SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT PRACTICES OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL HEADS: BASIS FOR POLICY RECOMMENDATION

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ABSTRACT

School-Based Management (SBM) is characterized as an era of the transition of the roles and functions of school leaders‖ or school managers such as principals, head teachers, officers-in-charge and teachers-in-charge who participate in school leadership activities. As managers, school heads are accountable for financial operations, building maintenance, student scheduling, personnel, public relations, school policy regarding discipline, coordination of the instructional program, and other overall school matters. This study attempted to analyze the school-based management practices of secondary school heads in the first district of Isabela. This study employed the descriptive method of research and involved two hundred fifty three (253) teacher-participants selected through stratified proportional random sampling and used a questionnaire in gathering data needed for the study. The findings of the study fostered better understanding of the basic tenets namely: vision and purpose, features, structures and roles, and support system of school-based management. Coordination among stakeholders served as the best measure for an effective school-based management which is influenced by the participants' educational attainment, position, and length of service.

Keywords: *School-based management practices, public secondary school heads, policy recommendation*

INTRODUCTION

In a world where knowledge has become a crucial element for nations to prosper and compete, primacy is placed on quality and accessible education, from early childhood development to primary, secondary, and tertiary learning. It is for this reason that the significance of education to any country needs to be underscored for it is believed to be the primary source of all technological advances, innovations, and human comforts. In most countries, particularly those that are developing like the Philippines, education is seen as the key to social mobility and major determinant of the levels of prosperity, welfare, and security of the people.

The formidable task of delivering educational service to the country's populace is one of the responsibilities assumed by educational institutions. Education in the Philippines has undergone several stages of development from the pre-Spanish times to the present. It pursues policy reforms that seek to improve the basic quality education. These policy reforms are expected to create critical changes necessary to further accelerate, broaden, deepen and sustain the improved education effort already started.

In order to meet the needs of the Philippine society, education serves as emphasis and priority of the leadership in all periods or epochs in the Philippine's national struggle as a race. As an umbrella term, "restructuring" in the education sector has been used to define a number of interrelated changes which may include changes in the core technology of schools, the conditions of teaching, the structures and authority for decision making, and the relationship between the school and its community.

In August 2001, Republic Act 9155, otherwise called the Governance of Basic Education Act, was passed transforming the name of the Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS) into Department of Education (DepED) in order to redefine the role of field offices. This also provides the overall framework for (i) school head empowerment by strengthening their leadership roles and (ii) school-based management within the context of transparency and local accountability.

The goal of basic education is to provide the school-aged population and young adults with skills, knowledge, and values to become caring, self-reliant, productive and patriotic citizens. This transformation, then, has embarked on a nationwide effort to introduce and implement School-Based Management or SBM. The Department of Education has been pursuing a package of policy reforms called the BESRA to build upon the efforts of the Schools First Initiative (SFI) and to create a basic education sector that is capable of achieving the Education for All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDG) objectives by 2015.

Referred to as the Key Reform Thrust (KRT) 1 in BESRA, the SBM is being promoted and institutionalized as one of the key strategies for achieving the desired learning outcomes. It is premised on the principle that in order to deliver better outcomes in a sustainable manner, schools must be enabled and empowered to manage their own affairs. School-based management is concerned with the decentralization of decision-making authority from the central, regional, and division offices to the individual schools. The idea is to unite the school heads, teachers, students, local government units, and the community to improve the quality of early formal education in Philippine public schools (DepEd, 2006b).

The DepEd has decentralized decision-making powers to local officials as its response to RA 7160 (the Philippine Local Government Code) in 1999. DECS Order 230, defined decentralization as the best position to know the needs of their schools and to make appropriate decisions in a timely manner. So involving local stakeholders in addressing local problems is the key to improving schools and even to mobilizing much-needed resources (World Bank, 2004).

Statement of the Problem

The study attempted to analyze the school-based management practices of secondary school heads in the first district of Isabela. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the participants in terms of:
    1.1 School Population,

      1.1.1 Total Number of Teachers

      1.1.2 Total Number of Students

    1.2 Educational Attainment,

    1.3 Position, and

    1.4 Length of Service?

2. What is the extent of knowledge and understanding of the participants on school-based management relative to the following:

    2.1 vision and purpose,

    2.2 features,

    2.3 structures and roles, and

    2.4 support system?

3. To what extent is the school-based management practiced as assessed by the participants relative to the following:

    3.1 school leadership,

    3.2 internal stakeholders participation,

    3.3 external stakeholders participation,

    3.4 school improvement process,

    3.5 school-based resources, and

    3.6 school performance accountability?

4. Is there a significant difference on the participants' extent of knowledge and understanding of school-based management when participants are grouped according to profile variables?

5. Is there a significant difference in the assessment of the participants on the extent of practice of school-based management when grouped according to profile variables?

6. What are the best practices manifested by the participants along the implementation of SBM?

7. What is the degree of seriousness of the problems encountered by the participants in the implementation of school-based management?

8. Is there a significant difference on the degree of seriousness of the problems encountered by the participants in the implementation of school-based management when grouped according to profile variables?

9. What measures should be undertaken to address the problems encountered in the implementation of school-based management?

10. What policies can be proposed to address the problems encountered in the implementation of school-based management?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed the descriptive method of research for it is designed to determine the extent or degree to which two or more variables are associated with each other. This was used to describe the existing behavior or characteristics of a particular population.

Participants of the Study

The participants of the study involved two hundred fifty three (253) teacher-participants who were randomly selected using the stratified proportional random sampling.

Instrumentation

The researcher made use of a questionnaire in gathering data pertinent to the study. A letter explaining the purpose of the study accompanied the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was patterned from the first and second parts of the tool used by Baguec (2008) who conducted the study on "School-Based Management Practice of School Heads in the Division of Apayao in Relation to Academic Performance" and Dulin (2013) who conducted the "Implementation of School-Based Management and School Performance among Elementary Schools in the Division of Tuguegarao City", respectively. These were modified and categorized by the researcher to suit the requirements of the study.

The questionnaire consists of the following parts:

Part I. Questionnaire for the School Heads

A. Profile of the School Heads

B. Extent of Knowledge and Understanding of the Participants in School-Based Management

C. Extent of Practice of School-Based Management

D. Best Practices relative to the Implementation of School-Based Management

E. Degree of Seriousness of the Problems Encountered in the Implementation of School-Based Management

F. Possible Measures to Address the Problems Encountered relative to the Implementation of School-Based Management.

Part II. Questionnaire for Teacher-Participants

A. Profile of Teacher-Participants

B. Extent of Knowledge and Understanding of the Participants in School-Based Management

C. Extent of Practice of School-Based Management

D. Best Practices relative to the Implementation of School-Based Management

E. Degree of Seriousness of the Problems Encountered in the Implementation of School-Based Management

F. Possible Measures to Address the Problems Encountered relative to the Implementation of School-Based Management

Data Gathering Procedure

In pursuing this particular study, the following steps were undertaken:

1. The researcher sought permission to conduct the study from the Office of the Schools Division Superintendent.

2. A letter of request pertaining to the study was sent to the school principals.

3. The researcher personally floated and retrieved the questionnaire from the participants.

Data Analysis

Upon retrieval of the questionnaires, the data were collated, tabulated and treated statistically through the following tools:

Frequency Count and Percentage. These were used to describe the profile of the participants.

Weighted Mean. This was used to interpret the assessment of the participants on school-based management.

Likert Scale. The following scale was used to interpret the weighted means:

Scale	Qualitative Interpretation
4.20 – 5.00	Very Great Extent/ Very Serious
3.40 – 4.19	Great Extent/ Serious
2.60 – 3.39	Moderate Extent/ Moderately Serious
1.80 – 2.59	Limited Extent/ Somewhat Serious
1.00 – 1.79	Very Limited Extent/Not Serious

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). This was used to test for significant difference in the participants' extent of knowledge and understanding on SBM when grouped according to profile variables. Further, it was used to test for significant difference on the extent of practice of SBM as well as on the degree of seriousness of the problems encountered in the implementation of SBM when participants are grouped according to profile variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the data gathered, the researcher obtained the following findings:

Profile of the participants in terms of:

School Population

Ilagan National High School is categorized as a large school while Simanu National High School is considered a small school.

Educational Attainment

Most of the participants have master's units and are professionally prepared for their task as evidenced by their intention to acquire higher level of educational ladder.

Position

Most of the school heads have Principal III position while most of the teacher-participants are designated as Teacher III.

Length of Service

Majority of the school heads are classroom teachers. Generally the teacher-participants are newly-hired in the field based on their service records.

Extent of knowledge and understanding of the participants on school-based management in terms of the vision and purpose, features, structures and roles, and support system

The participants assessed to a very great extent their knowledge and understanding of the set vision and purpose, features, structures and roles, and support system of school-based management.

Extent of practice of School Based Management as assessed by the participants in terms of school leadership, internal stakeholders' participation, external stakeholders' participation, school improvement process, school-based resources, and school performance accountability

The participants assessed to a very great extent their practice of School-Based Management along school leadership, internal stakeholders' participation, external stakeholders' participation, school improvement process, school-based resources, and school performance accountability.

Test of significant difference on the extent of knowledge and understanding of school-based management when participants are grouped according to profile variables

Educational Attainment

There is no significant difference in the extent of knowledge and understanding of school heads in terms of the vision and purpose, features, structures and roles, and support system school-based management when grouped according to educational attainment. Likewise, there is no significant difference in the extent of knowledge and understanding of teachers in terms of the vision and purpose, features, structures and roles, and support system school-based management when grouped according to educational attainment.

Position

There is no significant difference on the extent of knowledge

and understanding of school heads on the vision and purpose, features, structures and roles, and support system of school-based management when grouped according to position. Similarly, there is no significant difference on the extent of knowledge and understanding of teachers on the vision and purpose, features, structures and roles, and support system of school-based management when grouped according to position.

Teaching Experience

There is no significant difference in the assessment of school heads on the extent of knowledge and understanding of the vision and purpose, features, structures and roles, and support system when grouped according to their teaching experience. However, there is a significant difference in the assessment of teachers on the extent of knowledge and understanding along the vision and purpose, features, and structure and roles of school-based management.

Administrative Experience

There is a significant difference on the extent of knowledge and understanding of the school heads along the vision and purpose and support system of school-based management while there exist no significant difference on the extent of knowledge and understanding of the features of school-based management.

Test of significant difference in the assessment of the participants on the extent of practice of School-Based Management in terms of school leadership, internal stakeholders' participation, external stakeholders' participation, school improvement process, school-based resources, and school performance accountability when grouped according to profile variables

Educational Attainment

There is no significant difference in the assessment of school heads on the extent of practice of SBM when they are grouped according to educational attainment. Similarly, there is no

significant difference in the assessment of teacher-participants on the extent of practice of SBM when they are grouped   according to educational attainment.

Position

There is no significant difference in the assessment of school heads on the extent of practice of SBM in terms of school leadership, internal stakeholders' participation, external stakeholders' participation, school improvement process, school-based resources and school performance accountability when grouped according to position. Likewise, there is no significant difference in the assessment of teachers on the extent of practice of SBM with respect to school leadership, internal stakeholders' participation, school improvement process, school-based resources and school performance accountability. However, there is a significant difference in the teachers' assessment on the extent of SBM practice with regard to external stakeholders' participation when grouped according to position.

Teaching Experience

There is no significant difference in the assessment of school heads on the extent of practice of the six dimensions of SBM when grouped according to teaching experience. Similarly, there is no significant difference in the assessment of teachers on the extent of practice of the six dimensions of SBM when grouped according to teaching experience.

Administrative Experience

There is no significant difference on the extent of practice of the school heads in terms of school leadership internal stakeholders' participation, external stakeholders' participation, school improvement process, and school-based resources of school-based management when grouped according to administrative experience. However, there is a significant difference on the extent of practice of the school heads on school performance accountability.

The best practices manifested by the school heads along the implementation of school-based management were effective working relationship among stakeholders and fully transparent school. On the other hand, the best practice manifested by the teacher participants along the implementation of school-based management was focused on teaching that is coordinated with students' performance.

The participants stated that the behavior and absenteeism of students hinders the implementation of school-based management in the First District of Isabela. They also assessed that poverty, lack of human and material resources in schools, too much chain and bureaucracy in the school system, far-flung school site that delays pertinent communications, misunderstanding by many schools of what SBM is seen and how it functions, confusion on the part of the stakeholders in relation to new roles and responsibilities, Interference of influential persons and politicians, illiteracy of parents in promoting the development of the entire school, distraction of extra-curricular activities, lack of resource generation in schools, resistance of teachers to change, difficulties of coordination with the stakeholders, "no care" attitude of the stakeholders , occasional absences and tardiness of teachers affecting school performance, and lack of training or professional development to council members affect the implementation of school-based management.

There is no significant difference on the degree of seriousness of the problems encountered by school heads in the implementation of school-based management when grouped according to educational attainment, teaching experience and administrative experience. Similarly, there exists no significant difference in the degree of seriousness of the problems encountered by teachers in the implementation of school-based management when grouped according to educational attainment and administrative experience. However, there is a significant difference in the degree of seriousness of the problems encountered by teachers in the implementation of school-based management along designation.

The two groups of participants recommended that there must be coordination among stakeholders for effective SBM implementation. Likewise, both teachers and school heads suggested the following in

order to solve school-based management problems and challenges towards the realization of the school objectives: (a) initiate and conduct training about SBM to stakeholders, (b) encourage collaboration among teachers and participation among stakeholders, (c) there must be transparency in the allocation and utilization of MOOE, SEF, community contribution and supplemental budget, (d) de-politicize the school system or structure, (e) there must be a compulsory management course for school head, (f) the school head should discourage favoritism, (g) delegate powers for better decision-making, (h) regular monitoring and evaluation of school performance, and (i) democratic way of managing people.

Policy formulations or designs are recommended and are subjects for further and more intense deliberation among all concerned stakeholders namely: quarterly re-orientation of stakeholders in relation to their new roles and responsibilities, improved system of fair and just mechanism, resource generation of schools through school to school partnership, strict adherence to paperless communication system, continuous professional development of council members, and regulation of the conduct of extra-curricular activities.

CONCLUSION

The study had fostered better understanding of the basic tenets, namely: vision and purpose, features, structures and roles, and support system of school-based management. School-based management depends on the level of practice in terms of school leadership, internal stakeholders' participation, external stakeholders' participation, school improvement process, school-based resources, and school performance accountability brought by effective working relationship among stakeholders, fully transparent school, and focus on teaching that is coordinated with student performance, and effective working relationship.

Hence, this study provides that coordination among stakeholders serves as the best measure for an effective school-based management influenced by educational attainment, position, and length of service.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions drawn from the study, the following are the researcher's recommendations:

A re-orientation program for the stakeholders must be conducted to improve their awareness of their responsibility and accountability.

Schools must enhance the support system for teachers to provide the needs for basic instructional equipment and materials for the development of the learners' full potential.

Schools must strengthen the parents' accountability for students' performance by involving them in the management and monitoring of students' learning process.

Schools must draw greater support from the Local Government Stakeholders and other community leaders, government, and non-government organizations to provide community-wide improved learning outcomes.

Concerted efforts must be made by the stakeholders in establishing a monitoring and evaluation team to validate the actual level of SBM implementation in order to pass not only Level 1 but also the higher levels of SBM assessment.

School administrators and teachers must implement an intervention plan in order to solve behavioral issues and absenteeism of students.

A similar study may be conducted to validate the findings of the study.

The findings of the study must be disseminated to the participants of the study.

The policy recommendations formulated by the researcher must be presented to the school administration for efficient implementation of school-based management in the First District of Isabela.

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