JOURNEY TOWARDS SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT (SBM) PEAKS: A TRAVERSAL INTO THE SBM LEADERS GRASSROOTS EXPERIENCES

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to explore the lived experiences of school leaders in doing School-Based Management (SBM) activities in Catalunan Grande Elementary School, Talomo A District, Division of Davao City. The qualitative-phenomenological research design was utilized in the study. There were eight (8) teacher-participants as SBM leaders who were active in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the SBM and were subjected for an In-depth interview (IDI) as the key informants. Data confirmation and triangulation were done to the School Administrators of the same district through Focus Group Discussion (FGD). The results revealed that in terms of their grassroots experiences in handling SBM matters, school leaders had blended emotions, were positively learning, were doing multiple tasks, and were hurdling difficulties specifically dealing with time constraints, motivation issues, lack of documentation mechanisms and organizational conflicts. Although challenged, they found relief through team coordination, provision of technical assistance, healthy communication and sufficient trainings in all levels as their coping mechanism. They learned the concepts of SBM as a shared governance, responsibility and accountability, the importance of Technical Assistance and individual empowerment in Schools. Thus, the Department of Education may mount SBM capacity development courses regularly in order for school leaders to keep abreast on the emerging issues and trends on school management since based on the study, school leaders desire to have consistent technical assistance for enhancement and mastery. Further, they may create educational mandates, policy actions and orders as their guideline in lessening or eradicating the problems and issues experienced by school SBM leaders.

Key words: School-Based Management, School Leaders, Lived Experiences

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Rationale

The concentration on school-based management has evolved continuously along a continuum of centralization and decentralization in public education worldwide, with school heads and teachers taking on managerial duties and responsibilities. Today's school leaders must navigate a school culture, improve curriculum, operations, resources, and community contexts, all while developing a shared vision and acting with integrity and influence in accordance with the Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001, commonly referred to as the School-Based Management (SBM) Act. As a framework, the objective of school-based management is to enhance the quality of instruction and students' academic achievements through collaborative endeavors among educators, students, significant stakeholders, and government assistance (Oswald, 2020).

These activities pose challenges to the teacher leaders since SBM activities require sufficient knowledge, implementation strategies, evaluation preparations, and works that may bombard them and may demotivate them to do SBM-related tasks. Among the various responsibilities, school leaders experience is the several limits that make the job challenging. According to Osea et.al. (2023), the most common complaint is about how hectic their leadership job is, with so many papers to complete that they are neglecting more important tasks like curriculum

enhancements and modifications, instructional supervision, teaching-learning implementations, and other school-related tasks.

Across the world, School-Based Management (SBM) has been utilized to fill in the gaps and improve the quality of education in many public learning institutions. However, several reports demonstrated that SBM has increased teacher leaders' and principals' administrative and management duties, but at the same time, it has made it more difficult for them to successfully carry out their job as pedagogical leaders (De Grauwe, 2005; Lindberg, 2013). Specifically in Nigeria, concerns continue to exist regarding the administration of public schools, indicating that progress can be made in this domain notwithstanding the diligent endeavors of education stakeholders, particularly school administrators, to ensure effective and efficient school-based management and, ultimately, the achievement of the intended objectives. Factors such as inadequate financial support, obsolete and unreliable facilities, lengthy decision-making processes, low academic performance among students and faculty, discipline issues that extend beyond the classroom, and an overall decline in educational quality collectively impede the provision of high-quality services (Matthew, 2020). Because of the frequency of the problems, stakeholders, notably school administrators, will have to go above and beyond to guarantee that their schools are operated properly and efficiently.

In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepED) aims for each school to have the vision of honing learners' knowledge, abilities, and attitudes to their full potential for them to contribute effectively to the

nation's development. This facilitated the development and implementation of SBM in the educational system, which added to the obstacles and problems faced by principals and teachers in public schools. Leaders are frequently overburdened with work and challenged with several obstacles as they carry out their pedagogical, administrative, and managerial responsibilities. As a result of these conflicting objectives, there is a substantial disparity between aspirational and actual performance in their respective institutions. In spite, of the Department's efforts to emphasize SBM, school leaders still lacked managerial competencies and adequate management and leadership training when it came to implementing various school-based management initiatives and projects (Alvarado et al., 2019).

In the Division of Davao City and Davao Region as a whole, level three of practice as the highest to be achieved by schools is the aim of both agencies. The recently released Contextualized Means of Verification for SBM Assessment Process and Tools (APAT) was recently produced as an instrument for assessing SBM level of practice in schools. A series of school-based preparations occurred as SBM became the focus of attention for every involved teacher and school leader. There were validations at the school, district, division, and regional levels that tested their patience and ability. It was clear that teachers and principals spent the majority of their time in schools preparing for the aforementioned validations, strengthening SBM centers, and enhancing their SBM procedures. Although the majority of schools were successful in the said validations, others struggled to maintain and retain their previous level of practice. With this in mind, it

was critical to investigate the lived experiences of school leaders, particularly SBM teacher-leaders, to convey their perspectives and lessons learned.

The research gap in this study focused on the challenges and difficulties experienced by the teacher-leaders in relation to their roles and functions in the planning, implementation, evaluation and validation of School-Based Management. The researcher is quite aware that the SBM process is not a simple task. For some, it was an additional burden while for others, it was an opportunity to learn and prepare themselves to become future administrators in DepEd Schools. Therefore, learning from those who are involved in the SBM process is essential in today's management era.

Purpose of the study

Thus, the purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences of school leaders involved in the activities related to School-Based Management (SBM). Further, considering the limited number of studies conducted on school leaders experiences and insights in school-based management, this paper filled the gap to provide additional literature and for future local empirical research. More importantly, the results of this study may serve as the basis for policymakers, school officials, teachers, and stakeholders in creating and supporting SBM mechanisms in schools. Hence, this study is deemed of great significance.

Literature Review

The Concept of School-based Management (SBM)

Constantly, circumstances have changed. In order to succeed in the modern era, enterprises and organizations, including academic institutions, have been compelled to reevaluate their strategies. This is accomplished by means of radical modifications to requirements and expectations. Educators and researchers are becoming increasingly discontent with the current management approach, which concentrates authority within the district office. The growing complexity and unpredictability of educational responsibilities are the root causes of this discontent. As a result, educational institutions have implemented principles such as decentralized administration and shared decision-making (Oswald, 2014).

Recently, modifications have been made by the Department of Education to the evaluation and assessment of School-Based Management (SBM) techniques in schools. Using contextualized Means of Verifications, a School-Based Management (SBM) evaluation instrument was developed in accordance with DepEd Order No. 83 s. 2012, with the objective specified in DepEd RO no. 02, 2019. The framework for the School-Based Management Assessment Tool is derived from the four guiding principles of A Child (Learner)-and Community-Centered Education Systems (ACCESS). The following ones are subsequent: Group management and leadership encompass the principles and procedures that are essential for efficiently supervising and directing a collection of individuals in the pursuit of a shared objective. The Department of Education's 2019 publication The Importance of Active Participation in One's Own Education and the

Pertinence of Personal Accountability for Outcomes Education Resource Harnessing Principle. Leadership and Governance, Curriculum and Learning, Accountability and Continuous Improvement, and Management of Resources are the four concepts that are frequently implemented. Nevertheless, it is critical to acknowledge that the definitions of these four principles vary considerably.

SBM and Educational Outcomes

A multitude of scholarly investigations (Arar & Nasra, 2018; Bandur, 2012; Barrera-osorio et al., 2009; Caldwell, 2005; Grauwe, 2005; World Bank, 2013) have provided evidence that the adoption of School-Based Management (SBM) has produced positive outcomes across multiple facets of educational operation. These domains encompass student attendance, academic achievement, and administrative effectiveness. Let the Philippines serve as an illustrative example. As stated by the World Bank in 2013, the adoption of School-Based Management (SBM) during the three-year span from 2006 to 2009 led to a substantial enhancement in academic achievement. SBM has provided Indonesia with benefits ever since 2002 (Chen, 2019). Excited by the favorable results observed among educators and practitioners, a growing number of nations have adopted SBM methodologies. In accordance with the Education Development Master Plan (EDMP) 2006–2010, Malaysia adopted School-Based Management (SBM) through the establishment of autonomous cluster schools. In the end, the

Malaysian Education Blueprint (MEB) 2013–2025 mandated the implementation of this strategy in every Malaysian school.

Hussein (2014) presented a succinct elucidation of the four fundamental rationales supporting the significance of incorporating SBM in this assertion. Initiate the implementation of School-Based Management (SBM) to bolster the school's development and its critical contribution to the education reform movement. In addition, by endorsing locally formulated programs, SBM aids operations at the local level, thereby facilitating the realization of long-term transformational benefits. Moreover, SBM emphasizes the importance of indigenous leadership capabilities in the realms of administration and resolution of issues, as opposed to relying solely on directives from higher authorities. Moreover, SBM recognises the community's status as stakeholders, specifically with regard to decisions that have an impact on them, as well as the vital role that school administrators and instructors play as professional participants. SBM is a methodology that aims to improve education by empowering schools with increased autonomy in administrative and managerial decisions, according to Varatharaj (2015).

Unfortunately, due to inefficiencies in centralized and bureaucratic organizations, a lack of trust between policymakers and policy executors, and numerous other issues, children have been deprived of a sustainable education system (Ismail & Abdullah, 2011; Barrera-osorio et al., 2009). Several Asian nations have adopted SBM for over a decade, despite the paucity of research on the subject and the comparative dearth of interest of

social science experts in comparison to other regions. A notable disparity exists in the degree of scholarly attention devoted to the investigation of SBM between Australia and their Philippine and Malaysian counterparts, notwithstanding the implementation of SBM in both nations in 2006. Numerous SBM assessment techniques (Martin, 2019; Tapayan, Ebio, & Bentor, 2016) and the World Bank's empirical review report on SBM (2013) support the conclusion. As of yet, the practical efficacy of SBM in Asian nations is uncertain. Examining prior studies to collect data on School-Based Management (SBM) in the Philippines within a decade of its inception is crucial for this reason.

Challenges of Implementation of School-Based Management

Existing research suggests that the integration of School-Based Management is met with a multitude of obstacles. The School-Based Management Committee Policy was adopted by the National Council of Education in 2006. With the approval of the green light, these implementation guidelines are now formally mandatory for all public secondary schools across the nation. Notwithstanding the policy's implementation across the majority of Nigerian states, the Federal Ministry of Education (2011) asserts that the academic performance of senior secondary pupils in a number of states has not improved significantly. According to the results of Nigeria's Rapid Assessment (SESP/SESOP/2009/2010), political influences in the selection process may have compromised the strict adherence of SBMC to policy guidelines.

Funding is essential for the achievement of the goals of any program. Unquestionably, financial resources are required to support the costs associated with hosting SBMC meetings. According to the findings of the SBMC Policy in Nigeria Rapid Assessment (SESP/SESOP/2009/2010), the financial expectations of the members were only partially fulfilled, resulting in a disinterested membership.

Adediran (2010) delineates a multitude of challenges and obstacles that manifest during the execution of SBM Policy. The challenges include the following: a lack of understanding among stakeholders regarding the nature and operation of SBM; difficulties in communication and trust among stakeholders; constraints on decision-making authority and time commitment of teachers due to union agreements, statutes, and regulations; a reluctance among administrators and teachers to delegate decision-making responsibilities; ambiguity surrounding newly established roles and obligations; coordination obstacles; insufficient funding; SBMC members

In a research investigation carried out by Kiragu et al. (2013) concerning the effects of School-Based Management (SBM) on secondary school administrators in the Muranga South District of Kenya, fifty percent of the principals polled acknowledged that SBM would result in an augmented burden for stakeholders. Further issues that have come to light include regional governance deficiencies, insufficient financial resources, a restricted workforce capacity, rigid adherence to established or traditional practices, a lack of transparency, prolonged decision-making processes,

unclear delegation of responsibilities, resistance from stakeholders to collaborate, administrative incompetence, conflicts stemming from competing interests, and a general absence of constructive intentions.

In their research, Ayeni and Ibukun (2013) examined the efficacy of School-Based Management Committees in secondary institutions across Nigeria. Their influence on school governance, curriculum implementation, and student learning outcomes was investigated. School Community Management Committees (SCMCs) face a number of obstacles, including a lack of collaboration and support from schools, low committee member attendance due to inadequate government funding and incentives, and opposition from Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) towards SCMC projects, according to the findings of the researchers.

The difficulties encountered by the Board of Managers in supervising the activities of public secondary schools in the Kanwagi District of Kenya were examined by Kingi (2015). The obstacles consisted of a dearth of qualified staff, insufficient financial assets, misappropriation of school funds, outdated facilities, below-average academic achievements, opposition from the community, and disturbances to the operation of the school. In addition, Bala (2017) investigated the difficulties faced by the School-Based Management Committee in the Basic Schools of the North West Zone of Nigeria. SBMC asserts that the difficulties experienced within the educational institution stem from the members' reluctance to engage in meetings, inadequate communication, and a pervasive lack of dedication.

Theoretical Lens

This study is anchored to the theory of School-based Management by Wohlstetter and Odden (1992) who defined the general principle driving SBM activities. According to these authors, SBM can boost productivity and effectiveness, if clear outcomes are established at the top of the system (e.g., national education goals), decentralization is implemented at the school site, and accountability is structured either with rewards for meeting goals and sanctions for not meeting goals. The collaborative involvement of the internal and external stakeholders in SBM is expected to provide novel solutions to SBM difficulties as teachers participate and work with administrators in the options offered by SBM, and administrators' duties move from guiding to enabling the decisional process. With this, that the more teachers and school leaders are involved in the decision-making process, the more they learned to understand that they were responsible for the decisions; they feel a part of the decision-making structure; they have direct responsibility and accountability for developing and implementing programs; they observe supervisors stepping back from the decision-making process to allow teachers and school leaders to make their own decisions and learn from mistakes; and they exercise direct responsibility and accountability for developing and implementing programs.

When it comes to reflecting on the school leaders lived experiences, this study is also anchored to the theory of Reflective Practice by Rolfe et. al., (2001) where reflective learning was defined as a process where past

events are recalled to recapture the experience, examine them to consider why the observed outcomes occurred and assess the personal permanence or reactions to identify how these may be improved in the future. This reflective process has three stages to describe and explore a certain human experience. This includes answers to questions like what, so what and what now to analyze a certain experience, meaning of situations, and improving future practices. The same is true in the study; school leaders reflect on their practices reflecting on their experiences in doing and implementing SBM practices to come up with a concrete plan of action to the SBM-related processes.

In addition, the study is linked to RA 9155 or the Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001, School's First Initiative (2005) and Basic Education Reform Agenda (BESRA, 2006). These legal bases indicate local units and other stakeholders as partners in education service delivery. These also indicate the empowerment of school and its community stakeholders to effectively access address access and quality issues in basic education. The SBM is a child and a community centered educational system, a principle of shared governance to support stewardships of students' learning outcomes, and it is a product and a process. This is composed of four principles. They are the leadership and governance, curriculum and instruction, accountability and continuous improvement, and the management of resources. All the above-mentioned theories and frameworks focused on how to raise the bar high for school through development of SBM and through reflective practice. Thus, motivating the

school leaders to improve their organizational effectiveness by involving themselves in the SBM practices is essential in achieving the standards set by the Department of Education.

Synthesis

The current study aimed to explore the SBM engagement and experiences of the teachers in the Department of Education. Increasing SBM engagement of public-school teachers could lead to improvements in the school's leadership and governance, curriculum and instruction, accountability and continuous improvement and in resource mobilization. High SBM engagement level will, then, result in improved learning outcomes and the achievement of the organizational mandate (DepEd, 2021) of the Department of Education which is to provide quality education. The cited studies in the literature are also related to the present study which dealt on the lived experiences of teachers where mostly qualitative method was used in the analysis of data.

Research Questions

This proposed research concept aimed to explore the lived experiences of school leaders in handling School-Based Management related processes: their struggles, coping mechanisms, and insights. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of school leaders on School-Based Management processes?

2. How do school leaders cope with the challenges in doing School-Based Management related activities?

3. What are the educational management insights of the school leaders regarding their roles and functions on School-Based Management?

Scope And Limitations

The purpose of this research was to explore the practices and experiences of school SBM leaders in Catalunan Grande Elementary School (CGES)- Talomo A District. The reason for targeting only one school is that the school may have more opportunities to practice SBM since it already adopted policies, which corresponded with the National SBM guidelines. As a matter of fact and because of this, CGES was hailed as the 2022 most outstanding or the top-performing school when it comes to implementing SBM processes. The reason why this study will be conducted in Talomo A District elementary school is that the SBM has not yet been fully implemented in other schools and levels. Further, other schools were not yet fully evaluated in the regional level at the time of the study. The sample included only school leaders and assistant leaders who are teachers and who have experienced the school up to regional level validation activities. Therefore, the results of the study cannot be used to generalize the experiences of the other schools, the whole District and Division schools.

Chapter 2

METHODS

This study utilized the qualitative-inquiry-based research that focuses on the use of phenomenology. It was based on the premise that one's belief should be relied on as certainty and that realities should be treated as a "pure phenomenon" and as the "only absolute data". Phenomenology can, thus, be described as the science of phenomena (Groenewald, 2004). Phenomenological research describes the true events and perspectives of individuals as they occur and unfold in everyday life. The researcher employed the use of phenomenology since this study was concerned with the lived experiences of people. According to Creswell (2004), phenomenology describes the meaning of the lived experiences for several individuals about a concept or the phenomenon. This is a design for acquiring and collecting data that explicates the essences of human experience and meaning is the core in understanding the lived or human experience.

Further, this study also employed participants' observations in a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and In-Depth Interview (IDI). This method involves the use and collection of variety of interviews, observations, history, interactional and visual texts that describe routines, problems and meaning of individual lives. Creswell (2004) added that it is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions that explore a social or human problem. It builds a holistic picture, analyzes

words, reports, detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting.

Sampling

This study was conducted in one of the Schools of the Division of Davao City, Region XI, specifically at Catalunan Grande Elementary School with a school ID 129715. This school is situated in the First Congressional District of the City and the largest in the whole Talomo District. Only eight (8) participants from the different SBM principles as the key informants were included and were purposely selected based on their involvement in school-based management programs from year 2019-2022, their awareness and participations in SBM trainings, SBM summits or congress and the contribution they made to the school as SBM practitioners. Further, two school administrators who are also SBM performers and one supervisor will be invited for the data confirmation and data triangulation.

To gain a variance in perspective from participants, effort will be extended to include both male and female as well as individuals with various levels of educational training, attainment and rank. Specifically, the inclusion criteria will include the following: (1) School Leaders with active SBM involvement for 3 years; (2) Employed in a public school for 3 years or more; and (3) School leaders who have experienced difficulties and received commendations for actively and successfully implementing the School-based Management processes.

Data Collection

In gathering the data, the researcher prepared the interview guide which is composed of three (3) main significant questions which inquired about the experiences of school leaders. A thorough deliberation was made on the aspect of determining the problems of teachers in SBM activities. It was made sure that the interview guide was validated by the experts. Moreover, all ethical protocols were observed and implemented during the collection of data.

An official letter was sent to the Schools Division Superintendent of Davao City, DepEd Division Office, Talomo A - District Office and the selected principals of Talomo-A district Schools asking permission to conduct the study. After receiving the approval letter, the conditions set by the approving authority were considered and met. Then, the interview session followed. Blended interviews were also conducted utilizing Facebook Messenger, Google Sheets, Zoom and Google meet for some clarificatory concerns. The face to face interviews were audio recorded while the online interviews were screen recorded with the consent of the participants.

In addition, participants were asked to refrain from using names during the interview (names of people and places). They were informed that their participation was voluntary and that all the information gathered were held with strict measures of confidentiality. They were further informed that there was no financial compensation for their participation and their participation could raise awareness and provide insight on the

phenomenon being investigated. Right after, the transcription of In-depth Interviews (IDI) proceedings were done with the help of the note taker and recorder. The researcher made sure on the authenticity of responses of the informants. After gathering the key informant's data, a focus Group Discussion (FGD) were conducted to the participating school administrators for triangulation.

The sharing of findings with the participants allowed them to critically analyze and comment on it. The participants also affirmed that the summaries were original reflection of their views, feelings, and experiences. In this study, their affirmation on the accuracy and completeness of the information contributed so much to the credibility of the study. The data gathered from the IDI were organized accordingly into themes for analysis. Thematic analysis is an approach utilized in the execution of this qualitative research. It was the appropriate data analysis strategy since it facilitated comprehension of the meaning patterns present in the transcriptions and texts. This included organizing the data, breaking them into manageable units, synthesizing them to search for patterns, discovering what is important and what to be learned, and deciding how this information related to the study.

Chapter 3

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question 1 on the Lived Experiences of School Leaders on School-Based Management Processes

In analyzing the School-Based Management Processes experiences of the teachers as school leaders, based from the interview answers shared by the teachers themselves (P1-P8), I was able to identify four major themes: Blended Emotions, Positively Learning, Doing Multiple Tasks, and Hurdling Difficulties. For the last major theme which is on Hurdling Difficulties, there were four sub-themes that emerged. These are Time Constraints, Motivation Issues, Lack of Documentation Mechanisms and Organizational Conflicts.

Blended Emotions

Considering the processes involved in implementing School-Based Management (SBM) directives and orders – from planning and thinking to creating process implementations, arranging artifacts, taking actions, and collaborating with others – it is evident how inter- and intra-personal these processes are and how they are related to the processes of perception. They are profoundly rooted in emotions regarding the self, the external world, and alternative worldviews. SBM created distinct emotions and feelings to teacher-participants. The majority of respondents believed that the SBM process is one of the most emotionally demanding tasks of a teacher, and that the researcher's ability to control his or her emotions is crucial to the

development of his or her ideas and the advancement of the work. The majority of participants expressed:

> As one of the Principle leaders, being part of the team is not easy. Mixed emotions about the challenges and gains natural took place in me. As a whole, that was one of the most challenging experiences I have in DepEd being a teacher for 12 years now but it was the most fulfilling activity at the same time. (P6)

> One of the most memorable SBM-related activities I handled was the SBM Regional Validation. It's my first time to handle two tasks as the Vice-Chairman of Principle 2 and at the same time the ICT of the group but nevertheless I embraced it wholeheartedly. I must admit I'm quite nervous at that time especially during the validation but it's one of the most noteworthy experiences in my teaching career. (P7)

> Burnout: It is because I felt the increased responsibilities associated with SBM validation and I don't know the details ahead of time. Although feeling stressed, I was learning at the same time in all fairness. Accountability pressures: While preparing the accounting of the core components of the schedule SBM validation ,it can create high-pressure situations where leaders of the different principles felt stressed thinking of unfairly judged based on standardized scores or metrics set before us by the validating team. (P8)

It can be said that despite the negative emotions arising from their experiences, there is still a light of hope for them when they felt that the tasks are somehow easy for the others. The difficult emotions like being challenged, the burnout and or disturbed are not the only feelings to be experienced, as the expressions of excitement was also evident. Their way of thinking the positive side of the situation served as their personal mechanism to complete the task.

This is supported by the findings of Fried et al. (2015), who assert that teacher temperament plays a significant role in teacher well-being, including their approach to completing school-related tasks. Present-day educators experience more negative than positive emotions. This is a significant factor in teachers' reluctance to pursue higher-level responsibilities, such as taking on additional professional responsibilities. According to Akin et al. (2013), if the task is not managed well, negative emotions may result in teacher burnout. Since teacher-researchers also have shown positivism in the study, this relates to the findings of Chen (2019) that maintaining more positive emotions generates more innovative ideas and strategies, whereas, holding negative emotions decreases motivation to activities that are related to teacher's related professional enhancements. Moreover, according to Day (2011), teachers' emotions, whether positive or negative, have an influence on their personal and professional lives, which in turn affects their effectiveness as educators.

It is abundantly clear that emotions play a crucial role in conducting research. Therefore, delving into SBM where emotions are involved is not exempt because it requires both a high level of reasoning and emotional intelligence. Importance is placed on the leaders' emotional equilibrium if they are to achieve a high level of involvement.

Positively Learning

Regarding their experiences coordinating SBM activities in schools, each participant in the study shared nearly identical sentiments. When asked about their experiences with School-Based Management (SBM)

in their respective stations, they are able to convey how challenging it was, but also how optimistic they are as DepEd leaders guided by the DepEd Vision, Mission, and core values. They were able to emphasize that leadership is not exactly a piece of cake. In fact, for them, administering SBM-related activities is one of the most difficult yet rewarding responsibilities. They must truly coax the best from their team members and guide them through the worst situations. The following individuals have the following to say:

> One of the most unforgettable SBM-related activities I handled was the Division and Regional Validations. Since I was a novice in the SBM World (T1 at the time of the validations), I must admit that it was a truly nerve-racking experience for me. Nevertheless, it was also one of the most informative, memorable, and successful experiences of my whole career as a teacher. I learned a lot and I will forever carry with me all those learnings. (P2)

> Being one of the chair of the SBM, give me opportunity to lead my team and know each member capability as a team player. I felt happy and proud being a teacher of Catalunan Grande Elementary School for the best practices we have. From the gathering & compilation of the MOVs, exchanging of ideas in our Documentary Analysis, Observation, Discussion (DOD) and answering the SBM Regional Validation are unforgettable. The result is so overwhelming that made all of us proud and fulfilled.Indeed, from those ecperiences, good or bad, we learned so much. (P3)

> It was a great privilege and opportunity for me to be a leader of the school-based management. Our school head disperse power throughout our school so that many stakeholders participate in making decisions. Everyone is involved and has its own part in preparing the documents needed that's why it makes our job lighter because we worked as a

team and we were positively learning at the same
time. (P5)

Researchers have demonstrated that our environment has changed. This shift has necessitated the redesign of organizations, including educational institutions, to ensure their survival in the twenty-first century. This is accomplished through drastically altered requirements and expectations, and School-Based Management has also shaped the engagement of school leaders. As educational tasks have become more complex and variable, educators and researchers have noted a growing dissatisfaction with the pattern of governance that centralizes authority at the district office. As a result, concepts like decentralized management and shared decision making have begun to be implemented in schools (Oswald, 2014). Others believe it is an opportunity to learn and become better school administrators, while others believe it is a challenging activity just like what took place in the study.

Doing Multiples Tasks

Teachers and school leaders undergo training prior to entering the classroom or performing any managerial duties, but each day and class enables teachers to teach more effectively and perform their duties to the best of their abilities. In addition to their classroom responsibilities, teachers often have additional responsibilities outside of the classroom. We are aware of the remarkable work that teachers and other school personnel perform. Behind-the-scenes planning, resource preparation, extra-curricular activities, and so much more are just a few of the countless activities for which educators deserve more recognition. All of this quite

rightly - certainly in our views - earns teachers the title of the Best

Multitaskers Ever. These notions were supported by the participants'

contributions specifically performing multi-functions in schools including

their SBM roles:

> I serve as the school SBM Coordinator. I communicate the goals and objectives of SBM to all stakeholders and promote a shared understanding of the SBM process. Organize and facilitate meetings and committees where stakeholders, such as school councils or parent-teacher associations, can participate in decision-making processes. I Ensure that the voices of all stakeholders are heard and considered in the decision-making process. I Collect and analyze data related to school performance, including academic outcomes and other relevant indicators. I Evaluate the effectiveness of SBM implementation at the school level and identify areas for improvement and Prepare reports and updates on SBM progress for school stakeholders and relevant authorities. (P4)

> As the vice chairman in Principle 4- Management of Resources, I check and have a regular inventory in the allocation and mobilization of resources undertake by the learning manager, learning facilitators and community stakeholders of our school. We also have our regular meeting to discuss matters related in our area. (P5)
> As the Principle 1 leader which is about leadership and governance, I led in the creation of strategies to compile the means of verifications needed for the validation activities. Imagine our preparations in four levels of validations school, district, division and the regional level. (P6)

> As the P2: Community-Based Learning Vice-Chairman and ICT I believe I play a crucial role in assisting the Chairman and the members in gathering the necessary artifacts and arranging the files in orderly manner based on the key indicators of the calibrated tool. (P7)

RA 9155 endorses the shared governance principles, which recognize

that each organizational component has a unique purpose and is

responsible for its results. Furthermore, shared governance facilitates the engagement of stakeholders in the decision-making process, thereby fostering democratic consultation, accountability, transparency, improved communication channels, and the formation of alliances with other nonprofits, non-governmental organizations, and government entities. The legislation that established the School-Based Management (SBM) system in the Philippines is RA 9155. In order to accomplish its objectives, SBM must be seamlessly incorporated into the DepEd and receive backing from key stakeholders and institutions engaged in education. Following the passage of legislation or a memorandum addressing the ramifications of SBM, the execution of SBM necessitates meticulous evaluation of multiple elements. Furthermore, it is imperative that every SBM member and leader possesses a comprehensive comprehension of their individual responsibilities.

Hurdling Difficulties

Teacher-researches are multi-taskers as mentioned in the earlier section of the discussions. In addition to balancing their personal lives, they must also satisfy the demands of their jobs. In addition to the traditional teaching and learning cycles, they were encouraged to be active SBM practitioners in schools. With this engagement, problems, issues, and obstacles are inescapable. Teachers' challenges as SBM leaders are emphasized further by contemplating the four subthemes that emerged from the study and are discussed in the sections that follow:

Time Constraints

Most of the participants stressed that their major issue and challenge in the conduct of SBM activities is that they lack time. This connotes that teachers do not have enough available time to perform efficiently SBM related tasks since they also have other tasks as classroom teachers aside from the usual teaching activity. Three participants explained:

> As the Vice-Chairman of the Principle 2, it's a challenge to gather the artifacts needed from 3 years back to serve as MOVs in support to the PAPs of the school. Our time in preparing for all the needed documents is not really enough. If given only enough time to proper, I think everything goes better. Further, It's also a challenge to be appointed as the Vice-Chairman for the Regional Validation when I don't have any prior experience on how these validations should occur. It took me more days to grasp the SBM idea alone. (P7)

> SBM leaders often encounter a range of challenges and struggles in their roles, given the complexity of the work like Community engagement .From my experience , we need to build strong relationships with the stakeholders like Barangay officials and can take time and effort. We lack enough time to complete the needed data. Sometimes SBM leaders may face resistance or skepticism from community members. However, in Catalunan Grande ES, we were so blessed because our barangay officials headed by Hon. January Duterte is very supportive to all our endeavors. (P8)

It is clear that teacher's availability in gathering and collecting the needed SBM means of verifications are very hard to do especially that they are full-time teachers. The also explained the feelings of being pressured due to time issues and maintaining the level three practice is also an addition challenge. Teachers have always the difficulty to find time in balancing extra tasks. It was emphasized that time management has always been a big factor because SBM processes demands time. If a teacher is

loaded with different preparations, one can hardly comply on time. The above discussions are supported by different researchers. Ellis and Loughland (2016) discovered that time constraints resulting from classroom instruction and other responsibilities hindered the ability of educators to produce high-quality work.

Lack of Documentation Mechanisms

Relying on physical paper documents has a few drawbacks. When teachers are working on the SBM needed documents, they need to pull out all the files associated with the program. This task is no joke. As paper piles up around them, it's no surprise that some documents may go missing. Paper is easily shuffled from one place to another and can be accidentally moved. And when attachments are not updated and complete, schools SBM level of practice may be affected since these are the only documents that can support the schools' claims. Some participants expressed the following:

> One major struggle I experienced was gathering data from different sources. In which these data are very important, and we cannot function well without these data. (P1)

> The challenges of gathering those 2 to 3-year-old documents needed to serve as our MOVs or artifacts in support to the priority projects, programs, and activities we carry out in school. The struggle of "no experience and inactive involvement" in the SBM implementation, then suddenly you became the chairman of the group. Maybe we need to have better mechanism in terms of collecting the necessary means of verifications. (P2)

> The documents relating to SBM are hard to produce especially when teachers are not that

oriented to document everything regarding the
SBM activities (P4)

The notion that primary schools in Nigeria's North West Zone faced obstacles when attempting to establish a School-Based Management Committee is supported by Bala's (2017) findings. As per his assertion, SBMC faces obstacles within the educational institution, including members' reluctance to participate in meetings, inadequate communication practices, and a dearth of dedication towards document updates. These issues can undoubtedly be eliminated from the domain if individuals are willing to carry out their responsibilities.

Motivation issues

Teachers sometimes are demotivated to perform tasks in schools. Finding ways to increase motivation is crucial because it allows us to change behavior, develop competencies, be creative, set goals, grow interests, make plans, develop talents, and boost engagement. Motivating and empowering teaches have become issues in successfully implementing school-based management processes. Teacher motivation is closely linked to SBM success, and teachers who are motivated to do their task in the implementation of the SBM can result to the increase of school SBM practices trigger. Teachers can have an impact on the SBM results for better or for worse but if teachers are motivated, this influence will be more positive. Two participants shared:

It is challenging to strike the right balance between academic excellence and community-based learning. Ensuring that learners meet academic standards while engaging in meaningful outdoor/community activities requires careful planning and coordination. Aside from

motivating the teachers, everyone in school should also be motivated to perform and sustain the SBM practice. (P2)

One of our challenges is the online SBM Regional Validation. We need to have a soft copy of our MOVs and answer promptly all the panel questions. We are worrying with the internet connection stability. (P3)

It is really a struggle for us to find some documents in the previous years since some of the folders were taken out from the archives and aside from this, the struggles I have encountered is on how to motivate my members to function and do the task assigned to them. Inculcating that SBM means shared responsibility and not just a one-man job. (P5)

With this, recognizing the significance of empowered leaders in empowering educators is of the utmost importance. In each policy implementation, the educator plays a vital role. Kaabi (2015) and Shoraku (2009) posit that by improving the leadership abilities of instructors, a more positive atmosphere can be created during the implementation of SBM, resulting in heightened levels of self-assurance and drive. It is widely accepted that instructors ought to be prepared to adapt to newly implemented regulations at any given time. Nonetheless, educators frequently encounter obstacles, including motivational issues. Inconsistencies exist between the policies that regulate classroom activities and the instructors' actual conduct. Instructor behavior is regulated by accountability mechanisms, whereas the policies are embodied in the external testing system. Nevertheless, instructors are expected to follow established protocols when carrying out any given task. It is imperative that administrators and politicians offer additional encouragement and support with regard to pedagogy, professional development, accountability, and

integrity. The efficacy of teachers' autonomy in decision-making is compromised when they are unwilling to assume proactive responsibility within their classrooms. It is imperative for instructors to exhibit the capacity to adjust to modifications as a foundational element of their professionalism. This possesses the potential to raise the bar for SBM implementation.

Organizational Conflicts

Organizational conflict, or workplace conflict, is a state of discord caused by the actual or perceived opposition of needs, values and interests between people working together. There is also conflict within individuals – between competing needs and demands – to which individuals respond in different ways. SBM as a DepEd program may trigger conflicts in an organization. This expression in the study pertains to instances of discord or miscommunication among SBM team members, which may be ascribed to genuine or perceived discrepancies in requirements, preferences, and principles. It is highly probable that conflict will ensue when individuals within an organization engage in interaction while holding divergent viewpoints. Every member may be cordially invited to provide their thoughts on any recent decisions or actions undertaken by the institution. The participants mentioned by following during the interview:

> When everyone is pressured, our emotions and pressures were also getting high. Conflicts with colleagues took place although they were also solved. The misunderstanding and miscommunications hindered our activities but also strengthened our relationships somehow. We

were time-pressured. Imagine aside from our classroom tasks for we are teachers, we also need to comply our SBM tasks. We were hurrying up just to beat the deadline. We also lack preparations in gathering the desired MOVs and were pressured by our school head and higher bosses. (P6)

There are lots of challenges as an SBM leader. Like conflicts from members, documents needed from each principle, different ideas to highlight events and best practices, and most especially for funding's needed for each updates and validations that are not covered with the School's MOOE. (P8)

Given the circumstances, it is critical to exercise vigilant oversight over the responsibilities of both the district and division levels in order to avert any uncertainty and overly directive implementation of educational policy, particularly in regard to SBM regulations. Disagreements are likely to emerge, particularly when a new education policy is implemented during the transitional phase. Enhanced supervision strategies by district and school authorities diminishes the independence of educators to execute instructional decisions (Kim, 2018). In addition to monitoring policy implementation at the school and district levels, efforts should be concentrated on empowering school leaders and teachers, identifying problematic teachers for appropriate action, and empowering teachers. It is recommended that courses and seminars be designed and publicized at the school and district levels in order to increase the capacity of community members, school administrators, parents, teachers, and school leaders to implement School-Based Management (SBM). With this, harmonious relationship and healthy environment to work for SBM may take place.

During the Data triangulation, the school heads confirmed that teachers experienced various challenges in doing SBM in schools. They all agreed to the themes formed in terms of the lived experiences of the SBM leaders in dealing with SBM processes.
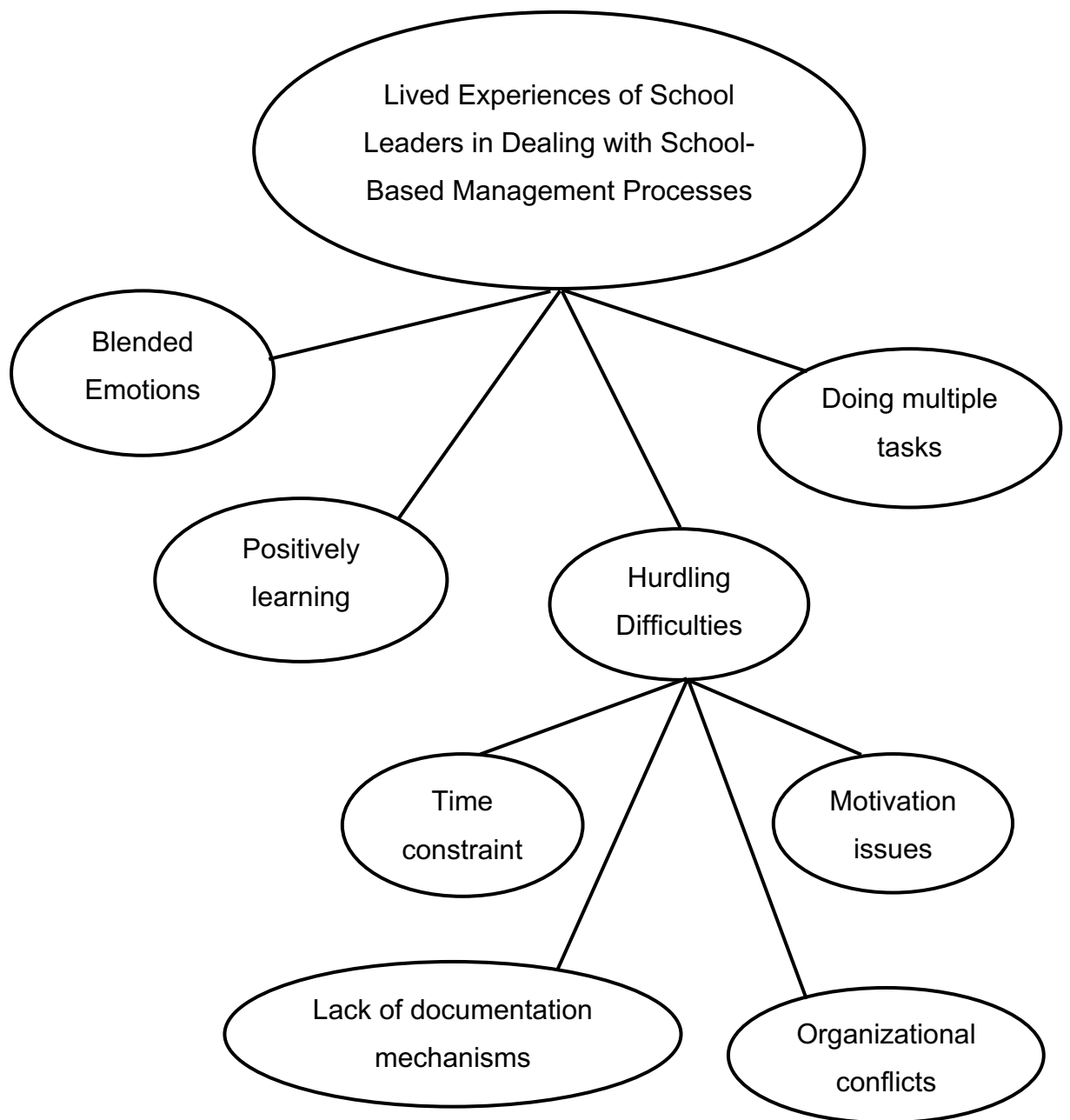
Figure 1. Lived Experiences of School Leaders on School-Based Management Processes

Research Question 2 on the Coping Strategies of SBM Leaders

       The second research objective of this study focuses on the coping strategies or mechanisms of the SBM leaders in dealing with their lived experiences. The coping strategies of school leaders are divided into four major themes. These are: Team Coordination, Provision of Technical Assistance, Healthy Communication and Sufficient Trainings in All Levels. These summarized the coping strategies of the teacher-leaders as they deal with the challenges of their current research circumstances. Based on their responses, their challenges and coping mechanisms are almost the same with implementing other programs in schools.

Team Coordination

       In the study, coordination is the fundamental form of synchronization used to eliminate pauses in SBM operations and to ensure that individuals and groups are working together to achieve corporate goals and are acting in unison. There are numerous needs, significance, and importance of coordination. Further, In School-Based Management, coordination is the process of bringing things together in a harmonic relationship so that they can work more efficiently. The nature of the problem, the circumstances, and the availability of resources, as well as the end aim, all influence coordination. Many physical, social, and economic aspects must be considered by the school leaders. To create a united and integrated whole effect, coordination is required to tune all of these components and forces into a unity in diversity of interrelation. This is an aspect or an attribute that is believed by the participants to be present in their respective schools

where creating connections is essential. The participants expressed the following:

> Team effort and cooperation. I am blessed to have a cooperative team that we were able to manage to do the different tasks. (P1)
> I attended coordination meetings which made the SBM journey lighter and smoother. I also communicated the plan of actions and suggested strategies to the whole school, not just to my team but to everyone knowing that SBM entails shared collaboration and leadership. (P6)
>
> As far as I can recall the coping mechanism, I had was building a support network, I connected with other SBM leaders sharing experiences and insights with them and provided valuable support and solutions. Yes, I coordinate with the general team and the sub groupings. Another noted thing was being resilient I understood that challenges are part of leadership, and I was able to maintain a positive attitude, practicing self -care and focusing on the goals set before us. (P8)

It is clear in their words that coordination indeed is the key to a successful SBM implementation. This are all related to the study of Hussein (2014) when he emphasized four importance of SBM implementation. SBM places emphasis on initiatives at the local level that foster sustainable, locally developed programs in order to achieve enduring transformative benefits. Additionally, it enhances the institution's capacity to foster progress and transformation within the realm of education. SBM ultimately recognizes the community's status as a stakeholder, specifically with regard to decisions that have an impact on them, as well as the professional responsibility of school administrators and instructors as pivotal participants. In addition, SBM improves the problem-solving capabilities and managerial expertise of local leaders, who are no longer overly reliant

on directives from higher authorities. SBM is defined by Varatharaj (2015) as an educational system reform that grants greater administrative and managerial autonomy to schools. Citing this importance is the same with understanding that coordination can enable the organization to achieve their SBM goals where all the involved individuals play big and important roles in implementing the SBM program.

Provision of Technical Assistance

The Department of Education has emphasized the importance of Technical Assitance (TA) in Schools. Technical Assistance is any form of professional help, guidance or support to be more effective in the performance of the DepEd personnel's functions. It is an active process with steps to follow; makes use of tools, via process consultation, requires specific skills and focuses on achieving set goals. It is also a journey, reminding the client of their prime responsibility and accountability as well respecting their capability and pace. The old concept of TA is Supervising, Monitoring, Evaluating, Directing and Instructing. However, in the new paradigm it is more on Coaching, Guiding and Empowering. When it comes to SBM, teacher-participants shared their thoughts and experiences that through Technical Assistance, they were able to perform better as SBM leaders. It was through TA processes that they were able to succeed in the implementation of the SBM. This was further confirmed by the following participants:

> I remembered attending a Virtual Orientation-Seminar on Making Meaning on Big Data. I also appreciated that they provided Technical Assistance to improve our practices and program

> implementations during the previous validations. (P2)

> We had School Training on SBM process and technical assistance was given by the school head and the district supervisor and the division SBM Team. We had our meetings and exchanging of ideas and designation of tasks of each indicator. Provision of technical assistance from our heads in the school, district and division were done. (P3)

The result is supported by the study of Pepito and Acibar (2019) when based on the result of their study, Technical Assitance be thoroughly implemented in schools since this is believed to be effective in raising the bars of schools for SBM implementations. According to them, the School-Based Management practices is an aspect in improving the school system. It is of great help in attaining mission, vision, goals and DepED's thrust. It serves as assessment of the functions, duties and responsibilities of the school heads as stipulated in the Republic Act 9155. It also measures the capacity of school heads in addressing different concerns, issues, gaps and priorities the school is undertaking. It identifies aspects that needs to be given importance to augment better performance. Different indicators stipulated in the tool performed and practiced by the school heads are fundamental aspects in school-based management practices to alleviate the status of the elementary schools in the aspects of the different dimensions such as the participation of stakeholders, school improvement process, school-based resources and school performance accountability. Further, Once School based management is in place, school heads always carry with them the excellence that they desire.

Healthy Communication

Communication is one of the most crucial instruments for an organization to convey information, develop a network, and ensure a smooth work flow within a modern school organization these days. Since Antiquity, communication has been one of the most important activities that people and cultures have engaged in (Ors, 2015). Effective communication may contribute to organizational success in many ways. Effective Communication is significant for managers in the organizations so as to perform the basic functions of management, i.e., Planning, Organizing, Leading and Controlling. Effective communication is an absolute necessity for school administrators to fulfill their responsibilities. Effective communication serves as the cornerstone upon which the process of planning is constructed. Senior management must be informed of all pertinent information; they will then disseminate strategies for implementation. Organizers must ensure that information regarding their employment responsibilities is effectively communicated. Similarly, in order to achieve team goals, leaders and managers must communicate effectively with their employees. Without written and spoken communication, control is impossible. On SBM, communication was valued by the participants. They expressed the following:

> I am constantly working to ensure that we have an open channel of communication. Because of the high volume of traffic in our District Group Chat, I am frequently contacted with questions and requests for clarification concerning SBM Reports and activities. I also make it a point to communicate information as early as possible in order to avoid any potential conflicts about the submission of said information to other learning areas. (P1)

As the leader of the SBM, it is my responsibility to ensure that I am in constant coordination with the other principals and the school principal in order to meet the challenges and overcome the difficulties. Has to communicate and address the difficulties in a level-headed manner. (P6)

I am straightforward with my members and explain my obligations to ensure that they are aware of their responsibilities right away. In difficult moments, I constantly guide them and try to understand where they are coming from. We were able to work together despite our differences because we communicated effectively and listened to one another. We approached our School-Based Management (SBM) responsibilities and the exchange of ideas for the improvement of our school as an organization with an extremely open mind. (P8)

Indeed, Managerial skill in sending and receiving communications is required for an effective and efficient communication system. A manager must identify numerous communication barriers, assess the causes for their development, and take preventative measures to avoid them. As a result, a manager's principal task is to establish and maintain an effective communication system in the organization. The same is true in the study, through communication, educational mandates and improvement on SBM were addressed. SBM implementations in most of the schools are truly successful.

Sufficient trainings in all levels

The reality is teachers face many challenges in SBM processes but aside from their personal coping mechanisms, they also received institutional support from the DepEd's higher offices in a form of trainings or webinars even amidst the CoVid-19 pandemic. Teachers are known to be well adaptors of change and are good in adjusting to whatever situation is

present. In the study, it was mentioned by the participants that they were able to receive sufficient trainings in all levels that is why they still pursue to be successful in the field of SBM. Specifically, the participants exclaimed the following:

> We were given LAC Sessions about SBM (P1)
> I remembered attending a Virtual Orientation-Seminar on Making Meaning on Big Data. I also appreciated that they provided Technical Assistance to improve our practices and program implementations during the previous validations. (P2)
>
> We had School Training on SBM process and technical assistance was given by the school head a, the district supervisor and the division SBM Team. (P3)

Trainings are considered to be teachers' way of advancing their knowledge and mastery in handling SBM related matters. The difficulties encountered by the Board of Managers in supervising the activities of public secondary schools in the Kanwagi District of Kenya were examined by Kingi (2015). The research revealed that educational administrators faced obstacles including a limited availability of qualified staff and inadequate communication of SBM knowledge. Multiple concerns have been identified by scholars regarding the education system. These include challenges related to coordination, inadequate leadership training for school administrators, limited decision-making authority, ignorance, low parental involvement, and insufficient government funding (Gamage and Sooksomchitra, 2004; Maksymjuk, 2000; Schlegel, 2000). But if trainings will be made available for school leaders, they will surely perform to the best of their abilities.

Furthermore, the lack of adequate SBM training will also diminish the enthusiasm, confidence, and willingness of educators to engage in SBM activities. According to Sheikh, Sheikh, Kaleem, and Waqas (2013), educators can derive benefits from engaging in courses, seminars, and symposiums. The instructors' exposure to a variety of SBM techniques, methods, and concepts would pique their curiosity regarding additional research in this area. Facilitating extended research trainings and seminars is crucial to ensure that these educators acquire comprehensive knowledge of SBM and are equipped to confront any potential obstacles that may arise.

During the data triangulation, the school heads confirmed that teachers practice various coping mechanisms on the challenges they experienced in doing SBM in schools. They all agreed to the themes generated related to the coping strategies of the SBM leaders in dealing with SBM issues and challenges.
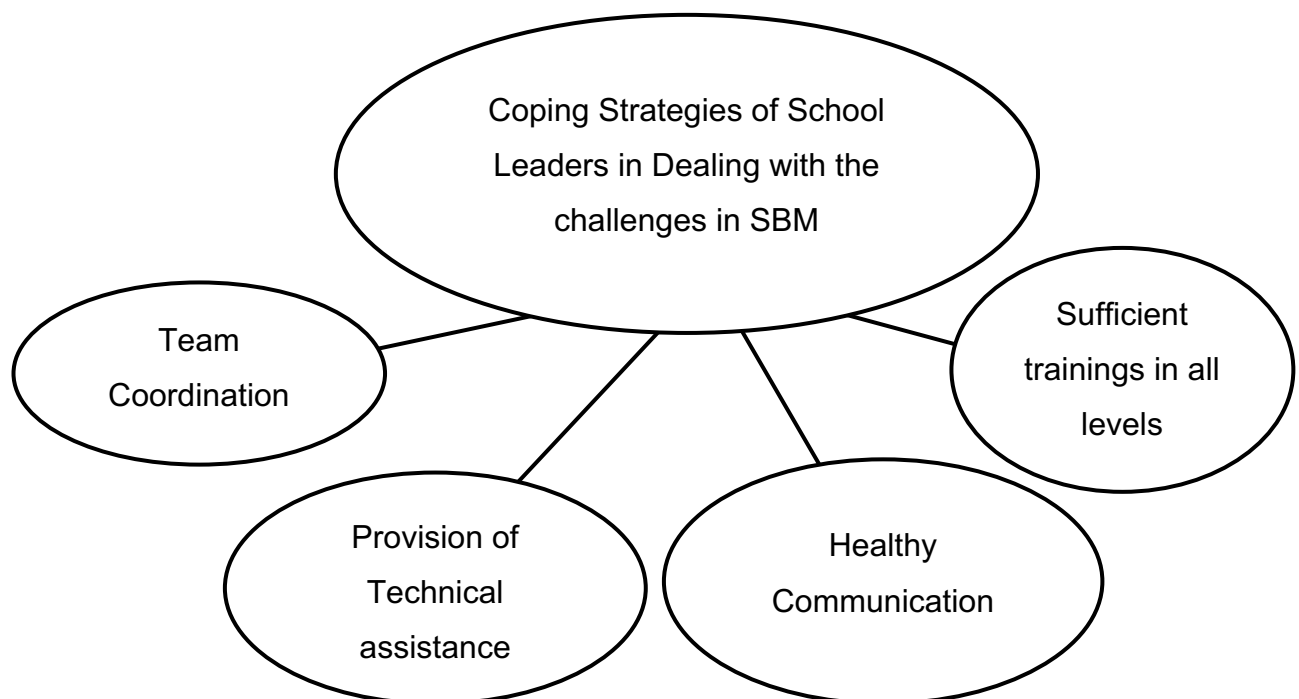

Figure 2. Coping Strategies of School Leaders

Research Question 3 on the Insights of School Leaders on School-Based Management

The insights of school leaders are divided into three major themes. These are: SBM as Shared Governance, Responsibility and Accountability, the Importance of Technical Assistance and Individual Empowerment in Schools. These summarized the insights of the teacher-leaders based on their experiences in dealing with SBM experiences, challenges and coping mechanisms. Based on their responses, although they experienced ups and downs in the process, still their insights had always reminded them on the lessons and things that they learned which made them more equipped and competent as SBM leaders.

SBM as Shared Governance, Responsibility and Accountability

School-based management (SBM) is a strategy to enhance education by transferring significant decision-making authority to individual schools, as described in the literature. This indicates that School-Based Management (SBM) is a program of high importance to be implemented by school personnel. SBM had an effect on enhancing school performance in terms of quality, financial management efficiency, and equity by modifying decentralization policies in various facets, including political, educational, administrative, and education budgets. In addition, SBM has enhanced the quality of teaching and learning, the operational efficiency of education, and political goals, particularly the democratization climate in schools. When participants were asked about the lessons they had learned, they provided the following responses:

It is a hard task especially to a Teacher I like me working as chairperson, but with collaboration and participation we were able to understand the true essence and meaning of how SBM works in a school. (P1)

As one of the SBM School leaders, I have learned that an effective school-based management involves collaboration, communication, and a commitment to providing the best educational experience for our learners. It's important to adapt to changing circumstances and continuously strive for improvement. (P2)

I personally learned that the heart of SBM is to practice genuine partnership and collaborations in schools with and among the internal and external stakeholders. It is a shared responsibility that aimed to produce learning stations that are fully functional to improve the learning outcomes. With this, the empowerment efforts for school SBM leaders should be done by DepEd regularly, not just during the validation and evaluation activities. (P6)

According to the participants, for SBM to be successful, it is imperative that all educational stakeholders engage in its operation actively and constructively, and that decentralization efforts are reflected in every facet of educational management. To the context-specific attributes of SBM, the participants clarified that the fluidity of its execution precludes the ability to codify its methodologies into a standard template that can be followed by leaders. Since SBM requires shared governance and accountability, all stakeholders, both inside and outside the school, are aware of its implementation, which is context-dependent.

Bautista, Bernardo, and Ocampo (2010) posit that while SBM promotes participation in decision-making processes in industrialized nations, its influence on teaching and learning appears to be negligible

when regarded solely as a modification in governance framework. Furthermore, decentralization is linked to this theory by these researchers. Based on the literature review conducted by the authors, it has been observed that schools exhibit enhanced academic performance when they are granted increased autonomy, supported in their efforts to develop local capabilities, cultivate positive relationships with the community and the school, are held accountable externally, and have access to innovative practices. Literature evidence connects SBM to improved student outcomes, enhanced teaching methods, a greater emphasis on student labor (or assessment literacy), and the formation of professional learning communities, according to their statement. However, when employing quantitative metrics, the impact of SBM (more precisely defined as autonomy) on academic achievements of students and schools is marginally diminished in comparison to other variables, despite remaining statistically significant.

Individual empowerment in schools

Teacher empowerment involves investing teachers with the right to participate in the determination of school goals and policies as informed by their professional judgment. As reiterated in Republic Act (RA) 9155, also known as the Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001 that provides the overall framework for principal empowerment by strengthening principal and leadership goals, and local school-based management within the context of transparency and local accountability. The need for the so called individual empowerment were felt by the teachers in schools. Teacher-

participants explained what they learned further in handling SBM processes. They mentioned the following:

> Everyone must be aware that SBM is a shared responsibility therefore, every teacher must be empowered. When all the teachers are aware of the SBM, the success of the school as a whole are just one click away. (P4)

> Implementing SBM can be challenging, as it requires leadership, effective communication, and the ability to balance autonomy with accountability . It is essential to ensure that decisions made at school level align with broader educational goal. Let us not forget also that SBM can vary from one school to another because its effectiveness depends on various factors, including the level of support of the different stakeholders. The most important thing here is that we are empowered as leaders for us also to empower our members. (P8)

The result is related to the conclusion of Adediran (2010) in his study. The challenges encountered during the execution of the SBM Policy include the following: a lack of understanding among stakeholders regarding SBM and its operational mechanisms, which hinders individual empowerment; a scarcity of decision-making capabilities, communication, and trust among stakeholders; restrictions on teachers' time commitment and decision-making authority imposed by union contracts, statutes, and regulations; inadequate funding; and insufficient personnel possessing the requisite expertise. With this, schools' leaders should be empowered to avoid the mentioned SBM problems. Individual empowerment is the key to a more successful SBM operations.

Importance of Technical Assistance

The issue on providing technical assistance is already visible in the previous parts of this study. Technical assistance is a concern among school leaders. Master teachers, principal, supervisors and other SBM heads. Technical assistance were considered helpful to the SBM leaders especially if the Department of Education in all levels create more trainings, webinars and workshops related to school-based management. This had helped the school sustain their advance level of practice or even in stepping up higher to those non-performing ones. This idea was concreted by the explanations of the following participants in the study:

> Investing in professional development opportunities for staff members is essential for improving learners' outcomes and keeping morale high among teachers. (P5)

> SBM Leaders and the teachers need more extensive technical assistance. I hope DepEd can provide this in the coming years. Giving TA is indeed very vital for our SBM roles and practices. Further, I would like to suggest if possible there must be regular trainings to be conducted since this is the core of the school such as on the Review, Assessment and enhancement of the existing School Annual Improvement Plan (SIP) and School Improvement Plan (SIP). and on how to come up with aligned SMEA or School Monitoring Evaluation and Adjustment since this template is new and it is a technology mediated system that collects, processes, generates, automates, and validates monitoring and evaluation data relative to the key result areas (KRAs) contained in the Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) that is quarterly executed, monitored, and adjusted. (P6)

This conclusion is supported by Hussein (2014), who highlights the four justifications or four implications of employing SBM as a learning strategy. SBM gives precedence to initiatives at the local level that advance

locally-produced, sustainable programs in order to achieve enduring transformative benefits. Furthermore, this enhances the institution's capacity to foster progress and revolutionization throughout the educational sphere. SBM acknowledges the community's status as a stakeholder, particularly in matters pertaining to decisions that impact them, and places significant emphasis on the pivotal participation of school administrators and educators. Thirdly, SBM strengthens the problem-solving and management expertise of local leaders, as opposed to placing excessive reliance on directives from above. SBM is defined by Varatharaj (2015) as an educational system reform that grants greater administrative and managerial autonomy to schools. If teachers are provided with substantial and comprehensive SBM related technical assistance, the above mention importance of SBM may be truly achieved.

During the Data triangulation, the school heads confirmed the lessons and insights learned by the SBM leaders in doing SBM processes in schools. They all agreed to the themes formed in terms of the management and educational insights of the participants.
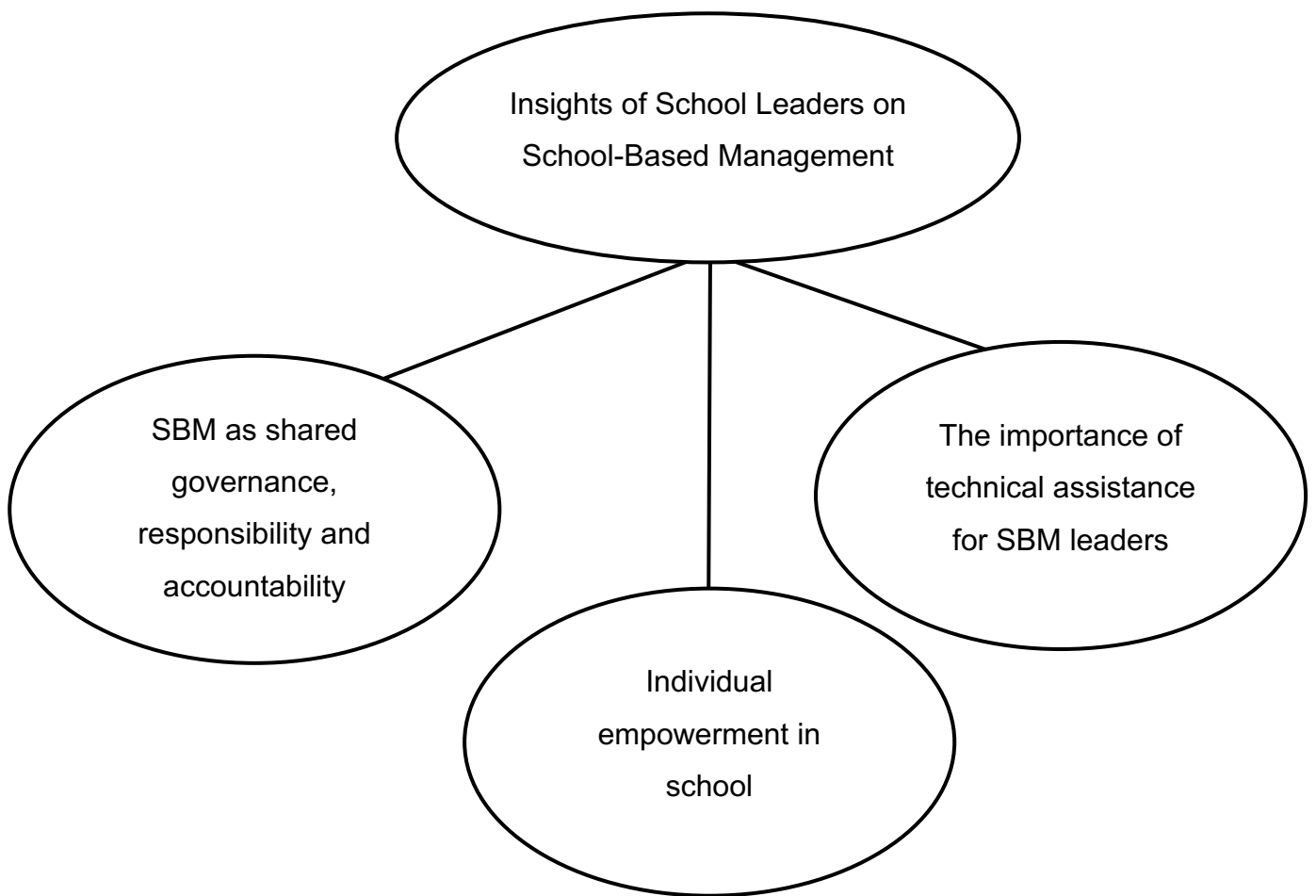
Figure 3. Insights of School Leaders

Implications

School-Based Management practices are essential to the improvement of the educational system. It is exceedingly useful for achieving the DepED's mission, vision, and objectives. It is used to evaluate the functions, responsibilities, and outcomes of all Department of Education-mandated programs. The Republic Act 9155 outlines the duties of school administrators and school leaders in implementing School Based Management processes. It also evaluates the capacity of school

administrators and SBM leaders to address the concerns, issues, gaps, and priorities being addressed by the school. It specifies what must be prioritized in order to enhance efficacy. Although School Leaders face obstacles in implementing the SBM as a program, their positivity and willingness to embrace change is admirable and deserving of praise.

Working as SBM leaders was never simple, as different indicators outlined in the tool had to be implemented and practiced by the schools in order to improve the status of elementary schools in terms of the various principles, including leadership and governance, curriculum and instruction, accountability and continuous improvement, and management of resources. Due to the difficulties encountered by school leaders, it may be necessary to provide them with sufficient time to carry out their responsibilities and to review their workloads and trainings on resolving organizational conflict, as these were the issues they shared.

Multitasking is essential for school SBM leaders, but their needs and welfare must also be considered. Empowering them will improve their performance. Providing them with the opportunity to balance their pressures and delights in life will increase their motivation to serve as SBM leaders. We are aware that teachers play a vital role in policy implementation. Instilling leadership skills in teachers to increase their confidence and motivation will increase the supportive attitude required for SBM implementation. Once school-based management is in place, school leaders always bring the excellence they seek. These were the grassroots realizations of the teachers as SBM leaders in a public elementary school.

Future Directions

In the light of the results, the following directions are identified:

For the officials of the Department of Education, they may mount SBM capacity development courses regularly in order for school leaders to keep abreast on the emerging issues and trends on school management and curriculum since based on the study, school leaders desire to have consistent technical assistance for enhancement and mastery. The policies imposed in the public schools may be monitored consistently to make the educational system holistic. This may encourage school leaders to become consistent as well in their tasks related to SBM. Further, they may create educational mandates, policy actions and orders as their guideline in lessening or eradicating the problems and issues experienced by school leaders in the Department of Education with regards to implementing SBM processes.

For School Administrators, they may review the workloads of SBM leaders and may consider the time frame intended for handling SBM matters. Sufficient School Learning Action Cell Sessions (SLACS) may also be conducted for all school individuals including the stakeholders so that they may be able to work efficiently and effectively as guided by the principle of shared governance, shared leadership and shared responsibility; the SBM mantra. In other words, technical assistance plan may be thoroughly implemented.

For Teachers as School Leaders, they may regularly update their SBM files and artifacts to avoid future problems especially during SBM validations. They may also work harmoniously with others or with their members to avoid further work stress and pressures.

For Future Researchers, more research in the area of School Based Management may be explored in different context to add more knowledge to the current study. For a wider scope a quantitative study may also be conducted.

Dissemination of the findings of this study is suggested to motivate other school SBM leaders by sharing the lessons learned.

Dissemenation And Advocacy Plans

The results of this basic research will be disseminated through existing mechanisms of the Department of Education (DepEd) such as School Learning Action Cell Session, In-Service Trainings, Enhanced School Improvement Plan (eSIP) of the school, and even in the division, regional, national and international research colloquium. The study will also be disseminated through *Aguhon*, the official research journal of DepEd Regional Office XI.

When it comes to utilization, the results of the study may be utilized in the decision-making process of the school with which this study is concerned with. This may also be utilized in making and revising the department's policies related to the study undertaken.

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