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PARADIGM SHIFT IN SCHOOL LEADERSHIP: THRIVING ON THE CHALLENGES IN THE POST PANDEMIC ERA

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ABSTRACT

The Corona virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, as the most crucial global health crisis of the century, has put forward challenges to meet in almost every sector of the society, including the education sector. This descriptive-quantitative research examined the paradigm shift in school leadership in the new normal of Legazpi City Division, utilized a 4-point Likert scale questionnaire involving the public-school heads, assistant principal, and teachers. The best practices include encouraging and monitoring teachers. It highlights the use of appropriate scoring tools; aligned performance tasks to the MELCs; and flexible assessments. But capacitating the teachers on integrative assessment was least evident. Managerial leadership prioritized the formation of systematic approach in the planning, preparing, and monitoring teachers; teacher's mental health was least monitored. Engaging parents embraced orientation of modalities; communication; and motivation. However, use of research-based data was least considered. There was no significant relationship between school heads' instructional leadership and students' learning outcomes but a strong significant relationship between managerial leadership and teachers' performance was revealed. This paper achieved the following: paradigm shift in school leadership on instruction and management of human and school resources amidst challenges was determined; the Maravilla's Paradigm Shift of Management Amidst Challenges Theory was formulated; and the "Instructional and Managerial Leadership Training Workshop for School Heads" was proposed.

KEYWORDS: Instructional Leadership, post pandemic era, monitoring of learning assessment of learning, managerial leadership.

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INTRODUCTION

The Corona virus Disease 2019 (COVID – 19) pandemic, as the most crucial global health crisis of the century, has put forward challenges to meet in almost every sector of the society, including the education sector. It has created the largest disruption of the education systems in history, affecting nearly 94 per cent of the world's student population (UNESCO, 2020). This public health emergency led to the closure of schools in most countries worldwide for considerable amounts of time to contain the spread of the COVID – 19. In the Philippines, all public schools were closed by the end of March 2020. The school closure has affected more than 27 million Filipino learners. To ensure continuity of learning despite the pandemic, countries worldwide have taken innovative approaches. The worldwide new educational set-up in line with teaching and learning is shifted to the post pandemic type of instruction. From the traditional face-to-face instruction, schools shifted to distance learning delivery modalities such as modular distance learning (MDL), online distance learning (ODL), Radio-based Instruction (RBI), TV - based Instruction (TVI), blended learning, and hybrid learning. The sudden shift in education brought about unprecedented changes in the way our learners learn, in the way our teachers teach, and in the way the school heads manage their schools. While educators have always been expected to create the best learning experiences for the students regardless of any circumstances, the emergence of an unprecedented educational paradigm has posed an entirely new set of challenges and has required a rethink of the traditional aspects of school leadership.

These challenges have established the new leadership paradigm. "Under this new paradigm, leaders are motivated to improve the well-being of people and communities in ways that transcend intrinsic value (Mao, 2021). " In the establishment of the post pandemic era in education transformation of leadership is also the demand of the time. The creativity, articulations, and leadership styles of the school managers in administering the delivery of the curricula are factors that determine in the attainment of the vision and mission of the organization. As leaders, it is their job to make sure they carefully assess the current landscape and develop a plan that meets the needs of the learners and prepare them also for the future. When it comes to responsible school leadership, communication, and relationships are the key. Leaders must ensure that communication between all stakeholders is accurate and timely to better understand the needs for improvement or development.

Leaders must stay up to date on the recent developments in education and the needs of their student body to effectively craft the best learning strategies. Technology can be a great help when it comes to keeping track of the global education news and trends, and it can also be used to facilitate collaboration between teachers and students. As leaders, it is their job to support teachers as they utilize these tools to create the most effective distance learning experience for students.

Lastly, school leaders, must prioritize well-being in the current environment. During this time, social distancing, mental health, and well-being are paramount for both students and teachers. Leaders must carefully assess their existing structures and adapt support structures accordingly to ensure that all students and teachers have access to the resources need.

Going forward, the key aspect of school leadership is to stay agile and open to new ideas. With so many uncertain moving parts, leaders must stay informed, plan, and recognize the need to adjust their strategies as the educational landscape continues to shift. By remaining open to adopting new ideas, leaders will be well-prepared to address the new challenges posed by the COVID - 19 pandemic.

The collective leadership experiences of school heads are an integral part of leadership skills in dealing with challenging situations in times of crisis amidst the pandemic to effectively sustain institutional functions. Along with these difficulties, challenges brought about by the operation-driven scenarios include “unprecedented accountability pressures”, as these pressures complicate, due to circumstantial situations, school leaders need to apply state-of-the-art leadership skills and greater resiliency to keep the institutions on their proper course.

The article published by Henebery (2020), entitled “Principals of the Pandemic: How School Leadership is Changing”, cited that amidst the COVID-19 pandemic school leaders around the globe are the ones who navigate the institution and display solid, selfless, and dependable characteristics enough to motivate the school community and stakeholders’ cooperation in realizing a common goal. These school leaders amidst crises showed strength. It is where the calmness of people around them was derived, to enable them to move forward amidst uncertainty, but with a sense of direction in combating all circumstances and difficulties.

In the Philippines, the Department of Education has been committed to ensure continuity of learning despite the pandemic. The sudden shift to distance learning delivery modalities entails challenging responsibilities among school heads. School heads, as school leaders, were expected to establish a safe learning environment to better support the teaching and learning process as well as ensuring safe operations of the school. They were instructed to demonstrate leadership and decisiveness when confronted with concerns taking into considerations the safety and well-being of learners, teachers and other school personnel while ensuring productivity and delivery of quality of instruction. According to Joaquin et.al. (2020), the policy responses of different Philippine higher education institutions (HEIs) to the COVID-19 pandemic as compared to HEIs in Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam based on available data, showed gaps and challenges in responses regardless of the innovations made in terms of “alternative learning modes and technologies for delivering education. This matter requires a deeper understanding of alternative learning and research-based policies which the Philippines can adopt amidst times of pandemic.

To address the education issues in times of pandemic, the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP) for School Year 2020-2021 was implemented by the Department of Education (DepEd). It is the DepEd’s major response and commitment to protecting the health, safety, and well-being of learners, teachers, and personnel. But, since school leaders were caught unrehearsed of the unexpected situations that require their uncommon instructional leadership skills, school leaders had to initiate strategies in the management of the school.

Since the welfare and safety of the stakeholders is the full responsibility of the school heads, the Department of Education (DepEd) Order No. 11 s. 2020 was implemented. It is known as the

"Revised Guidelines on Alternative Work Arrangement in the Department of Education during the Period of State National Emergency due to COVID-19 Pandemic" mandated all DepEd personnel, specifically, school heads, to "protect the health, safety, and well-being of learners, teaching and non-teaching personnel and support the efforts of government" to prevent spreading of coronavirus while ensuring continuity of accessible, quality and relevant basic education. Also, it is mandated that all teaching and non-teaching personnel must make themselves available in workplaces to continually deliver services without wasting resources. (DO #11 s. 2020).

This study on "Paradigm Shift in School Leadership: Thriving on the Challenges in the Post Pandemic Era" assessed the shift in school leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic, including post pandemic situations. This study revealed that a shift in the traditional structure and approach to leadership is necessary for the effectiveness of educational leaders. The twist on the school management and leadership is necessary when the post pandemic in educational system was imposed. This research gauged the transformation of leadership from a largely centralized approach, top-down structure to one that encourages a more collaborative decentralized approach.

The needs for research and evidence to support argument and argues that the current model of educational leadership must change to better support the needs of the learners and staff in today's school are very relevant. This study revealed that this shift can lead to a more democratic and equitable school environment, helping schools to create and sustain success in the classroom and beyond. Ultimately, this study is an exploration of how the school leaders can adapt to a new educational landscape and how leaders can prepare for the future. These experiences contributed to the little existing information on school governance amidst the pandemic and bridged the gap in this field.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study examined the paradigm shift in school leadership in the post pandemic era of Legazpi City Division. Only the twelve (12) secondary schools are involved in this study namely, Legazpi City National High School (LCNHS), Banquerohan National High School (BNHS), Maslog National High School (MNHS), Oro Site High School (OSHS), Cabagan High School (CHS), Legazpi City Science High School (LCHS), Homapon High School (HHS), Taysan Resettlement Integrated School (TRIS), Arimbay High School (AHS), Gogon High School (GHS), Cagbacong High School (CHS), and Pawa High School (PHS). In the case of the principals as respondents, only 11 respondents were considered since the proponent is the school head of Legazpi City Science High School. Instead of the proponent, the assistant principal was made respondent of the study. In case of the teachers as respondents, only the teachers coming from the 12 secondary schools were identified respondents of this study. The present study determined the paradigm shift in school leadership in the post pandemic era along instructional leadership and managerial leadership; infer the significant relationship between school heads' instructional leadership and students' learning outcome and school heads' managerial leadership and teachers' performance; determine the challenges encountered by school heads in the post pandemic era, and propose a training design that can enhance the instructional and leadership skills of school heads in the post pandemic era. This descriptive-quantitative research made use of a 4-point Likert scale questionnaire involving the total population of the public-school heads, assistant principal, and

teachers of the Legazpi City Division. Slovin's formula was applied in determining the number of teacher-respondent per school. While total enumeration was applied to the school heads. The teacher-respondents of this study were randomly selected, and the data gathered were analyzed using descriptive statistics particularly weighted mean and Spearman correlation coefficient or Spearman's Rho.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The paradigm shifts focused on instructional leadership and managerial leadership were highly evident. The instructional leadership highlighted the school heads practices such as encourages teachers to use checklists; monitors teachers and ensure that learners guided; and creates monitoring sheets; but monitoring of teacher's preparation of Individual Learning Monitoring Plan (ILMP) for slow learners was least evident. While the assessment of learning highlights the teachers use of appropriate scoring tools; alignment of performance tasks to the MELCs; and monitoring teachers on the use of flexible assessments. But capacitating the teachers on integrative assessment was least evident. Managerial leadership was based on monitoring of teachers and engaging of parents. It highlights the formation of systematic approach in the planning, preparing, and monitoring teachers; and creating opportunities to meet identified needs. However, monitoring the teacher's mental health and well-being was least practiced according to teachers. Engaging of parents highlights orientation on different learning modalities; communication of learners' achievements; and motivates parents to sustain distance learning participation. However, the use of research-based data was least evident.

There is no significant relationship between school heads' instructional leadership and students' learning outcomes. On the contrary, there is a strong significant relationship between managerial leadership and teachers' performance.

Moderate challenges were encountered by the school heads in the post pandemic era which focused on instructional leadership and managerial leadership. The moderate challenges encountered on monitoring of learning school were as follows, technological facility; chance to conduct capacity building; chance to collaborate with other stakeholders; and time to review teachers' assessments, planning and written feedback to learners. On assessment, school heads considered result-based assessment evidence as a challenge. Transparency in the assessment system; assessment tool to verify learning outcomes; and results of learning assessment per subject area were moderately encountered. The school heads and parents agree on the challenges on managerial leadership focused on monitoring of teachers and engaging of parents. Moderate challenges were encountered in monitoring of teachers. But, teachers' engagement, monitoring of teachers' performance, and internet connectivity were the challenges encountered by the school heads. The school heads agree on all the challenges of engaging parents. It includes quality of support given to children; educational background; nature of occupation and economic status; and support, cooperation, and compliance among parents.

Based on the identified challenges, the researcher proposed the training entitled, "Instructional and Managerial Leadership Training Workshop for School Heads in the Post Pandemic Era. The training workshop will enhance the instructional and managerial leadership of the school head in

line with monitoring teachers' performance onsite and engaging parents and community partnerships. The training workshop is designed for 40 hours and will be participated by the 12 school heads of the Schools Division of Legazpi City-Secondary Level. However the interested heads of schools from the elementary and the assistant principals of secondary, the department heads will be accommodated. It is expected that the school heads have fully revisited the instructional and managerial leadership competencies utilizing the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH). Sharing the best practices of the school heads can be a significant milestone of the activity in crafting.

CONCLUSION

The paradigm shift in school leadership on instruction and management of human and school resources amidst challenges in the post pandemic era was highly evident. School heads encouraged, guided, and motivated teachers; established planned actions; and gave teachers opportunities for professional growth. However, differentiated teaching; empowering, enabling, and capacitating teachers to integrate the flexible assessment across fields; and monitoring the psychological well-being of teachers were not equally given attention. Collaboration with parents to maximize full cooperation was highly practiced. However, the use of research-based data to enhance managerial skills was least practiced.

There is no significant relationship between instructional leadership and student learning outcomes. However, there is a strong significant relationship between managerial leadership and teachers' performance. Distance education had caused a decline in academic performance among students but has given teachers the opportunity to function at their best.

The challenges encountered by the school heads amidst the paradigm shift include physical reporting onsite affects teachers' self-engaging activities; technological facility, conduct of capacity building; engaging parents and community partnership; collaboration with other stakeholders; limited time to review teachers' outcomes; result-based assessment evidence, and transparency of the assessment system of the teachers. These were associated with the teacher-student limited face-to-face interaction, during this time, internet connectivity was an issue that hindered remote communication.

The proposed training design that can enhance the instructional and leadership skills of school heads in the post pandemic era is the "Revisiting the Instructional and Managerial Competencies Training Workshop for School Heads." It will be participated by the 12 school heads from the Secondary Schools of the Schools Division of Legazpi City which will be conducted for two (2) consecutive day's equivalent to 16 hours utilizing Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH). It was expected that revisiting the instructional and managerial leadership competencies along with the set objectives will be fully accomplished.

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