



BEST PRACTICES IN BRIGADA ESKWELA OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BATANGAS PROVINCE

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ABSTRACT

The study focused on best practices in implementing Brigada Eskwela among secondary schools in Batangas Province. Specifically, it aimed to identify the salient features of the Brigada Eskwela Work Plan, and assess the extent of implementation of Brigada Eskwela covering scope of work conducted, resource mobilization, school personnel participation, and community involvement. In addition, the study assessed how Brigada Eskwela broadened community support to basic education relative to curricular activities enrichment, physical facilities improvement, and unity of purpose. Likewise, the issues and opportunities brought by Brigada Eskwela were determined. This study used the descriptive method of research with the questionnaire as the main data gathering instrument using Slovin's formula at 5 percent margin of error. Statistical tools used in the analysis of data were weighted mean, one-way analysis of variance, and Brown-forsy and Scheffe tests. Results revealed that the respondents agreed that Brigada Eskwela is a product of collaborative effort, taps the spirit of volunteerism, and allows people from different sectors to extend help to the schools every year, which are the most salient features of the program. Further, Brigada Eskwela broadens community support to basic education relative to curricular activities enrichment and physical facilities improvement to a moderate extent, while it supports basic education to a great extent in terms of unity of purpose. The primary issue in Brigada Eskwela is following the implementing rules and regulations of the program to make it successful. Statistical analysis showed no significant differences on the assessments of the three groups of respondents in terms of the extent of implementation and support to basic education. However, significant differences were found on opportunities brought by Brigada Eskwela.

Keywords: Dissertation, Brigada Eskwela, Best Practices, Descriptive Method

INTRODUCTION

An old adage says that it takes a village to educate a child, and this is true now more than ever. Education is everyone's right, as it is everyone's responsibility, as it serves as the nation's arm in producing competent and globally competitive graduates. Through education, the quality of human capital increases vis-à-vis national progress, making it an instrument of poverty alleviation and a prime vehicle for development and competitiveness being the central hub for educational development where

the formal teaching-learning process takes place, schools are tasked to ensure that the learners are in a safe, clean and healthy environment. Together with community partners, the schools must provide a climate characterized by an orderly and friendly social and academic atmosphere. Through the spirit of volunteerism and public-private collaboration for Philippine education, the Republic Act 8525, also known as the "Adopt-A-School Act", was crafted in 1998. With the Adopt-A-School Program (ASP), the Department of Education launched the National Schools Maintenance Week in May 2003 and was



institutionalized on May 2008 by Department of Education Order No. 24, s. 2008. Dubbed, “Brigada Eskwela”, the program enlivened the spirit of volunteerism through bringing together teachers, parents and community members every third week of May to work together in repairing and preparing public schools for the class opening. It is also participated by individual, private organizations, business sectors, local and national government agencies which together share their efforts, time and resources (Vargas, 2016). Since then, it has gained ground and has been conducted annually. The learners’ optimum academic performance coupled with the acquisition of desired behavior are dependent to a healthy learning environment, which involves the interplay of various sectors. With this, a high expectation for the institutionalization of school improvement processes where the spirit of volunteerism and public-private partnership for education is underscored. However as reported by Cabardo, (2016) even with the help of the yearly Brigada Eskwela, there is just not enough manpower and resources to repair and refurbish all the aging classrooms, school buildings and other facilities that are lacking. The Teachers’ Dignity Coalition stated that the shortage of classrooms, and the lack of teachers and learning materials remain among the top problems that are yet to be solved.

The researcher, being a Brigada Eskwela Coordinator, is proactive in supporting the DepEd’s endeavors in curbing the plethora of challenges facing Philippine basic education, specifically in Batangas Province where the researcher is presently working. It is believed that Brigada Eskwela is a program that has to be sustainable, and the best practices in its implementation have to be identified, analyzed, and shared to other schools in the province. It is for this reason that this study was conducted, aimed at assessing the Brigada Eskwela implementation among secondary high schools in Batangas Province. The researcher focused on the identification of the salient features of B.E Work Plan, as well the extent of its implementation in terms of scope of work conducted, resource mobilization, school personnel participation, and community involvement.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted to analyze the best implementation practices of Brigada Eskwela among secondary schools in the Province of Batangas. More so, it adhered to attain the following specific objectives: 1) Describe the striking features of the Brigada Eskwela work plan; 2) Identify the internal and external stakeholders’ assessments on the extent of its implementation covering scope of work conducted, resource mobilization, school personnel participation, and community involvement; 3) Ascertain how the Brigada Eskwela broadened community support to basic education inclusive of curricular activities enrichment, physical facilities improvement, and unity of purpose.

METHODOLOGY

To achieve the objectives of this study, the researcher employed the descriptive method research. It was deemed as the most appropriate design to be used in evaluating the past, present and future implementation of the Brigada Eskwela, its best practices, its support to basic education, and the issues and opportunities of the program. Respondents were 90 Principals, 90 PTA officers, and 90 BE coordinators. The study made use of a researcher-made questionnaire intended for school heads, teachers and parents as the key data gathering instrument. A comprehensive review of related literature and studies from books, journals, unpublished studies and online sources on education was done to come up with questionnaire. The initial draft of the questionnaire was presented to the adviser for comments and suggestions. Items were reviewed and suggestions were noted for improvements. Necessary permits were acquired by the researcher in order to distribute the questionnaires. The researcher requested permission from the Schools Division Superintendent to conduct the study in the Division of Batangas Province. After the superintendent’s approval, permission was sought from the school head of each school to administer the questionnaire to the respective teachers and parents. The retrieval of the



questionnaire took almost two weeks. The data gathered were analyzed and statistically treated to provide empirical explanations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part presents the analysis and interpretation of data gathered on the best practices in the implementation of Brigada Eskwela among secondary schools in Batangas Province.

1. Salient Features of Brigada Eskwela Work Plan

Brigada Eskwela, also known as the “*Bayanihan Para sa Paaralan*” (Working Together for Schools), added a new meaning to the Filipino concept of unity. *Brigada Eskwela* brings a picture of people from different sectors of society repainting walls and blackboards, cleaning windows and doors, or repairing fences. The respondents strongly agreed that the Brigada Eskwela (BE) work plan was characterized by different salient features as reflected in the average composite mean of 3.60. The assessment of principals, PTA respondents, and BE coordinators had composite mean values of 3.63, 3.60, and 3.56, respectively, indicating strong agreement on the salient features of BE. Having the highest average weighted mean of 3.70 were three salient feature stating that Brigada Eskwela is a collaborative effort of school heads, private partners, local government units, and the community members; it taps the spirit of volunteerism; and allows people from different sectors of the society to extend help to the school every year. On the other hand, the respondents agreed that the least salient feature of the Brigada Eskwela work plan was making everyone work from 8 am to 5 pm with very little supervision, with an average composite mean of 3.28.

2. Extent of Brigada Eskwela Implementation

The implementation of Brigada Eskwela in every public school in the Philippines is a collaborative effort of principals, PTA officers, B.E. coordinators, and other stakeholders. This part of the study presents the assessment on the implementation of the program with regard to

scope of work conducted, resource mobilization, school personnel participation, and community involvement.

2.1 Scope of Work Conducted. Promoting public awareness by encouraging the stakeholders’ involvement in Brigada Eskwela; restoring walls through cleaning and repainting; repairing and repainting chairs, tables and chalkboards had the highest average weighted means of 3.71, 3.70 and 3.67 as assessed by the principals, PTA respondents, and BE coordinators. On the other hand, the item that received the lowest assessment was painting of murals on walls, which obtained an average weighted mean of 3.03. This means that while this was conducted to a moderate extent, this is the activity given the least priority among the schools relative to scope of work.

2.2. Resource mobilization. This is the process of acquiring the needed resources in a cost-effective manner. Resource mobilization aims to generate resources, both material and manpower or volunteer services, for the conduct of *Brigada Eskwela*. Encouraging involvement, acknowledging sources of donations, and sending letters of invitations to participate in Brigada Eskwela were all done to a great extent, as shown by the highest average weighted means of 3.71, 3.70 and 3.69, respectively, as assessed by respondents. In contrast, the program implementation relative to resource mobilization was conducted only to a moderate extent in terms of ensuring that pledges or commitments of partners are delivered. This received the lowest assessment as indicated in the average weighted mean of at 3.45.

2.3 School personnel participation. This includes teaching or academic staff, school administrators, academic non-teaching personnel, and non-academic personnel. Teaching personnel are entitled to earn vacation service credits arising from their active involvement in the week-long Brigada Eskwela activity. In general, the three groups of respondents assessed that the implementation of the Brigada Eskwela program in terms of school personnel participation was done to a great



extent. Delegating tasks properly to school personnel, monitoring assigned tasks, and performing assigned tasks were assessed to be conducted to a great extent with the highest average weighted means of 3.72, 3.72 and 3.71, respectively. In terms of providing logistic support and giving feedback on the performed tasks, it was found out that this aspect gained the lowest assessment as reflected in the average weighted mean of 3.59. The school heads must perform their function, defined in R.A 9115, which is to mobilize all stakeholders' participation for improvement of education outcomes.

2.4 Community Involvement. This serves as one of the criteria under diverse volunteer participation in the selection of the Brigada Eskwela Best Implementing Schools. It involves parents and other family members, officers and members of PTA, alumni, nearby home owners of community members, and religious groups. The highest assessment relative to community involvement was given to practices in terms of informing the community about Brigada Eskwela, accepting community helpers in carrying out the objectives of the program, and involving the community in implementing the program. These indicators gained the weighted means of 3.76, 3.72, and 3.68, respectively, and were found to be conducted to a great extent.

On the contrary, allowing stakeholders to give feedback to improve the program was deemed to have the lowest assessment with 3.58 average weighted mean. This aspect needs further enhancement relative to program implementation in terms of community involvement.

3. Assessment of Brigada Eskwela in Broadening Community Support to Basic Education

In this study, the extent to which Brigada Eskwela broadens community support to basic education was assessed in three aspects: curricular activities enrichment, physical facilities improvement, and unity of support.

3.1 Curricular activities enrichment. Curriculum basically covers what students are expected to learn in the classroom and how the

lessons are expected to be facilitated. It refers to all educational experiences that students go through, for which the school takes responsibility. As indicated in the Bureau of Elementary Education Thrusts, the goal of curricular enrichment is to build competent and productive citizens with strong moral character and are capable of living in a dynamic and global society

The top three assessments in terms of curricular activities enrichment are the enrichment through parents' extension of support not only during Brigada Eskwela but also in monitoring their children's school performance (3.55); community members' attendance to meetings about curriculum orientation (3.41); and parents' regular attendance to PTA meetings (3.38), all conducted to a great extent.

On the other hand, the lowest assessment was indicated by the average weighted mean of 3.31 pertaining to the practices of donating materials that may be used in the teaching and learning process, which is conducted only to a moderate extent.

3.2 Physical facilities improvement. The availability of safe, secured, and friendly physical facilities is one of the prerequisites for the opening of a new school. Physical facilities refer to all the physical properties of a school, consisting of the grounds, buildings, and the various facilities within the school grounds and inside the school buildings. Physical facilities are considered indispensable to a school; they do not only provide housing for the school but also serve as facilitating agents for all the educational activities that take place in a school. The availability of safe, secured, and satisfactory physical facilities is one of the prerequisites for the opening of a new school. The primary function of physical facilities is to provide the proper school environment that is most conducive to effective teaching and learning

Receiving the highest assessment was the indicator that parents take part in enhancing the learning environment, which obtained the average weighted mean of 3.42. The stakeholders' extension of support to improve teaching and learning environment had an average weighted mean of 3.38, while the community members' extension of support needed by the school in terms of physical facilities improvement received



an average weighted mean of 3.35. The lowest assessment was on the community members' ability to do their share in providing for material and financial support, with an average weighted mean of 3.30, implying that this is conducted only to a moderate extent.

These findings supported the concept of DE Havilland Associates, stating that although it is a common belief that the extent of community organizations' school support is largely financial, parents and community organizations can also support schools through the provision of goods and services, volunteers, talent development, student services, instruction, expertise, and advocacy

3.3 Unity of Purpose. In an effort to bring the spirit of volunteerism to the community level, maximize civil participation, and utilize local resources to improve public schools, the Department of Education launched National Schools Maintenance Week in May. The purpose is to unite various stakeholders to work together in the preparing public schools for the opening of classes. Brigada Eskwela assembles an army of volunteers to repair and prepare classrooms in time for the start of classes. Since they have a common goal, they perform all the tasks to be done with the same level of thinking and preparation.

Ensuring a continuous positive relationship between the stakeholders, adhering to the goal of the Department of Education, and maintaining unity of purpose towards school progress got the highest assessment, with the average weighted means of 3.66, 3.63, and 3.62, respectively. In contrast, the lowest assessment was indicated by the average weighted mean of 3.54, which pertained to maintaining the reevaluation and reviewing of the goals of the program

4. Issues and Opportunities Brought by Brigada Eskwela

Issues may arise despite the successful implementation of Brigada Eskwela. Even with the lack of material resources, there are instances when the community contributes to improve schools and the academic environment.

The top three issues in Brigada Eskwela implementation are following the implementing rules and regulations of Brigada Eskwela to make the implementation successful, with the average weighted mean of 3.62; performing the general goal of developing in children simple cleanliness habits that can prevent a host of diseases and health problems that adversely affect academic performance, with a weighted mean of 3.60; and proving that helping the school sets no economic status since all assistance in any form are welcome, with the average weighted mean of 3.60.

Conversely, the respondents agreed the least issue on Brigada Eskwela program implementation was on making parents take a leave of absence from their jobs to help refurbish and ready their children's schools for reopening. This had the lowest average weighted mean of 3.29.

On the other hand, the opportunities that got the highest weighted mean of 3.63 was generating community support via the time-honored, uniquely Filipino tradition of "bayanihan" and leaving stakeholders with a sense of accomplishment. In addition, the respondents strongly agreed that organizing efforts in increasing knowledge and investment in education issues, among adult and youth community members, and initiating innovations for better implementation of the Brigada Eskwela program were both opportunities that got second highest weighted mean of 3.59. On the other hand, the opportunity that got the lowest weighted mean of 3.54 was allowing private entities to assist public schools, which suggests that the respondents deemed this indicator to provide the least opportunity for improving program implementation.

5. Differences in Assessments by the Three Groups of Respondents

Table 10 shows the variables of Brigada Eskwela that were assessed by the three groups of respondents, namely: salient features of the program, scope of work, resource mobilization, school personnel participation, community involvement, curricular activities enrichment, physical facilities improvement, unity of purpose,



and issues and opportunities brought by Brigada Eskwela.

Statistical analysis revealed no significant difference in the assessments of the three groups of respondents on the salient features of the program, as shown in p-value of .42 at .05 level of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis was accepted.

Table 10
Differences in assessments by the Three Groups

Variables	p-values	Computed f-values	Decision on Ho	VI
Salient features of BE	.42	.87	Failed to Reject	NS
Scope of work conducted	.55	.61	Failed to Reject	NS
Resource mobilization	.31	1.18	Failed to Reject	NS
School personnel participation	.10	2.32	Failed to Reject	NS
Community involvement	.163	.47	Failed to Reject	NS
Curricular activities enrichment	.30	1.22	Failed to Reject	NS
Physical facilities improvement	.41	.90	Failed to Reject	NS
Unity of purpose	.51	.68	Failed to Reject	NS
Issues brought by BE	.08	2.50	Failed to Reject	NS
Opportunities brought by BE	.009	4.81	Reject	S

As to scope of work, resource mobilization, school personnel participation, community involvement, curricular activities enrichment, physical facilities improvement, unity of purpose, and issues brought by Brigada Eskwela data, all of these showed no significant difference in the assessments of the three group of respondents with values ranging from .08 to .55. This prompted the researcher to accept the null hypothesis. This finding supports the results in the study of Celestial (2015), which revealed that there was a high level of implementation of Brigada Eskwela but there was a significant difference in the level of implementation of the program.

6. Proposed Brigada Eskwela Project Plan

In this study, a Project Plan was proposed for the enhancement or strengthening of Brigada Eskwela implementation in public secondary schools in Batangas Province. Built into the inherent difficulty in planning and predicting the future are the elements of nature, and in certain cases, predictions or presumed scenarios are considered not a solid and firm basis for guaranteeing a successful plan. Despite these, it is a must that there be a project plan which should include critical elements, and should involve key stakeholders in the organization. The details of the plan were anchored on the key results of this study, especially along the line of scope of work, resource mobilization, school personnel participation, and community involvement. One important goal is for Brigada Eskwela to further broaden community support to basic education in terms of curricular activities, enrichment and physical facilities improvement. With this proposed plan in place, the school can look forward to a more productive and successful implementation of the Brigada Eskwela. To achieve this, every sector is involved in the process of developing a method to accomplish long-range goals.

CONCLUSIONS

Considering the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Secondary schools in Batangas province considered Brigada Eskwela as a product of collaborative effort, taps the spirit of volunteerism, and allows people from different sectors to extend help to the schools every year, which are the most salient features of the program.
2. The principals, BE coordinators, and PTA respondents assess that the implementation of Brigada Eskwela relative to scope of work conducted, resource mobilization, school personnel participation, and community involvement was done to a great extent.
3. Brigada Eskwela broadens community support to basic education relative to curricular activities enrichment and



physical facilities improvement to a moderate extent, while it supports basic education to a great extent in terms of unity of purpose.

4. The primary issue in Brigada Eskwela is following the implementing rules and regulations of the program to make its implementation successful. On the other hand, generating community support via the time-honored, uniquely Filipino tradition of "bayanihan" while leaving stakeholders with a sense of accomplishment is seen as the foremost opportunity.
5. There are no significant differences on the assessments of the three (3) groups of respondents in terms of the extent of implementation and support to basic education. However, significant differences exist in the assessment on opportunities brought by Brigada Eskwela.
6. The proposed project plan for Brigada Eskwela can enhance the strategies in program implementation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the foregoing findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are offered.

1. The proposed project plan may be reviewed, validated, and/ or evaluated to determine its possibility for adoption and implementation in the schools in the Division of Batangas Province.
2. School personnel who are directly involved in the Brigada Eskwela program may review the results of this study and communicate relevant findings to other stakeholders.
3. A clear plan to be followed by schools in Brigada Eskwela implementation addressing the weak areas found in the study may be provided.
4. Strong collaborative engagements with stakeholders may be developed towards orderly implementation of the program.
5. A similar study may be conducted to affirm the findings of the present study and for

the continuous, successful delivery of the Brigada Eskwela program.

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