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## SCHOOL HEADS' EXPERIENCES IN THE CONDUCT OF REGIONAL ACHIEVEMENT MEASURE (RAM): BASES FOR POLICY RECOMMENDATION

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### ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine the experiences of school heads in conducting the Regional Achievement Measure (RAM), with the goal of providing insights for policy recommendation. Using a qualitative research methodology grounded in phenomenology, the participants comprising ten purposively selected school heads from both elementary and secondary schools. In-depth interviews were conducted, and the data analyzed through thematic analysis. The following themes were generated: optimistic approach, constructive candid approach; hindering factors as of time, equipment, and supplies, and facilitating factors through teachers and online assessments. This study strongly recommends establishing comprehensive policies for the scheduling and dissemination of assessments, providing necessary equipment and technical support, and ensuring timely supply distribution. These recommendations emphasize the need for strategic planning and resource management to enhance the assessment process and improve educational outcomes across institutions.

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**Keywords:** *School Heads, Regional Achievement Measure, Policy Recommendation, Assessment Challenges*

## INTRODUCTION

The foundation of a basic skills-oriented education is reading, writing, and arithmetic. All three skills are of the utmost importance in everyday life and on the job. These skills are necessary to evaluate sources of information and the validity of the information (Furlow, 2017).

According to Malec (2022), both formal and informal education is essential in learning the basic skills. Learning is a continuous process that impacts all the factors of conduct, which incorporate skills, expertise, attitudes, personality, motivation, etc.

Hence, assessment is given to validate the basic skills. Although, there are many ways for learners to demonstrate what they've learned. Three approaches of assessment use at school, diagnostic, formative and summative (Staake, 2023).

The Department of Education (DepEd) under Matatag Curriculum aims to make every Filipino a literate, communicatively competent, and culturally aware. To validate the progress, the use of assessment has been recognized as an essential tool for measuring learners' achievement, evaluate the teaching strategies, and ensuring the educational objectives are met.

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Therefore, in the study, the researcher would like to find out the school heads' experiences in the conduct of Regional Achievement Measure (RAM) bases for policy recommendation.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This chapter presents the research method, research design, participants of the study, data gathering procedure, research instrument, validity of the research instrument and the data analysis.

### Research Method

The study employed descriptive qualitative research method. In-depth interview was used to identify and gather information based on the personal experiences and perceptions of the participants (Mckoy & Boyd, 2023).

The researcher examined the experiences and insight of the school heads in the conduct of Regional Achievement Measure (RAM).

### Research Design

The study used qualitative research design using under phenomenology. The latter is a form of qualitative research that centers on individual experiences. It is well suited for exploring challenging experiences in conducting the Regional Achievement Measure (RAM).

According to Shomron (2022), the objective of qualitative research is the development of concepts which helped to understand social phenomena in natural settings, giving due

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emphasis to the meaning, experiences, and views of the participants. Qualitative research is mainly interested in questions of what, how and why.

## Participants in the Study

The study employed a purposive selection of ten (10) participants, evenly representing both elementary and secondary levels from various schools within the division of Iloilo City. Specifically, the elementary schools included five (5) school heads from E. Yusay Elementary School, A. Mirasol Elementary School, Jaro II Elementary School, Jalandoni Memorial Elementary School, and Baluarte Elementary School. The secondary schools were represented by five (5) school heads from Ramon Avanceña National High School, Fort San Pedro National High School, R.G. Hechanova Memorial National High School, TCT Ros Foundation Integrated Farm School, and La Paz National High School.

Among the ten (10) participants, there were six (6) males and four (4) females, with a choice to provide their full name or remain anonymous; for confidentiality purposes, they were labeled as participants 1 through 10. The demographic details revealed that six participants were married, three were single, and one was widowed. The age range of the participants varied, with the youngest being 35 years old and others between 46 and 59 years old. In terms of designation, one participant held an office-in-charge position, while the majority served as principals. Additionally, the length of service varied, with two participants having 1 to 3 years of experience and the others boasting more than 10 years in their roles.

## Sampling Design

The participants were selected through purposive sampling.

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Purposive sampling was employed as a methodological approach to select a target group of participants for qualitative analysis (Heath, 2023).

According to Ellis as cited by Karahan (2022), many suggested varied numbers of participants for phenomenological research, but a sample of 6 to 20 individuals are enough. Ten (10) participants were recruited for the study.

### Research Instrument

The research instrument used was a researcher-made interview guide. This is appropriate since the study required qualitative data, which are mainly narrative.

The interview focused on the school heads' experiences in the conduct of Regional Achievement Measure (RAM).

The interview guide was validated by a panel of experts.

A video or audio recorder was used for documentation. Permission was sought depending on the participants.

A thematic analysis was used to summarize the result of the study.

### Validity of the Research Instrument

The researcher-made interview guide was subjected to validation by a panel of experts to make sure it was effective and relevant in achieving the research goals. The questions for the interview were thoughtfully crafted based on the research statement of the problem to ensure they matched the issues being explored in the study. The experts on the panel were chosen for their knowledge in the field and carefully assessed the interview guide. They were

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given the responsibility to evaluate how clear and relevant each question was. If it covered all aspects of the research problem effectively. Their input played a role in improving the guide by making revisions that strengthened its accuracy. This approach guaranteed that the interview guide was not just methodically sound but capable of capturing the essential data needed to meet the objectives.

### Data Gathering Procedures

After the interview guide was found valid, the researcher first processed a formal request for permission to conduct the research. The letter was addressed to the schools division superintendent, who, then granted approval. Following this approval, the researcher sent a request letter to the district supervisors and school heads to formally begin the study, including the attached authorized letter from the division office.

The face-to-face interviews were scheduled was convenient for each participant. To ensure thorough and accurate data collection, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews and obtained prior approval from the participants to use voice recordings.

After all the interviews were done, the researcher transcribed, organized, and consolidated the data for analysis. Roulston (2022) emphasizes that transcribing interviews requires precision and careful attention to detail. It is not merely about recording words or using a voice recorder, it's crucial to capture both the spoken content and its underlying meaning. This accuracy is vital for analyzing the data effectively, as researchers must ensure they accurately reflect the participants' intended messages.

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## Data Analysis

The collected data for the study have been properly analyzed using thematic analysis.

Thematic analysis was an excellent approach to research, discover something about people's view, opinions, knowledge or experiences through an interview (Caulfield, 2023). Therefore, to answer the questions in this study, it requires six steps developed by Braun and Clark namely: familiarization with the data, creating codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing report (Dawadi, 2020).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The purpose of the study was to determine the school heads' experiences in the conduct of Regional Achievement Measure (RAM) as bases for policy recommendation. Ten school heads from elementary and secondary schools in the schools division of Iloilo City were selected through purposive sampling. Using thematic analysis, the study identified key findings. Participants exhibited two main themes: optimistic and enthusiastic despite challenges, while others were candid about their difficulties. Hindering factors included time constraints, lack of adequate equipment, and insufficient supplies for test production. Facilitating factors included the dedication of teachers and the use of online assessments where ICT was available, though issues with internet connectivity posed challenges.

The study recommended policies to improve the scheduling of assessments, provide necessary equipment and technical support, and ensure timely provision of supplies.

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Based on the findings, the following insights were drawn:

Assessment is an essential tool in education used to measure knowledge and skills, evaluate the outcome of learners and key to manipulate strategies to cope with the gap of learning.

For educators combining the attitude of being optimistic and candid can lead to a more effective and enriching assessment process. Furthermore, the collaboration between teachers and online assessment platforms were imperative role and collectively improve both learning outcomes and the effectiveness of assessment processes.

Moreover, proper time allocation reduces stress and enhances focus, while dependable tools and adequate supplies ensure smooth assessments. By planning ahead and addressing potential disruptions, individuals can remain engaged and confident, ultimately leading to better performance and more achievable outcomes.

## CONCLUSION

Considering the insights derived from the study, the following recommendations are forwarded:

To optimize the administration of educational assessments, it is recommended that the Department of Education (DepEd) and higher educational offices establish a comprehensive policy for the proper dissemination and scheduling of assessments. This should include a detailed assessment calendar communicated at least a week in advance to all

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schools, promoting consistency, fairness, and optimal conditions for teaching and learning across all institutions.

District supervisors should implement regular workshops and training sessions for school heads and educators on effective assessment practices, enhancing understanding and adherence to the assessment calendar.

School heads are encouraged to advocate for the provision of high-capacity printers, photocopiers, and essential equipment, along with prioritizing technical support. They should actively engage with higher educational offices to highlight resource needs and collaborate on solutions, such as centralized printing services and the promotion of digital assessment tools.

Teachers can utilize the assessment calendar to align their instructional plans with upcoming assessments while engaging in ongoing professional development focused on integrating technology into their practices.

Learners should take advantage of the structured assessment schedules to plan their study time effectively, encouraging peer collaboration for review and preparation.

It is strongly recommended that the researcher's proposed policies be implemented. These recommendations focus on enhancing educational assessments through better planning and resource management. Centralized scheduling, provision of essential equipment and technical support, and timely supply distribution reduce stress, prevent disruptions, and improve both teaching and learning outcomes.

Overall, these strategies promote efficiency, consistency, and fairness across institutions.

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Furthermore, conducting with similar studies should consider the effectiveness of centralized scheduling and resource allocation on assessment outcomes, and explore innovative solutions for integrating technology into the assessment process.



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