



## **Strategic Leadership of School Heads and Stakeholders' Involvement in Tagum City Division**

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### **ABSTRACT**

For the holistic development of the school, stakeholders' involvement is a necessity. It is believed that the strategic leadership of school heads may influence stakeholders' involvement. However, these had never been explored specifically in the local setting. With this, the study determined the extent of strategic leadership of school heads and the stakeholders' involvement in Tagum City Division. Also, it investigated the association of the involved variables and the domains of strategic leadership of school heads that significantly influenced stakeholders' involvement. With the use of probability sampling, 200 elementary teachers in the public schools were selected as the respondents. Utilizing the descriptive-correlational survey method, the data collated were analyzed through the use of Mean and Product-Moment correlation. Results revealed that there was an extensive strategic leadership of school heads and stakeholders' involvement. Furthermore, there was a significant relationship between the two variables. Reflecting on the findings of the study, it was further suggested that higher officials in the Department of Education may identify means on how to help the school heads in improving their strategic leadership which would help them to attain maximum number of stakeholders' involvement. Apparently, the entire school needs to work together for the realization of stakeholders' involvement.

Keywords: Strategic leadership, school heads, stakeholders' involvement, descriptive correlation, Tagum City Division, Philippines

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### **Introduction**

Schools help learners acquire skills in socialization, communication, and development of their academic ability. Equally, schools are venues that deliver a place for parents and other stakeholders to get involved in the teaching-learning processes and other educational reforms of the Department of Education (DepEd). School personnel and other school partners must be attentive to the learners' welfare and performance in school. They have the responsibility to be involved and be sensitive enough to the learners' problems and or development in school. With their aid in the learners' education, positive cooperation and communication between the school and them will foster the learners' progress and better academic performance will be attained (De Torres, 2021). However, minimum participation of stakeholders in school affairs is being observed.

In many rural settlements in developing and underdeveloped nations which are predominantly African countries, the success or failures of learners are usually attributed to the level of quality education provided (Uleanya, Gamede&Kutame, 2020). Poor quality teaching and learning which leads to poverty is considered to be rife in many African countries and this has serious implications for the provision of quality education, especially as it concerns rural schools. According to du Plessis and Mestry (2019), rural schools face severe challenges that are unique to their environment which in turn affects their learning abilities and consequently, academic performances. For instance, lack of parental interest in children's education, insufficient funding from the state, lack of resources, recruitment of underqualified teachers, and multi-grade teaching are some of the identified barriers to effective education (du Plessis &Mestry, 2019)

In the Philippines, minimum involvement of stakeholders is evident. This has been attributed to lack of awareness among stakeholders' of their roles in the school activities which has been the persisting problem of the public secondary school. Their being passive in their participation to some extent affects the level of performance of the school operation. In most of the observed realities, even students do not feel their sense of belongingness. These feelings and attitudes may affect in school activities. They do not attend to school activities, show negative attitudes to teachers and other students, and also not responsible of being students. The students need to have harmonious relationships with school staff and with other students to feel that they belong to the school (Lacaniiao, 2020).

In the Division of Tagum City, the researcher observed that there is a very poor participation among stakeholders. Some parents are no attendance when general or homeroom PTA meeting has been conducted. Parents have no time even in family day at school. Meanwhile, private sectors are that accommodating when schools asked help from them for school improvement. Despite these observations, there was no formal undertaking that explored the said circumstances. There had no study that explored the stakeholders' involvement in the public secondary schools in the Division of Tagum City.

Given these situations, the researcher explored the extent of strategic leadership of school heads and the stakeholders' involvement of public secondary schools specifically in Tagum City Division. Furthermore, it investigated the correlation of the two variables. In this academic endeavor, the researcher shed light regarding strategic leadership of school leaders and the stakeholders' involvement. This undertaking also hoped to provide insights to the policy makers in crafting policies, programs, interventions, projects, activities that would be helpful to public schools to intensify stakeholders' involvement in the public secondary schools. Several theories and models had been associated with strategic leadership of school heads and stakeholders' involvement. These include Strategic Leadership Theory by Phipps and Burbach (2010), and Change Process Theory by Fullan (1983).

The theory for this study was based primarily on strategic leadership theory by Phipps and Burbach (2010). In the field of strategic leadership, this study is aligned to fundamental premise of strategic leadership theory. It claims that a leader's field of vision and interpretation of information is influenced by that leader's values, cognitions, and personality. Furthermore, Narayanan and Zane (2009) explained that the notion of strategic leadership implies that strategic leaders form a vision for the future, communicating it to subordinates, stimulating and motivating followers, and engaging in strategy-supportive exchanges with peers and subordinates.

In the context of this study, school principals employing strategic leadership will take time to communicate their vision to other members of the school community both the internal and external stakeholders in order to receive more support for school improvement. Everything that transpires in the school is not the sole responsibility of the school heads. With this, they need to strategize in convincing important stakeholders to be part of all school-initiated activities, programs, and projects.

Moreover, Fullan's (1983) Change Process Theory was used for this study. Fullan posited that change processes within a school are important if stakeholders within the school are to formulate strategies to improve schools. Change takes place over time, and change involves the acquisition of new skills through the medium of practice, continuous feedback, and organizational conditions at the level of the school (Fullan, 1983). These conditions determine the success of the process, and successful change is achieved through an interaction of organizational conditions within the internal and external environment of the school (Fullan, 1983).

Fullan (1983) posited that change process at the campus level of the school must include strategies for improving schools. The theory of change focuses on how change occurs using knowledge as the foundational base grounded on eight organizational factors including leadership focused on curriculum and instruction, district level support, emphasis on student development, high expectations for students, support systems and processes for monitoring performance of staff and achievement of students, continuous staff development, parental involvement, and promoting a healthy school climate (Fullan, 1983).

Four process variables embedded in the factors include leadership aptitudes, a value system for stakeholders, intentional communication, and collaborative planning and collaborative implementation. When the eight organizational factors and the four process variables are supported, there is improvement in the achievement of the goals of the school, coupled with a strong sense of community and a capacity for further improvement through focused innovation and school-wide strategies (Fullan, 1983).

In essence, the principal also has a social, cultural, and even political role in the community ([Hopkins, 2015](#)). This is an essential role for school principals to get support from various parties in the community. School principals cannot avoid such conditions for various reasons, including the school is a mini-community of other communities as a whole ([Epstein, 2018](#)); the school is part of a social system in which the school is involved to strengthen the values developed by the community where the school is located ([Touraine, 2017](#)); the school educates students from the surrounding community, integrates with the community, together with the community so that they can live in the community ([Schrag, 2016](#)); and the community has the best aspirations for people's lives in the future. These values should be developed by the school. The community needs a school presence ([Belfield & Levin, 2015](#); [Munn, 2018](#)). These four reasons become essential foundations for school principals that there is an excellent opportunity for school principals to develop schools together with all internal and external components as community representatives

A strong principal strategic leadership can only be carried out effectively by principals who have social, cultural, and political awareness by immersing them amid internal and external school communities. The ability of principals to position themselves proportionally during interactions is an effective approach in strengthening schools to get the maximum quality of community support. However, schools are institutions that must understand the hopes and aspirations of the community better. Schools need to identify, integrate, and agree on, and manage school programs by involving the community as a whole ([Banks, 1997](#); [Findlay, 2003](#)).

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## **Methodology**

### *Research Design*

This study was a quantitative research approach utilizing the descriptive correlational approach. Quantitative research is a way to learn about a particular group of people, known as a sample population. Using scientific inquiry, quantitative research relies on data that are observed or measured to examine questions about the sample population. It is used by social scientists, including communication researchers, to observe phenomena or occurrences affecting individuals. The purpose of quantitative research is to generate knowledge and create understanding about the social world. Moreover, a descriptive correlation study is a study in which the researcher is primarily interested in describing the relationships between variables without attempting to establish a causal relationship (Allen, 2017).

This undertaking was considered as quantitative since it relied on the numerical data when analyzing and interpreting the data. It was descriptive since its purpose was to determine the extent of strategic leadership of school heads and stakeholders' involvement in public secondary schools. In addition, this research journey was correlational since its intention to investigate the relationship between strategic leadership of school heads and stakeholders' involvement in the public secondary schools in the Division of Tagum

#### *Research Respondents*

This study considered 200 public secondary teachers in the Division of Tagum City. It was claimed that 200 samples were sufficient when testing the Pearson Correlation analysis (Memon et al., 2020). Hence, the 200 respondents were enough to address the purpose of this study.

Probability sampling specifically two-staged cluster sampling was used to identify the sample of the study. It is a kind of sampling technique in which the likelihood or probability of each piece being included may be defined. In other words, every member of the population must have an equal and independent probability of being included in the sample (Ragab & Arisha, 2018). Cluster sampling is a popular method in conducting researches wherein the population is being divided into different clusters. A cluster is a group of elements that are made up of individual units that represent mutually exclusive and exhaustive subsets (Thomas, 2020). It is two-staged cluster sampling since the sample of elements from each selected cluster or division is chosen randomly. In the context of the study, all teachers from the public secondary schools in Tagum City Division were considered.

In the inclusion and exclusion criteria, all secondary teachers in the public school of the Division of Tagum were given an equal chance to be part of the study. High school teachers with 5 years teaching experience were chosen in this endeavour since their five years stay in the public school would help them to assess the strategic leadership of their school leaders and their stakeholders' involvement in all school activities. In this endeavor, those secondary teachers in the private schools were considered. Furthermore, respondents who felt awkward and uncomfortable in answering the survey questionnaire were free to withdraw from their participation. They were not forced to be part of the study. Their decision to withdraw was respected. Apparently, the respondents' welfare was given utmost importance in the conduct of the study.

#### *Research Instruments*

The primary means of gathering data in this undertaking was by utilizing a survey questionnaire which was divided into two sections. The first part was focusing about the strategic leadership of school heads while the second section was about the stakeholders' involvement. The questionnaire on strategic leadership was adapted from Kirigi (2020). This tool has 15 statements. Of which 5 items are intended for each indicator, namely: visioning, focusing, and implementing. The Cronbach alpha coefficient for the 15 items is .77 suggesting that the items have relatively *high* internal consistency.

The stakeholders' involvement questionnaire was adapted from the study of De Torres (2021). It was also subjected to pilot testing resulting to a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .84, suggesting that the items have relatively *high* internal consistency. The tool has a total of 32 items. It has three variables, namely: leadership and governance (1-12), learners' achievement (11-20), and school's programs and reforms (21-30).

The instrument in this study was contextualized to achieve the purpose of this study. The researcher integrated all the comments and suggestions of the adviser, panel members and expert validators for the refinement of the tools and to achieve construct validity.

## **Table**

**Table 1**

### **Summary on the Extent of Strategic Leadership of School Heads**

<b>No</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Descriptive Equivalent</b>
1	Visioning	4.32	Very Extensive
2	Focusing	3.36	Moderately Extensive
3	Implementing	4.28	Very Extensive
<b>Overall</b>		<b>3.99</b>	<b>Extensive</b>

Table 1 provides the summary on the extent of strategic leadership of school heads. It is exhibited that the overall mean of strategic leadership of school heads is 3.99, which is in an extensive level. This means that strategic leadership of school heads is oftentimes evident.

Data show that all three (3) indicators reveal a varying result ranging from moderately to very extensive level. As arranged chronologically, visioning has the highest mean score (4.32). This is followed by implementing (4.28), and focusing (3.36).

With the very extensive strategic leadership of school heads, this reaffirms the widely held belief of Deeboonmee and Ariratana (2014) citing that many leaders who lead their organizations successfully use strategic leadership. The characteristics of strategic leadership include having wide vision and taking such vision into practice. The administrator has to practice strategic leadership. He has to change his way of thinking and accept a new style of administration which corresponds to change. He has to attempt to set a perfect strategic plan and cover all aspects of an educational institute. This change would lead to the implementation of management procedures especially the application of strategic plan into practice in the organization such as the structural organization, organization culture, information technology, human resources as well as strategic for monitoring and evaluation.

Furthermore, the results are paralleled to the findings of the study conducted by Mohammad and Ismail (2018) revealing that there are many factors that influence the principal strategic leadership and students' outcome. Zakaria et al. (2021) concluded that the principal's individual strengths and their strategic planning are dominant factors. More so, the principal strategic leadership strongly influences school performance, especially on students' achievement in academic, co-curriculum and personal.

**Table 2**

**Summary on the Extent of Stakeholders' Involvement**

No	Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1	Leadership and Governance	3.53	Extensive
2	Learners' Achievement	4.29	Very Extensive
3	School Programs and Reforms	4.38	Very Extensive
<b>Overall</b>		<b>4.06</b>	<b>Extensive</b>

Table 2 provides the summary on the extent of stakeholders' involvement. It is exhibited that the overall mean of stakeholders' involvement is 4.06, which is in an extensive level. This means that the stakeholders' involvement is oftentimes evident.

Data show that all three (3) indicators reveal a varying result ranging from extensive to very extensive level. As arranged chronologically, school programs and reforms have the highest mean score (4.38). This is followed by learners' achievement (4.29), and leadership and governance (3.53).

The findings of this study supported the contention of Bruns et al. (2011) espousing that multiple stakeholder engagement leads to effective school management. Having a school council that includes a wide range of stakeholders has a positive impact on student outcomes. For this purpose, engaging stakeholders and encouraging them to make decisions and propose ideas for school change are essential, giving them a sense of ownership and responsibility. Hofohsa (2012) further concluded that mutual decision-making is the foundation of effective planning.

Roundy (2022) substantiated that each stakeholder in education plays a unique role and can help increase support for educational goals. A stakeholder in education is anyone who has an interest in, or is impacted by, the educational system in some way. It is anyone who has a "stake" or a vested interest in the success and welfare of a school or educational system. Stakeholders in education include both those who are directly involved (such as parents, teachers, and students) and those indirectly impacted (such as government officials and local business leaders) by the success or failure of an educational system. All members of a community are stakeholders in education.

In addition, Smith and Goodwin (2014) claimed that when stakeholders are active in creating the plan for improvement, there are greater possibilities to carry out the plan. Furthermore, Tobergte and Curtis (2013) stated that accountability positively affects stakeholders' perceptions, expectations and discipline in the school environment. Theoretically, enhancing the bridging of stakeholders with the school foster trust and further increases the level of community involvement in school. In other words, community involvement in school may serve as a springboard in developing an additional form of community involvement in schools (Preston, 2013).

**Table 3**

**Significance of the Relationship Between the Extent**

**of Strategic Leadership of School Heads and Stakeholders' Involvement**

Strategic Leadership of School Heads Indicators	Dependent Variable	r-value	p-value	Decision on Ho
Visioning		0.628	0.000	Ho is Rejected

Focusing	<b>Stakeholders' Involvement</b>	0.598	0.000	Ho is Rejected
Implementing		0.615	0.000	Ho is Rejected
<b>Overall</b>		<b>0.614*</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>Ho is Rejected</b>

\*Significant at 0.05 significance level.

Presented in Table 3 are the data on the significance of the relationship between strategic leadership of school heads and stakeholders' involvement. Reflected in the hypothesis, the relationship was tested at 0.05 level of

significance. The overall r-value of .614 with a p-value of <0.05 signified the rejection of the null hypothesis. It means that there is a significant relationship between strategic leadership of school heads and stakeholders' involvement. This shows that strategic leadership of school heads is correlated with stakeholders' involvement.

Doing a pairwise correlation among the measures of both variables, it can be gleaned that visioning, focusing and implementing revealed computed r-values of 0.628, 0.598, and 0.615 respectively with p-values which are less than 0.05 in the level of significance. This implies that as visioning, focusing, and implementing increase, the stakeholders' involvement also increases.

The result is in consonance to the study conducted by [Anderson \(2016\)](#) claiming that principal's strategic leadership is the activity of driving everyone involved in the organization so that they generate a quality organizational performance in achieving organizational goals to the fullest through an effective approach. The principal's strategic leadership is directed to create a conducive organizational performance to support the performance of school programs to the maximum level, especially in the context of learning.

Moreover, Schrag (2016) confirmed that the principal's strategic leadership is an activity undertaken to stimulate all resources involved in school development, both directly and indirectly, to improve the school quality. The resources consist of elements of the school, parents, and the community holistically who have a strong passion and commitment to improving school programs.

Similarly, [Saaticioglu et al. \(2011\)](#) claimed that a school principal's ability to engage with external stakeholders is critical for achieving a range of school objectives such as involving parents, implementing policy mandates, and accessing resources from the school district. A school principal's ability to engage with external stakeholders—parents, the school district, community members, among others—is critical for achieving a range of school objectives such as ensuring sufficient student enrollment, implementing federal and state policy mandates, complying with teacher union policies, and accessing resources from the school district and other organizations.

## Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were offered:

The extent of strategic leadership of school heads implies that it is oftentimes evident in the school. Specifically, visioning and implementing are always evident while focusing was oftentimes evident. Meanwhile, the extent of stakeholders' involvement is oftentimes evident in the schools.

Based on the findings, strategic leadership of school heads and stakeholders' involvement are correlated. Also, strategic leadership of school heads significantly influences stakeholders' involvement. This leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Further, the result indicates that for every unit increase in the three domains of strategic leadership of school heads, the stakeholders' involvement will increase.

## Recommendations

The following suggestions were offered based on the conclusions of the study:

The higher officials in the Department of Education may craft effective policies, programs, projects, interventions and activities which may intensify the strategic leadership of school heads and the stakeholders' involvement. They may provide trainings to school heads that would help them to reinforce their strategic leadership which they may use to convince more stakeholders' involvement.

Moreover, school principals may find means in enhancing their strategic leadership. They may also assess the status of their strategic leadership and how does it affect stakeholders' involvement. Moreover, they may also craft new interventions strengthening stakeholders' involvement.

Furthermore, teachers may take an effort of helping the schools in encouraging all internal and external stakeholders to take part of the school events, undertakings, and activities. Teachers may also provide feedbacks and suggestions to school heads on how to convince maximum participation of the stakeholders.

Finally, future researchers may explore relevant information about strategic leadership of school heads and stakeholders' involvement. Also, other means of research approach may be utilized to further explore the involved variables in this study.

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