

SCHOOL MANAGERS' OCCUPATIONAL COMPETENCE

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Abstract

The study determined the upshot of school managers' professionalism on occupational their competence. Using the mixed methods of research with 101 school administrators and 10 district supervisors as respondents of the study, findings showed that majority of the Public Schools District Supervisor respondents cited that "Most of the time school managers use behavioral decision-making style because like the conceptual decision-making style, a group of individuals are approached for their insights into a situation". Moreover, according to them, through conflict self-awareness, one can more effectively manage conflicts and professional and personal relationships. On the other hand, they also asserted that to make schools continuously perform better depends mainly on the ability of school managers to tap and make good use of resources. Guided by the principles of School-Based Management, schools collaborate well with internal and external stakeholders. The school manager respondents' levels of occupational competence were described as "outstanding". In relation to this, the respondents argued that school managers need to be proficient in performing their duties and responsibilities. They have to possess instructional leadership by means of mentoring teachers for the improvement of the pupil's performance. Likewise, educational programs and projects have to be implemented in consonance with the department's thrusts. Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn: Elementary school managers do not differ in their professionalism as regards personal traits, decision making styles, conflict resolution, and community related factors when grouped according to position title. Meanwhile, district supervisor respondents claimed that the school managers regardless of their positions manifest the same professionalism. Also, attitude and having the heart of a true leader is the most important thing to be able to perform their work competently. Elementary school managers' professionalism is associated with their occupational competence in terms of instructional supervision, development/implementation of educational programs, and administrative management.

Keywords: Occupational Competence, school manager's professionalism, leadership, decision-making, School-Based management

INTRODUCTION

The most essential resource in any institutional organization is its people. The workers combine and process the other resources to achieve the institutional goal productively. In the management of human resources, the professionalism which 21st century school managers uphold underlies rational social action and makes workers' activities pass through. Hence, the system in the work place is the crucial concern of the educational administrator who wants to understand the work behaviour of the

members of organization in his goals of eliciting and attaining excellent occupational competence and professionalism for the institution and its people.

With the passing of the No Child Left Behind Act, **(Department of Education, 2004)**, the professionalism, specifically in regards to subject matter knowledge, has been emphasized with the introduction of highly qualified requirements for educators to the exclusion of any other competency **(Department of Education, 2004)**. Tate (2010), emphasized that professionalism is recognized for importance among leaders in business, politics, medicine and education. It is a set of values, attitudes, and behaviors that put others before one self. Professionalism is not a right but a privilege. The status of a professional is a privilege granted by society that consists of a set of characteristics which may change over time. Professionals base their careers on the use of specialized knowledge.

School Managers' professionalism is largely described by external conditions, such as public expectations and governmental agencies. The conjecture continues that professionalism is driven by local school traditions and norms rather than a collective body of teachers attempting to become more effective educators. Since the schools are icons of communities, current professional standards include characteristics of the localities rather than a larger body of school managers' professionals.

For school improvement to occur, the leadership of the school manager is crucial. One of the main commonalities among effective schools is strong leadership, especially the school manager who is instrumental in setting the academic tone for the school, in helping to select appropriate instructional strategies, and in organizing and distributing school resources. The development and nurturing of teacher study groups offers one solution to satisfy the high levels of accountability relative to teacher professional development and to the tremendous pressure school leaders are under to take action under the auspices of school reform. The teacher study group model can serve as a core strategy for teacher development within the context of a professional learning community **(Rehman, 2011)**.

Competency is an underlying characteristic that leads to superior performance in an individual. It includes qualities, skills, attributes and traits that help people to be successful. Competency is capable of being developed in people rather than being fixed. Competency development is mostly developed through personal and professional skills. personal and professional development is essentially an avenue of teaching professionals and managerial skills on how to develop their professional skills, focusing on what we do and how we do them. Personal and professional development is vital for the development professional abilities in every individual. Competency of a leader is vital in setting the direction of an organization, especially when the organization is a school. Competency is a measurable characteristic of a person that is related to effective performance in a specific job, organization or culture. Specific competencies of a school leader are needed in ensuring that the school under his care is achieving. The word competency is defined as a measurable characteristic of a person that is related to effective performance in a specific job, organization or culture **(Rosnarizah, et. al., 2015)**.

School managers play an important role in the creation of a well-rounded, high performing and productive working place. Good governance and leader's competence are the top most essence of any managerial job. The term competency was defined in various perspectives. The American Heritage Dictionary of English language (2000) provided a general description as "the state or quality of being properly or well qualified". Numerous scholars have attempted to pin down a definition for competency. **(Su-Chin et. al. 2012)**, indicated that competencies were associated with knowledge and skills for implementing certain assignments or projects effectively. To be effective in a particular competency, one must be able to accomplish the desired results of a job with specific qualifications

and personal attributes. It employed a functional perspective to define a competency as how the goals of organizations were best achieved by improving members' performance.

The school principals must find ways on how they can forge a linkage to community via student teachers as one of the better resources of the cooperating school and TEIs. The school principals can develop a master plan that can answer the need of student teachers to form a connection with the people in the community. For instance, they can let the student teachers present during PTCA meetings. (Dumayas, 2016)

RESULTS

Managers' Occupational Competence

Instructional Supervision

Results revealed that respondents perceived all items for instructional supervision as "outstanding". The highest computed weighted mean of 4.71 was computed for item "Prepares school year instructional supervisory plan" while the lowest weighted mean of 4.51 was recorded for item "Provides timely, accurate and specific feedbacks to teachers regarding their performance". The overall mean was computed at 4.62.

These findings implied that school manager respondents help create a shared vision and clear goals for their schools and ensure continuous progress toward achieving the goals by preparing school year instructional supervisory plan. They lead the process of setting, monitoring and achieving specific and challenging goals that reflect high expectations for all students and staff. Furthermore, they anticipate, monitor, evaluate and respond to educational developments that affect school issues and environment.

Development/Implementation of Educational Programs

Apparently, all items indicated in the table were perceived by the school managers as "outstanding". A closer look at the table reveals that item "Monitors implementation of BEC and K to 12 programs" obtained the highest computed mean of 4.66 while items "Increases survival rate by 2%" and "Increases retention rate by 2%" received the lowest weighted mean of 4.45. The overall mean was computed at 4.54.

These results implied that school managers support the implementation of high-quality standards based instruction that results in higher levels of achievement for all pupils. Moreover, they ensure that the instructional content that is taught is aligned with the national academic content standard of K-12 program. School managers ensure instructional practices are effective and meet the needs of all pupils including pupils with special educational needs and pupils at risk. They support teachers for their own professional development by providing them the opportunities to attend seminars and motivate them to take graduate studies.

Administrative Management

Interestingly, all items indicated in the table garnered an "outstanding" perception from the school manager respondents. Item "Manages school information/data" obtained the highest computed weighted mean of 4.67 while item "Manages linkage among internal and external stakeholders" got the lowest computed weighted mean of 4.55. The overall mean was recorded at 4.63.

Findings implied that school managers allocate resources and manage school operations in order to ensure a safe and productive learning environment. Moreover, they establish and maintain a safe school environment, create a nurturing learning environment that addresses the physical and mental health needs of all students and staff, mobilize, allocate and utilize resources, including technology, to support student and staff learning.

Furthermore, school manager respondents institute procedures and practices to support staff and students and establish an environment that is conducive to learning, and understand, uphold and model professional ethics, policies, and codes of professional conduct. School manager respondents report to the community and stake holders on effective and efficient use and management of school resources.

In relation to this, the respondents claimed that school managers need to be proficient in performing their duties and responsibilities. They have to possess instructional leadership by means of mentoring teachers for the improvement of the pupil's performance. Likewise, educational programs and projects have to be implemented in consonance with the department's thrusts.

The Difference in the School Managers' Professionalism in terms of Personal Traits, Decision Making Styles, Types of Conflict Resolutions, and Community Related Factors when Grouped according to their Position Title

Findings of the F-test analysis on the differences among the level of professionalism of elementary school manager respondents in terms of personal traits, decision making styles, types of conflict resolutions, and community related factors when grouped according to their position title show that there is no significant difference was found among the level of professionalism of the respondents when they are grouped according to their position. This no significant difference was brought about by the fact that the computed probability value of 0.296 is greater than the pre-set level of significance of 0.05. Results disclosed that the level of professionalism of the school managers whether they occupied Head Teacher position or Principal I to III positions were the same. This implied that position of school managers has no significant effect on their level of professionalism.

The findings of the present study are in contradictory to the results of the research conducted by Nauta et al., (2009). In their study, they found out that positions of school administrators play an important role in influencing their professionalism in terms of personal traits, decision making styles, types of conflict resolutions, and community related factors. Moreover, they concluded that school administrators who are holding higher positions possessed outstanding level of professionalism as compared to those who were occupying lower administrative positions. Furthermore, they stated that some of the reasons were: educational attainment, professional development, exposure and long experiences as a leader.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn: Elementary school managers do not differ in their professionalism as regards personal traits, decision making styles, conflict resolution, and community related factors when grouped according to position title. Elementary school managers' professionalism is associated with their occupational competence in terms of instructional supervision, development/implementation of educational programs, and administrative management.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations were drawn:

- Department of Education (DepEd) officials can provide the elementary school managers seminars and workshops regarding professionalism that have found to have significant effect on occupational competence.
- Practicing school principals need an ongoing formal professional development because education practices constantly change all the time.

- School principals should not only refine their own professional development but should build more teacher leaders in their schools. This would equip the school with a team of “expert educators” who will know what to do during the times of conflict.
- For future researchers, more research studies need to be conducted in schools regarding the instilling of conflict management among school principals.

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