

Principal Leadership for Teachers' Professional Development During the COVID-19 Pandemic in Public Secondary Schools, Zambales, Philippines

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Abstract— The study presented leadership strategies for teachers' professional development in public secondary schools, Zambales, Philippines aimed to respond to the changes in education setting and challenges in the midst of COVID-19 Pandemic. The respondents of this research study are the Secondary school principal's/school heads and their respective teachers from the selected schools in all the Zones of the Division. The education response focused on identifying/describing the (a) Characteristics of leadership for teachers' professional and (b) Resources provided to support the professional development of teachers. This study employed a descriptive research method, quantitative in its analysis and used a survey questionnaire as the main data gathering instrument. The overall number of items/indicators on the survey questionnaire was restricted to twenty-five (25). The statistical treatment of this study utilized descriptive statistical tools and ANOVA as inferential statistics. TH SPSS version 16 as was statistical program/software. Findings of the present study revealed that the respondents strongly agreed that resources have been provided to support the professional development of teachers and to further their capacity to innovate during the Pandemic. Moreover, the respondents strongly agreed to the different characteristics of leadership appropriate for teachers' professional development during the Pandemic primarily the principal's support to discussions, observations and evaluations aimed to enhance teachers' competence and learning. The result of analysis of variance computation found no significant difference on the characteristics of leadership for teachers' professional development in school appropriate during the health crisis; and on the perception of the respondents on the different resources provided to support teachers' professional development and their capacity to innovate to address the needs and concerns during the health crisis.

Keywords— Leadership Strategies, Principals, Teachers, Professional Development, COVID-19 Public Secondary Schools.

INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 really hit home on January 30, 2020 when WHO declared it a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. On March 12, 2020, WHO declared the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak, caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), to be a pandemic. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) [2020] estimated that 107 countries had implemented national school closures related to COVID-19. While here in the Philippines, the Department of Health (DOH) announced the first patient who tested positive for it. Immediately on February 1, 2020, the Department of Education (DepEd) Secretary issued DepEd Memo No. 11, s. 2020, creating a Task Force for the management of the department's response to COVID-19. Reimers & Schleicher (2020) argued that the absence of intentional and effective education response, the COVID-19 Pandemic is likely to generate the greatest disruption in educational opportunity worldwide in a generation. World Health Organization (2020) stressed that successful implementation of adaptive COVID-19 preparedness and education response strategies will depend on all of society being

engaged in the plan, and strong national and subnational coordination.

It is imperative, for this reason, that education leaders take immediate steps to develop and implement strategies which mitigate the educational impact of the pandemic. Education leaders need to devise effective education responses and one of the important key areas is leading, guiding and helping teachers in implementing the curriculum and carry on providing high standard of education even in the midst of health crisis.

According to Tingle, et al. (2017), the role of a school principal has drastically changed from operational management to instructional leadership. This dramatic change has several consequences on school principals such as balancing administrative and instructional roles, managing instructional programmes and promoting positive school climate. For Vanblaere & Devos (2016) school leadership can create a learning environment at schools by helping teachers to identify their development needs, by encouraging experimentation, by finding and allocating resources to support teachers' learning, and by enhancing the implementation of new learning. Weiland, et al. (2014) stressed that principals

in accelerating school improvement with the retention of effective human capital, but it would also ensure that a performing organisation is in place to increase academic achievement.

Effective principal leadership structures professional learning and development that effects changes and improvement in teachers' instruction and practices towards improved output and continuous learning of students even during the pandemic. High quality school leadership allows events and spaces for teachers and staff to collaborate; share their expertise; discuss their ideas and insights; and open to new culture of instruction during the pandemic. Effective leadership strategies provide teachers time to reflect on their status and make necessary adjustments on their teaching practices from feedbacks.

School principals have a unique insight into the challenges being faced by their schools and see teachers' individual needs. The output of this study would provide them empirical information of what their respective school needs primarily on faculty professional development and resources accessibility; and what challenges their school faced and how they are preparing to cope with these challenges. Moreover, this study would provide the school principals important elements in the formulation and development of a plan/program to help teachers respond to the current crisis caused by COVID19 pandemic and to design and implement evaluation tools for determining whether schools, administrators, teachers, students are functioning and learning.

If teachers are held accountable for increasingly higher expectations, educators must be given the opportunity to learn new strategies and be provided by high-quality professional development available. On the other hand, a clear defined roles expected from the school community (e.g., school heads the teachers) can effectively steer and support students' learning in the new situation, through synchronous and asynchronous instructions where possible. This contribution can inspire and reinforce other studies in this field of knowledge. However, still further research is needed on educational leadership and strategy to respond to the present health crisis. This study provides key messages and considerations for engaging school administrators, teachers and staff, parents and community members, in promoting relevant basic education.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The research study aimed to determine the leadership strategies for teachers' professional development during

the COVID19 Pandemic in public secondary schools, Zambales, Philippines which was conducted during the first quarter of the academic year of 2020. The following specific questions are answered and addressed.

1. What characterizes leadership for teachers' professional development in school during the Pandemic?
2. What resources have been provided to support the professional development of teachers and their capacity to innovate during the Pandemic?
3. Is there a significant difference on the perceived resources provided to support the professional development of teachers and their capacity to innovate during the Pandemic?
4. Is there a significant difference on the perceived characteristics of leadership for teachers' professional development in school during the Pandemic?

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive research method, quantitative in its analysis and will use survey questionnaire/checklist as the research instrument. For Shields (2013) descriptive method includes the collection of data to test the hypothesis and to answer the questions concerning the present status of the study. Quantitative analysis and formulation of generalization is generally concerned with measurable quantities (Casadevall & Fang, 2018). This study described the characteristics of leadership for teachers' professional development in school during the Pandemic and the resources provided to support the professional development of teachers and their capacity to innovate; a response to COVID 19 Pandemic of 2020.

The respondents of the research study were the School Principals/School Heads and Teachers of selected Public Secondary Schools of Zone 1, 2, 3 and 4, Department of Education, Division of Zambales, Philippines offering Junior and Senior High Programs. The four (4) Zones are composed of Districts or Municipalities where the Secondary High Schools are located. Zone 1 with 6 schools; Zone 2, 13 schools; Zone 3, with 4 schools; and Zone 4, with 3 schools. A total population of 27 Principals were chosen to represent the school heads and a total of 349 were teacher-respondents (grand total of 376 respondents). Sample of teacher-respondents were selected using Sloven's formula sampling technique.

The study's research instrument was a survey questionnaire which contains two general questions to clarify the objectives of the study. The researcher

reviewed the works of Adolfsson & Alvunger (2017) and UNICEF & Bender (2020) to complete the contents (items/indicators) of the survey questionnaire for the present study. The survey questionnaires were administered to the School Principals/School Head and Teachers of public secondary schools of Zone 1, 2, 3 & 4, DepEd, Division of Zambales, Philippines. The adapted survey questionnaire contains twenty five (25) key items/indicators which have two (2) parts. First Part: Resources provided to support the professional development of teachers; and Second Part: Characteristics of leadership for teachers' professional development in school during the Pandemic. The respondents answered within a scale ranging from 4 (Strongly Agree), 3 (Agree), 2 (Disagree), to 1 (Strongly Disagree). A set of subject matter experts (e.g., selected School Supervisors, Principal and School Heads in the Division of Zambales) reviewed and checked the indicators/questions of the research instrument for clarity and directedness to minimize the occurrences of misinterpretations. In order to assess the validity and reliability of the indicators of the research instrument, middle managers of PRMSU, Iba and Principals of private secondary schools (Iba, Botolan and Cabangan Districts) were invited as subjects for the pilot study. A pilot test will examine whether all instruction in the questionnaire given can be understood and to make sure all respondents understand the research objectives. The feedback of the experts mentioned above and the results

of the pilot study were highly considered in revising and finalizing the research instrument.

The first step which was undertaken by the researcher in data gathering was securing an approval from the Schools Division Superintendent, Division of Zambales through a letter to administer the survey questionnaires to the identified respondents. The researcher personally administered the instrument to the respondents on October, 2020 and were retrieved immediately. The objectives/purpose of the study were explained to the respondents and their responses were be treated as very confidential. The statistical treatment of this study utilized descriptive statistical tools such as frequency counts, percentage and mean. ANOVA was used as inferential statistics. All the data which were gathered using the questionnaire were coded, tallied and tabulated following the research objectives or the statement of the problem. The data gathered were analyzed, interpreted and discussed accordingly.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. Characteristics of Leadership for Teachers' Professional Development in School During the Pandemic

Table 1 presents the perceived characteristics of leadership for teachers' professional development in school during the Pandemic by the respondents (principal/school head and teachers).

Table 1: Perceived Characteristics of Leadership for Teachers' Professional Development in School during the Pandemic

Leadership for Teachers' Professional Development means that the:	Weighted Mean	Qualitative Rating	Rank
Principal continuously encourages teachers' self-improvement and collective inquiry.	3.49	Strongly Agree	4
Principal provides ample staff training and development opportunities	3.47	Strongly Agree	8
Principal fosters teacher learning by providing professional support.	3.46	Strongly Agree	11
Principal encourages teachers towards improved self-efficacy	3.47	Strongly Agree	8
Principal supports teachers' individual descriptive learning processes	3.41	Strongly Agree	15
Seeking outside resource persons for teachers' professional development.	3.49	Strongly Agree	4
Principal builds trust to establish productive learning environments for their teachers.	3.49	Strongly Agree	4
Principal courageously and willingly take a risk and accountable to his/her decisions.	3.47	Strongly Agree	8
Principal creates peer excellence groups which is led/owned by teachers and receives support	3.43	Strongly Agree	14

Principal stands out as a key condition for teachers to feel more comfortable about teaching.	3.50	Strongly Agree	2
Principal allows expert teachers help regular teachers on areas of teaching in need of improvement.	3.47	Strongly Agree	8
Principal utilizes lesson study method for teachers’ teaching and professional development	3.44	Strongly Agree	13
Principal implements teacher development necessary to change teaching practices.	3.45	Strongly Agree	12
Principal collaborates for teachers’ professional development.	3.49	Strongly Agree	4
Principal supports discussions, observations and evaluations aimed to enhance teachers’ learning	3.51	Strongly Agree	1
Overall Weighted Mean	3.47	Strongly Agree	

Results from the perceptions on the characteristics of leadership for teachers’ professional development in school during the Pandemic of the respondents revealed that Principal supports discussions, observations and evaluations aimed to enhance teachers’ learning was strongly agreed characteristic (Indicator 15, WM=3.51, rank 1), followed by Principal leadership stands out as a key condition for teachers to feel more comfortable about teaching (Indicator 10, WM=3.50, rank 2). During challenging situations/conditions at school or academic community, the respondents prefer that their respective principal supports the deliberations, discussions of teachers’ needs and concerns observations and evaluations of teachers’ performances aimed to enhance instruction. Further, the respondents strongly agreed that principal’s leadership would stand out and lead teachers and other staff feel more comfortable about teaching and working at school.

Here, the leadership of the principal was focused on planning and providing time for teachers to deliberate, receive inputs, engage teachers, and make better changes in their teaching practices appropriate for the present condition in education. Incorporated the elements of interactive activities, collaboration, coaching, giving feedback. Silva, et al. (2017) argued that teachers had the highest interest in association, engagement and collaboration when they perceive that their leaders support and encourage their professional development. Shuilleabhain (2016) stated that voluntary participation of teachers (e.g., share comments and ideas) was an important requirement for teacher learning and development. Adolfsson & Alvunger’s (2017) showed the significance of teachers are allowed to envision common goals, participate in instructional and pedagogical discussions, to further the knowledge on the curriculum and subject content. Adolfsson & Alvunger’s (2017), stressed a modern form of school leadership where principals characterized as spirited leaders in the educational system; willing to take risk

and accountability. Principals as mentors can also identify and develop expert teachers as mentors and coaches too in their particular area of expertise as teachers. King & Stevenson (2017) supported the vital role of teachers to engage in planning and reflecting together and cultivates openness and teamwork in teaching making school environment comfortable and pleasant

Other characteristics of principal leadership for teachers’ professional development which were strongly agreed upon by the respondents are indicator 1, leadership for teachers’ learning meant that principals continuously encouraged teachers’ self-improvement and collective inquiry, indicator 6, seeking outside resource persons for teachers’ professional development; indicator 7, the principal builds trust to establish productive learning environments for their teachers; and indicator 14, collaborates for teachers’ professional development (WM=3.49, rank 4 respectively) which were interpreted as Strongly Agree.

The respondents also strongly approved that their Principals should continuously encourage teachers’ self-improvement and collective inquiry; builds trust to establish productive learning environments for their teachers; and seeking educational or professional experts that can help and guide teachers on new trends and best instructional practices which are efficient and effective to be utilized by teachers in the ‘new normal’. With the present condition as school, principals and other policy makers can redesign school schedules to increase opportunities for teachers for professional learning such as peer coaching, joining professional learning communities and collaborative planning. Expert scaffolding and mentoring/coaching can help the effective implementation of the present curricula and the alternative learning modalities in the new normal. Pang, et al. (2016) stress the leadership for teachers’ learning meant that school heads constantly encourage teacher

implementers for self-improvement and professional support. Mohan, et al.'s (2018) findings highlights that professional development is an opportunity for teachers to collaborate and to share ideas for a stronger foundation of professional improvements. Wood, et al.'s (2017) study notes that employing expert facilitator plays a vital role in sustaining the best school processes and practices and empowering the teachers.

The respondents also strongly agreed that indicator 2, providing ample staff training and development opportunities; indicator 4, encouraging teachers towards improved self-efficacy; indicator, 11, allowing expert teachers help regular teachers on areas of teaching in need of improvement (WM=3.47, ranked 8 respectively) were principal attributes which can help and guide teachers professional growth. Respondents of the present study found the above indicators vital to be further reinforced by the principal's/school heads during the pandemic. In this study of Pang, et al. (2016), leadership for teachers' learning meant that principals continuously plan and look for opportunities such as teacher orientations, preparations, trainings towards further self-improvement and self-efficiency and effectiveness. For Cravens, et al. (2017), the expert teachers should serve as mentors and role models for other teachers' professional growth. Both, gain more assurance and built confidence on their skills and abilities. Cravens, et al. (2017), reiterated further the need for educators and the school to form relationship even group level to assist and support professional development.

Indicator 12, utilization of lesson study method for teachers' teaching and professional development (WM=3.44, rank 13), indicator 9, creates peer excellence groups which is led/owned by teachers and

receives support from principals (WM=3.43, rank 14), indicator 5, supports teachers' individual descriptive learning processes (WM=3.41, rank 15) wherein teachers connect concrete practice to theory were the items which obtained the lowest weighted mean, but still gained a qualitative rating of Strongly Agree. Even with the lowest weighted mean, the respondents strongly agreed that the utilization of Lesson Study (LS) method, connecting concrete educational practices to theory; the creation of peer excellence groups wherein teachers can receive support from each other and their principals; and supporting teachers' individual learning processes are important characteristics of principal leadership for improved teaching and professional development. Chen's (2017) study concludes that lesson study (SL) actually improves the quality of lessons reinforced with repeated teaching based on accepted and useful standards and reasoning constructed on useful and concrete situations and conditions. Goh & Fang's (2017) study indicates that each stage of the lesson study process engaged teachers' deliberative discourse and assisted them in building a common inquiry. Focusing on teacher peer excellence groups, Cravens, et al. (2017), underscores the importance of principals who provide flexibility and support for their teacher leaders.

The Overall Weighted Mean was 3.47 with Qualitative Rating Strongly Agree.

2. Resources Provided to Support the Professional Development of Teachers and their Capacity to Innovate during the Pandemic

Table 2 presents the perceived resources provided to support the professional development of teachers and their capacity to innovate during the Pandemic by the respondents (principal/school head and teachers).

Table 2: Perceived Resources Provided to Support the Professional Development of Teachers and their Capacity to Innovate during the Pandemic

Resources Provided to Support the Professional Development of Teachers	Weighted Mean	Qualitative Rating	Rank
Trainings for software applications needed for teaching (e.g., Zoom, Google classroom, Edmodo, etc.)	3.47	Strongly Agree	2
Provisions of printed instructional packages	3.47	Strongly Agree	2
Provisions of educational television programs/packages	3.39	Strongly Agree	10
Guidelines in the utilization of blended learning	3.41	Strongly Agree	8
Use of existing online distance learning platform/resources	3.43	Strongly Agree	6.5
Provision of tools that enable teachers to share knowledge with other teachers at school	3.44	Strongly Agree	4.5
Provision of tools that enable teachers to collaborate with peers at school	3.43	Strongly Agree	6.5

Creation of a website to communicate with teachers, students and parents about curriculum goals.	3.40	Strongly Agree	9
Guidelines to teaching online subjects/courses	3.47	Strongly Agree	2
Partnership with private education platforms	3.44	Strongly Agree	4.5
Overall Weighted Mean	3.44	Strongly Agree	

The respondents strongly agreed that indicator 1, trainings for software applications needed for teaching (e.g., Zoom, Google classroom, Edmodo, etc.) and indicator 2, provisions of printed instructional packages and indicator 9, guidelines to teaching online subjects/courses (WM=3.47, rank 2, respectively) were the resources/materials provided to a great extent to support the professional development of teachers and contributed to their capacity to innovate during the Pandemic. The respondents were probably recipients or participants of these kind of training, orientation and new modality of teaching and learning and have gained benefits from these.

Technology is a crucial enabler and it is the best choice that we have under the circumstances (Jorge, 2020). Saggi & Anukoonwattaka (2018) acknowledged that online education as core to every school’s strategic plan for institutional resilience and academic continuity. The trainings, according to the respondents would focus into the use of different computer-based technology, the use of the Prezi and PowerPoint in displaying the lesson training on the use of popular video conferencing platforms (Google Meet, Zoom Meetings, etc.). Popular video conferencing platforms presented by Sinha & Basu (2020) which teachers have to have knowledge and literacy are Google Meet and Zoom Meetings. Daniel (2020) on the other hand highly suggest the usage of live broadcast, pre-recorded contents and educational programs from media by teachers in the basic education.

Indicator 4, guidelines in the utilization of blended learning (WM=3.41, rank 8), Indicator 8, creation of a website to communicate with teachers, students and parents about curriculum goals (WM=3.40, rank 9), Indicator 3, provisions of educational television programs/packages (WM=3.41, rank 10) were the items with the least weighted mean, however were still obtained a qualitative description of Strongly Agree.

The respondents perceived that these resources/provisions/materials were provided but not to a great extent. The respondents would what their schools to help them be more familiar with the rules, creation and strategies in the utilization of blended learning, creation of a website to communicate with teachers, students and parents about curriculum contents and

essential competencies, and provisions of educational television programs/packages compatible with the curriculum being offered this time of pandemic.

Teachers need to be familiar and to structure their room on the various rotational model such as station rotation, lab rotation, flipped classroom, and individual rotation as one of the blended learning designs (Perkins Eastman Blended Learning Design Guidelines, 2015). Other blended learning models/designs that teachers should have knowledge with are the flex model, the self-blended approaches; and the enhanced virtual. For Daniel (2020), it is necessary that schools hire experts such as instructional designers and educational technology consultants to set up and manage blended learning classrooms. Reimers & Schleicher (2020) stressed that availing efficient and effective professional resources that could help teachers learn how to be digitally literate is essential.

Leaders of educational institutions should take into consideration the making of a clear and functional plan to guide for safe operations of schools in the middle of the health crisis such as communication strategy for teachers/staff, students, parents and other in the community; and alternative delivery mechanisms (UNICEF & Bender, 2020). The improve communication strategies greatly help sustain cooperation and unity with the school community and from the stakeholders as the schools seek help and provisions from them.

Further, this would allow and encourage students to express and communicate their concerns and feelings. The alternative mode of delivery of instructions would assure continuous education and other important support. The Overall Weighted Mean was 3.44 with Qualitative Rating Strongly Agree.

3. Analysis of Variance on the Difference on the Perceived Characteristics of Leadership for Teachers’ Professional Development in School during the Pandemic

Table 3 shows the difference on the perceived characteristics of leadership for teachers’ professional development in school during the Pandemic by the respondents (principal/school head and teachers).

Table 3: Difference on the Perceived Characteristics of Leadership for Teachers' Professional Development in School during the Pandemic

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Interpretation
Between Groups	3.556	14	0.254	0.680	0.796	Ho is accepted Not Significant
Within Groups	2094.619	5609	0.373			
Total	2098.175	5623				

The significant value for characteristics of leadership for teachers' professional development in school during the pandemic (0.796) was higher than (0.05) alpha level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. There is no significant difference on the perception of the respondents on the characteristics of leadership for teachers' professional development in school appropriate during the health crisis. The respondents who are Principals, School Heads and Teachers manifest similarity of insights, understanding and beliefs what desirable, ideal and appropriate characteristics of leadership the secondary school principals should

Table 3: Difference on the Perceived Resources Provided to Support the Professional Development of Teachers and their Capacity to Innovate using the Pandemic

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Interpretation
Between Groups	3.004	9	0.334	0.864	0.557	Ho is accepted Not Significant
Within Groups	1445.136	3740	0.386			
Total	1448.140	3749				

The significant value for resources provided to support the professional development of teachers and their capacity to innovate during the pandemic (0.557) was higher than (0.05) alpha level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. There is no significant difference on the perception of the respondents on the different resources provided to them to support their professional development and their capacity to innovate to address the needs and concerns during the during the health crisis. The respondents who are Principals, School Heads and Teachers manifest similarity of insights, situations, conditions and experiences as regard to the different supports and resources for instruction that their respective principal/school head provide them which can contribute to further their professional development and to improve their capacity to innovate their teaching-learning modalities and materials during the Pandemic.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings, the researcher concluded that:

1. The respondents strongly agreed to the different characteristics of leadership appropriate for teachers' professional development during the

practice and apply which can help address the education concerns and issues in the 'new normal'.

4. Analysis of Variance on the Difference on the Perceived Resources Provided to Support the Professional Development of Teachers and their Capacity to Innovate during the Pandemic

Table 4 shows the difference on the perceived resources provided to support the professional development of teachers and their capacity to innovate during the Pandemic by the respondents (principal/school head and teachers).

Pandemic primarily the principal's support to discussions, observations and evaluations aimed to enhance teachers' competence and learning; and the establishment of comfortable teaching environment.

2. The respondents strongly agreed that resources have been provided to support the professional development of teachers and to further their capacity to innovate during the Pandemic mainly on trainings for software applications needed for teaching; provisions of printed instructional packages; and guidelines to teaching online subjects/courses.
3. The analysis of variance result revealed a no significant difference on the perception of the respondents on the characteristics of leadership for teachers' professional development in school appropriate during the health crisis.
4. It was also established in the analysis of variance result on a no significant difference on the perception of the respondents on the different resources provided to support teachers' professional development and their capacity to innovate to address the needs and concerns during the health crisis.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based for the presented conclusions, the following recommendations were advanced by the researcher.

1. School Heads/Principals' leadership and management styles that can help teachers' professional development in school during the Pandemic may focus on supports to discussions, observations and evaluations aimed to enhance teachers' learning a making and assuring that the school community a stands out as a key condition for teachers to feel more comfortable about teaching.
2. School Heads/Principals, Supervisors, and Education Specialist/Curriculum Planners of the Division of Zambales may provide continuous trainings on software applications needed for teaching (e.g., Zoom, Teleconferencing, Google classroom, Edmodo, etc.) and provisions of the production of instructional packages (e.g. self-learning module) to support the professional development of teachers and their capacity to innovate during the Pandemic.
3. The pool of experts in the Division of Zambales (School Heads/Principals, Supervisors, and Education Specialist/Curriculum Planners) may formulate and present a Framework/Program for education strategy as a response to COVID 19 Pandemic of 2020 for funding and future implementation.
4. Conduct follow up study on the status of the public secondary school in connection with Principal strategies and support to teachers as responses to COVID 19 Pandemic in the country.

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