

## Towards Enhancing the Managerial Performance of School Heads

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### Abstract

*The main purpose of this study was to determine the level of managerial performance of school heads, their strengths and weaknesses in the different areas of school management as perceived by school head themselves, their teachers, and senior students. It attempted to propose an enhancement plan based on the identified weaknesses vis-à-vis the managerial performances of school heads in performing their functions. The study used a descriptive method of research that involved the participation of four (4) schools in the Division of Cavite, with their ten (10) school heads, thirty-eight (38) teachers, and one hundred thirty-four (134) senior students. The validated survey instrument containing 50 questions were used and covered assigned seven (7) areas of school management namely the (1) vision-mission-goals, (2) curriculum and instructional management, (3) financial and budgeting management, (4) school plant and facilities, (5) student services management, (6) community relations management, and (7) management of school improvement plan. The findings and results of the study revealed school heads exhibited very satisfactory level in performing their managerial functions in all management areas identified. It also revealed that there were significant differences in the managerial performance of school heads in the areas of vision-mission-goals, financial and budgeting, physical plant and facilities, community relations and management of school improvement plan. The data on the weaknesses of school heads in performing managerial functions in identified areas of school management provided the basis in proposing an enhancement plan that may be used in improving their functions and in providing a key to more development programs for school heads in the division.*

**Key Words:** School Heads, Managerial Performance, Managers, Management, Educational Leaders.

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## Introduction

A school organization, like any other organization, needs a strong leadership and management. Both set the way the school organization will go. The application of different management and leadership principles and practices in school setting complement each other. School leadership and management of activities challenge everyone in the field in promoting the culture of lifelong learning and teaching.

The relationship between management and leadership as summarized by Covey (Jooste, 2008) is that leadership deals with the vision, direction, effectiveness and results focusing on the top line, while management deals with establishing structures and systems to focus on the bottom line to get results. Everard, et. al, regarded both leadership and management as indispensable and in practice while Earley and Weinding stressed the close link of both which is necessary for organizational success (Malasa, 2007). Thus the importance of these two principles in school operations cannot be denied.

The school organization is continually changing and the need for both leadership and management today is more important, serious, and challenging. It is grappled by different problems and pressures to address the needs of the education system. Schools are expected to immediately cope and adapt with the continuous changing environment to survive. Lunenburg and Ornstein (2000) cited Senge's assertion that a school is a learning organization that must be studied as a whole which includes its relationship with its parts and the external environment. Aquino (2000) stressed that management of school is a complex function that requires sophistication in practice.

Over the years, the changing landscape of schools and their management show an ever bigger job to do for all the stakeholders. The new school environment calls for the decentralization for more school autonomy and accountability, the improvement of student achievement results, the improvement of pedagogical processes including a bigger responsibility, local communities, and public services. All of these aim to meet the educational needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

A school head helps the school to attain high level of performance through the utilization of its resources (Lunenburg, 1995). It is expected that school head as leader and manager have the knowledge, skills and ability to promote the success of all students by managing the school organization, operation and resources in a way that promotes a safe, efficient and effective learning environment.

The study of Sindhvad (2009) on the school principals' capacity as instructional leaders found out that in Asia many school principals were not prepared for their new role and function in school management. Likewise the findings of Albano (2006) when she investigated the level of empowerment of secondary principals found out that school principals were more empowered in performing their administrative functions than in the supervisory functions. The research of Pablo (2008) on the assessment of functions of school managers which revealed that school managers do not practice negative belief system like crab mentality, bahala na system, personalan, palakasan, nepotism, and Filipino values makes us hope that, indeed, what school heads lack is identifying the critical roles and competencies in delivering their functions effectively and efficiently.

The school heads as managers and leaders set the direction the schools are going. They are basically responsible in the overall operation of the school. The tremendous changes in scope, variety of competencies, and necessary skills of managing the school make their functions more complex, diverse, and challenging. These functions of school heads as educational leaders and managers are essential to the areas of management namely: the vision, mission, and goals of the institution, curriculum and instruction, financial and budgeting, school plant and facilities, student services, community relations, and the school improvement plan. The identification of competencies needed to function on these areas brings forth the challenges faced by principals everyday where accountability, challenges, and integrity as leaders and

managers remain at stake. The essential competencies in these areas of management greatly influence the effectiveness and efficiency of the performance of the school as a whole.

Successful school managers should be interested in developing and adopting necessary skills to create the best teaching and learning environment. The evolving needs of the school organization grow out of the never-ending pressure from the different stakeholders in the educational system. The capacity to perform both as leaders and managers shapes the school organization as a whole.

The call for enhancing the leadership and managerial competencies of school heads as the most influential person in promoting reform, change, and innovations in performing these functions challenges educational leaders. The emerging changes in leading and managing organizations should be dealt with by discovering new opportunities and threats attached to these and at the same time reconciling these with essential management processes. One must understand the changes in school environment, but the application of proven fundamentals of planning, organizing, leading and controlling remain unchanged. They are as relevant as they were years ago but their form continuously evolves.

Successful school heads' leadership and management can be developed and expanded over time. Their ability to reflect on their actions, their own perceptions and the perceptions of others are necessary to complete the challenges of one's' endeavor to be effective and efficient. What schools need now is not just putting the right person in the position but training them on competencies that will enhance and sustain an environment of efficient and effective leadership and management.

Schartz as cited by Notman (2005) named the external pressures school leaders and the school environment are confronted with in which no solution is being offered and they are as follows: (1) politically - which means new tasks, school programs, and evaluation; (2) economically - which includes stricter budget and restricted expenditures; (3) socially - in terms of status and image of teaching profession; (4) globally - which includes inter-schools ranking and competition; (5) educationally - which means schools efficiency; (6) didactical-methodical level - which demands for dynamic teaching ; and (7) multi-media level - which means new form of communication and media.

With these, school heads' work and responsibilities become complex that a full range of leadership and management knowledge, skills, competencies, and standards are needed. Every school that promotes lifelong learning, raise student achievement, uphold high teaching standard and advocate school improvement must be led by school heads who are skilled in leadership and management techniques.

The thrust of the DepEd to empower school heads and emphasize school-based management has increased and intensified. This major trend of practice in current education reform aims at improving the quality of education services by the government and schools both public and private as well. In the Division of Cavite, there is a current increase in the number of public high schools which is considered as annex schools which are located in places different from their mother schools. These annexes are being managed and supervised by the principals of the mother schools.

The demand for more school heads for these annexes open the opportunity for aspiring teachers to be principals within the division. Passing the National Qualifying Examination for School Heads (NQESH) is one of the requirements to qualify for a school head position but there is more on managing, administering and leading a school. For these reasons and situations the researcher was motivated to conduct the study to give insights on different management areas where school heads are expected to know and perform as manager/leader. The researcher also believes that through this study, school heads, and aspiring to be one will reflect on the importance of knowing the roles, responsibilities, and functions expected of them in different areas of school management. The main concern of this research realizes the essential roles and competencies of school heads in performing their functions in the major areas of management in school operation which are sometimes overlooked or underperformed.

## Materials and Methods

The study used the descriptive method of research. Ariola (2006) states that descriptive research describes current events and that questions posed are based on present phenomena or state of affairs. Since the present study is concerned with knowing the level of managerial performance of school heads in performing their functions, descriptive method provided the best method. The study was conducted with the ten school heads, 38 teachers and 134 senior students of public secondary schools in the division of Cavite as respondents. The secondary schools in the Division of Cavite were grouped into clusters or unit namely north, south, east and west. The researcher made use of purposive sampling in selecting one school per unit. On the other hand, each school was randomly represented by their school heads, secondary school teachers, and senior students for SY 2013-2014.

The Supervisory and Administrative Management Functions of School Heads Instrument of Albano (2006) was modified and adapted by this study in identifying the levels of managerial performance of school heads in the different school management areas. The respondents, school heads, their teachers and senior students, were requested to answer the same set of questionnaire specifying the functions in seven areas of school management namely: vision-mission-goals of the school, curriculum and instruction, financial and budgeting, physical plant and facilities, student services, community relations and school improvement plan. The school heads were asked to rate their own managerial performance in the different areas of school management. The teachers and senior students were asked to rate how their school heads performed in the given areas of school management. In measuring the level of managerial competence of school heads, five items per indicators were measured using a scale score of 1 to 5: 1 = poor, 2 = fair, 3 = satisfactory, 4 = very satisfactory and 5 = excellent.

The Adapted Supervisory and Administrative Management Functions of School Heads Instrument was submitted to five competent authorities composed of professors and experts for content validation. The experts were given the instruments and asked to evaluate each function that fall under the different areas of school management in terms of appropriateness and meaningfulness. The comments and corrections by the experts were incorporated in the adapted instrument leading to the addition or reduction of a number of items or merging of items into a single item to make it more suitable to the needs of the study. After which, the items and the format were finalized. To establish the reliability of the instrument, a test-retest method was done using ten (10) masteral students of the Philippine Normal University. The pretest and the posttest yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.84 showing a high positive correlation between the two tests. Hence, the newly developed questionnaire was considered reliable and suitable to the present study.

## Results and Discussion

As perceived by the school heads themselves, teachers and senior students, the level of managerial performance of secondary school heads is very satisfactory in the different areas of school management. Vision, mission and goals garnered the highest grand mean while financial and budgeting management got the lowest grand mean. The perceptions of the three (3) groups of respondents on the competencies of functions of school heads in the different management areas such as Vision-Mission- Goals, Financial and Budgeting, School Plant and Facilities, Community Relations and School Improvement Plan were found significantly different from each other. Whereas in the areas of Curriculum and Instruction and Student Services, their perceptions did not differ. The weaknesses in managerial performance of school heads found to have significant difference are the following:

### A. Vision-Mission-Goals

- \* Informs stakeholders of programs toward the vision and mission of school via appropriate communication strategies
- \* Reviews the school performance vis-à-vis vision, mission and goals of the school

- \* Articulates the school vision, mission and goals to all stakeholders

#### B. Financial and Budgeting

- \* Prepares school budget.
- \* Administers school purchases.
- \* Enforces a system of internal audit.
- \* Accounts for school funds/budget.
- \* Maintains transparency of records and expenses of the school.
- \* Enforces rules and regulations in allowable and authorized school contribution.

#### C. School Plant and Facilities

- \* Undertakes school inspection of school equipment.
- \* Prepares plans for the improvement of school facilities Maintains school buildings, if necessary, refurbish/repair them.
- \* Maintains school facilities, if needed upgrades them.
- \* Orients school personnel on proper utilization of school facilities.
- \* Orients school personnel on safekeeping of school programs.
- \* Oversees conduct of property inventory.
- \* Inspects school campus to spot/solve problems.

#### C. Community Relations

- \* Establishes rapport with parent/guardians of learners

#### D. School Improvement Plan

- \* Involves the different stakeholders in the evaluation of the programs and projects of the school.
- \* Conducts regular meetings with different stakeholders.
- \* Interprets and reports progress on issues and performance.
- \* Emphasizes collaboration and empowerment.

### Conclusion

The level of managerial performance of secondary school heads in the Division of Cavite is described as very satisfactory in the areas of 1) vision-mission-goals, 2) management of school improvement plan, 3) community relations, 4) school plant and facilities, 5) curriculum and instructional management, 6) student services management, and 7) financial and budgeting management.

The managerial performances of secondary school heads as perceived by the respondents were found to have significant difference in the areas of 1) school vision-mission-goals, 2) financial and budgeting, 3) community relations, 4) management of school improvement plan and 5) school physical plant and facilities. On the other hand, there were no significant difference in the areas of 1) curriculum and instructional management, and 2) student services management.

Even though the overall level of managerial performance of school heads was described as very satisfactory, there were weaknesses in performing some functions in the five areas of school management namely: vision-mission-goals, school plants and facilities, community relations and management of school improvement plans. One of which is establishing school and community networks and encouraging the active participation of all of the stakeholders. Thus involvement of stakeholders in planning, monitoring

and evaluating the progress the school has set. In the area of financial and budgeting, school heads have greater responsibility and accountability that school finances are without a trace of irregularities. Parents, students and community play vital role in the success of how school heads perform in the different areas of school management.

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