



LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES AND CHALLENGES OF UPLAND SCHOOL HEADS: BASIS FOR POLICY RECOMMENDATION

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to determine the leadership responsibility and challenges of the upland school heads as basis for police recommendation in the Schools District of Lemery during the school year 2022-2023. The study utilized qualitative research method using in depth interview. The study revealed that the leadership responsibilities of the principals include providing financial resources, conducting educational activities, and providing of technical assistance. It was also found out that the leadership performance of upland school heads included providing direction, having firm decision, building strong relationship, leading by example, providing conducive working environment and opening communication. Furthermore, upland school heads face stakeholders' attitude, necessary resources and support, and multi-tasking as challenges. To address challenges school heads shows positive thinking, practice constant communication, adapt changes, provide proper time management and prioritize tasks.

Keywords: *Leadership Responsibilities, Challenges, Upland School Heads, Policy Recommendation*

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INTRODUCTION

Upland school leaders assume numerous leadership responsibilities and face a lot of challenges. This aspect should be given careful attention as performance of upland school leaders may influence teachers' performance. Which in turn can increase student to improve learning systems, because the case in the field that researchers met during interviews with 9 school leaders who experienced challenges in performing their leadership responsibility in improving the learning system, this certainly many things that are related and need to be analyzed comprehensively in order to find a solution.

School leadership includes the direction, encouragement, and actions necessary to improve a school's overall success. According to Yukl (2002), leadership is an influential process that evolves through time and results in the accomplishment of a goal. Leadership entails motivating and helping people to work toward a goal based on distinct personal and professional beliefs. Schools' ought to provide a solid basis for academic success, social skill development, and learning for all students.

As an empowered authority in schools, school heads perform dual roles, as administrative manager, and as instructional leader. Hence, school heads enjoy decisive latitude to dispense not only quantity but also quality education whose by-products are learners imbued with competitive lifelong skills and desirable values to enable them to become active community

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participants in the future. Anything excesses or want in the execution of such functions ultimately creates adverse impact on formal education system in schools.

Teachers and school leaders in the upland areas persisted in wearing cheerful faces and maintaining a positive outlook for the love of their work and to inspire the lives of the children. Teachers took their strength each week from their school heads to deal with uncertainties which eventually helped to improve the living conditions of learners through education. Although personal problems and paperwork were inevitable, added to that are numerous school problems, staying optimistic was the best choice (Recamadas, 2018).

School heads in highly effective schools achieve this by promoting collaboration, providing support to teachers, engaging parents as partners for improving student learning, and building trust and respect in schools and communities (UNICEF, 2021).

When super typhoon Yolanda struck Iloilo, numerous establishments, homes, and schools, especially in the far-flung areas were destroyed. The challenge to keep every school head in route to quality formal education is dependent on several yet interdependent factors. One of these factors is how they performed their leadership responsibilities and manage the challenges in their way.

It is in this light that the researcher, being a school head at the same time, was motivated to conduct a study on the leadership responsibility and challenges of upland schools of the Schools District of Lemery under the Division of Iloilo Province. The study likewise proposed a

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policy recommendation that may improve or sustain the school heads' leadership responsibility to strive and deliver quality, accessible, relevant, and liberating basic education for all.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Methodology

This chapter presents the research method, research design, participants of the study, data-gathering procedures, research instrument, and data analysis to be used in this study. The purpose of this study is to determine the leadership responsibilities and challenges of upland school heads as basis for coming up with policy recommendation in the Schools District of Lemery during the school year 2022-2023.

Research Method

The research method utilized in the study was qualitative research using in-depth interviews.

The interviewer and the interviewee during the interview were allowed to sit together in a distance and to think about the series of questions about a certain issue. The aim was to get the main or the necessary views of the participants in a certain issue in a social context through the responses of the participants to the questions.

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Research Design

The study used phenomenological research design. It is possible to think of phenomenology as a philosophical method for conducting qualitative research. Phenomenology focuses on an individual's subjective interpretations of her experiences in order to understand how others see the world and how this view may differ from widely held beliefs. In disciplines including psychology, sociology, and social work, phenomenology is widely used to get information from people by interviewing them about their perceptions.

Phenomenology, according to Smith (2013), is the study of consciousness structures as they are perceived in the first person. As it is an experience of or about some object, the intentional, or being oriented toward something, is the main structural component of an experience. By virtue of its content or meaning (which symbolizes the object) and the proper enabling conditions, an experience is directed toward an object.

Participants of the Study

The participants of the study were the three (3) elementary school principals were handling big school in the District of Lemery, two(2) head teachers were also handling complete elementary school, and four (4) purposely selected primary school teachers-in-charge that handling a primary school with administrative and teaching loads at the same time with a total

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of nine (9) school heads assigned in the different upland elementary schools of the Schools District of Lemery.

Sampling Design

The sampling strategy utilized was purposive. A nonprobability sample called a purposive sample is chosen based on demographic characteristics and the study's goal. It also called judgment sampling, selective, or subjective sampling are other terms for purposeful sampling. The deliberate choice of a participant due to the qualities the participant possesses. It is a nonrandom technique that does not need underlying theories or a set number of participants (Tongco, M. D., 2021).

Research Instrument

The research instrument used in the study was a researcher-made interview schedule.

The interview schedule has four questions focusing on the purpose of study.

Voice and video recorders were used for data gathering and documentation, depending upon the permission of the participants.

Validity of the Research Instrument

Prior to the determination of the validity of the interview schedule made by the researcher, the adviser, Dean of the Graduate School then a panel of jurors who are considered

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for their expertise in the field of research, testing and assessment, and English, were requested to validate each question for review and modification.

Validity refers to the appropriateness, meaningfulness, correctness, and usefulness of inferences that a researcher makes. In content-related evidence of validity, the content and format must be consistent with the definition of variables and sample of subject to be measured and is also helpful in validating the items in the questionnaire (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2007).

Comments, corrections, and suggestions of the panel of validators regarding the interview schedule were considered using the appropriate form of Good and Scates (Appendix A).

Data Gathering Procedures

The researcher secured permits from the adviser, Dean of the Graduate School, Office of the Schools Division Superintendent, Office of the District Supervisors, School Heads, and individual participants to allow the researcher to conduct the study. The researcher personally went to nine (9) participating school in the District of Lemery where participants located and convenient to conduct the interview.

The researcher conducted an interview with the participants, but prior to this, the researcher encouraged the participants to sign a waiver or permission relative to the conduct of the study. Minimum health protocols mandated by the Inter Agency Task Force (IATF), Department of Health (DOH) guidelines amidst the pandemic, DepEd Orders on the Health

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protocols, Local Government Units and the Barangay health protocols were strictly observed and followed during the conduct of the study.

Using in-depth interview, voice and video recorders were be provided to completely capture the interviewee’s words. The interviewee allows researcher to record the interview for the documentation purposes. The researcher consolidated all of the collected data after a series of interviews.

Data Analysis

The information gathered was analyzed using a thematic approach.

The process of thematic analysis involves identifying patterns or themes in qualitative data. The goal of a thematic analysis, according to Maguire & Delahunt (2017), is to find themes, such as fascinating or significant patterns in the data, and then utilize those themes to discuss the research or make a point about a problem. This involves condensing, evaluating, and interpreting the information gathered and giving it meaning.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study was conducted to determine the leadership responsibility and challenges of the upland school head as the basis for police recommendation in the Schools District of Lemery during the school year 2022-2023.

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The research method utilized in the study was qualitative method, using in-depth interviews, and the research design was phenomenology.

The participants of the study were three (3) principals, two (2) head teachers, and five (4) purposely selected teacher-in-charge with the total of 9 school heads assigned in the different upland elementary schools of the Schools District of Lemery.

A researcher-made interview schedule was used as an instrument to gather data.

Voice and video recorders were also used for data gathering and documentation, depending upon the permission of the participants.

The panel of experts content-validated the questionnaire. The validity of the interview schedule's questions was evaluated using Fraenkel and Wallen's (2007) Criteria for the Content Validation. The researcher considered all comments and suggestions relative to the validation of the tool. After the questionnaire had been found valid, permits were prepared to allow the researcher to start conducting the in-depth interview.

Permits from the adviser, Dean of the Graduate School, Office of the Schools Division Superintendent, School Head, and individual participants were obtained to allow the researcher to conduct the study. The researcher personally went to the schools, community, or place convenient on the part of the participants to conduct the interview.

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The researcher consolidated all collected data after a series of interviews. The information was gathered, analyzed, and interpreted using thematic approach.

The following are the findings of the study:

The welfare of the instructors and students, financial resources, instructional activities, and giving technical help are the principals' primary leadership responsibilities, according to the information acquired through in-depth interviews with the participants.

The results of the in-depth interview revealed that the leadership performance of upland school heads includes providing direction, making firm decision, building a strong relationship, leading by example, providing a conducive working environment, and open communication.

On the other hand, school heads consider dealing with stakeholders' attitude, provides necessary resources and support, and doing multi-tasking.

Upland school heads manage challenges through showing positivity, having constant communication, accepting changes, managing time properly, and prioritizing tasks.

Based on the findings, the following insights were drawn: School heads play a pivotal role that can affect the school performance most especially in upland areas. Their way of supervising subordinates promotes good relationships towards the teachers working with them. Positively doing their duties and responsibilities clearly inspires them to do their own work well. School heads also has a big part on activities, programs and projects that can provide and support to

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the mission, vision and goal of the school. School heads also can be flexible at all times to cater diversity of individuals that leads to conflict when things may not in control. When school head's leadership skills have deficiency and an advocate on promoting chaos, confusions, and factions towards their subordinates definitely lose teachers' trusts and confidence that could affect and invite negative working environment.

It is important to see the bright side in all situations in dealing with challenges or problems to promote positive attitude and creates good relationship. School heads must always practice to connect not just with teachers but also with the community. Connection is the best way to win the heart of stakeholders.

I was enlightened that being a school head has a great impact in the school as well as the community. Every school head has a different situation and challenges that could affect to their performance in performing their duty and responsibility. I myself was amazed in realizing amazing stories and experiences of school heads throughout the conduct of the study. It gives me wisdom, knowledge and courage knowing I am doing a multi-tasking type of leadership that some were paying just to study and acquire what I've been through and experience to have this kind of learnings. I realized that I have a noble work and something to be proud of. I may have experienced hardship in this journey but it gives me so much lessons and learnings that could help my professional growth and being a wholesome individual. I may have done

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so much work but I believed that God prepares me in bigger opportunities and a great story to share.

CONCLUSION

In the light of the findings and insights arrived in this study, the following recommendations are forwarded:

School heads may intensify the stakeholders' engagement so everyone feels involved and appreciated. They must practice being transparent, for everything that happens in school should be announced for all to be more updated and connected to everyone. They may involve internal and external stakeholder for all the programs and activities in school that could help inspire unity.

School heads may ask help from the DepED personnel for the provision of additional administrative officer. The additional AO could help the school head not to multitasking, which could affect the performance of the school. With the additional AO, the burden of the school head will lessen, and they can do a great job of doing a systematic task and achieve success in the allotted time.

A proposed incentives for Teachers-In-Charge (TICs) should be given. They are not in the position of school principals and school heads, but they are geared towards working with the same documents and play the same responsibilities of the higher ranks. Giving them incentives would mean so much to them as it will mark their efforts and rewards.

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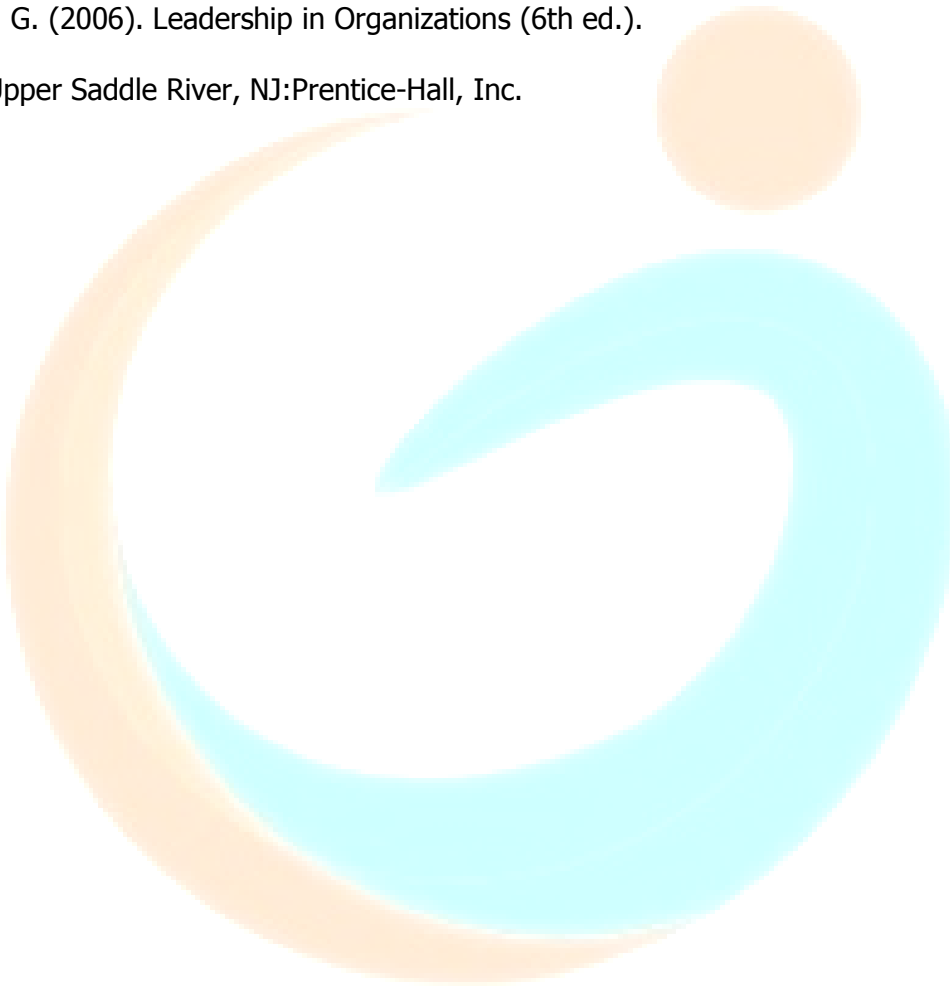
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