



Challenges and Experiences of School Heads and Teachers in Educational Leadership A Mixed Method

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Abstract

This qualitative study explores the challenges and experiences faced by school heads and teachers in the realm of educational leadership. The research investigates the intricate dynamics of managing schools, fostering a positive learning environment, and overcoming obstacles encountered in the performance and acquisition of competencies. The study comprises in-depth interviews with four school heads and twelve teachers, shedding light on the multifaceted aspects of their roles in shaping the future of learners. Four prominent themes emerge from the school heads' challenges, encompassing time constraints, financial insufficiency, limited stakeholder support, and academic-related odds. These leaders grapple with the intricate balance between administrative responsibilities, resource allocation, and innovative initiatives to enhance student outcomes. Financial constraints, coupled with the need for stakeholder collaboration, underscore the importance of strategic planning and effective resource management. Teachers, too, encounter an array of challenges, with a particular focus on addressing diverse learning needs and managing time effectively. Themes such as the presence of learners with learning disabilities, time constraints, scarcity of learning resources, and learning gaps due to the pandemic showcase the intricate demands placed on educators. The study emphasizes the significance of specialized knowledge, collaboration, and efficient time management to meet the diverse needs of students and create an inclusive learning environment. The findings underscore the need for targeted professional development programs for both school heads and teachers to enhance their competencies. Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of fostering strong relationships with stakeholders, including parents, to create a supportive educational ecosystem. The challenges identified provide insights for educational policymakers and institutions to develop strategies that promote effective leadership, resource management, and inclusive teaching practices. This study contributes valuable insights into the challenges faced by educational leaders and teachers, offering a foundation for further research and the development of initiatives aimed at improving educational practices and outcomes.

Keywords: School Heads, Teachers, Educational Leadership, Challenges

Introduction

School leaders and teachers play an important part in any educational system since they are the prime movers of educational institutions' goals and objectives (Mulford, 2003). The interest of school leaders and teachers stems from their duty and immediate contribution to realizing the educational system's vision. They have direct participation in the daily venture of the educational system puts them on the pedestal in terms of significance in their role in education.

Numerous researchers in the educational field have shown interest in studying the performance qualities and core competency performance of school leaders and teachers in public elementary schools (Puruwita, et al., 2022). They praised and acknowledge the significance of linking effective leadership with classroom management performance. Moreover, studies focused on public schools are deemed crucial as it shed light on the unique challenges faced by educators.

On the other hand, some other researchers have pointed out certain limitations (Kilag, et al., 2023). They need for a more extended data collection process to ensure the study's validity. Additional repeated observations to investigate the development and progression of professional qualities and core competency performance over time could offer deeper understanding of dynamics at play. With these considerations, the research is acknowledged as an essential contribution towards advancing the understanding of the intricate relationship between school leadership, teacher competence overall education outcomes in public schools.

As Zhang and Zhang (2008) highlight three key concepts in the university internal stakeholders' relationship: the university development depends on internal support, building a stroing university brand requires meeting stakeholders needs and expectatios, stakeholder's satisfaction and recognition are vital for active participation and support in promotueng university development. Despite the substantial body of research on school leadership and teachers' competencies, a notable gap exists concerning the application of mixed method research approach to investigate the qualities and competency performance of school heads and teachers in public schools. To the best of our knowledge, there have been no previous studies employing a sequential explanatory mixed method research design to address this specific aspect comprehensively.



Based on the Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001 (RA 9155), the Department of Education (DepEd) believes that the shared responsibility of school heads, teachers, parents, learners, Local Government Units (LGUs), and the community. The above mentioned internal and external stakeholders are essential elements in the provision of accessible and quality basic education that contains a healthy place for the school children to stay. This place called school, a welcoming learning environment. Effective School -Based Management (SBM) inspires internal and external stakeholders to continuously engage teachers and learners success. This Primary reason why school leaders must strengthen shared responsibility with them to give appropriate interventions and give strategic directions to the school community (Day, et al., 2016). Moreover, they also develop and implement school improvement plan that addresses to the identified priority needs align to low performance indicator. In addition, school appraisal system, functional classroom, other task and functions to all other personnel.

Therefore, school heads as the primary person in internal stakeholders play a vital role in achieving educational objectives in a school. The principal should create an environment conducive for teachers, students, and non-teaching staff through his leadership styles, sound rapport, and channels of communication. If the school environment is not conducive, it may cause stress to the principals.

As observed by the researcher who has been in a public school in the Schools Division of Baybay City for 17 years of experience, school leaders demonstrate a vision for enhancing educational quality and learning outcomes while effectively engaging on going tasks. Based on 2020-2021 records from the Human Resource Personnel Section shows that only 26% or 18 school leaders attained an outstanding rating of their core competencies out of 69 elementary school heads based on the Office Performance Commitment Review Form (OPCRF) while 11.60% or 76 of the teachers attained outstanding rating of their Individual Performance Commitment Review Form (IPCRF) out of 655 elementary teacher in the Division.

It is evident that there is a need for these leaders who possess a vision to improve the schools learning environment within a well-functioning school-based management (SBM) system (Kilag, et al., 2023). This SBM system involves setting school direction concerning students, teacher's development and allocation of materials and financial resources. Despite existing research in educational leadership and teacher's competence a comprehensive model that significantly address the qualities and competencies required by school leaders and teachers in public schools remains lacking.

The primary aim of this study is to comprehensively examine and analyze the challenges faced by both school heads and teachers in the educational landscape. By investigating themes such as time constraints, financial insufficiency, limited stakeholder support, academic-related odds, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the research seeks to provide valuable insights into the intricate dynamics of school leadership and teaching. Through interviews with school heads and teachers, the study aims to shed light on the nuanced experiences of these educational professionals, offering a deeper understanding of the obstacles they encounter in their roles. Ultimately, the research aspires to contribute to the enhancement of educational practices by identifying key areas for improvement and guiding the development of targeted interventions and support mechanisms.

Methodology

The study's chosen methodology is supported in this chapter. It explains the choices made for testing the relationships in the conceptual model, including the analytical approach, sampling, procedure, and measures. This is being outlined, along with design, environments, participants, sampling technique, data-gathering procedure, and ethical considerations.

Design

This study employed a sequential explanatory mixed method. The explanatory sequential design emphasizes the quantitative phase, followed by the qualitative phase (Creswell, 2011). The purpose of the second qualitative phase is often to explain the results discovered in the first quantitative phase, and sometimes to explain outliers that are not entirely consistent with the collected data. Since the analysis of qualitative data is used to explain the quantitative phase's results, thus the term 'explanatory'. Researchers often choose this design if they are quantitatively oriented and comfortable doing research in this manner.

For the quantitative research the descriptive correlational design was used. Descriptive research is a type of research that is used to describe the characteristics of a population. It collects data that are used to answer a wide range of what, when, and how questions pertaining to a particular population or group. Descriptive research intends to present a population and any of the given situations or phenomenon that precisely and methodically represents. Accurate and systematic data drives to answer the main and sub problem on what, where, when and how questions.

In this study, professional qualities and core competencies of school heads and teachers are described. In contrast, data from descriptive studies can be used to examine the relationships (correlation) any of the variables. Although, correlational analysis do not provide evidence of causality, they can aid in identifying variables that may

play a consequential role in explaining a situation, clarifying factors that play a crucial role and those which did not. In this study the professional qualities of the teachers and school heads are correlated with their competencies. Therefore, descriptive research is often employed to articulate hypothesis that necessitate testing using more precise design.

For the qualitative research, the descriptive qualitative design was applied. According to Kumar, 2011, —a descriptive qualitative design which the attention draws the description, rather analyzing relationships or association. It is —classified as a descriptive study. A descriptive study intends to methodically portray a condition, problem, observation, services or program. It desires to provide detailed information about various aspects, such as living conditions of a community, or to draw opinion and attitudes towards a particular issue.

Environment

This study was conducted in all SDO Baybay City elementary schools, Leyte comprising 10 Districts as shown in Table 1. The chosen public schools district-in charge (DIC)/principal-in charge (PIC) or school heads and teachers were considered as the participants of the study. Not all the districts are categorized as small, medium, and large.

Table 1
Distribution of Schools per District

District	Number of Schools	School Heads	Teachers
Baybay 1	10	10	131
Baybay 2	9	9	77
Baybay 3	3	3	36
Baybay 4	2	2	13
Baybay 5	6	6	51
Baybay 6	5	5	56
Baybay 7	7	7	92
Baybay 8	5	5	66
Baybay 9	12	12	56
Baybay 10	10	10	77
Total	69	69	655

The distribution per district was based on a strategic location and on the number of teachers or personnel in a district that would be equal or somewhat the same as other districts (Please sees Appendix for the schools). The school category was based on DepEd Memo #062s.2022 dated August 1, 2022, on Brigada Eskwela Implementing

Guidelines School Category

There were a total of 69 schools involved in the study. Of the 69 schools, three were integrated schools, two were large or mega schools, 11 were medium schools and the rest were considered small schools. Hence, the total number of school heads was equal to the schools, and there was a total of 655 teachers in the ten districts. The number of students of the ten districts is fourteen thousand seven hundred fifty-eight (14,728) with Baybay 1 Central School is the highest enrolment of one thousand seven hundred nineteen (1,719) and Lintaon Elementary School with the least number of students a total of forty-three.

Participants

The participants of the study included school heads and teachers from the 69 elementary schools of Baybay City Division.

School Heads. The participants are very important in this study. All the 69 school heads of Baybay School Division are participants of the study. Complete enumeration was done; hence, no sampling method was used. Since all were considered as participants, no selection criteria were used these school heads are either principals, head teachers or school-in charge of their schools.

Teachers. From each of the 69 schools, at least three teachers were selected as participants. The purposive sampling technique was used in the selection of the teachers. Purposive sampling refers to a group of non-probability sampling techniques in which units are selected because they have characteristics that the researcher needs as a sample Selection of the teacher participants was based on the following inclusion criteria: 1) they have been in the present school with the school head for at least three years, 2) they are currently teaching this school year, 3) they are grade leaders or master teachers, and 4) they are willing to participate in the study. However, in



the final data gathering only 193 teachers (instead of 207) were considered since 10 questionnaires were not retrieved and 4 questionnaires were rejected due to lack of information.

Instrument

The researcher used the standardized survey questionnaires which serve as the main instrument of data collection which includes scoring and interpretation. For the school heads. Qualities of the school heads were measured using a standardized tool in conformity with DepEd Order No. 32, series 2010. Only three dimensions were adapted as Instructional Leadership, Fiscal Management and Linkages and Networking.

The second instrument is the Office Performance Commitment Review Form (OPCRF) adapted from DepEd (2015) which is used to measure the competencies of the school heads. This is a public statement of professional accountability for school heads to reflect on and assess their own practice as they aspire for and pursue professional development. School heads performance as respondents will be gauged based on the major functional objectives in Office Performance Commitment Review Form (OPCRF) which includes the competencies a school head must possess. First, leading strategically second, managing school operations and resources third, focusing on teaching and learning fourth, developing self and others, and lastly, building connections.

Data Gathering

Procedure In data collection, the researcher followed a step- step procedure. The three phases are pre-data gathering, actual data gathering, and post-data gathering. Every phase is discussed thoroughly.

Pre-data Gathering.

First, the researcher sought the approval of the graduate school Dean to conduct the study. The researcher incorporated the suggestions of the panel members before submitting the requirements for the Institutional Review Board. The manuscript was enhanced by incorporating all the suggestions of the review board. Data gathering commenced when the notice to proceed (NTP) certificate was issued by IRB.

Actual Data Gathering.

With the acquisition of the NTP, the researcher conducted a document review in the respective 10 Districts of SDO Baybay City, Leyte wherein existing personnel data information and performance rating results will be reviewed and analyzed to support or strengthen data from other data collection methods.

Quantitative Data.

After this, an actual distribution or administration of the questionnaires to 69 public elementary schools where school heads and teachers or master teachers were involved. This happened right after the approval of the letter request sent by the researcher to the School Division Superintendent (SDS) to conduct a study in the mentioned 69 elementary public schools in SDO Baybay City, Leyte.

Qualitative Data.

In addition, the researcher also developed an interview schedule as the interview process was also conducted to help the researcher understand more about the concepts of congruence and discrepancies in the assessment of the qualities and core competencies of school leaders and teachers in the school. During the conduct of the study, the researcher distributes the data using the standardized questionnaire and will inform the school heads and teachers when to collect or gather the accomplished form including the result from the interviews from different perspectives, views, and opinions among superiors, subordinates, and peers where teachers, and school heads as part of the internal stakeholders.

Post Data Gathering.

The researcher collected all the distributed questionnaires tallied, analyzed, and discussed the results as a basis to propose a congruence evaluation model. The data collected will be stored safely for a year or as soon as the researcher completed the study or until the study will be published in an accredited journal. After that, the data will be disposed of properly.

Data Analysis

After the thorough data gathering and tallying of the data the researcher analyzed the data gathered to answer the identified problems. To determine the profile of the participants, the frequency distribution and percentage was applied. The qualities and competencies of the school heads and teachers are presented in weighted means with standard deviations with the equivalent adjectival descriptions. The correlation between the qualities and competencies was determined using the Pearson r coefficient of correlation.

For the qualitative research thematic analysis was used. Thematic analysis is a method of analyzing qualitative data. It is usually applied to a set of texts, such as an interview or transcripts. The researcher closely examines the data to identify common themes – topics, ideas, and patterns of meaning that come up repeatedly. Thematic analysis is a flexible method that can be adapted to many different kinds of research following the steps:

Step 1: Familiarization. Getting to know our data data is the first step in this method. It is the primary to validate the reliability of data that the researcher collected before starting to analyze it.

Step 2: Coding. Coding means highlighting sections of our text – usually phrases or sentences – and coming up with shorthand labels or “codes” to describe their content.

Step 3: Generating themes. Look over the created codes and, identify patterns among them, and start coming up with themes. Themes are generally broader than codes. Most of the time, you'll combine several codes into a single theme.

Step 4: Reviewing themes: Now we have to make sure that our themes are useful and accurate representations of the data. Here, we return to the data set and compare our themes against it. Are we missing anything? Are these themes really present in the data? What can we change to make our themes work better?

Step 5: Defining and naming themes: Now that you have a final list of themes, it's time to name and define each of them. Defining themes involves formulating exactly what we mean by each theme and figuring out how it helps us understand the data.

Step 6: Writing up: Finally, we'll write up our analysis of the data. Like all academic texts, writing up a thematic analysis requires an introduction to establish our research question, aims and approach

Ethical Considerations:

The study adhered to robust ethical standards, ensuring the protection of participants' rights, privacy, and well-being. Prior to commencing the research, the researcher obtained informed consent and secured authorization from the school administration at each participant level. The participants, including District-In-Charge, Principal-In-Charge, School Heads, Teachers, or Master Teachers, were provided with detailed information through informed consent forms. This information covered their roles, the study's goals, the type of data involved, procedures, commitments, participant selection process, potential benefits, associated risks, confidentiality assurances, the voluntary nature of consent, and researcher details.

In the planning phase, the researcher considered ethical requirements, prioritizing the protection of participants' human rights. The study focused on personal experiences of school heads in strategic leadership, school operations management, teaching and learning, self-development, and building connections.

The ethical considerations extended to the consent process, emphasizing the voluntary nature of participation. Participants were given the freedom to withdraw at any point during the research, ensuring respect for their rights and autonomy. Consent information was presented both orally and in writing, with an emphasis on transparency and opportunities for participants to seek clarification. Confidentiality measures were implemented, ensuring anonymity by coding and analyzing data without linking it to participants' identifying information. A certificate of confidentiality was obtained to prevent forced disclosure of sensitive information in various situations.

Findings and Discussion

Correlation of Professional Qualities and Core Competency Performance of School Heads and Teachers

It was hypothesized that the school heads and teachers' professional qualities are significantly correlated to their core competency performance. To test this hypothesis, the Pearson r correlation was used, Table 1 presents the correlation analysis results.

Table 1 Correlation of Professional Qualities and Core Competency Performance of Teachers and School Heads

Pair of Variables	Computed r	Value p -value	Decision	Remarks
Teachers Professional Qualities and Core Competency Performance	0.088	0.266	Fail to reject H_0	Not significant correlation
School Heads Professional Qualities and Core Competency Performance	0.311	0.015	Reject H_0	Significant Correlation

Note. Significant @ $\alpha < 0.05$

For the Teachers. The table shows that the qualities and competencies of the teachers were not correlated with a p -value of 0.266. . The lack of a significant correlation between qualities and competencies for teachers suggests that in this study, these specific qualities (classroom management, advisory skills, facilitation of learning, and extension work) may not have a direct influence on their job performance.



It was observed that majority of the teachers (163 out of 193) have higher ratings in their qualities than in their competencies and those with higher ratings in qualities have lower ratings in competencies and vice versa. These findings may imply that the higher ratings in qualities suggest that there is a recognition and emphasis on personal attributes and characteristics that are desirable in teachers and school heads. These qualities may include dedication, empathy, communication skills, and professionalism. The focus on qualities might reflect an understanding that certain personal attributes contribute to effective teaching and leadership. The lower ratings in competencies compared to qualities indicate a potential gap between the desired qualities and the actual skills and abilities of teachers and school heads. This suggests a need for professional development and training programs to enhance their competencies and bridge the gap between desired qualities and actual performance.

The emphasis on qualities highlights the significance of a holistic evaluation approach that considers both personal attributes and professional competencies. It recognizes that effective teaching are influenced by a combination of qualities and skills. Therefore, evaluation processes should encompass a comprehensive assessment of teachers' and school heads' qualities, as well as their competencies, to gain a complete understanding of their performance. The lower ratings in competencies present an opportunity for growth and improvement. Teachers can engage in targeted professional development activities to enhance their skills, knowledge, and competencies. This can contribute to their overall effectiveness in the classroom.

The evaluation results can serve as a guide for aligning professional development programs with the identified competencies that require improvement. By focusing on enhancing specific skills and knowledge areas, teachers can further strengthen their overall performance and effectiveness. The evaluation results can foster a collaborative environment where teachers work together to enhance their competencies. Peer-to-peer support, mentoring programs, and collaborative learning opportunities can be established to share best practices and collectively improve the skills and competencies of the education professionals.

For School Heads. The professional qualities of the school heads were significantly correlated with their core competency performance. The null hypothesis of no correlation was rejected based on the p-value which is less than .05 ($p\text{-value}=.015$). This means that school heads who exhibited these qualities were more likely to possess certain competencies in their job performance.. It seems that school heads who were rated higher in job performance tended to display the mentioned qualities, such as being effective mentors, skilled in financial management, and active in extension work.

The significant correlation between qualities and competencies for school heads indicates that certain personal attributes or characteristics positively influenced their job performance. For

instance, being a good mentor may enhance their ability to lead and guide their staff effectively, leading to higher job performance ratings. Similarly, being competent in budget management and active in extension work may contribute to overall effective school management and decision making.

In totality, ratings in qualities correlated their ratings in competencies suggest the importance of considering both personal attributes and professional skills in evaluating the performance of school heads. It highlights the need for targeted professional development and support to bridge the gap between desired qualities and actual competencies, enabling continuous growth and improvement in their roles as leaders.

EXPERIENCES OF SCHOOL HEADS AND TEACHERS

School heads and teachers play a vital role in shaping the future of learners, but their journey is not without challenges. As educational leaders school heads face the responsibility of creating a conducive learning environment, managing staff, and ensuring the smooth functioning of the institution. They often grapple with budget constraints, changing educational policies, and the ever-evolving needs of learners' engagements. Similarly, the teachers face their own set of challenges, including maintaining learners' engagement, addressing diverse learning styles, managing large class sizes, and balancing administrative tasks with instructional responsibilities. With these various challenges of school heads and teachers, they strive to overcome these and pave the way for interventions for effective education and learners' success.

Participants:

There were 4 school heads and 12 teachers who were interviewed about the challenges they encountered in performing and acquiring their competencies. These participants are described based on their responses. They willingly submitted themselves for an interview. Table 16 presents the 16 participants who were interviewed:

The Themes

The following are the nine themes; time constraints, financial insufficiency, limited stakeholders support, academic related odds, presence of learners with learning difficulties, time constraints or mismanagement of time, scarcity of learning resources, learning gap or learning loss due to pandemic and lack of parental engagement. These was



extracted from the responses of the school heads and teachers about the challenges they encountered during the pandemic. Blended learning was implemented in the public schools and parents were given the task to help their children learn through the modules. Other schools had a full swing of face to face instruction after the 2 yrs modular distance learning.

School Heads' Challenges

As mentioned in the previous discussion, school leaders or school heads play a critical role in educational system, tasked in challenging responsibility in managing schools and leading the staff effectively. School leaders often encountered ethical delimmias while balancing between evident-based practices to upholding the rights and welfare of all that is under his battoon. The researcher closely examines the data to identify common themes, topics, ideas, and patterns of meaning that come up repeatedly. These themes involve formulating exactly what we mean figuring out how it helps us understand the data.

Theme 1 Time Constraints

This poses a significant challenge to school leaders as they juggle multiple responsibility within limited hours. Balancing administrative task, staff management, student outcomes, long-term planning for school improvement and impacting their ability to foster positive school environment for learning.

Theme 2 Financial Insufficiency

This creates a major obstacle to school leaders which hindered their ability to provide resources, school mainteanmce and other operations, educational materials that necessary for the school operations. This challenge limits the opportunities to school staff and hampers the overall academic and extracurricular programs. Finding creative solutions to maximize available resources and securing additional funding become crucial tasks for school leaders in overcoming financial constraints.

Theme 3 Limited Stakeholders' Support

This challenge can hamper the efforts of the school leaders to innovate initiaves to improve student outcomes and create a positive learning environment. Limited support presents a significant challenge as they may not have access to sufficient resources, personnel, or external assistance to address the diverse needs of their educational community.

Theme 4 Academic Related Odds

Academic-related oddities made the school leaders difficult to understand as they encounter unusual situations that deviate from norms of educational setting. These uncommon students' behavior, unexplained academic performance, fluctuating indicators and atypical challenges in the new normal educational setting.

Teachers' Challenges

Teachers faced a multitude of challenges inside and outside the four corners on their classrooms. These encompasses the various aspects of theior roles as shaping the minds of the next generations but also beating the demands of the educational system. Despite their challenges their unwavering dedicatrion and passion for education play a pivotal role in shaping the future of our learners and molding them to be better citizens of our country.

Theme 1 Presence of Learners with Learning Disabilities

Teachers faced challenges of accommodating learners with disabilities in inclusive classrooms. They need specialized knowledge and collaboration with support staff to create an environment caters to diverse needs, providing equal educational opportunities for all learners in the different walks of life.

Theme 2 Time Constraints

Same way with the school heads, teachers also had this challenge. They were more affected with time constraints. They need to prepare daily lesson plan, teach the assigned subjects, assess students, and handle classroom and record management. Finding enough time for each task and balancing their workload can be difficult, affecting their effectiveness as educators. Efficient time management is essential for teachers to overcome this challenge and provide a quality learning experience for their students.

Theme 3 Scarcity of Learning Resources



The scarcity of learning resources tagged as one of the challenges of the teachers. Limited access to textbooks, educational materials, technology, and other essential resources can hinder the teaching and learning process.

Theme 4 Learning Gap or Learning Loss

Learning gap or learning loss refers to the disparity or regression in academic progress that occurs when students do not achieve the expected level of learning over a specific period. It can arise due to various factors such as extended school closures, disruptions in regular instruction, or limited access to educational resources

Theme 5 Lack of Parents' Engagement

Teachers face difficulty in establishing a strong support system without active involvement from parents. The lack of parental engagement is a significant challenge for educators as it can affect students' academic performance and well-being.

Below are the experiences of school leaders and teachers based on their utterances:

School Heads' Challenges

As cited in RA 9155, the school head, who may be assisted by an assistant school head, shall be both instructional leader and administrative manager. In performing the said task, the school heads meet challenges and adversities. In order to specify those challenges, the researcher transcribed and coded the utterances from the in-depth interview of the school heads and came up with themes. Presented below are the themes supported by the utterances of the school heads.

Theme 1: Time Constraint

Time is gold. As the saying goes, time was very limited during the pandemic when things should be done online. Giving instructions online to the staff was taxing and time-consuming, answering e-mails and phone calls also can take much of the time. Based on the DepEd Order, public teachers must render service for at least six hours a day and school heads must be earlier to report to school since one of their responsibilities is to supervise school activities and other school concerns (Uy, et al., 2023). This may sound so relaxing, however the case of our participants here is totally reversed, as they said:

"First nga challenge ma'am, is kanang hectic ang time gani, especially during the submission of reports....So, what are we doing now is maximizing our time, during our synchronized reading time in the afternoon, 4-5....Monday to Friday, I wake up early, prepare myself for work, so, from flag raising ceremony naa nako. (The first challenge ma'am is the hectic time, especially during the submission of reports...So, what we do now is to maximize our time, where during synchronized reading time in the afternoon, from 4:00-5:00.) .From Monday to Friday, I wake up early and prepare myself for work; so, during the flag raising ceremony, I am already in school).|| (SH 1, lines 2,8,14)

"I am also thankful despite the hectic schedule, here and out, ma'am Malou naay bisita, okay, come in come out. I am also so grateful that the teacher in Baybay I Central School is so cooperative in terms of the delegation of work because they know already what to do (I am also thankful that despite the hectic schedule, here and out, —Ma'am Malou we have visitors|| —Okay come in, come out. I am also so grateful that the teachers in Baybay 1 Central School are so cooperative in terms of the delegation of work because they already know what to do.)|| (SH 2, lines 97-98)

As revealed in the utterances of the school heads, there is not enough time to complete and achieve what is needed to be done in school. This implies that as a school head, you should have proper management skills to be prompt in submitting reports and other things that need to be done. By mastering the art of time management, school heads can unlock their potential, enhance their efficiency and create a balanced and fulfilling life. According to Narlock (2018), effective time management leads to effective leadership.

Theme 2: Financial Insufficiency

According to Fink and Resnick (2013), school heads are accountable for management functions such as scheduling, reporting, managing relations with parents and the community, and dealing with the numerous crises and unique circumstances, particularly financial ones, that are inevitable in schools. In the Philippines, the government already appropriated a budget for the expenses of school operations through the creation of DO 13 of the Department of Education on Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) but still the school heads consider their finances as a primary challenge in the public schools. Hereunder are the support utterances:

"Then kanang financial, we cannot do well if we do not have enough fund for that project...Especially our MOOE nga daghan kaayo mi diri-a ma'am, daghan ug needs ang teachers, so, mag priority lang gyud mi. (Then financial,



we cannot do well if we don't have enough funds to use for the project.... Especially, in our MOOE that we are so many, where teachers have a lot of needs so, we prioritize.)|| (SH 1, line 3, 38)

"For the school finances ma'am, I admit we are struggling. As a very small school, we have a very limited MOOE funding for 60 thousand only for the month. And given all the overhead expenses, from electricity to supplies. But what we did is, again prioritization of the purchases. (For the school finances ma'am, I admit we are struggling. As a very small school, we have a very limited MOOE funding for 60 thousand pesos only for the month. And given all the overhead expenses, from the electricity down to the supplies. But what we did is, again, prioritize the purchases.)|| (SH 3, lines 196-199)

"First is the school fund ma'am because it cannot suffice the need of the school, for the school year because especially the school supplies and the school repairs—the classrooms.., With all honesty, mangutang ra gayud mi, especially school supplies, kanang periodical test na gani ma'am. Though I requested the teachers to have a strategy in handling the test papers, kanang mag share nalang unta and then utilize napud for the next school year kay lain lain mana evey grading period. (First, is the school fund ma'am because it cannot suffice the needs of the school, especially the school supplies and the school repairs—the classrooms.... With all honesty, we do loans, especially for the school supplies during periodical test ma'am. Tough I requested the teachers to have a strategy in handling the test papers, like having the learners share them and use it again in the next it's different each grading period.)|| (SH 4, line 232)

The said predicament in these public schools implies that school heads should carefully plan as to how she will prioritize and do something on the needs of the school. Being the leader of the school, she is accountable and responsible in budgeting and planning the finances and how it should be spent wisely.

Theme 3: Limited Stakeholders' Support

Active participation of the parents, peers and students has a very big impact in school, especially when it comes to funding and problems with their child. It is a must to notify the parents and the school if ever the teacher will notice that there is something wrong with her student. In addition, the participant stated that there were times that she needed to borrow bond papers from her peers since there is only a limit of funds given by the DepEd for their materials to the point that they will need to use their own money and lends money from their friends. The parents must but are not compulsory in attending the parent-teacher conference to be able to know the problems inside the classroom and feedback from the teacher to their child's behavior or progress. Lastly, the participants also stated during the interview that having a supportive parent and teacher gives a brighter and good impact to the school and classroom. Hereunder are the utterances that support the said theme:

"For example, our school projects, improvement in the school, repair of classrooms, and our new exits and entrances in our school. Then mangayo ug aide sa stakeholders, especially our barangays unya naa sad koy gi hire kroon nga mag bantay sa mga bata didto inig tabok sa may eskina. (For example, our projects, improvement in the school, repair of classrooms, including our new exits and entrance in our school. Then we ask aide from the stakeholders, especially our barangays because I hired someone who will guide and help the learners in crossing the highway.)|| (SH 1, lines 16 and 17)

The scenario cited implies that school heads and the school itself should build strong linkages to the stakeholders so that these partners can also provide services and goods that are needed by the school.

Theme 4: Academic Related Odds

School heads are also considered the instructional leaders of the school. The focus here is on the delivery of instruction as stipulated in the curriculum. However, the school face challenges every day related to this matter. Below are the utterances that support the said theme:

"Then the learners, we have presence of non-numerates and non-readers, and we should plan all the interventions, we help them. Para matulungan natin sila, kasi nahihirapan sa pandemic, maybe, for 2 years, they do not know how to read. (Then the learners, where we have learners who are non-numerates and non-readers thus, we plan all the interventions to help them. So that we can help them because they are struggling due to the pandemic, maybe for 2 years, that's why they don't know how to read.)|| (SH 1, lines 4-5)

"Sometime if there are lots of seminars and activities, ah, there are days nga the instruction observation is left behind, to be honest. But in the later part, I had to compensate for it.... To be honest, naa man gyud na siya, in an organization naa gyud na siya, and in that situation you will grow. Kay kung wala na siya, your organization is not functioning or working any longer. That's what I learned during my masteral, kung ang imong organization kuno walay away, not away nga patay or physical, kana ragung conversation lang (Sometimes, if there are a lot of seminars and activities, there were days that the instruction observation is left behind, just to be honest. But in the later part, I had to compensate it. To be honest, there is like that, in an organization there is always like that, and



in that kind of situation you grow Because if there is no like that, your organization is not functioning or working any longer. That's what I learned during my masteral, when there is no conflict in your organization, not those conflict that is criminal or physical but those that are conversational.)|| (Sh 2, line 102 and 103)

" First, my struggle with handling a multi-grade school, which is not that easy comparing to the mono-grade in the sense that we have a different program and curriculum to follow. Because multi-grade classes are not implementing the same, the same as what the teachers are doing in the mono-grade classes. But by the help of my experience as a multi-grade teacher way back when I was first assigned to a multigrade school when I was hired in 2013. (First, my struggle with handling a multigrade school, which is not that easy compared to the mono-grade in the sense that we have a different program and curriculum to follow. Because multi-grade classes are not implementing the same, exactly the same as what the teachers are doing in the mono-grade classes. But by the help of my experience, as a multi-grade teacher way back when I was first assigned in a multi-grade school when I was hired in 2013.)|| (SH 3, lines 175-177)

As revealed in the above scenario, school heads must be knowledgeable and skillful enough to address the said challenges. This implies that seminars and training related to leadership and other academic development must be done in the school to equip the school heads and teachers with enough competencies and skills to address the problems. By recognizing and addressing these challenges, school heads can strive towards creating optimal learning environments and nurturing the academic, personal and professional growth of the school staff. Empty talk is a no to being an educational pioneer yet rather school heads should take on and follow a model that will permit them to precisely and successfully screen responsibility (Leithwood, 2014)

Unveiling the spoken realities of teaching, we delve into the challenge's teachers face in their daily endeavors. From juggling classroom dynamics to navigating administrative demands and societal expectations, teachers confront a complex web of obstacles that shape their professional journey (Martinez, et al., 2023). In this discussion, we will explore the common challenges teachers encounter in shedding light on the complexities of their profession in performing and acquiring their competencies. They are also described according to their responses. Considering the various factors and indicators that are demonstrated by teachers they are described as follows: a dedicated Teacher, an Altruistic Teacher, a Generous Teacher, a Flexible Teacher, a Dancer Teacher, a one-Call -Away Teacher, a Religious Teacher, a Patient Teacher, a Solution Finder Teacher, a Hardworking Teacher, a Systematic Teacher, and a Kind Teacher.

Conclusion

The experiences of school heads and teachers highlighted in this study underscore the multifaceted challenges they face in the pursuit of effective education and the success of learners. As educational leaders, school heads bear the weight of responsibilities that encompass creating a conducive learning environment, managing staff, and ensuring the smooth functioning of the institution. Their challenges range from time constraints, financial insufficiency, limited stakeholder support, to academic-related odds, reflecting the intricate nature of their roles. The issue of time constraints emerged as a significant challenge for school heads, affecting their ability to balance administrative tasks, staff management, student outcomes, and long-term planning. Financial insufficiency posed a major obstacle, hindering their capacity to provide necessary resources, conduct school maintenance, and support academic and extracurricular programs. Limited stakeholder support further complicated matters, impacting the ability of school heads to innovate initiatives for improved student outcomes.

Additionally, academic-related odds presented unique challenges, such as the presence of non-readers and non-numerates among learners, requiring tailored interventions and strategic planning. The experiences of school heads indicate the need for strong time management skills, financial planning, and effective stakeholder engagement strategies to overcome these challenges and fulfill their roles as instructional leaders and administrative managers.

Teachers, on the other hand, encountered challenges in accommodating learners with learning disabilities in inclusive classrooms, managing time constraints, coping with the scarcity of learning resources, and addressing learning gaps or losses, particularly during the pandemic. Lack of parental engagement emerged as a significant challenge, hindering the establishment of a robust support system for students.

The findings emphasize the crucial role of educators in shaping the future of learners, despite the myriad challenges they face. The identified themes underscore the importance of targeted professional development programs, adequate resource allocation, and collaborative efforts among stakeholders to address the challenges confronted by school heads and teachers. Furthermore, the study advocates for the recognition of the interplay between personal attributes and professional competencies in evaluating the performance of school heads and teachers.

The experiences shared by school heads and teachers shed light on the intricacies of the educational landscape and the ongoing efforts to overcome obstacles. The study underscores the necessity for continuous support,



professional development, and strategic planning to enhance the effectiveness of educational leaders and educators in fostering an environment conducive to learning and ensuring the success of learners.

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