

SGOD Interface Link Design

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Abstract:

The rationalization plan of the Department of Education in 2014 brought about the establishment of the School Governance and Operations Divisions (SGOD) in Schools Division Offices. Since its inception as a functional Division, the SGOD has taken over the administration and management of several sections that include Education Facilities, Human Resource Development, Planning and Research, School Health and Nutrition, School Management Monitoring and Evaluation, Social Mobilization and Networking, and Youth Formation. These seven sections have their particular job summary and key result areas with assigned personnel who perform their respective duties and functions.

Hence, the study puts forward the application of systems thinking framework that is relevant in organization and human resource management and development in the workplace. It uses documentary research analysis in presenting, reviewing, and assessing the existing manuscripts that are substantial to the conceptualization and designing of an interface link within SGOD.

As a result of the study based on systems thinking and through documentary research coding process, an SGOD interface link design is constructed to map out how the office and sections interact, connect, and integrate within the functional division. Furthermore, the innovative research establishes a foundational study, model, and tool to pursue a sustainable agenda and recovery plan in the new normal by serving as basis for a workplace interface to strengthen organization and human resource structure in DepEd Schools Division Office and its functional divisions, particularly the School Governance and Operations Division.

Key Words: education; systems thinking; governance and operations; organizational management and development; workplace interface

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1. INTRODUCTION

An epochal transition emerged in the Philippine educational frontier as the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) responded to the challenges of the fast-changing conditions in the local and global environment. In October 4, 2004, the Executive Order (EO) No. 366 was signed to direct a strategic review of the operations and organizations of the Executive Branch as well as the rationalization of its agencies and functions. The call to re-define its proper role in society and improve its performance while focusing efforts on its core governance functions led the Department of Education (DepEd) to submit its proposed Rationalization Plan in 2005.

After some technical reviews, revisions, and consultations, DepEd Rationalization Plan was approved by the Department of Budget Management (DBM) in 2013. Resulting from a thorough study of DepEd Change Management Team, the new organizational structures of the Central, Regional and Schools Division Offices of DepEd was put into effect in 2015. DepEd Order No. 52, s. 2015 followed through and superseded the previous issuances and policies pertaining to the old titles, functions, and structures of the offices. Its issuance also paved the way for the implementation of DepEd Rationalization Program. In the same year, Republic Act (RA) No. 10533, known as the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, was enacted to strengthen the curriculum and implement the Kindergarten to Grade 12 (K-12) basic education program.

In 2017, the Philippine House of Congress filed Bill No. 5707 or the Government Rightsizing Bill to improve public service delivery and minimize, if not totally eliminate redundancies, overlaps and duplication in government operations as well as to simplify rules and regulations, systems and procedures. In the same year the Philippine House of Senate filed Bill No. 13952 or “An Act Rightsizing the National Government to Improve Public Service Delivery and for Other Purposes” to address government dysfunctions in all Executive Branch departments and agencies.

The Department of Education, mandated through RA 9155 or the Governance of Basic Education act of 2001, adheres to continuously improve itself to better serve its stakeholders. Affected by constant changes and emerging challenges from internal and external environment, including the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, DepED develops strategies and adopted policies guided by its vision, mission, mandate, and core values. Since the inception of K-12 basic

education and rationalization programs, it presents significant breakthroughs such as the adoption and implementation of professional standards for teachers, school heads, and supervisors. Moreover, basic education strategic and learning recovery plans are implemented to carry out its vision, mission, and goals in the new normal.

1.1 Objectives

The implementation of DepEd Rationalization Program brings major changes in the organizational structure of Schools Division Offices. A Compendium of Office Functions and Job Descriptions version 2 is released to augment the institutional strengthening of the agency and provide detailed indicators in performing office, section and individual functions, duties, and responsibilities.

Thus, the research study responds to the call for the convergence of governance and operations as to take action to the pressing needs of the institution in the new normal; moreover, to strategize organizational excellence and transformative solutions such as organizational alignment, quality management system, and internal structure review. It aims to provide an interface link design frame for the School Governance and Operation Division based on systems thinking model. In doing so, it seeks to review functions, duties and responsibilities, and key result areas (KRAs) of the seven section under SGOD as to identify connecting lines and clearer interaction points among them. Existing manuscripts, *e.g. Compendium of Office Functions and Job Descriptions*, are reviewed and assessed in the process.

1.2 Significance of the Study

First, this study plots the functional interconnectivity within SGOD office and sections. It provides clearer understanding on the differing roles that each section contributes. In doing so, it also highlights valuable line of cooperation, collaboration, and solidarity among them as one SGOD team that supports and capacitates schools and learning centers.

Second, it brings forth an approach to review and assess organizational relationships and interactions in a functional division as well as to map out how the office and sections interact, connect, and integrate within the SGOD structure of the Schools Division Office of Oriental Mindoro. Third, it shows an application of a system thinking framework to establish interface design in the practice of organizational and human resource management and development in DepEd, particularly SGOD as a functional division. Fourth, it supports and augments the

sustainability agenda and recovery plan of the agency in the new normal.

1.3 Literature Review

Studies which directly taking in or published on the same research subject matter are considered minimal to none. However, archival manuscripts are very much available in the area of institutional issuances, *i.e. Compendium, DepEd Orders, and significant fields, and disciplines*. They are sufficient and substantial in the formulation of necessary concepts and enunciations to develop an innovative SGOD interface link design.

Among the institutional issuances include DepEd Order (DO) No. 2 s.2015, DO No. 9 s.2002, DO No. 24 s.2020, DO No. 25 s.2020, DO No. 36 s.2013, DO No. 42 s.2017, DO No. 52 s.2015, DepEd Learning and Development Manual (Draft), DepEd Merit and Selection Plan (Draft), and DepEd Compendium of Office Functions and Job Descriptions. These documentary archives are considerably significant in understanding the functions, elements and interconnections of the SGOD organizational and contextual determinants. Some existing government issuances are revisited particularly those which are significant and relevant to the study, *e.g. EO No. 366, RA 10533, RA 9155, and Senate Bill No. 13952*.

The research study incorporates significant and influential works, published books and articles in various fields such as studies on systems thinking, document analysis, social science and education philosophies, and organization and human resource development. Among them include Peter Senge's *The Fifth Discipline* (1990), Karol Wojtyla's *The Acting Person* (1979), Albert Bandura's *Social Foundations of Thought and Action*, Jerry B. Harvey's *The Abilene Paradox and Other Meditations on Management* (1988), and other notable works in human resource management and development.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Theoretical Framework

Systems exist everywhere and influence everything that organisms, *e.g. humans, institutions, societies, do*. However, as humans, institutions, and society evolve in time, so do systems. Applied in this study is the systems thinking framework as a lens to enable to see various components involved in an institutional structure, *i.e. the School Governance and Operations Division (SGOD) of DepEd Schools Division of Oriental Mindoro*. Systems

thinking highlights the interrelation and connecting lines among sections under the SGOD. It prompts the navigation of SGOD documentary imprint and marks to determine several accesses on how to facilitate collaboration and cooperation within the organization.

The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy defines systems theory as transdisciplinary study and investigates both the principles common to all complex entities and various models to describe them. It elaborates that systems theory was proposed in the 1940s by Ludwig von Bertalanffy in biology and furthered by Ross Ashby in cybernetics as a reaction to scientific reductionism. Open to and interact with their environments, systems theory is described to be a result of continual evolution wherein emergences of new properties are actively involved. Applied in various disciplines, *e.g. biology, mathematics, engineering, technology, psychotherapy, sociology*, systems theory focuses on the arrangement of and relations among the parts that connect them into a whole rather than reduce an entity to the properties of its parts or elements (Audi, 1999).

On the other hand, the concept of system dynamics that has led to the evolution of systems thinking is attributed to the work of Dr. Jay W. Forrester in the 1950s (Azar and Kamal, 2021). The concept allowed the development of tools to address concerns in the areas of social sciences, humanistic and scientific fields. Arnold R.D. and J.P. Wade (2015) credits the coining of the term "systems thinking" to Barry Richmond who views that as interdependency increases, systems thinking is necessary to learn in a new way, share specialized knowledge and expertise, and continue to evolve in the local and global setting.

Relatively, Sabelli, N.H. (2006) explains complexity theory which posits that systems begin as collections of individual actors who organized themselves and create relationships. It is pointed out that relationships, behaviors and structures emerge as actors interact among themselves. Sabelli elaborates that system is non-linear and relies on feedbacks that shapes its evolution and behavior emerges from the interactions therein. In addition, Mason, M. (2016) points out that studying complex systems can be done by understanding the interconnections which form a coherent whole and subjecting it to the phenomenon of emergence. Moreover, he construes that a system, *e.g. education system*, is impossible to govern with traditional linear models.

In this study, the concepts and principles of systems theory is applied to give light to organizational interconnectivity as a coherent whole with different acting components. With systems thinking approach, the complex SGOD environmental construct is determined by: (a) identifiable function, purpose, or goal embedded to its offices, sections, and individual actors; (b) elements that characterizes the systemic relations; and, (c) interconnections wherein elements relate and gives feedback to each other.

2.2 Research Method

The DepEd Compendium of Office Functions and Job Descriptions is the primary manuscript of the research. The study utilizes documentary research analysis as an approach to proffer the exploration of the existing manuscript pertaining to the SGOD office and sections functions, duties and responsibilities. Scott, J. P. (2006) defines documentary research as an attempt to analyze, assess, and examine source materials, i.e. primary and secondary texts, manuscripts, and documents.

As a qualitative research, the study uses documentary inquiry and content analysis thru coding process. The process identifies the categorical components within SGOD structure (open coding), determine the interrelations entailed among categorical characteristics (axial coding), and identify interconnecting and cooperative functions within the organizational duties and functions (selective coding).

The research design thus follows the input-process-output paradigm wherein (a) DepEd Compendium of (SGOD) Office Functions and Job Descriptions serves as primary material (input); (b) documentary analysis through coding approach to analyze and describe the organizational functions, characteristics and interconnections evident in the Compendium (process); and, (c) an interface link design of SGOD organizational structure (output).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

An SGOD Interface Link Design presents a new way of understanding the collaborative and cooperative interactions within an organizational structure using the lens of systems thinking thru coding process. In the condition of the organizational complexity, Burns, T., F. Koster and M. Fuster (2016) study governance in education systems and introduce systemic capacity (the functioning and aligning together of all components) in addition to

individual and institutional capacity in effectively and efficiently to carry out certain mission and evolve when necessary. They share with Colgan, et al. (2010) in advocating collaboration and coordination among actors as important factor in system approaches to improve and contribute meaningfully in public service.

The SGOD office, which main purpose is to support and capacitate schools and learning centers in ensuring a conducive learning environment and in compliance to quality standards, is expected to manage support services, planning and research, community level linkages and partnerships, human resource development, and quality assurance. These five (5) purposive functions are coded as SOPF1, SOPF2, SOPF3, SOPF4, and SOPF5, respectively, which the study used to indicate as SGOD Office purposive functions. The SGOD aims to perform twenty-two (22) governance and operations tasks provided to internal and external stakeholders to carry out its purposive functions. They are coded as SOPT1 to SOPT22 pertaining to the respective arrangement of the objectives in the Compendium of SGOD Office Functions and Job Descriptions manuscript.

The SGOD sections, namely Education Facilities, Human Resource Development, Planning and Research, School Health and Nutrition, School Management Monitoring and Evaluation, Social Mobilization and Networking, and Youth Formation, perform in accordance to the office's purposive functions and targeted performances. They are coded as EF, HRD, PR, SHN, SMME, SMN, and YFS respectively and their corresponding functions and targets are affixed as PF and TF with indicated number, e.g. EFPPF1 for Education Facilities Section first purposive function or HRDTP2 for Human Resource Development Section second target performance, in accordance to the Compendium inscription pattern.

Aside from office functions, there are assigned key positions which include Chief Education Supervisor, Education Program Supervisor, Senior Education Specialists, Medical Officer III, Planning Officer III, Engineer III, Education Program Specialists II, Nurses II, Project Development Officers II, and Project Development Officers I. They are coded as CES, ES, SEPS, MO, PO, ENG, EPS, NRS, PDO2, and PDO1 respectively. The key positions have their respective job summary and KRAs which are coded as CES-JS and CES-KRA for the Chief Education Supervisor job summary and key result areas. The other key position coding follows including the indicated number of KRAs inscribed in the Compendium but with reference to their assigned section, e.g. PRPO-

KRA2 for Planning and Research Section Planning Officer III second KRA or HRDEPSKRA3 for Human Resource Development Section Education Program Specialist third KRA.

The key assigned key personnel within the SGOD organization have particular duties and responsibilities. They are coded pertaining to their respective section, position, KRA, and referring to the number of duties and responsibilities, e.g. SHNMOKRA3-DR5 for the School Health and Nutrition Section Medical Officer III third KRA and fifth duty and responsibility or SMNPDO2-KRA2-DR6 for the Social Mobilization and Networking Project Development Officer II second KRA and sixth duty and responsibility, as indicated in the Compendium manuscript.

As all components within the SGOD office are described according to their respective functions and characteristics, the interconnection of their purposive functions, targeted performances, KRAs, job summary, and duties and responsibilities, the selective process of identifying and determining their commonalities and shared elements ensued. The process is crucial in the plotting and mapping out of the SGOD interface design. It is where the specific collaborative and cooperative efforts within the SGOD structure emerge and develop to provide support and constructive feedback, thus making impact to the whole organizational scheme. For example, the HRDSEPS-KRA1-DR1 is connected with PRSSEPSKRA3-DR3 which both concerns the review and analysis of researches for policy recommendation, formulation, and implementation. Another example is SMMESEPS-KRA2-DR5 and PRSSEPS-KRA1-DR4 which characterizes the provision of monitoring and evaluation process for organizational improvement and effectiveness.

The SGOD interface design is achieved as all possible interconnectivity components, indicators and factors are explicitly accessed and analyzed through the textual imprint of the Compendium. The complex SGOD landscape, evidently embedded in DepEd Compendium on SGOD is mapped out – its internal functions and elements as well as the occurring patterns of interactions within its subsystems, *i.e. sections and KRAs*. This innovative interface link design within the SGOD human resource structure presents the interactive, connective, and integrative capacity of complex workplace that can be replicated and not separated to similar and other existing systems therein.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes that to improve DepEd internal systems, policies, and processes, an interface link design based on systems thinking brings forth a guide and tool in understanding how its existing workforce structure accommodate contemporary strategic plans and forethought endeavors. The interface link design promotes a beneficial response to the challenges brought about by changes in the organizational structure in DepEd since the inception and implementation of its rationalization program; moreover, an innovation to synergize organizational components capability and capacity in an ever-challenging world, *e.g. pandemic condition and desperate times*.

Responding to the call to assess the alignment in organizational and human resource management and development as well as in continuously improving itself, its system and policy, the utilization of systems thinking framework and documentary research coding process to identify and analyze functional purpose and characteristics attests that every component and characteristics of those belonging to the institution has valuable contribution to offer, *e.g to reinforce, balance, capacitate, give feedback and appreciation*, in overall performance of the whole organizational workplace, especially in the new normal.

As an innovation to assist and support in the delivery of quality education service, the study further concludes that a basis for the interface feature among and within the three functional divisions namely, the Office of the Schools Division Superintendent (SDS), the Office of the Curriculum Implementation Division (CID), and the Office of the SGOD is established.

However, among the recommendations to extend the endeavor into new heights are the following:

a. Hermeneutical approaches may also be applied as to determine the meaning and interpretation of the Compendium on KRAs and job description of office, section, and individuals to provide distinctive and potential interactive patterns.

b. Actual surveys, focus group discussions, among practitioners is significant for validation and appeal to the experiential level.

c. Since SGOD organic composition is part of a larger system, it is also deemed to provide possible collaborative and cooperative interface design among and within DepEd Schools Division Office and its functional divisions.

d. The development and use of ICT software applications to pursue and support a digital interface platform.

e. The approach can be replicated to study interface dynamics of the domains, strands, and indicators on the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH), Philippine Professional Standards for Supervisors (PPSS) of the Department of Education.

f. The study as a guide and tool for organization and human resource management and development endeavor can be further utilized in strengthening the built-in and strategic structure of a (DepEd) workplace in the new normal.

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