



Competence and Challenges of Multigrade Coordinators in the Selected Upland Municipalities of Ilocos Sur: Input to Retooling Program

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ABSTRACT

The study developed a retooling program for multigrade coordinators of the Schools Division of Ilocos Sur. The descriptive-correlational and developmental design was used where 50 respondents from selected upland municipalities of Ilocos Sur were involved. A questionnaire-checklist was used to gather data. Frequency count mean values and Pearson r were used in the analysis and interpretation of data gathered. Data processing was done using a computer. Findings revealed that the profile of the respondents varied as to age, sex, highest educational attainment, length of service, number of seminars or trainings attended and IPCRF ratings; the level of competence of the respondents along: knowledge on coordinatorship; professional development leadership; design and delivery of professional development activities, monitoring and reporting of professional development activities and community collaborations were highly competent; the degree of challenges encountered was moderately agree towards coordinatorship; there is significant relationship between the profile of the respondents along highest educational attainment on competencies. Age, sex, length of service, number of seminars or trainings attended and IPCRF ratings has no significant relationship; there is no significant relationship between the profile and challenges encountered towards coordinatorship; the retooling program was developed based on the result of the study; and the retooling program was very highly acceptable. From the findings, the conclusions were drawn: the teachers' characteristics are acceptable based from the standard qualification of teachers in the public-school system. MG coordinators are highly competent to deliver and execute their functions as coordinators. The challenges met by the multigrade coordinators made them to employ coping strategies in their work. The higher the educational attainment of the multigrade coordinators, the more they are competent in their coordinatorship. The profile characteristics of the multigrade coordinators could be a factor in enhancing the coordinatorship competence of the respondents. The proposed retooling program for Multigrade coordinators is acceptable for use. The following are the recommendations offered: Multigrade coordinators should be given time for trainings and seminars, for them to be able to learn and relearn what they have learned before. School heads should send their multigrade teacher coordinators to series of different continuing professional development for they can enhance more their competencies to meet the outstanding performance. There should be proper monitoring, evaluation and census as to the multigrade teacher coordinators challenges met. Multigrade teachers are strongly recommend pursuing their continuing professional development. Multigrade teachers are strongly encouraged to employ effective coping mechanisms towards challenges encountered. The proposed retooling program is strongly recommended to be implemented. Teachers and future researchers are encouraged to benchmark on this developed retooling program.

KEYWORDS: competence, challenges, retooling program, multigrade coordinators

Introduction

Multigrade is an education strategy in which a teacher instructs students of various ages, talents, and grade levels in a same classroom. It is suitable to schools in rural or outlying locations when there is a lack of resources, a low student enrollment, a shortage of teachers, and a requirement to teach many grade levels at once. Teachers in multigrade schools are having ancillary services, administrative works, designations and they are the coordinators of the different learning areas and special programs of the Department of Education. UNESCO (2015) proposed multigrade as an important tool to help developing countries meet the mandate of EFA (Education For All) parameters. Teachers in multigrade schools, on the other hand, have a dual role as teachers and principals, which presents several challenges. Managing multigrade classes, on the other hand, is tough since the classroom comprises more than one grade level. Multigrade schools will undoubtedly confront several problems and difficulties. A multigrade program's effectiveness is heavily reliant on the teacher. Teachers in multigrade classes encounter a variety of problems, including a lack of facilities, cultural and practice disparities, distance, demographic considerations, a lack of resources, infrequent monitoring, and poor living circumstances. Teachers must also cope with the difficulties that come with teaching a multigrade structured class. Due to these conditions, multigrade teachers become hostile to the notion of multigrade teaching and lose excitement for the work. Multigrade Teaching is a challenging and problematic work environment. Teachers' challenges should not be overlooked because they will serve as the foundation for developing and promoting quality education. This is true in the upland municipalities of Ilocos Sur Schools Division. Multigrade coordinators in upland districts face a number of difficulties and challenges, including: voluminous paper work, such as completing and submitting simultaneous school reports on time while teaching multiple classes; too many designations or coordinatorships, which necessitate time and patience to finish reports and submit via online; a lack of learning materials and school facilities, as well as a lack of monitoring and

technical assistance. Many of them centered on teachers' experiences and challenges in multigrade classrooms. However, no study has been conducted on the competence and challenges faced by teacher coordinators in multigrade schools. As a result, this study was conceptualized to determine the level of competence and challenges faced by Multigrade Coordinators in carrying out their assigned responsibilities.

Statement of the Problem

The study developed a retooling program for Multigrade Coordinators of the Schools Division of Ilocos Sur. Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions: What is the profile of the Multigrade Coordinators along: age; sex; highest educational attainment; length of service; number of seminars/trainings attended related to multigrade coordinatorship; and IPCRF rating? 2) What is the extent of competence of the Multigrade Coordinators along: knowledge on coordinatorship; professional development leadership; design and delivery of professional development activities; monitoring and reporting of professional development activities; and community collaborations?

What is the degree of the challenges encountered by Multigrade coordinators towards their coordinatorship? Is there a significant relationship between the profile of the respondents and the competence? Is there a significant relationship between the profile of the respondents and the challenges? What program may be formulated in improving the competence of Multigrade Coordinators along the dimensions considered? What is the acceptability of the retooling program? The following assumption served as a guide in the conduct of this study. There is no significant relationship between the profile of the respondents and competence. There is no significant relationship between the profile of the respondents and the challenges encountered?

Scope and Limitation of the Study

The focus of the study was to determine the profile of respondents along: age, sex, highest educational attainment, length of service and number of seminars, trainings related to coordinatorship; extent of competence of Multigrade Coordinators along the dimensions considered, degree of challenges encountered towards coordinatorship, significant relationship between the profile of respondents and their competence, significant relationship between the profile of respondents and challenges encountered toward coordinatorships, such result of the study was the development of the Retooling Program for Public Multigrade Coordinators of Schools Division of Ilocos Sur. It was delimited on the selected upland municipalities of Ilocos Sur composed of 50 multigrade coordinators of pure and mixed multigrade schools.

Research Design

The study used the descriptive-correlational and developmental design wherein the questionnaire is the main tool in gathering the data relative to the problem. Descriptive research designs are used when a researcher wishes to describe the characteristics of a population in a systematic and accurate manner; a researcher may also use the descriptive design if it is necessary to fully capture the characteristics of a population in order to discover meaning or the frequency of certain events.

Population and Locale of the Study

The respondents of the study were the 50 public Multigrade Coordinators in selected upland districts of Schools Division of Ilocos Sur's pure and non-pure multigrade schools. Specifically, Sigay district (10) respondents, Suyo (15) respondents, Quirino (9) respondents and Cervantes district (16) respondents. The researcher used the 50 multigrade elementary teacher coordinators during the school year 2022-2023 to identify the level of competence and degree of challenges to coordinatorship. The total enumeration method was employed.

Results and Discussions

The profile of the respondents as to age, sex, highest educational attainment, position or rank, length of service, and relevant seminars/trainings attended. 19 or 38 percent of the respondents belonged to age bracket of 29-36 years old. The 12 or 24 percent were 37-44 years old; 8 or 16 percent were 21-28 years old; 7 or 14 percent were 45-52 years old and 4 or 8 percent were 53-60 years old. The results imply that most of the respondents belonged to age bracket of 29-36. This means that the teachers are expected to be mature and capable of carrying out their obligations as professional teachers throughout their prime and most productive years. In terms of sex, it was established that out of 50 MG respondents, 41 or 82 percent were females while 9 or 18 percent were males. The findings support the widely held belief that women continue to dominate the teaching profession, particularly in multigrade classrooms where instructional responsibilities are overly complex. The findings support Regalado's (2017) findings that females dominate teaching in the Philippines both in elementary and secondary schools. In terms of educational attainment, it was found that 32 or 64 percent of the respondents hold a baccalaureate degree with master's units; 7 or 14 percent hold a master's degree; 5 or 10 percent hold a baccalaureate degree; 4 or 8 percent hold a master's degree along with a doctorate; and 2 or 4 percent hold a doctorate. Level of Competence of Multigrade Coordinators along Knowledge on Coordinatorship The indicator "adheres to standards and is alert to good practices" got the highest mean value of 3.76 categorized as highly competent while the lowest indicator "makes recommendations to program director/head and instructional leadership based on research findings that enhance program services" got a mean value of 3.22 categorized as highly competent. This suggests that the multigrade teacher coordinators are familiar with the various work procedures and are aware of the standards and best practices that apply to their duties as Multigrade Coordinators. Level

of Competence of Multigrade Coordinators along Professional Development Leadership The level of multigrade coordinators along Professional Development Leadership was highly competent as evidenced by 3.81 mean value. The highest indicator “develops and maintains positive relationships with education stakeholders” got a 4.5 mean value categorized as very highly competent while the lowest indicator “encourages risk-taking and the acceptance of new challenges to achieve goals” got a mean value of 3.58 categorized as highly competent. The findings show that multigrade coordinators are capable and successful leaders who are well-equipped with the necessary leadership techniques to carry out their duties as coordinators in their respective schools.

Level of Competence of Multigrade Coordinators along Design and Delivery of Professional Development Activities.

The level of competence of multigrade coordinators along Design and Delivery of Professional Development was highly competent as evidenced by the 3.66 mean value. The highest indicator “prioritize issues and needs to be addressed” got 3.88 mean value categorized as highly competent. However, the lowest indicator competent obtains and allocates human and material resources for professional development activities garnered a 3.46 mean value categorizes as highly competent. Relationship between the Profile and the Competencies of the Multigrade Coordinators The relationship between the profile and competencies of the Multigrade Coordinators is significantly correlated with the competencies of the respondents at 0.05 level of significance as evidenced by 0.291 r-value causing the null hypothesis to be rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted. Conclusions and Recommendations Based from the findings of study the following are the conclusions and recommendations that were culled out from it. The teachers’ characteristics are acceptable based from the standard qualification of teachers in the public-school system. The Multigrade Coordinators are highly competent to deliver and execute their functions as coordinators. The challenges met by the multigrade coordinators made them to employ coping strategies in their work. The higher the educational attainment of the multigrade coordinators, the more they are competent in their coordinatorship. The profile characteristics of the Multigrade Coordinators could be a factor in enhancing the coordinatorship competence of the respondents. The proposed retooling program for Multigrade coordinators is acceptable for use. Based from the conclusions drawn from the study, the following are highly recommended: Multigrade Coordinators should be given time for trainings and seminars, for them to able to learn and relearn what they have learned before. School heads should send their Multigrade Coordinators to a series of different continuing professional development for they can enhance more their competencies to meet outstanding performance. There should be proper monitoring, evaluation and census as to the multigrade teacher coordinators challenges met. Multigrade teachers are strongly recommended to pursue their continuing professional development. Multigrade teachers are strongly encouraged to employ effective coping mechanisms towards challenges encountered. The proposed retooling program is strongly recommended to be implemented. Teachers and future researchers are encouraged to benchmark on this developed retooling program.

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