Strategic Leadership Practices, Management Behavior And Work Engagement On School Performance

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Abstract: his study determined the relationship between school heads' strategic leadership, management behavior, and work engagement and the performance of public elementary schools in Educational District (EDDIS) VI in the Schools Division Office of Bulacan, School Year 2024-2025. With explanatory sequential mixed methods as research design and 67 school heads and 360 teachers as respondents of the study, findings showed that most of the school heads are of pre-retirement age, female, had been in the service for 20 years, and above, finished graduate degree courses and attended training related to their work. The strategic leadership of school heads in terms of vision, pragmatism, culture and values, communication network, and change management was described as "always practiced." The strategic management behavior of school heads in terms of empowerment, teamwork, organization, control system, and provision for rewards and benefits was described as "always." The strategic work engagement of school heads in terms of vigor, dedication, and absorption was described by the two groups of respondents as "highly engaged." The school's performance was described as "outstanding." The study's findings led to the conclusion that demographic factors, including age, tenure, educational qualifications, and participation in training programs, significantly influence the strategic leadership practices, management behavior, and work engagement of school heads. Moreover, a robust and positive association exists between strategic leadership approaches, management conduct, and the degree of work engagement inside the school, as well as the institution's overall performance.

Key Words: Strategic leadership practices, Strategic management behavior, Work engagement, School performance

Chapter I
INTRODUCTION

In today's fast-evolving educational landscape, schools are under increasing pressure to not only meet the expectations of diverse stakeholders but also to continuously improve their performance. The pressure for schools to deliver quality education, while navigating the complexities of modern challenges, demands strategic leadership, effective management behavior, and a high level of work engagement from school heads and staff. These factors play a critical role in shaping the academic outcomes, organizational culture, and sustainability of educational institutions. Understanding the dynamic interaction between strategic leadership practices, management behaviors, and work engagement is essential for optimizing school performance and fostering an environment conducive to growth, learning, and development.

In the Philippine educational context, the importance of strategic leadership, management, and work engagement is particularly significant as the country aims to achieve educational reforms that can effectively address the diverse and evolving needs of its learners.

Strategic leadership practices, management behaviors, and work engagement are crucial in this regard, as they directly influence not only academic achievements but also the holistic development of students and the capacity of schools to sustain and innovate over time.

This imperative is reinforced by various legal frameworks and policies that govern education in the Philippines. The Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 (Republic Act No. 10533), for instance, underscores the need for school leaders to be at the helm of curriculum development and educational delivery, ensuring that schools respond to the needs of learners and the broader community. The law calls for effective school leadership that utilizes strategic planning to improve educational outcomes, a principle that aligns closely with the practices of strategic leadership outlined in the study.

Similarly, Republic Act No. 9155**,** known as the Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001**,** decentralizes school management, emphasizing the importance of school heads as instructional leaders who are expected to engage in strategic decision-making, foster collaboration among stakeholders, and drive continuous school improvement. This law frames the role of school heads as central to promoting academic excellence and good governance at the school level.

Additionally, the Department of Education's (DepEd) School-Based Management (SBM) framework further highlights the strategic role of school leaders in improving school performance. This framework advocates for decentralized decision-making and the active involvement of stakeholders such as teachers, parents, and the community in school governance. This participatory approach not only strengthens accountability but also encourages transparency, which are critical factors in fostering a positive school environment and enhancing student performance.

The relevance of strategic leadership is also emphasized on the global stage, with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) providing a robust framework for guiding educational institutions toward sustainable practices

and outcomes. SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) specifically call for inclusive, equitable, and quality education, which strategic leaders can align their school's goals with. Furthermore, SDGs like SDG 13 (Climate Action) and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption) emphasize the importance of leadership in promoting responsible decision-making and innovation.

The significance of effective strategic leadership is deeply tied to work engagement and management behavior. Research has shown that school heads who are highly engaged in their work and practice effective management behaviors, such as empowering staff, fostering teamwork, and providing necessary resources and rewards, directly influence teacher motivation and student achievement. In the Philippine context, this is crucial as the country navigates a competitive and fast-changing educational environment. Work engagement among school heads, characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption, serves as a foundation for cultivating a positive school culture and improving organizational performance.

Furthermore, the Philippine government's commitment to educational reform, as reflected in the Philippine Development Plan (2017), reinforces the importance of leadership in achieving national goals for sustainable development. By integrating the SDGs into national education frameworks, strategic leadership practices at the school level become even more crucial in ensuring the effectiveness of educational policies and their long-term impact.

This study, Strategic Leadership Practices, Management Behavior, and Work Engagement on School Performance, is crucial as it aims to examine how school leaders in the Philippines implement strategic leadership and management practices and how these practices, in turn, affect school performance.

By analyzing the relationship between leadership practices, management behaviors, work engagement, and school performance, this study aligns with both local and international educational reforms. The findings contribute to evidence-based practices that can guide school leaders, policymakers, and educational administrators in enhancing the quality of education, improving school governance, and achieving the national goals of equitable and sustainable education.

Moreover, as educational leadership increasingly becomes an area of focus in research, this study also aims to fill the gap in understanding how these factors operate in a unique context like the Philippines, where diverse challenges and opportunities intersect. The results may inform future initiatives for the professional development of school leaders and suggest actionable strategies for improving educational outcomes at the school level.

In conclusion, this study serves as a critical step toward optimizing school performance through strategic leadership, management, and work engagement, ensuring that schools can adapt to the dynamic needs of education and contribute meaningfully to the country's development.

Literature Review

Arksey and O'Malley (2020) conducted a scoping review to comprehensively analyze how strategic leadership is applied in school settings, particularly in navigating complex educational challenges. By mapping key concepts and existing literature on the topic, their review offers valuable insights into how school leaders can align their vision with the institution's goals and foster an environment conducive to learning and growth. This emphasis on the role of school leaders can empower and motivate the audience.

Building on this, Arksey and O'Malley's five-stage framework for their scoping review, which includes study selection and data analysis, systematically explores how strategic leadership is defined and practiced in the educational field. In a related vein, Engagement with stakeholders, particularly in the context of school performance, is another critical aspect of strategic leadership. Robinson et al. (2019) suggest that leaders who actively engage with teachers, parents, and the community foster a sense of shared responsibility and accountability. Further elaborating on the dimensions of strategic leadership, Adams (2023) emphasized in his book "Educational Leadership: Contemporary Theories, Principles, and Practices", the essential components of strategic leadership in educational settings: (a) Visionary Leadership: Educational leaders must develop a clear and compelling vision that outlines the school's future direction. This vision should reflect the institution's core values, mission, and goals and serve as a guiding framework for all decisions and actions; (b) Strategic Planning: Education leaders must engage in strategic planning to ensure that the school's resources, policies, and practices align with its vision. This involves setting long-term goals, identifying priorities, and developing actionable plans to achieve these goals; (c) Instructional Leadership: A significant aspect of educational strategic leadership is the focus on improving teaching and learning. Leaders must ensure that instructional practices are effective, evidence-based, and aligned with the school's academic objectives. This also includes supporting teacher professional development and fostering a culture of continuous improvement; (d) Change Management: Schools often undergo significant changes, whether due to curriculum reforms, policy shifts, or technological integration. Strategic leaders must manage these changes, guide the school community through transitions, and minimize resistance; and (e) Stakeholder Engagement: Strategic leadership in education requires collaboration with various stakeholders, including teachers, parents, students, and the broader community. Effective communication and partnership with these groups are essential for successfully implementing the school's strategic plans.

Day et al. (2020) examined the relationship between strategic leadership and school performance. The research found that schools led by strategic leaders focusing on long-term goals, stakeholder engagement, and instructional improvement tend to perform better academically. The study highlights the importance of aligning leadership practices with the school's vision and goals.

In the Philippine context, Bernardo and Garcia (2022) explored the role of strategic leadership in improving the

performance of public schools. The researchers found that Filipino school leaders who engage in strategic planning, data-driven decision-making, and community involvement achieve their schools' academic and operational goals more successfully. The study underscores the need for continuous professional development and capacity-building for school leaders in the Philippines.

Similarly, a study by Robinson et al. (2021) investigated the impact of strategic leadership on teacher professional development. In the same line of inquiry, Fullan and Quinn (2020) explored the role of strategic leadership in driving educational change. The researchers found that strategic leaders skilled in change management, communication, and stakeholder engagement are more successful in implementing reforms and innovations in their schools.

Adding a culturally nuanced perspective, Navarro and Santos (2023) delved into the pivotal role of culturally responsive leadership in Philippine schools. The research unearthed that strategic leaders who grasp and integrate cultural contexts into their leadership practices are significantly more effective in addressing the diverse needs of their students and communities. Despite these promising insights, strategic leadership in education has its challenges. First, educational leaders often face the challenge of balancing the immediate needs of their schools with long-term strategic objectives. This requires careful planning, prioritization, and resource allocation. Zhao and Zhang (2024). Moreover, implementing strategic initiatives often involves significant changes, which can be met with resistance from teachers, students, and parents. Leaders must be skilled in change management to guide their school communities through transitions. Gunter (2023). Furthermore, many schools, particularly in developing countries like the Philippines, often operate with limited resources. Strategic leaders must be creative and resourceful in maximizing the use of available resources to achieve their goals. Zhao and Zhang (2024). In addition, they must ensure equitable and inclusive education, addressing the needs of diverse learners to guarantee access to quality education for all (Adams, 2023). Lastly, the education sector is often subject to frequent policy changes, which can significantly alter a school's strategic direction. Leaders must stay informed and adaptable in aligning their strategies with emerging regulations (Smith & Garcia, 2023).

To tie these issues together, strategic leadership involves setting a clear vision, making long-term plans, and ensuring that all stakeholders are aligned with the school's goals (Hitt et al., 2020). However, research that directly links strategic leadership to work engagement among school leaders remains scarce. Work engagement may serve as a critical bridge in this relationship. According to Schaufeli (2021), engaged school leaders are more likely to translate strategic goals into effective actions, motivating staff, enhancing school culture, and improving teacher performance. Nevertheless, while work engagement has been shown to positively influence individual and organizational performance in other sectors, the connection between school heads' engagement and their strategic decision-

making capacity is still underexplored within the field of education (García-Cabrera & García-Soto, 2022).

In terms of management, there is a need for more studies that explore how strategic leadership and management practices integrate to influence work engagement and overall school success. For example, while Yu et al. (2021) found that effective management practices boost work engagement and productivity, these studies often focus on the business sector, leaving an empirical gap in the educational setting.

To address this gap, strategic management in education involves formulating, implementing, and evaluating plans and policies designed to achieve educational institutions' long-term goals. This process requires school leaders to align resources, methods, and practices with the institution's vision and mission, ensuring that the school can adapt to changing environments, respond to challenges, and achieve sustainable success. In schools, strategic management is crucial for improving academic outcomes, but it also plays a significant role in fostering a positive school culture, thereby ensuring the efficient use of resources and making the audience feel the importance of a conducive learning environment Tariq (2024).

Following this line of thoughts, strategic management in educational settings encompasses several key components: (a) Vision and Mission Alignment: The foundation of academic management is aligning the school's strategic plans with its vision and mission. This alignment ensures all decisions and actions are directed toward achieving the institution's goals. Ritchie & Wills (2023); (b) Environmental Scanning: Khurram et al. (2023); (c) Strategic Planning: Educational leaders develop long-term strategic plans based on the insights gained from environmental scanning. Lin and Chen (2024); (d) Implementation and Resource Allocation: Effective implementation of strategic plans requires the efficient allocation of resources, including financial, human, and material resources. Lin and Chen (2024); and (e) Monitoring and Evaluation: Continuous monitoring and evaluation are essential to assess the effectiveness of the strategic plan Arshad & Mahmood (2024).

In support of these concepts, a study by Lumibao and Mendoza (2021) examined the strategic management practices of public schools in the Philippine context. The researchers found that schools with well-defined strategic plans and practical implementation processes tend to achieve higher levels of student performance and operational efficiency. The study highlighted the role of school leaders in fostering a culture of accountability and continuous improvement.

Furthermore, a study by Fullan and Quinn (2020) investigated the role of strategic management in driving educational reform. The researchers found that schools that adopt a strategic management approach are better able to implement reforms, improve teaching quality, and enhance student outcomes. This study underscores the importance of strategic leadership in navigating the complexities of educational change.

In addition, a study by Odden and Picus (2019) focused on strategically allocating school resources. The research found that schools strategically allocate resources,

particularly regarding teacher deployment and instructional materials, to achieve better academic results. The study highlighted the need for data-driven decision-making in resource allocation.

Moreover, a study by Hargreaves and O'Connor (2021) explored the relationship between innovation and school strategic management. The researchers found that schools that integrate innovation into their strategic management processes are more likely to adapt to changing educational demands and improve student outcomes. The study emphasized the importance of fostering a culture of creativity and experimentation in schools.

Similarly, a recent study by De Guzman and Chua (2023) examined the role of strategic management in promoting educational equity in the Philippines. This study highlights the importance of inclusive strategic planning in creating a more equitable education system.

Complementing these elements, work engagement is generally understood through three key components: (a) Vigor refers to the high levels of energy and mental resilience school heads exhibit while working. School heads who demonstrate vigor are willing to invest effort in their tasks, even when faced with challenges; (b) Dedication reflects a strong sense of significance, enthusiasm, and pride in one's work. School heads who are dedicated are deeply committed to their schools' goals and take pride in their achievements, and (c) Absorption is characterized by being fully concentrated and engrossed in one's work to the extent that time seems to pass quickly. School heads who are absorbed in their work tend to focus intensely on their responsibilities, often going beyond their formal duties (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2023).

In the Philippine setting, work engagement among school heads is linked to several performance indicators, such as student outcomes, teacher development, and school climate. For instance, a study by Cuizon (2021) emphasized the importance of leadership engagement in driving instructional quality and overall school success. Similarly, Cabardo (2020) noted that school heads with high levels of work engagement exhibit more decisive organizational leadership, which translates into better performance in national achievement tests and other metrics of academic success.

Extending these finding, work engagement among school heads profoundly impacts various aspects of school performance. Recent studies by Filipino and foreign researchers have highlighted the critical role engaged school leaders play in fostering a positive school environment, enhancing teacher motivation, and ultimately improving student outcomes.

Strategic leadership and management are not just important, they are critical in shaping the success and sustainability of educational institutions. While strategic leadership focuses on guiding the school toward a long-term vision through inspiration and influence, strategic management involves the systematic planning and execution of strategies to achieve specific goals. These two elements ensure schools can navigate challenges, adapt to changes, and improve student outcomes, underscoring the weight of the audience's roles.

In schools, strategic leadership and management are essential to foster a culture of excellence, align resources with educational goals, and implement policies and practices that enhance the institution's overall performance.

Day et al. (2020) examined the relationship between strategic leadership and school effectiveness. The study found that schools led by strategic leaders focusing on long-term goals, stakeholder engagement, and instructional improvement tend to perform better academically. This research underscores the importance of aligning leadership practices with the school's vision and goals.

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The study by Day et al. (2020) titled "The Impact of Leadership on Student Outcomes: How Successful Leaders Transform Schools" provides an in-depth analysis of strategic leadership practices and their impact on school performance. Successful school leaders are noted for their clear and compelling vision. They set strategic directions that align with the school's overall goals and students' needs. Effective leaders actively engage in instructional leadership, improving teaching and learning. Successful leaders empower teachers and other staff, encouraging collaboration and shared leadership in decision-making processes.

Leaders who effectively implement strategic practices positively impact student outcomes. The study found a correlation between strong leadership and improvements in student academic achievement, including test scores and overall learning progress. The research indicates that successful school leaders create a positive school climate conducive to learning. This includes fostering a safe and inclusive environment where students and staff feel valued and supported (Day et al., 2020)

Another essential practice is engaging various stakeholders, including parents, community members, and policymakers. Successful leaders actively involve stakeholders

in decision-making and communicate effectively to build support for school initiatives (Day et al., 2020).

The study acknowledges that school leaders face complex challenges, including balancing multiple priorities and addressing diverse student needs. Effective leaders develop strategies to manage this complexity, often by delegating responsibilities and fostering a culture of collaboration. Implementing and sustaining changes in schools can be difficult. The research highlights that successful leaders focus on long-term goals and build systems that support continuous improvement and adaptation. Leaders often face pressures from external sources, such as policy changes and accountability measures. The study finds that successful leaders navigate these pressures by staying focused on their core mission and advocating for the needs of their schools (Day et al., 2020).

Lumibao and Mendoza (2021) provide valuable insights into the strategic leadership practices of public schools in the Philippines. Their research highlights school leaders' challenges and opportunities in improving school performance.

School leaders need help to provide adequate professional development for teachers and staff. Budget limitations and a lack of training opportunities contribute to this challenge, affecting the school's overall capacity to improve instructional practices. This includes leveraging technology, forming collaborative partnerships, and seeking alternative funding sources to overcome resource limitations (Lumibao & Mendoza, 2021).

Moreover, the study highlights the need for policy changes that address the constraints faced by school leaders and provide greater flexibility and support for strategic initiatives. It also emphasizes aligning leadership practices with instructional goals to enhance school performance (Lumibao & Mendoza, 2021).

The study of Leithwood and Sun (2020) further underscores the holistic approach to school leadership. Influential leaders must address all four pathways, setting direction, developing people, improving instruction, and managing the environment, to significantly improve student learning. Leaders should focus on strategic planning and goal setting to align school efforts with broader educational objectives.

Similarly, Alvares and Martinez (2019) comprehensively analyze strategic management practices in Southeast Asian schools. In the Philippines, the study finds that schools are increasingly adopting strategic management practices, but face challenges related to resource limitations and bureaucratic constraints. In Thailand, schools demonstrate a high level of strategic planning and resource management. However, the implementation of these practices varies, and regional disparities and local governance structures influence them. Schools in Vietnam strongly focus on aligning their strategies with national educational goals. The study notes that while effective strategic planning exists, implementing strategies is challenging due to limited resources and administrative constraints.

Their study highlights the common challenges and opportunities faced by schools in the region. Effective strategic management practices, including clear vision, resource allocation, and performance monitoring, are crucial for improving school performance. Addressing resources, bureaucracy, and cultural challenges and leveraging opportunities for professional development and collaboration can enhance strategic management practices in Southeast Asian schools.

Additionally, Eacott and Norris (2020) provided a comprehensive exploration of strategic management in schools during times of uncertainty.

The study suggests rethinking traditional strategic leadership models to better address the complexities of modern educational environments. Eacott and Norris (2020) propose that leaders adopt a more dynamic and iterative approach to strategic management, focusing on continuous adaptation rather than fixed long-term plans.

Furthermore, Eacott and Norris (2020) also advocated for using scenario planning as a strategic management tool. This involves developing multiple potential future scenarios and planning for each. Scenario planning helps leaders prepare for various possible futures and enhances their ability to respond to unexpected changes.

The study recommends investing in training and development programs for school leaders focusing on strategic management and decision-making in uncertain environments. Developing scenario planning, risk management, and stakeholder engagement skills can enhance leadership effectiveness. Eacott and Norris (2020) suggest that educational policies should support flexible and adaptive strategic management practices, policies promoting innovation and providing scenarios. Schools should be prepared to adjust their strategies and operations in response to changing conditions and emerging challenges.

Likewise, Mendoza and Rivera (2021) provided valuable insights into the role of strategic management in enhancing school performance in Philippine secondary schools. Their study underscores the importance of strategic planning, resource allocation, and data-driven decision-making in achieving better educational outcomes.

Not only that, Mendoza and Rivera (2021) also emphasized that effective strategic management begins with comprehensive strategic planning. Schools that set clear, measurable goals and develop detailed action plans tend to achieve better performance outcomes.

The study highlights that strategic management involves effectively allocating financial, human, and physical resources. Effective schools use performance data to monitor progress and evaluate the impact of their strategies. Continuous evaluation and adaptation are key components of successful strategic management (Mendoza & Rivera, 2021).

The study finds a positive correlation between effective strategic management practices and improved student achievement. Schools that implement strategic planning, allocate resources effectively, and use data-driven approaches tend to see better student academic outcomes. Strategic management practices contribute to creating a positive and supportive learning environment. Effective strategic

management also contributes to increased staff motivation and engagement. Schools that involve teachers in decision-making and provide clear goals and support tend to have higher staff commitment and performance levels Mendoza and Rivera (2021).

The study identifies budget constraints as a significant challenge for many schools. Limited financial resources can impact the ability to implement strategic plans effectively and provide necessary student and staff support resources. Inadequate. The study notes that complex regulations and slow decision-making processes can impede the ability to execute strategic plans effectively. The study finds that effective communication and stakeholder engagement are crucial for overcoming resistance and ensuring the successful implementation of strategic initiatives Mendoza and Rivera (2021).

The study recommends that schools invest in comprehensive strategic planning processes. This includes setting clear, achievable goals, developing detailed action plans, and aligning these plans with broader educational objectives. Incorporating scenario planning can help schools prepare for various potential challenges and uncertainties. Ensuring that resources are allocated effectively and aligned with strategic goals can help maximize their impact and support school improvement efforts Mendoza and Rivera (2021).

Schools should prioritize professional development programs that are aligned with their strategic goals. Providing targeted training and support for teachers and staff can enhance instructional practices and overall school performance, Engaging stakeholders in discussions about the benefits of strategic initiatives and supporting their adaptation can help overcome resistance Mendoza and Rivera (2021).

Hallinger and Heck (2019) explore a conceptual framework that identifies and examines the pathways through which strategic management practices influence school leadership and performance. The study introduces a model that integrates various dimensions of strategic management within the context of school leadership. Visionary leadership provides a sense of purpose and direction that guides decision-making and fosters a shared commitment among stakeholders. Strategic management also influences organizational development within schools. Leaders use strategic practices to develop and implement systems, structures, and processes that support school improvement. This includes establishing effective governance structures, creating professional development programs, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement. Another key pathway is resource management. Strategic management involves efficiently allocating and utilizing resources to support strategic goals. Leaders must ensure that financial, human, and material resources are aligned with the school's priorities and effectively support the implementation of strategic initiatives. Strategic management practices include monitoring and evaluating the impact of initiatives on school performance. Leaders use data and feedback to assess progress, identify areas for improvement, and make informed decisions. This pathway emphasizes the importance of using performance data to guide strategic adjustments and enhance school outcomes.

The study finds that strategic management practices significantly enhance leadership effectiveness. Leaders who employ strategic management techniques are better equipped to make informed decisions, set clear priorities, and guide their schools toward achieving strategic goals. Effective strategic management promotes a positive school climate by fostering a shared vision, enhancing organizational development, and engaging stakeholders. A positive environment, in turn, supports better student outcomes and teacher performance (Hallinger & Heck, 2019).

Hallinger and Heck (2019) report on a positive relationship between strategic management practices and academic achievement. Schools that implement strategic management effectively tend to see improvements in student performance, as these practices lead to more targeted and efficient instructional strategies and support systems. Schools that manage resources effectively and use data-driven decision-making are better able to achieve their strategic objectives and enhance overall performance.

More resources can also help implement strategic management practices. Schools with constrained budgets and limited personnel may struggle to allocate resources effectively and support strategic initiatives (Hallinger & Heck, 2019). Overcoming resistance requires effective communication, stakeholder engagement, and demonstrating the benefits of strategic management (Hallinger & Heck, 2019).

The study recommends investing in professional development programs for school leaders focusing on strategic management skills. This includes developing systems and processes that facilitate the implementation of strategic initiatives and ensure alignment with school goals. Involving stakeholders in decision-making can help mitigate resistance to change and foster a sense of ownership and commitment to strategic goals. Schools should adopt data-driven approaches to inform strategic decisions and monitor progress. Collecting and analyzing performance data allows leaders to adjust strategies and improve school outcomes. To address resource constraints, schools should explore innovative approaches to resource management. This may include seeking alternative funding sources, leveraging community partnerships, and optimizing available resources (Hallinger & Heck, 2019).

Alvior and Beltran's study (2022) investigates the influence of school heads' work engagement on teacher motivation within Philippine public schools. This research highlights the critical role that school leadership plays in fostering an environment conducive to teacher motivation and, consequently, student performance.

The study found that school heads who practice transformational leadership, characterized by inspiring and motivating teachers, are particularly effective in enhancing teacher motivation (Alvior & Beltran, 2022).

Theoretical Framework

Several theoretical frameworks underpin the concepts of strategic leadership, management, and work engagement of school heads in education: Transformational Leadership:

Transformational leadership theory, introduced by Burns (1978) and later expanded by Bass (1985), emphasizes the role of leaders in inspiring and motivating their followers to achieve higher levels of performance. Strategic Planning Theory: This theory focuses on the systematic planning process for the future, ensuring that schools set clear goals and develop actionable plans. Mintzberg's (1994) work on strategic planning highlights the importance of flexibility and adaptability in the planning process. Balanced Scorecard: Developed by Kaplan and Norton (1992), it is a strategic management tool that helps schools translate their vision and strategy into measurable objectives. It balances financial and non-financial measures across multiple perspectives, such as learning and growth, internal processes, and community engagement. Distributed Leadership: Spillane's (2006) concept of distributed leadership emphasizes sharing leadership responsibilities among various school community members. Systems Thinking: As described by Senge (1990), systems thinking involves understanding the school as a complex system where different elements interact. This approach helps leaders see the big picture and understand how various factors contribute to the school's overall performance.

The concept of work engagement is grounded in several theoretical frameworks: Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model: The JD-R model, proposed by Demerouti et al. (2001), suggests that work engagement is influenced by the balance between job demands (e.g., workload, emotional demands) and job resources (e.g., support, autonomy, professional development). For school heads, job resources such as adequate support from the education department, opportunities for professional growth, and a supportive work environment can enhance work engagement. Self-Determination Theory (SDT): Developed by Deci and Ryan (2000), SDT posits that individuals are more engaged when their basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are met. For school heads, having the autonomy to make decisions, feeling competent in their leadership role, and maintaining positive relationships with staff and the community can significantly boost work engagement. Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory: Hobfoll's (1989) COR theory suggests that individuals strive to obtain, retain, and protect their resources. When school heads perceive sufficient resources (e.g., time, support, knowledge), they are likelier to engage in their work. Conversely, the threat of losing resources can lead to disengagement.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework presented here illustrates the interrelationships among strategic leadership, strategic management, and strategic work engagement among school heads and how these factors collectively influence overall school performance. This framework is grounded in recent research highlighting these components' significance in enhancing educational outcomes.

Strategic leadership refers to the ability of school heads to influence their organizations by establishing a vision, creating a supportive culture, and making strategic decisions that guide the school's direction. Strategic leadership is foundational to the other components. It sets the vision and mission that guide strategic management practices and fosters an environment conducive to work engagement among staff. Recent studies, such as those by Alvior and Beltran (2022), indicate that effective leadership styles, especially transformational leadership, significantly enhance teacher motivation and school performance.

Strategic management involves planning, implementing, and evaluating strategies that align with the school's goals and resources. It encompasses the processes that school heads use to manage the school's operations and improve educational outcomes effectively. Effective strategic management practices enhance the execution of the vision set by strategic leadership. Research by Hargreaves and Fullan (2019) highlights the importance of adaptive management practices in responding to the changing landscape of education and improving school performance.

Strategic work engagement refers to the commitment, enthusiasm, and involvement of school heads and their staff in achieving the school's objectives. High levels of work engagement among school heads foster a positive school culture, leading to improved morale and performance among teachers and students. Studies by Mendoza and Rivera (2021) have shown that leadership practices that promote work engagement contribute significantly to school effectiveness.

School performance is measured through various indicators, including student achievement, graduation rates, teacher satisfaction, and overall school climate. It reflects the effectiveness of the school's strategic initiatives and operational practices. The interaction between strategic leadership, management, and work engagement ultimately influences school performance. Research by Leithwood and Sun (2020) demonstrates a clear link between effective leadership practices and enhanced student outcomes.
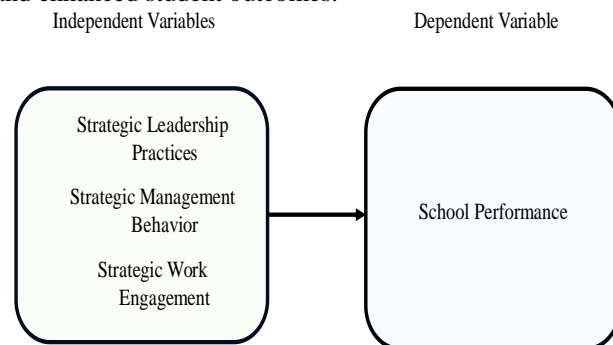

Figure 1. Paradigm of the study

The study was guided by the paradigm depicted in Figure 1, which illustrates the independent and dependent variable model. The researcher utilized this model to exhibit the relationship among the variables. As presented, the independent variables include strategic leadership practices of school heads (vision, pragmatism, culture and values, communication network, and change management) and strategic management behavior of school heads (empowerment, teamwork, learning

organization, control system, and provision for rewards and benefits). Moreover, the strategic work engagement of school heads is also considered an independent variable (vigor, dedication, and absorption). Meanwhile, the arrow signifies the level of influence, presuming a significant relationship to the dependent variable: the school performance based on the school's Office Performance Commitment and Review Form (OPCRF) result.

This visual representation outlined the foundational framework through which the study explored these variables' relationships.

Statement of the Problem

This study determined the relationship between school heads' strategic leadership, management behavior, and work engagement and the performance of public elementary schools in Educational District (EDDIS) VI in the Schools Division Office of Bulacan, School Year 2024-2025.

Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions:

1. How may the profile of the public elementary school heads be described as to:
   1.1   age;
   1.2   sex;
   1.3   number of years in service;
   1.4   educational qualification; and
   1.5   attended training?
2. How may the strategic leadership practices of school heads as assessed by themselves and teachers be described as to:
   2.1   vision
   2.2   pragmatism;
   2.3   culture and values;
   2.4   communication network; and
   2.5   change management?
3. How may the strategic management behavior of school heads as assessed by themselves and teachers be described as to:
   3.1   empowerment;
   3.2   teamwork;
   3.3   organization;
   3.4   control system, and
   3.5   provision for rewards and benefits?
4. How may the strategic work engagement of school heads be assessed by themselves and teachers as to:
   4.1   vigor;
   4.2   dedication; and
   4.3   absorption?
5. How may the school performance be described as to OPCRF rating?
6. Is there a significant difference in strategic leadership practices, management behavior, and work engagement of school heads as assessed by the groups of respondents?
7. Is there a significant difference between strategic leadership practices, management behavior, and work engagement when classified according to their demographic profile?
8. Is there a significant relationship between school heads' strategic leadership practices, management behavior, and work engagement and school performance?
9. How may the school heads and teachers' views and insights as regards the importance of strategic leadership practices, management behavior, and work engagement on successful school performance be described?
10. What program of activities can be crafted from the results of the study?

CHAPTER 2
RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

The researcher applied an explanatory sequential design of mixed-method research to answer the study's research problem. According to Creswell (2021), an explanatory sequential design in mixed methods research is a two-phase approach where quantitative data is collected and analyzed first, followed by qualitative data to further explain or elaborate on the initial quantitative results. The qualitative phase helps to clarify and expand upon specific findings from the quantitative analysis, providing deeper insights. This design is often chosen when researchers use qualitative data to better understand unexpected or complex quantitative outcomes.

In the context of the study "Strategic Leadership Practices, Management Behavior, and Work Engagement on School Performance," the explanatory sequential design uncovered the relationships between leadership practices, strategic management behavior, work engagement, and school performance through quantitative methods, followed by qualitative exploration to understand the underlying reasons for those patterns.

The first phase of the quantitative phase focused on gathering quantitative data to identify relationships, trends, or correlations between strategic leadership, management behavior, work engagement, and school performance. Surveys or questionnaires were used to collect data from school leaders and teachers.

After analyzing the quantitative data, the second phase involved gathering qualitative data to explain or explore the patterns and relationships found in the first phase. The goal was to gain deeper insights and perceptions of participants that demonstrate the quantitative results. The data collection involved conducting semi-structured interviews with school leaders and teachers.

In the final stage, the researcher integrated the findings from both phases. The qualitative data provided context and depth to the quantitative results, offering a more comprehensive understanding of how and why certain leadership practices, management behaviors, and levels of work engagement affect school performance.

Sampling and Respondents

In collecting the quantitative data needed in the study, total population or universal sampling was used to select the school head respondents. All school heads in public elementary schools in Educational District VI served as respondents in this research. However, since the teacher population is large, proportionate stratified random sampling was employed to get the samples. Only 20 percent of the teachers in each school served as respondents to this research.

Respondent of the study

DISTRICT	No. of School Heads	No. of Teachers	
		N	n
Angat District	13	284	57
Norzagaray East	12	231	46
Norzagaray West	11	309	62
Sta. Maria Central	13	399	80
Sta. Maria East	9	270	54
Sta. Maria West	9	304	61
TOTAL	67	1773	360

For the qualitative part of the study, selected School Heads and Teachers in each district were interviewed. The interviews ensured the richness and depth of the data collected for research or understanding the best practices in education leadership.

Instruments

A survey questionnaire of the Likert type was adapted for use in the study. The items on strategic leadership practices grouped according to the following constructs are the following: (1) vision, (2) pragmatism, (3) culture and values, (4) communication network, and (5) change management Adams, D. (2018), Collier and Evans (2020), and Dawkins et al. (2021).

On the other hand, the items on strategic management behavior are grouped under the following constructs: (1) empowerment, (2) teamwork, (3) learning organization, (4) control system, and (5) provision for rewards and benefits Navarro and Santos 2023); Balorana & Hernan (2021).

Items on work engagement are grouped under the following constructs: (1) work environment and collaboration, (2) engagement and decision-making, (3) innovation and initiative, and (4) overall work engagement Bernardo and Garcia (2023).

The questionnaires were adapted from the studies conducted by Adams, D. (2020) on Educational Leadership and Strategic Planning in Schools, Yang, J., and Wei, Y. (2021) on Strategic Leadership in Schools: The Role of Vision and Instructional Leadership, Al Quraan, H., and Al Shboul, S. (2023) on The Role of Strategic Management in School Performance, Lopez, R. (2022) on Data-Driven Decision Making in School Management as well as the study of Asuncion, G. A. (2020) on the Quality of Work Life and Work Engagement among the School Heads in Region III: Basis for a Strategic Work Enhancement Plan.

The questionnaires were revised to contextualized and suit the present study being conducted.

The instrument was constructed in a rating scale form with five response options numerically coded as follows: 5 – if the strategic leadership practice, management behavior and work engagement described were practiced, exhibited, and engaged at all times; 4 - if practiced, exhibited, and engaged most of the time; 3 – if practiced, exhibited, and engaged sometimes; 2 – if practiced, exhibited, and engaged rarely; 1 – if had not been practiced, exhibited, and engaged at all when the occasion occurred.

For the qualitative data gathering, the researcher formulated open-ended questions following the study's quantitative findings. The interview questions were checked after consulting with the adviser.

Data Gathering Techniques

Before conducting the study, all the documents required by the DepEd-Bulacan and the Institute of Education were completed. After accomplishing all the requirements, a request letter was sent to the Schools Division Superintendent of Bulacan to use the public elementary schools in Educational District (EDDIS) VI as respondents. Upon receiving the approved study permit, the researcher coordinated with the six (6) Public Schools District Supervisors and 67 school principals for the quantitative and qualitative data collection schedule.

The researcher personally administered the questionnaire to collect the quantitative data so that if the respondents need clarification, she can easily explain anything about the study. Likewise, the researcher personally interviewed the respondents. Before the interview, respondents were given adequate information about the topics discussed.

Data Analysis

Mean and standard deviation was used to describe the school heads demographic profile. Meanwhile, weighted mean was computed in order to describe the school heads' strategic leadership practices, management behavior, and work engagement. On the other hand, F/t-test analysis was performed to determine if significant difference existed between the school heads' strategic leadership practices, management behavior, and work engagement when they are classified according to their demographic profile. Finally, correlation analysis was performed to determine if significant relationship existed between the school heads' strategic leadership practices, management behavior, and work engagement and school performance. To interpret the collected qualitative data, thematic analysis was done.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher strictly followed standard ethical procedures while collecting quantitative and qualitative data. The respondents were assured that their participation in this research is voluntary, and they can withdraw anytime they want to. The survey was also to be anonymous; no personal identifiers was collected. No individual can, therefore, be identified from the data collected. Moreover, they were informed that all data collected were used solely to complete

the study. After passing the final defense, which may happen sometime in May 2025, the gathered electronic data stored in the researcher's laptop were permanently deleted. Additionally, the hard copy of the questionnaires were destroyed through shredding.

The same was true when conducting an interview. All permits were secured before the interview. Additionally, the topics of the interview was given to the respondents so that they can prepare their insights and views. Further, the respondents were free to refrain from answering the question/s asked whenever they feel uncomfortable giving their insights and views about the topic.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter covers the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data collected and the results of the statistical treatment employed in the study with the purpose of determining the relationship between school heads' strategic leadership, management behavior, and work engagement and the performance of public elementary schools.

The Profile of Public Elementary School Heads

The demographic profile of public elementary school heads in the study includes characteristics like age, sex, number of years in service (as school head), educational qualification, and trainings attended (related to their roles as school head).

Age

The concept of age describes how old a person is at a particular point in time. It is defined as the measure of the time elapsed from date of live birth to a specific point in time, usually the date of collection of the data.

Table 2 presents the profile characteristics of the school head respondents when they are grouped according to their ages when the study was conducted.

Table 2.

Frequency and Descriptive Measures of School Heads' Profile in terms of Age

Age (Years)	f	%
55 – 60	20	29.85
50 – 54	18	26.87
45 – 49	19	28.36
40 – 44	6	8.96
35 – 39	4	5.97
Total	67	100.00
Mean		50.51 years
Standard Deviation		5.91 years

It can be seen from the table that 29.85 percent of the school head respondents belong to the highest age bracket of 55

to 60 years. Meanwhile, only 5.97 percent of these respondents belong to the lowest age bracket of 35 to 39. Further perusal of the table reveals that the mean was registered at 50.51 years while the standard deviation which measures the variability of the respondents' ages from the mean was computed at 5.91 years.

This means that most people in school leadership roles are in the later stages of their careers. This may be due to the high level of experience that is usually needed for these jobs. The fact that most school heads are between the ages of 45 and 60 says that this group of leaders may be getting close to retirement, which shows how important it is for the education system to plan for future leaders. The small number of school heads younger than 45 years old could mean that younger teachers do not have many chances to move up or that leadership development programs have to wait.

In conjunction to the findings of the study, it was revealed in the research conducted by Barola and Digo (2022) in Donsol West 1 and 2 and Donsol East 1 and 2 School Districts in the Municipality of Donsol, Schools Division of Sorsogon Province, Philippines that majority of the school heads belonged to the highest age bracket of 46 and above. Further, it was concluded in their study that there are no significant relationships between the profile of the school heads and their level of performance along the 7 key result areas of the first domain of the national standards for school heads.

Sex

In general terms, sex refers to a person's physical characteristics at birth. In research, sex is a biological construct that is usually categorized as male or female.

Table 3 exhibits the profile characteristics of the school head respondents when they are categorized according to sex.

Table 3.

Frequency Distribution of School Heads' Profile in terms of Sex

Years in Service	f	%
30 – 36	16	23.88
23 – 29	16	23.88
16 – 22	10	14.93
9 – 15	20	29.85
2 – 8	5	7.46
Total	67	100.00
Mean		20.54 years
Standard Deviation		9.18 years

It can be examined from the table that more than one-fourth or 29.85 percent of the school head respondents have been serving as school leader from 9 to 15 years. On the other hand, 7.46 percent of the respondents have been in the service from 2 to 8 years. A close examination of the table reveals that the mean was computed at 20.54 years while the standard deviation was recorded at 9.18 years. This indicates that the years in service of the school heads are more dispersed from the average (mean).

More than 60% of school principals have served for more than 16 years, implying that they have substantial experience. This tendency demonstrates strong institutional memory and leadership expertise inside the school system. This expertise can benefit school administration, curriculum implementation, and junior teacher mentoring.

performance, and lead change effectively.

Educational Qualification

Educational qualification refers to the official confirmation, usually in the form of a certificate, diploma or degree, certifying the successful completion of an education program or a stage of a program.

Table 5 summarizes the profile characteristics of the school head respondents when they are categorized according to educational qualification.

Table 5.

Frequency Distribution of School Heads' Profile in terms of Educational Qualification

Educational Qualification	f	%
PhD/EdD	22	32.84
MA/MS with PhD/EdD units	10	14.93
MA/MS	21	31.34
BS with MA/MS Units	13	19.40
BS	1	1.49
Total	67	100.00

The School Heads' Strategic Leadership Practices

Strategic leadership involves steering the school community toward achieving its mission while fostering growth and improvement. Effective school heads demonstrate a clear vision, pragmatism, and commitment to organizational culture and values. They cultivate open communication networks to ensure inclusivity and collaboration across stakeholders. Additionally, their approach to change management enables schools to adapt seamlessly to evolving educational demands, ensuring long-term success.

Vision

A school head's vision serves as a guiding light for educational initiatives. It aligns the school's goals with its mission and inspires stakeholders to work toward a shared objective. By defining clear, actionable steps, they ensure consistent progress in achieving the institution's aspirations.

Pragmatism

Pragmatic leaders blend idealism with practicality, making decisions grounded in the present reality. They tackle challenges by considering available resources and constraints while remaining focused on desired outcomes. This approach ensures efficient problem-solving and realistic goal achievement.

Table 8.

School Heads' Strategic Leadership Practices in Terms of Pragmatism

Item	School Head		Teacher	
The school head ...	Mean	VD	Mean	VD
1. makes realistic decisions based on available resources and circumstances.	4.89	AP	4.63	AP
2. focuses on solving immediate problems while considering long-term goals.	4.85	AP	4.65	AP
3. effectively adapts plans when unexpected challenges arise.	4.85	AP	4.67	AP
4. balances idealism with practicality in decision-making.	4.79	AP	4.61	AP
5. finds effective solutions that benefit both students and staff.	4.85	AP	4.67	AP
6. prioritizes practical outcomes when implementing new policies or initiatives.	4.86	AP	4.71	AP
7. effectively handles crises and making quick, well-informed decisions.	4.80	AP	4.63	AP
8. is practical in allocating resources to areas where they are most needed.	4.89	AP	4.66	AP
Overall Mean	4.85	AP	4.65	AP

Culture and Values

Upholding a strong organizational culture rooted in shared values fosters unity within the school community. School heads promote positive behaviors, inclusivity, and respect, shaping a supportive environment for both staff and students. A values-driven culture enhances morale and school-wide collaboration.

Change Management

The ability to successfully navigate change is critically important for growth, and school leaders play the role of change agents in order to guide their institutions through transitions. Through the engagement of stakeholders and the thorough consideration of resistance, they cultivate resiliency and flexibility within the context of the educational environment.

The School Heads' Strategic Management Behavior

Strategic management behavior reflects the ways school leaders empower their teams, foster collaboration, and ensure effective systems. School heads take proactive steps to motivate teachers and staff, enhance organizational structure, and establish robust control systems. Additionally, they provide incentives and rewards to maintain engagement and recognize contributions to the institution's success.

Empowerment

Empowering staff builds confidence, fosters innovation, and increases job satisfaction. School leaders delegate responsibilities effectively and create opportunities for professional growth. This enables team members to feel valued and capable of contributing meaningfully.

Teamwork

Cultivating teamwork ensures collaboration and unity within the organization. School heads inspire cooperation by fostering trust and mutual respect among team members. A strong sense of teamwork leads to collective success in achieving institutional goals.

Organization

Strategic leaders structure their institutions to operate seamlessly. By organizing resources, personnel, and processes efficiently, they create a well-coordinated environment

conducive to learning and growth. A solid organizational framework supports both long-term and day-to-day operations.

Control System

Control systems ensure accountability and maintain high standards within the school. Leaders implement mechanisms to monitor progress, evaluate performance, and identify areas for improvement. Such systems uphold consistency and quality across the institution.

Vigor

Vigor represents the enthusiasm and energy school heads display in fulfilling their responsibilities. They approach their roles with resilience, ensuring that they remain proactive and focused even in challenging situations. Their vitality positively influences the school environment.

The School Performance

School performance is assessed and monitored using the Office Performance Commitment and Review Form (OPCRF), which is part of the Results-Based Performance Management System (RPMS) within the Department of Education (DepEd). The OPCRF is a key tool for evaluating the performance of school heads, teachers, and other school-based personnel. It helps in identifying areas for improvement, providing performance-related incentives, and ensuring accountability in the education sector.

The Difference between School Heads' Strategic Leadership Practices, Management Behavior and Work Engagement when Assessed by Themselves and by Teachers

Table 24 displays the results of the t-test analyses which were performed to determine if significant difference existed between the assessments of the teachers and the school heads themselves with regard to their strategic leadership practices (vision, pragmatism, culture and values, communication network, change management), management behavior (empowerment, teamwork, organization, control system, provision for rewards and benefits), and work engagement (vigor, dedication, absorption).

The Difference between School Heads' Strategic Leadership Practices, Management Behavior and Work Engagement when Classified According to Demographic Profile

Table 25 exhibits the results of the t-test (for sex only) and F-test analyses which were performed to determine if significant difference existed between the school heads' strategic leadership practices, management behavior and work engagement when they classified according to their demographic profile**FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter presents the summary of the major findings, the conclusions arrived at based on the findings, and the recommendations given in accordance with the conclusions.

Findings

This study determined the relationship between school heads' strategic leadership, management behavior, and work engagement and the performance of public elementary schools in Educational District (EDDIS) VI in the Schools Division Office of Bulacan, School Year 2024-2025.

Using the procedures described in the preceding chapter, the answers to the problems raised in this study were ascertained and summarized as follows: Findings revealed that most of the school heads are in their pre-retirement age, female, had been in the service for 20 years and above, finished graduate degree courses and attended trainings related to their work.

Meanwhile, the strategic leadership of school heads as to vision, pragmatism, culture and values, communication network and change management was assessed by the two groups of respondents as "always practiced."

The strategic management behavior of school heads as to empowerment, teamwork, organization, control system, and provision for rewards and benefits was described by the two groups of respondents as "always."

The strategic work engagement of school heads as to vigor, dedication and absorption was described by the two groups of respondents as "highly engaged."

The school performance was described as "outstanding."

There is a significant difference in strategic leadership practices, management behavior, and work engagement of school heads when assessed by the two groups of respondents. School heads' assessments were greater than the teachers' assessments.

There is a significant difference between strategic leadership practices, management behavior, and work engagement when classified according to age, number of years in service, educational qualification, and attended training. School heads who are 55 to 60 years old, had been in the service from 30 to 36 years, doctorate degree holder and attended trainings showed better strategic leadership practices, management behavior and work engagement.

Highly significant relationship was found between the school heads' strategic leadership practices, management behavior, and work engagement and school performance.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

- School heads' age, length of service, educational qualifications, and training attended significantly influence their: Strategic leadership practices, management behavior, and work engagement

- School heads': Strategic leadership practices, management behavior, work engagement are positively and significantly correlated with school performance.

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