



SCHOOL HEADS STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING IN PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, DISTRICT OF TRECE MARTIRES, CAVITE: BASIS FOR SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE

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Abstract

This study evaluated the relationship between school heads' strategic leadership practices and the implementation of School Improvement Planning (SIP) in public elementary schools in the District of Trece Martires City, Cavite, Philippines, and served as the empirical foundation for a proposed Sustainability Initiative Program. Utilizing a quantitative descriptive-comparative-correlational research design, data were gathered from 521 respondents, comprising 16 school heads (100% enumeration), 16 SIP coordinators (100% enumeration), and 489 teachers (55.4% stratified random sample) using an expert-validated, highly reliable instrument ($\alpha = 0.930$). Descriptive findings revealed that school heads demonstrated a "Highly Evident" level of strategic leadership overall (WM = 4.62), with Visionary Leadership scoring highest (WM = 4.62) and Resource Management receiving the lowest evaluation (WM = 4.53). One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) indicated no statistically significant differences in leadership assessments across the three respondent groups ($p > 0.05$), demonstrating a shared institutional perception. SIP implementation was evaluated as "Highly Evident" overall (WM = 4.29), led by the Implementation of Improvement Strategies (WM = 4.35), though SIP Coordinators evaluated overall implementation lower (WM = 4.16) than principals (WM = 4.37) and teachers (WM = 4.34). Pearson product-moment correlation analysis revealed statistically significant, very high to high positive correlations between all strategic leadership dimensions and SIP implementation domains ($r = 0.741$ to 0.918 , $p = 0.001$), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Resource inadequacy for technology integration (WM = 3.57) and program sustainability (WM = 3.42) emerged as the primary operational challenges. To address these structural bottlenecks, an 18-program Sustainability Initiative for Fiscal Year 2027 was formulated and evaluated as "Highly Acceptable" (WM = 4.44).

Keywords: *Strategic Leadership, School Improvement Planning, Educational Governance, School-Based Management, Continuous School Improvement*



Introduction

In contemporary educational management, basic education systems worldwide encounter complex pressures to elevate academic outcomes, ensure equitable access, and optimize resource allocation. In the Philippine basic education sector, legislative and administrative mandates have progressively restructured school governance from centralized directive frameworks toward decentralized, participatory management. Republic Act No. 9155, officially designated as the Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001, institutionalized School-Based Management (SBM), explicitly empowering school heads as instructional leaders and administrative managers who bear direct accountability for institutional performance and student learning outcomes. Complementing this statutory foundation, the Department of Education (DepEd) promulgated the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH) through DepEd Order No. 24, s. 2020, establishing strategic leadership as a core competency requirement for school administrators.

A principal vehicle through which strategic leadership is operationalized within Philippine basic education is the School Improvement Plan (SIP). Institutionalized via DepEd Order No. 44, s. 2015 (Guidelines on the Enhanced School Improvement Planning Process and the School Report Card), the SIP functions as a data-driven, participatory roadmap spanning a three-year cycle. The SIP articulates an educational institution's priority areas for improvement, strategic objectives, resource allocation strategies, and performance monitoring mechanisms. However, empirical observations across basic education districts, such as the District of Trece Martires City in Cavite, indicate persistent variations in institutional performance and SIP execution despite uniform policy guidelines. These operational variances suggest that standardized planning mandates alone are insufficient to guarantee continuous school improvement; rather, institutional progress is profoundly mediated by the strategic leadership behaviors of school administrators.

While scholarly literature widely acknowledges the general importance of educational leadership in school effectiveness, empirical inquiries specifically investigating the structural relationships between school heads' strategic leadership domains—visionary leadership, strategic decision-making, innovation leadership, collaboration and communication, and resource management—and the key execution domains of School Improvement Planning remain limited within the public elementary school context of Cavite Province. Furthermore, few empirical studies translate correlational findings directly into actionable, policy-aligned intervention programs designed to mitigate resource constraints and institutionalize long-term leadership capacity. To bridge these empirical and practical gaps, this study systematically analyzed the relationship between strategic leadership practices and SIP implementation in the District of Trece Martires City, Cavite, establishing an empirical foundation for a proposed Sustainability Initiative Program.

Theoretical Framework

This investigation was anchored on two complementary theoretical paradigms: the Strategic Leadership Theory advanced by Davies and Davies (2004) and the Theory of Continuous School Improvement formulated by Lezotte (1991).

Davies and Davies (2004) conceptualize strategic leadership in education as an overarching capability that transcends routine managerial maintenance. Strategic leadership demands that educational administrators anticipate future institutional demands, align human and material capital with long-term organizational goals, foster organizational learning, and cultivate an environment conducive to sustainable change. Within this framework, strategic leadership comprises five core behavioral dimensions:

1. Visionary Leadership: The capacity to construct, articulate, and sustain a compelling, inclusive, and learner-centered institutional direction.



2. Strategic Decision-Making: The practice of executing data-informed, ethical, and participatory choices that balance immediate operational requirements with long-term institutional goals.
3. Innovation Leadership: The active encouragement of creative pedagogical practices, adaptive technology integration, and professional experimentation.
4. Collaboration and Communication: The cultivation of transparent, trust-based dialogue and shared accountability among internal and external stakeholders.
5. Resource Management: The equitable, transparent, and efficient mobilization and allocation of human, financial, and physical capital.

Complementing this perspective, Lezotte's (1991) Theory of Continuous School Improvement posits that sustainable educational advancement requires a systematic, evidence-driven cycle of goal formulation, strategy execution, rigorous monitoring, and stakeholder engagement. Operationalized through the Enhanced SIP framework, continuous school improvement relies upon four interconnected planning domains:

1. Goal Setting and Prioritization: Defining measurable, time-bound, and contextually grounded academic and developmental targets based on learner data.
2. Implementation of Improvement Strategies: Executing structured action plans through collaborative teacher engagement, adaptive problem-solving, and resource alignment.
3. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E): Tracking progress systematically using evaluation metrics to drive real-time course corrections and organizational learning.
4. Stakeholder Involvement and Collaboration: Engaging parents, community leaders, local government units (LGUs), and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as co-owners of the school's developmental trajectory.

Synthesizing these frameworks, the study hypothesized that school heads who demonstrate high levels of strategic leadership across visionary, decision-making, innovative, communicative, and resource management dimensions create an organizational climate that significantly enhances the fidelity, rigor, and sustainability of School Improvement Planning.

Structural Framework of the Investigation

The study followed an Input-Process-Output (IPO) research model. The Input phase captured the institutional environment, comprising the demographic profiles of respondents (age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, and years in service), baseline assessments of school heads' strategic leadership behaviors, evaluations of School Improvement Plan implementation, operational challenges encountered during leadership and planning execution, and stakeholder acceptability evaluations. The Process phase involved the systematic deployment of expert-validated survey questionnaires, descriptive statistical computations, a one-way analysis of variance to identify perceptual variations across professional roles, and a Pearson product-moment correlation analysis to evaluate the significance of relationships. The Output phase resulted in the formulation of the FY 2027 Sustainability Initiative Program titled "Enhancing Strategic Leadership and School Improvement Planning for Sustainable School Development", designed to address identified operational bottlenecks and institutionalize continuous leadership development.

Research Hypotheses

To guide the empirical inquiry, two formal null hypotheses were tested at an $\alpha=0.05$ level of significance:

- *H01*: There is no statistically significant difference in the assessments of school heads' strategic leadership among principals, SIP coordinators, and teachers.
- *H02*: There is no statistically significant relationship between school heads' strategic leadership and the implementation of School Improvement Planning in public elementary schools within the District of Trece Martires City, Cavite.

Methods

Research Design

This study utilized a quantitative descriptive-comparative-correlational research design. The descriptive component measured the extent to which school heads exhibited strategic leadership behaviors and the degree to which public elementary schools implemented their School Improvement Plans. The comparative component examined whether perceptual variances existed among three distinct respondent cohorts: school principals, SIP coordinators, and classroom teachers. The correlational component evaluated the direction, strength, and statistical significance of the relationship between strategic leadership dimensions and SIP implementation domains.

Population and Sampling

The investigation was conducted across all sixteen (16) public elementary schools in the District of Trece Martires City, Division of Cavite, Philippines. The total target population comprised 915 educational personnel, from which a sample of $n=521$ respondents was drawn.

To ensure complete institutional representation at the leadership level, total enumeration (purposive sampling) was used for school principals ($n=16$, 100%) and designated SIP Coordinators ($n=16$, 100%). For the teaching staff ($N=883$), stratified random sampling with proportional allocation per school was initially conducted, yielding a baseline target of 307 teachers (31.1%). However, during field administration, the number of completed responses reached 489 teachers (55.4%). Upon statistical consultation, all 489 valid teacher responses were retained to maximize statistical power, minimize sampling error, and enhance the robustness of subgroup analyses.

Table 1: Institutional Sampling Architecture and Respondent Distribution Across Target Public Elementary Schools

School Name	Principals ($N=16$)	SIP Coordinators ($N=16$)	Teacher Population ($N=883$)	Teacher Sample ($n=489$)	Teacher Sampling Ratio (%)	Total Sample ($n=521$)
Agtas Elementary School	1	1	32	20	62.5%	22
Aguado Elementary School	1	1	50	31	62.0%	33



Aliang Elementary School	1	1	17	10	58.8%	12
Bagong Pook Elementary School	1	1	48	25	52.1%	27
Conchu Elementary School	1	1	38	22	57.9%	24
De Ocampo Elementary School	1	1	22	17	77.3%	19
Feliciano Cabuco Elementary School	1	1	95	48	50.5%	50
Hugo Perez Elementary School - Main	1	1	71	44	62.0%	46
Hugo Perez Elementary School - Annex	1	1	118	59	50.0%	61
Kanggahan Elementary School	1	1	111	56	50.5%	58
Lapidario Elementary School	1	1	66	36	54.5%	38
Osorio Elementary School	1	1	51	26	51.0%	28
Palawit Elementary School	1	1	29	20	69.0%	22
Southville Elementary School	1	1	44	23	52.3%	25
Trece Martires City Elementary School	1	1	72	40	55.6%	42

Victoriano Luciano Elementary School	1	1	21	13	61.9%	15
Total	16	16	883	489	55.4%	521

Demographic analysis revealed that principals were predominantly mature, highly experienced administrators, with 62.5% aged 51 years or older and 50.0% possessing 26 to 30 years of educational service. Furthermore, 62.5% of principals held completed doctoral degrees. SIP Coordinators represented a mid-career cohort, with 37.5% aged 41–45 years, 50.0% possessing 16–20 years in service, and 43.8% holding completed master's degrees. Classroom teachers were comparatively younger, concentrated in the 31–35 age bracket (20.0%), with 11–15 years of service (46.8%), and 50.7% having earned postgraduate master's units. Female personnel dominated leadership and coordination roles (87.5% of principals and 93.8% of SIP coordinators), whereas male respondents comprised 80.4% of the teacher sample.

Table 2: Comprehensive Demographic Distribution of Educational Personnel Cohorts

Demographic Variable	Sub-Category	Principals (n=16) %	SIP Coordinators (n=16) %	Teachers (n=489) %	Total Sample (n=521) %
Age	21–25 years old	0.0%	0.0%	4.5%	4.4%
	26–30 years old	0.0%	0.0%	15.3%	14.8%
	31–35 years old	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	18.8%
	36–40 years old	0.0%	12.5%	16.6%	16.1%
	41–45 years old	18.8%	37.5%	14.9%	15.7%
	46–50 years old	18.8%	18.8%	14.3%	14.4%
	51 years old & above	62.5%	31.3%	14.3%	15.7%
Sex	Male	12.5%	6.3%	80.4%	76.0%
	Female	87.5%	93.8%	17.2%	21.7%
	Prefer not to say	0.0%	0.0%	2.5%	2.3%

Highest Education	Bachelor's Degree	0.0%	0.0%	18.6%	17.7%
	With Master's Units	18.8%	25.0%	50.7%	48.8%
	Master's Degree	0.0%	43.8%	19.2%	19.2%
	With Doctorate Units	18.8%	18.8%	9.4%	9.8%
	Doctorate Degree	62.5%	12.5%	2.0%	4.6%
Years in Service	1–5 years	0.0%	0.0%	3.3%	3.1%
	6–10 years	0.0%	12.5%	13.1%	12.5%
	11–15 years	0.0%	12.5%	46.8%	44.3%
	16–20 years	0.0%	50.0%	17.0%	17.5%
	21–25 years	18.8%	12.5%	8.6%	8.8%
	26–30 years	50.0%	12.5%	7.6%	9.0%
	31 years & above	31.3%	0.0%	3.7%	4.8%

Research Instrumentation and Reliability

Data collection was executed using a structured survey questionnaire composed of five discrete sections:

- Part I: Respondent Demographic Profile.
- Part II: Strategic Leadership Scale (35 items spanning Visionary Leadership, Strategic Decision-Making, Innovation Leadership, Collaboration/Communication, and Resource Management).
- Part III: School Improvement Planning Scale (28 items spanning Goal Setting/Prioritization, Implementation Strategies, Monitoring/Evaluation, and Stakeholder Involvement).
- Part IV: Operational Challenges Scale (18 items evaluating leadership and planning constraints).
- Part V: Acceptability Scale for the Proposed Sustainability Initiative (5 items).

The instrument underwent content validation by a panel of three experts in Educational Management, Research Methodology, and Basic Education Governance. Following refinement, a pilot test was conducted with 30 educational personnel in non-participating public elementary schools. Internal consistency was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, yielding an overall coefficient of $\alpha=0.930$, confirming high instrument reliability.

Responses were scored using a 5-point Likert scale and interpreted through standardized statistical boundaries:

Scale Range=55.00–1.00=0.80

Table 3: Statistical Rating Scale, Numerical Ranges, and Verbal Interpretations

Rating Scale	Numerical Range	Verbal Interpretation	Symbol
5	4.20 – 5.00	Highly Evident / Highly Encountered / Highly Acceptable	HE / HA
4	3.40 – 4.19	Evident / Encountered / Acceptable	E / A
3	2.60 – 3.39	Moderately Evident / Moderately Encountered / Moderately Acceptable	ME
2	1.80 – 2.59	Less Evident / Least Encountered / Least Acceptable	LE
1	1.00 – 1.79	Least Evident / Very Least Encountered / Very Least Acceptable	LVE

Data Analysis Tools

Data were processed using statistical software. The analytical treatment comprised:

1. Frequency and Percentage Distribution: Applied to summarize demographic profiles.
2. Weighted Mean (*WM*): Computed to assess the levels of strategic leadership, SIP implementation, operational challenges, and intervention acceptability.

$$\bar{X}w = N\sum(f \cdot w)$$

where $\bar{X}w$ represents the weighted mean, f represents response frequency, w represents assigned item weight, and N represents total responses.

3. One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA): Executed to test $H01$ by determining whether statistically significant perceptual differences existed among principals, SIP coordinators, and teachers. F -tests were evaluated at $\alpha=0.05$ significance with degrees of freedom $df1=2$ and $df2=518$ (Critical $F=3.00$).

$$F = \frac{MS_{within}}{MS_{between}}$$

4. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (r): Applied to test $H02$ by measuring the direction and magnitude of relationships between strategic leadership dimensions and SIP implementation domains. Statistical significance was confirmed via Student's t -test at $\alpha=0.05$ ($df=519$, Critical $t=0.0875$).

$$r = \frac{[N\sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2][N\sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2]}{N\sum XY - (\sum X)(\sum Y)}$$

$$t = \frac{1-r^2}{rN-2}$$



Results

Evaluation of School Heads' Strategic Leadership

The overall evaluation of school heads' strategic leadership across all five dimensions yielded a composite weighted mean of $WM=4.62$, interpreted as "Highly Evident".

Table 4: Descriptive Evaluation of Strategic Leadership Dimensions Across Respondent Groups

Strategic Leadership Dimensions	Principals ($n=16$)	SIP Coordinators ($n=16$)	Teachers ($n=489$)	Composite Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Dimension Rank
1. Visionary Leadership	4.76	4.51	4.58	4.62	Highly Evident	1
2. Innovation Leadership	4.70	4.53	4.56	4.59	Highly Evident	2
3. Strategic Decision-Making	4.74	4.47	4.52	4.58	Highly Evident	3
4. Collaboration and Communication	4.62	4.52	4.52	4.55	Highly Evident	4
5. Resource Management	4.74	4.38	4.47	4.53	Highly Evident	5
Overall Composite Mean	4.71	4.48	4.53	4.62	Highly Evident	--

Visionary Leadership achieved the highest overall rating ($WM=4.62$, Rank 1), anchored by strong indicator scores in formulating learner-centered, inclusive visions ($WM=4.68$) and integrating long-term goals into institutional practices ($WM=4.65$). Innovation Leadership ranked second ($WM=4.59$), driven by school heads motivating teachers to explore fresh instructional approaches ($WM=4.67$) and recognizing innovative staff contributions ($WM=4.63$). Strategic Decision-Making ranked third ($WM=4.58$), highlighted by anchoring choices on credible data ($WM=4.63$) and upholding ethical fairness ($WM=4.62$). Collaboration and Communication obtained a mean of $WM=4.55$ (Rank 4), led by fostering respectful communication ($WM=4.61$). Resource Management, while remaining "Highly Evident," received the lowest relative rating ($WM=4.53$, Rank 5), with maintenance of physical facilities and materials recording the lowest individual indicator score ($WM=4.46$).

Comparative Analysis of Strategic Leadership Across Respondent Groups

To test $H01$, a One-Way ANOVA was conducted to compare leadership assessments among principals, SIP coordinators, and teachers.

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Table 5: One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Test Results for Strategic Leadership Assessments

Strategic Leadership Dimensions	Between-Group Mean Square	Within-Group Mean Square	Computed <i>F</i> -value	<i>p</i> -value	Decision on <i>H</i> 01	Statistical Significance
Visionary Leadership	0.284	0.323	0.880	0.415	Fail to Reject	Not Significant
Strategic Decision-Making	0.392	0.321	1.220	0.296	Fail to Reject	Not Significant
Innovation Leadership	0.168	0.323	0.520	0.595	Fail to Reject	Not Significant
Collaboration and Communication	0.059	0.321	0.184	0.832	Fail to Reject	Not Significant
Resource Management	0.551	0.322	1.713	0.181	Fail to Reject	Not Significant

Note: $df_1=2, df_2=518$; Critical *F*-value = 3.00 at $\alpha=0.05$.

All computed *F*-values (0.184 to 1.713) were lower than the critical *F*-threshold of 3.00, with all corresponding *p*-values exceeding the 0.05 significance level ($p=0.181$ to 0.832). Consequently, the null hypothesis *H*01 was not rejected. This confirms that principals, SIP coordinators, and teachers share a consistent, non-significantly different assessment of the school heads' strategic leadership practices.

Evaluation of School Improvement Planning (SIP) Implementation

The evaluation of School Improvement Planning implementation across four functional domains yielded an overall composite weighted mean of $WM=4.29$ ("Highly Evident").

Table 6: Assessment of School Improvement Planning (SIP) Implementation Domains

SIP Implementation Domains	Principals (<i>n</i> =16)	SIP Coordinators (<i>n</i> =16)	Teachers (<i>n</i> =489)	Composite Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Domain Rank
1. Implementation of Improvement Strategies	4.38	4.25	4.42	4.35	Highly Evident	1
2. Goal Setting and Prioritization	4.38	4.15	4.30	4.28	Highly Evident	2.5
3. Monitoring and Evaluation	4.38	4.15	4.30	4.28	Highly Evident	2.5
4. Stakeholder Involvement & Collaboration	4.34	4.07	4.32	4.24	Highly Evident	4

Overall Mean	Composite	4.37	4.16	4.34	4.29	Highly Evident	--
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Implementation of Improvement Strategies scored highest ($WM=4.35$, Rank 1), supported by structured action plans ($WM=4.53$) and institutionalization of long-term strategies ($WM=4.53$). Goal Setting and Prioritization ($WM=4.28$, Rank 2.5) was characterized by integrating community context ($WM=4.52$), though setting inclusive goals for diverse learners scored lower ($WM=3.83$, Evident). Monitoring and Evaluation ($WM=4.28$, Rank 2.5) demonstrated strength in integrating lessons learned ($WM=4.52$), but recorded a gap in transparent report sharing ($WM=3.83$, Evident). Stakeholder Involvement and Collaboration received the lowest mean ($WM=4.24$, Rank 4), where active stakeholder participation in direct decision-making scored $WM=3.72$ ("Evident").

A descriptive divergence emerged across respondent groups: while principals ($WM=4.37$) and teachers ($WM=4.34$) rated overall SIP implementation as "Highly Evident," SIP Coordinators recorded a lower composite mean of $WM=4.16$, categorizing overall SIP implementation as "Evident".

Correlational Analysis Between Strategic Leadership and SIP Implementation

To test $H02$, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients (r) were calculated between each strategic leadership dimension and the four SIP implementation domains.

Table 7: Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Matrix Between Strategic Leadership and SIP Execution

Strategic Leadership Dimensions	SIP Implementation Domains	Pearson r	Correlation Strength	t -value	p -value	Decision on $H02$	Statistical Significance
Visionary Leadership	Goal Setting & Prioritization	0.862	Very High Positive	38.70	0.001	Reject	Significant
	Strategy Implementation	0.808	Very High Positive	31.25	0.001	Reject	Significant
	Monitoring & Evaluation	0.782	High Positive	28.56	0.001	Reject	Significant
	Stakeholder Involvement	0.741	High Positive	25.13	0.001	Reject	Significant
Strategic Decision-Making	Goal Setting & Prioritization	0.918	Very High Positive	52.34	0.001	Reject	Significant
	Strategy Implementation	0.849	Very High Positive	36.59	0.001	Reject	Significant
	Monitoring & Evaluation	0.831	Very High Positive	33.95	0.001	Reject	Significant
	Stakeholder Involvement	0.797	High Positive	30.02	0.001	Reject	Significant

Innovation Leadership	Goal Setting & Prioritization	0.888	Very High Positive	43.92	0.001	Reject	Significant
	Strategy Implementation	0.851	Very High Positive	36.99	0.001	Reject	Significant
	Monitoring & Evaluation	0.831	Very High Positive	33.95	0.001	Reject	Significant
	Stakeholder Involvement	0.793	High Positive	29.43	0.001	Reject	Significant
Collaboration & Comm.	Goal Setting & Prioritization	0.884	Very High Positive	43.06	0.001	Reject	Significant
	Strategy Implementation	0.842	Very High Positive	35.55	0.001	Reject	Significant
	Monitoring & Evaluation	0.810	Very High Positive	31.71	0.001	Reject	Significant
	Stakeholder Involvement	0.792	High Positive	29.29	0.001	Reject	Significant
Resource Management	Goal Setting & Prioritization	0.856	Very High Positive	43.06	0.001	Reject	Significant
	Strategy Implementation	0.853	Very High Positive	35.55	0.001	Reject	Significant
	Monitoring & Evaluation	0.811	Very High Positive	31.71	0.001	Reject	Significant
	Stakeholder Involvement	0.821	Very High Positive	29.29	0.001	Reject	Significant

Note: $df=519$; Critical t -value = 0.0875 at $\alpha=0.05$.

The data show strong to very strong positive correlations across all paired dimensions, with coefficients ranging from $r=0.741$ (Visionary Leadership vs. Stakeholder Involvement) to $r=0.918$ (Strategic Decision-Making vs. Goal Setting and Prioritization). All computed t -values (25.13 to 52.34) far exceeded the critical value of 0.0875, and all p -values were 0.001, well below the 0.05 threshold. Consequently, the null hypothesis $H02$ was rejected across all sub-variable pairings. This confirms a statistically significant relationship between school heads' strategic leadership practices and the execution of School Improvement Planning.

Operational Challenges Encountered

Assessment of operational challenges relative to strategic leadership and SIP execution revealed an overall mean of $WM=2.62$ ("Moderately Encountered").



Table 8: Operational Challenges Encountered in Strategic Leadership and SIP Execution

Operational Challenge Indicators	Principals (n=16)	SIP Coordinators (n=16)	Teachers (n=489)	Composite Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Challenge Rank
Insufficient resources to support innovative programs & tech integration	2.44	4.11	4.16	3.57	Encountered	1
Insufficient resources to sustain SIP programs and initiatives	2.38	3.75	4.13	3.42	Encountered	2
Low participation of stakeholders in planning and decision-making	2.50	3.44	3.43	3.12	Moderately Encountered	3
Challenges in accessing reliable data to guide strategic decisions	2.63	2.69	2.90	2.74	Moderately Encountered	4
Limited opportunities to consistently communicate the vision to stakeholders	2.44	2.63	2.78	2.61	Moderately Encountered	5
Resistance from some teachers to adopting new teaching approaches	2.56	2.44	2.76	2.59	Least Encountered	6
Communication gaps across levels of the school community	2.44	2.56	2.71	2.57	Least Encountered	7
Difficulty in sustaining staff commitment to long-term vision	2.31	2.56	2.79	2.55	Least Encountered	8

Difficulty in fostering collaboration among diverse partners	2.44	2.56	2.63	2.54	Least Encountered	9
Constraints in securing adequate financial/material resources	2.31	2.50	2.67	2.50	Least Encountered	10
Unequal distribution of resources affects program execution	2.19	2.44	2.58	2.40	Least Encountered	11

The most prominent operational bottleneck was the lack of sufficient resources for innovation and technology integration ($WM=3.57$, Rank 1, "Encountered"), followed by resource deficits in sustaining SIP initiatives ($WM=3.42$, Rank 2, "Encountered"). Low stakeholder participation in formal planning ranked third ($WM=3.12$, "Moderately Encountered"). A pronounced perceptual gap was observed between administrators and field implementers: while principals rated resource deficits for innovation as "Least Encountered" ($WM=2.44$), both SIP Coordinators ($WM=4.11$) and Teachers ($WM=4.16$) rated this constraint as "Encountered".

Proposed Intervention Program and Acceptability Evaluation

To address the identified operational gaps, a Sustainability Initiative entitled "Enhancing Strategic Leadership and School Improvement Planning for Sustainable School Development" was designed for Fiscal Year 2027. The initiative comprises 18 actionable programs structured across leadership enhancement, resource mobilization, data governance, and stakeholder engagement, with an estimated operational budget of Php 337,000 sourced from School MOOE, PTA, LGU, and Adopt-a-School partners.

Table 9: Stakeholder Acceptability Assessment of the Proposed FY 2027 Sustainability Initiative Program

Program Acceptability Criteria	Principals (n=16)	SIP Coordinators (n=16)	Teachers (n=489)	Composite Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Criteria Rank
1. Practicality to warrant adoption and implementation	4.38	4.56	4.49	4.48	Highly Acceptable	1.5
2. Guidance in developing and enhancing policy guidelines	4.50	4.45	4.49	4.48	Highly Acceptable	1.5
3. Provision of comprehensive	4.50	4.43	4.38	4.43	Highly Acceptable	3



knowledge for corrective actions						
4. Organizational benefit in identifying leadership/SIP weaknesses	4.31	4.39	4.54	4.41	Highly Acceptable	4
5. Completeness of facts and structural coherence	4.38	4.49	4.32	4.39	Highly Acceptable	5
Overall Acceptability Mean	4.41	4.46	4.44	4.44	Highly Acceptable	--

Evaluation of the proposed initiative yielded an overall weighted mean of $WM=4.44$ ("Highly Acceptable") across all respondent groups, confirming stakeholder buy-in and readiness for institutional implementation.

Discussion

Leadership Dynamics: Visionary Drive versus Resource Management Bottlenecks

The empirical findings demonstrate that school heads in Trece Martires City exhibit a high level of strategic leadership ($WM=4.62$), characterized by strong visionary direction ($WM=4.62$) and innovative drive ($WM=4.59$). School administrators successfully align local school targets with overarching Department of Education mandates and articulate inclusive, learner-centered aspirations. This aligns with findings by Lingatong (2024), who observed that school-based management thrives when school heads establish inspiring, transparent direction.

However, a structural tension emerges when comparing leadership dimensions. While Visionary Leadership ranked highest, Resource Management scored lowest among leadership domains ($WM=4.53$). This internal variation mirrors the primary operational challenge identified by respondents: insufficient resources for technology integration ($WM=3.57$) and program sustainability ($WM=3.42$). This disparity reveals a critical structural phenomenon: school administrators excel at conceptualizing aspirational goals but encounter operational friction in securing and maintaining the material, technological, and financial capital required to execute those visions. In decentralized basic education governance, visionary leadership without strategic resource mobilization risks creating "aspirational fatigue," wherein high organizational expectations outpace institutional capacity.

Perceptual Congruence and the Coordination Visibility Gap

The One-Way ANOVA test for $H01$ revealed no statistically significant differences ($p>0.05$) among principals, SIP coordinators, and teachers regarding strategic leadership assessments. This perceptual alignment indicates a shared organizational understanding across Trece Martires City public elementary schools. School leadership behaviors are uniformly observed and experienced across hierarchical levels, reflecting institutionalized governance practices.

Conversely, descriptive evaluations of SIP implementation uncovered a subtle "coordination visibility gap". While principals ($WM=4.37$) and teachers ($WM=4.34$) evaluated SIP execution as "Highly Evident," SIP Coordinators rated implementation lower ($WM=4.16$, "Evident"). This divergence can be understood through the operational mechanics of middle management. SIP Coordinators serve as the administrative interface responsible for data aggregation, metric monitoring, and compliance reporting. Consequently, they directly experience data access constraints ($WM=2.74$), resource bottlenecks, and tracking delays that executive-level principals or classroom-bound teachers may overlook. Recognizing this visibility gap underscores the need to empower middle managers with automated data management systems and dedicated administrative support.

Structural Coupling Between Strategic Leadership and SIP Execution

The rejection of $H02$ confirmed strong, statistically significant positive correlations ($r=0.741$ to 0.918 , $p=0.001$) across all leadership dimensions and SIP implementation domains. The strongest correlation emerged between Strategic Decision-Making and Goal Setting/Prioritization ($r=0.918$, $t=52.34$). This indicates that when school heads base institutional choices on credible data, ethical reasoning, and participatory engagement, schools formulate more precise, realistic, and time-bound improvement targets.

Similarly, Resource Management demonstrated a strong correlation with Strategy Implementation ($r=0.853$) and Stakeholder Collaboration ($r=0.821$). Efficient resource allocation directly reinforces implementation fidelity by ensuring that planned intervention activities receive timely material support. Furthermore, transparent fiscal stewardship enhances external stakeholder trust, encouraging sustained community investments. These empirical relationships support Davies and Davies' (2004) conceptualization of strategic leadership as an integrated organizational catalyst.

The structural coupling connecting strategic leadership behaviors directly to continuous school improvement outcomes operates across three key operational pathways:

First, high visionary leadership ($WM=4.62$) couples strongly with goal setting ($r=0.862$) and strategy implementation ($r=0.808$) by establishing data-driven targets and localized institutional context. Second, robust strategic decision-making ($WM=4.58$) and resource management ($WM=4.53$) are directly coupled with strategy execution ($r=0.849$ and $r=0.853$, respectively), thereby guaranteeing action fidelity and strategy continuity. Third, effective collaboration and communication ($WM=4.55$) drive stakeholder engagement ($r=0.792$), converting passive consultation into participatory co-governance. Together, these pathways synthesize leadership capacity directly into sustainable, continuous school improvement.

Addressing Structural Gaps via the Sustainability Initiative

The empirical findings highlighted two critical areas requiring intervention: passive stakeholder engagement and resource deficits for innovation. Stakeholder Involvement recorded the lowest score among SIP domains ($WM=4.24$), with direct stakeholder participation in decision-making scoring $WM=3.72$. While community partners endorse school plans, their active involvement in early-stage goal formulation remains limited.

The proposed Fiscal Year 2027 Sustainability Initiative, "Enhancing Strategic Leadership and School Improvement Planning for Sustainable School Development", directly targets these operational bottlenecks. By structuring 18 specific interventions—such as the School Data Management Enhancement Program (Php 20,000), Resource Mobilization Program (Php 30,000), Community Voice Integration Program (Php 12,000), and Education Partnership Sustainability Program (Php 20,000)—the initiative transitions stakeholder engagement from passive endorsement to active co-governance. Evaluated as "Highly Acceptable" ($WM=4.44$), this intervention framework offers a practical model for institutionalizing strategic leadership and building school resilience.

Conclusions

Based on the empirical findings, the following conclusions are derived:

1. High Competency in Strategic Leadership: School heads in the District of Trece Martires City demonstrate strong strategic leadership capabilities, particularly in visionary direction and innovation. However, resource management remains an operational area that requires targeted capacity enhancements to optimize facility maintenance and technological integration.
2. Shared Institutional Perception: The absence of statistically significant differences among principals, SIP coordinators, and teachers confirms a unified understanding of leadership practices across public elementary schools.
3. Effective Strategy Execution alongside Coordination Gaps: School Improvement Planning is executed effectively, particularly in strategy institutionalization. However, lower evaluations by SIP Coordinators highlight operational friction in data access and progress tracking, while stakeholder involvement remains largely consultative rather than participatory.
4. Direct Coupling Between Leadership and Planning: A strong, statistically significant positive relationship links school heads' strategic leadership to SIP execution, confirming that data-driven, innovative, and collaborative leadership directly enhances planning fidelity.
5. Resource Constraints as Primary Bottlenecks: While general leadership challenges are manageable, resource deficits for technology integration and project sustainability continue to hinder optimal SIP execution.



6. Practical Viability of the Intervention: The proposed FY 2027 Sustainability Initiative Program is practical, contextually aligned, and highly acceptable to school stakeholders, providing a structured framework to resolve identified governance gaps.

Recommendations

In light of the study's conclusions, the following recommendations are advanced for policy, administrative practice, and future research:

1. School Heads and Local Administrators:
 - Adopt and operationalize the 18-program Sustainability Initiative across public elementary schools in Trece Martires City for Fiscal Year 2027.
 - Enhance resource management capabilities by establishing strategic partnerships with Local Government Units (LGUs), alumni associations, and private sector donors through the Adopt-a-School Program to fund ICT and instructional infrastructure.
 - Shift stakeholder engagement strategies from passive consultation to active co-governance by embedding community representatives into upfront data analysis and goal-setting workshops.
2. SIP Coordinators and School Planning Teams:
 - Institutionalize digital database systems (such as the proposed School Data Management Enhancement Program) to streamline data collection, reduce reporting friction, and ensure real-time progress monitoring.
 - Engage in continuous professional development focused on advanced data analytics, monitoring and evaluation frameworks, and evidence-based planning.
3. Schools Division Office (SDO Cavite) and Policy Makers:
 - Utilize the study's findings to refine leadership development modules under the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH), prioritizing strategic resource mobilization, financial management, and data-driven decision-making.
 - Allocate targeted equity funds to basic education districts facing material resource deficits to balance technological infrastructure across elementary schools.
4. Future Researchers:
 - Expand the geographical scope of this research to include secondary schools, urban-rural comparisons, or multi-division samples to test the generalizability of these structural relationships.
 - Conduct qualitative or mixed-methods investigations to explore the nuanced administrative mechanisms through which middle-level SIP Coordinators manage implementation friction.



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