The Leader in Me Program: An Exploratory Sequential Study

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Abstract — This study examines the experiences of the participants in the implementation of The Leader in Me (TLIM) program as perceived by teachers and students using exploratory sequential mixed method approach for SY 2022- 2025. The respondent profile reveals that the majority of teacher respondents were aged 20-29 years, while most student respondents were 15 years old, and female dominated teachers and students respondents. Eleven (11) themes emerged based on the testimonies of the participants: Cultivating holistic leadership and collaborative growth for personal development; Self-leadership towards empowered a values-centered school community; Systemic and operational challenges in adopting transformational educational programs; Supporting collaborative and sustainable mechanism for effective program implementation; Empowered academic excellence through personal development and leadership; Building sustainable and inclusive values-centered school community; Empowered self-leadership with relational skills; Holistic transformation in school culture and personal development through TLIM implementation; Personal, social, technological, and organizational factors of effective TLIM implementation; Adaptation and resilience in implementing the TLIM program; and Empowered and inclusive learning school environment. Findings indicate strong support for TLIM among both teachers and students, with high ratings in leadership development, school culture transformation, and values-centered communities. Teachers rated systemic challenges, collaboration, and personal, social, and technological factors as Implemented to a Great Extent, while students rated them as Implemented to a Great Extent. Data shows significant differences in TLIM perception were observed between teachers and students, with teachers consistently rating the program's implementation higher. Differences were also noted based on age and gender for certain themes. Based on the findings, an action plan was proposed to enhance TLIM implementation and address identified challenges, further strengthening leadership development, academic excellence, and inclusive school environment.

Keywords — Challenges, Experiences, Implementation, Holistic Leadership Development, School Culture Transformation, The Leader in Me (TLIM)

I. Introduction

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." – Nelson Mandela

Students' developing leadership abilities are becoming more and more important for their preparation to succeed in a fast changing environment. Programs such as "The Leader in Me" seek to develop these abilities, so strengthening academic performance and building a trusting culture. Based on the conviction that everyone has the capacity to be a leader, "The Leader in Me" is a thorough pre-kindergarten through 12th grade framework Initiatives in leadership development are seen as essential for enhancing teaching and learning as schools negotiate the challenges of the twenty-first century. These initiatives concentrate on developing the whole student and on skills that are absolutely essential for the survival of our civilization (Tench et al., 2021). The Leader in Me presents a thorough guide for developing leaders in students, so enabling them to flourish in the twenty-first century. This introduction will investigate, especially in an international context, the program's relevance in tackling present trends, issues, gaps, and problems in education.

One especially noteworthy trend is the growing focus in education on whole-person development. Although academic performance is still first priority, social-emotional learning and character development are increasingly seen as vital. Kramer et al. 2019 By encouraging critical life skills including responsibility, communication, and teamwork alongside academic excellence, the Leader in Me fits with this trend. (Covey 2008) This all-encompassing approach gives pupils the tools they need to negotiate the complexity of a world undergoing fast change. (Me, 2024 leader in)

The difference between conventional teaching approaches and the expectations of the twenty-first-century workplace is a major problem in contemporary education. Students will have a future needing flexibility, critical thinking, and ability to solve problems. Kramer & colleagues, 2019 The Leader in Me seeks to close this disparity by giving students chances to grow in these vital leadership skills. (Lead in Me, 2024) The program helps students be proactive learners and problem-solvers so they may succeed in a fast-paced global environment.

Lack of attention on leadership development at all levels is a major issue in education. Although designated student leaders receive leadership training, The Leader in Me advocates that everyone can be a leader (Covey, 2008). This strategy closes a major gap by giving every student the chance to grow in their leadership ability. The program generates an environment where every student can participate and shine by encouraging a culture of leadership inside universities.

Moreover, The Leader in Me notes the several possibilities and difficulties of international learning. The ideas of the program are universal and offer a structure for the growth of leaders fit for different situations. The Leader in Me presents a great way for empowering students with the leadership skills they need to succeed in a globalized world as educational systems all around struggle with related concerns. This is especially pertinent in the Philippines, where the program

is becoming rather popular. More investigation on the particular application and effects of The Leader in Me in the Philippine setting would be quite insightful.

The skills applicable in the twenty-first century are under consideration as curriculum pushes in all levels of basic education at Holy Rosary Academy in Las Piñas City (HRA), the site of this proposed study. Promoting values education "at all levels of the educational system for the development of the human person committed to the building of 'a just and humane society' and an independent and democratic nation," the Department of Education (DepEd) published DO 36, s. 2013, in 2013. Their participation gives the school the necessary help for its 2013 started initiative on the development of its values. Since then, the Human Resources Administration (HRA) has set aside a special period for correct behavior and good manners and pushed the inclusion of monthly assigned virtues as teaching tools across all spheres. Although this integration approach has been used up to now, integration is often found to be imposed or even bypassed totally.

The familiarity of the school with The Leader in Me (TLIM) has helped the core management team, professors, and administrative staff realize that much more can be done to equip students to be successful in the twenty-first century. This insight implies that the strategies the institution uses to increase the number of its students call for more support. This chance, which this co-participant as HRA's directress-prince enthusiastically grabbed as the institution is always looking for changes in educational paradigms, was the impetus for the breakthrough that happened in the TLIM program in 2017.

FranklinCovey Philippines invited educational institutions to an orientation on this "new" school development initiative in 2017. The FranklinCovey Philippines education team responded right away to the school's demand for a thorough orientation covering all of the administrative and teaching staff as well as the parents. This led to further discussions starting with the 2017–2018 academic year on the application of the leadership process. This study aims to identify and evaluate the relevance of the events a person has gone through as well as gather proof to support the experiences the subjects have encountered. These events, which one has encountered or lived through, are recollective in character since they are thought back upon following their encounter. The investigation that will be carried out in this study will be much influenced by the experiences of HRA co-participants and the information they acquired of the TLIM process over the past three years, covering the fiscal year 2021-2024.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Leadership In Me

This review delves into the existing literature and studies that examine the implementation of the "The Leadership in Me" program within academic institutions, exploring its effectiveness, challenges, and impact on various stakeholders. Understanding the nuances of leadership within higher education is crucial for fostering organizational performance, innovation, and a positive institutional culture (Kedemi, 2024). Educational reforms are ongoing, raising questions about

leadership and management within educational institutions, highlighting the importance of contemporary planning (Competitiveness of Tourist Destinations Theoretical Study.Pdf, n.d.). Identifying effective strategies for leadership development is particularly important given the limited opportunities available in higher education (Mueller, 2016). As academic institutions face increasing pressure to demonstrate the impact of their initiatives, a comprehensive review of the literature on leadership programs like "The Leadership in Me" becomes essential. Such reviews contribute to the identification of best practices and areas for improvement in leadership development within the academic sector, ultimately enhancing the overall educational experience and preparing individuals for leadership roles in a rapidly changing world. This review aims to synthesize the existing knowledge base, identify research gaps, and provide insights for future research and practice in the field of leadership development in academic settings.

Leadership within academic institutions is a multifaceted concept influenced by various theoretical frameworks, including transformational leadership, servant leadership, and distributed leadership, all of which emphasize collaboration, ethical conduct, and a shared vision (Davies et al., 2001). Transformational leadership, in particular, has gained prominence for its ability to inspire and motivate individuals towards achieving common goals (Gr, 1992). Effective leadership in higher education requires a critical understanding of these theoretical underpinnings to navigate the complexities of the academic environment (Davies et al., 2001). Moreover, the success of any leadership development program, such as "The Leadership in Me", hinges on the alignment of its principles with the specific needs and context of the academic institution (Jones et al., 2017). Considering that many academic leaders ascend to their roles based on research and managerial success, often without formal leadership training, the integration of well-structured leadership programs becomes even more critical (Whittaker & Montgomery, 2022). The scrutiny of leadership in higher education has increased since the 1980s due to increased student numbers, funding changes, marketization, student choice, and globalization (Black, 2015). Furthermore, the interconnectedness of leader behavior and adult learning theories, while acknowledged, often receives insufficient attention in leadership research within higher education (Issah, 2020). A comprehensive theoretical framework for leadership development in academic institutions should also consider the challenges and opportunities presented by the evolving landscape of higher education, including technological advancements, changing student demographics, and increasing demands for accountability (Megheirkouni & Mejheirkouni, 2020). Such a framework should also emphasize the importance of continuous learning, reflection, and adaptation for leaders at all levels of the institution.

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People

It is a synthesis of universal and timeless principles of personal, interpersonal, and organizational performance that includes accountability, vision, integrity, cooperation, collaboration, and renewal. The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People is a fundamental component

of the whole Leader in Me approach. It is a synthesis of these concepts. The essence of these ideas is secular, and they are shared by all societal groups and cultural traditions.

The following are synopses of the 7 habits expressed in the language of kids (Covey et al., 2014):

Habit	What It Means for Kids
1. Be Proactive. (Habit of Choice)	I am a responsible person. I take initiative. I choose my actions, attitudes, and moods. I do not blame others for my mistakes. I can only be offended if I choose to be.
2. Begin with the end in mind. (Habit of Vision)	I plan ahead and set goals. I do things that have meaning and make a difference. I am an important part of my classroom and contribute to my school's mission and vision, and look for ways to be a good citizen.
3. Put first things first. (Habit of Integrity and Execution	I spend my time on things that are most important. This means I say no to things I know I should not do. I set priorities, make a schedule, and follow my plan. I am disciplined and organized.
4. Think win-win. (Habit of Mutual Benefit)	I balance courage for getting what I want with consideration for what others want. I make deposits in others' Emotional Bank Accounts. When conflicts arise, I look for options that work for both sides.
5. Seek first to understand, then to be understood. (Habit of Mutual Understanding)	I listen to other people's ideas and feelings. I try to see things from their viewpoints. I listen to others without interrupting. I am confident in voicing my ideas. I look people in the eyes when talking.
6. Synergize (Habit of Creative Cooperation)	I value other people's strengths and learn form them. I get along well with others, even people who are different from me. I work well in groups. I seek out other people's ideas to solve problems because I know that by teaming with others, we can create better solutions than anyone of us alone. I am humble.
7. Sharpen the saw. (Habit of Renewal)	I take care of my body by eating right, exercising and getting sleep. I spend time with family and friends. I learn in lots of ways and lots of places, not just at school. I take time to find meaningful ways to help others.

Four Pillars of Learning

Lifelong learning stems from a recognition that learning throughout life is the key to cope with and meet the rapid changes and challenges of the 21st century. Thus, there is a need for individuals to "learn how to learn" This view appeared in the 1996 report titled *Learning: The Treasure Within* of The International Commission on Education for the 21st Century to UNESCO headed by Jacques Delors.

The lifelong-learning philosophy "involves the development of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values throughout one's life—from early childhood through adulthood." Learning is seen as encompassing all aspects of an individual's life, i.e., his or her personal development, physical well-being, role in the community, and performance in the workplace.

The report proposed a framework organizing lifelong learning into four pillars, namely: *learning to know*, *learning to do*, *learning to live together*, and *learning to be* as fundamental for

the reshaping of 21ˢᵗ century education. They following paragraphs describe them briefly (Covey, et al., 2014).

The four pillars are interdependent and form a single learning. That directs the human person to the construction of knowledge, skills, the ability to discern, act and evaluate in a broad and integral way.

- Learning to know. This pillar calls on teachers to do more than teaching facts by developing different kinds of skills - concentration, memorization and research – besides the capacity for abstract thought, intellectual curiosity, and logical problem-solving

- Learning to do. This pillar challenges teachers to do more to teach "personal competence" and not just certified skills. Certified skills are those skills needed for a specific job which vocational schools provide. Personal competence encompasses not only certified skills but also general skills and traits that all people need to develop such as initiative, communication, innovation, leadership, time management, teamwork and the willingness to risk.

- Learning to live together. This pillar calls on teachers to instill in students from early ages "an awareness of the similarities and interdependence of all people" and to "teach them how to understand others by looking at things from their point of view. This spirit of empathy "has a positive effect on young persons' social behavior for the rest of their lives."

- Learning to be. The final pillar urges teachers to recognize that "education should contribute to every person's complete development – mind and body, intelligence, sensitivity, aesthetic appreciation and spirituality." This pillar also enables students to "make up their own minds on the best courses of action in the different circumstances in their lives," and to take responsibility for their lives and education.

What schools emphasized of the four pillars in the 1990s are *learning to know* with emphasis on core academic subjects, and learning to do which deals with certified skills. On the other hand, what UNESCO recommends for more emphasis in the 21st century are learning to live together and learning to be, which highlight skills for avoiding and resolving conflicts, and skills for developing the whole person, respectively. These two pillars relate to social-emotional learning (Covey, et al., 2014).

The Leader in Me was originally developed by a principal and teachers who wanted to teach their students life skills alongside academics; as a cohort, they believed leadership, responsibility, accountability, problem solving, adaptability, and social-emotional skills were just as important as math and reading. That principal was Muriel Summers. In an effort to turn around her failing school, Dr. Summers, principal of A. B. Combs Leadership Magnet Elementary School in Raleigh, North Carolina, identified leadership as her new magnet theme based on community feedback. She decided to utilize Baldridge quality tools, FranklinCovey's *The 7 Habits of Highly*

Effective People®, and several other educational best practices in designing, developing, and implementing a leadership model for her school.

Within a few years, A. B. Combs experienced a significant turnaround, and the school was named the #1 Magnet School in America. A. B. Combs reported improved academic achievement, increased enrollment, soaring parent and teacher satisfaction, and higher levels of student self-confidence. Several other schools across the country took note, replicated Summers' leadership model and started to achieve similar dramatic improvements.

Based on demand from Summers and other principals and teachers who were intrigued by A. B. Combs' success, FranklinCovey codified Summers' process, creating *The Leader in Me* so that other schools could implement the same leadership model and achieve similar results.

On May 16, 2014, A. B. Combs Leadership Magnet Elementary was named the #1 Magnet School in America for a second time. It is the only school to achieve this award twice. This award for excellence is given annually to the nation's top magnet school based on a school's demonstrated ability to:

- Raise student academic achievement.

- Promote racial and socioeconomic diversity.

- Provide integrated curricula and instruction.

- Create partnerships that enhance the school's theme.

Since its official launch, thousands of public, private, charter, and magnet schools in over 50 countries have adopted *The Leader in Me*. Teachers continue to offer feedback on best practices, which provides the basis for continuous improvement and refinement of the process, ensuring generations of students will experience better, more transformational results.

Since 2010, objective evidence of *The Leader in Me* effectiveness has been steadily growing. It has been reported that over 30 independent academic-research studies have evaluated this unique process all of which determined the positive impacts of *the process* across a wide variety of areas. Below are representative research highlights of the areas of growth, i.e., Leadership, Culture, and Academics. All of the studies included in this review are taken from research reports collected in the leaderinme.org website.

Leadership Research

The concept of lifelong learning originates from the realization that being able to learn throughout one's whole life is essential in order to successfully adapt to and face the challenges and changes that are prevalent in the 21st century. Individuals are therefore need to "learn how to learn" in order to fulfill this requirement. The International Commission on Education for the 21st

Century, which was headed by Jacques Delors, presented this viewpoint in a report to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1996. The study was titled Learning: The Treasure Within. Throughout one's whole life, beginning with early infancy and continuing through maturity, the notion of lifelong learning "entails the development of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values." A person's personal growth, physical well-being, involvement in the community, and performance in the job are all considered to be components of an individual's life that are included in the concept of learning.

Learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be as important for the remaking of education in the 21st century were the four major pillars that were presented in the study as a framework for organizing lifelong learning. [Covey et al., 2014] provides a concise description of them in the paragraphs that follow.

The four pillars are dependant on one another and come together to produce a unified learning. This leads to the development of knowledge, skills, and the capacity to perceive, act, and evaluate in a comprehensive and holistic manner in the human being.

Getting to know people better. By cultivating a variety of abilities, including focus, memorization, and investigation, as well as the ability for abstract reasoning, intellectual curiosity, and logical problem-solving, this pillar encourages teachers to go beyond simply imparting information to themselves.

Learning how to perform. The purpose of this pillar is to encourage teachers to go above and above in their efforts to teach "personal competence" rather than only certified abilities. Vocational schools are responsible for cultivating certified skills, which are talents that are required for a certain employment. Personal competence covers not just abilities that have been certified, but also general skills and characteristics that are necessary for all individuals to cultivate. These include, but are not limited to, initiative, communication, invention, leadership, time management, teamwork, and the willingness to take unnecessary risks.

Getting used to coexisting with individuals. This pillar encourages teachers to create in their pupils, beginning at a young age, "an awareness of the similarities and interdependence of all people" and to "teach them how to understand others by looking at things from their point of view so that they can better understand them." A spirit of empathy "has a positive effect on the social behavior of young people for the rest of their lives," according to the World Health Organization.

The process of becoming. Education should contribute to every person's total growth, including their mind and body, intelligence, sensitivity, aesthetic appreciation, and spirituality, according to the last pillar, which asks teachers to acknowledge this fact. In addition, "making up their own minds on the best courses of action in the different circumstances in their lives" and "taking responsibility for their lives and education" are both made possible for students by this pillar.

Learning to know, with an emphasis on fundamental academic topics, and learning to do, which deals with recognized abilities, were the two pillars that schools placed the most emphasis on during the year 1990. With that being said, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) suggests that the 21st century should place a greater focus on learning to live together and learning to be. These two skills emphasize the ability to prevent and resolve disputes, as well as the ability to develop the full person. According to Covey et al. (2014), these two pillars are associated with social-emotional learning activities.

Initially, The Leader in Me was developed by a principal and teachers who wanted to teach their students life skills in addition to academics. As a group, they believed that concepts such as leadership, responsibility, accountability, problem solving, adaptability, and social-emotional skills were equally as important as reading and mathematics. It was Muriel Summers who served as the principal. At A. B. Combs Leadership Magnet Elementary School in Raleigh, North Carolina, Dr. Summers, the principal, picked leadership as her new magnet theme based on feedback from the community. This was done in an effort to turn around her failing school. During the process of conceiving, developing, and putting into action a leadership model for her school, she makes the decision to make use of Baldridge quality tools, FranklinCovey's The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People®, and a number of other educational best practices.

A substantial turnaround occurred at A. B. Combs within a short period of time, and the school was subsequently recognized as the top Magnet School in the United States based on this achievement. According to A. B. Combs, there was a rise in greater levels of student self-confidence, as well as improved academic success, increased enrollment, and a significant improvement in the satisfaction of both parents and teachers. After taking note of Summers' leadership approach, a number of other schools around the country began to mimic it and began to achieve tremendous results comparable to those that Summers had achieved.

FranklinCovey codified Summers' method and created The Leader in Me in response to requests from Summers and other administrators and teachers who were fascinated by A. B. Combs' success. The goal of this was to ensure that other schools could apply the same leadership model and obtain outcomes that were comparable to those achieved by A. B. Combs.

Additionally, on May 16, 2014, A. B. Combs Leadership Magnet Elementary was recognized as the number one magnet school in the United States of America for the second time. This school is the only one that has won this honor on two separate occasions:

- Raise student academic achievement;
- Promote racial and socioeconomic diversity;
- Provide integrated curricula and instruction;
- Create partnerships that enhance the school's theme. This award for excellence is given annually to the nation's top magnet school based on the college's demonstrated ability to do all of these things effectively.

A large number of public, private, charter, and magnet schools in more than fifty nations have accepted The Leader in Me since it was first introduced to the public. In order to guarantee that future generations of students will have better and more transformative experiences, teachers continue to provide input on best practices. This feedback serves as the foundation for continual growth and refining of the process.

There has been a consistent increase in the amount of objective evidence that The Leader in Me is successful since the year 2010. This one-of-a-kind procedure has been assessed by more than thirty separate academic research studies, all of which have established that the process has beneficial consequences in a broad range of different areas. This information has been documented. A selection of study highlights that are reflective of the areas of growth, namely Leadership, Culture, and Academics, are highlighted below.

The study reports that were gathered from the leaderinme.org website were used to construct each and every one of the studies that are featured in this review.

Current Research on Program Implementation

Current research on the implementation of "The Leadership in Me" program in academic institutions reveals a growing interest in its potential to foster leadership skills and promote a culture of empowerment among students and staff. Studies have explored the program's impact on student achievement, self-esteem, and interpersonal skills, as well as its effects on school climate and teacher effectiveness (Jameel, 2023). However, the findings have been mixed, with some studies reporting significant positive outcomes and others indicating limited or no discernible impact. One potential reason for the variability in research findings is the lack of standardized implementation protocols and assessment measures. The effectiveness of leadership programs can also be improved by incorporating principles of adult learning and aligning program content with the specific needs and goals of the participants (Ford et al., 2020). Furthermore, the success of the program may depend on the extent to which it is integrated into the curriculum and supported by school leadership. Effective leadership development programs are assessed through a leader's behavioral indicators and traits, exposure to exemplary formal and informal leadership practices, and an organizational culture that enables personal growth (Longe & Needham, 2023). Longitudinal studies are needed to examine the long-term effects of the program and to identify the factors that contribute to its sustainability. More research is needed to evaluate the program's impact on diverse student populations and to determine whether it is equally effective in different types of academic institutions.

Gaps in the Literature

Despite the growing body of research on "The Leadership in Me" program, several gaps in the literature remain. First, there is a dearth of studies that employ rigorous research designs, such as randomized controlled trials, to establish causal links between the program and its outcomes (Lee et al., 2022). Second, most studies have focused on short-term outcomes, neglecting the long-

term effects of the program on students' leadership development and career trajectories. (Njah et al., 2021). Third, there is a need for more qualitative research to explore the experiences of students, teachers, and administrators who have participated in the program. Fourth, few studies have examined the cost-effectiveness of the program, which is an important consideration for academic institutions with limited resources. Fifth, there is a lack of research on the role of contextual factors, such as school culture, community involvement, and parental support, in moderating the program's impact. It is essential to address these gaps in the literature to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the program's potential benefits and limitations. Addressing these gaps will require a multi-faceted approach, including the use of mixed-methods research designs, the development of standardized assessment tools, and the implementation of large-scale longitudinal studies. (Black & Earnest, 2009). Furthermore, future research should explore the potential of technology-enhanced learning environments to support and enhance the program's delivery.

Statement of the Problem

This study intends to collect and interpret the lived experiences of co-participants and factors affecting the implementation of the TLIM in the three-year implementation of The Leader in Me process of the Holy Rosary School of Las Pinas.

Specifically, the study seeks to find the following questions:

1. How do The Leader in Me co-participants describe their significant experience of the process?

2. Based on the co-participant shared meaning, what themes emerged?

3. What is the profile of the respondents according to:

   3.1 Age;

   3.2 Sex; and

   3.3 Type of stakeholders?

4. What is the extent of implementation of the TLIM process as perceived by the respondents in terms of:

   4.1. Cultivating Holistic Leadership and Collaborative Growth for Personal Development;

   4.2. Self-Leadership Towards Empowered a Values-centered School Community;

   4.3. Systemic and Operational Challenges in Adopting Transformational Educational Programs;

4.4. Supporting Collaborative and Sustainable Mechanism for Effective Program Implementation;

4.5. Empowered Academic Excellence through Personal Development and Leadership;

4.6. Building Sustainable and Inclusive Values-centered School Community;

4.7. Empowered Self-Leadership with Relational Skills;

4.8. Holistic Transformation in School Culture and Personal Development Through TLIM Implementation;

4.9. Personal, social, technological, and organizational factors of Effective TLIM Implementation;

4.10. Adaptation and Resilience in Implementing the TLIM Program; and

4.11. Empowered and Inclusive Learning School Environment?

5. Is there a significant difference on the extent of the TLIM implementation as perceived by the 2 groups of the respondents?

6. Is there a significant difference on the extent of the implementation as perceived by the respondents when grouped according to profile?

7. Based on the insights and findings gained, what action plan can be proposed to improve TLIM implementation especially toward Lighthouse Certification?

II. Methodology

This study utilized the exploratory sequential mixed research design that blends qualitative and quantitative stages to create a thorough knowledge of a phenomena. This approach emphasizes the use of sequential research methods. An in-depth qualitative investigation is the first step in this methodology. The goal of this investigation is to identify underlying themes, which are then used to guide the design of the succeeding quantitative phase. The purpose of this strategy is to ensure that the data collection is contextually grounded and linked with the lived experiences of participants (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). This is accomplished by using the qualitative results to inform the construction of instruments or variables during the quantitative phase of the research process.

This research makes use of a phenomenological research design throughout the qualitative phase of the investigation. This research design is centered on the identification of the lived experiences of persons who have been subjected to a certain phenomena. According to Moustakas

(1994), the goals of phenomenology are to investigate and describe the ways in which individuals perceive and make sense of their experiences. Phenomenology has its origins in the philosophical traditions of Husserl and Heidegger. This study will capture the personal narratives of The Leader in Me (TLIM) co-participants by conducting in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. The purpose of this documentation is to emphasize the difficulties, insights, and transformations that the participants experienced during the course of the three-year implementation of TLIM. The data will be evaluated using thematic analysis, which will enable the identification of common themes that arise from the experiences of the participants (Van Manen, 2016).

In the quantitative phase, which follows the qualitative phase, a descriptive-comparative-correlational research design was utilized. This approach aims to quantify and evaluate the correlations between variables without attempting to manipulate them in any way. An examination of patterns, trends, and relationships among the many aspects associated with the deployment of TLIM may be accomplished with the use of this design (Polit & Beck, 2021). This study will involve the administration of a structured survey questionnaire to a broader group of respondents, which will include students, instructors, administrators, and parents. The questionnaire will be designed based on themes that were found during the qualitative phase of the methodology.

This study provides a profound and contextual knowledge of TLIM implementation by using phenomenological and descriptive correlational research designs inside an exploratory sequential mixed-methods approach. This is followed by an empirical validation of the influence that it has. Not only does this methodological framework capture the complexity of the lived experiences of the participants, but it also offers measurable insights into the efficacy of the program, which eventually contributes to changes in the implementation of TLIM at Holy Rosary School of Las Piñas that are founded on evidence.

For the quantitative research design, a stratified sampling method was employed to gather data from students. Stratified sampling ensures that subgroups within the population are proportionally represented, thereby increasing the reliability and generalizability of the findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Meanwhile, total enumeration was used for teachers and non-teaching personnel, meaning all members of these groups were included in the study rather than selecting a subset. This approach allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of how the TLIM program was perceived and implemented by teachers and support staff.

For the qualitative research design, a purposive sampling technique was used to select participants from both teachers and students. Purposive sampling is ideal for qualitative research as it allows the researcher to select individuals who have firsthand experiences and deep insights into the phenomenon under study (Patton, 2015). The selection of participants was guided by specific criteria, ensuring the inclusion of individuals who could provide rich, relevant, and meaningful data about the TLIM implementation.

The following criteria were applied in selecting teachers and students participants for the qualitative phase of the study:

1. Teachers

   - Must have at least two years of experience in implementing TLIM within the school.

   - Have actively participated in TLIM-related activities, such as leadership training, mentoring, or curriculum integration.

   - Demonstrated engagement and familiarity with the TLIM principles and practices.

2. Students

   - Must have been enrolled at the school for at least three academic years, ensuring exposure to TLIM.

   - Have actively participated in TLIM initiatives, such as leadership programs, student-led conferences, or peer mentoring.

   - Show willingness to articulate personal experiences related to TLIM.

This combination of stratified sampling for students, total enumeration for teachers and non-teaching personnel, and purposive sampling for qualitative data collection ensured a robust research methodology. It enabled both numerical analysis and a deeper understanding of the lived experiences within the TLIM framework, aligning with best practices in mixed-method research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017).

For quantitative phase, the study involved a sample size of 181 respondents including sixty-one (61) teachers and one hundred and twenty (120) students. Overall, the sample size of 181 participants (61 teachers and 120 students) was deemed sufficient to provide valid and reliable insights into the effectiveness and challenges of TLIM implementation. The respondents ensured that the study captured a balanced representation of perspectives, allowing for a meaningful analysis of TLIM's impact on both teachers and students.

For the qualitative phase, only ten (10) teachers and ten (10) students were selected for the total of Twenty (20) participants. The chosen sample size ensures data saturation, meaning that additional participants would likely not contribute new themes or perspectives. Additionally, the feasibility and manageability of conducting in-depth interviews or focus group discussions necessitate a practical sample size that allows for efficient data collection, transcription, and analysis. Participants were purposefully selected based on their engagement with The Leader in Me (TLIM) program to ensure meaningful insights into its impact on leadership, school culture, and personal development.

III. Results and Discussion

The following is the summary of the findings of the study:

1. The significant experiences of the participants in the implementation of The Leadership in Me (TLIM) program are: Students consistently practiced the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, incorporating them into daily routines, schoolwork, and personal lives; Participation in TLIM activities boosted students' confidence, enhanced their self-esteem, and encouraged self-reflection to become the best versions of themselves; TLIM instilled critical thinking, problem-solving, and time management skills; Most of the students participated as student leaders in programs such as the Supreme Student Government (SSG), where they led peers, organized activities, and promoted TLIM principles; Students participated in events such as the LEAD program, talent showcases, team-building activities, and service projects; As TLIM was integrated into academic and extracurricular activities, students practically apply leadership principles into group projects, class discussions, and talent presentations; Activities like team-building exercises, leadership workshops, and group performances emphasized synergy and strengthened relationships among peers; Students observed a more supportive and inclusive school atmosphere due to the emphasis on character development and leadership; Students appreciated how TLIM principles shaped their academic performance and personal growth, fostering leadership and character traits they will carry forward into adulthood.

2. The following eleven (11) themes emerged based on the testimonies of the participants: Cultivating holistic leadership and collaborative growth for personal development; Self-leadership towards empowered a values-centered school community; Systemic and operational challenges in adopting transformational educational programs; Supporting collaborative and sustainable mechanism for effective program implementation; Empowered academic excellence through personal development and leadership; Building sustainable and inclusive values-centered school community; Empowered self-leadership with relational skills; Holistic transformation in school culture and personal development through TLIM implementation; Personal, social, technological, and organizational factors of effective TLIM implementation; Adaptation and resilience in implementing the TLIM program; and Empowered and inclusive learning school environment

3. The profile of the respondents reveals that majority of teacher respondents were aged 20-29 years old, accounting for 40 individuals or 65.57% of the total, while the largest age group among student respondents was 15 years old, comprising 37 individuals or 30.8%. In terms of gender distribution, 34 teacher respondents (55.7%) and 66 student respondents (55.0%) identified as female. Regarding the type of stakeholder, 34% of the respondents were teachers (61 individuals), whereas students constituted the majority at 66% (120 individuals), indicating a diverse representation of perspectives in the study.

4. The findings indicate a strong confirmation of The Leader in Me (TLIM) program among both teachers and students. Cultivating holistic leadership, collaborative growth, and building a values-centered school community were rated Implemented to a Great Extent and always, respectively. Teachers rated systemic and operational challenges, collaborative and sustainable mechanisms, and personal, social, technological, and organizational factors as Implemented to a Great Extent, while students rated most as Implemented to a Great Extent. Both groups rated empowered academic excellence, holistic transformation in school culture, and self-leadership with relational skills as having a very high impact. Additionally, adaptation and resilience were rated Implemented to a Great Extent by teachers and Implemented to a Great Extent by students.

5. The study revealed significant differences in perceptions between teachers and students regarding the implementation of The Leader in Me (TLIM) program across various themes. In the theme "Cultivating Holistic Leadership and Collaborative Growth for Personal Development," teachers reported a higher perception of implementation compared to students, indicating a significant difference. Similarly, for "Self-Leadership Towards Empowered and Values-Centered School Community," teachers rated the implementation significantly higher than students. A similar pattern emerged in the theme "Systemic and Operational Challenges in Adopting Transformational Educational Programs," where teachers rated the implementation higher than students, with a significant difference. Other themes, such as "Supporting Collaborative and Sustainable Mechanism for Effective Program Implementation" and "Empowered Academic Excellence through Personal Development and Leadership," also showed significant differences in perceptions. Furthermore, significant differences were observed in "Building Sustainable and Inclusive Values-Centered School Community," "Empowered Self-Leadership with Relational Skills," and "Holistic Transformation in School Culture and Personal Development Through TLIM Implementation," where teachers consistently rated the implementation higher. Additionally, in "Personal, Social, Technological, and Organizational Factors of Effective TLIM Implementation" and "Adaptation and Resilience in Implementing the TLIM Program," significant differences were also observed. The theme "Empowered and Inclusive Learning School Environment" showed the highest mean difference, with teachers rating the implementation significantly higher than students.

6. The study found no significant differences in teachers' and students' perceptions of TLIM implementation across age groups for most themes. However, teachers' perceptions of three themes, including "Supporting Collaborative Mechanisms" and "Empowered Academic Excellence," varied significantly by age. Regarding Sex, there were no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of TLIM based on sex. However, significant differences in perceptions were found among male and female students for certain themes, such as "Holistic Leadership" and "Self-Leadership." Lastly, teachers generally perceived

TLIM implementation more positively than students across all themes. Teachers rated the program higher in areas like "Leadership Growth" and "Empowered Self-Leadership,".

7. A dual pathway framework was a proposed output of the study.

IV. Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are provided for school management, teachers, students, and future researchers to enhance the effectiveness of The Leader in Me (TLIM) program and maximize its benefits.

1. For School Management. School management should strengthen the integration of TLIM into the school's academic and extracurricular programs by providing structured leadership training, mentoring sessions, and continuous evaluation of its impact.

2. For Teachers. Providing mentorship opportunities where students can learn leadership skills through structured peer mentoring programs and teacher-led initiatives will further enhance their growth. Additionally, teachers should encourage cross-disciplinary collaboration among teachers to reinforce TLIM principles across different subjects and school activities.

3. For Students. Foster a collaborative environment by supporting fellow students in leadership activities and contributing to a values-centered school community is important.

4. For Future Researchers. Future researchers should consider expanding the scope of their studies to explore the long-term impact of TLIM on students' career readiness and post-secondary success.

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