



MANAGING SCHOOL OPERATIONS AND RESOURCES IN THE NEW NORMAL AND PERFORMANCE OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN ONE SCHOOL DIVISION IN THE PHILIPPINES

ERMA S. VALENZUELA¹, LERMA P. BUENVINIDA²

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7237-5499>

¹erma.valenzuela001@deped.gov.ph, ²ermabuenvinida@lspu.edu.ph

¹Schools Division of Laguna, ²Laguna State Polytechnic University
Laguna, Philippines

ABSTRACT

All organizations require effective and efficient management. Being effective is evident if one is doing a certain task appropriately, while efficiency is observed if the task is done with accuracy. It is through management that the vision, mission, and goals of an organization are realized through the efforts of those people who walk in one direction to attain the desired goal. In this time of uncertainty where everything must stop, the competencies of the school leaders in management need to be strengthened to ensure better school performance. The purpose of this study was to determine if there was a link between school leaders' abilities to manage school operations and resources and the performance of public schools in the Schools Division of Laguna. To evaluate the relationship between the independent and dependent variables, the descriptive-correlational study design was used, and employed statistical methods such as Pearson r, Chi-square, Spearman rho correlational analysis, and multiple linear regression were used. Findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between the level of management competencies of school heads and the school's performance in terms of quality and efficiency. All the given competencies in managing school operations and resources, such as record management, financial management, school facilities and equipment, staff management, school safety for disaster preparedness, mitigation and resiliency, and management of emerging opportunities have a significant impact on the school's quality and efficiency. Further, the management competencies of school heads in terms of management of staff singly and significantly predict the quality and efficiency of the school. Thus, it was recommended to conduct an annual Induction Program for all new school heads to provide them salient information about managing the school operations and resources; and give the school heads technical assistance through the conduct of training, workshop, coaching, and mentoring; include topics in records management and school facilities in the professional development programs of SDO Laguna and conduct other related research in the future.

Keywords: schools heads, competencies, performance, quality, and efficiency

INTRODUCTION

The education system of the country and the whole world was altered due to the emergence of the dreaded COVID 19. Due to the risk of being exposed to the virus, the government decided not to allow the face-to-face learning modality in the delivery of instruction. The Basic

Education Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP), a set of educational initiatives implemented by the Philippines' Department of Education (DepEd) through DepEd Order No. 12, s. 2020, responds to Covid 19's basic education challenges. As a result, school heads play a



vital role in ensuring that all students have access to an enabling and respectful learning atmosphere (Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads) (DepEd Order No. 24, s. 2020). The five leadership areas that school leaders must embody demonstrate the characteristics of a school leader in the twenty-first century. These include strategic leadership, overseeing school operations and finances, concentrating on teaching and learning, improving self and others, and building professional networks.

Managing School Operations and Resources include six strands: records management, financial management, managing the school facilities and equipment, management of staff, school safety for disaster preparedness, mitigation, resiliency, and emerging opportunities and challenges. According to Valdez (2012), management must ensure that facilities and resources are always accessible, sufficient, and in good working order. This will help students and teachers perform better, allowing the school to achieve its mission of providing high-quality education. Further, the study of Akpabio in 2015 revealed that the physical environment is a major determinant in the attainment of the school's objectives, thus that school managers should conduct a comprehensive needs assessment of facilities.

In 2018, Ezeubor et al. conducted a study focusing on the staff personnel administrative strategies implemented by principals for fostering teacher-job satisfaction and discovered that principals must outsource funds internally or externally to provide teachers with a safe working atmosphere that allows them to demonstrate their best qualitative teaching. This study is related to this research because both endeavors to determine the practices expected from a school manager to ensure that the welfare of the staff is properly managed to result in their satisfaction in performing their responsibilities.

Sakurai, et. Al (2017) assessed the depth of school disaster, safety at public elementary schools in Banda Aceh City, Indonesia, in terms of comprehensive school safety, especially

school location, disaster management, and disaster education, and recommended that comprehensive school safety, disaster preparedness program be carried out jointly and sustainably by several stakeholders.

The school heads must not only equip themselves with the knowledge of identifying these challenges and opportunities, but they are expected to manage, capacitate, and empower the school personnel to make sure that equality and equity will be made possible. (DepEd Order No. 24 s.2020). This new normal setting in education though very crucial tasks for school leaders will also provide opportunities for them to test their management skills specifically in making decisions. Having this situation, the school leaders need to consider alternative solutions to ensure that no child will be left behind and that the education will continue in this time of health crisis.

It was on this premise why this study decided to focus on the competencies of the school heads, particularly in managing the school operations and resources in this very crucial period. Knowing the important role that these management competencies in the continuous implementation of the curriculum, it is imperative that school heads be allowed to reflect and to determine their practices relative to their knowledge, skills, and attitude in the management of school operations and resources.

The six strands of managing school resources and operations include records management, financial management, school facilities and equipment, management of staff, school safety for disaster preparedness, mitigation, and emerging opportunities and challenges.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to determine level of competencies of the school heads in managing school operations and resources in terms of records management, financial management, school facilities and equipment, management of staff, school safety for disaster preparedness, mitigation and resiliency, and emerging



opportunities and challenges. It also sought to identify the performance of the public schools in terms of efficiency and quality, test the significant relationship between the level of management competencies of the school heads and the performance of the schools in SDO Laguna in terms of quality and efficiency and determine the significant prediction of management competencies of the school heads and the performance of the school.

METHODOLOGY

This is a descriptive-correlational study, and the respondents are the 358 school heads who were drawn from 371 public elementary, Junior High School, Integrated Senior High School, and Senior High School Stand Alone at the Schools Division of Laguna, for the school year 2020-2021. These school heads are the persons responsible for administrative and instructional supervision of a school or cluster of schools (Republic Act 9155, Sec. 4.). The 358 respondents were composed of Principal 1 to Principal IV, Assistant Principals, Teacher-in-charge, and Head Teachers who are officially designated to lead and to manage the school by the Schools Division Superintendent. The number of school heads per group was identified using Slovin's formula with one (1) percent margin of error for the school heads. There were sample respondents from the elementary, Junior High School, Integrated High School, and Senior High School Stand Alone from all the twenty-five (25) districts in the Schools Division of Laguna.

This study made use of a survey questionnaire which was crafted by the researchers and validated by experts in the field of education. The research instrument for the school head-respondents consisted of four (4) parts; the first part dealt with the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, highest educational attainment, length of service as a school head, and the classification of the school according to size; Part two described the level of competencies of the school heads in managing the school

operations and resources in terms of the strands of the second domain, which is specified in the Philippine Professional Standards for School heads. There were ten (10) statements per competency which are descriptions of the school heads' knowledge, skills, and practices in managing the school's operations and resources. Part 3 of the school heads' questionnaire is focused on the school performance in terms of quality and efficiency for three consecutive years covering SY 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020. The Office Performance Commitment Review Form (OPCRF) of the schools handled includes the instructional leadership, learning environment, parents' involvement, and community partnership, school leadership, and management, human resource management, and development. The data were analyzed using different statistical tools such as frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, Pearson's r correlation coefficient, Chi-square analysis, Spearman rho correlation analysis, and multiple linear regression.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. Level of Competencies of the School Heads in Managing School Operations and Resources

1.1 in terms of Records Management

The results on the level of the competencies of the school heads in managing the school operations and resources provided information that the school heads in SDO Laguna-Public Sector do not only demonstrate knowledge in the management of records but also in the supervision relative to the proper utilization and safekeeping of the school data and information. The study conducted by Lateef and Adelotan in 2020 entitled "The Use of Information Technologies for Improved School Administration and management in Ogun State University" confirmed that the use of technology in school administration and management improves the efficiency of the processes.



1.2 in terms of Financial Management

As to Financial Management, the indicators evaluated by the school heads as “highly observed” described as knowledge and skill level of competencies, however, indicators interpreted as “observed” are more on the performance competency which is necessary for a school manager to exhibit. These results denoted that the school heads are very knowledgeable and skillful in financial management in terms of knowledge and adherence to the guidelines, policies, and issuances, ensuring that the fund allocation and procurement are aligned with the school plan which is a requirement to ensure efficient and effective school operation. This can provide salient information regarding the need for school heads to be trained in creating a checking mechanism to ensure that management of the school finances is properly done and sustained. The study on “Financial Management Competence of Selected and Promoted School Heads: A Demographic Comparison” which was written by Fatima Z, Shahzadi, U., Shah, A. in 2017 recommended that conducting orientation and training for school heads on financial management could improve their competencies on this aspect.

1.3 in terms of school facilities and equipment

School heads’ level of competencies in managing the school facilities and equipment was “observed” with a composite mean of 4.34 and SD, 0.43. The results encompassed that school heads in the Public Sector of the Schools Division Office of Laguna demonstrate knowledge and understanding on handling school facilities and equipment but in terms of managing the schools’ facilities and equipment as stated in the guidelines, policies, and issuances, the school managers need further enhancement. The study of Shaibu L, Edeabo C. and Ishaka M.L. (2019) revealed that one of the problems with the management of school facilities for effective instructional delivery was poor maintenance culture.

1.4 in terms of Management of Staff

With regards to managing the staff, all indicators are “highly observed” with a composite mean of 4.37 and a standard deviation of 0.51. The results revealed that though the school heads have less ability to demonstrate and apply their knowledge and understanding of laws, policies, guidelines, and issuances still they effort to encourage and support their staff in their desire to improve themselves. As mentioned in the article written by Braun and Spielmann in 2020 entitled “Challenges for Higher Education and Staff Development towards Sustainability: Empowerment of people and shaping of organizations, “not only the top management and heads of the departments should be expected to take a strategic vantage point.” Accordingly, each member of the organization needs to think and act strategically, and these people need to be empowered to consciously navigate all levels of institutional change.

1.5 in terms of School safety for Disaster preparedness

Its composite means of 4.37 for School safety for disaster preparedness, mitigation and resiliency was interpreted as “observed”. To organize a school safety team who will be responsible for the activities related to school safety “obtained a mean of 4.50 (s=0.59) was interpreted as “highly observed”, merely because the school heads are used to organize such teams. It is already a practice in the Department of Education that a group or a committee will be responsible for the implementation of the programs like what is being practiced in the annual Brigada Eskwela.

1.6 in terms of mitigation and resiliency, and emerging opportunities and challenges

The study also revealed that school heads can promote equality and equity in the way they address the needs of the students. They can also motivate and support the teachers and school personnel in addressing the challenges posed by the emerging opportunities and



threats. The study explored the various obstacles and opportunities that universities face in planning for sustainable development. Some of these include the lack of institutional support and the capacity to sustain development (Leal et.al, 2018).

2. Performance of the Public Schools in terms of Efficiency and Quality

The findings show that "Performance of the Public Schools in terms of Efficiency and Quality", the data depict that the public schools gained a very satisfactory in all of its performance indicators. for three consecutive years. The findings revealed that the school's performance in terms of the learning environment, specifically in creating and sustaining a safe, orderly, nurturing, healthy, culture-based environment ranked first among the indicators both in quality and efficiency, 4.24 and 4.25, respectively. On the other hand, it can be gleaned from the results that the first indicator which is instructional leadership after computing the average rating of the sub-indicator # 1.1 "Account for the learning outcomes of the school vis-a-vis goals and targets" with 4.11 (VS) and indicator # 1.2 "Perform instructional supervision to achieve the target learning outcomes through the following activities" with 4.17 (VS) was found to have the lowest average of 4.14 in terms of efficiency.

Several studies have shown that instructional monitoring has a major impact on school success, like the results above. Fikuree, Meyer, Le Feyre, and Alansari (2021) wrote one of these studies, which emphasized the importance of principal task effectiveness and its connection to student achievement. This was backed up by a study by Ma, X, and Marion R. (2019), which found that instructional leadership strategies had a greater indirect effect on teachers' effectiveness. The study "Influence of School Heads' Direct Supervision on Teachers' Role Performance in Public Senior High Schools, Central Region, Ghana" by Ampofo et al. (2019) found that school heads devote very little time to supervision, especially in lesson

planning and delivery of learning by teachers. The study was able to establish that instructional supervision has a significant influence on teachers' performance, with a computed significance result of ($p=0.0430.05$) in lesson planning and ($p=0.035 0.05$) in learning delivery. As a result, the study recommends that school heads perform direct supervision as well as a reduction in the teaching load of the heads of departments.

3. Significant relationship between the level of management competencies of the school heads and the performance of the schools in SDO Laguna in terms of quality and efficiency

The test of a significant relationship between the level of management competencies of the school heads and the performance of the schools in SDO Laguna" revealed that the school head-respondents competencies in terms of records management, financial management, school facilities and equipment, managing of staff, school safety for disaster preparedness, mitigation and resiliency, and emerging opportunities and challenges are positively, highly and significantly related to the school performance in terms of ($r = .244$ to $.305$, $N = 358$, $p < .01$), efficiency ($r = .245$ to $.328$, $N = 358$, $p < .01$), and both quality and efficiency ($r = .269$ to $.305$, $N = 358$, $p < .01$). The quality and efficiency of the schools' performance can truly be determined by the kind of management exhibited by the school heads. Records Management is an important factor to make the services provided by the schools effective and efficient. Proper utilization of the school data and information like the school enrolment, student-teacher ratio, achievement level, and other significant data will result in proper planning, fund allocation, and management of staff.

To design a feasible project, the school heads need to analyze the various data and make sure that the creation of all the projects is data-based. Aligned to this School Improvement Plan (SIP) are the Annual Improvement Plan



and the Annual Procurement Plan where one can find the fund allotted for the identified projects. This means that all the activities to be implemented by the schools are following the needs of the learners, teachers, and the non-teaching, that in terms of financial management, no project will receive allotment if these are not part of the proposed interventions. Through the school heads' leadership in utilizing accurate school records and information, other school operations such as financial and management of staff are well taken care of.

Financial management especially in the new normal is a challenge for all school heads. Realigning the small budget from the MOOE to produce the learning resources needed by the students, managing the school expenditures without other sources of the fund like the canteen share, procuring safety materials for the school staff test the competencies of the school managers. These people must possess the wisdom to ensure that every single centavo will not be wasted and that these financial hindrances will not stop the school to aim high and performing better. The study of Suleman (2015) demonstrated that budgeting plays an important role in an organization's growth because it improves its operations. In a 2011 study, Hunjra et al. discovered a positive and important relationship between financial management and organizational success. In terms of school safety for disaster preparedness, mitigation, and resiliency, the above findings of a significant relationship between the school heads' competencies in this area and the school's performance were backed up by a study by Kingshott and Mckenzie in 2013, which stated that it is the responsibility of the school heads to create a comprehensive and prepared plan to ensure the student's safety.

4. Significant prediction of management competencies of the school heads and the performance of the school in SDO Laguna

A stepwise multiple linear regression was conducted with quality and efficiency as the

dependent variable and the six (6) constructs of management competencies as independent variables. The multiple regression analysis revealed that Management of Staff contributed significantly to the regression model $F(1, 355) = 43.053, p < .01$ and accounted for 10.6% of the variation in Quality and Efficiency. Hence, the model suggests that the management competencies of school heads in terms of management of staff singly and significantly predict the quality and efficiency of the school.

According to Makore and Shukuru (2017), "the way to improve the quality of education is to invest in teachers." The study highlighted the fact that the availability and quality of the teaching force is evidence of quality education in the education system. Swaleha (2013) concluded that to sustain the teachers' interest and make them enthusiastic, dedicated, and committed in the performance of their roles and responsibilities, they need to be properly informed, motivated, and well supervised.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the study indicated that the level of managerial competencies of school heads has a significant relationship with the school's performance. The competencies in various areas such as financial management, school operations, school safety, and management of staff, were also found to contribute significantly to the school's efficiency and quality.

RECOMMENDATIONS

With respect to the conclusions drawn, the succeeding recommendations are presented:

The Schools Division of Laguna may conduct an annual Induction Program for all new school heads to provide them salient information about managing the school operations and resources, to allow them to have in-depth knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibilities, and to encourage



them to develop their competencies both in managing and instructional aspects. More so, a comprehensive professional development program be implemented to ensure that the school heads will be given the chance to continuously improve themselves as school leaders. Relative to this, it is also suggested that the Human Resource Training and Development Unit of School Division Offices may craft a professional development plan anchored on the different levels of competencies of the school heads particularly in managing the school operations and resources. The program may start by conducting a pre-assessment to get significant information regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the school heads in the different areas of leadership and management. The data can be used as a basis in identifying the appropriate learning and delivery mechanisms as well as the possible focused competency of the school heads. It is also recommended that the school heads be given technical assistance through training, workshop, coaching, and mentoring on class programming, loading of teachers, and giving of assignments which should be under the existing laws, policies, guidelines, and issuances. Records Management specifically in managing the school data and information using the ICT and managing the school facilities and equipment may be considered as possible topics in the future learning and development programs for the school heads. Lastly, future researchers may conduct a study on the effectiveness of using a comprehensive professional development plan in developing or enhancing the competencies of the school heads.

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AUTHORS' PROFILE



Erma S. Valenzuela is an instructional leader who has forayed into decades of professional teaching and educational management. She has served as Education Program Supervisor in English since 2008, which opened more doors for her to handle important positions such as Division Senior High School Coordinator since 2013, Division Campus Journalism Coordinator, and Division Focal Person for Radio Based-Instruction. She is a Certified Learning Facilitator of the National Educators' Academy of the Philippines whose task is to assist in training teachers, school heads, and other instructional leaders. She is also a researcher whose work was approved by the Department of Education's BERF. She has conceptualized, led, and managed educational projects and programs that innovate and shape the educational landscape of the division she serves.



Dr. Lerma P. Buenvinida is a research advocate holding an academic rank of Professor III. She had been the Director of Laboratory High School (2007-2008), Dean of the College of

Education (2008-2012), Chairman of Curriculum, Instruction and Quality Assurance (2015-2017), and Program Coordinator of Graduate Studies and Applied Research (2010-2020) at the Laguna State Polytechnic University, Los Banos Campus. She has been an Internal Quality Auditor in LSPU and an accreditor of the Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines, Inc. (AACCUP) since 2013. She continuously sharpens her craft by rendering professional services as an adviser and member of the panel of examiner for both graduate thesis and dissertation.

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