Building Champion School Leaders Through the Institutionalization of the Re-Entry Program of The School Heads Academy (SHA) of DepEd Region VI

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BUILDING CHAMPION SCHOOL LEADERS THROUGH THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF THE RE-ENTRY PROGRAM OF THE SCHOOL HEADS ACADEMY (SHA) OF DEPED REGION VI

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ABSTRACT

The School Heads Academy (SHA) was established by DepEd Region VI, making it the first among DepEd to provide such professional training for aspiring and emerging school leaders who desire to cultivate their leadership and managerial competencies. The Re-Entry Application Project (REAP), being one of the prerequisites of SHA program is faced with an array of concerns among its beneficiaries and implementers to include the lack of definite structure and processes in the implementation. This study sought to develop a definite structure of the Re-Entry Program of the SHA to ensure a unified process of conceptualization, execution, monitoring, and evaluation of the projects and its eventual institutionalization in the whole of DepEd Region VI. The study is a mixed-method study with its foundation in the ADDIE Model. Qualitative data were gathered through FGD and were analyzed through a deductive thematic analysis to assure that the four REAP implementation phases are the primary topic of the discussion and they will be used to guide the conversation and elicit answers from the respondents. Quantitatively, the mean was used to determine the level of acceptability of the implementing guidelines, and the ANOVA to determine the significant differences among the acceptability level of the SHA scholars, school heads, and HRD specialists. The overall results of the evaluation of the level of acceptability of the implementing guidelines revealed to be highly acceptable to the SHA scholars, school heads, and HRD specialists in terms of conceptualization, execution, monitoring, and evaluation. This implies that the implementing guidelines have completely and satisfactorily addressed the concerns raised in the FGD and is regarded as clear, all-encompassing, and beneficial for all the program implementers and end-users. The evaluation further revealed that there are no significant differences between the level of acceptability of the implementing guidelines of the Institutionalization of the Re-Entry Program of the SHA of DepEd Region VI between the SHA scholars, school heads, and HRD specialists. This indicates that, although having distinct roles and responsibilities within the REAP implementation and in the SHA program, each group views the implementing guidelines as clear, comprehensive, and useful. With the implementing guidelines on the institutionalization of the Re-Entry Program, the SHA scholars, school heads, HRD specialists, and partner learning institutions will be guided properly as they work toward the goal of implementing a relevant and responsive REAP to the scholars' organizational needs. Thus, the Region VI's commitment to its mantra as the "home of the champions" would be strengthened and achieved accordingly.

Keywords: *School Heads Academy, Re-Entry Program, Re-Entry Application Project, DepEd Region VI, Champion Leaders*

INTRODUCTION

School heads' leadership skills are attributable to various educational gains, as they are seen as crucial for achieving success in the classroom and fostering a harmonious school environment. Principals must participate in professional development programs to understand the necessity of maximizing their employee's potential (Mathibe, 2007). The Department of Education (DepEd) emphasizes lifelong learning and professional development for school leaders as it underlines that high-quality teachers supported by high-quality school heads will eventually guarantee that students get a quality education. DepEd Memorandum No. 24, s. 2020, also known as the National Adoption and Implementation of the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH), is issued in accordance with DepEd's dedication to supporting school heads to fulfill their roles in schools, including the improvement of teacher quality and, consequently, student achievement.

Republic Act 9155 also known as the Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001 mandates the school heads to perform instructional leadership and administrative manager roles for school reform and to provide students with high-quality education. Additionally, under Republic Act No. 10533, popularly known as the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, DepEd has required that school heads and principals have the skills essential to perform their obligations as academic, administrative, fiscal, and community leaders.   To support this mandate, DepEd has implemented several initiatives such as the School Heads Development Program (SHDP) of the National Educators Academy of the Philippines (NEAP), to tackle the problem of inadequate leadership skills among current school administrators.
The demand for qualified school heads has been marked by a tremendous increase due to the limited number of qualifiers and passers of DepEd's Principals' Test (Cabigao, 2019). In the case of DepEd Region VI, a considerable decline in the passing rate of Principal's Test takers from 26.79% in 2017 to 1.05% in 2018 highlights the need to further develop and strengthen the knowledge and abilities of school leaders, particularly concerning the PPSSH competencies.

As an initiative to give adequate support to school leaders, DepEd Region VI has established the School Heads Academy (SHA), making it the first among DepEd to provide this kind of professional training for aspiring and emerging school leaders who aim to nurture the competency under the beginning Career Stage 1 of the PPSSH. Through partnerships with State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) and other Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), the SHA hopes to build champion school leaders in the 21 Schools Division Offices (SDOs) in the Region. The program is intended to improve the capacity of prospective school heads to manage their schools and prepare them for the responsibilities associated with their expected roles. It also highlights the importance that aspiring school leaders need professional development programs to gain the most up-to-date information, the necessary skills, and the right mindset.

The implementation of SHA strengthens the need to harness these multifaceted roles and responsibilities of school heads. This further nurtures DepEd Region VI's slogan as the "home of the champions" and showcases the region's commitment to its mantra "...where every child is a champion." The program instills the notion that champion learners can only be developed by champion teachers, and champion teachers can only be nurtured by champion school heads.

As a prerequisite for finishing the SHA, the scholars are required to implement a Re-Entry Application Project (REAP) that makes sure that the ideas and skills they learn during the training under the partner learning institution are used to help their organization reach its goals. REAP addresses the challenge of translating learning into tangible organizational improvements and links the acquisition and application of the acquired competencies from the in-house training aligned to the standards set by the DepEd in the PPSSH and, simultaneously, ascertains the use of the said competencies at the individual level to the achievement of the organizational outcomes and goals.

However, there are several challenges in the REAP implementation as identified by the SHA program handlers in the SDOs due to the unavailability of a distinct structure or themes, the absence of specific processes and procedures, and the lack of clear goals and objectives for the Re-Entry Program. These deficiencies further accentuate the difficulty for the scholars and the HRDD to conceptualize their REAP and the systematic monitoring and evaluation, respectively. If not properly addressed , this may result in undesirable effects, such as low-quality REAP implementation that is unresponsive and irrelevant to

the organization's needs, which would negatively impact aspiring school leaders and, therefore, negatively impact student learning outcomes.

Hence, this study is conducted to develop a definite structure of the Re-Entry Program of the SHA to ensure a unified process of conceptualization, execution, monitoring, and evaluation of the projects and the eventual institutionalization of the Re-Entry Program of the School Heads Academy of DepEd Region VI. Through the institutionalization of the Re-Entry Program, the SHA scholars, the school heads, and the HRD specialists are provided with the appropriate knowledge and expectations regarding conceptualization, execution, monitoring, and evaluation of the projects, thus, improving their organization's operations and management by guaranteeing the relevance and responsiveness of their identified REAP intervention.

Research Questions

1. What are the criteria or features of the Re-Entry Program that are relevant and responsive to the school's needs according to the SHA scholars, their school heads, and HRD specialists?
2. What is the structure to be included in the institutionalization of the Re-Entry Program of the SHA?
3. What is the process flow to be included in the institutionalization of the Re-Entry Program of the SHA?
4. What is the level of acceptability of the Re-Entry Program according to the SHA scholars, their school heads, and HRD specialists in terms of the projects' a.) conceptualization, b.) execution, c.) monitoring, and d.) evaluation?
5. Are there significant differences in the level of acceptability of the developed Re-Entry Program according to the SHA scholars, their school heads, and HRD specialists regarding the project's a.) conceptualization, b.) execution, c.) monitoring, and d.) evaluation?

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

On Roles of School Heads and their Professional Development

Principals have a critical role in ensuring that schools are successful because they are the key figures in facilitating learning, enriching teachers, establishing facilities, and building connections with stakeholders (Wibowo et al., 2021). Mathibe (2007), Ng and Szeto (2015), and Schechter and Shaked (2017) shared the same observations that the growing responsibilities of school heads have gone out of the administrative borders and have touched the moral reformation and humanization as per the national goals and policies. School heads are expected to be deeply involved with teaching and learning concerns, act as the highest instructional leader to promote best teaching practices that could better ensure students' academic success, and foster a cultural climate where self-expression, creativity, motivation, and communication in all forms are valued and welcomed.

Researchers found that many administrators were unprepared for the responsibilities of leading schools (Sindhvad, 2009). They were less empowered in their supervisory functions and more empowered in the administrative aspect (Albano, 2006).The image of the principal being changed from a management to a leadership position (Capili-Balbalin, 2017) provides reasons for principals to be highly exposed to various professional development programs to ensure that schools are being managed by appropriately qualified and skilled principals who have the knowledge and in-depth understanding of the idea of full range utilization of educational potential. The effectiveness of educational policies and programs is heavily based on the leadership abilities of school administrators; hence, providing principals with the necessary education and training is a crucial component of ensuring that students get an education of sufficient quality (Mathibe, 2007). Although various studies proved that the tasks performed by the principals are of great importance, they are usually not given enough attention (Arrieta, 2020).

Bush and Oduro (2006) elucidated that formal leadership among principals is rare, and they are often appointed only based on their records without considering their leadership skills and potential. According to Naidu (1998), reports have shown that the quality of education will improve if school heads are appropriately trained and immersed in professional development programs to effectively manage the

school's organizational forms and its other educational developments. Hence, school principals must have the necessary qualifications before taking on the role of becoming a leader. Thus, both pre-service and in-service leaders be given comprehensive professional development programs (Mathibe, 2007). Professional development programs can be delivered through different forms, such as training and on-site learning. On-site learning, on the other hand, is essential not only for the transformation of schools but also for the consistent development of the principal's skills and competencies (Mathibe, 2007). Boeskens et al. (2020) further expressed that professional development includes a wide range of settings. Formal training sessions are adequately organized and structured with implicit objectives for the acquiring of skills, knowledge, and competencies, and these are usually initiated by the school and education agencies and are identified as evidence of a teacher's professional development engagement. Workshops and seminars, as well as formal coaching and pursuing official certification programs, are all examples of formal professional development programs.

Countries throughout the globe have implemented professional development programs to solve the challenges relating to the lack of required capabilities of aspiring and incumbent school principals in managing organizational structures. In the accumulated literature in the study of Goldring et al. (2010), necessary elements for high-quality professional development were identified. First, programs that are made to harness professional skills should be job-embedded to enable participants to apply their obtained practices in school settings. Second, the diverse needs of school leaders must be recognized, and adjustments and modifications should be made to accommodate the needs of school leaders. Third, professional development must offer numerous learning opportunities in different formats and longer terms to be considered adequate. Lastly, professional development of high quality must be systematic and should utilize a curriculum that supports and strengthens key concepts that connect with the practical conditions that leaders encounter.

In the Philippine context, the DepEd through the NEAP has implemented a program, the School Heads Development Program (SHDP), that is primarily geared towards helping school principals improve their managerial and leadership skills. The program is designed based on the competency standards prescribed for school heads, the National Competency-Based Standards for School Heads (NCBSSH). With the issuance of DepEd Order No. 24, s. 2020 on the Adoption of the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH), the modules and context of the SHDP are aligned with the domains, strands, and indicators of these standards to ensure the standards are understood and internalized by school heads so that they may work effectively as school leaders. The PPSSH articulates the different career stages that a school head should undertake with the corresponding indicators in each career stage.

In adherence to RA 9155, with the vision to strengthen and further develop the competence of the school leaders to take on their roles abreast with essential knowledge and skills that are integral in their nature of work, DepEd Region VI- Western Visayas has established a professional development academy that intends to train aspiring school leaders under career stage 1 of the PPSSH for beginning school heads. The School Heads Academy (SHA) was established to respond to the growing needs of qualified and equipped school principals. The schools divisions in DepEd Region VI has partnered with several State Universities and Colleges (SUC) and Higher Education Institutions (HEI) as well as local institutions and organizations in the implementation of SHA to produce champion school leaders in the region. Unlike the existing SHDP of NEAP that concentrate on training in-service principals, SHA is designed to equip aspiring and emerging school leaders with the necessary competencies before they take on bigger roles in an organizational system.

On Linking Theory to Practice

One of the frequently critiqued deficiencies of existing professional development by scholars is the lack of emphasis between theory and practice (Capili-Balbalin, 2017; Darling-Hammond et al., 2010; Wallace Foundation, 2012; Wrenn J. & Wrenn, B., 2000). Traditional approaches to teacher education have emphasized delivering information and abilities rather than focusing on the actual situations or instances wherein teachers apply what they have learned (Wallace Foundation, 2012). Some school leadership training programs do not sufficiently integrate theory with practice because they are instructive, distant from the reality of school leadership, and not linked with current conceptions of leadership (Darling-Hammond et al., 2010). As expressed by Capili-Balbalin (2017), most professional activities are in the form of seminars and workshops where theoretical insights are taught through direct instruction.

Darling-Hammond (2010) emphasized further that many principal candidates are unprepared for the rigors of administrative jobs due to a lack of field experience. Such candidates often submit papers that are irrelevant to their everyday duties as principals. Integrating field experiences into academic coursework and basing them on basic concepts of educational administration is therefore essential. This is backed by Bottoms et al.'s (2001) assertion that school leadership programs need considerable revisions to the curriculum to generate leaders who can assist schools in achieving significant reform. Boud et al. (1993), quoted by Wrenn J. & Wrenn B. (2000), stressed that experience is the major contributing factor in learning. In their view, learning can only take place if the learner's own experience is at least somewhat included in the learning process. Integration of teaching and practice on the part of the instructor is one way to improve student learning.

Opportunities for principals to participate in context-specific problem-solving reinforce their learning, making them more equipped to improve their practice (Darling-Hammond et al., 2012). Thus, it is essential for scholars in professional programs to be able to apply classroom knowledge in the real world (Wrenn J. & Wrenn B., 2000). According to Avalos (2011), teachers' professional development may be seen as a cyclical process that involves learning, learning how to learn, and applying what has been learned in the classroom. Principals report that, when they have the opportunity to apply their knowledge, they learn more profoundly (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). In this way, we adhere to the recommendations of Zepeda et al. (2013), who state that the most successful professional learning experiences are "engaging, genuine, and entrenched in the work setting."

This is supported by the findings of an 18-month field study by Perez et al. (2011), which showed that participants gained a deeper comprehension of the complexities involved in school leadership, especially the leader's role in establishing a climate of trust and rapport among employees, encouraging teamwork, and developing future leaders. A conclusion was reached that more effective programs integrate on-site training, practice, and coaching with a strong focus on participants' work and develop a sense of community among participants. In the Philippines, the Re-Entry Action Plan (REAP) best exemplifies the crucial need to translate knowledge into practice and to tangible organizational gains. REAP originated in the Philippines Australia Human Resource and Organizational Development Facility (PAHRODF). PAHRODF is the Australian Government's flagship program for supporting human resource management, organizational development, and institutional change in the Philippines (Australian Embassy in the Philippines, 2017).

Most of the research covered in the review of related literature concurred that personalization, practical experience, and insightful reflection are essential components of school leadership training programs. According to Darling-Hammond (2010), a lack of field experience renders many principal candidates unprepared for the demands of administrative roles. REAP provides a bridge between theory and practice and exemplifies the program's commitment to cultivating competent school leaders who are not passively taught by their mentors.

Despite a wide range of studies stressing the need to integrate theory and practice in professional development programs (e.g., Capili-Balbalin, 2017; Darling-Hammond et al., 2010; Wallace Foundation, 2012; Walker et al., 2013; Wrenn & Wrenn, 2000), there is little research on REAP as an approach to accomplishing this goal. The SHDP of the NEAP was the first program in DepEd to adopt the REAP as part of its prerequisite for training incumbent school leaders but, there is no definite process and procedure by which school heads implement their REAP.

Given the low amount of literature on REAP as a way of linking theory into practice, especially on the issue of having a specific process or procedure, this study is of considerable relevance in filling this critical gap to ensure the implementation of a responsive and relevant REAP of the SHA scholars of DepEd Region VI. Goldring et al. (2010) emphasized that high-quality professional development must be systematic and utilize a structure that supports and strengthens key concepts that connect with the practical conditions that leaders encounter. Since SHA pioneered the provision of training for prospective school principals, developing a unified structure for REAP as one of its prerequisites also provides a solid framework for other programs in DepEd or even in different agencies that seek to include REAP in their future professional development programs.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed the mixed-method research design used to collect pertinent data about the institutionalization of the Re-Entry Program for the SHA of DepEd Region VI. As mixed-method design, this study gathered information from the respondents on determining the criteria or features of a responsive and relevant Re-Entry Application Project to the needs of the organization/school through Focus Group Discussion (FGD). The gathered data were encoded/transcribed, organized/clustered, discussed, and analyzed. Thematic analysis was employed to come up with academically formulated conclusions. This study also described the level of acceptability of the Re-Entry Program that was designed and developed for the SHA of DepEd Region VI. Quantitative data were collected from the participants regarding their evaluation of the acceptability of the Re-Entry Program using a questionnaire checklist with a 5-point rating scale.

Moreover, this study employed the ADDIE model to institutionalize the Re-Entry Program of SHA of DepEd Region VI. According to Peterson (2003), the ADDIE instructional design process is frequently used for creating instructional courses and training programs.

Following the phases of the ADDIE model, the Analyze, Design, Develop, Implement, and Evaluate, the researcher analyzed the data gathered in the FGD among the SHA scholars, school heads, and HRD specialists. These data served as input in designing the Re-Entry Program for the SHA and in developing the structure and processes to ensure the unified implementation in the 21 SDOs across Region VI. After the developed structure was consulted with the SHA program implementers and approved by the Regional Director, it was institutionalized in the Region through the issuance of a Regional Memorandum. The level of acceptability of the Re-Entry Program was evaluated by the SHA scholars, school heads, and HRD specialists in the various phases of conceptualization, execution, monitoring, and evaluation.

Research Respondents

For the qualitative aspect of this study, the participants are consist of selected SHA scholars, school heads, and HRD specialists of DepEd Region VI. The researcher purposively selected the SHA scholars and school heads based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Table 1 and 2 presents the standards in the selection of scholars and school heads in the FGD, respectively:

Table 1. The inclusion and exclusion criteria of the SHA scholars as participants in the FGD.

No.	Criteria	
	Inclusion	**Exclusion**
1	Must be recommended by the Senior Education Program Specialist (SEPS) of the Human Resource Development Unit (HRDU) of the SDO	Not recommended by the SEPS-HRDU
2	Must have finished Phase 3 (multi-modal in-house delivery of academic course) of the SHA implementation	Undergoing Phase 1, 2, and/or 3 of the SHA implementations
3	Must be willing to participate in the FGD activities and post-implementation evaluation of the Re-Entry program	Non-willing to participate in the FGD and evaluation activities

Table 2. The inclusion and exclusion criteria of the school heads as participants in the FGD.

No.	Criteria	
	Inclusion	**Exclusion**
1	Must be an immediate school head of the SHA scholar whom he/she works with during REAP implementation	Incumbent school head (designated or appointed by the SDS) enrolled in the SHA
2	Must be recommended by the Senior Education Program Specialist (SEPS) of the Human Resource Development Unit (HRDU) of the SDO	Not recommended by the SEPS-HRDU

3	Must be willing to participate in the FGD activities and post-implementation evaluation of the Re-Entry program	Non-willing to participate in the FGD and evaluation activities

The HRD specialists of the SDOs of Region VI are automatically included as participants of the FGD without any parameters set considering their role as focal person of the SDOs in the implementation of the SHA. It is therefore expected that they have valuable inputs in the sudy.

For the quantitative aspect of the study, the stratified random sampling technique was utilized to determine the participants as representative sample of the SHA Scholars, their school heads, and HRD Specialists of DepEd Region VI. Slovin's formula was used in calculating the sample size of participants for every SDO with 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error. Table 3 presents the number of respondents for the quantitative part of the study.

Table 3. Stratified Random Sampling of SHA Scholars, School Heads, and HRD Specialists for Each SDO Category

SDO	Participants	Number of Participants	Sampling Fraction	Sample
Aklan	SHA Scholars	25	25/414 x 203	12
	School Heads	0	0/234 x 148	0
	HRD Specialists	1	1/20 x 19	1
Antique	SHA Scholars	13	13/414 x 203	6
	School Heads	5	5/234 x 148	3
	HRD Specialists	1	1/20 x 19	1
Capiz	SHA Scholars	10	10/414 x 203	5
	School Heads	1	1/234 x 148	1
	HRD Specialists	1	1/20 x 19	1
Roxas City	SHA Scholars	10	10/414 x 203	5
	School Heads	8	8/234 x 148	5
	HRD Specialists	1	1/20 x 19	1
Guimaras	SHA Scholars	10	10/414 x 203	5
	School Heads	0	0/234 x 148	0
	HRD Specialists	1	1/20 x 19	1
Iloilo	SHA Scholars	22	22/414 x 203	11
	School Heads	8	8/234 x 148	5
	HRD Specialists	1	1/20 x 19	1
Iloilo City	SHA Scholars	0	0/414 x 203	0
	School Heads	0	0/234 x 148	0
	HRD Specialists	1	1/20 x 19	1
Passi City	SHA Scholars	15	15/414 x 203	8
	School Heads	9	9/234 x 148	6
	HRD Specialists	1	1/20 x 19	1
Bacolod City	SHA Scholars	47	47/414 x 203	23
	School Heads	46	47/234 x 128	26
	HRD Specialists	1	1/20 x 19	1
Bago City	SHA Scholars	33	33/414 x 203	16
	School Heads	28	28/234 x 148	18
	HRD Specialists	1	1/20 x 19	1
Cadiz City	SHA Scholars	50	50/414 x 203	25
	School Heads	34	34/234 x 148	22
	HRD Specialists	1	1/20 x 19	1
Escalante City	SHA Scholars	20	20/414 x 203	10
	School Heads	13	13/234 x 148	8
	HRD Specialists	1	1/20 x 19	1
Himamaylan City	SHA Scholars	9	9/414 x 203	4
	School Heads	0	0/234 x 148	0
	HRD Specialists	1	1/20 x 19	1

Kabankalan City	SHA Scholars	16	16/414 x 203	8
	School Heads	0	0/234 x 148	0
	HRD Specialists	1	1/20 x 19	1
La Carlota City	SHA Scholars	22	22/414 x 203	11
	School Heads	18	18/234 x 148	11
	HRD Specialists	1	1/20 x 19	1
Negros Occidental	SHA Scholars	71	71/414 x 203	35
	School Heads	42	42/234 x 148	27
	HRD Specialists	1	1/20 x 19	1
San Carlos City	SHA Scholars	6	6/414 x 203	3
	School Heads	5	5/234 x 148	3
	HRD Specialists	1	1/20 x 19	1
Sagay City	SHA Scholars	18	18/414 x 203	9
	School Heads	0	0/234 x 148	0
	HRD Specialists	1	1/20 x 19	1
Silay City	SHA Scholars	7	7/414 x 203	3
	School Heads	7	7/234 x 148	4
	HRD Specialists	1	1/20 x 19	1
Sipalay City	SHA Scholars	10	10/414 x 203	5
	School Heads	10	10/234 x 148	6
	HRD Specialists	1	1/20 x 19	1
		TOTAL:	**SHA Scholars**	**204**
			School Heads	**145**
			HRD Specialists	**20**
				369

After computing the representative sample size for each SDO, the researcher employed a simple random sampling to determine who will participate in the study. A total of three hundred sixty-nine (369) participants were randomly drawn from the different SDOs. Randomization of participants was done by assigning a designated number to each SHA scholar, school heads, and HRD specialists. After assigning a number, an online random number generator software was used to randomly pick the SHA scholars, school heads, and HRD specialists representing their respective SDO.

Research Instrument

The qualitative data gathered in the FGD was obtained through a a semi-structured interview guide developed by the researcher. It was validated by the Division Chief and Education Program Supervisors of the Human Resource Development Division (HRDD) of DepEd Regional Office VI, being the focal persons in the implementation of the SHA to ensure that the questions posed in the guide will assist the researcher in acquiring the necessary data for the completion of the study. Using the semi-structured interview guide, the researcher was able to gather information from the participants about their experiences, concerns, and suggestions in a more flexible manner regarding the essential criteria or features of a relevant and responsive Re-Entry Program of the SHA. The FGD guide was prepared with preliminary and main questions regarding (i) processes that make up a Re-entry project responsive and relevant, (ii) the criteria that will streamline the process of conceptualization, execution, monitoring, and evaluation of the REAP, and (iii) the features of a responsive and relevant REAP.

At the post-implementation phase of the study, the quantitative data on the level of acceptability of the Re-Entry Program is administered to the SHA scholars, their school heads, and HRD specialists in terms of conceptualization, execution, monitoring, and evaluation using a 5-point rating scale questionnaire checklist with corresponding interpretation: 5 – highly acceptable, 4 – acceptable, 3 – moderately acceptable, 2 – fairly acceptable, and 1 – not acceptable.

The interpretation and determination of the level of acceptability of the developed structure for the Re-Entry Program of the SHA utilized the following scale:

Score	Interpretation	Description
4.21-5.00	Highly Acceptable	No revisions
3.41-4.20	Acceptable	Very few revisions

2.61-3.40	Moderately Acceptable	Few Revisions
1.81-2.60	Fairly Acceptable	Needs Revision
1.00-1.80	Not Acceptable	Many Revisions

Data Analysis

The qualitative data gathered in FGD were analyzed thematically. Thematic analysis is a method for examining qualitative data that involves identifying themes, examining those themes, and analyzing the findings (Braun and Clarke, 2012). Additionally, it also includes interpretation in the selection of codes and the construction of themes as a way of describing data. A deductive thematic analysis was employed where the starting themes were the four processes of REAP implementation, namely conceptualization, execution, monitoring, and evaluation. To focus on topics of interest, deductive methods start with an already-established theory, framework, or other researcher-driven focal points (Braun and Clarke, 2012). The purpose of this is to assure that the four REAP implementation phases will be the primary topic of discussion and that they will be used to guide the conversation and elicit answers. A communication letter was sent to the Schools Division Superintendent of SDO Escalante City and Sagay City where majority of the scholars are already in Phase 4 of the SHA program or the school-based implementation of the Re-Entry Application Projects. The letter was then communicated to the target scholars and school heads with consideration to the standards set in selecting the participants of the FGD.

For the quantitative analysis, the mean was used to determine the level to which the proposed framework for the Re-Entry Program was deemed acceptable by the participants. The One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was employed to determine the significant difference between the level of acceptability of the institutionalization of the Re-Entry Program between the SHA scholars, their school heads, and HRD specialists in terms of a.) conceptualization, b.) execution, c.) monitoring, and d.) evaluation. The level of significance was set at 0.5 alpha. Both the mean and One-Way ANOVA were tabulated, organized, analyzed, and packaged employing the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Criteria or Features of a Relevant and Responsive Re-Entry Program of the SHA

The FGD results revealed a spectrum of experiences regarding the scholars', school heads', and HRD specialists' experiences in the conduct of the REAP implementation. The FGD results were subjected to thematic analysis, which resulted in meaningful units that were reduced, labeled, and aggregated into four (4) subthemes: concerns in conceptualization, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. Below is the description of these emerging themes:

(i) **Clear Conceptualization**. It is clear from the responses of the SHA scholars, their immediate school heads, and the HRD specialists that conceptualization is challenging where the sub-themes include: (a) *careful selection of priority problems,* where it was suggested that identification of priority problems is the first step the SHA scholar should consider. Some scholar voiced their concerns about the difficulty of coming up with a priority area to focus on; (b) *budget allocation,* where the SHA scholars had identified monetary concerns in the conduct of the REAP considering their current positions as Teachers I,II, or III that they cannot consider the implementation of their project against the school MOOE; (c) *aligned with priority improvement areas,* where the scholar has to ensure that the project is aligned with the identified needs of the school based on the data gathered in the School Improvement Plan (SIP); and the (d) *conduct of one-on-one discussion,* where the scholars emphasized the need of having a monthly *"Kamustahan"* or open discussions with their school head or immediate supervisor with regard to the project implementation and to ensure that it is done according to plan.

(ii) **United Execution.** The participants have asserted that there must be a *constant collaboration and communication with stakeholders* to ascertain a common understanding of the project and ensure the proper implementation.

(iii) Systematic monitoring. As scholars talked about the monitoring phase, they noted that there should be *availability of a structured monitoring tool and process*. They experienced difficulty in doing the monitoring since they are not guided with a specific guideline that will serve as their basis to effectively implement their REAP. Some of them asserted the need to conduct a regular *Kamustahan* session to better keep track of the scholars' implementation of their project as one school head has highlighted the need for the conduct of this activity. The need for proper documentation of evidences or *MOVs* in the implementation of the project as another way of monitoring was also emphasized by the scholars, school heads, and HRD specialists.

(iv) Proper Evaluation. The SHA scholars, school heads, and HRD specialists shared that there is a need to have *clear and identified criteria* to be used to evaluate the scholar's REAP. Determining the *impact* is one criterion that they wanted to include in the evaluation of the project. Together with *sustainability and originality* of the project in order to have a responsive and relevant REAP.

The Structure of the Re-Entry Program of the SHA
The responses of the three Focus Groups served as the baseline data in the design of the framework and for the detailed creation of the structure and processes of the Re-Entry Program of the SHA. Figure 1 shows the initial design of the framework that is derived from the responses of the SHA scholars, school heads, and HRD specialists.
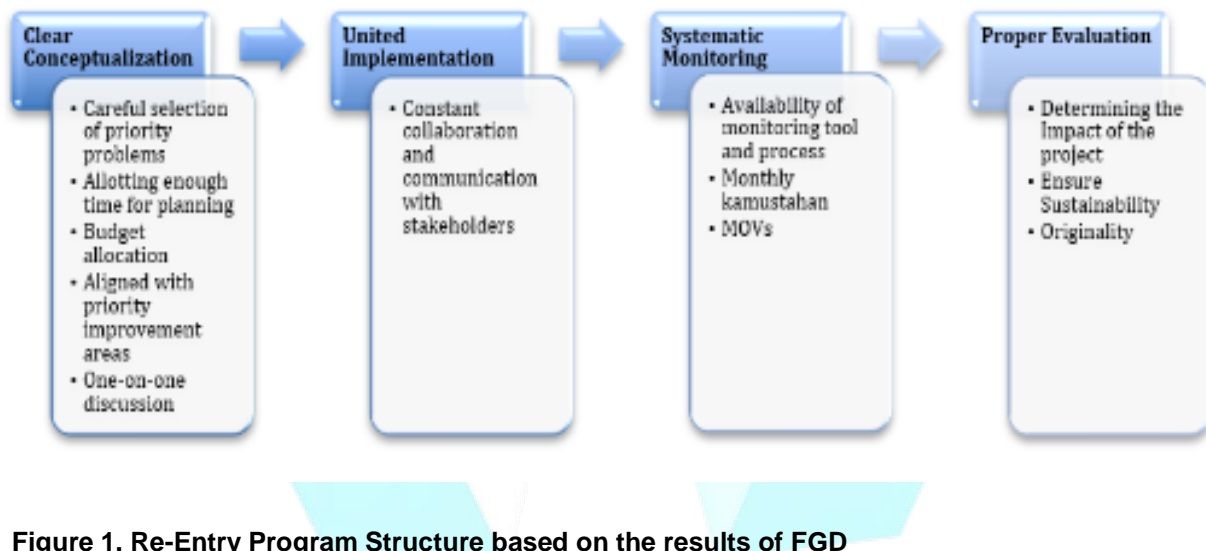

 Figure 1. Re-Entry Program Structure based on the results of FGD

The Process of the Institutionalization of the Re-Entry Program of the SHA
The development of the process of the institutionalization of the Re-Entry Program of the SHA was derived from the conduct of the regional workshop on the design and development of the structure and processes of the program, and the conduct of the first and second/final consultative meetings with the SHA implementers for the presentation of the semi-finalized and finalized guidelines, respectively.

The regional workshop was conducted with the aim at coming up with themes, structures, processes, and procedures in the implementation of the Re-Entry Program to ensure that the REAP implemented by the SHA scholars are relevant and responsive to the needs of the organization.

The Figure 2 below gives the overall gist of the implementation of the REAP of the SHA scholars.
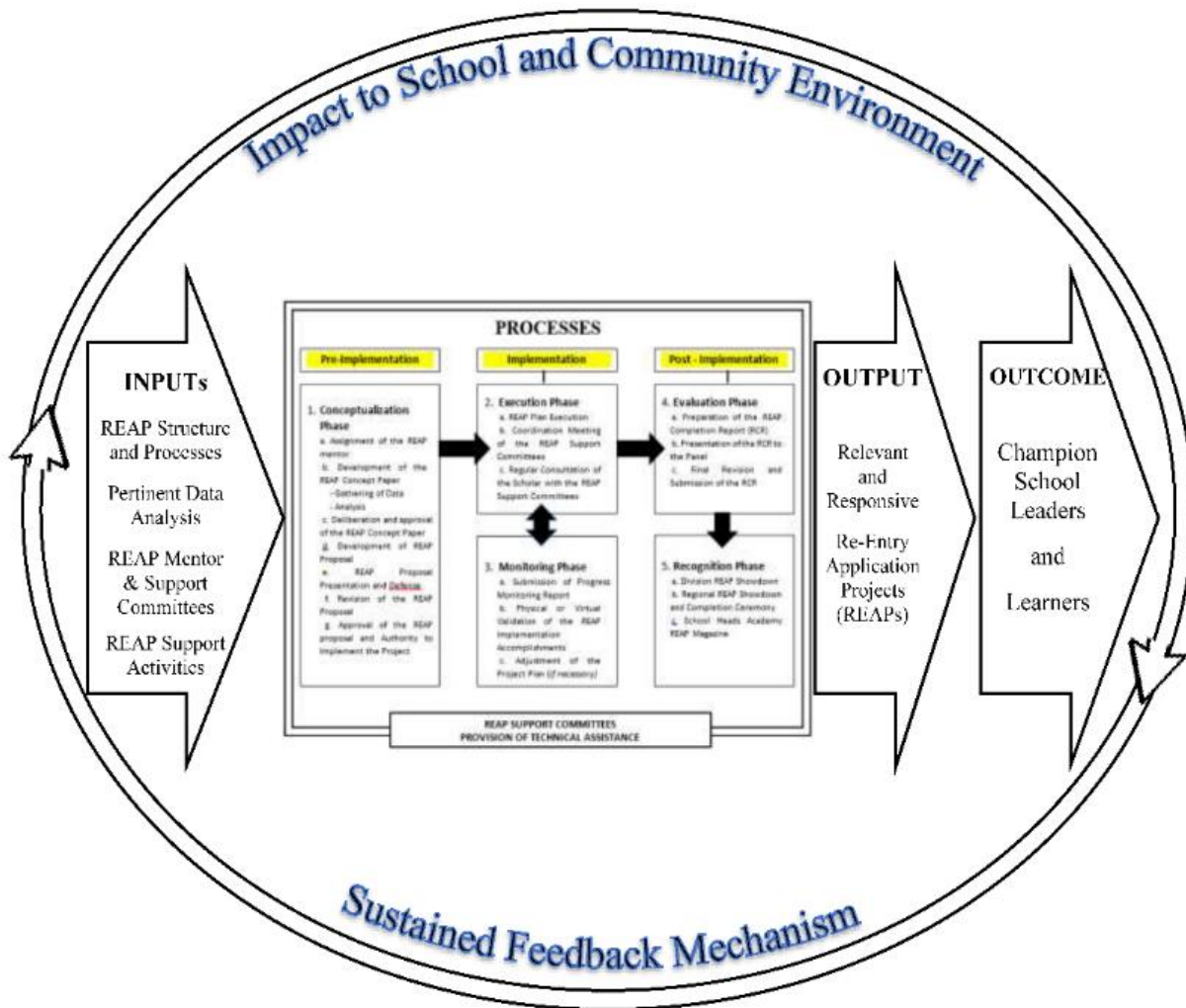

Figure 2. Re-Entry Program Structure

Alongside the structure, the program's process flow also served as one of the outputs during the regional workshop. Figure 3 shows the Re-Entry Program Process Flow as it illustrates the interconnection of one phase to another, as well as the tasks or activities the SHA scholar has to accomplish in each phase. It is divided into three main stages, the pre-implementation, implementation, and post-implementation stage. Under the pre-implementation is the conceptualization phase while the execution and monitoring phases are simultaneously made as part of the implementation stage, while the evaluation and recognition phases are part of the post-implementation stage of the program.
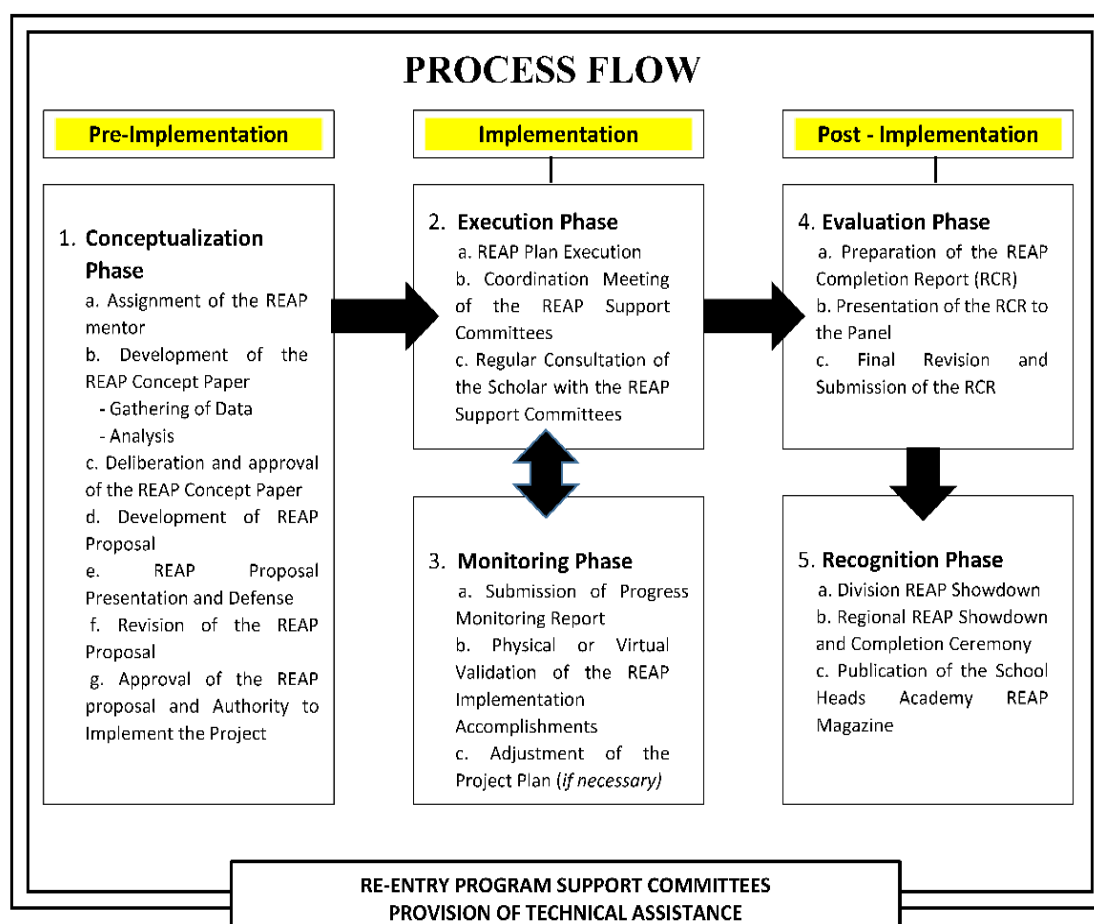
PROCESS FLOW

Pre-Implementation

1. Conceptualization Phase
a. Assignment of the REAP mentor
b. Development of the REAP Concept Paper
 - Gathering of Data
 - Analysis
c. Deliberation and approval of the REAP Concept Paper
d. Development of REAP Proposal
e. REAP Proposal Presentation and Defense
f. Revision of the REAP Proposal
g. Approval of the REAP proposal and Authority to Implement the Project

Implementation

2. Execution Phase
a. REAP Plan Execution
b. Coordination Meeting of the REAP Support Committees
c. Regular Consultation of the Scholar with the REAP Support Committees

3. Monitoring Phase
a. Submission of Progress Monitoring Report
b. Physical or Virtual Validation of the REAP Implementation Accomplishments
c. Adjustment of the Project Plan (*if necessary*)

Post - Implementation

4. Evaluation Phase
a. Preparation of the REAP Completion Report (RCR)
b. Presentation of the RCR to the Panel
c. Final Revision and Submission of the RCR

5. Recognition Phase
a. Division REAP Showdown
b. Regional REAP Showdown and Completion Ceremony
c. Publication of the School Heads Academy REAP Magazine

**RE-ENTRY PROGRAM SUPPORT COMMITTEES
PROVISION OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

Figure 3. Re-Entry Program Process Flow

Soon after the implementing guidelines for the Institutionalization of the Re-Entry Program were modified and finalized based on the comments and suggestions made during the consultative meetings, the regional launching was conducted to formally introduce the Re-Entry Program to the education stakeholders in the SDOs of Region VI with the partner State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) representing the involvement of CHED Region VI in the SHA program. The launching came to its highlight with the signing of the Regional Memorandum No. 729, s. 2022 titled *"Institutionalization of the Re-Entry Program of the School Heads Academy of DepEd Region VI"* by the Regional Director and witnessed by the Asst. Regional Director, Division Chiefs, and the 21 SDSs and was then published in the official website of DepEd Region VI as an official document for easy access by the SHA program implementers and stakeholders.

The Level of Acceptability of the Re-Entry Program of the SHA
After the formal launching of the Re-Entry Program of the SHA, the researcher together with the other HRDD education program supervisors has organized a clustered orientation on the implementing guidelines on the institutionalization of the Re-Entry Program of the SHA of DepEd Region VI to all the SHA scholars, school heads, HRD specialists, and other SDO officials to ensure that the guidelines are properly understood and ensure its unified implementation across the 21 SDOs of the Region. The clustered orientation includes the administration of the questionnaire checklist to the pre-identified participants through the stratified random sampling technique to determine the level of acceptability of the Re-Entry Program.

The overall assessment of the SHA scholars, school heads, and HRD specialists revealed that the implementing guidelines on the institutionalization of the Re-Entry Program of the SHA of DepEd Region

VI are highly acceptable in terms of conceptualization, execution, monitoring, and evaluation. This implies that the implementing guidelines of the Re-Entry Program are held clear, comprehensive, and favorable for SHA scholars. This also indicates that the points brought up at the FGD have been resolved, as the implementing guidelines have already completely and satisfactorily addressed all their concerns and questions. This also implies that the Re-Entry Program's implementation guidelines are likewise regarded as clear, all-encompassing, and beneficial for all the program implementers and end-users.

Table 4 shows the significant difference in the level of acceptability of the Re-Entry Program of the SHA to the scholars, their school heads, and HRD specialists in terms of conceptualization, execution, monitoring, and evaluation.

Table 4. Significant Differences in the Level of Acceptability of the Re-Entry Program

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Conceptualization	Between Groups	.119	2	.059	.289	.749
	Within Groups	73.563	366	.205		
	Total	73.681	368			
Execution	Between Groups	.284	2	.142	.708	.494
	Within Groups	71.821	366	.201		
	Total	72.105	368			
Monitoring	Between Groups	.352	2	.176	.871	.419
	Within Groups	72.392	366	.202		
	Total	72.744	368			
Evaluation	Between Groups	.551	2	.275	1.331	.266
	Within Groups	74.122	366	.207		
	Total	**74.673**	**368**			

Using ANOVA, the analysis revealed no significant differences in the level of acceptability between the SHA scholars, their school heads, and HRD specialists. The level of significance was set at 0.5 alpha, which means that when the p-value is higher than the 0.05 level of significance, there are no significant differences among the variables.

In terms of the conceptualization phase, it revealed no significant differences between the acceptability level of SHA scholars, their school heads, and HRD specialists $F_{(2,366)} = 0.289$, p=0.749. The same holds true in the execution phase, where the analysis revealed that there are no significant differences in the level of acceptability between SHA scholars, their school heads, and HRD specialists $F_{(2,366)} = 0.708$, p= 0.494. Similarly, both the monitoring phase $F_{(2,366)} = 0.871$, p= 0.419 and evaluation phase $F_{(2,366)} = 1.331$, p=0.266 revealed to have no significant differences between SHA scholars, their school heads, and HRD specialists.

These findings denote that the implementing guidelines on the institutionalization of the Re-Entry Program are highly acceptable across the three groups and that the perception of one group is almost similar with the two groups. This also implies that despite the different roles and functions in the REAP implementation, all the duties and responsibilities they must carry out are well-stipulated in the implementing guidelines. This further suggests that the points raised during the FGD were addressed accordingly by the implementing guidelines.

CONCLUSION

Intending to eliminate the pre-existing concerns and challenges by the SHA implementers, this study aims to Institutionalize the Re-Entry Program of the SHA of DepEd Region VI. The institutionalization calls for the design and development of a unified structure and processes that will comprehensively discuss the pertinent details on how the five phases- conceptualization, execution, monitoring, evaluation, and recognition - will be carried out successfully. Anchored on the ADDIE Model and the mixed-method study as its nature, the features and criteria for a responsive and relevant REAP were identified and became the bases in the design and development of the structure and processes of the Re-Entry Program of the SHA of DepEd Region VI.

The FGD findings served as the foundation for the study's implementing guidelines that include the structure and the processes of the REAP. From the high level of acceptability results of the quantitative data analysis, it is concluded that the developed implementing guidelines provide relevant and adequate information and clarification on the points of concern highlighted in the FGD of the study participants. Because the difficulties brought up are centered on the lack of unified and systematic guidelines that will aid them in their REAP implementation, the developed implementing guidelines guarantee the successful implementation of a relevant and responsive REAP by the SHA scholars. With a high level of acceptability of the implementing guidelines which includes a unified structure and explicit processes in place, the REAP of the SHA scholars will be made relevant to their roles in the learning process and responsive to the needs of the school/organization which will redound in more excellent organizational performance through an improved learning process to develop Champion learners.

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