



**MANAGEMENT PRACTICES OF CABA CLUSTER DURING THE PANDEMIC:  
INPUT FOR ENHANCED SCHOOL OPERATIONAL LEARNING  
CONTINUITY PLAN (E-SOLCP)**

**CARREON, PRECILA M. & NAVOR, REGIE F.**

San Jose National High School, Caba, La Union

Division of La Union

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**Abstract**

Management is a skill that a school leader needs to improve over time. To expand this skill, a school leader should practice benchmarking strategies. Hence, this study described the implementation of SOLCP activities among the public secondary schools in Caba, La Union for the Academic Year 2020-2021, and employed mixed method using survey questionnaire, a structured interview questions, and document analysis which were treated using frequency count, mean, and codes and themes. As to the findings of the study, all of the SOLCP activities were implemented by the schools to a very high extent. Meanwhile, identified necessary programs, projects, and activities based on uniqueness, location, and geographical locations included provision of learning support technologies, construction of additional facilities, social awareness program, and intensified school-community partnership. From the merits of the findings, the study concluded that there was budget insufficiency, lack of monitoring tool, and no periodic giving of technical assistance. Therefore, this research humbly recommended to increase budget allocation for school, devise monitoring tool for SOLCP activities, and consistently provide episodic technical assistance for school heads and teachers. Thus, a training design was formulated to equip all schools about practices and success stories in the implementing SOLCP, a proposed monitoring tool to supervise different SOLCP activities, and a sample enhanced SOLCP.

**Keywords:** Management Practices, SOLCP, Implementation, Projects, Programs, Activities

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**1. Introduction**

Effective school management lies on the shoulder of the school principals who are anchoring their work on central issues of teaching and learning and continuous school improvement. It is then imperative for school heads to lead schools to goal-setting processes where student achievement data is analyzed, improvements areas are identified, and actions for changes are initiated. However, this process is not a one-man task; it should be a collaborative work among staff and community to identify relevant needs towards realizing desired outcomes, to set and prioritize essential goals towards improvement, to help close gaps by identifying strategies aimed at accomplishing effective changes, and to constitute the foundation for positive improvement results.

Managing schools cannot be contained in a vacuum. It is dynamic. It changes. It morphs to adapt to the needs of the community. It transforms to suit the prevailing conditions of the community. Just like the kind of students in the yesteryears, catering to their needs is no longer the same process that schools should apply to the kinds of students today. It is with these conditions that the government has paved the way for the decentralization of organizational management. Galiani and Schargrodsy (2002) highlighted that decentralizing management in educational institutions leads to a more efficient allocation of resources necessary to bring about substantial improvement in the quality of education being delivered by schools. Decentralization gave birth to School-Based Management (SBM).

In the early 2000s, the Philippines introduced the SBM reforms which have had positive impact on student learning outcomes (Khatrri, Ling, & Jha, 2010). One successful reform is the provision of

operational funding to the school level coupled with the devolution of greater school autonomy over the use of the said fund (World Bank and AusAID, 2013). In the following years, schools have been significantly managing their resources using the allocated funds to implement own school improvement plans through the strengthened policies and guidelines for transparency and accountability.

Recently, the whole world was shaken up by the widespread effect of CoViD-19. It was in the early months of 2020 when the virus struck the Philippines. The overwhelming pandemic caused great alterations in many systems existing in the country. One is the basic education system. The changes in the education system greatly challenged the schools on their leadership and most especially on their SBM.

Through the guidance of La Union Schools Division Office, different schools were guided by the Division Memorandum No. 167 s. 2020 entitled School Operational Learning Continuity Plan (SOLCP). Embodied in the memorandum are guidelines that should be followed and implemented by schools.

Up until now, school heads have been continuously striving to keep their schools on track, exercising their full potentials as school leaders who need to solve issues and problems besetting their own workplace and eventually improve existing management practices.

Unfortunately, there have been no recent reports nor studies conducted describing the implementation of SOLCP due to the newness or novelty of the program. As mentioned and described by the SDS of La Union, 'SOLCP is not a perfect program'. There may be loopholes identified in the implementation of SOCLP. However, a school head must not stop by only identifying problems, obstacles, or challenges. Instead, an effective school principal seeks answers or solutions to overcome and solve problems. One effective solution is to engage in benchmarking.

Erdil and Erbiyek (2019) defined benchmarking as partnership, discussion and exchange of information and ideas with similar academic units, looking for innovative ways of improving teaching, research performance and management. He added that benchmarking is based on identifying best practices. Therefore, an institution may have the opportunity to look at the processes and practices of other institutions with the aim at establishing links between them to assist each other in ensuring better services delivered.

Moreover, Zheng (2017) pointed out that benchmarking as a tool is regarded as useful and appropriate for improving products, processes, and services. While in the past, benchmarking is perceived as effective tool for business, industry, and other profit organizations, benchmarking has become integral in the service sector particularly in the education sector.

The prevailing situation, problems encountered, and challenges faced in the education system especially during the times of unexpected calamity such as the pandemic motivated the researchers to study the management practices of secondary schools in the municipality of Caba with the aim of collating plethora of best practices along different activities in the SOLCP.

## **2. Research Questions**

This study described the management practices of the selected public secondary schools in Caba, La Union in light of the pandemic through assessing the SOLCP implementation.

Specifically, this study answered the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of Caba Cluster in terms of:
  - 1.1 number of enrolment;
  - 1.2 number of teachers and;
  - 1.3 average monthly MOOE?
2. What is the extent of implementation of SOLCP activities?
3. What programs, projects, or activities are practiced by the schools as determined by their needs, uniqueness, location, and other factors?
4. Based on the findings, what can be proposed to enhance the implementation of SOLCP?

## **3. Methodology**

### *3.1. Research Design*

This district-wide basic research used mixed method to describe the implementation of SOLCP among public secondary schools in Caba, La Union using quantitative and qualitative analysis.

### *3.2. Participants*

This research was conducted in the municipality of Caba, La Union from October 2020 to August 2021. Caba cluster has six public secondary schools. Total enumeration sampling was used because all six schools implemented the SOLCP activities as mandated by the Division of La Union.

### 3.3. Instrumentation and Data Collection

To give detailed description of the SOLCP implementation, this study employed researcher-made survey-questionnaire and interview guide, validated by three research experts and with Cronbach Alpha reliability value of 0.95. The instrument contained questions eliciting profile of the respondents and their extent of implementation along SOLCP activities using Likert scale, and open-ended questions. The instrument was distributed to different schools and was retrieved personally on a schedule basis.

### 3.4. Data Analysis

To have a generalized profile of the respondents, frequency count was used. In describing the extent of SOLCP implementation, mean was used. To identify programs, projects, or activities, Collaizi's method of analysis and thick description were used.

### 3.5. Output Formulation

The researchers considered the value of benchmarking and shared-practice theory. Through a proposed training design for cluster INSET, sharing of success stories, a sample monitoring tool and a sample enhanced SOLCP become an input for enhanced SOLCP. This training design was subject for approval by the SDS of La Union Division before its implementation.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Profile of the Respondents

Table 1 below showed the demographic profile of the public secondary schools in terms of the number of students, number of teachers, and their average monthly MOOE. It can be gleaned from the table that the municipality of Caba has 108 teachers catering to the needs of 2,267 learners. These public secondary schools were given monthly fund ranging from 40,000 pesos to almost 120,000 pesos which were used for school operations and in the implementation of SOLCP. In addition, based on the interview conducted, school principals admitted that the average monthly MOOE was not enough to fund the necessary activities during the school year. One school conveyed that teachers sought donations such from other stakeholders. When asked what donations were given, the school principals mentioned school supplies, health sanitation materials and equipment were handed to them. Other teachers confessed that they used personal money to buy school supplies such as bond papers, ink printers, and among others.

Table 1. Profile of Caba Cluster Secondary Schools

Public Secondary Schools	Number of Students	Number of Teachers	Average Monthly MOOE
School A	114	10	40,375.00
School B	278	16	50,000.00
School C	195	10	42,000.00
School D	240	16	54,000.00
School E	1049	36	117,404.00
School F	391	20	64,000.00
Total	2,267	108	367,779.00

### 4.2. Extent of Implementation

Table 2 on the next page presented the extent of implementation along SOLCP activities of the Division of La Union during the school year 2020 – 2021. It can be gleaned from the table that all of the SOLCP activities were implemented to a very high extent. On top of the implementation of SOLCP, two activities garnered perfect scores (M=4.00). These were determining needed and appropriate resources for school operations and seeking and engaging the support of Local School Board to support SOLCP.

Meanwhile, the activity that received the lowest rating (M=3.50) among all activities was designing well-defined health protocol in the school for the physical reporting of teachers and other school personnel.

Table 2. Extent of SOLCP Implementation

SOLCP	Mean	Description
1. Designed appropriate health protocol in the schools for the physical reporting of teachers and other concerned personnel as evidenced by work plan, minutes of the meetings, and documentations on planning sessions.	3.50	Very High Extent
2. Implemented health protocols in the schools for the physical reporting of teachers and other concerned personnel as evidenced by the presence of logbook, thermal scanners, foot bath, alcohol, sand sanitizers, markings or postings, and other relevant supporting documents.	3.83	Very High Extent
3. Determined the learning modalities of learners per grade level as evidenced by a compiled printed LESF or a consolidated summary of data from LESF or any documents to support the action conducted.	3.67	Very High Extent
4. Distributed tasks/assignments of teachers as per their expertise, age and health conditions as evidenced by updated SF7, designation of ancillary services, and other supporting documents.	3.83	Very High Extent
5. Prepared the school for distance learning as evidenced by any supporting documents to prove the implementation of distance learning.	3.67	Very High Extent
6. Determined needed and appropriate resources for school operations using MOOE and other local funds as evidenced by needs assessment or MOOE liquidation.	4.00	Very High Extent
7. Purchased needed and appropriated resources as evidenced by MOOE liquidation or acknowledgement receipts for personal purchases of teachers and other related documents to support the purchase or resources.	3.83	Very High Extent
8. Designed and implemented work modalities / AWA per teacher with respect to his/her subject area, grade level assignment and other tasks assigned as evidenced by monthly accomplishment reports, schedules, documentations and other supporting documents.	3.83	Very High Extent
9. Provided a class time schedule per subject area per year/grade level with respect to the MLC and the available learning and instructional materials and the preferred learning modalities as evidenced by teachers' programs and class programs.	3.83	Very High Extent
10. Established a system of attendance checking and definite teachers daily schedule with respect to his/her assignment as evidenced by teachers' logbook, online attendance, etc.	3.83	Very High Extent
11. Provided technical support, accomplishment reporting and system of giving feedback and post activity conference as evidenced by communication among teachers and parents and other means of verification.	3.67	Very High Extent
12. Identified, gathered and consolidated offline and online learning resources per subject area/grade level as evidenced by compilation of SLMs, printed or soft copies, inventory of SLMs and other supporting documents.	3.67	Very High Extent
13. Identified, solicited and engaged the support of stakeholders that can help or facilitate the delivery of SOLCP along instructions and distance learning as evidenced by MOU/MOA with stakeholders, deeds of donations, photos/documentations, minutes of meeting, and other means of verifications.	3.83	Very High Extent
14. Sought and engaged the support of Local School Board to support the SOLCP of the school as evidenced by communications/letters, minutes of the meetings, photos/documentation, and other supporting documents.	4.00	Very High Extent
15. Provided a school time table of activities that will be conducted with respect to the school calendar for school year 2020 – 2021 as evidenced by localized school calendar.	3.83	Very High Extent

Legend: **Mean** **Descriptive Equivalent**

3.25 - 4.00	Very High Extent of Implementation
2.50 - 3.24	High Extent of Implementation
1.75 - 2.49	Low Extent of Implementation
1.00 - 1.74	Very Low Extent of Implementation

#### *4.3. Programs, Projects, and Activities (PPAs)*

Based on the responses from the interview, the identified PPAs included provision of learning support materials, construction of additional facilities, social awareness program, and intensified school-community partnership.

#### *4.4. Proposed Training Design*

Based on the findings of this study, a training design is proposed to disseminate the result of the study, to present and to discuss the innovations of school, a proposed monitoring tool for SOLCP and a sample enhanced SOLCP.

### **5. Discussion**

#### *5.1. Profile of the Respondents*

Table 4.1 presented relevant school information. Result indicated that there were sufficient number of teachers to cater the number of learners. However, average monthly MOOE was not enough to cover all the expenses in the implementation of SOLCP. This result should take the recommendations of World Bank and AusAid (2013) that the provision of operational funding to the school level contributes to successful reforms in school-based management, and therefore, fund should be adequate.

#### *5.2. Extent of Implementation*

In Table 4.2, results reflected the management of the school principals in implementing the SOLCP activities. Results indicated that SOLCP activities were carefully and diligently implemented by the public secondary schools. This means that the school principals were doing their job as school leaders. The result strongly supported Villanueva and Ortega-Dela Cruz (2019) that principals as strong educators and managers consistently worked on continuous school improvement and solve issues of teaching-learning because these aspects contribute to the implementation of a program.

However, school principals should account the findings of Mawanda, Karta, and Zm (2018) that more guidance and assistance are needed to help teachers implement the program elements in a school. Also, monitoring unit should consider the result of Barr, Mugisha, Serneels, and Zeitlin (2012) that there should be an intervention tool as way for managing schools to monitor performance. Finally, supervisors or program coordinators should reflect on the recommendations of Usman, Muslem, Nur, Sailful, and Yunus (2019) that technical assistance and strategic planning are parts of achieving quality development when changes happen.

#### *5.3. Programs, Projects, and Activities*

Results indicate that there were programs, projects, and activities that each school devised to address the school factors affecting the SOLCP implementation. The findings confirmed Ozmon and Craver (2006) who emphasized that there should be a movement of life adjustment, relevancy, and accountability in the basic education because changes are unavoidable and that school leaders should be more radical in seeking variety of methods to adapt to existing social conditions affecting social institutions such as schools for them to be more responsive to the needs of the community. Also, this result agreed with Khattri, Ling, and Jha (2010) that school-based reforms have positive impact to student learning outcomes.

#### *5.4. Proposed Training Design*

Proposed training design incorporated relevant results from the research. The training design aimed to present strategies of schools in implementing SOLCP. Also, part of it was to introduce a monitoring tool to secure that SOLCP activities are implemented, and to present a sample enhanced SOLCP crafted based on the result of this study.

## 6. Output

Training design for teachers and school heads was designed to introduce innovations and strategies practiced by different schools, subjected for the approval of the Schools Division Superintendent. The Training Design shall be subjected for revisions under the direction of the cluster chairman and the monitoring supervisor. This training design shall be subjected for reliability and validity from the Quality Assurance, Technical Assistance, and Monitoring and Evaluation (QATAME) team.

## 7. Conclusions

From merits of the findings, this research concluded that there was budget insufficiency, lack of monitoring tool as a guide in properly implementing SOLCP activities, technical assistance was seldom given to schools, thus, capacitating teachers and school leaders was needed through a training workshop.

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