Visionary leadership across modern approach to curriculum development: cases from the Philippine schools

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Abstract: This study described and examined visionary leadership of school heads. The study employed descriptive research. It was participated by 200 randomly selected public secondary school heads in the Philippines. Researcher-made survey-questionnaire was utilized as the main research instrument. Findings showed that school heads visionary leadership style to modern approach to curriculum planning and development is immensely vital for it provided clearer directions and realistic visions on the hows and whys of curriculum design and development. In this line, the study concluded that school heads were visionary leaders in supervising and leading their teachers to craft progressive and modern curriculum responsive to the needs and readiness of their learners. Also, school heads put emphasis on curriculum development and imposition of modern teaching approaches. Further, visionary leadership style was highly effective in fostering positive school culture, performance and students' academic performance. Hence, lack of stakeholder engagement was the most dominant challenge encountered by school heads in utilizing visionary leadership style to modern approach to curriculum planning and development.

INTRODUCTION

School heads perform difficult task in the school because of the administrative duties and responsibilities handed on their shoulders. School heads are expected to dispense effective and efficient leadership and supervisory performance as they are the manager and leader of the school. It is within their hands and hearts lie the very trajectory of the school towards development or failure. Along with the difficult and herculean tasks of school heads in leading and governing the school, it is also vital that school heads possess clear, logical and rational points of view in making decisions and rendering such decisions emphasizing fairness, equality and positive implications for the members of the school, learners, parents and the whole community in general. In this line, school heads are also expected to characterize and possess different leadership styles which may serve as their basis of leading and governing their school. Most often than not, leadership styles and preferences of school heads become their clear compass on how to lead and manage the school.

Consequently, leadership styles are essential part of leading teachers towards the development of the school and the community in general. In fact, according to the words of Rehman et al. (2019), leadership styles included instructional leadership, transformational leadership, moral leadership and visionary leadership. Thus, the study reveals that different leadership styles are adopted keeping in view of the needs of members of the institutions in different situations. Meanwhile, Guillergan (2024) concludes that democratic and visionary leadership styles are the dominant style used by school heads in leading and supervising their teachers. With these leadership styles, teachers are able to obtain continuous professional development and program. In line with the clear and definitive leadership styles used by school heads, the foremost concern on the practical importance of school heads' leadership styles, is the objective supervision and governance to address and respond with the current trends in curriculum planning and development.

Apparently, curriculum planning and development is an essential baseline to effect quality instruction leading to quality-based education. In the scientific words of Page (2020), school leadership and school heads' leadership styles are significantly related to the development and effective implementation of curriculum. In this regard, the researchers observe that common leadership styles are being examined and associate them to the potential implications towards positive change in school settings gearing development. In view of this, the researchers described and examined the effects of visionary leadership to modern approach in curriculum planning and development.

Research Objectives

This study described and examined the effects of visionary leadership of school heads to modern approach in curriculum planning and development. Further, this study also:

1. described school heads visionary leadership styles in terms of curriculum development, imposition of modern teaching approaches and resilience and adaptability;
2. assessed the effects of visionary leadership to modern approach to curriculum planning in terms of school culture, teachers' performance and students' academic performance;
3. identified the challenges encountered by school heads in utilizing visionary leadership style to modern approach to curriculum planning and development.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study utilized descriptive research. As defined by Siedlecki (2020), descriptive research is a quantitative method that is described as the collection of numerical data for the statistical analysis of a sample data set in a population. In this present undertaking, the study described school heads' visionary leadership in terms of curriculum development, imposition of modern teaching approaches and resilience and adaptability, assessed the effects of visionary leadership to modern approach to curriculum planning and development in terms of school culture, teachers' performance and students' academic performance. Lastly, the study also identified the challenges encountered by school heads in using visionary leadership styles to modern approach to curriculum planning and development.

Respondents and Locale of the Study

The subject respondents of the study were the 200 randomly selected public secondary school heads among selected schools in the Philippines. The selection of the respondents was based on the willingness of the school heads to participate in the study. The researchers posted a call for participants in their social media account. They accounted the first 200 school heads who signified their interests to participate with the study.

Research Instrument

The study utilized a researcher-made-survey questionnaire which contained three (3) parts. For part 1, it contained items relating to the visionary leadership styles of school heads in terms of curriculum development, imposition of modern teaching approaches and resilience and adaptability. On the other hand, part 2 contained items relating to the effects of visionary leadership styles to curriculum planning as perceived by school heads in terms of school culture, teachers' performance and students' academic performance while part 3 contained items relating to the challenges encountered by school heads in utilizing visionary leadership styles to modern approach to curriculum planning and development. The developed survey-questionnaire used a 4-Likert Scale. For part 1, it used 4-Likert Scale such as: 4-Strongly Agree, 3-Agree, 2-Disagree and 1-Strongly Disagree while for part 2, it made used similar scale however with different verbal description such as: 4-Highly Effective, 3-Effective, 2-Not Effective and 1-Highly Not Effective. Lastly, for part 3, again, similar scale was used but with different verbal description such as: 4-Always Encountered, 3-Encountered, 2-Not Encountered and 1-Never Encountered.

The researcher-made survey questionnaire underwent reliability testing through pilot testing among non-included respondents who were participated by 15 school heads. The result of reliability testing obtained a Cronbach Alpha of .819 for items in part 1 while .718 Cronbach Alpha result for items under part 2 and .771 for items in part 3. These results signified that all items among three parts were "Acceptable."

Data Analysis

The researchers sent a formal letter of request to the respondents' immediate head and informed consents to the subject respondents. In this line, the researchers established active and consistent line of communication through their social media account. Google form was used in order to administer the survey-questionnaire. Link was shared through the respondents' social media account. When all the data have been collected and encoded on a digital facility created by the researchers through MS Excel, appropriate statistical tools were applied.

To quantify specific research objective number 1, use of mean and general weighted mean were employed in order to describe school heads' visionary leadership styles. On the other hand, to quantify specific research objective number 2, similar statistical tools were applied in order to assess the effects of visionary leadership to modern approach to curriculum planning and development. Lastly, similar statistical tools were also used in order to identify the challenges encountered by school heads in utilizing visionary leadership styles to modern approach to curriculum planning and development.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

School heads' visionary leadership

Based from the results, curriculum development and imposition of modern teaching approaches obtained the highest mean of 3.82 which are both verbally described as "Strongly Agree." The results show that school heads take clearer and actionable steps directly concentrated on curriculum planning and development. This means that school heads are keen in supervising their teachers in creating and formulating modern and relevant teaching standards that respond to the learners' needs and demands under the modern conditions of teaching and learning process. Also, school heads take foremost initiative in leading their teachers to provide modern teaching approaches that are highly relevant to the needs, interests and readiness of the learners. In this line, based from the results, it can be deduced that school heads are highly visionary when it comes to shaping pedagogical concerns which also lead them to obtain solidified and strengthened teaching approaches forming relevant curriculum for their learners. Notably, school heads exhaust their visionary leadership style in order to proceed with relevant curriculum, ensuring its practical implications for the development of teaching and learning process moreso, provision of meaningful educative process. The result affirmed the study of Kurebwa et al. (2014) which reveals that school heads and teachers are both visionary implementers of curriculum where they utilized diverse designs so as to offer progressive and modern ways of teaching and learning process.

Assessed effects of visionary leadership to modern approach to curriculum planning and development

Every fiber of leadership style and form instituted by school heads to address and rectify concerns in curriculum planning, development and implementation, is treated with pristine importance. Significant leadership style and shape of school governance influenced the community to abide with the pressing changes surfacing in line with instructional aspects. Based from the result, school culture obtains the highest weighted mean of 3.87 which is verbally described as "Highly Effective." The results show that visionary leadership and its effects as perceived by school heads, is immensely substantial to creating positive school culture where teachers, learners and other

stakeholders foster collaborative environment. School heads as visionary leaders institute culture of collaboration where teamwork becomes primary mechanism to formulate relevant and practical school-based competencies anchored with the standardized teaching and learning competencies. On the other hand, visionary leadership is also effective in promoting relevant and active teachers' performance where, as perceived by school heads, their teachers are able to further their professional knowledge and skills because as visionary leaders, they helped their teachers boost confidence for the improvement of instructional practices. Lastly, students' academic performance has also benefited accruing from school heads' visionary leadership. Well-planned curriculum immensely engaged learners to learn actively. With consistent engagement, teachers and learners are both energized because of the efficiency and motivation shown by school heads towards holistic development. The findings supported the study of Purnomo Arta et al. (2024) which reveals that visionary leadership plays a critical role in setting a direction for character development when its impact is pronounced when combined with curriculum and resource management.

Challenges encountered by school heads in utilizing visionary leadership style to modern approach to curriculum planning and development

Based from the results, limited resources, lack of stakeholder engagement and data management and assessment are the challenges encountered by school heads. Accordingly, lack of stakeholder engagement is the most challenging condition encountered by the school heads. This reveals that school heads as visionary leaders always if not, often fail to communicate their vision among stakeholders which lead to misunderstanding and lesser engagement. In addition, with lack of stakeholder engagement, school heads as visionary leaders also encountered conflicting interests because their visions and actionable plans are somehow different to other stakeholders' perceptions, mindset and plans for the school specifically in line with curriculum planning and development. The results supported the study of Wilson Heenan et al. (2023) which concludes that principal's visionary leadership styles encompassed the provision of recognition to stakeholders and put importance to stability and relevance of curriculum.

CONCLUSION

School heads visionary leadership style to modern approach to curriculum planning and development is immensely vital for it provided clearer directions and realistic visions on the hows and whys of curriculum design and development. In this line, the study concluded that school heads were visionary leaders in supervising and leading their teachers to craft progressive and modern curriculum responsive to the needs and readiness of their learners. Also, school heads put emphasis on curriculum development and imposition of modern teaching approaches. Further, visionary leadership style was highly effective in fostering positive school culture, performance and students' academic performance. Hence, lack of stakeholder engagement was the most dominant challenge encountered by school heads in utilizing visionary leadership style to modern approach to curriculum planning and development.

RECOMMENDATION

The study recommends further investigation on the relationship of school heads' demographic profile specifically their number of years in the service, educational attainment and exposure to relevant trainings and seminars. Also, the study recommended that school heads should create their curriculum mapping plan interjecting their visions and future instructional plans to their respective schools. Thus, conduct of a feasibility study relative to this plans is also recommended.

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