Development strategies and digital transformation practices in secondary schools of Rizal District in the province of Nueva Ecija: Their relationship with teacher empowerment

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Abstract

This study, conducted during the 2023-2024 school year in the Rizal District under the Schools Division Office of Nueva Ecija, examines the correlation between development strategies, digital transformation practices, and teacher empowerment in public secondary schools. It employs a quantitative, descriptive-correlational design, surveying 144 teachers from five high schools, representing 64.57% of the district's 223 teachers. Results indicate that respondents perceive their schools' development strategies as excellent and their digital transformation practices as very good. Teacher empowerment is also perceived as excellent. The study reveals a high positive correlation between perceived development strategies and digital transformation practices. Significant positive correlations also exist between development strategies and teacher empowerment, as well as between digital transformation practices and teacher empowerment. Based on these findings, the researcher developed organizational development intervention strategies and a training design. It is recommended that schools implement these programs, customizing them to meet specific needs. Regular assessment through surveys, feedback, and performance metrics is essential to identify areas for improvement. Updating and refining the programs based on the latest research, stakeholder feedback, and observed outcomes will ensure their continued relevance and effectiveness. To sustain excellence, fostering a culture of continuous improvement is crucial. This involves encouraging all school community members to contribute ideas and solutions for ongoing development. By adopting and tailoring the crafted programs to the unique needs of each school, and by continuously assessing and updating these programs, schools can enhance their development strategies, digital transformation practices, and teacher empowerment, leading to overall improved educational outcomes.

Keywords: development strategies, digital transformation practices, teacher empowerment

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1. Introduction

The Education 2030 - Incheon Declaration places significant emphasis on achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which aims to ensure inclusive, equitable, and high-quality education while promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all. This commitment to quality education underscores the importance of enhancing learning outcomes through strengthened components such as inputs, processes, evaluation mechanisms, and methods for measuring progress. At its core is the empowerment, recruitment, training, and continuous support of teachers and educators within well-resourced, efficient, and effectively governed educational systems. Quality education, as envisioned in this declaration, transcends the mere imparting of knowledge; it aims to foster creativity, instill foundational skills like literacy and numeracy, and nurture advanced cognitive, interpersonal, and social abilities such as analytical thinking and problem-solving (UNESCO, 2023). This holistic approach not only prepares individuals to thrive in a rapidly changing world but also contributes to societal development and sustainable global progress. Furthermore, the declaration highlights the significance of education in cultivating essential skills, values, and attitudes necessary for citizens to lead healthy, fulfilling lives. It underscores the role of education for sustainable development (ESD) and global citizenship education (GCED) in enabling individuals to make informed decisions and effectively address local and global challenges. This comprehensive approach aims to prepare individuals to respond adeptly to the complexities of an ever-evolving world.

Attaining quality education within schools as academic organization involves a multifaceted approach that intertwines organizational development and educational strategies. Schools, as organizations, play a pivotal role in creating an environment conducive to quality education. In a global scenario, organizational development within schools necessitates a shift in focus from traditional teaching methods centered solely on disseminating information to a more holistic approach. This involves restructuring educational frameworks to prioritize critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills. It is about fostering an ecosystem that nurtures intellectual curiosity and emotional intelligence among students, moving beyond rote learning and grades. Moreover, it is very crucial for schools to adopt development strategies that cater to the holistic growth of students. This involves curriculum enhancements that integrate practical skills, promote inclusivity, and encourage lifelong learning. Additionally, empowering teachers through continuous professional development equips them with the tools to create dynamic and engaging learning environments.

Digital transformation also stands as a vital aspect of organization development strategies in schools. Embracing technology not only enhances the learning experience but also prepares students for a digitally-driven world. Integrating technology effectively allows for personalized learning experiences, access to diverse resources, and facilitates global connectivity. Furthermore, fostering a nurturing school culture is integral. Creating environments where students feel supported, respected, and encouraged to explore their potential plays a pivotal role in their emotional and social development, contributing significantly to the quality of education imparted. According to Berends and Donaldson (2016), the synergy between organizational development and educational strategies is pivotal in achieving quality education within schools. It requires a collective commitment to evolving teaching methodologies, embracing technology, empowering educators, and creating nurturing environments. By prioritizing holistic student development and continuous improvement, schools can truly become centers of excellence that prepare students not just academically but also for a future where adaptability, critical thinking, and lifelong learning are essential.

The researcher holds an unwavering conviction regarding the transformative power of quality education. It is seen as not just a means of personal growth but a force that propels societal advancement. This belief extends far beyond the classroom, encompassing areas like character development, ethical comprehension, and the nurturing of responsible citizenship. It is about empowering individuals to actively shape a brighter future, equipped with the necessary tools to navigate complexities and contribute significantly within an interconnected global society. To realize this vision, the researcher emphasizes the imperative for all schools to adopt a comprehensive set of development strategies. These strategies should encompass various dimensions, enabling schools to evolve digitally and, crucially, to prioritize the empowerment of teachers. Such strategies form the backbone for creating environments where quality education can thrive. They serve as the blueprint for fostering holistic growth, not just academically but also ethically, emotionally, and socially.

In essence, the attainment of this vision of quality education as a catalyst for personal and societal betterment hinges on the concerted efforts of educational institutions. It necessitates a collective commitment to implementing effective development strategies, embracing digital transformation, and placing utmost importance on empowering the educators who play a pivotal role in shaping the educational landscape. According to Neendoor (2023) development strategies in schools are deliberate and purposeful initiatives aimed at enhancing various aspects of educational systems, ensuring the holistic growth of students. These strategies encompass a wide array of dimensions, all crucial in shaping a comprehensive and effective educational experience. At their core lies the pursuit of quality education, one that transcends the mere imparting of knowledge and extends to nurturing the intellectual, emotional, and social well-being of students.

This approach to quality education goes beyond the confines of traditional learning methods centered on rote memorization and grades. Instead, it embraces a learner-centric paradigm, prioritizing critical thinking, creativity, and practical application of knowledge. Such an approach forms the cornerstone of development strategies, aiming to improve educational outcomes while fostering an environment conducive to nurturing students' multifaceted growth. Central to these strategies is the creation of a nurturing educational environment. This environment is fundamental in supporting students' emotional and social well-being, ensuring they feel valued, respected, and empowered to explore their potential. Through this nurturing atmosphere, quality education lays the groundwork for lifelong learning by instilling not just information but the essential skills and attitudes necessary for continuous personal growth (Neendoor, 2023).

The integration of these development strategies thus becomes pivotal in shaping a comprehensive educational landscape. It is not merely about academic achievements but about equipping students with the tools and mindset needed to thrive in a rapidly evolving world. By combining intentional development strategies with the ethos of quality education, schools can foster an environment where students not only excel academically but also become adaptable, empathetic, and engaged individuals prepared for the challenges of the future.

As a head teacher in one of the high schools within the Rizal District of the Nueva Ecija schools division, the researcher has observed the multifaceted challenges that teachers face, profoundly affecting their empowerment and effectiveness in educational settings. These hurdles span overwhelming workloads, limited professional development opportunities, inadequate resources, and a lack of recognition, significantly impacting educators' morale and performance. To empower teachers in overcoming these obstacles, the imperative lies in implementing targeted development strategies and digital transformation practices within schools. Tailored continuous professional development, mentorship programs, curriculum enhancements integrating technology and critical thinking, and prioritization of wellness initiatives stand as pivotal strategies. Simultaneously, digital transformation practices ensuring technology access, providing digital skills training, fostering online collaboration platforms, and enabling data-driven decision-making can uplift educators and enhance their teaching effectiveness. Therefore, conducting research focusing on the correlation between these constructs and teacher empowerment within educational contexts holds promise for revealing crucial insights that foster supportive environments for educators and drive improvements in overall educational quality.

At the local scenario, teachers in Rizal District, Nueva Ecija, face significant challenges amidst the ongoing digital transformation of education, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the primary concerns is the uneven access to technology and infrastructure, with many educators lacking reliable internet access and adequate digital devices essential for effective online teaching. This digital divide not only hinders their ability to deliver quality education but also impacts students' learning experiences, especially for those in remote or economically disadvantaged areas. Additionally, there is a pressing need for extensive digital skills training and support. Many teachers struggle with adapting to and mastering digital tools and platforms for instructional purposes, highlighting a crucial gap in their professional development. Equity and inclusion issues further complicate the landscape, as disparities in access to digital resources persist among students, exacerbating educational inequalities. Teachers also face daunting challenges in maintaining student engagement and participation during virtual or blended learning environments. This includes overcoming barriers related to student motivation, attention, and the effective facilitation of interactive online classes. Moreover, the shift to digital teaching methods has significantly increased teachers' workload and stress levels, requiring effective strategies for managing time and workload amidst evolving educational demands.

To address these challenges, comprehensive strategies are needed. These include prioritizing infrastructure improvements such as enhanced internet connectivity and providing necessary digital devices. Professional development programs should be robust, focusing on equipping teachers with essential digital literacy skills and pedagogical support for effective online teaching. Initiatives aimed at promoting equity in digital access and resources are crucial, ensuring that all students can participate fully in digital learning environments. Furthermore, ongoing support for teachers' mental health and well-being is essential, recognizing and mitigating the stressors associated with digital transformation. By implementing these strategies, educators in Rizal District can better navigate the complexities of digital education, ensuring equitable and quality learning experiences for all students.

In this current investigation, there is an underlying assumption by the researcher that the existing development strategies and digital transformation practices implemented across various high schools within the district directly correlate with and substantially impact the empowerment of teachers. This assumption posits that the methodologies adopted by these schools, concerning both their developmental approaches and technological transformations, play a pivotal role in shaping the level of empowerment experienced by educators. The investigation aims to explore and establish the extent and nature of this relationship, shedding light on how these strategies and digital advancements contribute to or hinder the empowerment of teachers within their educational contexts.

2.   Related Literature

This study on development strategies, digital transformation practices, and teacher empowerment within secondary schools in Rizal District, Schools Division Office of Nueva Ecija, draws upon **Systems Theory** as its theoretical framework. Von Bertalanffy (1968) in his book **General System Theory: Foundations, Development, Applications**, posits that understanding the parts of a system is best achieved by considering their relationships with each other and with other systems, rather than in isolation. He advocated for open systems, contrasting them with closed systems prevalent in classical science. Open systems interact with other systems or their environment, unlike closed systems, which operate independently. Von Bertalanffy's (1968) foundational work emphasized the interconnections within systems, demonstrating how changes in one part of a system can impact the entire system. This perspective is instrumental in analyzing the complexities of educational systems and the dynamic interactions involved in implementing effective development strategies and digital transformations.

Systems Theory serves as a strong framework supporting the exploration of development strategies within organization development contexts. This theory's essence lies in understanding the intricate relationships among various components within a system and their interdependence. In educational settings, employing Systems

Theory allows researchers to perceive schools not as isolated entities but as complex systems comprising interconnected elements. When investigating development strategies, Systems Theory enables the examination of how changes in one aspect—be it curriculum enhancements, teaching methodologies, or community engagement—ripple through the entire educational system. It elucidates how these strategies interact with each other and with broader systemic elements, such as organizational culture or community partnerships, impacting the overall educational environment. Systems Theory's application aids in comprehending the holistic nature of development strategies, emphasizing the need for integrated, systemic approaches rather than isolated interventions for effective educational enhancement (Garcia, 2022). This perspective underscores how interconnected components within an organization or educational system influence the success and sustainability of development efforts, promoting a comprehensive understanding of the dynamic interactions at play.

Anent to the above, Systems Theory also serves as a pivotal framework supporting the exploration of "digital transformation practices" within educational research. At its core, Systems Theory views organizations as interconnected systems, emphasizing the dynamic interactions between various components. When applied to digital transformation in educational settings, this theory enables researchers to comprehend how technological advancements permeate every aspect of the educational system. It sheds light on how digital learning environments, data-driven decision-making, technology-enhanced curricula, and inclusive digital access interrelate and impact the overall educational landscape. Systems Theory underscores the interdependence of digital elements within an educational system, emphasizing that changes in technology integration in one area can reverberate across the entire educational environment. This framework offers a comprehensive lens to study digital transformation practices, highlighting the intricate connections between technology, pedagogy, infrastructure, and educational outcomes. By examining these interconnections, Systems Theory fosters a deeper understanding of how digital advancements influence educational effectiveness and organizational dynamics (Smith, 2023).

Moreover, Systems Theory offers substantial support for examining "teacher empowerment" as a research construct within educational contexts and organizational development. By conceptualizing educational institutions as interconnected systems, Systems Theory illuminates the intricate relationship between empowered educators and the broader educational environment. This framework accentuates that teachers, as integral components of the system, do not operate in isolation but interact within a network of influences. Systems Theory emphasizes how factors like autonomy, professional development opportunities, collaborative decision-making, resource allocation, and reflective practices collectively contribute to a teacher's empowerment. It underscores those empowering teachers positively impacts the entire educational system, fostering a supportive culture and influencing student outcomes. According to Nguyen (2023), this approach encourages researchers to explore not just individual aspects of empowerment but also the systemic implications, acknowledging how empowered educators catalyze systemic changes that enhance the overall educational experience. Systems Theory, therefore, provides a holistic lens to scrutinize the multifaceted dimensions of teacher empowerment within educational systems, offering insights into how organizational dynamics and systemic interactions shape the empowerment process and its outcomes.

In this research study, development strategies is based on the framework developed by Castriciones, Ocampo, and Vadil (2023) referring to intentional plans and actions designed to enhance various facets of a school's functioning and the holistic growth of its students. These strategies aim to improve educational outcomes, foster a conducive learning environment, and promote the overall development of learners. They typically encompass several dimensions, which collectively contribute to a well-rounded educational experience. The following dimensions based from their framework is presented below. Academic excellence as a dimension focuses on enhancing teaching methodologies, curriculum design, and assessment practices to ensure students receive high-quality education. It involves strategies to improve academic performance, critical thinking skills, and subject mastery across various disciplines. The dimension of "social and emotional development" emphasizes the importance of nurturing students' social skills, emotional intelligence, and interpersonal relationships. Strategies here might include implementing programs that promote empathy, conflict resolution,

and resilience, creating a positive and inclusive school culture (Castriciones et al., 2023).

Moreover, physical development and well-being as a dimension emphasizes the importance of physical health and well-being for students. Strategies may involve promoting healthy lifestyles, providing opportunities for physical activities, ensuring nutritious meals, and offering counseling or support services for physical health needs. Cultural and ethical development on the other hand often focus on instilling values, ethics, and cultural awareness in students. Development strategies here may involve incorporating diverse perspectives into the curriculum, encouraging respect for different cultures, and promoting ethical decision-making and responsible citizenship. Furthermore, technological integration as a dimension of development strategies focuses on integrating technology into education. Strategies include providing access to technological resources, training educators in using technology effectively, and incorporating digital literacy skills into the curriculum. Community engagement and partnerships as the final dimension recognizes the importance of collaboration with parents, local communities, and other stakeholders. Development strategies involve fostering partnerships to support students' learning, organizing community events, and involving families in the educational process (Castriciones et al., 2023).

Toquero (2020) observed that the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted the development strategies within the DepEd, shedding light on the digital disparity prevalent in the Philippine education system. Many students lacked access to necessary technology and internet resources, prompting governmental efforts such as DepEd TV and DepEd Commons. However, experts emphasize the need for more comprehensive initiatives, especially for marginalized communities. Bai (2023) further elaborated on the multifaceted challenges confronting the Philippine education sector, encompassing poverty, armed conflict, resource scarcity, infrastructure deficiencies, and the digital divide. Addressing these issues mandates a holistic strategy incorporating job creation, enhanced social services, educational support, skill development, alternative learning options in conflict zones, and infrastructure investments. Closing the digital gap is crucial, particularly in the pandemic context. Ensuring equitable education access for all citizens can unleash the nation's full potential, fostering sustainable development. The government, in collaboration with international bodies and private enterprises, must sustain prioritization and investment in education for the nation's future.

Another research construct considered in this study is digital transformation practices. This construct is based from the framework developed by Aliaga et al. (2023). Digital transformation practices in the context of schools involve the strategic integration of digital technologies to enhance teaching and learning processes, administrative efficiency, and overall educational outcomes. The authors have the strong conviction that in today's educational landscape, embracing digital transformation practices is imperative. This shift harnesses technology's power to revolutionize learning, providing dynamic tools that engage students, foster critical thinking, and personalize education. It optimizes administrative processes, streamlining operations for efficiency. Digital transformation cultivates essential skills needed in a tech-driven world, preparing students for future success. Moreover, it enables equitable access to resources, bridging gaps in education. Embracing these practices isn't just about adapting; it's about empowering educators, nurturing innovative teaching methods, and creating an inclusive environment where technology serves as a catalyst for comprehensive and transformative learning experiences. The dimensions of this research construct is presented below.

Transformation might lead to narratives of failure rather than success

Digital learning environments as a dimension refers to the creations and optimizing online platforms and tools to facilitate interactive and engaging learning experiences. This includes Learning Management Systems (LMS), digital content, and collaborative platforms that support remote and blended learning. The second dimension is "data-driven decision making" which is the use of data analytics and insights to inform educational decisions. Schools collect and analyze data on student performance, attendance, and engagement to tailor instructional strategies and improve overall educational outcomes (Aliaga et al., 2023). The same authors stressed that "professional development in technology" as the third dimensions is the provision of continuous

training and development opportunities for educators to enhance their digital literacy, teaching with technology, and integrating new educational technologies effectively into their classrooms. The fourth dimension is "cybersecurity measures" which is implementing measures to ensure the security and privacy of sensitive educational data. This involves protecting against cyber threats and ensuring compliance with data protection regulations.

Technology-enhanced curriculum as a dimension is the integration of digital tools and resources into the curriculum to enhance learning experiences. This includes interactive educational software, multimedia content, and virtual simulations that support diverse learning styles. Infrastructure and connectivity as a dimension refers to ensuring schools have the necessary technological infrastructure, including reliable internet connectivity, devices, and IT support, to facilitate seamless integration of technology into daily operations and learning activities. The last dimension is "Inclusive Digital Access" that is focus on ensuring equitable access to digital resources for all students, irrespective of their socio-economic background. This involves initiatives to bridge the digital divide and provide equal opportunities for learning (Aliaga et al., 2023).

Bozkurt and Sharma (2022) conducted an analysis focused on education-related research concerning digital transformation, employing data mining and analytics methodologies. The examination of these research papers highlighted five primary themes within the realm of digital transformation: (1) the role of strategies and technologies in social development, (2) perceiving digital transformation beyond mere technology adoption, (3) the transformative impact of innovative technologies, (4) the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic as an accelerator of digital transformation, and (5) the confusion surrounding terminology like digitization, digitalization, and digital transformation. The researchers emphasized the significance of incorporating social dimensions and prioritizing human-centric approaches in digital transformation initiatives. They cautioned that neglecting these aspects and overlooking the underlying philosophy, vision, and mission of digital transformation might lead to narratives of failure rather than success.

The third construct considered in this investigation is teacher empowerment. According to Balyer and associates (2017), teacher empowerment involves investing teachers with the right to participate in the determination of school goals and policies as informed by their professional judgment. By empowering teachers, teachers can discover their potential and limitations for themselves as well as developing competence in their professional development. This makes teacher empowerment a crucial issue. In this current investigation, teacher empowerment is anchored in the research framework developed by Apostol, Tallungan, and Vadil (2023). Teacher empowerment refers to the process of granting educators the authority, resources, support, and autonomy necessary to make decisions about their teaching practices, curriculum development, classroom management, and professional development. It involves providing teachers with the tools and opportunities to enhance their teaching skills, exercise their creativity, and take leadership roles in their educational environments. Empowered teachers often feel more engaged, motivated, and capable of making a positive impact on students' learning experiences. The dimensions of teacher empowerment according to their research framework is discussed below.

The first dimension is "autonomy" that refers to the level of independence and self-governance teachers have in making decisions about their teaching methods, curriculum design, classroom management, and assessments without external constraints. Autonomy allows teachers to personalize their approaches based on students' needs and their own expertise. The second dimension is "professional development opportunities" which is the provision of ongoing learning experiences, workshops, courses, and resources that support teachers in expanding their knowledge base, acquiring new skills, and staying updated with the latest teaching methodologies and technologies (Apostol et al., 2023). Collaborative decision-making as the third dimension refers to the involvement of teachers in the decision-making processes at the school or district level, encouraging their active participation in discussions, policy formation, curriculum planning, and other matters that affect their teaching environment and students' learning experiences. The fourth dimension is "resource allocation and support" which is providing teachers with adequate resources, including teaching materials, technology,

administrative support, and access to mentors or support networks, ensuring they have what they need to effectively carry out their teaching responsibilities (Apostol et al., 2023).

Leadership opportunities as a dimension is the offering of opportunities for teachers to take leadership roles within their schools or districts, such as leading professional development sessions, mentoring newer teachers, or participating in committees, empowering them to influence educational practices beyond their classrooms. The last dimension is "reflective practice and feedback" which is encouraging a culture of reflection and continuous improvement by providing constructive feedback, self-assessment tools, peer observations, and opportunities for teachers to evaluate and refine their teaching methods based on insights gained from their experiences and feedback received (Apostol et al., 2023). The study of Balyer and associates (2017) examines the dynamics of teacher empowerment under administrative practices within educational settings. The findings underscore administrators' efforts in empowering teachers through shared decision-making, enhancing their standing, fostering appealing school environments, and fostering strong communication based on trust among peers. While administrators exhibit strengths in certain empowerment aspects, deficiencies persist in nurturing teachers' growth and expanding their roles within the educational framework. This study emphasizes the pivotal role of administrators in enhancing teacher empowerment, highlighting areas necessitating improvement to fortify teacher-professional development, autonomy, and expanded responsibilities.

It is the assumption of the researcher that there is a potential relationship between the three main variables of the present study. Development strategies, digital transformation practices, and teacher empowerment are intricately interconnected within the context of educational institutions, each influencing and reinforcing the others in significant ways. Development strategies encompass a wide range of initiatives aimed at improving educational outcomes, organizational effectiveness, and student success. These strategies often involve systematic planning and implementation of policies, programs, and resources designed to enhance teaching and learning environments. Moreover, the current researcher strongly believed that digital transformation practices play a pivotal role in modernizing educational systems, leveraging technology to innovate teaching methods, curriculum delivery, and administrative processes. Integrating digital tools and platforms can facilitate personalized learning experiences, improve administrative efficiency, and expand access to educational resources. Moreover, digital transformation empowers educators by providing them with new tools and methodologies to engage students effectively and adapt to evolving educational needs.

Teacher empowerment, in this context, refers to initiatives that support educators in developing their professional skills, autonomy, and leadership capabilities. Empowered teachers are better equipped to implement development strategies and leverage digital tools creatively to enhance student learning outcomes. This empowerment is often fostered through ongoing professional development opportunities, collaborative decision-making processes, and supportive organizational cultures that value educators' expertise and contributions (Nguyen, 2023). The relationships among these elements are symbiotic: effective development strategies lay the groundwork for successful digital transformation by aligning institutional goals with technological integration efforts. Simultaneously, digital transformation enhances the implementation of development strategies by providing data-driven insights, personalized learning opportunities, and streamlined administrative processes. Teacher empowerment acts as a catalyst, ensuring that educators are equipped and motivated to leverage digital tools and participate actively in the evolution of educational practices.

By fostering synergies among development strategies, digital transformation practices, and teacher empowerment, educational institutions can cultivate environments that are responsive to change, innovative in their approach to teaching and learning, and supportive of continuous improvement in educational outcomes for all learners. This holistic approach not only enhances organizational effectiveness but also promotes a culture of collaboration, adaptability, and student-centered learning in educational settings.

3. Methodology

This study aimed to explore the development strategies and digital transformation practices in public secondary schools within the Rizal District province of Nueva Ecija. The investigation considered these factors as potential determinants of teacher empowerment. The chosen research approach predominantly employed quantitative research methodologies to thoroughly investigate the research questions. Furthermore, this research incorporated the descriptive-correlational method, employing a structured questionnaire supplemented with open-ended questions as the primary tool for data collection. The respondents of this study were the 144 public secondary school teachers representing 64.57 percent from a total of 223 public secondary school teachers of Rizal District. This sample size was determined employing Slovin Formula. The research study adopted a stratified sampling procedure, employing various public secondary schools within the district as distinct strata or subgroups. Each school accounted for 64.57 (approximately 64.00 % to 65.52%) percent of the total population size. The selection of the sample size from each school was conducted using a simple random sampling method. This approach aims to ensure representation across schools while maintaining the proportional allocation defined for each public elementary school. In order to gather the salient data needed in this study, the following research instrument were utilized:

Development Strategies Survey Scale. This instrument as designed to assess multifaceted dimensions within educational contexts was developed and validated by Castriciones, Ocampo and Vadil (2023). The scale consists of 36 benchmark statements, encompassing academic excellence, social and emotional development, physical well-being, cultural and ethical development, technological integration, and community engagement as dimensions. A Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.873 indicates strong internal consistency, affirming the scale's reliability in measuring these dimensions.

Digital Transformation Practices Scale. This instrument consisting of 42 benchmark statements aligned across seven dimensions like digital learning environments, data-driven decision making, professional development in technology, cybersecurity measures, technology-enhanced curriculum, infrastructure and connectivity, and inclusive digital access. The instrument was developed and validated by Aliaga, Bautista, and Vadil (2023) and had demonstrated strong internal consistency. Through the application of Cronbach's alpha, the reliability test produced a commendable coefficient of 0.825.

Teacher Empowerment Questionnaire. This is a 36-item questionnaire developed and validated by Apostol, Tallungan, and Vadil (2023) to measure teacher empowerment along the dimensions of autonomy, professional development opportunities, collaborative decision-making, resource allocation and support, leadership opportunities, and reflective practice and feedback. A Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.851 indicates strong internal consistency, affirming the scale's reliability in measuring these dimensions.

The commencement of the research study involved obtaining authorization from the Schools Division Superintendent of Nueva Ecija. This authorization was facilitated through a recommendation letter obtained from the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, ensuring adherence to necessary protocols. Upon securing official permission, coordination was established with the district supervisor of Rizal District. This collaboration aimed to facilitate an organized administration of research instruments, expediting the collection of questionnaires. Prior to administering the questionnaires, respondents were briefed on the study's nature, objectives, and its significance within the organization. Emphasis was placed on encouraging honest and open responses to ensure the reliability and validity of the gathered data. Once respondents' answers were collected, the data were compiled, tallied, and tabulated. Following this stage, the data underwent rigorous statistical treatment like mean and Pearson-r to facilitate interpretation, directly addressing the specific research questions outlined in the initial chapter of this study. This meticulous approach was designed to uphold the credibility and accuracy of the research findings.

4. Discussion of Results

What is the perception of the public secondary school teachers of Rizal District in the province of Nueva Ecija of their schools' development strategies along academic excellence, social and emotional development, physical development and well-being, cultural and ethical development, technological integration, and community engagement and partnership?

The data presented in Table 1 indicate that the respondents perceive themselves as having an excellent development strategy, evidenced by a computed grand mean of 3.65. The respondents rated all dimensions of this research variable at an excellent level. Specifically, the ratings are as follows: academic excellence (3.65), social and emotional development (3.66), physical development and well-being (3.67), cultural and ethical development (3.64), technological integration (3.62), and community engagement and partnership (3.66).

Table 1

Mean and Qualitative Description of the Respondents' Perception of Their Development Strategies (n=145)

Dimensions	Area Mean	Qualitative Description
Academic Excellence	3.65	Excellent
Social and Emotional Development	3.66	Excellent
Physical Development and Well-being	3.67	Excellent
Cultural and Ethical Development	3.64	Excellent
Technological Integration	3.62	Excellent
Community Engagement and Partnership	3.66	Excellent
Grand Mean	3.65	Excellent

Academic Excellence. Table 1 reveals that the respondents exhibit an excellent development strategy, particularly in the dimension of academic excellence, as reflected by the computed area mean of 3.65. These results suggest that the respondents consistently train teachers in innovative and engaging methods, utilizing technology to enhance students' understanding of various subjects. Additionally, they develop a diverse and up-to-date curriculum that fosters critical thinking and the practical application of knowledge. They also implement a robust system to regularly monitor student progress, such as using data analytics to track performance trends and identify areas needing improvement. For example, they utilize personalized support strategies tailored to individual needs, such as tutoring sessions or personalized learning plans. Moreover, the respondents consistently offer extracurricular activities that enrich learning and allow students to explore their interests beyond the classroom.

For instance, organizing science fairs, language clubs, or cultural events fosters a well-rounded educational experience. They actively recognize and celebrate student achievements through awards ceremonies, honor rolls, or student showcases, fostering a culture of healthy competition and academic excellence. For instance, hosting annual academic awards nights or publishing student accomplishments in newsletters highlights their dedication to celebrating student success. Furthermore, they continuously refine teaching methods based on educational research and feedback from students and peers. For example, incorporating innovative teaching techniques like flipped classrooms or project-based learning ensures a dynamic and engaging learning environment. These practices exemplify a strong commitment to academic excellence and a proactive approach to educational development. By integrating personalized support, extracurricular activities, recognition of achievements, and innovative teaching methods, they create a flexible and inclusive learning environment that caters to diverse student needs and promotes continuous improvement in educational outcomes.

Social and Emotional Development. The data from Table 1 reveals that the respondents perceive an excellent development strategy in the dimension of social and emotional development, as indicated by the computed area mean of 3.66. This suggests a comprehensive approach to fostering emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills among students. These findings imply that the respondents consistently introduce programs aimed at teaching students how to understand and manage their feelings while promoting kindness towards others. They establish initiatives focused on helping students solve problems peacefully and build resilience

when confronted with challenges. Moreover, they foster a welcoming environment where inclusivity and respect are paramount, creating a positive atmosphere throughout the school. Furthermore, the respondents consistently provide tools and support to aid in the development of empathy and understanding towards different perspectives among students. They encourage teamwork and cooperation through activities designed to strengthen relationships and enhance social skills. Additionally, they evaluate and adjust strategies to effectively nurture both social skills and emotional intelligence in students, ensuring continuous improvement in their approach to social and emotional development.

Physical Development and Well-Being. The data presented in Table 1 indicate that respondents perceive excellent development strategies in the dimensions of physical development and well-being, as evidenced by the computed area mean of 3.67. These findings suggest a strong commitment to promoting holistic health among students. The interpretation of these findings suggests that respondents consistently prioritize the encouragement of healthy habits such as regular exercise and balanced diets through educational initiatives and practical activities. They provide ample opportunities for students to engage in physical activities and sports to maintain their fitness levels and overall well-being. Additionally, they ensure access to nutritious meals and snacks within the school environment, fostering a culture of healthy eating habits. Moreover, respondents consistently offer counseling and support services that address physical health concerns and promote overall well-being. They create a safe and supportive environment that encourages physical activity and healthy choices among students. Furthermore, they regularly assess and enhance strategies aimed at promoting physical health and well-being, reflecting a commitment to continuous improvement in this aspect of education provision.

Cultural and Ethical Development. The data from Table 1 illustrates that respondents perceive excellent development strategies within the dimensions of cultural and ethical development, reflected by the computed area mean of 3.64. These results suggest a strong commitment to fostering cultural appreciation and ethical behavior among students. Interpreting these findings indicates that respondents consistently incorporate diverse cultural perspectives into lessons and activities, promoting an understanding and appreciation of different backgrounds among students. Moreover, they cultivate an environment where respect for all cultures is not only encouraged but also celebrated, fostering a sense of inclusivity and unity within the school community. Furthermore, respondents are dedicated to teaching ethical decision-making and promoting responsible behavior, both within the school and in the broader community. They introduce discussions and activities that highlight the importance of ethical choices in everyday life, empowering students to make principled decisions. Additionally, they encourage student participation in community service or projects that promote understanding and unity among diverse groups, reinforcing the values of empathy and social responsibility. Moreover, these findings indicate that respondents regularly assess and adapt their methods to ensure students are continually learning about and respecting various cultures and ethical principles. This commitment to ongoing evaluation and improvement underscores the importance placed on cultural and ethical development within the educational framework.

Technological Integration. The data from Table 1 reveals that respondents perceive excellent development strategies in the dimension of technological integration, indicated by the computed area mean of 3.62. These findings suggest a strong commitment to leveraging technology to enhance learning experiences and prepare students for the modern world. Interpreting these results indicates that respondents consistently prioritize ensuring access to modern technology for both students and teachers, thereby supporting learning across various subjects. Moreover, they invest in training teachers to effectively utilize technology in their instructional practices, enhancing the effectiveness of teaching methods. Furthermore, respondents are dedicated to integrating digital skills into lessons, equipping students with the necessary competencies to thrive in an increasingly digitalized society. They also prioritize the regular updating of technology to keep pace with advancements, ensuring that students have access to cutting-edge tools and resources. Moreover, respondents create a safe online environment and provide instruction on internet safety, empowering students to navigate the digital landscape responsibly. Additionally, they continuously assess and adapt technology use in education to optimize learning experiences, reflecting a commitment to innovation and improvement in educational practices.

Community Engagement and Partnership. The data presented in Table 1 indicate that respondents perceive an excellent development strategy in the dimension of community engagement and partnership, reflected by the computed area mean of 3.66. These findings underscore the significance of fostering collaborative relationships with parents, local groups, and other stakeholders to support students' education. Interpreting these results further suggests that respondents consistently prioritize developing partnerships with parents and local groups to enhance students' educational experiences. They organize events that foster community involvement in the school and actively involve families in educational activities, thereby strengthening ties between the school and the broader community. Moreover, respondents collaborate with local organizations to provide additional learning opportunities for students, leveraging external resources to enrich the educational environment. They establish effective communication channels to engage parents and the community in school initiatives, ensuring transparency and fostering a sense of ownership in the educational process. Furthermore, respondents encourage volunteering and participation from community members in school programs, recognizing the value of collective effort in supporting student success. They also prioritize regular assessment and enhancement of methods to strengthen partnerships and community involvement in the school, reflecting a commitment to continuous improvement and responsiveness to community needs.

What is the respondents' perception of their digital transformation practices of their along digital learning environment, data-driven decision making, professional development in technology, cybersecurity measures, technology-enhanced curriculum, infrastructure and connectivity, and inclusive digital access?

In Table 2, respondents perceive very good digital transformation practices, as indicated by the computed grand mean of 3.32. Specifically, data-driven decision-making is rated at an excellent level (3.59), highlighting a strong reliance on data to inform strategic decisions. Professional development in technology also scores excellently (3.66), showcasing a commitment to enhancing educators' digital skills. Additionally, technology-enhanced curriculum (3.56) is rated excellently, emphasizing a proactive approach to integrating technology into teaching practices. Furthermore, respondents perceive very good digital learning environments (3.48), reflecting a conducive online setting for learning. Infrastructure and connectivity are also seen as very good (3.29), indicating a solid foundation for digital operations. However, inclusive digital access (3.20) is rated slightly lower, suggesting potential areas for improvement in ensuring equitable access to digital resources for all students. Cybersecurity measures are rated as good (2.48), indicating that while the foundation is solid, there is room for improvement in safeguarding digital assets.

Table 2

Mean and qualitative description of the respondents perception of their digital transformation practices (n=145)

Dimensions	Area Mean	Qualitative Description
Digital Learning Environment	3.48	Very Good
Data-driven Decision Making	3.59	Excellent
Professional Development in Technology	3.66	Excellent
Cybersecurity Measures	2.48	Good
Technology-Enhanced Curriculum	3.56	Excellent
Infrastructure and Connectivity	3.29	Very Good
Inclusive Digital Access	3.20	Very Good
Grand Mean	3.32	Very Good

Overall, these findings indicate a commendable effort towards digital transformation, with notable strengths in data utilization, professional development, and curriculum integration, alongside opportunities for further enhancing digital access and inclusivity.

Digital Learning Environment. In Table 2, respondents perceived to have a very good digital transformation practice along the dimension of digital learning environment, as evidenced by the computed area mean of 3.48. These findings suggest a strong emphasis on creating interactive and engaging online platforms and tools to facilitate learning experiences. Interpreting these results further indicates that respondents consistently ensure active participation and collaboration through various tools, tracking metrics such as forum

discussions and project involvement. They regularly assess the availability of diverse content types, including text, video, and interactive elements, catering to different learning preferences. Moreover, respondents establish seamless feedback loops between students and teachers, regularly evaluating their effectiveness and clarity. They also assess the platform's impact on collaborative learning through surveys and qualitative assessments, ensuring its effectiveness in group activities. Additionally, respondents frequently audit the platform to ensure all features accommodate diverse abilities, confirming its inclusivity through feedback from students with varying needs. Furthermore, they gauge teachers' ease in customizing content to suit individual student needs, providing ongoing feedback on the platform's adaptability.

Data-Driven Decision Making. In Table 2, respondents demonstrate excellent digital transformation practices within the dimension of data-driven decision making, as evidenced by the computed area mean of 3.59. These findings suggest a strong commitment to utilizing data analytics and insights to inform educational decisions effectively. Interpreting these results further indicates that respondents' schools systematically gather and organize student performance, attendance, and engagement data across various platforms and courses for holistic analysis. They maintain a healthy analytics system, providing educators with easily understandable and actionable insights derived from collected data on student metrics. Additionally, leveraging historical data, schools utilize predictive analytics to forecast trends in student performance and engagement, aiding proactive instructional planning. Moreover, data analysis directly informs the alignment of instructional strategies and educational decisions with predefined academic objectives and targets. Schools employ a cyclical process, utilizing data insights to adapt and refine instructional strategies continuously, fostering an environment of ongoing improvement. Various stakeholders, including teachers, administrators, and students, actively engage in utilizing and interpreting data, ensuring a collective understanding of insights for decision-making.

Professional Development in Technology. Table 2 indicates that respondents perceive their digital transformation practices in professional development technology as excellent, with a computed area mean of 3.66. This finding suggests that respondents consistently view these practices favorably, particularly in the context of continuous professional development. The results imply that respondents perceive continuous training programs as tailored specifically to meet educators' needs in digital literacy, ensuring that the training is both relevant and practical for classroom application. Additionally, they regularly receive ongoing technical support and resources after training sessions, which enables educators to confidently implement the strategies they have learned. Moreover, respondents actively engage in collaborative learning communities, where they exchange best practices and innovative techniques for integrating technology effectively. They also perceive that regular assessments are conducted to measure the effectiveness of their acquired technological skills, accompanied by constructive feedback mechanisms that promote continual improvement. This suggests that respondents seamlessly integrate technology into their teaching methodologies, thereby enhancing the learning experiences of their students. They also exhibit readiness and flexibility in adapting to new educational technologies, showcasing innovation in their teaching practices.

Cybersecurity Measures. Data in Table 2 revealed that the respondents in this investigation perceive their digital transformation practices along the dimensions of cybersecurity measures as good, indicated by a computed area mean of 2.48. This result suggests that schools often have a strong and up-to-date cybersecurity infrastructure in place to safeguard sensitive educational data against potential breaches and unauthorized access. Periodic assessments are frequently conducted to identify and mitigate potential cyber threats, ensuring that proactive security measures are maintained. Furthermore, respondents believe their schools consistently adhere to data protection regulations, with cybersecurity measures aligned with the latest compliance standards to protect the privacy of students and staff. An effective incident response plan is also perceived to be always in place, allowing schools to promptly address and mitigate the impact of cybersecurity incidents when they occur. However, it is also noted that ongoing training programs only sometimes ensure that school staff are educated about cybersecurity best practices, which is essential for creating a culture of awareness and responsibility. Additionally, sensitive educational data is only sometimes encrypted both in transit and at rest, which provides an additional layer of protection against potential data breaches.

Technology-Enhanced Curriculum. It is reflected in Table 2 that respondents perceive excellent digital transformation practices in their schools along the dimension of a technology-enhanced curriculum, as evidenced by the computed area mean of 3.56. These findings suggest that their curriculum incorporates a wide range of digital tools and resources, catering to various subjects and learning levels to support diverse learning styles. Educational software and multimedia content are actively used to engage students, fostering interaction and participation in the learning process. Additionally, the curriculum effectively adapts digital resources to suit different learning styles, offering flexibility and customization for individual student needs. Moreover, virtual simulations and practical applications within the curriculum provide students with tangible and experiential learning experiences. Digital tools and resources are seamlessly aligned with the curriculum's learning objectives, ensuring relevance and coherence in educational content. Regular feedback from students and educators helps refine and enhance the effectiveness of the digital resources integrated into the curriculum.

Infrastructure and Connectivity. Data in Table 2 show that respondents perceive their schools to have very good digital transformation practices along the dimension of infrastructure and connectivity, as indicated by the computed area mean of 3.29. This result suggests that schools often maintain reliable internet connectivity, ensuring minimal disruptions to online learning activities and operational needs. Devices are often provided to students and staff, allowing access to digital resources and tools necessary for educational purposes. Immediate and accessible IT support is frequently available for troubleshooting technical issues, ensuring minimal disruptions to teaching and learning activities. Additionally, the schools' bandwidth capacity often accommodates the demands of multiple users accessing digital resources simultaneously, preventing network congestion. Technological tools are often integrated into administrative operations, optimizing efficiency in various school functions beyond educational purposes. Infrastructure accessibility often extends to all stakeholders, including students, educators, and administrative staff, ensuring equitable access to technology resources.

Inclusive Digital Access. It can be seen in Table 2 that respondents perceive their schools to have very good digital transformation practices along the dimension of inclusive digital access, as shown by the computed area mean of 3.20. These results suggest that schools often ensure all students, regardless of socio-economic status, have equal access to necessary digital resources and tools required for their education. Initiatives are frequently in place to distribute devices and access to online materials fairly among all students, addressing disparities in resource availability. Additionally, affordable options for internet connectivity and devices are often provided or facilitated to ensure access for students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Moreover, programs and resources are often available to enhance digital literacy skills, ensuring all students can effectively utilize technology for learning purposes. Strategies and policies are frequently implemented to sustain inclusive access in the long term, ensuring that all students consistently have the necessary resources for learning. However, the same group of respondents noted that collaborative efforts with local communities and stakeholders to bridge the digital divide are sometimes undertaken, indicating room for improvement in extending access to digital resources beyond the school environment.

What is the respondents perception of their teacher empowerment along the dimension of autonomy, professional development opportunities, collaborative decision-making, resource allocation and support, leadership opportunities, and reflective practice and feedback?

It can be seen in Table 3 that respondents perceive teacher empowerment to be excellent, as indicated by the computed grand mean of 3.53. Specifically, teachers rate autonomy as excellent (3.71), suggesting they feel they have significant control over their teaching methods and classroom management. Professional development opportunities are also rated as excellent (3.52), reflecting a strong commitment to continuous learning and skill enhancement for teachers. Collaborative decision-making is perceived as excellent (3.56), indicating that teachers are actively involved in making important school decisions.

Reflective practice and feedback are rated excellent as well (3.52), highlighting that teachers regularly engage in self-reflection and receive constructive feedback to improve their teaching practices. Additionally,

teachers perceive resource allocation and support as very good (3.46), suggesting that while resources and support are generally adequate, there is still room for improvement. Leadership opportunities are also rated very good (3.45), indicating that teachers have opportunities to take on leadership roles, although this could be further enhanced.

Table 3

Mean and qualitative description of the respondents perception of their teacher empowerment (n=145)

Dimensions	Area Mean	Qualitative Description
Autonomy	3.71	Excellent
Professional Development Opportunities	3.52	Excellent
Collaborative Decision-Making	3.56	Excellent
Resource Allocation and Support	3.46	Very Good
Leadership Opportunities	3.45	Very Good
Reflective Practice and Feedback	3.52	Excellent
Grand Mean	3.53	Excellent

Overall, these results underscore a strong sense of empowerment among teachers, with particularly high marks for autonomy, professional development, collaborative decision-making, and reflective practices. While resource allocation and leadership opportunities are viewed positively, they represent areas where further development could enhance overall teacher empowerment.

Autonomy. It can be seen in Table 3 that respondents perceive excellent teacher empowerment along the dimension of autonomy, as indicated by the computed area mean of 3.71. These findings suggest that respondents consistently feel empowered to make choices about how they teach, design their curriculum, manage their classrooms, and assess students, free from unnecessary external rules. Moreover, they always have the freedom to adjust and customize the curriculum to meet both educational standards and the specific needs of their students. Teachers also have the autonomy to choose and implement effective and appropriate classroom management techniques that align with their teaching style and suit the needs of their students. Furthermore, teachers consistently select and implement assessment methods that accurately reflect what and how their students are learning. They have the autonomy to choose professional development opportunities that match their teaching style, interests, and the changing needs of their students. Additionally, they are actively involved in creating and updating school policies related to teaching methods, ensuring that their experiences and insights shape how things are done.

Professional Development Opportunities. Data in Table 3 reveal that respondents in this study perceive excellent teacher empowerment along the dimension of professional development opportunities, as evidenced by the computed area mean of 3.52. These findings suggest that teachers always have easy access to a variety of learning materials, including workshops, online courses, and libraries, which promote continual professional growth. Furthermore, professional development offerings consistently encompass various formats, such as in-person workshops, online modules, conferences, and peer-to-peer learning, accommodating different learning styles and preferences. Importantly, professional development sessions directly link to classroom practices, offering practical strategies and tools that teachers can readily implement in their teaching environments. Moreover, respondents often perceive that they are supported in creating personalized development plans that address their specific needs, fostering continuous improvement aligned with their professional aspirations. Opportunities for mentorship and collaboration with experienced educators are often available, fostering a culture of shared learning and expertise exchange. Regular evaluations and feedback mechanisms are in place to assess the effectiveness of professional development programs, ensuring they meet teachers' evolving needs and expectations.

Collaborative Decision Making. Data in Table 3 reveal that respondents perceive excellent teacher empowerment along the dimension of collaborative decision-making, as indicated by the computed area mean of 3.56. These findings suggest that regular meetings or forums are always established, providing opportunities for teachers to voice opinions, suggest improvements, and contribute ideas regarding school policies and curriculum

design. Moreover, teachers always have the chance to take on leadership roles in committees or task forces that address matters influencing their teaching environment and students' learning experiences. Decision-makers consistently value and respect the expertise of teachers, acknowledging their firsthand experience in the classroom as vital in shaping effective policies and practices. Decisions made collaboratively are always accompanied by clear action plans and support structures to facilitate successful implementation, ensuring alignment with teachers' needs and capabilities. However, it is also important to note that the same group of respondents often perceives that clear communication channels exist to inform teachers about decisions made at higher levels, ensuring transparency and allowing for constructive feedback loops. Teachers are often actively invited to contribute to school or district-level discussions, where their input significantly influences policies, curriculum development, and planning.

Resource Allocation and Support. It can be seen in Table 3 that respondents perceive a very good level of teacher empowerment along the dimension of resource allocation and support, as indicated by the computed area mean of 3.46. This suggests that teachers have easy access to a wide range of up-to-date teaching materials, including textbooks, digital resources, and supplementary materials, which support diverse teaching approaches. Moreover, adequate technological resources, such as computers, software, and internet access, are always provided to facilitate modern teaching methods and enhance learning experiences. Additionally, teachers often receive administrative support and assistance, relieving them of non-teaching tasks and allowing them to focus more on classroom instruction and student engagement. Furthermore, access to mentorship programs or support networks often enables teachers to seek guidance, advice, and collaboration with experienced educators to improve their teaching practices. Continuous evaluation and feedback mechanisms are often in place to assess resource adequacy, ensuring ongoing improvements and addressing teachers' evolving needs. However, it is commonly perceived among respondents that financial support is sometimes allocated for teachers' professional development endeavors, enabling them to attend conferences, workshops, or pursue further education.

Reflective Practice and Feedback. It can be seen in Table 3 that respondents perceive excellent teacher empowerment along the dimension of reflective practice and feedback, as indicated by the computed area mean of 3.52. This suggests that a culture of constructive feedback is always fostered, encouraging regular and meaningful feedback loops between teachers, administrators, and peers to facilitate professional growth. Moreover, reflection on professional development experiences is always encouraged, enabling teachers to apply gained knowledge effectively in their classrooms. Feedback mechanisms are always designed to be supportive and growth-oriented, emphasizing strengths while providing constructive guidance for improvement. Additionally, teachers are always encouraged and supported in refining their teaching methods based on insights gained from their experiences and feedback, fostering a continuous improvement mindset. Furthermore, teachers are often provided with self-assessment tools and resources to reflect on their teaching practices, fostering introspection and self-improvement. Opportunities for peer observation and collaboration are often facilitated, allowing teachers to learn from each other's practices and provide supportive, constructive feedback.

Is there a significant relationship between the perceived development strategies and teacher empowerment of the respondents?

Table 4

Correlation between development strategies and teacher empowerment as perceived by the respondents (n=145)

Compared Variables	Correlation Coefficient	Critical r-value	Coefficient of Determination	Statistical Inference
Development Strategies VS Teacher Empowerment	0.815 *(High positive correlation)*	0.1631	66.00%	Very Significant

Degrees of Freedom: 143	Level of Significance: 0.05

The data presented in Table 4 reveal a significant positive correlation between respondents' perceived development strategies and teacher empowerment, as evidenced by the computed Pearson correlation coefficient (r-value) of 0.815. This value significantly exceeds the critical r-value of 0.1631 at the 0.05 level of significance for 143 degrees of freedom, indicating a strong relationship between these two variables. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (R-squared) between perceived development strategies and teacher empowerment is 66 percent. This indicates that approximately 66 percent of the variability in teacher empowerment can be explained by perceived development strategies among respondents. These findings offer valuable insights into the interconnectedness between development strategies and teacher empowerment. It suggests that educators who perceive themselves as benefiting from comprehensive development initiatives are more likely to feel empowered in their roles. This correlation underscores the importance of investing in targeted development programs that cater to educators' professional growth needs, as it directly influences their sense of empowerment within educational settings.

Additionally, the substantial coefficient of determination implies that a significant portion of the variance in teacher empowerment can be attributed to perceived development strategies. This highlights the pivotal role of strategic investments in fostering an empowered teaching workforce. Organizations and educational institutions can leverage these insights to design and implement effective development programs that not only enhance educators' skills and capabilities but also promote a sense of ownership, autonomy, and efficacy among teachers. Furthermore, the high positive correlation and coefficient of determination between perceived development strategies and teacher empowerment underscore the critical link between professional growth initiatives and educators' sense of empowerment. By prioritizing comprehensive and tailored development programs, educational stakeholders can cultivate an empowered teaching workforce capable of driving positive educational outcomes and fostering a supportive learning environment.

Is there a significant relationship between the perceived digital transformation practices and teacher empowerment of the respondents?

Table 5

Correlation between digital transformation and teacher empowerment as perceived by respondents (n=145)

Compared Variables	Correlation Coefficient	Critical r-value	Coefficient of Determination	Statistical Inference
Digital Transformation Practices VS Teacher Empowerment	0.894 *(High positive correlation)*	0.1631	79.92%	Very Significant

Degrees of Freedom: 143   Level of Significance: 0.05

The data presented in Table 5 reveal a significant positive correlation between perceived digital transformation practices and teacher empowerment among respondents, as evidenced by the computed Pearson correlation coefficient (r-value) of 0.894. This value significantly exceeds the critical r-value of 0.1631 at the 0.05 level of significance for 143 degrees of freedom, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (R-squared) between perceived digital transformation practices and teacher empowerment is 79.92 percent. This implies that approximately 79.92 percent of the variability in teacher empowerment can be explained by perceived digital transformation practices among respondents. These findings provide compelling insights into the relationship between digital transformation practices and teacher empowerment. The high positive correlation suggests that educators who perceive their institutions as embracing digital transformation are more likely to feel empowered in their roles. This underscores the importance of integrating technology effectively into educational practices to enhance teacher empowerment and overall educational outcomes.

The substantial coefficient of determination further emphasizes the significant influence of perceived digital transformation practices on teacher empowerment. Educational stakeholders can leverage these insights to prioritize initiatives aimed at fostering digital readiness among educators, thereby promoting a culture of empowerment and innovation within educational settings. Moreover, the strong positive correlation and high coefficient of determination between perceived digital transformation practices and teacher empowerment highlight the critical role of technology integration in empowering educators and driving positive educational outcomes. By embracing digital transformation initiatives, educational institutions can create a supportive and empowering environment that enhances teacher efficacy and promotes student success in the digital age.

5. Conclusions

Based on the significant findings of this investigation, the following conclusions were derived:

> The respondents perceived to have an excellent development strategy in their own schools.

> The respondents perceived to have very good digital transformation practices in their own schools.

> The respondents' teacher empowerment is perceived to be excellent.

> There is a significant positive correlation between respondents' perceived development strategies and teacher empowerment.

> There is a significant positive correlation between perceived digital transformation practices and teacher empowerment among respondents.

5.1 Recommendations

Based on the foregoing conclusions, the following are hereby recommended:

> To sustain and continuously improve development strategies, schools should regularly review and update their programs focused on academic excellence, social and emotional development, physical well-being, cultural ethics, technological integration, and community engagement. Implementing a feedback mechanism where teachers, students, and parents can provide input on development strategies will ensure they meet the evolving needs of the school community. Organizing professional development workshops and training sessions will also keep teachers updated on the latest educational strategies and practices.

> Elevating digital transformation practices requires investing in the latest educational technologies to enhance digital learning environments and ensuring these technologies are accessible to all students. Schools should promote data-driven decision-making by training teachers and administrators in data analytics to better understand student performance and tailor interventions accordingly. Developing strong cybersecurity policies and providing regular training to staff and students will safeguard digital environments. Ensuring that digital infrastructure is regularly updated and maintained will support high-quality digital learning experiences.

> To enhance teacher empowerment, schools should continue providing opportunities for professional growth through advanced training programs, workshops, and further education. Encouraging collaborative decision-making by forming committees and working groups that include teachers in the decision-making processes regarding school policies and practices is essential. Effective resource allocation is crucial to ensure teachers have the materials and support

they need to succeed. Creating more leadership opportunities for teachers to lead projects, initiatives, and training sessions within the school will further empower them.

➤ Leveraging the synergy between development strategies and teacher empowerment involves designing strategies that specifically aim to increase teacher autonomy and involvement in school improvement efforts. Facilitating regular meetings and discussions where teachers can share their insights and experiences will contribute to refining development strategies. Recognizing and rewarding teachers who actively contribute to the enhancement of development strategies will motivate continuous engagement.

➤ Harnessing the power of digital transformation to empower teachers includes providing ongoing training and support to help teachers effectively integrate digital tools into their teaching practices. Developing a supportive community of practice where teachers can share best practices, resources, and experiences related to digital transformation will foster collective growth. Implementing mentorship programs where tech-savvy teachers can support their colleagues in using new technologies will further enhance digital competency

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