Literacy Management of Elementary School Heads in Congressional District IV: Basis for Enhanced Learning Recovery Plan

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Abstract

Literacy of learners has been a worldwide concern as this competency opens to the development of more complex skills. The two-year remote learning brought by the pandemic crisis posed an impact on the literacy level of students. This study identified the roles and abilities of the school heads in literacy, assessed the readiness catch-up programs as well as the monitoring practices, and proposed a learning recovery plan to shape the literacy progress of the school. Purposive sampling was utilized in this study which selected 45 elementary school heads from the Congressional District IV of Batangas Province. The results revealed that the school heads exemplified a great extent of performing their roles and abilities. Moreover, they have great extent of readiness in preparing catch-up plans, and they greatly monitored the literacy programs. Further enhancements were required in terms of community engagements in planning and inclusivity on programs. In line with the findings, a proposed learning recovery plan was crafted to improve the literacy of the learners.

Keywords

Literacy management
Learning recovery plan
Literacy

1. Introduction

In the 21st century, literacy has become a key factor in education. It is crucial to implement effective literacy education programs in all elementary schools. The quality of education cannot be solely measured by students' learning achievements but also by other essential components such as teacher development programs, learning materials, teaching methods, facilities, and infrastructure. Therefore, improving the quality of education in schools requires a comprehensive approach that prioritizes literacy management.

In addition, literacy encompasses the process of reading, writing, and speaking to construct, connect, and evaluate meanings [1], and it is the responsibility of school

management to promote it. Scholars have emphasized the significance of establishing robust relationships between the school and home environments and the importance of implementing effective literacy management practices. Some researchers have proposed the idea of a "third space" for literacy management, which involves creating a new literacy space that bridges the gap between the home and school environments. This "third space" can be established through various means, such as setting up a reading corner in the classroom or designing a family area that includes a reading room [2]. This approach enables primary school children to integrate their experiences with popular culture, television, and digital media, such as computers and tablets, into their school experiences, promoting their literacy development.

Furthermore, literacy plays a crucial role in enabling individuals to access information and solve problems effectively. Education must equip students with literacy skills for them to successfully overcome future challenges. To attain literacy goals, schools must offer a range of literacy programs and activities, such as reading recovery, note-taking, library visits, and reading months, among others [3]. These programs should align with the primary objectives to ensure successful implementation. Thus, schools can develop three essential components, namely, good management practices, student-focused literacy development, and integration of 21st-century skills proposed by the Pacific Policy Research Center in learning. The importance of literacy management in schools has become a public spotlight in the education field. This is because literacy education can help children cultivate reading, writing, appreciating, responding, and developing awareness of the positive or negative impacts of modern information technology [4]. Therefore, this study is significant in describing the actual implementation of literacy management by school leaders, particularly in elementary schools.

Ultimately, numerous studies have reported on the literacy proficiency levels of students based on various assessments. Following the Philippines' participation in the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), several empirical results have been revealed. Unfortunately, the Philippines received low achievement scores in some areas. In 2018, PISA test results for randomly selected 15-year-old students ranked the Philippines as having the lowest Reading literacy scores among the 79 countries assessed and the second-lowest scores in Science and Mathematics literacy.

It is imperative to address this issue promptly by implementing a well-planned literacy management strategy. The inadequate focus on literacy management in the country results in an uncompetitive human resource base due to a lack of proficiency in science and technology, which is attributed to low interest and ability in reading and writing skills [5]. Therefore, schools must adapt their literacy education to align with the demands of 21st-century education.

Importantly, active participation from various stakeholders in formal education, such as school principals, teachers, educators, and librarians, is crucial in facilitating the development of students' literacy skills and awareness. The literacy management embedded within students has a significant impact on their future success, both academically and socially. In summary, effective school management leads to the cultivation of students with strong literacy skills.

Consequently, Auberry [5] conducted a study to investigate how the literacy education and management system in a model school improved students' ability to identify fake news. Another study by Maulida [6] examined the literacy management in elementary schools and found that schools with an effective literacy management system had better academic achievements than those without. While previous research has explored the impact of literacy management, little is known about the specific aspects of planning, organization, habituation, and control implemented in these programs.

Indeed, the focus of this research is to investigate the literacy management of elementary school administrators in their schools, with the aim of identifying areas for improvement and guiding future literacy education programs. The findings of this study could potentially

guide the development of enhanced learning recovery plans in elementary schools.

2. Literature review

Literacy is an essential element of education and human growth with profound effects on individuals and the wider community. It involves the capability to read and write in a language, as well as the skill to use language competently in various situations. In contemporary times, literacy is an indispensable skill for thriving in both personal and professional domains.

The literature does not provide a clear definition of the principal's role in literacy instructional leadership. However, the principal's responsibilities and skills as a literacy manager can be grouped into five broad categories. These categories include the principal's knowledge of the literacy curriculum and their ability to use this knowledge to assist teachers in literacy instruction. Additionally, it includes their capacity to provide supervision of the literacy instructional program, empower literacy teachers through professional development activities, create a positive, print-rich literacy environment, and implement a vision and mission for literacy instruction while being aware of contextual challenges.

(1) Assisting teachers in literacy instruction

Having adequate knowledge of the literacy curriculum content allows principals to effectively support teachers in the practical aspect of literacy instruction. According to Lear [8], leaders should focus on explicit curriculum documentation and collaborate with teachers to establish processes and protocols that enhance targeted teaching. The same study also emphasizes that teachers and leaders must work together to ensure that lesson structures and unit planning promote consistency in feedback and assessment methods throughout the school.

(2) Supervising literacy instruction

The capacity of principals to conduct thorough supervision to ensure high-quality instruction is likely one of the most crucial aspects of their instructional leadership duties. Additionally,

classroom observations should include the assessment of teaching and learning, as "teacher evaluation, which emphasizes instructional improvement and accountability, has the potential to foster improvements in academic achievement" [8]. Improving classroom structures and routines should be a key focus of principals' management through teacher evaluation. The question at hand is whether the content and skills outlined in the literacy Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) program are being addressed.

(3) Implementing a clear vision and mission for effective literacy instruction

Principals must be very clear on what they want to attain in terms of literacy, including well-defined learning and teaching goals, as part of their instructional leadership responsibilities. It is the responsibility of principals to implement teaching and learning goals and develop strategies to monitor the progress [7]. The vision for effective literacy instruction must be closely linked to the classroom, as emphasized by Frankel *et al.* [1]. Day and Sammons [9] highlighted the advantages of principals' involvement in literacy instruction, stating that their clarity of thought, purpose, and knowledge can help them to bring out the best in their staff, which is essential for improving classroom practices and raising learner standards.

Both the government and the community have greatly aided the advancement of literacy culture. Etikan *et al.* [10] found that the government has implemented Community Reading Parks to promote literacy culture, but its effectiveness has been hindered by financial limitations, inadequate information, and insufficient public awareness. Although the focus of this study is on elementary schools rather than the community, the findings are relevant to the discussion of developing literacy management. Thus, the outcomes of this study can be used as a foundation for creating an

Enhanced Learning Continuity Plan.

(4) Establishing literacy classrooms rich in resources and print materials

The literature presents convincing evidence of the impact of a literacy environment that is abundant in resources and print materials. While creating a print-rich classroom environment is primarily the teacher's responsibility, the International Literacy Association (ILA) emphasizes that teachers require support to establish conducive learning environments for all students. In this regard, research highlights the role of the principal in providing leadership for literacy. Principals should oversee the arrangement and supervision of classroom resources, as well as the physical layout of the literacy environment to encourage student learning, the use of print, and/or technology.

(5) Empowering staff through continuous professional development activities

A crucial aspect of effective instructional leadership in literacy involves prioritizing continuous professional development (CPD) activities for literacy teachers. Principals have a responsibility to facilitate CPD activities as a strategy for promoting professional growth among teachers [11]. This may involve emphasizing the study of teaching and learning, fostering collaboration among educators, developing coaching relationships, and providing encouragement and support. Other forms of CPD activities that may be beneficial include professional learning communities, workshops, communities of practice, and principal forums. Through a collaborative approach, principals can drive system improvement and focus on literacy by setting goals for school practices and promoting CPD activities [12].

3. Research objectives

The instructional leadership role of the school principal involves promoting effective practices in managing literacy and recognizing instructional priorities, rather than simply serving as a school manager. This study aims to gain a better understanding of how elementary school principals manage literacy in their schools, which can be used to develop an enhanced learning recovery plan. The study specifically aims to describe how elementary school principals manage and support the school improvement process to achieve literacy gains. The specific goals of this study are:

(1) To identify the roles and abilities of the school heads in shaping the literacy plan for the school.

(2) To familiarize with readiness catch-up programs to address the literacy crisis.

(3) To ascertain the monitoring of literacy practices in the instructional classroom by the principal.

(4) To develop an enhanced learning recovery plan that will address the learning crisis.

4. Research methods and procedure

This section presents the research design, research method used, and population sampling utilized in this paper.

4.1. Research design

The study is primarily concerned with examining the literacy management practices of elementary school leaders in Congressional District IV. The findings of this study will guide the development of an Enhanced Learning Recovery and Continuity Plan aimed at addressing the literacy challenges faced by both teachers and students. This research aims to develop plans and programs that can effectively tackle the literacy crisis in the district.

Instead of drawing conclusions or testing hypotheses, descriptive research focuses on describing and condensing facts. A variety of techniques, including surveys, observations, and content analysis, may be used. Descriptive research, which is frequently employed in social science research, can be used to discover new phenomena, or better comprehend existing phenomena.

Similarly, Lear [8] defines descriptive research as a

research design that seeks to describe the characteristics of a group or phenomenon, without manipulating or controlling any variables. It is often used to gather baseline information about a population or phenomenon, and it can be useful for generating hypotheses or developing theories.

4.2. Respondents and sampling

The participants of this study are elementary school principals selected from Congressional District IV. These individuals serve as literacy managers in their respective schools and were responsible for creating the Enhanced Learning Recovery and Continuity Plan in response to the challenges posed by the pandemic.

In this study, purposive sampling was used. The judgment sampling technique, as it is often known, refers to the deliberate selection of samples from a study depending on the quality of the samples [10]. Purposive sampling also enables the researcher to choose samples with enough subject knowledge.

Rosario East and Rosario West districts, both from the upland and lowland areas, are the chosen areas for the respondents in the study. To come up with the number of respondents, the school heads in the municipality where they are teaching, which are also a part of Congressional District IV, were chosen as shown in **Table 1**.

4.3. Questionnaires

A series of survey questionnaires were employed as the research tool in this study. The questionnaires were created using literature and the internet. After reading various novels as well as related studies and research, all the concepts were condensed into questions. Numerous

inquiries were made only to identify the precise inquiries and remarks that should be contained in the questionnaire. Consent for each question that will be used in the study was requested.

4.4. Data collection

Data for this study were gathered utilizing a survey questionnaire that combined custom questions created by the researcher with pertinent questions modified from similar studies. The authorization to perform the study was requested in a letter to the division superintendent of the school before beginning to collect actual data. The distribution of the survey questionnaire was done once the SDS's clearance was received.

The questionnaires were distributed to the two groups of respondents for data collection. In the first and second quarters, the questionnaires were personally distributed to the school administrators who are in charge of addressing the literacy gaps revealed by the MPS and the Pre-Test Reading Inventory Results. Every questionnaire section had a time limit for responses from participants. The data were tallied after collection for statistical processing and evaluation.

4.5. Data analysis

In presenting the data, certain statistical tools and procedures were employed in the presentation, interpretation, and analysis of the data acquired. Mathematical tools like frequency and percentage were employed to ascertain the linkages of individual data with respect to the whole before presenting the facts clearly and explicitly.

The researcher used statistical tools including frequency counting, percentage methods, and weighted

Table 1. Respondents of the study

District name	Total number of respondents from the upland	Total number of respondents from the lowland	No of school as head respondents
Rosario East	5	16	21
Rosario West	5	19	24
Total	10	35	45

Table 2. Role and abilities of the school heads

Items	Mean	Interpretation
1. Empower staff through continuous professional development activities	3.89	Great extent
2. Assist teachers in literacy instruction	3.84	Great extent
3. Supervise the literacy instruction	3.82	Great extent
4. Establish a literacy vision and mission for effective literacy instruction	3.76	Great extent
5. Manage people, data, and processes to foster school improvement in the areas of literacy	3.76	Great extent
6. Improve literacy instruction	3.69	Great extent
7. Establish well-resourced, print-rich literacy classrooms	3.67	Great extent
8. Cultivate literacy leadership in others	3.67	Great extent
9. Create a literacy climate hospitable to education	3.62	Great extent
Grand mean	3.75	Great extent

means to obtain accurate assessments of the data required by the problem statement. The literacy management method of elementary school principals at the institution was understood. This information will serve as the foundation for the Enhanced Learning Recovery Plan.

4.6. Ethical considerations

Many ethical principles were taken into account when producing research in order to maintain the integrity of the information as well as the dignity and well-being of the teachers and pupils. It includes that while conducting research, it is crucial to think about a few key factors before the survey even begins.

The research data must remain private during the study and the consent of the participants was obtained before using their real identities in the research report. This will allow the study's key objectives to be met and ensure that the data collected is consistent with expectations.

5. Results and discussion

This section summarizes the data obtained from the survey using the questionnaire that was distributed to the participants. They were tabulated, examined, interpreted, and supplemented with conclusions, ramifications, and theoretical underpinnings. Only the data used in the study's data analysis are represented in the figures and interpretation.

5.1. Role and abilities of the school heads in shaping the literacy plan for the school

School heads have a critical role in improving the literacy of the students. As part of the learning recovery, plans on shaping literacy are required. This is a foremost concern for school heads. In this study, the roles and abilities of the school heads on this matter were assessed.

Table 2 shows the roles and abilities of the school heads. The roles of school heads were assessed as this is very critical to the conduct of their work. Moreover, the abilities of the school heads are an important area of consideration as this is needed in the fulfillment of their obligations.

School heads showed a great extent of applying for their leadership roles in accordance with the literacy goals of the school. School heads establish a great extent of literacy vision and mission for effective literacy instruction. They empower staff through CPD activities to a great extent as well. Plus, they cultivate a great extent of literacy and leadership in others. The result signifies a good performance of school heads in acting as the leaders of the schools and promoting goals for improvement. In relation, Lear mentioned that school heads need to have

Table 3. School readiness catch-up plans

Items	Mean	Interpretation
1. Secure a safe and welcoming social environment	3.80	Great extent
2. Bring in the training of the teaching workforce (professionalism, quality of teaching, and sufficient quantity)	3.80	Great extent
3. Harness parents and community involvement	3.78	Great extent
4. Provide appropriate curriculum for learners	3.73	Great extent
5. Promote education inducing early stimulation	3.71	Great extent
6. Develop quality gender-responsive Early Childhood Care and Education programs	3.69	Great extent
7. Make culturally responsive, mother-tongue early childhood programs	3.64	Great extent
8. Develop legal and policy frameworks to ensure Early Childhood Care and Education programs	3.62	Great extent
9. Create an inclusive curriculum and teaching methods	3.56	Great extent
10. Provide quality early childhood and pre-primary education to all displaced children	3.51	Great extent
Grand mean	3.68	Great extent

clear goals to facilitate school operations [8].

The school heads also performed the instructional supervisory role to a great extent. This was evident in the assistance they provided to teachers in terms of literacy instruction. They also supervise literacy instruction. In addition, they manage people, data, and processes to foster school improvement in the areas of literacy. The result implies that the school heads focus on the attainment of quality education through continuous guidance and mentoring of classroom teachers. This is in consonance with the study by Lear [8], which stated that the application of instructional supervision will increase the achievement of learners.

It is also the role of the school heads to manage the school environment in line with the attainment of improved literacy instruction. To do this, the school heads establish well-resourced, print-rich literacy classrooms. They also create a literacy climate hospitable to education. It can be noted that school heads have the necessary abilities to prepare a learning environment that is consistent with the demands of the work of a school head. This aligns with the study by Domingo and Salva [12], which mentioned the provision of a learning environment for better literacy.

In general, the roles and abilities of the school heads were exemplified to a great extent in terms of preparing the school to attain the highest level of literacy. The school heads performed positively in the aspects of leadership, instructional supervision, and management of the learning environment. In line with this, Day and Sammons [9] highlighted the advantages of engaged principals for better literacy of learners.

5.2. School readiness catch-up plans to address the literacy crisis

For a school literacy program to be effective, readiness catch-up plans are necessary. In times of crisis, immediate actions are needed. It is imperative to have a well-designed plan which can be significant to the school. In this study, the school heads reported their catch-up plans while focusing on their readiness to address the literacy crisis.

Table 3 shows that the school heads exhibited a great extent of readiness to prepare catch-up plans to address the literacy crisis. The result indicates that the school heads have the necessary preparedness in response to the crisis faced by learners on their level of literacy. This may be attributed to the sufficient orientation given to school heads in dealing with and designing interventions that will address problems in literacy. However, the fact that the school heads did not meet the highest mean on this matter signifies a need to further strengthen this aspect.

Table 4. Monitoring of literacy practices

Items	Mean	Interpretation
1. Observe classes to see how teachers teach	3.91	Great extent
2. Monitor the use of teaching/learning resources in teaching	3.82	Great extent
3. Provide teachers and learners with teaching/learning resources	3.80	Great extent
4. Check the methodology that the teacher uses to deliver content	3.78	Great extent
5. Conduct in-person meetings with teachers to reexamine syllabus progress	3.78	Great extent
6. Observe teachers during lessons to encourage them to apply the most effective methodologies	3.76	Great extent
7. Walk in during lessons by the principals to improve learner's achievement in exams	3.73	Great extent
8. Evaluate teachers' classroom management	3.73	Great extent
Grand mean	3.79	Great extent

School heads exhibited a great extent of establishing a conducive learning environment. In order to promote better literacy, the school heads secure a safe and welcoming social environment. In addition, the school heads harness parents and community involvement. Moreover, they develop quality gender-responsive Early Childhood Care and Education programs. The result implies that the school heads have prepared in terms of the provision of an appropriate environment that will facilitate the literacy of learners. In relation to that, ILA mentioned the provision of a good learning environment towards better literacy.

Curriculum and legal frameworks were considered in the crafting of catch-up plans. The school heads develop legal and policy frameworks to ensure Early Childhood Care and Education programs. They also provide appropriate curriculum for learners as well as create an inclusive curriculum and teaching methods. To equip teachers with better skills, they bring in the training of the teaching workforce (professionalism, quality of teaching, and sufficient quantity). The result means that the curriculum and policies have been carefully prepared by the school heads in consonance with the desire to uphold the literacy of learners. In relation, DET mentioned that schools should have an emphasis on a curriculum that will focus on literacy.

The inclusion of learners was also greatly considered. School heads promote education by inducing early stimulation. They make culturally responsive, mother-tongue early childhood programs. They also provide quality early childhood and pre-primary education to all displaced children. The result implies that the school heads deeply promoted inclusivity while targeting the literacy of learners. In relation to that, Domingo and Salva [12] mentioned that school heads must provide community-based learning wherein everyone is welcomed.

To a great extent, the school heads have devised a good catch-up plan. They are well-prepared in the aspects of learning environment, curriculum and legal framework, and inclusivity. However, it is important to note that among the items, inclusivity in learning is the least practiced. This may be attributed to the lack of special facilities that can cater to learners with special needs or in difficult circumstances. Nevertheless, the school heads have the required preparation and are keeping up with the plans for literacy improvement. In line with this, Day and Sammons [9] stated that the school heads have been empowered to craft plans for literacy.

5.3. Monitoring of literacy practices in an instructional classroom

In every program, there is a need for close monitoring. School heads play a fundamental role in monitoring the programs to ensure the attainment of goals. When there is no monitoring included, the program may fail to attain its objectives or solve a particular problem. This study sought

to generalize the extent of monitoring done by school heads in terms of literacy practices.

Table 4 shows that the school heads exemplified a great extent of monitoring in terms of the literacy practices in the classroom which attained a grand mean of 3.79. This means that the school heads are making the expected effort to monitor these initiatives. Although the result is favorable, the school heads still have not met the maximum monitoring as the highest mean was not attained. The result implies that the school heads are well-equipped in monitoring the practices but the monitoring needs to be further strengthened to attain optimum performance. The fact that the highest possible mean was not attained signifies some areas for improvement.

The classroom teaching was greatly monitored. School heads observe the classes to see how teachers teach. Moreover, school heads walk in during lessons to help to improve learner's achievement in exams. They also evaluate teachers' classroom management. As a mentoring activity, they conduct in-person meetings with teachers to reexamine syllabus progress. The result implies that the school heads perform the job of being the instructional leader which the teachers can rely on in terms of pursuing quality literacy instruction. In relation to this, Houck and Novak mentioned that the school heads supervised literacy instruction [7].

Learning resources were considered to a great extent as well. They provide teachers and learners with teaching/learning resources. In turn, school heads monitor the use of teaching/learning resources in teaching. The school heads provide the necessary materials as implied by the result. The result indicates that the needed tools for literacy instruction are prioritized in the budget. In relation, ILA mentioned that the availability of resources has an impact on literacy.

Teaching strategies were also given great importance. The school heads check the methodology that the teacher uses to deliver content. They observe teachers during lessons to encourage them to apply the most effective methodologies. The result implies that the school heads can mentor teachers in terms of teaching strategies that

can help them hone their literacy. It agrees with the study by Day and Sammons [9], which emphasized the benefits of mentoring towards better literacy of learners.

In general, the teachers exemplified a great extent of monitoring. In terms of classroom teaching, resources, and strategies, the school heads exerted their best effort to monitor teachers. On the other hand, the classroom observations seemed to be falling behind as this was scored lower as compared to the rest of the indicators. The result implies that the school heads need to improve this aspect. This result may be attributed to the heavy workload of school heads which does not allow them to supervise classroom instruction closely. In relation to that, the school heads have a wide range of skills in terms of providing development activities for teachers.

5.4. Enhanced learning recovery plan

This study proposed an enhanced learning recovery plan. This plan focused on addressing the literacy gaps brought about by the two-year pandemic crisis which gave rise to the conduct of remote classes. The learning recovery plan is essential in bridging the learning gaps and helping learners attain the required competencies based on their grade level. The learning recovery plan crafted by the researcher focused on the weak points of roles and abilities, preparedness for catch-up plans, and monitoring. The learning plan was expected to improve the literacy of learners.

A situational analysis was presented to communicate the gaps that need to be addressed. As a plan, the researcher included the use of remedial classes, a project entitled "Teach one Each one," and a project entitled "Anak ko Turo ko." These activities were based on the least practiced indicators. The emphasis on establishing an inclusive environment and help from other stakeholders was observed in the learning recovery plan. In turn, this learning recovery plan is envisioned to improve the literacy of the learners.

6. Conclusion

The following are the conclusions derived from the

findings of the study.

(1) Maximum level of practice of the roles and responsibilities was exemplified by school heads but there is a need to further enhance the establishment of literacy climate.

(2) School heads are prepared with their catch-up plans but they need to further strengthen the provision of early childhood programs for displaced children.

(3) School heads have consistent monitoring of literacy practices but they need to strengthen the evaluation of teacher's classroom management.

(4) School heads have the necessary training in terms of their roles, abilities, preparedness, and monitoring skills.

(5) Learning recovery plans focused on literacy programs are required as this is one of the challenges of post-pandemic education.

7. Recommendations

The following are the recommendations based on the conclusions of the study.

(1) School heads may utilize the proposed learning recovery plan to uphold the literacy skills of learners.

(2) School heads may strive to attain the highest practice of their roles and preparedness to improve the literacy of learners.

(3) Teachers may adopt the best practices to improve the literacy of learners.

(4) Parents may take part in literacy programs as part of the school's learning recovery plan.

Acknowledgments

Disclosure statement

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