

Challenges and Opportunities in School Governance

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.15430560

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ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to determine the Challenges and Opportunities in School Governance. Eleven School Administrators in the Division of Cadiz City were selected using Purposive sampling. The investigation used the Phenomenological Qualitative research design. The researcher used a researcher-made interview guide as a tool to determine the challenges and opportunities of School Administrators in School Governance. Thematic analysis was used. Based on the results, it was revealed that the challenge faced by school administrators in school governance is the Balancing Strategies. Building a positive culture within the school is one of the main challenges that school administrators must balance. They have also experienced difficulties balancing leading and overseeing all school employees. Another noteworthy piece of information was Meeting Standards. Added to this, work pressure was one of the obstacles faced by school administrators. Discipline and behavior issues were another vital piece that was emphasized. Their duty as school administrators is put to the test by the numerous demanding parents. Change in Curriculum is another challenge for them. In addition, school administrators also encounter difficulties when there are variations in the learning delivery. As to the opportunities of School Administrators in School Governance, the results show they have gained opportunities on Experiences, leadership skills, feelings of fulfillment, experiences on various innovations and research projects, Collaboration Aspect, interaction with many stakeholders, positive influence on the lives of students, teachers, support staff, and other stakeholders was one of the opportunities that school administrators encountered. The least was salary.

KEYWORDS: *Challenges, Opportunities, School administrators, School governance*

INTRODUCTION

Quality Education was the main goal of the Department of Education, and it can be attained through good school governance. School governance refers to the structures, processes, and mechanisms through which educational institutions are managed, directed, and controlled. It involved collaborating with various stakeholders, including school administrators, teachers, parents, students, community members, and policymakers (OECD, 2018).

The school administration managed all school operations, from an established secure learning environment to overseeing the budget. The individuals who did these many administrative duties that allowed a school to operate efficiently were known as school administrators (Washington, 2019). As guardians of their institutions, school administrators were essential in fostering a climate conducive to successful teaching and learning. The Department of Education (DepEd) produced outstanding instructors and "holistic learners who are steeped in values, equipped with 21st-century skills, and able to propel the country to development and progress" through their effective leadership and administration (PPSSH, 2021).

Examining the difficulties and chances principals face in school governance provided light on the efficiency of leadership, the distribution of resources, and the effects of policies. In the end, it can assist in identifying tactics to improve student results, school administration, and systemic problems.

School Administrators play a massive role in School Governance. The researcher was challenged to explore School Administrators' experiences in terms of their challenges and opportunities in School Governance. This study was conducted not only to understand school administrators' challenges but also to uncover their opportunities in School Governance.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to determine the Challenges and Opportunities in School Governance of School Administrators and seeks to answer the following specific problems:

- What are the Challenges of School Administrators of the Division of Cadiz City in School Governance?
- What are the Opportunities for School Administrators of the Division of Cadiz City in School Governance?
- What are the recommendations of School Administrators of the Division of Cadiz City in the challenges experienced in School Governance?

METHODOLOGY

This study focused on the Challenges and Opportunities in School Governance, so it used a Phenomenological Qualitative Research Design.

Qualitative research is a process of naturalistic inquiry that seeks an in-depth understanding of social phenomena within their natural setting. It focuses on the "why" rather than the "what" of social phenomena and relies on the direct experiences of human beings as meaning-making agents in their everyday lives (UTA, 2021). Research to delve into the depths of complexity and processes, where the associated factors have not been established, is a consideration when adopting qualitative methodologies (Tenny et al., 2022).

This study utilized a qualitative research approach with a phenomenological design. Qualitative research is a process of naturalistic inquiry that seeks an in-depth understanding of social phenomena within their natural setting. It focuses on the "why" rather than the "what" of social phenomena and relies on the direct experiences of human beings as meaning-making agents in their everyday lives. (Jeffers, R. 2022). The interview questionnaire was used to collect qualitative data. This design was selected since the primary goal of the study is to identify school administrators' challenges and opportunities in School Governance.

This study's participants were the eleven (11) School Administrators in the Division of Cadiz City. It used the Purpose Sampling technique since it involves examining the entire population (i.e., the total population) with a particular set of characteristics (e.g., specific attributes/traits, experience, knowledge, skills, exposure to an event) (Halleh, 2022). Furthermore, participants of this study have the following qualifications: a Principal II, III, or IV designation, assigned in either medium, big, or macro schools, and more than two years as a school administrator.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

This study aimed to identify Challenges and Opportunities in School Governance. To gather the data, a semi-structured interview questionnaire was used. The questionnaire contained questions and topics about Challenges and Opportunities in School Governance for School Administrators.

The semi-structured interview questionnaire consisted of 5 questions determining the Challenges and Opportunities in School Governance. To gather the necessary data, the researcher used an instrument whose validity and reliability had been established.

This qualitative research investigation of School Administrators' Challenges and Opportunities in School Governance was conducted through face-to-face interviews with each participant. Interviewing is a qualitative research technique that involves "conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program or situation" (BRM, 2020).

According to Demott (2020), Debriefing is an additional part of the interview protocol because you should have credible responses in your role as a researcher. "The interview questions should be conveyed in the everyday language of the interviewees, whereas the researcher questions were typically formulated in a theoretical language." The use of semi-structured interviews, which will provide participants greater latitude and flexibility to develop deeper interactions and the collection of additional data, allowed for the collection of this data.

Reliability and Validity

Validity is whether the number obtained truly reflects what the user intends to measure. It requires reliability. According to Dipboye (2020), validity is not a property of the measure but refers to the truthfulness of the inferences drawn from it.

An instrument is said to be valid when it can measure what it intends to measure. To establish the validity of the instrument, the researcher presented all items and content to the panel of validators and asked the panel of experts to validate the research instrument.

A jury panel made up of 4 professionals in the fields of education and research was given with semi-structured interview questionnaires. The jury panel assessed the instrument based on Lawshe's standards for content validity. The validators rated the items as essential, useful, but not essential, or not necessary. The final instrument only contained items that have received an essential rating from a necessary number of panelists; otherwise, items were eliminated. According to Lawshe (1975) as cited by Genareo (2023), who founded his claim on well-established psychophysical principles, a level of 50% agreement among the panel's experts will guarantee content validity. Lawshe stated CVR (content validity ratio) is a linear transformation of a proportionate degree of agreement on the proportion of panel experts who judged an item vital.

Lawshe's approach to instrument validation was relevant for this study since panels must assess the information in the semi-structured interview questionnaire. The program listed only essential interview questions. Four validators

who were experts in the fields of education and research thoroughly examined the content of the questionnaire item by item using the Lawshe procedure. In the assessment, the validators rated every item essential, thus achieving a content validity ratio (CVR) of 1 for every item and overall items.

The research tools used were undergone a reliability test as they met the criteria mentioned by Nowell et al. (2020) Trustworthiness Theory. In a study, "Trustworthiness" was vital for identifying the study that other researchers are familiar with and understand as legitimate. This study gained credibility by conducting member checking which was one of the methods that can be used to verify the credibility of the study. This was to allow the participants to review the data collected and the researchers' interpretation of the data that the participants value, as they will have the opportunity to validate their statements and fill in the data gaps.

Member-checking tests were conducted in this study because the participants agreed that the results were an analysis and an interpretation of the themes. Dependability is one of the criteria for realizing the study's trustworthiness; it increases the consistency of the findings as a result of the study, which can be achieved when the credibility criterion is met. The opportunity given by the researcher to the participants to view the data and interpret it may result in the inconsistency of the findings, but the consistency in their re-examination and assessment of the result and interpretation of the statements of criteria are consistent (Nowell et al., 2020).

The final criterion for achieving trustworthiness is confirmability applied using the audit trail method. The audit trail is a qualitative strategy for determining the confirmability of research. This was an in-depth approach to illustrate that the outcome is based on the participant's response and not on the researcher's preconceptions and biases, which is also related to this standard of transparent data collection and analysis. In this study, the standard of confirmability was achieved because even though the interviewer's perspective or reason was still obtained, the participants' answers and responses to the interview presented an appropriate process.

Data Analysis

The researcher focused on the method outlined by Braun and Clarke (2021) as it had turn out to be the most commonly adopted method of thematic analysis within the qualitative literature (Clarke & Braun 2021).

Ethical Considerations

Prior to the participation in the study, each subject was required to give written consent. In order to protect participant identification, the names of participants were not used in this study. Names were not mentioned throughout the taped talks since they would be used. Overall, there was a low likelihood of danger, harm, or injury, and every participant was an adult.

The goal of being a researcher was to preserve objectivity. Reviewing on the data was the researcher's duties. To understand the data completely and preserve data integrity, the information/transcripts were evaluated, created, and written.

Participants were urged to consider their own shared experiences and express their comprehension. The norms and beliefs were revealed via the interview questions. During the interview process, participants were given time to take part in open discussions to convey how they regard the modular learning modality. The method of interviewing participants took into account any ethical concerns associated with the study, with the potential danger of disclosing information that would identify specific schools or participants. Using the materials that were transcribed, precautions were put in place to get rid of such factors.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Challenges in School Governance

Limited Resources

Another key challenge underscored by the participants was the limited resources. Participants emphasize that it was a great challenge to how school administrators used the MOOE wisely, but there were instances and situations when resources were limited.

This result supported the study of NASSP, according to a National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP, principals usually deal with budgetary restrictions that affect their capacity for sound decision-making. These include limitations on hiring, pursuing professional growth, and acquiring essential resources (NASSP, 2022).

Additionally, on having limited resources, participants do not shed only on MOOE or financial aspects but as well as in other aspects such as human and material resources.

"The challenges I experienced as a principal in the school that I managed/ handled is in terms of Budget Management, the insufficiency of funds and allocating resources affecting to meet the needs of the school, where Projects, Programs and activities or PARS are affected too in terms of affective implementation and poor support system of external stakeholders the LGU/ Barangay Officials, school could not run alone or as School Principal, effective implementation of Programs of the Department and the over-all performances of the school also depends to the strong support of stakeholders"

A study that was published in the "Journal of Educational Administration" shows that principals' top concern is staffing. Principals frequently struggle to find and keep talented instructors, which had an effect on the standard of instruction and the atmosphere of the school. These difficulties were exacerbated by elements including tight budgets, rivalry with other districts, and shifting demographics (Journal of Educational Administration, 2020).

Balancing Strategies

The responses from the participants collectively highlight the perceived challenges of School Administrators in School Governance. One of these challenges is Balancing Strategies. Participants find it challenging to balance different strategies.

The participants' responses shed light on the different strategies to balance all aspects of school governance. One prominent challenge was strategies that must be balanced by the participants to build a positive culture inside the school. School Administrators find it difficult to balance School Governance, especially building and maintaining the best positive school culture.

"Balancing Administrative and Instructional Supervisory roles. Managing school operations while ensuring learners' education quality can be demanding."

This outcome validated the NASSP research. The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) referenced studies that show principals struggle to develop strong connections and trust among stakeholders in the school community. These connections are essential to establishing a cooperative, encouraging atmosphere that promotes learning and development (NASSP, 2022).

Moreover, participants also shared that they have experienced challenges in balancing strategies in leading and managing all school personnel. Since each of them has their traits, school administrators find it challenging to decide that everyone would agree, from the teachers to the non-teaching personnel.

Research by educational research groups like the Educational Research Service (ERS) highlights how difficult it is to conduct impartial and efficient performance reviews of school staff. To preserve motivation and morale, principals must balance accountability and support, offering opportunities for growth and constructive criticism (Adelabu, 2023).

Meeting Standards

Significant data emerged from the participants also regarding meeting standards. They highlighted that one of the challenges experienced by School Administrators was how to meet various standards, such as the rapid changes in technology.

"Technological Integration- Incorporating technology in the classroom and ensuring staff and pupils are proficient with new tools."

This result supported the different studies. A study published in the Journal of Educational Technology & Society suggests that principals encounter difficulties when attempting to incorporate technology successfully into their teaching methods. According to the Journal of Educational Technology & Society (2020), this entails giving instructors professional development, guaranteeing fair access to technological resources, and coordinating the use of technology with academic objectives.

Moreover, in line with meeting standards, work pressures were added to the challenge experienced by school administrators. School administrators experience varied types of pressures at work. The American Educational Research Association (AERA) has highlighted studies that indicate principals are under pressure to meet performance standards and be held accountable. Meeting academic standards, enhancing student outcomes, and showing a school's efficacy in the face of outside criticism from stakeholders, including parents and district officials, were all part of this (Dunduza, 2024).

Discipline and Behavior Issues

Discipline and Behavior Issues were also significant data that the school administrators highlighted. These were challenges experienced in School Governance.

These were the students' negative behaviors that led to problems inside and outside the school. Children with behavioral issues tend to have problems in school.

"Dealing with Discipline and Behavior Issues. Addressing disciplinary issues and managing student behavior can be a major challenge for principals. He must enforce school policies while supporting and guiding learners to help them make positive choices."

According to studies cited by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), student conduct difficulties have been shown to impact teachers' job satisfaction and morale. Principals face challenges in supporting teachers who may feel overwhelmed or frustrated by disruptive behaviors, which can impact instructional quality and retention (NASSP, 2024).

Another challenge on the part of the School Administrator under Discipline and Behavior Issues was the Demand of Parents in School. According to the data collected, these had the next greatest number of references under this theme. Participants declared that there were a lot of demanding parents who tested their role as school administrators.

"Demanding parents. A big population means responsibility. There are many things that you need to consider when making decisions. You need to have Solomon's Wisdom and treat everyone fairly."

The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) cited studies that showed principals face challenges when parents have divergent expectations for their child's education. It can be difficult to strike a balance between each student's demands, academic requirements, and parental requests; principals must do this tactfully (NAESP, 2021).

Changes in Curriculum

One of the most timely themes, "Changes in Curriculum," is composed of meaningful clusters. The participants provided responses stating the challenges school administrators experienced in school governance.

"Implementing Curriculum Changes – Staying updated with educational standards and integrating new curriculum requirements can be challenging."

Studies have been published in the "Journal of Curriculum Studies," which highlight principals' difficulties when implementing new curricula and coordinating them with academic standards and school objectives. To accommodate students' various needs, it is necessary to maintain coherence across grade levels, subject areas, and instructional techniques (Journal of Curriculum Studies, 2024).

School administrators also find it difficult when there is a lot of learning delivery nowadays. Sometimes, there are sudden shifts in the Learning Delivery modality, mainly if serious situations occur.

"Alternative Delivery Modes- Shifting of classes due to climate change can be challenging."

Studies published in the "Journal of Educational Technology & Society" suggest that when principals switch to various learning modes, they encounter infrastructure and technology-related difficulties. This entails tackling student digital inequalities, guaranteeing fair access to technology resources, and offering staff and instructors technical support (Wang et al., 2024).

Opportunities in School Governance

Experience

Participants mentioned that the experiences they gained as School Administrators in School Governance were their best opportunities. These experiences can help them fulfill their duties and obligations and reach the school's goals and objectives.

Under the experience theme, participants mentioned that the experiences they gained became their Leadership Skills. These skills will govern the school and its components correctly and justly.

"With this, better leadership will follow and implement."

"Leadership Development. Serving as a principal provided an opportunity to develop and hone leadership skills, such as decision-making, strategic planning, and team management."

Studies released by the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) show improved school performance results from principals who consistently hone their leadership abilities. Improved academic results and

general school success were correlated with practical leadership strategies, such as instructional leadership and strategic planning, which created a healthy school atmosphere (NAESP, 2021).

Moreover, school administrators' Fulfillment satisfaction is one of the best experiences they have gained in School Governance. They know that having experience allows them to properly manage the school by providing the best for learners and the school's stakeholders. All of these give fulfillment to school administrators.

"Pride. There is a sense of fulfillment in every accomplished task or work implemented in school."

Research cited by the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) emphasizes that principals derive a sense of purpose and meaning from their roles. Fulfillment comes from leading meaningful initiatives, creating a positive school culture, and fostering a supportive learning environment that promotes student success (Valentine, 2020).

In addition, school administrators were given much experience in different innovations and research in the Department of Education. Participants mentioned how these experiences helped them govern the school appropriately.

"Innovation and Research in education, implementing new programs, technologies, and teaching methods. Gained experiences in budgeting, financial planning, and resources."

According to the Center for Public Education, principals with a deeper understanding of innovations and research are more equipped to support data-driven decision-making. This involves reviewing educational research, interpreting assessment data, and using evidence to inform school improvement measures that align with student needs and educational goals (Levin & Datnow, 2021).

Collaboration

This has one of the most incredible numbers of significant themes by the data collected. Participants have expressed and agreed that one of the opportunities they experienced as school administrators in school governance is Collaboration with the parents, teachers, non-teaching personnel, pupils, and other stakeholders.

Under this theme, participants shared that the school administrators had the opportunity to see unity among all the school community members.

"Network Building. Principals can build a strong professional network within the education sector, connecting other school leaders, policymakers, community members, and stakeholders."

According to the Center for Public Education, Principals who valued cooperation and unity used shared leadership and decision-making procedures. Participating in policy creation, strategic planning, and school improvement activities with educators, parents, and community members encourages consensus-building, transparency, and shared responsibility for educational objectives (Griffiths et al., 2020).

Moreover, not only was there unity among all the people in the school community, but the school administrators also had the opportunity to meet different stakeholders. They helped with the school programs, activities, and projects.

"Meeting the right persons to become partners/ stakeholders of the school, be it private individual, group/ organization. Giving them equal opportunity to implement the PAPs (Programs and Projects) for our school children's common goal/welfare; as the wise saying/quote goes, "It takes a community or village to educate a child."

The American Association of School Administrators (AASA) underscores the importance of principals meeting stakeholders to facilitate effective problem-solving and decision-making. Principals who seek input from diverse stakeholders bring varied perspectives to discussions, identify innovative solutions, and address challenges comprehensively, leading to sustainable improvements in school operations and student outcomes (Valentine, 2020).

Meaningful Impact

This is one of the most relevant themes determined by the data collected. As participants mentioned, one of the opportunities experienced by school administrators was seeing them have a tremendous and meaningful impact on the lives of the pupils, teachers, non-teaching personnel, and stakeholders.

"Opportunities to help my children and parent in school"

Principals prioritizing professional development for teachers and creating collaboration opportunities have positively impacted teaching practices and student learning outcomes (Sims et al., 2023).

Salary

The data collected showed that salary was one of the relevant themes. As participants mentioned, one of the opportunities experienced by school administrators was the salary of the school administrator. "Getting a higher salary"

Salary and compensation packages contribute significantly to principal job satisfaction. According to a study, principals who perceive their salaries as fair and commensurate with their responsibilities tend to report higher job satisfaction (Fulmer et al., 2023).

Opportunities in School Governance

Shared Responsibility

Participants mentioned the shared responsibility of the school head, teachers, parents, students, and stakeholders, and this was the best recommendation to aid and ease challenges in school governance. In everyday operations, shared responsibility helps divide the workload and contributes a variety of viewpoints and areas of expertise to problem-solving. It increases efficiency, encourages collaboration, and permits more thoughtful decision-making, all of which contribute to improving the efficacy of school administration.

"Encouraged parents and school officers to represent the school and provide a strong link to network the reels of the school. Constant communication or follow-up with the LGU or Barangay Officials. Intensity is the active participation or involvement of the LGU through shared governance."

This result supported Gordon's study (2020). The research highlighted that shared governance structures, which involve teachers, parents, and stakeholders in decision-making processes, positively affect teacher morale and job satisfaction. Teachers who feel more involved in governance are often more motivated and engaged, which can translate into better classroom performance.

Manage and Lead

Participants mentioned that how the school head manages and leads the school lessens challenges in school governance. Effective management and leadership skills of the principal are essential for school governance. Strong leadership fosters a positive school culture, supports staff and students, and ensures a clear vision and direction. Good principals make wise judgments, foster teamwork, and assign responsibilities—all of which improve governance and overall performance in the school.

"Be able to manage or lead the school in terms of School Governance and other school activities such as SBM Wins, Brigada Eskwela, GSP/ BSP Activities, Teacher's Day Celebration, Managing School Canteen, Managing Stakeholders participation and Organization of PTA Officers."

This result supported the study of Hallifer (2021), Which indicated that principals who excel in leadership and management significantly improve school effectiveness. Their ability to manage resources, support staff, and lead instructional improvement directly influences governance outcomes.

Resourcing

Participants mentioned how the school head's resourcing abilities lessen challenges in school governance. Effective school governance depends on a principal's ability to allocate resources, guaranteeing that the institution has the tools, resources, and personnel to accomplish its objectives. By managing resources effectively, a principal can increase teacher development, meet student needs, and improve educational programs. These actions enhance overall school performance and governance.

"...resourcing in school for income generating Projects through establishing support to parents of school children and teachers to tap or look for possible partners to help the effective implementation of PAPs (Programs and Projects)..."

This result supported the study of Brinson (2021), Which examined how principals' skills in resource allocation—such as budgeting, staffing, and procuring materials—directly influence school performance. Effective resource management allowed schools to support instructional programs and meet the needs of both teachers and students, leading to improved governance and educational outcomes.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

It was found that School Administrators experienced challenges related to Limited Resources, such as financial and human resources. Another challenge for them was Balancing Strategies related to Building a Positive Culture and Leading Personnel inside the school.

Meeting Different Standards was also one of the challenges that School Administrators experienced. They felt pressure and the sudden improvement of technology used in the department. Another challenge for them was the Discipline and Behavior Issues of the students and the demanding parents.

It was also found that the curriculum changes challenged the school administrators, especially the emergence of different Learning Modes. School Administrators need to be flexible with this.

It was discovered that the Opportunities given to the school administrators in School Governance were a ton of Experiences. They felt fulfilled, and they learned leadership skills from different trainings and seminars, as well as exposure to different Innovations and Research.

It was found that the opportunities gained by the school administrators are seen as having a meaningful impact on the learners, parents, teachers, and other significant people in the school and community.

It was also discovered that the school administrators' opportunities included a good salary, which could help them and their families.

Lastly, the school head made recommendations, which involved sharing responsibility with the parents, teachers, students, and stakeholders; their ability to manage the school and their skill in resourcing can be of great help. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were suggested:

To the Division Chief on School Governance. Provide well-planned training and seminars that help school administrators face challenges in School Governance and consider additional opportunities. This will help school administrators gain a passion for school governance.

To School Administrators. Understand their challenges and opportunities in school governance, as this will also give them a heads-up. Provide more specific antidotes to the emerging challenges, such as the behavior of parents and students.

To Teachers. Being aware of the challenges and opportunities school administrators face in school governance will help them align those experiences with their roles in school. They can also help school administrators by collaborating more to attain the school's goals and objectives.

To Parents. Explain the role of school administrators and give parents a heads-up on the aid they extend to their children. They may give their 100% support and collaboration in all the school's programs, activities, and projects.

To Future Researchers. This study's findings may provide the basis for further research. This may contribute to opportunities and development in the field of research.

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