



# EXPLORING THE ROLES OF SCHOOL HEADS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF READING PROGRAMS

Ms. Zarina G. Llarena  
Researcher – SDO Laguna, Philippines

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## ABSTRACT

*The study dealt with the exploration of the roles of school heads in the implementation of reading programs of the Department of Education. A qualitative research design was used to analyze the data gathered from the interview of school heads and school reading coordinators. Purposive sampling was used to identify the respondents.*

*This study sought to answer the perception of school heads in their roles in the implementation of DepEd reading programs as well as their teacher's perceptions in their roles. The findings from the research provide principals and division leaders with a collection of best practices on strategies for the implementation of a successful reading program.*

*It revealed that in the implementation, principals gave regular technical assistance, mentoring, and coaching to provide resources. They lead in the planning and implementation of reading activities empowering and motivating teachers, partners, and learners. Implications for school leaders and principals are shared as well as suggestions for future research.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Comprehension, Implementation, Reading, Perception*

## INTRODUCTION

Relative to “Every Child a Reader Program (ECARP)” that addresses the thrust of DepED to make every Filipino child a reader at his/her own level, SDO Laguna is intensifying its advocacy for reading considering the existing problems in poor reading comprehension of learners in different grade levels.

As challenged also by the National Initiative Bawat Bata Bumabasa -3Bs( DM No. 173 s. 2019) to align its priorities toward promoting the culture of reading as a critical step in closing achievement gaps is in its pursuit, the significant roles of the school heads is being considered to prepare learners with strategic reading skills to make them independent readers.

Despite the implementation of reading programs in school, problems with reading comprehension are still prevalent based on the local assessment done instead of Phil. IRI was not used during the pandemic period. Instead of the Administration of the Revised Philippine Informal Reading Inventory, released on March 26, 2018, DO 14, 2.2018, SDO Laguna contextualized pre and post-reading materials to sustain the need to assess the reading level considering the learning platform being used by learners.

Assessing the impact of the pandemic on learners who may not have sharpened their reading skills as well as expected is crucial. In early literacy, the development of skills needed to transition from learning to read to reading is foundational to later academic success. Observations suggest that many children have lost momentum on such fundamental skills.

Based from findings of Goddard (2017) which shows that effective instructional leadership can provide foundation to support teachers’ work in ways that reinforce

managerial principle practices which promote growth of academic achievement

The current reading status of students needs focused attention for timely and flexible reading activities that would help them to improve their reading abilities. According to Merto (2018), technical assistance monitoring and evaluation by the school heads, education program supervisors, and other education experts are considered necessary to strengthen the implementation of the reading program.

Through instructional supervision focused on reading, the schools are urged to improve the school climate of moving towards the literacy of the learners through the help of the teachers.

The idea is supported by Dhuey and Smith (2014) who stated that a principal influences learners' performance by offering a positive teaching-learning environment and culture. It is the role of the school head to lead the teachers in facilitating the teaching-learning process (Fullan 2018). Their roles in the implementation of the reading programs are significant. Thus, the extent of their involvement and engagement in its implementation is a contributive factor for the success of the reading programs.

Research demonstrated that the leadership style of the school principal strongly influenced various elements of the school environment, including teacher and staff attitudes, student learning, and academics. (Shatzer et al., 2014)

The target of improving the schools from varied perspectives needs to focus on systems thinking headed by school principals. Leithwood (2017)

Based on the findings of Townsend (2017) that school heads are more confident in leading the school after successful programs and shared support among teachers which lead to improved teaching-learning process and



engagement of learners on activities and improvement in academic achievement.

According to Karadag (2017), the common adaption and valuable effect among leadership styles were found in distributive and transformational leadership. Rasinski and Young (2017) reported that educators often struggle to provide the most effective instructional strategies to improve reading achievement.

In this study, the selected active reading program implementers elementary principals, and school reading coordinators were interviewed. Sets of questions dealt with their perceptions of the principal's role in the implementation of a reading program. Ideas and perceptions came out from the point of view of the principal and the perspective of the teacher as to the principal's role.

These phenological interviews was the primary method of data collection. Findings will be fused and sorted into concepts, classifications, and ideas.

The result of the study could be of help in planning. If the result shows positive effects of using the initiated project on students' performance in reading, continued use of these materials should be utilized. Otherwise, modification for further improvement of activities itself should be considered.

### Objectives Of Study

The purpose of this study is to identify the perceptions of selected elementary principals and teachers regarding the principal's roles in the effective implementation of DepEd reading programs in SDO Laguna.

1. Identify the perceptions of elementary principals regarding their roles in the effective implementation of DepEd reading programs and projects
2. Identify the teachers' perceptions of the roles of the elementary principals in the effective implementation of DepEd reading programs and projects

An interview instrument and guide was designed by the researcher. Data were gathered from principals and teachers regarding the role of the principal in the implementation of a reading program using the interview protocol developed by the researcher. This is based on the thoughts of Creswell (2013) who stated that qualitative research measures consist of organizing the data, conducting an initial read-through of the archive, transcribing and arranging ideas, indicating the data, and developing an analysis of them.

There were a series of virtual interviews via zoom that occurred which provided a transcription through the recorded videos. The researcher transcribed the answers of the respondents and coded them to come up with common themes. The data were organized, managed, and analyzed with consideration of data privacy.

### Research Design

This research used a qualitative, phenomenological design through online interviews letting the perspectives of the research respondents be evaluated. It is used to explore the perceptions of the elementary principal's role in a reading program through the lens of the principal and in which the lived experiences of principals and teachers were examined. This approach's purpose was to describe, interpret, and understand multiple perspectives.

As Merriam and Tisdell (2016), emphasized to get a real sense of the meaning of experiences, the main method of collecting data is a phenomenological interview. The study discovered perceptions of principals and teachers concerning their roles in the implementation of the reading program. Principals and school reading teacher coordinators were interviewed. These phenological interviews were the main method of collecting information.

### Participants/Respondents

Purposive sampling was used in the study. The respondents were the school heads and school reading coordinators

Therefore, purposive sampling as considered also by Rai (2015) was used considering that it is a procedure of non-probability sampling wherein decisions concerning the respondents were based upon a range of criteria which may include knowledge of the research study, or competence and commitment to cooperate with the research.

### Instrumentation

The interview instrument procedure was conceptualized by the researcher through the Zoom meeting link, the series of interviews were recorded which transliterated the communications. Findings were carefully and systematically linked, coded, and sorted into subjects, classifications, and perceptions.

According to Alshenqeeti, H. (2014). research on using interviews has long been an expanding area of study, it might be accompanied by some conceptual problems that need to be constantly considered.

### Data Collection Procedure

As the interviews were done, the researcher used the qualitative results to recognize similarities and differences between the principals' and teachers' perspectives. The answers let the researcher make assumptions about the role of the principal in the implementation of a reading program. Transcribing, translating, and coding were done as the data were gathered after the online interview through the zoom link.

The answers for each question were based on the occurrences of connections and disparities between the perceptions of principals and teachers. The clustered themes were put into categories and arranged to simplify key outcomes.

To decide the existing number of respondents, purposive sampling was done on top implementers of effective implementation of reading programs in elementary schools. The researcher virtually sent a request letter to the school principal and the guardians of the target learners. After the consent, the set of reading materials was sent to them weekly to be distributed at the time the teachers released and retrieved the SLMs until the post-test was given.

### Ethical Consideration

The researcher was granted permission to conduct the study upon approval of District Supervisors and a copy of the approved letter was sent to the principal and teacher respondents for their participation as invited respondents.



The objectives of the study were well-cited to the respondents. The respondents were also assured that all data collected would be utilized for the research intention and that anonymity and confidentiality of the data would highly be observed.

It was assured that data privacy will be observed as they share their answers to the interview questions. Their free time for the conduct of the interview was also given consideration.

### Data Analysis

After the series of interviews with respondents which were done individually through the Zoom link, the data were transcribed, translated, inventoried, organized, coded into themes, and stored. A careful analysis of the data gathered from the questions was done.

There were identifying segments of the data explicitly stated from responses. The researcher wrote different observations, comments, and notes through carefully done coded transcripts.

The goals of the researcher were “to arrive at structural descriptions” of the experiences and to identify the “underlying and precipitating factors” that account for what was experienced so conclusions could be drawn based on the research questions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 227).

Thematic analysis is the data analysis technique utilized by the researcher. Thematic analysis as discussed by Braun & Clarke (2014) provides accessible and systematic procedures for generating codes and themes from qualitative data

### Results and Discussion

The results and analysis of the data are presented below.

#### Findings 1

Three themes emanated on the roles of school heads in the background of implementation of the reading program as perceived by the school heads and teachers such as Administer Reading Programs as mandated by the DepEd, Assessment of Reading Performance and Supervise the Reading Program through the support of internal and external stakeholders

Elementary school principals use the Every Child A Reader Program, Bawat Bata Bumabasa -3Bs Initiative and Division-initiated reading programs. They used the result of the division-based reading test as the basis for activity implementation. The implementation is a joint effort of the school and its external stakeholders.

The school principals have background knowledge on the implementation of their reading program wherein they used the national reading program and division reading program as the basis for their reading activities. They considered the different contributions of teachers, parents, and educational partners that served as an advantage for the promotion of the reading program since then. They used the results of reading tests as their basis in working out the implementation of the reading programs.

#### Findings 2

There were four themes identified in the roles of school heads as perceived by the school heads and teachers on professional development opportunities and support given

to teachers related to the reading programs namely: Empower Teachers through Significant Training, Facilitate Coaching and Mentoring, Encourage Research-Based solutions and Support Continuous Improvement (CI) activities.

The school heads provided development opportunities and support to teachers related to the reading program by conducting School Learning Cells (SLAC). Some of the topics were cascaded from district and division training in reading. They led the planning and implementation of SLAC and even invite resource speakers that can share significant learning to teachers in terms of reading programs. The teachers were also encouraged to attend reading training at a higher level.

Coaching and mentoring were done regularly by the school heads with the help of master teachers to sustain the learning of all teachers in reading.

Some of them also encouraged teachers to be engaged in teachers in research about reading to solve the issues and concerns of learners in reading. The school heads also lead them on conducting continuous improvement programs (CI) and pursue on graduate degrees.

#### Findings 3

There were three themes identified in the roles of school heads in the learners' motivation in engagement to the reading program as perceived by the school heads and teachers. These are the following: Motivate Learners to Engagement of Reading Activities, Provide Learning Resources for Reading, Provide Recognition to Learners' Achievement, and Allot time to give instructional assistance

The school heads guide the teachers in providing enjoyable reading activities among learners. There is also support for the provision of reading materials for them. Rewards and recognition were also initiated to be given to learners.

The school heads guided the teachers in providing enjoyable reading activities using the available learning platforms. They delivered reading materials to learners in case they do not have internet access or gadgets for the online class. There was the participation of the school heads in “Kumustahan “ among learners and parents. There are rewards and recognitions given to learners with the guidance and materials support of the school heads. (Scholastic, 2019) Having more books for students to choose from increases the likelihood a student will self-select a book interesting to them to read independently.

#### Findings 4

Four themes were identified in the roles of school heads in the program's implementation sustainability as perceived by the school heads and teachers. There are the themes: Reach out to the learners, Provide learning resources, Maintain community partnerships, and Monitor and evaluate the progress of learners' reading capabilities.

The school heads gave technical assistance, close monitoring on the distribution of reading materials, provide learning resources, and allocate budgets for the printing of reading materials from MOOE. They also seek partnerships with stakeholders for support to the reading engagement of learners in the pandemic times.



They conducted monitoring and evaluation using the generic tool for different programs based from their School Implementation Plan (SIP).

### Findings 5

There were four themes identified on the responses of school heads and teachers as to the roles of school heads in the success of the reading program. There are the following themes: Lead planner, Lead Implementer, Lead for Technical Assistance and Resource generation Through Partnership and School Fund

The overall success of the reading programs was described as outstanding, very good, rated 9 out 10, and as a product of the partnership of the school, parents, and other stakeholders. The principal played the roles of the planner, technical lead, coach, facilitator, resource provider, and evaluator in reaching the success of the program implementation.

The principals played a vital role in planning the implementation of reading activities. The school and other stakeholders took their part in planning for more sustainable implementation considering the limitations because of the alert levels. Technical assistance and instructional supervision were done regularly to support the teachers and learners in their endeavor in the reading journey.

The needs in the instruction were supported by the school heads leading to securing the resource generation. Instructional materials were outsourced from the donations of external stakeholders and MOOE.

### Conclusion, Limitations, and Recommendations

The following conclusions are formed based on the findings:

The purpose of this study was to identify the perceptions of the principal regarding their role in the implementation reading program, as well as the teachers' perceptions of the role of the principal in the implementation, and continuation of their reading program. Based on the data gathered from the interview, there is a resemblance in the responses of the school heads and their school reading coordinator.

The study findings suggested that the principal plays the role of technical assistance provider, and coach, mentor and resource provider. Principals motivate students' engagement in reading programs by leading the teachers in providing enjoyable and worthy reading activities and reading materials even majority of them are in the modular platform of learning.

The principals build a good partnership with different stakeholders to sustain the implementation of the reading programs not only for resource generation but also as a partner in the delivery of reading sessions to learners.

The principals monitored the implementation of reading programs using their localized form and generic monitoring tools for all reading programs. No specific tool for evaluation was available crafted specifically for their monitoring of the implementation of the reading program.

This study included a small sample size due to COVID-19 restrictions. The respondents were only the top awardees of the Best Implementer of Reading Program of SDO Laguna.

Considering the findings of this study, it would be beneficial to conduct research in the following areas:

1. The researcher could increase the sample size to include more school heads and teachers because COVID-19's impact limited the sample size in this study.
2. The researcher could consider interviewing principals and teachers from non-awardee schools to help clarify the principals' role in the implementation of the reading program.
3. This research could be beneficial to school heads in improving their implementation of the reading program through benchmarking with the best practices cited in the findings.
4. It is also beneficial to Education Program Supervisors and District Supervisors in guiding other school heads on how they can have effective and sustainable reading programs.

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### APPENDIX

<b>1. Roles of school head in the background of school's reading program as perceived by school heads and teachers</b>			
<b>Condensed Meaning Unit</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Theme</b>
Use the ECARP, Bawat Bata Bumabasa 3 Bs Initiative as basis of reading program	Adaptation reading activities ECARP Bawat Bata Bumabasa 3Bs	National Reading Program as Basis	Administer Reading Programs as mandated by the DepEd
Use of assessment as the basis of activities	Phil. IRI, reading assessment	Tools for assessment	Assessment of Reading Performance
Supervision implementation of the reading program	Planning, analysis, support	Adaption and support of reading activities	Supervise the reading program through the support of internal and external stakeholders.
<b>2. Roles of the school heads in professional development opportunities and support were given to teachers related to the reading program as perceived by school heads and teachers</b>			
Conduct of Training to teachers	School Learning Action Cell SLAC INSET in district ,DO	Provide professional development and training	Empower teachers through significant trainings
Conduct of session online	Give coaching and mentoring	Professional communication	Facilitate coaching and mentoring
Conduct of research	Action research	Encouragement for teachers to conduct research	Encourage Research-Based solutions
Participation to Continuous Improvement ( CI )	Encourage Continuous Improvement ( CI )activities and presentation	Constant Improvement through CI participation	Support Continuous Improvement (CI) Activities
<b>3. Roles of school heads to motivate the learners to engage in the reading program as perceived by school heads and teachers</b>			
Encourage teachers to provide enjoyable reading activities	Storytelling, games ,Kwensayahan	Reading activities	Motivate Learners to Engagement of reading activities
Provide reading materials	Localized reading materials ,teacher-made reading materials, printed reading materials	Reading materials	Provide learning resources for reading
Assist in giving rewards to learners	Certificates Kind words	Appreciation	Provide Recognition to Learners' Achievement
Visit online class	Online sessions, google classrooms, group chats	Observation, supervision	Allot time to give instructional assistance
<b>4. Roles of school heads in the program implementation sustainability as perceived by school heads and teachers</b>			
Plan and implement activities to reach out to learners despite the pandemic	Pasabay Delivery through barangays caravan	Delivery of reading materials	Reach out the learners
Give learning materials	Give bond papers, ink, printers	Give the needs for the printing of reading materials	Provide learning resources
Tap stakeholders for support	Partnerships Communicate with LGUs	Adopt a School	Maintain community partnerships
Observation, <i>Kumustahan</i>	Visitation to online class Regular <i>Kumustahan</i> with learners and parents	Checking of Learners' status	Monitor and evaluate the progress of learners' reading capabilities
<b>5. Roles of school heads in the overall success of the reading program as perceived by school heads and teachers.</b>			
Coordinate the reading activities	Meeting <i>Kumustahan</i>	Online and F and F meetings	Lead Planner
Execute implementation of reading activities	Observation	Instructional Supervision	Lead Implementer
Guiding the teachers throughout the activities	Mentoring Coaching	Technical Assistance	Lead for Technical Assistance
Tap external stakeholders for resource support	Solicitation MOOE	Budgetary Inclusion of resources needed	Resource generation Through Partnership and School Fund