

On Basic Education Leadership: Analysis of Potential Impacts on Financial Management in the new normal

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes the changes in the financial management skills of school heads. Data was collected from elementary schools of Bayugan North District, Bayugan City Division, Philippines. The transition in the first two quarters of 2020 decreased the annual utilization rate of schools which indicates little impact on the financial performance of the school. High workload and level of effectiveness limit the responsibilities of school heads and that their time is spent more on administrative work than supervisory work. Conducting relevant training to create several key benefits for the students, faculty, and staff is very important.

Keywords

educational leadership, basic education, impact, financial management, new normal

Introduction

It is this 2020 where school leadership was put to test. According to the UN Policy Brief [1], the COVID-19 pandemic affected nearly 1.6 billion learners in more than 190 countries and all continents making it the largest disruption of education systems in history. Further, UNESCO [2] also stated that the pandemic has forced a massive shift away from learning and teaching in traditional settings with physical interactions. The role of education undergoes several changes which include the role and leadership of the principals. Basit, et. al. [3] said that school principals are very important in educational institutions. Korolczuk [4] affirmed this, stating that principals face a myriad of a sudden and monumental shift of responsibilities imposed on them brought on by COVID-19. Hitt, et. al. [5] agreed that to stay relevant, school leaders need to adjust to technological, socio-political, and institutional changes. There is a need to devise strategies to deal with short- term discontinuities

and uncertainties to thrive and continue different operations.

Black, et.al. [6] pointed out that in the United States, nearly 90% of local school budgets comprised education but are targeted for the cuts to be redirected to medical care, unemployment insurance spending, and other critical needs during the pandemic. In the Philippines however, consistent with the priorities of the Administration through the Department of Budget and Management [7], the Department of Education, state universities and colleges, the Commission on Higher Education, and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority collectively will receive the largest portion of the 2020 budget to the tune of PhP692. 6 billion Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses is the school budget downloaded from the government to all public schools for the utilization in running school operations. The budget includes the procurement of school supplies necessary in classroom teaching, utilities, and communication, training activities, graduation rites, security, janitorial

services, minor school repair as stated in the approved School Improvement Plan (SIP) for the current school year and in the Annual Improvement Plan (AIP) of the school, procure small capital expenditure items worth Php 15,000 and below as provided in the new Government Accounting Manual issued by the Commission on Audit and subject to separate guidelines to be issued by DepEd . Connectedly, DepEd Order 008 series of 2019 otherwise known as —Revised Implementing Guidelines on the Direct Release and Use of MOOE allocations of the schools, including other funds managed by schools aims to guide all public schools on the derivation, release, and utilization of school MOOE, ensure timely and optimal use of school resources and institute mechanisms for transparency and accountability can be well-maintained so that it becomes the center of the locality. At the start of the year, principals craft their budget for MOOE and incorporate this in their school operating budgets (SOB), annual improvement plan (AIP), and the annual procurement plan (APP). These yearly budgets are based on their three-year. school improvement plan (SIP). Hence, according to Mbatsane and Mestry [8-9], concerted efforts of the school principal and his management team are encouraged to make sure that the school funds are managed effectively. Moreover, MOOE funds are allocated based on student enrollment and other characteristics, for example, the number of classrooms and teachers. Strategic planning, a noteworthy management activity, causes a school to define its goals and objectives, establish priorities and solidify specific tactics to achieve its mission. This study recognizes the need to fill the gaps in educational leadership vis-a-vis financial management in this new normal and thoroughly looks at how these perceptions of school heads are reflected in their school financial performance.

Methods

Research Design

The descriptive survey research method was employed in this research. It attempted to establish the range and distribution of social characteristics such as education or training, years of relevant experiences, and perceptions and to discover how these characteristics may be related

to certain behavior patterns or attitudes. This design is deemed appropriate to describe natural or man-made educational phenomena that are of interest to policymakers and educators. Further, the methods of collecting data for descriptive research can be employed singly or in various combinations, depending on the research questions at hand.

Research Site

This study was conducted in Bayugan North District, Bayugan City Division. Bayugan was formerly a sitio of Barangay Maygatasan, Esperanza. The place was located along the river which served as the pathway of the natives going to Esperanza. It became a city on March 23, 2007, by Republic Act No. 9405 and was ratified by a plebiscite held on June 20. Bayugan is a transportation highway nexus for the eastern part of Mindanao Island. Bayugan is now one if not the fastest-growing component city in Northern Mindanao. The city's name was either derived from a Manobo term for “pathway” or from the *bayug* tree. Fifty percent (50%) of the schools in the district participated in this research.

Data Collection, Analysis, and Method of Validation

This study undertook phases and systematic procedures in gathering data and securing the reliability of the data. First, the researcher secured validated instruments that will be used in gathering data. Next, the researchers identified the Bayugan North District as the area of research to which 5 schools responded. Afterward, the researchers started gathering data. Upon identification of the participants, the researchers asked permission from the Division Schools Superintendent and school heads to allow them to conduct the study as well as the accompanying instruments. After the granting of the approval, the researchers then coordinated with the school heads to administer the survey and to ask for a copy of their Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses for CY 2019 and 2020.

Further, descriptive statistical techniques appropriate for the gathered data were employed. Frequency and Percentage were used to determine the distribution of school heads' responses using

the questionnaire and Percentage to determine the MOOE Utilization of CY 2019 and CY 2020 which will define the school’s financial performance. The researchers analyzed the data by following two procedures: Summary Measures and Variance Measures. The importance of measuring variance is that it demonstrates differences. Once the difference was identified, then the researchers sought an explanation and determine if it is significant. In the first procedure, the researchers analyzed how the data converge and by identifying the average value. Barbeira, et. al. [10] highlighted that the power of these increased sample sizes while keeping the computational burden manageable, methods that use summary-level data rather than individual-level data are needed. The second procedure was through variance measures where a range of outcomes was explored. Sauer, et.al [11] emphasized that effective coverage metrics require accurate estimation of uncertainty around each estimate. While it is routine to report variance for effective coverage estimates that use one data source. There are ways to judge the reliability and validity of qualitative research findings. To withstand scrutiny, the researchers spent time giving serious consideration to credibility as one of the aspects of research validity. Credibility which is often called internal validity refers to the truthfulness and trustworthiness of the findings. This depends more on the richness of the data gathered than on the quantity of data. Since the questionnaire used was modified by the researchers, there was revalidation testing done to improve the understanding of the validation and evaluation of this qualitative research. It was done with consistent findings when it was administered to the school heads from a different district using internal consistency reliability and test-retest reliability.

Results and Discussions

Table 1. Percentage Change in the Annual Utilization of School MOOE

School	CALENDAR YEAR		
	2019	2020	% Change
1	99.92%	99.94%	0.02%
2	100.00%	99.75%	-0.25%
3	99.83%	99.88%	0.05%

4	98.23%	70.86%	-27.37%
5	100.00%	88.75%	-11.25%
			-7.76%

Table 1 shows the percentage change in the annual utilization rate of MOOE per school from CY 2019 (normal year) to CY 2020 (new normal). Forty percent (40 %) of schools have experienced a minimal decrease in the performance of their MOOE Utilization during the new normal. The annual utilization rate of the schools has decreased by 7.76% from CY 2019 which is 98.80% as compared to CY 2020 which is 91.84%. This may be due to some factors. Keel and Kelly [12] supported that when the school's characteristics affect the current and future performance, it is plausible that this effect progressively decreases over time. To add, Serdar [13] discussed that the peculiarity of the education system is its non-commercial nature and the lack of regulatory mechanisms for the extraction and distribution of profits by results of activities. Sharma [14] contended that in the case of secondary schools, school principals and administrators are charged with the responsibility of planning the school budget to achieve the objectives of the school and more so effective financial management. Only 20 % of schools obtained lower than 94% average within two years in MOOE Utilization. This indicates that the performance of the schools in CY 2020 was not significantly affected as compared to its performance in CY 2019.

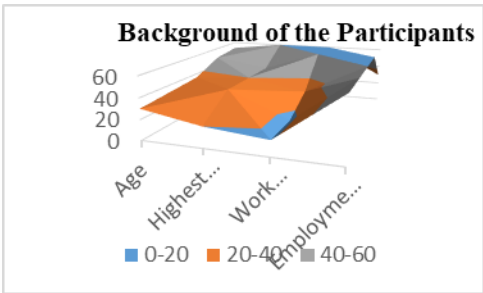


Figure 1. Profile of the participants showing the age, highest educational attainment, work experience, and status of employment

Figure 1 shows the schools' background in terms of age, highest educational attainment, work experience, and employment status. The average age is 40.2, of which the oldest is 53 and the youngest is 30. Twenty percent (20%) of the participants obtained a Bachelor's degree, sixty percent (60%) obtained a Master's degree, and

Twenty percent (20%), Doctorate Degree. As to work experience in their present workstations, the average is 1.9 years and as a principal in general, 6.6 years. Additionally, the average school management experience of the school heads is 3.8 years. When asked about their experience as a teacher and other jobs, the participants responded 6.6 and 3.6 years respectively. As to their employment status, 80% of the participants are serving 90% or more of full-time hours without teaching obligation and the remaining 10% is serving part-time or less than 90% of full-time hours without teaching obligation.

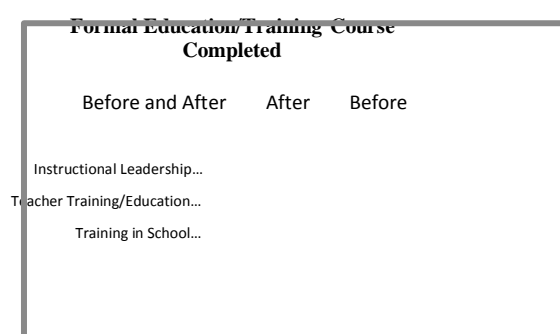


Figure 2. Participation in training program or course after having been appointed as either School Head or School Principal.

Figure 2 shows the Formal Education and Training Course completed by the school heads. Eighty percent (80%) of the participants answered that teacher training programs and instructional leadership training were received by them before actually being appointed in the position. Twenty percent (20%) answered to have undergone the same before and after having been appointed as such in the position. All of the participants took part in professional development activities, particularly in a network, mentoring, or research activity, while only Twenty (20%) participated in the conference or observational visits.

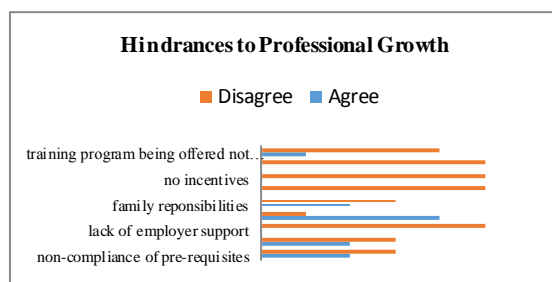


Figure 3. Data shows how strongly the participants agreed or disagreed in the present barriers as regards professional growth

Twenty (20%) of the participants believed that they do not have the prerequisites (qualifications, experience, seniority) and that they find professional development too expensive. The majority of the participants, however, agreed that there is employer support, relevant and good quality professional development offering that is accessible to all, and that there are incentives in participating in such activities.

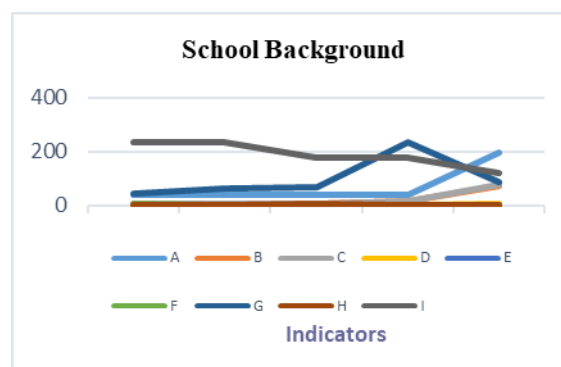


Figure 4. Responses on School Information

Figure 4 shows information that best describes the different workstations of the school heads. In the figure different indicators. They are the following: A – Community where the school is located; B- Number of Teachers; C- Number of Personnel for Pedagogical Support; D- Number of School Administrative Personnel; E- Number of School Management Personnel; F-Other Staff; G- Current Enrolment; H- Students with Special Needs and I – Socio-economically disadvantage Students. The majority of the schools are from a rural community and only 20% are located in the city. Among all the schools, 74 is the highest number of teachers while 3 is the lowest. As to personnel for pedagogical support, irrespective of the grades/ages they support, including all teacher aides or other non-teaching professionals who provide instruction or support teachers in providing instruction, professional curriculum/instructional specialists, educational media specialists, and school psychologists, the highest number is 73 and 3 is the lowest respectively. Sixty (60%) of the schools have no school administrative personnel. All schools have school management personnel and other management staff whose main activity is management however forty (40%) of the schools have no other staff. As regards school enrolment,

the highest number is 235 while the lowest is 43. When asked about the numbers of students with special needs, all the participants answered 1-10% of their student population. As to being socio-economically disadvantaged, 20% answered to be in the 11-30% bracket, 40% in the 31-60% bracket and the remaining forty percent belonged to the more than 60% bracket.

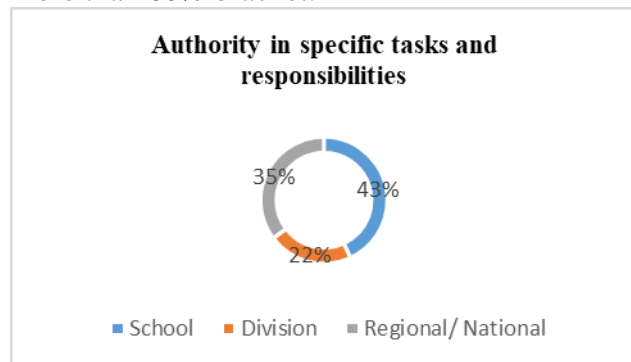


Figure 5. Perception of school heads in performing different school responsibilities

Figure 5 shows the presentation of significant responsibilities played in decision making as perceived by the school heads. Forty-three percent (43%) of the participants believed that "Dismissing or suspending teachers from employment", "Establishing teachers' starting salaries, including setting pay scales", "Determining teachers' salary increases" and "Determining course content, and curriculum" are tasks of the authorities in the regional and national level. Meanwhile, Twenty-two percent (22%) believed that indicators as "Appointing or hiring teachers" and "Establishing student assessment policies, including state and district assessments" are Division level responsibilities and the remaining 35% believed that "Deciding on budget allocations within the school," "Establishing student disciplinary policies and procedures", "Approving students for admission to the school," and "Choosing which learning materials are to be used" are within the school level. Additionally, all the participants believed that their respective stations provided students, parents, and staff with opportunities to actively participate in school decisions.

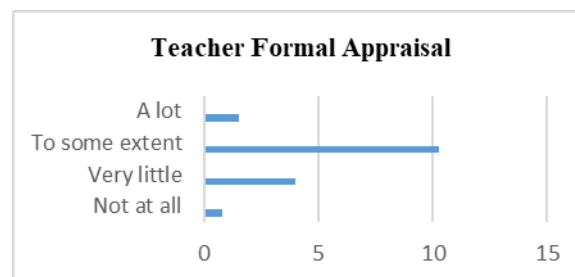


Figure 6. Perception of school heads in performing different school responsibilities

Figure 6 shows Teacher Formal Appraisal as perceived by the participants. 'Appraisal' is defined as when a teacher's work is reviewed by the principal, an external inspector, or by his or her colleagues. Here, it is defined as a more formal approach rather than a more informal approach (e.g. through informal discussions). A weighted mean of 10.25 indicates that the majority of the participants answered 'To some extent to the following indicators: "Measures to remedy any weaknesses in teaching are discussed with the teacher", "A development or training plan is developed for each teacher", "A mentor is appointed to help the teacher improve his/her teaching", "A change in a teacher's work responsibilities (e.g. increase or decrease in his/her teaching load or administrative/managerial responsibilities", "A change in a teacher's salary or a payment of a financial bonus and "A change in the likelihood of a teacher's career advancement." A weighted mean of 4 means that the indicator "If a teacher is found to be a poor performer, material sanctions such as reduced annual increases in pay are imposed on the teacher" is found to be very little or not at all present in their respective workstations.

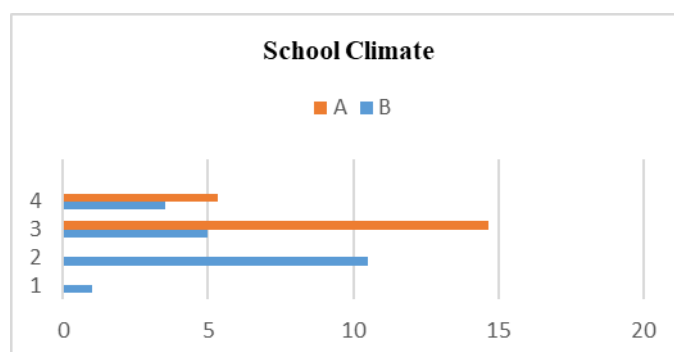


Figure 7. Perception of school heads in performing different school responsibilities

Figure 7 shows the perception of school heads as regards school Climate. Indicator A covers questions regarding openness to discussion and relationship and Indicator B covers the provision of quality instruction. In Indicator A, all the participants answered either 'Agree' (weighted mean of 5.33) or 'Strongly Agree' (weighted mean of 14.66) on the following items: "The school staff shares a common set of beliefs about schooling/learning", "There is a high level of cooperation between the school and the local community", "School staff has an open discussion about difficulties", "School staff has an open discussion about difficulties. ", "There is a culture of sharing success", and "The relationships between teachers and students are good." In indicator B on the other hand, some participants answered 'To some extent' (weighted mean of 5) in the area of personnel shortage. However, with a weighted mean of 10.5, there is a 'Very Little' shortage on the following: qualified and/or high-performing teachers, teachers with competence in teaching students with special needs, the inadequacy of computers for instruction, insufficient internet access, and inadequacy of library materials.

Table 2. Structures of Induction Program

Activities	%
Mentoring by experienced teachers	21.74%
Courses/Seminars	17.39%
Scheduled meetings with principal/ colleague teachers	8.70%
A system of peer review	8.70%
Networking/ virtual communities	0.00%
Collaboration with other schools	8.70%
Team Teaching	17.39%
A system of diaries/portfolios/journals	17.39%
None of the above	0.00%

Table 2 shows the structured range of activities at school to support new teachers' introduction into the teaching profession/school. An induction program may include peer work with other new teachers, mentoring by experienced teachers, etc. The formal arrangement may be defined by schools concerning other schools, or by educational authorities/external agencies. Mentoring remained the most common activity with 21.74%. On the other hand, 17.39% of the

participants answered courses/ seminars, team teaching and system of journals were present in their Induction Program. It is notable that until last year networking or virtual communities is not included in the activities. This year's situation, however, will presumably be included as almost all means of communication and activities are done virtually.

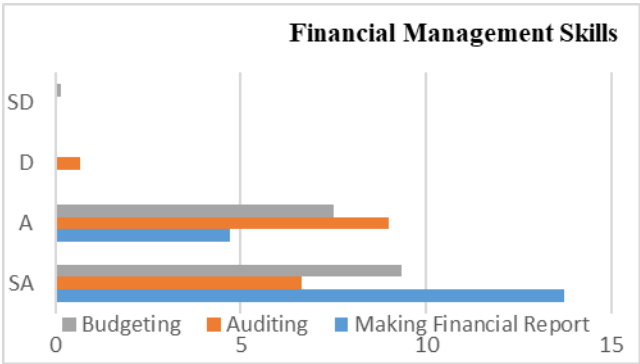


Figure 8. Perception of school heads in financial management skills

Figure 8 shows the perception of school heads on Financial management skills. In almost all areas, the participants answered 'Strongly Agree' (weighted mean of 9.33 in Budgeting, 6.66 in Auditing, and 13.71 in making financial reports). Answered as 'Disagreeable', the items "Auditing skills will enable principals to determine their gains in schools" and "Auditing skills will enable them to determine their losses in schools" obtained .66 weighted mean. Moreover, only the item "Principals should learn not to spend every revenue lawfully" was answered 'Strong Disagree' by the participants.



Figure 9. Perception of school heads on Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction refers to the school heads' feeling of satisfaction on the job, which acts as a motivation to work. The statements where the participants strongly agreed obtained a weighted

mean of 4.5; agree, 6.38; disagree, 3 and strongly disagree .25. All the participants disagreed with changing to another school. The majority agreed that they enjoy working in their current school, that they would recommend their school as a good place to work, that the teaching profession is valued in society, and that all in all, they are satisfied with their job.

Limitations and Future Studies

This study is limited to the prime objective of investigating the potential effects on financial management in the new normal to leadership. Further, the effectiveness is measured only in terms of school heads' perception of educational leadership and their school's school performance through their (Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses) MOOE utilization in CY 2019 and 2020.

Conclusion

Findings from this study indicate the following: (a) Despite the pandemic, the spending of the schools remained efficient as the MOOE budget is readily available for utilization; (b) High workload and the level of responsibilities limit the effectiveness of school head in administrative and supervisory work. The training course helps principal enhanced instructional supervisory skills; (c) Teacher formal appraisal is necessary to determine the development or training plan for each teacher; (d) There are a harmonious relationship and positive response on the programs and project of the school between internal and external stakeholders; (e) Teacher induction and mentoring help to improve teacher's pedagogical competence which will result to improve student's general performance; (f) Principals' knowledge on the financial management of the school as to budget, audit, report and account for all the school financial expenditures are vital in managing a school and (g) The school heads find job satisfaction in their workplace. Going over the results, it can also be concluded that leadership, as perceived by the school heads, could be enhanced in this new normal by becoming resilient and coming up with measures to quickly adapt to the challenges brought about by this pandemic.

School heads must consider their respective school financial performance. One way is aligning MOOE utilization to the quarterly priorities of the school especially in this new normal where transactions and processes are challenged. Furthermore, school heads must balance their administrative and supervisory work to be able to carry out different school functions. Teachers' appraisal must adhere to the standard criteria which will be used to determine career progression. The utilization of technology platforms to meet the individual needs of the students and teachers is important as a genuine means of improving school processes. Conducting relevant training to create several key benefits for the students, faculty and staff and stakeholders is very important. Additionally, a financial management refresher course is fundamental in equipping school heads in this new normal.

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