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MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOL OPERATION OF AN INTEGRATED SCHOOL: PRACTICES, CHALLENGES, AND OPPORTUNITIES AS BASES FOR POLICY RECOMMENDATION

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ABSTRACT

The qualitative research method using the phenomenological research design aimed to formulate a policy recommendation on practices, challenges, and opportunities on the management of school operations of an integrated school as bases for policy recommendation. A researcher-made interview guide was conducted to the 11 internal and external stakeholders of the integrated schools in the Schools District of Banate. Thematic analysis was utilized for descriptive data analysis. The practices in the management of school operation of an integrated school were collaboration and teamwork, resourceful and transparency and good management. How stakeholders cope with the practices were support and cooperate, participate and work together and effectiveness and efficiency. The challenges encountered were lack of resources and financial assistance, lack of participation, and lack of knowledge and skills. How stakeholders cope with the challenges encountered were encourage parents to help, ask guidance and solicit donations, and show positive attitude. The opportunities experienced in the management of school operation were asking financial assistance, involvement in school activities, and maintaining good relationship.

Keywords: *Management of School Operation, Integrated School*

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INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

An integrated school is a public school that offers kindergarten, elementary, and junior high school education and has a unified instructional program. The integrated school may be expanded to include a senior high school education as necessary to be determined by the Department of Education.

One of the Department of Education's initiatives to increase literacy rates in the Philippines has been the conversion of elementary schools into integrated schools, which means that a high school department is created or added to ensure that those who graduate from these schools continue their education because they are practically located in isolated areas. Unfortunately, the transformation of these elementary schools into integrated schools presents interesting challenges to current school administrators because, instead of managing just an elementary school, they now have to oversee the operation of an elementary, a high school, and a two-year Senior High School on one campus. This indicates that their obligations have been expanded, if not doubled (San Miguel, 2019).

The heads of integrated school hold a key position in the operations and administration of the school. They must give necessary advice and guidance to teachers, learners and other members of the school. As an important component of the school administration, the school heads have important roles and responsibilities to play. According to Hill (as cited by Botha, 2004) the efficiency of the school depends on the ability, skills, personality, and professional competence of school heads.

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School leaders with these abilities help to keep the office running efficiently while also supporting the efforts of their superiors and stakeholders. Without them, a company can soon devolve into chaos, impeding production and resulting in disgruntled personnel. Administrative personnel must be able to manage multiple moving pieces and difficult situations at the same time. If you are looking to open yourself up for raises and promotions, it is wise to develop extraordinary administrative skills (Doyle, 2021).

An integrated curriculum is one that connects several areas of study by crossing topic divisions and emphasizing unifying principles. Integration focuses on connecting students, allowing them to participate in relevant, meaningful activities that are applicable to real life. Thus, an integrated curriculum aims to connect the practical and experimental learning aspect of an integrated curriculum is facilitated through service-learning (Barton,2020).

Today, students need to develop the habits of mind and the skills necessary to unpack the deep, embedded meanings found in complex, challenging editions of integrated schools' learners in order to become college and career ready (Vineski, 2022).

As a school head of an integrated school, the researcher found difficulty in this present situation of ours. Minimizing risks, dealing with stress, worrying about the implementation of schools' programs and staying COVID-19 free have become the top recurring concerns in this pandemic.

The researcher believes that, there is a need to determine and find out the practices, challenges and opportunities encountered in the management of school operation of an integrated school and look into the possible solutions to address these problems. The result

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of this study may somehow identify the appropriate school solutions in the management of school operations of an integrated school in enhancing the smooth implementation of its programs and activities in the Schools District of Banate during the school year 2022-2023.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Method

The research method utilized in the study was descriptive method using in-depth interview.

The interviewer during the interview was allowed to sit 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.

Research Design

The study used qualitative research design using phenomenology.

Smith (2013) defines phenomenology as the study of structures of consciousness as experienced in the first person. The core structure of an experience is its intentionality, or the fact that it is an experience of or about something. By virtue of its content or meaning (which symbolizes the object) and the right enabling conditions, an experience is directed toward an object.

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Phenomenology can be considered a philosophical approach undertaking qualitative research. Phenomenology is done by interviewing the subjects to learn their impressions, and is frequently used in such fields as psychology, sociology, and social work.

Qualitative analysis has different steps that start from the bottom up and they range from data transcription, segmenting information into categories using codes, generation of themes or categories, description of themes and to interpretation of data (Creswell, 2009).

These steps are critical to check for accuracy and consistency of the findings. In a qualitative study, interviews afford interviewees an opportunity to provide their viewpoint, perception and explanation without predetermination by the researcher (Galanes, 2003).

The findings would be supported by the existing literature regarding the practices, challenges, and opportunities of integrated schools in management and operations. Findings also led to implications for the discipline and future research.

Participants of the Study

The participants of the study were the eleven (11) selected stakeholders namely; teachers, parents (PTA officers with major positions only), and the Presidents of the student supreme government of integrated schools in the Schools District of Banate during the school year 2022-2023.

Sampling Design

In the study, a purposeful sample design was adopted. A purposive sample is one chosen by the researchers based on their knowledge of the study and population. Purposive

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sampling is the deliberate selection of informants based on their capacity to explain a particular theme, concept, or phenomenon.

Research Instrument

The research instrument utilized in the study was a researcher-made interview schedule. The interview schedule aims to gather relevant information about the involvement of the stakeholders in the management and operations. An open-ended question was used for the interview. The researcher asked questions to the participants and then follow-up with relevant questions that may arise from the responses of the participants.

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

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

Validity of the Research Instrument

The practices, challenges, and opportunities in the management and operations of an integrated school was reviewed for face to face content validity by a panel of jurors who was chosen on the basis of their expertise in research and instrumentation. Each item was assessed by the jurors whether it is revised, rejected or retained. The panel of jurors was composed of experts in the fields of research, tests and measurements, and evaluation.

All comments and suggestions for the finalization of the research instruments were incorporated.

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Data Gathering Procedures

Upon approval of the Dean of the Graduate School and adviser to conduct the research, the researcher identified the respondents and those specifically involved in the management and operations of integrated schools. A letter of request for the conduct of the study was sent to the principal of all integrated schools in the Schools District of Banate through their Public Schools District Supervisor. Upon approval, the researcher set for an individual appointment to the identified participants to conduct the face-to-face interview. The researcher personally conducted the interview using the interview guide. During the face-to-face in-depth interview, a voice and video recorders were provided to completely capture the interviewee's words.

To observe proper health protocol of social distancing and wearing of face mask and face shield were observed. All the information and answers were recorded, compiled and analysed. For ethical consideration, the respondents were informed that all information and data from the conduct of this study were treated with utmost confidentiality and were used for the purpose of this study.

Data Analyses

The information gathered in this study were properly analysed using thematic approach.

Thematic analysis is a qualitative data analysis technique. It is commonly used to describe a group of texts, such as interview transcripts. The researcher will closely examine

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the data to identify common-theme topics, ideas, and patterns of meaning that come repeatedly (Caulfield, 2019).

A theme is a pattern that captures something significant or interesting about the data and/or research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006). They further explain that there are no hard and fast rules about what makes a theme. In this case, the researcher examined the codes and some of them clearly filtered together into a theme.

The researcher extracted what she considered relevant statements from each participant's description of the phenomenon and then integrates these themes into a narrative description of the phenomenon and then clusters these into themes. She then integrates these themes into a narrative description of the phenomenon.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Summary

The main purpose of the study was to find out the practices, challenges and opportunities of integrated schools in the management of their operation as bases for policy recommendation in the Schools District of Banate during the school year 2022-2023.

The participants of the study were the eleven selected elementary and secondary high schools, parents (PTA Officers) and the President of the supreme pupil government.

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The research instrument utilized in the study was a researcher-made interview guide. Voice and video recorder were used for data gathering and documentation depending upon the permission of the participants.

The data gathering instrument was subjected to face content validation by panel of experts. Thematic analysis was used for descriptive data analysis.

The thematic analysis was used to interpret and analyse the narrative result of the in-depth interview. The following are the findings of the study;

Based on the information gathered during the in-depth interview, practices in the management of school operation of an integrated school were collaboration and teamwork

For how the stakeholders cope with the practices, they were support and cooperate, participate and work together, and effectively and efficiently.

Stakeholders' challenges encountered in the management of school operation of integrated school were lack of resources and financial assistance, lack of participation from parents and lack of knowledge and skills.

For how the stakeholders cope with the challenges, they were encouraging parents to help, ask guidance and solicit donations, and show positive attitude.

As to the opportunities experienced by the stakeholders, they were asking financial assistance, involvement in school activities, and maintaining good relationship.

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Insights

Based on the results of the study, the following insights were drawn:

The practices in the management of school operation of an integrated school is an initiative to increase access to basic education among the learners in far-flung areas where separate secondary school is not feasible to operate. It is only through the help of the stakeholders to help initiate this program for the good of the service.

There is a need of community involvement to sustain the success they have established and offer ways in which these constituents can be a positive force for helping the school achieved improved outcomes for all learners in the school.

The Department of Education should take part in the challenges encountered by the stakeholders in the management of school operation of integrated schools. In spite that stakeholders involved themselves in the operation still there are problems which cannot be addressed to them but to the higher officials only.

The support of the stakeholders was important to a successful program of the school especially in managing the operations of the school. They remain hopeful and see the best even in difficult situations.

The operation of integrated schools required stakeholders an opportunity to build a strong commitment and dedication from the Local Government Units and other stakeholders who continuously support their programs.

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Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, the following recommendations are strongly suggested:

School heads should make sure that their stakeholders were properly guided to meet school's expectation towards its program and activities.

There should be unity and teamwork among stakeholders in order to achieve the mission, vision, and goals of an integrated school.

Stakeholders should be given more assistance to enhance their pedagogical knowledge, skills, and attitudes towards the management of school operation of integrated schools.

School heads, teachers, parents and learners may take into account their strengths and weaknesses as partner in the operations of school.

The school should look into the significant help and contributions extended by the stakeholders in the school. It should be monitored, evaluated and maintained as integral component of the operation of the school.

The study may be replicated in other congressional districts of the Schools Division of Iloilo to corroborate the results obtained in the present investigation.

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