Exploring the Experiences of Secondary School Administrators among State Universities and Colleges Implementing the K to 12 Program

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the lived experiences of the Secondary School Administrators in the SUCs implementing the K to 12 Program in Region X, during the school year 2016-2017 up to 2019-2020. It utilized a qualitative research design using the phenomenological-descriptive approach. Narrative analysis of (Collaizi, 1978) used as basis of presentation and interpretation of the data. The participants of the study were the administrators of the four SUCs in Region X offering high schools and the eight senior faculty randomly selected by their respective administrators in both JHS and SHS. It utilized interviews, focus group discussion, and school records to gather data. The interview guide and FGD motive questions underwent validation from the panel of experts before the finalization and implementation. An audio-recorder served as the equipment to record the discourses from the interview and the FGD. After the transcriptions, clustering of the significant statements formed the themes and sub-themes. The findings showed four distinct themes that surfaced out. These themes are: (1) believe to achieve, (2) support and report the effort, (3) assessment for advancement, and (4) transparency and efficiency. The secondary school administrators are faced with the challenges on limited school facilities, problems in coping with school responsibilities, and problems on less exposure to the K to 12 Program. Coping and honing mechanisms were the management strategies used. They also encountered challenges in PTA empowerment, delegation of responsibilities, and proper time management. Management by empowerment was the strategy used.

Keywords: *Lived Experience, Secondary School Administrator, SUCs, K to 12 Program*

1 INTRODUCTION

The secondary school administrators among State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) experienced numerous challenges in performing their roles in the management of instruction, human, and physical resources brought about by the implementation of the K to 12 Program. These increase their willpower to apply strategies and approaches in helping the institution achieve their goals and objectives.

The creation of CMO 32, s. 2015 provides guidelines for the participation of State Universities and Colleges to offer Senior High School (SHS) beginning school year 2016-2017. It added burden to the secondary school administrators because they have to help formulate strategies and mechanisms in order to ensure academic, physical, financial, and human resource capabilities of the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in providing educational and training services to its clientele.

Along with the challenges experienced by the administrators, Alvy and Robbins (2016) posited that successful school administrator's know how to blend their roles as managers and leaders and understand the importance of both task. And so, to realize this, they suggested effective strategies like maximizing quality instructional time, using data, managing time effectively, using faculty meetings to leverage professional learning and reflecting. Lunenberg (2010) pointed out that the primary responsibility of the principal is to promote the learning and success of the students, which is accomplished through collaboration, providing support, and alignment of curriculum, assessment, and instruction. These are the ideal concepts that a school principal must have to possess in performing different roles at various times or within one school day. With this, administrators must be capable of acting as managers, diplomats, teachers, or even as a curriculum leader. According to him, performing the role of a principal is a balancing act because administrators must be proficient in all areas.

In reality, secondary school administrators in the SUCs practiced multiple tasks in doing their duties and responsibilities to accommodate the volume of workload, as well as the urgency of the reports that they need to submit on time. Based on observation, there are times were memoranda received that should be acted right away to meet the immediate deadline. There are also side by side attendance to meetings, seminars, and other school functions that needs attention. Thus, important functions are left unattended. These are some of the challenges in the responsibility of the administrators as instructional managers.

According to the study conducted by Oton (2018), hiring qualified, skillful, competent, and committed instructors is the most challenging concern of the SHS administrators among SUCs implementing the K to 12 Program in the management of human resources. Although the SUCs SHS administrators have the responsibility of identifying the staff and teachers needed in the assigned unit, the authority is still under the supervision of the higher officials of the university and that the role of the secondary school administrator is recommendatory. Moreover, based on experience and observations during the first year of implementation, many college instructors taught subjects in the senior high school to fill in the need even if they do not have the proper training to teach in high school. Besides, the purpose was to help teachers not to be displaced in their current job (IRR of R.A. 10533).

Furthermore, the SUCs administrators have a different version in dealing with the different challenges, especially in performing their role as physical resource manager. Many encountered problems like shortage of the classroom considering the volume of students from the different neighbouring places. According to the study conducted by Oton (2018), these are some realities brought about by lack of physical facilities among the SHS students even if the government has been making much effort so that Filipino learners will be able to learn according to the standard set by the new implemented K to 12 Program. He also pointed out that there are inadequate classrooms after one year of the SHS implementation. As a result, classes moved from one classroom to another and from one building to another causing the students to feel discomfort and anxiety in the situation.

Finally, considering that SUCs have different bureaucracy compared to DepEd, where they give particular attention to studies and researches, the researcher is interested in exploring with the experiences of the secondary school administrators and discovered how they were able to cope with the challenges brought about by the implementation of the K to 12 Program. Through this venture, the essences of their experiences were understood better and

were able to formulate practices that helped improve the quality management in the SUCs secondary school.

1.1 **Objectives of the Study**

This study explored the experiences of Secondary School Administrators among State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) implementing the K to 12 Program in Region X during the first implementation in the school year 2016-2017 up to the present. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following:

1. Explore the experiences of Secondary School administrators among SUCs in the implementation of the K to 12 Program.
2. Describe the challenges encountered and the management strategies of secondary school administrators in the implementation of the K to 12 Program.

2 METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research design using the phenomenological-descriptive approach. Narrative analysis of (Collaizi, 1978) used as basis of presentation and interpretation of the data. It utilized the interview making use of the interview guide questions and the focus group discussion (FGD) with the help of the motive questions to gather in-depth information regarding the experiences of the secondary school administrators in the SUCs, implementing the K to 12 Program.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

For problem number one, there were four themes that came out after the analysis of the transcribed discourses. These are as follows: *believe to achieve, support and report the effort, assessment for advancement, and transparency toward efficiency.*

For believed to achieve, the following factors include *competent faculty, the expertise of faculty in designing assessment tools, and selected students*. For support and report the effort the factors are *faculty development*, *provision of teaching materials and comfortable workplace, recognition of student's achievements, support initiation of student's activity hour.* Assessment for advancement consists of *informal observation, formal observation, post conference, and casual interview/inspection*. In transparency toward efficiency the factors are *PTA empowerment, teamwork, friendly atmosphere, regular faculty meeting, rapport, trust and confidence, fairness, and humility.*

3.1*The Lived Experiences of the Secondary School Administrators among SUCs implementing the K to 12 Program*

The first theme was believed to achieve from where the administrators established trust and confidence to the members of their faculty, considering that they were very competent in performing their duties and responsibilities especially in designing assessment tools and the students were intelligent and properly selected. For this reason, administrators believed that faculty and students could achieve excellent performance.

Matrix 1

Theme #1. *Believe to achieve*

Significant statements	Formulated meaning	Unit meaning	Theme
P2"…personally I really believe that they can handle it…that they really are doing well…"	Administrator believed in the capability of faculty members	Competent Faculty	Believe to achieve
P1"…I told them nadilinako particular kaayo when it comes to the assessment ngainyonggamitonsamgabata, anilanggyudang word "I trust you…"	Administrator believed on the teachers expertise in designing assessment tools to be used	Expertise of faculty in designing assessment tools	
P4"… I am confident with the kind of students we have here because they were screened through oral and written exams before they were admitted for enrolment	Students are properly screened and selected	Selected students	

Theme #2. Support and report the effort

The second theme that emerged from this study was, support and report the effort. It refers to the support system extended by the administrators to faculty and students. Matrix 2 presents how the school administratorsmanage both teachers and students in such a way that they will be able to perform their duties and responsibilities. These supports include: *faculty development, provision of teaching materials and comfortable workplace, recognition of students, and support initiatives to students.*

From the educators' point of view, teachers play a significant role in the existence of the school. They provide an opportunity to nurture and encourage students to appreciate and develop their natural abilities and interest so that they will become a good citizens of the country. But along the way, they sometimes forget themselves because they are happy in giving themselves without lamentations. They forgot that as a teacher, they also need to grow and be updated with the latest trends. Administrators, on the other hand, are the living witnesses of their teachers unwavering efforts. And so, it is just but right to give back what they needed to develop not only their teaching skills but also their emotional quotients as well. In this way, administrators established support system to help their faculty members as well as the students.

Matrix 2

*Theme 2.*Support and report the effort

Significant statements	Formulated meaning	Unit meaning	Theme
P1"…I advise them to continue and discover new teaching strategies, attend seminars, and pursue their graduate studies…"	The administrator sends faculty members to seminars and training workshops for faculty development	Faculty development	Support and report the effort
P4"…I have to see to it that they have all the necessary teaching materials they are going to use…and so I provided them all the materials they needed…."	The administrators provided the teachers with all necessary teaching materials	Provision of teaching materials and comfortable workplace	
P3"We announce the winners of the different contest our students have participated outside and even those contest done in school level". We also have our quarterly recognition programs where we recognize students' academic standing…"	The administrators recognized students achievements both in academic and in extra-curricular activities participated	Recognition of students achievements	
P2"…we have students activity hour every day at 4:00-5:00 in the afternoon where students group themselves, make requirements, individual outputs, meeting with their academic clubs, training of the contestants, and other school related work…"	The administrator initiated students' activity hour to give them time in making requirements and other school related activities	Initiation of students activity hour	

Theme #3.Assessment for advancement

The third theme that emerged in this study was assessment for advancement. This refers to the monitoring and evaluation practices of the secondary schools administrators, which they found to be very useful and effective in the way they managed their respective schools. This include: *Informal observation, Formal observation, Post conference, and casual interview/inspection.*

Matrix 3
Theme #3.Assessment for advancement

Significant statements	Formulated meaning	Unit meaning	Theme
P2"…I just pass through…a kind of informal observation…just look what's happening inside…"	The administrator simply pass by the classroom corridors	Informal observation	Assessment for advancement
P3"…I will be calling them that I will be observing their classes…"	The administrator informed the teacher to be ready for class observation	Formal Observation	
P3"…post conference is very important so that teachers, especially those who were newly hired, will be able to improve their teaching performance…"	Administrators conduct post conference to help teachers improve teaching performance	Post conference	
P4"…I supervise by simply walking around but I am observing and by having simple conversations with students to draw up issues…"	The administrator simply walks around and do some conversations with students	Casual interview/ Informal conversation/ inspection	

Theme # 4.Transparency toward efficiency

The fourth theme that emerged from this study was transparency toward efficiency. As an administrator, it is necessary to establish transparency in the workplace to create a healthy environment that will help promote efficiency not only among teachers and staff but also among students as well. Since the implementation of the K to 12 Program was new and massive changes were inevitable. The administrators need to establish a healthy work environment so that they will be able to gain cooperation coupled with support and coordination from the members of the faculty and staff.

Matrix 4

Theme # 4.Transparency toward efficiency

Significant statements	Formulated meaning	Unit meaning	Theme
P2"… we are working as an EXECOM…so we work as a team…"	The administrator work with faculty members as a team…"	Teamwork	
P4"…I set friendly atmosphere so that teacher's will not hesitate to ask help especially when the concern is on teaching matters. So	The administrator set friendly atmosphere that allows faculty to work smoothly	Friendly atmosphere	

Significant Statement	Formulated meaning	Unit meaning	Theme
teachers are free to consult or approach me anytime they need help…"			Transparency toward efficiency
P3"…we have quarterly regular meeting with the faculty but aside from that may mga special meetings kami…"	The administrator conducts regular faculty meeting	Regular faculty meeting	
P1"…makihalubilokosailaha, make them as my friends, my co-workers, in that way they will be able to work harmoniously with others too…"	The administrator established good relationship with the people being worked with	Rapport	
P1"…I have trust and confidence saakongmga teacher's ngamahimougmaperformgyudnila angilahangmga responsibilities as teachers…"	The administrator has trust and confidence to the teachers.	Trust and confidence	
P3"…I have to be fair…I have to practice transparency…"	The administrator practice the value of being fair to employees	Fairness	
P4"…I work with all humility… I always put my feet flat on the floor…"	The administrator practice being humble	Humility	

3.2 *Challenges of Secondary School Administrators*

Problem number two determined the challenges encountered by the administrators referred to as coping and honing attributes while the management strategies that helped address the challenges were referred to as management by empowerment. Being a secondary school administrator requires great dedication, commitment, passion, and love of work. But it cannot be denied that along with the implementation of the K to 12 Program in the SUCs set up, administrators have experienced challenges which evolved from the different way on how they managed their respective schools. The challenges include: *limited materials and equipment, problems in coping with responsibilities of assigned designation aside from being an administrator, and less exposure to policies of the K to 12 Program.*

Matrix#5.Coping and honing

Significant Statement	Formulated meaning	Unit meaning	Theme
P2"…We lack even chemicals for the laboratory because if you are going to wait the budget from the institute, it would take a lot of time so we cannot provide that to our student's right there and then. Though we requested but it takes time…"	The administrator have problem on the limited school facilities like (classrooms, water supply, laboratory equipment's,	Limited materials and equipment	Coping and honing

Significant Statements	Formulated Meanings	Unit Meaning	Theme
	ventilation and		
P4"…aside from being the administrator, I am also teaching, I am the director of the university brass band, the program director of PhD Ed-Ad, and the former head of the university security unit…"	The administrator has problem in coping with the responsibilities of the assigned designations aside from being the unit head.	Problems in coping with responsibilities of assigned designation aside from being an administrator	
P1"…I never have experienced teaching high school walakokabalo unsay mga policies…unsay angaybuhaton…"	The administrator has less exposure to the policies of the new program	Less exposure to policies	

Management by empowerment

The lamentations of the secondary school administrators did not become a hindrance slow down. Being the head of the unit, though varied responsibilities are always on the line, commitment and love of work keep them on fire making sure that at the end of the day, they will accomplished the priorities. For this reason, administrators developed management strategies like the management by empowerment to help them keep going. These include: *PTA empowerment, delegation of responsibilities, and proper time management.*

Matrix # 6.Management by Empowerment

Significant Statements	Formulated Meanings	Unit Meaning	Theme
P4"…I empowered the GPTA because I consider them as the wind beneath the wings in the operation and the existence of the high school…"	Administrator empowered the PTA in its operation	PTA empowerment	Management by Empowerment
P1"…naapudkoygipang assign namga coordinators arundalikaylisudkaayo kung ako pa jud…so naasilaymgaresponsibilidad…"	The administrator delegated some of the tasks to the teachers	Delegation of responsibilities	
P2"…I need to manage my time properly because I have my family. I have my kids and they are still single…"	The administrator balances the time for family and work	Proper time management	

4   CONCLUSION

There are four significant themes derived from the lived experiences of SUCs secondary school administrators, hence they demonstrated varied experiences in their role as the school heads in the implementation of the K-12 Program. Secondary school administrators

encountered challenges in their work as school unit heads; therefore they have to design coping mechanisms and management strategies to make their work effective, efficient and self-fulfilling. Thus, the generated theory is: "*The SUCs secondary school administrators implementing the K to 12 Program have multifarious works and responsibilities that could be challenging, hence they have to design coping mechanisms and strategies to manage their sphere of influence*".

Figure 2 illustrates the model of the management strategies of the secondary school administrators as revealed in this study. As illustrated in the figure, the Management styles of the secondary school administrators implementing the K-12 Program is at the centermost of the model. From the result of the findings based from the narrative accounts on the lived experiences of the secondary school administrators on how they managed their units, four significant themes emerged, namely: 1) *believe to achieve*, (2) *support and report the effort*, (3) *assessment for advancement*, and (4) *transparency towards efficiency*. With these themes on how they managed their units, the secondary school administrators also revealed the challenges they encountered, hence they develop their coping mechanisms and strategies to allow them to become effective, efficient and self-fulfilled. The arrows signify the interrelationship of the experiences and management strategies of secondary school administrators in coping the challenges they encountered.
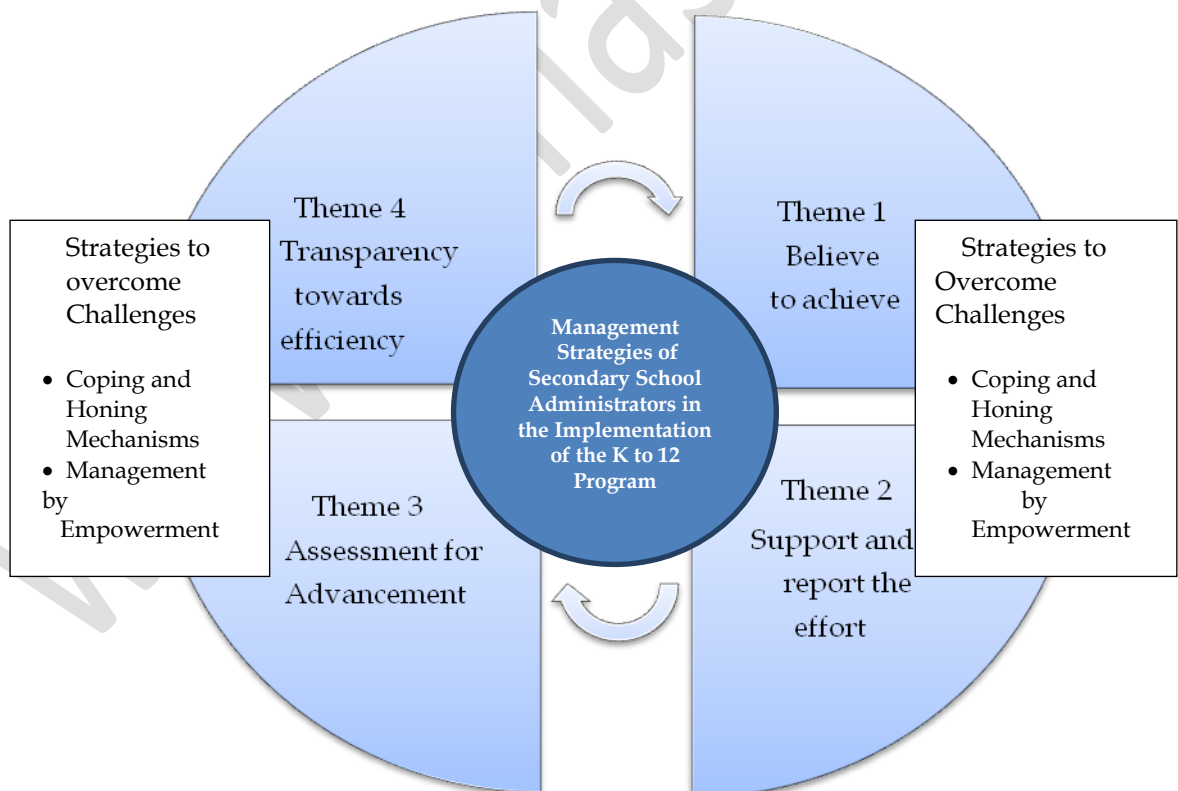

Figure 2.Pabiona's (2020) Management Strategies Model for SecondarySchool Administrators in the Implementation of the K to 12 Program

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

SUCs secondary school administrators need to:(a) conduct formal observations and post conference not only for the newly hired teachers but to the entire faculty to have a good feedback, monitoring and evaluation system; (b) continue to look for useful and helpful support strategies system to relieve the teachers from the burdens of their workloads and to facilitate students' learning; and (c) continue to empower the school PTA for a smooth working relationship with the school and for making them as partners in the education of their children.The University administration may give the secondary school administrators a full-time designation for them to concentrate in their duties and responsibilities to the administration, teachers, students, parents, colleagues, and the community. The administration may also have an adequate time frame for the submission of reports and documents needed to allow them to make an accurate and a presentable report. The University HRM may provide trainings and seminars for secondary school administrators especially on the guidelines and policies of a new curriculum for proper and correct implementation. The assigned personnel for repair and maintenance and for the requisition and distribution of materials and supplies have to make a better strategy to cater to the needs of the unit, the principal, the faculty and the students.

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