

Secondary School Linkages and Networking Among External Stakeholders

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Abstract: This study aimed to assess the implementation and practices in the public secondary school linkages and networking activities among external stakeholders in the CALABARZON region relative to curriculum, instruction, faculty and staff development, physical facilities development, and special projects. The strengths were determined on how evident the extent of school linkages and networking among stakeholders in programs, projects, and activities sponsored by DepEd, school, and community. The descriptive method was used with the questionnaire, interview and focus group discussion. There were a purposive sample of 112 external stakeholders composed of alumni, local government unit, parent of alumni, religious and non - government organization. They came from different public secondary schools in CALABARZON which won in the BrigadaEskwela from School Year 2013 – 2015 categorized as small, big, and exceptional in size. The statistical processes and procedures included weighted mean and rank. Findings of the study showed that the school linkages and networking activities related to curriculum, instruction, faculty and staff development, physical facilities development, and special projects concern were rated as highly evident by the external stakeholders. Moreover, involvement in school linkages and networking among stakeholders were highly evident in DepEd, school and community – sponsored programs, projects, and activities. The strengths identified in school linkages and networking were in faculty and staff development and DepEd sponsored activities; while the weaknesses were on special projects and community - sponsored programs, projects and activities. Moreover, the issues and challenges confronting administrators in fostering school linkages were availability of resources, accountability measures for concerned stakeholders and involvement and commitment of participants. A proposed management program to enhance the school linkages and networking activities among external stakeholders was designed as an output of this study

Keywords: Secondary School Linkages and Networking, External Stakeholders, School Linkages, School Networking, Stakeholders

1. Introduction

A. Context/ Rationale

This study aimed to assess the implementation and practices in the public secondary school linkages and networking activities among external stakeholders. Specifically, it looked into the description of school linkages and networking activities relative to curriculum, instruction, faculty and staff development, physical facilities development, and special projects as assessed by the external stakeholders. The strengths

likewise determined how evident the extent of school linkages and networking among stakeholders in programs, projects, and activities sponsored by DepEd, school, and community was among the external stakeholders. A management program was proposed to enhance the public secondary school linkages and networking.

The researcher has been connected with the Department of Education as a public secondary school teacher for 15 years and as a public secondary school head for six years. Through those years, the main purpose of said position is to improve students' learning outcomes. However, she had realized and witnessed that such improvement could not be achieved by the people in the school alone, such that it is necessary to involve people outside the school. It has been an experience that in the span of time that the researcher has been connected with the different schools, the level of engagement of the external stakeholders varied.

It is on this premise that the research was undertaken to assess the extent of involvement of school linkages and networking among stakeholders in CALABARZON. Along this concern, from the study's results, the researcher aimed to come up with a proposed management program towards improved school performance.

2. Review of related literature

Both conceptual and research literature have significant bearing in the conduct of the present investigation. The literature reviewed contained some concepts with strong bearing on the development thrust of public secondary schools where the linkages and networking are supposed to be present. These concepts were given information by Valenciano (2008), Cadora (2008), Sanguines (2010), and Williams (2006) while perceptions about linkages and networking were expounded by Sinclair (2001), Jacobson (2003) and Bodin (2009). Similarly, the external stakeholders' engagement in the different activities sponsored by the Department of Education, school and community were stated by Agpalo (2004), Diamini (2004), and Brucato (2004).

The studies of Golfo (2012), Chumacera, Mani, San Agustin, Managbanag (2003), Maslang, Mascarina (2002), Honculada and Hoj and Miskel (2001) attested to the participation of varying types of stakeholders in activities involving directly or indirectly increasing students' learning outcomes. These

studies are similar to the present study in that their linkages and networking also entailed participation of the stakeholders in school activities.

Viilamin (2013), Laurente (2010), and Tan (2006) suggested different activities which strengthened linkages and networking in the school among stakeholders, These studies are somewhat similar to the present study because they gave information on the different aspects of how any type of stakeholder may connect with the school to bring about students' increased learning outcomes.

Stakeholders have a great impact to the establishment of the vision, mission and goals of the school and this was studied by Cabral. Stakeholders' assessment were done by Nito, (2002), Barrion (2005), and Lumactao (2010), These were similar to the present study, specifically in terms of establishing linkages and networking among institutions. The problems and needs confronted by administrators in carrying out these linkages and networking were detailed by Briones (2012) and Robbins (2003). The study also delved into the issues and concerns confronting administrators in the establishment of linkages and networking in schools. These subject matters were all discussed in the present study but were different in terms of the time the study was conducted and the respondents who were given the questionnaires who involved stakeholders from the schools who won the BrigadaEskwela from 2013 – 2015. Generally, it could be said that despite the found similarities cited in the reviewed studies, it was evident that this study had a distinct personality of its own considering its focus, methodology, variables, and respondents, among many others.

3. Research questions

This research aimed to assess the linkages and networking activities of stakeholders in secondary schools in CALABARZON with the end in view of proposing a management program. Specifically, the researcher sought answers to the following questions:

As assessed by the external stakeholders, how may school linkages and networking activities be described relative to:

- Curriculum;
- Instruction;
- Faculty and staff development;
- Physical facilities; and
- Special projects?

To what extent are the school linkages and networking among stakeholders evident in programs, projects and activities that are:

1. DepEd- sponsored;
2. school- sponsored;
3. community-sponsored?
4. What are the strengths and weaknesses identified in the school linkages and networking activities?
5. What issues and challenges confront administrators in fostering school linkages?
6. What management program may be proposed to

enhance school linkages and networking among stakeholders in CALABARZON?

4. Scope and limitation

This study covered the school linkages and networking activities among stakeholders in CALABARZON pertaining to curriculum, instruction, faculty and staff development, physical facilities development and special projects. Likewise, the stakeholders' engagement in various programs, projects, and activities sponsored by the Department of Education, school and community were also included. The strengths, weaknesses, issues and challenges regarding school linkages and networking activities were also determined. At the end of the study, a proposed management program was conceptualized. The research was limited to the CALABARZON Region as its research environment. The stakeholders in the school were the main focus of the study as they could provide direct evidences of the existing linkages and networking among stakeholders. It was confined only to stakeholders in the schools in CALABARZON which have won the BrigadaEskwela for three years covering School Year 2013 – 2015.

5. Methodology

The respondents of the study were involved in the linkages and networking in schools composed of the parents, alumni, local government unit, parent of alumni, religious and non-government organization. The external stakeholders came from the different public secondary schools in CALABARZON which were categorized as small, big, and exceptional in size. The CALABARZON area included in the study is composed of the different provinces and city divisions of Cavite, Calamba, Batangas, Rizal, Lipa City, Tanauan, Quezon, Dasmariñas City, Imus City, Antipolo City and Cavite City. The schools in these areas were adjudged first to fifth place winners in the BrigadaEskwela from 2013 to 2015.

A. Data collection

The study utilized the descriptive qualitative method of research in presenting information on the secondary school linkages and networking among the external stakeholders in CALABARZON. The statistical tool used was the weighted mean and rank. To substantiate data gathered, the researcher made use of unstructured interview and focused group discussion with the different stakeholders involved.

B. Significant findings

The following were the findings of the study:

1. Descriptions of Stakeholders on School Linkages and Networking Activities (SLNA) Curriculum. The school linkages and networking activities among stakeholders related to curriculum were rated by the external stakeholders as highly evident as learning is complemented with real experiences in order to improve the curriculum. This item gained the highest

rank and had weighted mean of 4.23. Assistance to identify learners' needs by providing activities and using materials for meaningful learning was last in rank and had a weighted mean of 3.97 but still assessed as highly evident. Based on the responses, it could be inferred that the external stakeholders' ratings on the school linkages and networking activities related to curriculum was highly evident as shown in composite mean of 4.11.

2. *Instruction:* The external stakeholders rated the school linkages and networking activities related to instruction as highly evident with a composite mean of 4.06. They gave the highest value to the activity on helping strengthen good practices by motivating students to practice desirable values as justified in weighted mean of 4.32 described as highly evident. However, the external stakeholders gave lowest rating to the establishment of a mechanism to benchmark best practices on development of instructional materials, shown in weighted mean of 3.86 described as highly evident.
3. *Faculty and staff development:* The external stakeholders indicated that it was highly evident the school linkages and networking activities related to faculty and staff development focused on exposing teachers for their career advancement and enhancing teamwork among teachers through team building activities, ranked 1.5 with a weighted mean of 4.21. The lowest weighted mean of 3.90 and last in rank yet still assessed as highly evident. was providing financial assistance through scholarship programs. To sum up, the external stakeholders assessed the school linkages and networking was highly evident in faculty and staff development indicated in composite mean of 4.10.
4. *Physical facilities development:* The external stakeholders placed the highest rating on the assistance in generating resources to continuous school development indicated by a weighted mean of 4.26 inferring such assistance was highly evident. Lowest weighted mean among the external stakeholders was 3.97 on collaboration to observe transparency in transacting physical facilities concerned described as highly evident. The composite mean on the external stakeholders' responses was 4.09 indicating highly evident assistance in physical facilities development.
5. *Special projects:* The external stakeholders revealed that it was highly evident they inspired members by preserving the school's good image and performance in the community expressed in weighted mean of 4.24 and ranked first. The lowest weighted mean was 3.92 and was last in rank order which indicated highly evident participation in provision of: scholarships from possible donors, training exposure by tapping

different agencies and evaluative measures in fund sourcing. To sum up, the external stakeholders assessed the school linkages and networking activities related to special projects as highly evident reflected in composite mean of 4.04. This connotes that external stakeholders have a bearing on the DepEd's thrust on special projects.

Extent of Involvement of Stakeholders in Different Programs, Projects, and Activities

1. *DepEd – sponsored.* The external stakeholders proved that extent of involvement was in the cleaning, repair and construction for the BrigadaEskwela Program was to a very great extent. This got the highest rank with a weighted mean of 4.50. The involvement to MADRASAH Evaluation Project was to a moderate extent which ranked the lowest with a weighted mean of 3.36. Based on the responses, it could be inferred that the external stakeholders' ratings on extent of involvement to the different programs, projects and activities sponsored by the DepEd was to a great extent. This showed a composite mean of 4.01.
2. *School – sponsored.* The external stakeholders gave the highest value to the implementation of GulayansaPaaralan with a weighted mean of 4.23 indicating involvement was to a great extent. However, external stakeholders gave low rating on sourcing out funds from the Alumni Organization as obtained in weighted mean of 3.73 but still assessed that involvement was to a great extent. With the results presented, it can be deduced that the external stakeholders were involved to a great extent in the different programs, projects and activities sponsored by the school as shown in composite mean of .3.99.
3. *Community – sponsored.* The external stakeholders revealed that involvement in the monitoring of attendance of students for the PantawidPamilyang Pilipino Program was to a great extent which gained a weighted mean of 4.28, ranked first. The respondents gave a low rating to organization of cultural shows and exhibits sponsorship programs expressed in weighted mean of 3.62 but still described as to a great extent. The external stakeholders rated their involvement in the programs, projects and activities sponsored by the community was to a great extent. This garnered a composite mean of 3.97.

Strengths and Weaknesses identified in the School Linkages and Networking

The variable for curriculum was first in rank with an average weighted mean of 4.11 indicating it was in this area where the most number of stakeholders participated most. On the other hand, the special projects concern was the weakest among the variables as shown in weighted mean of 4.04 inferring greater efforts of the stakeholders were focused on the faculty and staff, physical facilities development and instruction. For the

sponsoring agency, the DepEd activities, projects and programs gained the highest rank reflected in the weighted mean of 4.01 while the community-sponsored was lowest in rank with a weighted mean of 3.97.

Issues and Challenges confronting Administration in Fostering School Linkages and Networking Activities

1. The external stakeholders regarded availability of resources, accountability measures for concerned stakeholders and involvement and commitment of participants as three main issues confronting administrators in fostering school linkages and networking as affirmed in weighted means of 3.94, 3.87 and 3.85, respectively. The respondents gave lowest value to lack of monitoring and evaluation scheme with a weighted mean of 3.18. The external stakeholders' assessment yielded a composite mean of 3.55 indicating strong agreement on these issues.
2. Proposed Management Program to Enhance School Linkages and Networking Activities among Stakeholders in the CALABARZON Region The proposed management program highlighted special projects which contain environment, cultural/social, and religious components to be sponsored by the community and may enhance the public secondary school linkages and networking activities among internal and external stakeholders in CALABARZON Region.

6. Conclusions

In the light of the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. The school linkages and networking activities are highly evident in curriculum, instruction, faculty and staff development, physical facilities development, and special projects.
2. The school linkages and networking among stakeholders are evident to a great extent in DepEd, school and community – sponsored programs, projects and activities.
3. The strengths identified in the school linkages and networking activities pertain to curriculum and DepEd sponsored programs, projects, and activities. The weaknesses in the school linkages and networking are in special projects and community-sponsored programs, projects and activities.
4. The issues and challenges confronting administrators in fostering school linkages and networking are on availability of resources, accountability measures for concerned stakeholders, and involvement and commitment of participants.
5. The proposed management program may enhance the public secondary school linkages and networking activities in the CALABARZON Region.

7. Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the

following recommendations are hereby endorsed:

1. The proposed management program should be reviewed by program specialists prior to its implementation.
2. Create engagement of stakeholders in the implementation of special projects and community sponsored activities with additional focus on the provision of resources is strongly recommended.
3. Researchers may conduct similar study for other schools which are non – Brigada Eskwela winners.

Proposed Management Program for Enhancing Secondary School Linkages and Networking Among Internal and External Stakeholders In Calabarzon

A. Program title

Community – based Special Projects on School Linkages and Networking(SLNA). The Management Program encompasses the special projects aspects which would cater to the community as the basic participants. This includes package of activities which would develop environment, cultural/social, and religious projects.

Project 1: Environmental Concern

Objective: To offer package of activities which will help develop the environmental concerns of the school and the community.

Activities: The school will spearhead a regular quarterly/monthly schedule of clean-up drive. The internal stakeholders (school head, teachers, students, and parents) and internal stakeholders (alumni, parent of alumni, NGO, LGU, private individual or religious group) will be involved. The participants will do the clean-up drive of the areas outside the school up to the area where the students are passing by within the barangay. There will also be a tree planting activity to be done on the cleaned area or in a designated area in the barangay. The seedlings to be used will be requested from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources or from the barangay or YES – O nursery.

Provision of identical plastic garbage cans (blue drums) will be placed in strategic areas outside the school area. The barangay officials will be in – charge of the garbage disposal. The group will collaborate to make organic fertilizers using waste materials. This will be the main responsibility of the barangay office who also has a nursery. Furthermore, income-generating activities can also be done to offer livelihood opportunities for the parents. This would be possible if the external stakeholders will tie – up with other agencies who can provide jobs directly or indirectly related to the capabilities of the parents.

An election of officer will be done to select from the internal and external stakeholders. This group will be responsible for the overseeing the activities of the movement.

Project 2: Cultural Concern

Objective: To present package of activities which will help stakeholders to engage in cultural concerns.

Activities: This will be a yearly activity, possibly during the Independence day Celebration on June 12 or Recognition Day in March to be done to give recognition to the stakeholders who have given their share in order to bring improvement to the school. Plaques of recognition or certificates will be given to concerned donors to document their outstanding contribution to the school.

There will also be a program to showcase students' special presentations from the school. Likewise, counterpart presentations from the community can also be tapped. This could also serve as a venue to invite other people outside the school who can be possible donors. A Fun Run titled "Takbo Para sa (Name of School)" could also be done to raise funds for future use of the school. The Local Government Unit in the municipality and barangay should be given major roles to ensure their 100% participation.

A yearly Larkbay-aral/Team Building activity will be sponsored by the municipal government

Project 3. Religious Concern

Objective: To offer a number of activities where stakeholders will get involved to uplift the religious aspects of the school and the community.

Activities: The school will spearhead the project in conducting First Friday Mass. This will be a means to strengthen the moral values of both the internal and external stakeholders. The Mass will be officiated by the Parish priest and the religion classes to be handled by the lay persons. Other religious celebrations will already be incorporated in the school-church schedule as confession, ash Wednesday, and baccalaureate mass for the graduates.

Similarly, religion classes can be conducted once a week to cover 30 minutes to one hour, without hampering the schedule of the academic subjects. This would be done with the permission of the parents allowing their children to attend the catechetical classes. There will be a yearly retreat to be given to the students to be conducted by the religious groups in the community or other groups from nearby areas. The group will take charge of following – up the values reorientation growth of the students.

Other issues which will be addressed in this proposed management program will include the lowest ranked variables for curriculum, instruction, faculty and staff development and physical facilities development. Also, DepEd and school activities will also be variables with least rank will be given activities to address the gap.

School Linkages and Networking Activities Related to:

B. Curriculum

- Establish mechanisms to recognize accomplishments by granting incentives to outstanding students and teachers and documenting best practices.
- Identify learner's needs by providing activities and using materials for meaningful learning and designing modules to substantiate students' learning.

C. Instruction

- Tap agencies to provide on the job training to supplement teaching by sponsoring stakeholders' forum and giving certificates of recognition to outstanding stakeholders.
- Provide monitoring system for regular home visits to prevent drop out by discussing with parents, students and PTA.

D. Faculty and staff development

- Commit stakeholders to institutionalize provision of financial assistance through scholarship programs to teachers by executing Memorandum of Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding.

E. Physical facilities and development

- Develop evaluation tools that accurately assess the transactions in constructing buildings and providing instructional materials.
- Establish a functional and workable committee to oversee physical facilities check.

Involvement of Stakeholders in Different Programs, Projects, and Activities:

F. DepEd

- Sponsored. Lobby with external stakeholders for possible land donation.
- Addressing clientele included in the MADRASAH Project.
- Organize a stakeholders' summit to address the school needs concerns.

G. School – Sponsored.

- Establishing linkages with the Health Sector regarding Deworming Project through constant monitoring.
- Organizing quarterly Alumni Meeting to motivate them to link with the school and sponsor priority projects for school improvement.

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