

Prioritization of Improvement Areas of Elementary Schools in Bacon West District

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Abstract— The study aimed to determine the prioritization of improvement areas of the public elementary schools in Bacon District for school year 2020-2021. The study used the descriptive-survey method since a questionnaire was devised in gathering the primary data as reflected in the problem. There were 108 respondents from the Bacon District who were selected using purposive sampling. The statistical tools utilized were frequency, weighted mean, and ranking. It was revealed that the priority improvement areas are maintaining a 100% attendance of pupils along access, decreasing the number of pupils who are non-numerates along quality, and increasing the awareness and involvement of the stakeholders in the school programs and projects along governance. The areas of decreasing the number of severely wasted and wasted pupils and maintain a zero drop-out rate came out strategically important, urgent, and high in magnitude while the area of decreasing the number of children with below 90% attendance emerged as feasible. However, the area of increasing the achievement rate and strengthening the instructional supervision were found slightly feasible. Consequently, increasing the stakeholders' participation and involvement was strategically important and improvement and upgrading of school. The most challenges addressed by the prioritization of improvement areas are poverty, teachers need to attend training, coaching, and mentoring, and inadequate number of instructional and reading materials was high in magnitude. Recommendations were given to make prioritization of improvement areas better.

Keywords— Bacon West District, Elementary Schools, Improvement Areas, Prioritization.

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is viewed as the corner stone of development. It is where the foundation is laid down to build a strong nation. In fact, Ocho and Nwangwu (2011) believe that the ability of a nation to grow and develop depends on its educational system. Therefore, it is of great importance that a strong school leader has even has a stronger will to spearhead the implementation of changes needed in schools to meet the needs of the learners.

According to McAleavy, Rigall and Fitzpatrick (2016), school heads as managers have clear perspective on how to bring about the change for school improvement. Change, according to them, must come from the school's leadership. On the other hand, Redding (2013) remarks that planning of improving school performances begins with the ultimate goal of education. This corner stone is where the school improvement plan should be built upon.

Maier, Daniel, Oakes and Lam (2017) believe that community-based planning is an avenue for school improvement. They emphasize that involving community in school improvement planning reflects both the needs of the community as well as the learners. Rualo (2016) reiterates that stakeholders play a vital role in managing the schools. They are the partners of school leaders in making the schools conducive to teaching and learning. Also, Nepomuceno (2019) states that the significant partnership of the school and community provides greater opportunities for support from the stakeholders in bringing out better and improved partnership in transforming the schools into a learning environment where they have the opportunity to work together and share responsibility. Bona (2016) says that parents plus school equals pupils' achievement is a very basic formula in attaining good school academic performance in every school in the country. The positive attitude of parents towards education and future life of their children is very significant because according to Santos (2018) one among the causes of dropping out from schooling is family problem.

Furthermore, the Department of Education issued an order to enhance SIP to build on the strengths of the existing planning process (DO No. 44, s. 2015). The enhanced SIP development and implementation has 3 cycle: Assess, plan and Act. According to this cycle, the assess phase is where the Priority improvement areas is identified and the general objective of the SIP are set. The plan phase is the writing of School Improvement Plan (SIP) and Annual Improvement Plan (AIP) while the Act phase involves small-scale testing then implementation of the solutions (DO No. 44, s. 2015). In the same note, part of School Improvement Plan (SIP)

is the Annual Improvement Plan (AIP) and the Division of Sorsogon City personnel monitored the improvement of the school through the School Report Card (DM no. 168 s. 2020) and School Monitoring and Evaluation Assessment (SMEA). This encompasses the Annual Improvement Plan of the school which is congruent with the 3-year school improvement plan.

The status of School Improvement Plan of 18 Public Elementary Schools in Bacon West District, Division of Sorsogon City with 4,033 enrollees for School Year 2019-2020 are regularly monitored by the Division Personnel headed by Public Schools District Supervisors in their assigned schools. Through monitoring and feedback-giving, technical assistance on the successful implementation of Annual Improvement Plan congruent to the 3-year School Improvement Plan is provided when they found out that there are PIA's did not realize and need to be included again in the next planning of the members of the School Planning Team (SPT).

In Bacon West District, the challenges that must be considered is the availability of fund in order to implement successfully what PIA's included in the AIP and SIP. With these foregoing issues, the researcher finds it timely and relevant to conduct a study on the Prioritization of improvement areas in Bacon West District, Division of Sorsogon City.

II. OBJECTIVES

This study aimed to determine the prioritization of improvement areas of public elementary schools in Bacon West District during the school year 2019-2020. Specifically, it identified the following: (1) Priority Improvement Areas (PIAs) along: access, quality, and governance; (2) Extent of prioritization of improvement areas when grouped according to: strategic importance, urgency, feasibility, and magnitude; (3) challenges on the prioritization of improvement areas along: access, quality, and governance.; and (4) action plan based on the results of the study.

III. METHODOLOGY

The method used in this research was the descriptive survey method. The respondents of this study were the school heads, faculty presidents, GPTA Presidents, SGC Chairman, Brgy. Chairmen/Committee on Education and Alumni Presidents of 18 schools in Bacon West District with the total of 108 respondents. The instrument used in this study was the researcher-constructed questionnaire checklist. The gathered data were treated using different statistical tools to come up with the answers to the laid problems of the study.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The presentation and analysis of the data are the following: 1) priority improvement areas (PIAs) along access, quality, and governance; 2) extent of prioritization of the improvement areas when grouped according to strategic importance, urgency, magnitude, and feasibility; 3) challenges do the prioritization of the improvement areas address along access, quality and governance; and 4) proposed action plan.

1. Priority improvement areas (PIAs) along Access, Quality and Governance

Access - The five most priority improvement areas along access are maintaining a 100 percent attendance of pupils with 93 respondents favoring it which is in rank 1 followed by the maintenance of the 0 percent of pupils who are victims of child abuse, discrimination, child labor and exclusion with 91 respondents agreeing that is in rank 2, and in rank 3 with 83 respondents considering the zero drop out in the school. In addition, there were 78 respondents identifying the aim of decreasing children with below 90 percent attendance in rank 4 and maintaining of no enrolment for 5-year-old child is agreed by 68 respondents that emerged as rank 5.

It means that the schools' priority improvement areas along access revolve around the learners who are already enrolled in school. The PIAs are focus on maintaining learner's attendance while ensuring their safety within the school premises. However, it can be perceived that schools prioritize least the encouragement of school-age children to enter school. Similarly, schools do not give priority to health of learners. It can be implied that schools give more importance to learners and their performance. Schools prioritize the maintenance of learners' academic performance rather than encouraging school age children to enroll.

The finding is supported by the Kutash (cited in Hanover Research, 2014). According to him, one of the indicators of school improvement plans focuses are graduation and attendance rates, absenteeism and dropout rates.

Quality - The five most priority improvement areas along quality the respondents identified are the decrease in the number of non-numerates with 97 of them which is in rank 1. Then, the aim of decreasing the number of non-readers was favored by 96 respondents that is 2nd in rank whereas the goal of decreasing the number of pupils under frustration level was chosen by 94 respondents that resulted to rank 3. In addition, the 85 respondents picked the priority of improving their competency level from developing to experienced which is rank 4 and increasing the achievement rate became the priority area in rank 5 that is considered by 84 respondents.

It means that school improvement plan give priority in enhancing reading and mathematics skills. The PIAs also include updating teachers' skills and their competency level. It can be implied that the schools acknowledge reading as the foundation skills of academic achievements of the learners. Similarly, teacher's competency level is one of the factors to attain academic success among the learners.

The finding is supported by the findings of the study of Curry (2017) which was found out that there is a significant correlation between the mathematics and writing strategies found in SIP and the achievement of scores in these subjects.

Governance - The five most priority improvement areas relative to governance chosen by the respondents is increasing the stakeholders' participation and involvement with 102 respondents choosing it which became rank 1. Then, the improvement and upgrading of school plants and facilities was favored by 93 respondents that is 2nd in rank. Moreover, there were 85 respondents who identified the procurement of instructional materials which is rank 3. Also, in ranks 4 and 5 are the procurement of industrial tools and procurement of Drum and Lyre Corps Instruments were picked by 66 and 60 respondents, respectively.

It means that school improvement plans of public school in Bacon West district primary aim is to increase the involvement of stakeholders in schools by attending school meetings and school activities. Aside from these, procurement of learners' materials is also included in the school's PIA. The maintenance and repairs of school buildings and school's physical facilities is also one of the priority concerns of the schools for improvement.

It can be implied that stakeholders' participation is one of the concerns of the schools that needs to be prioritized. It is also noted that along governance, the schools have concerns on their physical environment. The finding is supported by Cruz, Villena, Navarro, Belencia and Garvida (2016) which revealed that school heads have very satisfactory level in performing their functions in terms of school plant and facilities. In fact, the study also found out that there is a significant difference in school physical plant and facilities and their managerial functions.

2. Extent of prioritization of the improvement areas when grouped according to Strategic importance, Urgency, Magnitude, and Feasibility

Access and Strategic Importance - Generally the respondents assessed the strategic importance with an overall weighted mean of 2.71 which is interpreted as important. The decreasing the number of severely

wasted and wasted pupils and maintaining a zero drop-out rate got the highest weighted mean of 2.92 that is described as important.

Access and Urgency – The urgency was given by the respondents an overall weighted mean of 2.32 which is described as a bit urgent. The aim of decreasing the number of severely wasted and wasted pupils and maintaining a zero drop-out rate got the highest weighted mean of 2.32 emerged as the area with the highest weighted mean that is interpreted as a bit urgent.

Access and Magnitude – The magnitude is evaluated as moderate because the overall weighted mean is 2.31 as rated by the respondents. The goal of decreasing the number of severely wasted and wasted pupils and maintaining a 100% pupil's attendance are the areas with the highest weighted mean of 2.56 which is interpreted as high.

Access and Feasibility – There is a slight feasibility of the improvement areas since the overall weighted mean of 2.49 as seen by the respondents. The area of decreasing the children with below 90% attendance emerged with the highest weighted mean of 2.67 that is described as feasible.

It meant the schools deemed health and condition as well as the maintaining of attendance are the important areas that need to be prioritized. It is also the areas in which the schools deemed urgently needed attention as well as feasibly completed. It can be implied that pupil-factors are the primary concern of the school heads. In fact, the data revealed that maintaining attendance and improving the learners' health status are deemed important, urgent and feasibly attainable.

Quality and Strategic Importance – The respondents assessed strategic importance as important because the overall weighted mean is 2.70 with the area of decreasing the number of pupils under frustration level having the highest weighted mean of 2.92 that is described as important. All the other indicators are important with weighted means ranging from 2.50 to 2.80.

Quality and Urgency – The respondents rated the urgency with an overall weighted mean of 2.48 which is interpreted as a bit urgent with the area of decreasing the number of pupils under frustration level having the highest weighted mean of 2.61 that is described as urgent. The other four indicators such as decreasing the numbers of pupils under frustration level, increasing the completion rate, increasing the achievement rate, and improving the competency level of teachers from beginning to expert are urgent with weighted means from 2.50 to 2.59. Meanwhile, the remaining four

indicators are bit urgent with weighted means ranging from 2.33 to 2.49.

Quality and Magnitude – The respondents evaluated the magnitude as moderate with an overall weighted mean of 2.46. The areas of decreasing the number of pupils under frustration level, decreasing the number of non-numerates, and improving the competency level of teachers from developing to experienced emerged with the highest weighted mean of 2.61 which is interpreted as high. Also, there are two indicators which are high in magnitude such as decrease the numbers on non-readers and increase achievement rate with weighted means of 2.50 and 2.53, respectively. The rest of the indicators are moderate in magnitude with weighted mean ranges 2.28 to 2.41.

Quality and Feasibility – The respondents assessed feasibility with an overall weighted mean of 2.61 that is described as feasible. The area of strengthening the Instructional Supervision got the highest weighted mean of 2.75 which is described as feasible. The other 7 indicators are feasible with weighted means ranging from 2.56 to 2.72. Meanwhile, the decrease of the number of non-numerates is considered slightly feasible with weighted mean of 2.42.

It means that the learners' academic performance is the main priority of the school and need to be given more concentration. The finding also showed schools are also aimed to develop teachers' skills and competency level. It can be implied that schools invest in actors that played in the education system. It can also be noted that prioritization of improvement areas includes teacher development as well, which is commendable if the end goal is to improve the academic performance of the learners.

Governance and Strategic Importance – Generally the respondents evaluated strategic importance as important with an overall weighted mean of 2.55. The area with the highest weighted mean of 2.76 is increasing the stakeholders' participation and involvement which is interpreted as important.

Governance and Urgency – The respondents generally rated the urgency with an overall weighted mean of 2.39 that is described as a bit urgent. The area of increasing the stakeholders' participation and involvement has the highest weighted mean of 2.60 which is interpreted as urgent.

Governance and Magnitude – The magnitude was generally evaluated as moderate with an overall weighted mean of 2.32. Then, the increase of the stakeholders' participation and involvement got the highest weighted mean of 2.60 that is described as high.

Governance and Feasibility - The feasibility was generally rated with an overall weighted mean of 2.32 which is interpreted as slightly feasible. The area of increasing the stakeholders' participation and involvement was observed as slightly feasible having the highest weighted mean of 2.52.

It means that the schools are experiencing difficulties in sustaining the stakeholders' involvement in school programs and activities. The data also showed that one of the problems in school that needs to be prioritized is the repair of buildings for learners' safety. It can be implied that schools must have a concrete strategy to sustain the involvement of the stakeholders in the school. Active involvement of stakeholders, especially the parents can be utilized by the school heads to complete the programs and innovations they wish to accomplish, including repairs of the physical facilities of the school.

3. Challenges on the prioritization of the improvement areas along Access, Quality and Governance

Access – The three most challenges identified are poverty with 84 respondents favoring it followed by weather condition with 67 respondents choosing it. The distance of the school from home was picked by 56 respondents as the third challenge to be addressed by prioritization.

It means that external factors are challenges addressed by prioritization of improvement areas. These factors cannot be fully given solutions by the school. Although the school heads include them in PIA and SIP to be addressed, it is beyond the capability of the school. It can be implied that the school improvement plan and the priority improvement areas identified are the factors which hinders the learners from accessing quality education. These factors, although can be included in the PIA of the school, will always affect the learners' access to education.

Quality – The five most challenges chosen are the teachers need to undergo more training, coaching and mentoring with 94 favoring it then followed by the absence of master teacher as identified by 77 respondents. Then, the area of poverty was picked by 76 respondents in rank 3 whereas the poor study habit of pupils is in rank 4 with 66 respondents choosing it. Also, the parent's lack of follow-up at home emerged as in rank 5 with 55 respondents choosing it. It means that teacher and parent-factors are also challenges that the PIA addressed. Teacher's competencies and parents' involvement can be a challenge for the learners to succeed academically. Similarly, socio-economic factor may pose as a challenge that PIA and SIP need to be

addressed. It can be implied that both school and home environment can play a crucial role in learners' academic success. Socio-economic condition can influence both the access of learners to quality education as well as the quality of education they may receive.

Governance – The inadequate number of instructional and reading materials was identified by 95 respondents which is rank 1 followed by the insufficient funds to improve the school plant and facilities with 88 respondents favoring it. Then, there were 67 respondents who identified that there are insufficient funds to improve the school plant and facilities in rank 3, 33 respondents chose lack of industrial and garden tools in rank 4, and 32 respondents favored the inadequate number of musical instruments and sports equipment in rank 5. It means that the primary concerns of school heads along governance are the materials and physical facility of the school. These proved to be challenges in providing quality education among learners. Hence, addressing such issues, the school heads prioritize these areas for improvement. It can be implied that lack of learners' materials and supplementary materials are issues that need to be addressed by the school heads. These factors hinder the academic performance of the learners and therefore needs to be addressed immediately.

4. Proposed Action Plan on the Prioritization of Improvement Areas

The proposed action plan on the prioritization of improvement areas dealt primarily on the enhancement of the school improvement plan which is prepared by the school heads.

Generally, the proposed action plan on the prioritization of improvement areas aims to: (a) enhance the access of the learners to quality education; (b) increase the quality of basic education through strengthening the quality level; and (c) improve the governance of the school with its school-based management plan.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings, the researcher concluded that the priority improvement areas are maintaining a 100% attendance of pupils along access, decreasing the number of pupils who are non-numerates along quality, and increasing the awareness and involvement of the stakeholders in the school programs and projects along governance. Also, the areas of decreasing the number of severely wasted and wasted pupils and maintain a zero drop-out rate came out strategically important, urgent, and high in magnitude while the area of decreasing the number of children with below 90% attendance emerged as feasible. However, the area of increasing the

achievement rate and strengthening the instructional supervision were found slightly feasible. Consequently, increasing the stakeholders' participation and involvement was strategically important and improvement and upgrading of school was high in magnitude. Furthermore, the most challenges addressed by the prioritization of improvement areas are poverty, teachers need to attend training, coaching, and mentoring, and inadequate number of instructional and reading materials. The researcher also concluded that there is a need to conduct an action plan in order to enhance the prioritization of improvement areas in the school.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

The researchers would like to recommend that the teachers may reinforce the monitoring of the attendance and performance in mathematics of the pupils. Also, they may provide supplementary activities that will improve the numeracy level of the pupils. Likewise, they may enhance the school-community relationship in order to increase the participation in all programs and projects. The school administrator may improve the school-based feeding program and sustain *Gulayan sa Paaralan* in order to decrease the number of severely wasted and wasted pupils and maintain a zero drop-out rate. Likewise, they may enhance the guidance and counseling program in the school. The school administrator may review the contents of the school Improvement Plan which may include program that may address poverty, provision of more training for teachers, and provision of additional books and reading materials in the library. The proposed action plan may be submitted to the Division Office for possible adoption. If found feasible, it may be recommended for implementation. The researchers recommend that further study may be considered which may widen the scope and include other variables not covered.

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