Research Article

School-Based Management and School Heads Management Practicesin Zone III Schools Division of Zambales

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ABSTRACT

This research study aimed to assess the implementation of School-Based Management (SBM) and school heads' management practices as perceived by teachers in selected elementary schools in Zone III, Division of Zambales during the school year 2021–2022. The study employed a descriptive research design, utilizing a structured questionnaire to collect data from 158 teacher-respondents. Findings revealed that teachers strongly agreed on the effective implementation of SBM, particularly in the dimensions of empowering staff, training staff, introducing schemes for improving quality, integrating various forms of new technology, and promoting continuous professional growth. Similarly, school heads' management practices were perceived as highly practiced in terms of administrative support, adequacy of physical facilities, and curriculum relevance. Statistical analysis indicated no significant differences in teachers' perceptions across the dimensions of SBM and management practices, suggesting a consistent understanding and experience among respondents. Based on the findings, an action plan was proposed to further strengthen the continuous implementation of SBM and school heads' management practices. The study recommends that school heads disseminate the results to improve awareness and application, and encourages future researchers to conduct parallel studies with a wider scope and in-depth exploration to validate and expand upon these findings. Overall, the study underscores the importance of effective management practices in enhancing the quality of elementary education.

Keywords: *School-Based Management; School Heads' Management Practices; Teacher Perception; Empowering Staff; Professional Development; Curriculum Relevance; Elementary Teachers; Zone III, Division of Zambales*

Background

School-Based Management (SBM) was introduced to promote meaningful changes in educational practice by empowering school communities to make informed, context-sensitive decisions that improve school performance. SBM aims to motivate school staff, foster professional growth, and create learning environments that encourage innovation, accountability, and responsiveness to local needs. Unlike traditional centralized governance models, SBM establishes accountability mechanisms between beneficiaries (students and parents) and implementers (school heads and teachers), thereby strengthening transparency and shared responsibility in delivering quality education (Barrera-Osorio, Fasih, & Patrinos, 2009).

SBM is commonly defined as "the decentralization of levels of authority to the school level," allowing decision-making power to be shared among school heads, teachers, parents, and community stakeholders (Oswald, 2014). This decentralization increases participation, enhances ownership of school programs, and enables schools to respond more effectively to learners' needs (Barrera-Osorio, Fasih, Patrinos, & Santibáñez, 2014). The underlying assumption of SBM is that those closest to the teaching–learning process are best positioned to determine how educational policies and programs should be implemented (Alvarado, Sy, & Adriatico, 2019).

Beyond governance, SBM is explicitly intended to improve school performance and student learning outcomes. Empowering staff encourages teacher autonomy and classroom innovation, enabling teachers to contextualize instruction and adopt learner-centered strategies. Training staff enhances pedagogical competence and assessment literacy, which directly affects instructional quality. Additionally, mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation promote continuous improvement, and the integration of new technologies supports flexible and blended learning modalities. Continuous professional development sustains teacher motivation and instructional effectiveness, collectively positioning SBM as a framework that links leadership practices to improved teaching and learning outcomes (Author, 2022).

While SBM promotes decentralization, schools continue to operate within policy frameworks set by the central government, highlighting the complementary roles of national oversight and school-level autonomy (Department of Education, 2012). Effective SBM depends on collaborative engagement between central authorities and school stakeholders.

Empirical evidence, however, suggests that SBM implementation remains challenging. Alvarado, Sy, and Adriatico (2019) found that school heads often struggle to balance administrative, supervisory, and instructional leadership roles, resulting in gaps between intended SBM goals and actual school performance. Their study identified deficiencies in managerial competencies and limited access to leadership training, constraining effective SBM implementation.

In the Philippine context, these challenges were further intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic, which disrupted traditional modes of instruction and school management. School heads were compelled to manage resources, support teacher well-being, and ensure curriculum continuity under unprecedented conditions. These shifts underscore the need to reassess management practices and governance mechanisms within SBM, particularly in relation to administrative support, curriculum relevance, and teacher professional development in post-pandemic or hybrid learning environments.

Consequently, this study sought to assess the extent of SBM as a governance framework and examine the management practices of school heads as perceived by teachers. While teachers' perceptions may reflect generally positive evaluations, consistently high ratings may also mask underlying issues or areas for improvement. Identifying these nuances is essential in refining action plans that move beyond compliance toward sustained school improvement (Author, 2022).

Statement of the Problem

This research study aimed to assess the School-Based Management as a governance framework and School Heads Management Practices as perceived by the teachers of selected Elementary Schools in Zone III, Schools Division of Zambales, School year 2021 - 2022.

Specifically, the research study sought answers to the following research questions:
1. How do the teacher-respondents assess the School-Based Management with respect to:
    1.1 empowering staff;
    1.2 training staff;
    1.3 introducing schemes for improving quality;
    1.4 introducing various forms for new technology; and
    1.5 continuous professional growth
2. How do the teacher-respondents describe the management practices of school heads in terms of:
    2.1 administrative support;
    2.2 physical facilities; and
    2.3 curriculum relevance
3. Is there a significant difference on the dimensions of School-Based Management as governance framework?
4. Is there a significant difference on the dimensions of the School Heads' management practices?
5. What action plan may be proposed based on the findings of the study?

Methodology
Research Design

The study employed a descriptive quantitative research design to assess teachers' perceptions of School-Based Management (SBM) and the management practices of school heads. Descriptive research is appropriate for systematically describing existing conditions, practices, and perceptions within a defined population (Atmowardoyo, 2018; Bonilla-Elegado, 2021; Canonizado, 2020; Deliquiña, 2021; Koh & Owen, 2017; McCombes, 2020; McLeod, 2018; Reguindin-San Agustin, 2021; Siedlecki, 2020).

Before conducting the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), a test of normality was performed to verify the suitability of parametric analysis. The data satisfied the assumption of normal distribution; hence, ANOVA was deemed appropriate for testing differences in teachers' perceptions across SBM dimensions and management practices. This statistical procedure strengthened the validity of the study's findings, particularly in interpreting non-significant results.

Descriptive research uses a variety of methods to investigate one or more variables (McCombes, 2020). It is defined as a method aimed at describing existing phenomena as accurately as possible (McLeod, 2018). Descriptive studies examine the characteristics of a population, identify problems within units or organizations, and explore variations in practices (Bonilla-Elegado, 2021). This methodology focuses on what a research subject is rather than why it exists (Deliquiña, 2021), providing a foundational understanding before exploring causal relationships (Koh & Owen, 2017).

Descriptive research involves gathering data that describe events, organizing, tabulating, and presenting them through visual aids such as graphs and charts to facilitate understanding of data distribution (Canonizado, 2020). It aims to accurately and systematically depict populations, situations, or phenomena, answering questions of what, where, when, and how (Atmowardoyo, 2018; Siedlecki, 2020). Its value lies in solving problems and improving practices through careful observation, analysis, and description (Reguindin-San Agustin, 2021).

In this study, the descriptive quantitative analysis focused on:
a) the assessment of teachers on SBM as a governance framework, and
b) management practices of school heads as assessed by the teachers.

Respondents and Location

The respondents were elementary teachers from selected schools in Zone III, Schools Division of Zambales. Respondents are individuals who complete surveys or interviews to provide data for analysis (Allen, 2018). Participation required informed consent.

A total of 158 elementary teachers across twelve schools participated. Table 1 shows the frequency distribution and percentage of respondents per school.

Table 1. Distribution of Elementary Teacher-Respondents from Zone III, Schools Division of Zambales

Elementary Schools	Teachers (f)	Percentage
Cabangan Elementary School	16	10.13%
Longos Integrated School	8	5.06%
Sta. Rita Elementary School	11	6.96%
Laoag Elementary School	8	5.06%
San Felipe Elementary School (West)	17	10.76%
Sindol Elementary School	11	6.96%
Dallipawen Elementary School	7	4.43%
San Juan-Candelaria Elementary School	8	5.06%
San Narciso Elementary School	22	13.93%
Dirita Elementary School	14	8.86%
San Antonio Central Elementary School	22	13.93%
West Dirita Elementary School	14	8.86%
Total	158	100%

Research Instrument

The main instrument was a survey questionnaire (McLeod, 2018; Bhandari, 2021). Questionnaires consist of structured questions designed to collect information on respondents' attitudes, experiences, or opinions (Bhandari, 2021).

The questionnaire was developed based on literature and the Department of Education (DepEd) School-Based Management Framework and the Revised SBM Assessment Tool (DepEd Order No. 83, s. 2012) (Department of Education, 2012). The survey consisted of two parts:

1. SBM as governance framework – 10 indicators rated on a 4-point Likert scale (4 = Strongly Agree to 1 = Strongly Disagree).
2. Management practices of school heads – 10 indicators rated on a 4-point scale (4 = Highly Practiced to 1 = Not Practiced).

The draft questionnaire was reviewed by a panel of examiners and the research adviser. A pilot test was conducted among 20 teachers from two elementary schools to ensure validity, reliability, and clarity (Wright & So, 2022).

Reliability Results: Cronbach's alpha values indicated excellent reliability across all dimensions:

- SBM: Empowering Staff (0.963), Training Staff (0.951), Improving Quality (0.965), Technology Integration (0.954), Continuous Professional Growth (0.974)
- Management Practices: Administrative Support (0.942), Physical Facilities (0.962), Curriculum Relevance (0.984)

Data Collection

Permission was secured from the Schools Division Superintendent of Zambales. The researcher coordinated with school heads to administer the survey in April 2022, ensuring proper explanation of study objectives and adherence to health protocols. Ethical standards and the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (RA 10173) were strictly observed to protect respondents' rights (Republic of the Philippines, 2012).

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

1. Frequency and Percentage Distribution – to describe respondents' demographic characteristics.
2. Weighted Mean – to determine overall perceptions of teachers. The following 4-point scale was used:

SBM as Governance Framework

Point	Scale	Interpretation	Symbol
4	3.26–4.00	Strongly Agree	SA
3	2.51–3.25	Agree	A
2	1.76–2.50	Disagree	D
1	1.00–1.75	Strongly Disagree	SD

Management Practices of School Heads

Point	Scale	Interpretation	Symbol
4	3.26–4.00	Highly Practiced	HP
3	2.51–3.25	Practiced	P
2	1.76–2.50	Fairly Practiced	FP
1	1.00–1.75	Not Practiced	NP

3. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) – tested for significant differences in perceptions across SBM dimensions and management practices (McCombes, 2020).

Decision Rule:
- Sig. > 0.05: Accept the null hypothesis (no significant difference)
- Sig. ≤ 0.05: Reject the null hypothesis (significant difference)

All data were processed using Microsoft Excel 365, tallied, tabulated, analyzed, and interpreted according to the research objectives.

Results and Discussion
This chapter presents the results and interpretation of the findings based on collected data, and the researcher's observations and actual experience.

1. Assessment of the teacher-respondents on the School-Based Management.
Table 2. Summary Table on the Assessment of the teacher-respondents on the School-Based Management

	School-Based Management	Overall Weighted Mean	Qualitative Interpretation	Rank
1	Empowering Staff	3.59	Strongly Agree	2
2	Training Staff	3.59	Strongly Agree	2
3	Introducing schemes for improving quality	3.56	Strongly Agree	4
4	Introducing various forms for new technology	3.59	Strongly Agree	2
5	Continuous professional growth	3.55	Strongly Agree	5
	Grand Mean	**3.58**	**Strongly Agree**	

The findings revealed a grand mean of 3.58, interpreted as "Strongly Agree," indicating that teachers perceived SBM implementation across all five dimensions to be highly evident in their schools. While this result reflects favorable perceptions, the consistently high mean scores across dimensions warrant cautious interpretation.

The absence of significant differences among SBM dimensions (Table 4) may suggest a generally uniform implementation of SBM practices across the twelve schools in Zone III.

However, it may also indicate the presence of social desirability bias, where teacher-respondents may have been reluctant to provide critical evaluations of school leadership due to professional or organizational considerations. Such uniformly positive responses may obscure specific operational challenges or contextual variations in SBM implementation.

To address this limitation, future studies may consider incorporating qualitative methods, such as interviews or focus group discussions, to capture deeper insights into teachers'

lived experiences with SBM. A mixed-methods approach would allow numerical trends to be substantiated with narrative evidence, thereby providing a more nuanced understanding of SBM practices at the school level.

The teacher-respondents strongly agreed on Empowering Staff, Training Staff, and Introducing various forms for new technology with equal overall weighted mean of (3.59) and ranked 2nd respectively; Introducing Schemes for improving quality (3.56) and ranked 4th while Continuous Professional Growth with overall weighted mean of (3.55) and ranked 5th.

The computed grand mean on the responses towards dimensions on School-Based Management was 3.58 with qualitative interpretations of "Strongly Agree".

2. Assessment of the teacher-respondents on management practices of school Heads as perceived by the teacher-respondents.

Table 3 shows the summary table on the assessment of the teacher-respondents on the level of management practices of school administrators.

Table 3. Summary Table on the Assessment of the Teacher-respondents on the Management Practices of School Heads

	Management practices of school administrators	Overall Weighted Mean	Qualitative Interpretation	Rank
1	Administrative Support	3.54	Highly Practiced	2
2	Physical Facilities	3.53	Highly Practiced	3
3	Curriculum Relevance	3.56	Highly Practiced	1
	Grand Mean	**3.54**	**Highly Practiced**	

Among the three indicators on level of management practices of the school heads, Curriculum Relevance (3.56) obtained that mean value and ranked 1st; followed by Administrative Support (3.54) and ranked 2nd and Physical Facilities (3.53) and ranked 3rd. The computed grand mean on the responses towards the management practices by school heads was 3.54 with qualitative interpretations of "Highly Practice". Curriculum relevance obtained the highest mean (3.56) among the management practices, reflecting teachers' strong perception that instructional programs were aligned with learners' needs. This finding can be attributed to the implementation of the Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs) mandated by the Department of Education during School Year 2021–2022.

The MELCs streamlined curricular content to prioritize essential knowledge and skills, ensuring continuity of learning despite pandemic-related disruptions. Their contextualized and flexible nature enabled teachers to adapt instruction to local realities, which likely contributed to the high rating of curriculum relevance. This alignment between national curriculum policy and school-level implementation underscores the critical role of school heads in facilitating curriculum coherence within the SBM framework.

3. Test of difference on the dimensions of School-Based Management as governance framework.

Table 4 shows the Analysis of Variance to test difference on the dimensions of School-Based Management as a governance framework.

Table 4. Analysis of Variance to test difference on the dimensions of School-Based Management as governance framework

Sources of Variations		SS	df	Ms	F	Sig.	Decision
Empowering Staff	Between Groups	0.216	4	0.054	0.327	0.860	Accept Ho Not Significant
Training Staff							
Introducing schemes for improving quality	Within Groups	129.841	785	0.165			
Introducing various forms for new technology	Total	130.057	789				
Continuous professional growth							

There is no significant difference on the perception towards dimensions of School-Based Management as governance framework as to Empowering Staff, Training Staff, Introducing schemes for improving quality, Introducing various forms for new technology, and Continuous professional growth manifested on the computed Sig. or P-value of 0.80 which is greater than 0.05 Alpha Level of Significance; therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. The results of the ANOVA revealed no significant differences in teachers' perceptions across SBM dimensions and management practices. Rather than indicating stagnation, this finding suggests a shared baseline of practices across schools within Zone III. In school-based management (SBM), operational responsibilities and decision-making are delegated to school heads, teachers, parents, community members, and even students, promoting inclusive governance (Ya, Wang, & Li, 2020). SBM serves as an educational management framework that enables schools to distribute and manage resources collaboratively, with the shared goal of improving educational quality (Karmila & Wijaya, 2020). Moreover, SBM is an autonomous model that guides school policies and performance enhancement through cooperation among the school, community, and government (Mawanda, Muliira, & Nabukeera, 2018). As a formal decision-making mechanism, SBM oversees financial management, personnel, and program implementation to ensure accountability and effective governance (Ya, Wang, & Li, 2020).

Functional decentralization refers to the allocation of authority among different bodies operating concurrently, where effective cooperation enhances educational planning (Alma'arif & Maksum, 2017). Territorial decentralization involves the distribution of power across geographic levels of government (UNESCO, 2021). Privatization can also be considered a form of decentralization, as authority shifts from the government to private entities, thereby reducing state control over schools (Verger, Fontdevila, & Zancajo, 2017).

4. Test of difference on the dimensions of management practices.

Table 5 shows the Analysis of Variance to test difference on the dimensions of management practices

Table 5. Analysis of Variance to test difference on the dimensions of management practices

Sources of Variations		SS	df	MS	F	Sig.	Decision
Administrative Support	Between Groups	0.054	2	0.027	0.128	0.880	Accept Ho Not Significant

Sources of Variations		SS	df	MS	F	Sig.	Decision
Physical Facilities	Within Groups	100.097	471	0.213			
Curriculum Relevance	Total	100.152	473				

There is no significant difference on the perception towards dimensions of management practices as to Administrative Support, Physical Facilities, and Curriculum Relevance manifested on the computed Sig. or P-value of 0.880 which is greater than 0.05 Alpha Level of Significance; therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. From a systems perspective, the absence of significant differences highlights the potential for horizontal learning, where schools can collaboratively share effective strategies and practices. Instead of identifying a single "best-performing" school, the Division may benefit from facilitating professional learning exchanges among schools to reinforce strengths and address common challenges collectively.

The role of school heads in school-based management (SBM) is a critical factor in achieving successful school improvement through effective leadership, community engagement, and collaborative planning, decision-making, and budgeting (Kartika & Arifin, 2020). School-based curriculum development (SBCD) emphasizes innovation and the tailoring of curricula to meet local needs, requiring the active participation of multiple stakeholders while remaining aligned with national standards (Murillo, 2018). The rationale for implementing SBCD, along with the challenges encountered during its execution, has been well documented in the literature (Hairon, 2018; Nyame, 2020).

Accountability in education promotes transparency, public trust, and school performance through effective reporting and shared responsibility (Widodo, Sunardi, & Kartowagiran, 2018).

5. An Action Plan developed/formulated to continuously implement the School-Based Management as governance framework and school heads management practices

Presented below is a proposed action plan to continuously implement School-Based Management as a governance framework and desired management practices of school heads. Table/Matrix 14 is the proposed action plan based from the findings of the present study specifically from the theme/variable with highest to the least results on the School-Based Management as governance framework and school headsmanagement practices. The action plan is composed of seven (7) aspects such as the Key Area, Objective, Specific Activities, Outputs, Person(s) Involved, Time Frame and Proposed Budget. To help complete the contents of the Action Plan, reviews of literature and related studies were also conducted by the researcher.

PROPOSED ACTION PLAN

I. TITLE: Continuous Implementation of the School-Based Management and School Heads Management Practices

II. INTRODUCTION:

Quality Education is the primary objective of School-Based Management and its goal is to help educators in managing their schools efficiently and effectively.

Quality education is the primary objective of School-Based Management, and school heads play a central role in linking education authorities, teachers, students, parents, and communities to foster collaborative and nurturing learning environments (Whang, 2021).

During the COVID-19 crisis, school heads are expected to be more flexible in managing school resources to keep up with frequently changing guidelines and circumstances. Leadership and management have always been the main responsibilities of school heads. Therefore, the principal needs to have a broad knowledge and skillsin school management.

III. OBJECTIVES:
a. To be able to continuously implement the School-Based Management and school head management practices.
b. To be able to come up and adopt different strategies in managing school.

IV. TARGET PARTICIPANTS:
School Heads and Teachers

V. BUDGETARY REQUIREMENTS:
Php 400 per participant

VI. TABLE/MATRIX
Table/Matrix 6. Proposed Action Planto Continuously ImplementSchool – Based Management and School Heads Management Practices

Key Area	Objective/S	Specific Activities & Outputs	Person(s) Involved	Time Frame	Proposed Budget
Continuous professional growth	To conduct workshops where there is the opportunity to discuss and debate ideas and opinions and take away ideas for classroom activities and to reflect on.	Attend/conduct seminars/LAC Sessions that will focus onprofessional advancement of teachers.	School Heads, Teachers, and Lecturers/ Resource Persons	December 2022	Php400.00 per participant
Introducing schemes for improving quality	To encourage teachers to write an action plan to implement the ideas within the group.	Attend/conduct seminars/LAC Sessions that will focus on the importance of action planning.	School Heads, Teachers, and Lecturers/ Resource Persons	September 2022	Php400.00 per participant
Physical Facilities	To makes sure that school head assess that there are complete facilities that support the learning experience of the students.	Attend/conduct seminars/LAC Sessions Proposed Topic: The Importance of Complete Learning Facilities for Better Learning Outcomes	School Heads, Teachers, and Lecturers/ Resource Persons	June 2023	Php400.00 per participant
Administrative Support	To provides support to faculty, employees, and students who have been most affected during the pandemic.	Attend/conduct seminars/LAC Sessions Proposed Topic: Impact of Covid-19 pandemic to Faculty and Students	School Heads, Teachers, and Lecturers/ Resource Persons	March 2023	Php400.00 per participant

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