

Leadership development programs for teachers: best practices

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Abstract: This study assessed the leadership development programs and their best practices based on the perceptions of school heads. Apparently, the study selected the participation of randomly selected 700 school heads across the country (Philippines). Hence, the study used descriptive research where it used a researcher-made survey questionnaire which was subjected to reliability testing and validation. Findings showed that leadership development programs contained needs assessment structure, curriculum, mentorship program, collaborative learning, research, support and resources. In this line, it also found out that three (3) highest domains representing best practices under leadership development programs which were; mentorship program being the highest, curriculum modelling and support and resources. The study also showed that intensive efforts and diverse contextualized programs are endeavored to weave effective leadership development programs. The study recommended further investigation on the practicality and impact of leadership development programs as to be perceived by school heads and teachers.

Keywords: Leadership, Development, Program, School heads, Mentorship, Curriculum, support, Resources

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INTRODUCTION

Effective and efficient school governance and administration lies heavily on the strategies and styles employ by school heads they serve as leaders and managers of the school. Leadership is an objective and visionary compass of school heads where they put premium emphasis on influencing and engaging their subordinates to achieve educational goals and objectives. In this line, school heads are expected to create consistent, relevant and impactful leadership programs which aid their teachers to perform productively along with the sound delivery of public service in the field of education. Also, effective leadership development program is viewed as crucial task for school heads because it contains concrete, relevant and meaningful activities that promote efficiency to the public service. Commonly, leadership development programs as crafted and headed by school heads, are essential mechanism to foster culture of continuous improvement and empowerment of teachers' knowledge, skills and behavior in the teaching profession.

As shown in the study of Ghamrawi (2013) reveals that professional development model embraces a constructivist approach whereby teachers are trained. Also, similar study shows that resonant school leaders from this model as it highlights potential growth and development of teachers personally and professionally. Meanwhile, in the words of Tingle et al. (2017), principals consider training activities related to human capital, executive leadership, school culture and strategic operations as resulting with a high influence brought about by principals' leadership development programs. In addition, according to the study of Hilton et al. (2015) which reveals that there is a positive influence brought by Leadership Development Program where teachers are highly trained and engaged in all school activities specifically instructional practices and processes.

Researchers comprehensively observed that there are less number of school heads are incline with the formulation and development of Leadership Development Program (LDP) which causes significant failure in obtaining quality instruction and quality-based education. Also, the researchers collectively observed that there are also school heads who may only formulate leadership development program to respond to specific condition or concern moreso, when they are confronted with leadership and governance problems. Apart from these observations, the researchers also examine that there are less studies conducted that primarily focused on the formulation, processes and practices of school heads in establishing Leadership Development Program for teachers. In view of these foregoing conditions, the researchers described and assessed the leadership development programs and their best practices based on the perceptions of randomly school heads in the Philippines.

Research Objectives

This study assessed the leadership development programs and their best practices based on the perceptions of school heads as they professionally formulated their LDP for their teachers and other stakeholders of the school. Specifically, the study aimed to:

1. describe the content of the designed Leadership Development Program;
2. assess school heads' Leadership Development Programs; and
3. identify the best practices implemented as contained with the Leadership Development program.

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 current work, it assessed the leadership development programs and their best practices as designed and perceived by school heads. Also, the study described the content of the designed LDP, assessed school heads LDP and identify the best practices obtained in using the designed LDP for effective and efficient school governance and administration.

Respondents and Locale of the Study

The subject respondents of the study were the 700 randomly selected school heads among selected public 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.

Research Instrument

The study utilized a researcher-made-survey questionnaire which contained three (3) parts. For part 1, it contained items relating to the content of the designed Leadership Development Programs while part 2 contained items relating to the school heads' assessment of the designed LDP. On the other hand, part 3 contained items relating to the best practices obtained in the designed and implemented LDP.

The developed survey-questionnaire used a 4-Likert Scale. For part 1, it used 4-Likert Scale: 4-Highly Considered, 3-Considered, 2-Not Considered and 1-Highly Not Considered while similar scale but with different verbal description was used for part 2 such as: 4-Highly Utilized, 3-Utilized, 2-Not Utilized and 1-Highly Not Utilized. Further for part 3, it used similar scale however with different verbal description such as: 4-Highly Evident, 3-Evident, 2-Not Evident and 1-Highly Not Evident. The researcher-made survey questionnaire was subjected to reliability testing through pilot testing among non-included respondents who were participated by 30 school heads. The result of reliability testing obtained a Cronbach Alpha of .918 for items in part 1 while .912 Cronbach Alpha result for items under part 2 while a Cronbach Alpha result of .814 for items under part 3. These results signified that all items among three parts were "Acceptable."

Data Analysis

Relevant statistical tools were used such as mean, standard deviation and general weighted mean. Specifically, these tools were used in order to describe the content of the designed Leadership Development Program, assess school heads' Leadership Development Programs and identify the best practices implemented as contained with the Leadership Development Program.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Contents of the designed leadership development program

Based from the results, significant contents were designed in the formulation of Leadership Development Program. First, school heads highly considered needs assessment, mentorship program and curriculum as significant core element in designing Leadership Development Program. Needs assessment encompasses the current needs of teachers relative to their teaching responsibilities. Part of LDP's design and development is that school heads systematically gather their teachers' needs. This has been placed at the preliminary section of the LDP. On other hand, mentorship program is also highly considered as it contained specific activities and tasks for school heads on the means and methods of educating their teachers to the current trends and demands in education. Under this element, school heads create creative and innovative activities where directly involve the participation of their teachers to expand their knowledge, skills and values to instructional processes and demands. Also, curriculum is highly considered where based from the results, school heads act as curriculum mentors and experts in their respective schools. They consistently teach and advice their teachers to properly interpret and implement instructional standards written on the curriculum. Meanwhile, collaborative learning, research, support and resources are considered. The result shows that school heads put importance to other vital elements for effective school administration that can solidify complete and adequate education for their clientele. The results affirmed the study of Lucas et al. (2018) which reveals that LDPs are common to describe informed leadership. Similar study also concludes that leadership competency model incorporating multiple approaches to teaching and implementing more rigorous program for teachers' development.

Assessment of the designed and implemented leadership development program

Based from the results, school heads adapted the design and development of Leadership Development Program to strengthened school leadership and administration. Apparently, mentorship program is highly evident as school heads consistently acted as mentors and experts to support their teachers in the efficient fulfillment of their duties and responsibilities in the school. Also, the result shows that provision of other support and resources are highly evident as school heads allocate consistent support for their teachers part of which is the provision of creative and innovative instructional designs. These instructional designs are used by teachers in order to established meaningful teaching and learning process. Hence, curriculum, research, assessment structure and collaborative learning are all evident in which these elements as contents of LDP, are immensely implemented as part of the normal course of the teaching and learning process hence, school operations and governance. In other words, school heads put greater emphasis on mentorship program and provision of support and resources because these are considered as lacking emphasis based on school heads perceptions. Notably, there is a complete and relevant design and implementation of LDP made by school heads which enable them to proceed with sound and proper delivery of quality-based education. The results supported the study of Abdul Razzak (2013) which reveals that LDP highly impacted the development of instructional practices and sound school governance and operations. Also, similar study shows that LDP is a functional mechanism to develop school heads' leadership competencies and performance.

Best practices under the designed and implemented leadership development program as perceived by school heads

Based from the results of the study, mentorship program, curriculum modelling and provision of support and resources are the best practices obtained as LDP is designed and implemented in the school. In this regard, LDP becomes a strategic compass for school leaders on how they would respond to the pressing needs of their teachers and learners as well as other needs of the school and the community in general. Notably, LDP is also regarded as one of the primary leadership and governance framework where school leaders put emphasis largely on mentoring and coaching their teachers in line with instructional concerns. The results affirmed that study of Eva and Sendjaya (2013) which concludes that LDP highlights a holistic framework of servant leadership in teachers and learners total development.

CONCLUSION

Leadership development programs contained needs assessment structure, curriculum, mentorship program, collaborative learning, research, support and resources. In this line, it also found out that three (3) highest domains representing best practices under leadership development programs which were; mentorship program being the highest, curriculum modelling and support and resources. The study also showed that intensive efforts and diverse contextualized programs are endeavored to weave effective leadership development programs. The study recommended further investigation on the practicality

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends further investigation on the relationship of school heads demographic profile and the design and formulation of Leadership Development Program. In addition, the study recommends that further analysis on the best practices contained on LDP should be examined incorporating diverse perceptions from teachers, learners, parents and other community officials. On the other hand, the study also recommends to create a model accruing from standardized LDP which should be tested through implementation among selected secondary and elementary schools across the country.

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