

School Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adjustment (SMEA) in Central Cebu, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

An evaluation of the implementation of the School Monitoring, Evaluation and Adjustment (SMEA) System of the Department of Education (DepEd) was conducted to aid on the improvement and upgrading of the system. A researcher-made instrument was utilized to quantitatively analyze the implementation and interviews were conducted to identify the challenges and struggles of its implementation. Also, a close look at the SMEA questionnaires was done to identify the level of compliance with the established standards. The analysis showed high levels of implementation, however, the qualitative analysis showed gaps in the validity and reliability of results. The burden of too many indicators and the confusion by questions that are hard to quantify in a single questionnaire were identified as the major problem. The need for indicators, which consider the setting and context of each school, was identified as the primary need. A sense of ownership of the indicators and commitment building were among the recommendations. In addition, a systems approach of integrating established school systems such as School Improvement Planning, Results-Based Performance Management System and the Monitoring and Evaluation System was also suggested. The result of the study could contribute to the management of schools, enhancement of policies and improvement of DepEd systems.

Keywords: *SMEA System, DepEd, School Monitoring, Evaluation and Adjustment, SMEA Model, contextualized indicators*

INTRODUCTION

The School Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adjustment System is a mechanism that provides information and insights on several aspects of the school system (Kusek & Rist, 2004). Its main objective is to provide the school heads with the necessary information and insights on the status, progress, and results of the delivery of basic education in schools concerning access, quality, and governance. This is designed to help school heads manage the schools effectively and efficiently and for the teachers to adhere to the standards of teaching and learning process. This also allows the school heads to meet the information, reporting and documentation requirements of the Department of Education as well as provide key information to the Schools Division Office and Regional Offices for its provision of technical assistance. The enactment of Republic Act No. 9155, also known as the "Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001," strengthened the Department of Education's adherence to the principle of shared

governance which recognizes the particular role, task, and responsibility of every unit in the education bureaucracy. It is this Act that stipulates the roles inherent to each office and for which it is principally accountable for outcomes. (Section 5(a), R.A. No. 9155).

With the principle of shared governance, the establishment of a good feedback mechanism is very important to ensure coordination and open communication of the central office with the regional, division and school levels (Section 5(b), R.A. No. 9155). It is for this reason that the Department of Education seeks to continuously improve its feedback mechanism to monitor and evaluate learning outcomes starting from the school level.

It is, therefore, necessary for the information gathered in monitoring and evaluation to be accurate and reliable to ensure that decisions and adjustments are valid and made according to real needs. When the integrity of the system is compromised, monitoring

and evaluation will do more harm than good (Aguinis, 2009). This could result in wrong decisions made due to incorrect and invalid information gathered.

To ensure a more accurate and reliable School Monitoring, Evaluation and Adjustment System in the Department of Education, Regional Office VII, the Officer-In-Charge of the Office of the Regional Director, through the Quality Assurance Division (QAD), has established an enhanced monitoring and evaluation system through its Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adjustment (MEA) Technology. This system is used at the regional level (Regional Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adjustment or RMEA), the division level (Division Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adjustment or DMEA), the district level (District Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adjustment or DsMEA), and at the school level (School Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adjustment or SMEA). The Monitoring, Evaluation and Adjustment System is a means to keep abreast of the current delivery of the basic education services. Through the qualitative and quantitative gathering of information, the schools, districts, and divisions present their current status and progress and identify possible directions for technical assistance and pertinent intervention.

Since the implementation of the Enhanced MEA Technology in the School Year 2015-2016, it has already gained several reactions and comments from the different schools' divisions throughout the region. Teachers and school heads were made to answer data gathering tools provided by the regional office. These data-gathering tools would require time and effort on the part of the school head and teachers to provide accurate information. There were also issues on the validity and reliability of the tools which would properly represent the performance of the school or the teachers. The congestion of the indicators was also brought up covering around more than 50 indicators in every grading period.

The implementation of Enhanced MEA Technology provided a feedback mechanism for DepEd to monitor and evaluate learning outcomes. Because of this, there had also been a noticeable improvement in the involvement of both internal and external stakeholders in their participation during SMEA conferences.

Moreover, the reactions of the different school heads and teachers in the implementation of the system made it essential to evaluate how the system

was imposed in the field. There were questions on whether the target beneficiaries benefitted from the system or whether the objectives were met. These questions are important since they tell much about the essence of the system's implementation. A stakeholder-friendly evaluation of the Enhanced MEA Technology at the school level (SMEA) would help identify the gaps in its implementation. Also, this would help improve the feedback mechanism that the department needs to monitor and evaluate learning outcomes.

Hence, this study aimed to evaluate the implementation of School Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adjustment (SMEA) in the Schools Division of Toledo City during the School Year 2016-2017.

Specific problems were identified to evaluate the SMEA implementation. First, the study determined the level of implementation of the SMEA by the teachers and the school leaders. This was further specified by measuring the regulations of the desired levels of quality, outcomes accountability and stimulation towards the improvement of the delivery of education.

Second, the degree of compliance of the SMEA implementation was also identified. Lastly, the challenges experienced by the beneficiaries in the implementation of the SMEA was qualitatively studied to gain more insights into the current implementation of the program.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Scope of SMEA focused on the improvement of the delivery of Basic Educational Services. The improvement focused on measuring indicators under a good number of aspects in the educational system. This included education resources, which usually focused on the liquidation of the school Maintenance, and Other Operating expenses, the liquidation of the PTA funds, provision of local school board funds and other funds donated by partners and other stakeholders. The SMEA system also focused on the human resources function of the department. Possible indicators were teacher's compliance in the policy of the six-hour straight teaching, analysis of teacher needs and other training needs. Learning Resources were also taken into consideration for this system. This included learning materials, teaching materials, and curriculum guides. The Physical facilities were also checked in terms of

adequacy and equitable distribution. The number of classrooms, comfort rooms, desks, armchairs, and blackboards were checked. Facilities that facilitate health and hygiene were also checked which would include hand washing facilities. Laboratories for learning were also taken into account, which may include computer, science and speech laboratories. The progress of the School Improvement Plan was also checked vis a vis their targets. The projects under the School Improvement Plan were usually divided in terms of the provision of quality education, enhancing access and improving the level of governance. Finally, possible concerns, issues, gaps, and problems were discussed and presented for possible technical assistance to be provided by the higher authorities.

One might think that the above-listed scope of SMEA is a bit too much. Nonetheless, teachers and school heads must follow what was stated in the memorandum by answering the different tools provided by the Division Monitoring and Evaluation Team or the DMET (Regional Memorandum No. 0533, s. 2016). What was the basis of establishing such a scope of SMEA?

In 2006, the Department of Education launched the Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda (BESRA), a package of policy reform thrusts to accelerate the attainment of the Education for All (EFA) goal (Stromquist & Monkman, 2014). Among the Key Reform Thrusts (KRT) of BESRA is to enhance the desired learning outcomes by national learning strategies multi-sector coordination, and quality assurance (Nolasco, 2008). To implement this KRT, BESRA through the Technical Working Group – Quality Assurance and Accountability/Monitoring and Evaluation (TWG-QAA/M&E) crafted the Quality Assurance and Accountability Framework (QAAF), which was approved in 2008. This paved the way for the installation of the Quality Management System (QMS) in the Department to ensure delivery of quality basic education (Nanda, 2016).

The QMS is a system of processes and tools to be applied so that the desired knowledge, skills, attitudes and values of the students can be attained at some expected level. Furthermore, it is a system that requires coordinated and shared the responsibility of the various levels of governance of the Department and all the stakeholders of basic schooling to deliberately bring about quality education (Bouckaert et al., 2016). The main objective of the QMS is to

assure the quality of the teaching and learning experience of the learners (DepEd Order No. 44, s. 2010).

To operationalize the system, school heads must first be oriented on the concepts and principles of Quality Assurance (QA) and the requirements of the QA System. These concepts and principles must then be re-echoed to the teachers and non-teaching staff. When all school personnel has been oriented on the concepts and principles of the QA system, the setting up of the School M&E System will follow which will then be implemented in the school (Scheerens, 2016).

In the guidelines for the School Monitoring and Evaluation System prepared by Macalindong (2009), the scope of the SMEA was defined using the 3-year School Improvement Plan (SIP). The school Monitoring and Evaluation System crafted by Macalindong considers the system as an outcome evaluation, a means to track intermediate results and monitoring progress as well.

As means for outcome evaluation, the school monitoring and evaluation and adjustment provide an avenue for evaluating school performance. This is in preparation for the conduct of the annual review and post-implementation review.

Second, the school Monitoring and Evaluation as a means to track intermediate results also provide an avenue where the school, internal stakeholders and external stakeholders can track their learner's progress. This aspect of the Monitoring and Evaluation provides the school and the teachers the chance to know which students require a certain level of intervention. The curriculum implementation aspect of this dimension provides an avenue for determining what technical assistance or training is necessary for the teacher to improve their craft. This is also an opportunity for the teachers and other non-teaching personnel to check on their staff performance, which was integrated into the Results-Based Performance Management system, devised by the Department of Education to increase employee performance.

Lastly, the utilization and maximizing of results are also checked for possible adjustments. Under Macalindong's framework, the progress monitoring of the different initiatives is also checked. School Improvement Plans are programs prioritized with the help of the School Planning team, which is a group of internal and external stakeholders that provides the school with the general direction for improvement for

the next three years. The progress of these initiatives is checked and possible adjustments are discussed.

In summary, the primary focus of the framework on the learners. School effectiveness was based on the performance of the learners in terms of access, retention, completion, and achievement. This is called outcome evaluation by Macalindong (2009).

The intermediate results are also tracked. These are leading indicators of improvement in the school's assistance to learners. These include the quality of the teaching and learning process as well as the improvement in the access of learners to learning facilities and learning materials. Learners' participation in the teaching and learning process and school activities are also included as well as the improvement of school practices in school-based management (SBM) and the positive perception of stakeholders. This part of the School M&E System is the tracking of intermediate results (Macalindong, 2009).

Finally, the School M&E System will also monitor the school's implementation of school programs and projects outlined in the SIP, the management, and utilization of resources and handling of financial resources. This is called progress monitoring. Progress monitoring covers the school's implementation of programs and projects based on quality, time and targets set in the SIP. It also includes staff development, particularly the improvement in the skills of teachers. It also covers the use of school facilities and other resources, maintenance and improvement of the learning environment, as well as fiscal management vis-à-vis physical accomplishment (Macalindong, 2009).

The scope of the SMEA as stated in RM No. 29, s. 2016 has covered the ideal scope of a School M&E System based on the guidelines prepared by Macalindong (2009) with some additions by the Quality Assurance Division (QAD) of DepEd – RO7. The QAD aims to holistically monitor and evaluate learning outcomes in the different schools throughout the region. The members of the QAD felt the need to add to the scope of the School M&E to achieve this aim.

Knowing the scope of the SMEA would perhaps lead us to the question of why schools need to establish an SMEA system. Scheeren (2016) pointed out that the primary intention of every SMEA System is threefold. First, is to regulate the desired levels of quality of learning outcomes. Second, is to hold

educational service providers accountable for the results. Third, is to support ongoing improvements in education.

Regulation of Desired Levels of Quality of Educational Outcomes and Provisions

The monitoring of the quality of education among schools is the primary goal of any monitoring and evaluation (Scheerens, 2016). Hence, the question of whether or not the school is delivering the desired levels of quality expected of a standard educational institution is the primary concern. This is important since the school deals with outcomes that are long term and could not easily be manifested (Harrison, 2011). For instance, development is considered long term while learning is hard to measure even with standardized tools. This has important implications on how measurement is done. Are the performance measures measuring the actual performance of teachers? Can the indicators' key indicators provide a proper representation of the quality of education delivered? The study conducted by Aguinis (2009) has warned managers in the proper choice of performance indicators since this could have dire consequences on the performance of a company. For instance, the dropout rate as a performance indicator can have disturbing implications among teachers' delivery of quality education. A teacher concerned with dropout rate as a performance indicator may feel trapped when assigned to the lowest section where most of the students at risk of dropping out might be present. This will require much work compared to a teacher assigned to a homogenous section where most of the advanced students are enrolled. It is important to note that even with excellent performance, a teacher assigned to the lowest section might have higher chances of students dropping out. On the other hand, choosing failure rate as a performance indicator may lead teachers to either do their best to teach all the students or resort to passing all the students without even going through the required performance standards to be manifested based on the curriculum. This may lead to additional problems for the next set of teachers who will be teaching students short of the required competencies to be achieved. Thus, measuring a set of indicators may become counterproductive if it is erroneously linked as a representation of the quality and level of performance expended by the employees (Poister, 2008). There is, therefore, a careful and systematic approach in

determining if these indicators represent the level of performance among teachers.

Accountability for their Functioning and Performance

Accountability in education means that schools should provide information to the necessary stakeholders who are directly concerned with the delivery of basic education services (Fullan, 2007). This is not done to subject the school and teachers of public scrutiny but to develop shared accountability in the community. This places the school in a situation where stakeholders could reflect on the possible contributions they can perform to help solve the issues and concerns.

A Mechanism to Stimulate and Improve Education

By monitoring and evaluating certain indicators, the results could be a powerful tool in stimulating learning and self-improvement among education units (Sallis, 2014). When the approach is productive and proactive, the persons involved including the community could place themselves in a situation where strategic planning could be performed. It is important to note that unless a strategic control system is in place and a mode for improvement and learning is established, the road to improvement may not be necessarily near.

Thus, School Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adjustment system were established to improve the quality of the delivery of basic education services and for better learning outcomes. A good monitoring and evaluation system can provide accurate and reliable information needed to help improve past programs and adjust ongoing activities. This will also provide the information needed for future planning (Scheeren et al., 2003). Studies conducted by the United Nations Development Programme showed that proper planning, monitoring, and evaluation working together can play a major role in enhancing the effectiveness of development programs and projects (see Hatton & Schroeder, 2007). Planning, monitoring, and evaluation come together as Results-Based Management (RBM). RBM has been defined as "a broad management strategy aimed at achieving improved performance and demonstrate results" (Hulme, 2007).

To have good RBM, there should be constant feedbacking, learning, and improving. Lessons learned through monitoring and evaluation can be used as the basis for regularly modifying existing

plans. Plans can also be developed based on these lessons. (Handbook for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating Results for Development Results by United Nations Development Programme, 2009).

According to the RBM Life-Cycle Approach, planning, monitoring, and evaluation must come together. Other organizations now refer to RBM as Management for Developmental Results (MfDR) to emphasize development rather than organizational results. (Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results by United Nations Development Programme, 2009).

The Result Based Management Framework involves three major actions, which are planning, evaluation and monitoring. In this framework, these three actions form a cycle, which revolves around stakeholder's participation. To strengthen the stakeholder's involvement, specific steps under each of the main actions are specified. First, under planning, the first step is the act of setting the vision. Every action initiated and maintained by the organization should be rooted in its mission and vision. This is followed by the teams gathering together to define the results they wish to achieve. This is called defining the results map and results-based management framework. This process involves discussion of the desired results and then discussing how the results could be achieved. After this is completed, the next main action is that of monitoring. Monitoring starts with the act of planning for the conduct of such action. The evaluation step is also planned since the evaluation process is considered as the final phase of the appraisal.

Second, the most important step in the monitoring process is the implementation of the monitoring system as planned. After this is achieved, the phase called evaluation is then conducted. This involves a series of action steps that manages and utilizes the evaluation to enhance the next possible steps in the future.

In general, the results-based management system intends to benefit the stakeholders of the educational sector. This involves the school heads, the teachers and the students themselves who are the primary beneficiaries of educational services. Hence, the discussion at this point will focus on how the system intends to deliver these benefits to these primary beneficiaries.

Figures from DepEd and the National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) show that one out of six

school-aged Filipino children is not enrolled in schools (Bernardo, Zhang & Callueng, 2002). Data from the National Statistics Office (2003) Functional Literacy, Education, and Mass Media Survey showed that poverty is the top reason why Filipino school-aged children do not attend schools. Second, was the lack of personal interest of students. Most of the schools do not have control over the economic status of the children in the community. Therefore, the challenge is to find means on how to make the schools more interesting rather than intimidating.

Schools must also make the teaching and learning experiences of the students more significant to their daily lives. With the data and information gathered through SMEA, necessary interventions and adjustments to different programs in schools and improvements in education can be made based on real needs. These improvements in education make the students the primary beneficiaries of the SMEA.

Teachers can also benefit from SMEA. The teachers in the Philippines have always been facing a lot of challenges in the delivery of quality basic education to the learners (Sadiman, 2004). These include the lack of learning materials, lack of armchairs, and lack of technical equipment needed for learning (Orosa, 2008). Even the time they have to deliver all the competencies in every quarter is affected due to the programs and activities. With the SMEA system, the adherence of teachers to the different policies and guidelines of the Department of Education is being monitored and the hindering factors to this adherence to policies are determined and can, therefore, be adjusted when necessary.

The SMEA system can also benefit the school heads. This system enables school heads to monitor and evaluate learning outcomes at the school level. This system also provides information as to the performance of the teachers in terms of the delivery of basic education services as well as adherence to DepEd policies. The information and data provided by the SMEA can then be used for necessary improvements in school processes thereby making the job of a school head to manage the school a lot easier.

Preconditions for Effective Monitoring and Evaluation in Education

Educational monitoring and evaluation are the normal rhetoric of any educational innovation. However, in the actual scenario, this practice is usually

the last item on the agenda. Although, it should be noted that most of the stakeholders are interested in the implementation of a sustainable monitoring and evaluation provisions. Scheerens (2016) has provided the following guidelines as possible answers to improve monitoring and evaluation.

First, is the use of the momentum of Monitoring and Evaluation as part of the current reform models and planning schemes. Second, is to consider the design and implementation of the M& E as an innovation program in its own right, justified by the global call for quality in education. Third, is to stress the innovative and learning potential of the M&E as a lever for educational improvement. In simple words, it could be a useful tool.

At this point, it is important to discuss why certain aspects of the Monitoring and Evaluation in education could constrain these guidelines. First of all, its usefulness is usually impeded by the overwhelming nature of the work of teachers and school leaders. Consequently, a long-form for Monitoring and Evaluation may lead to hasty filling of information, which could lead to inaccurate information. The consequences of this scenario have strong implications on the reliability of the instrument used to monitor and evaluate.

Another, important point to discuss is the level of validity of the instrument. Are the items' level of validity high enough to warrant the basis for specific decisions to be made. It is also obvious that a certain amount of judgment is involved in the conduct of monitoring and evaluation. This may cause a certain level of resentment from those who are judged. This resentment may escalate if the feedback is given to individuals who feel they are not completely accountable for the judgment made.

Educational Evaluation

In many applications of educational evaluation in real life, setting goals is taken into specific practical situations such as described as a set of means and goals. Goals are important in all evaluations since they could be seen as the desired states or ideal processes that could be made as targets for the evaluation itself. The goals need not necessarily be defined by precise operational and quantitative form. It could be a general notion of the dimension improving after a particular program is implemented. In this case, there should be a level of assessment and judgment and in this case, certain kind of criteria is

being used. At this point, it is important to note that the data gathered could be used either as formative or summative in nature.

When we say formative, a certain level of adjustment is done based on the feedback provided by the data gathering. The summative approach, on the other hand, utilizes the information to create a judgment of the current progress of the schools. This could have important considerations on how possible School Monitoring, Evaluation and Adjustment conferences are performed. Is the approach formative or summative in nature? The approach by itself has important implications for itself.

It is important to note that teachers and schools usually operate in a complex process of interactions. The study conducted by Leithwood & Riehl (2003) has shown that the school system is too complex that even the school principal's influence has a minimal effect on the success of the school. Complex interactions of school location, nature of students, and the nature of parents and teachers could come into interplay. This makes it hard to distinguish which among these factors could greatly lead to the success of a school. Hence, there should be careful use of the summative nature of the monitoring and evaluation. This is essential since judgment may lead to the idea of ineffective school leaders when in fact the school head may be on the right track. This may discourage potential leaders and aggravate the situation.

In the Department of Education, performance is evaluated using the Results-Based Performance Management Systems (RPMS). The guidelines thereof are established through the DepEd Order No. 2 series of 2015. The order was issued on February 6, 2015. As stated in the DepEd Order, the aim of the system is a contextualized adoption of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) Strategic Performance Management System (SPMS) in DepEd. SPMS was established through the issuance of the Memorandum Circular (MC) No. 06 series of 2012. The SPMS emphasizes the strategic alignment of the agency's thrust with the day-to-day operation of the units and individual personnel in the organization. Before the SPMS was institutionalized, the Philippines has evolved its Performance Management System to what is now from the previous forms of Performance Management Systems. For instance, the Philippines has shifted its performance management system from focusing on processes to focusing now in results.

Successive administrations since 1963 had

imposed different means to manage performance for the government sector. First, the 1963 implementation of the first-ever means of Performance rating through CSC Memorandum Circular No. 6, s. 1963. This was then followed by reforms implemented in 1978, where it was labeled as the New Performance Appraisal System (NPAS), which was mainly based on Peter Drucker's Management by Objectives (MBOs) system. The system focused on Key Result Areas (KRAs) that were measured through the dimensions of quality, quantity, and timeliness. In 1989, a new milestone through CSC Memorandum Circular No. 12, s. 1989 allowed government agencies to create their Performance Evaluation System. In 1999, the Revised Performance Evaluation System (PES) was implemented. It was commonly known as the 360-degree Evaluation where ratings were scored through the gathering of individual's, employer's, subordinates', and peers' feedback. The system was then found out to be too complex. Finally in 2005, with the popularity of systems thinking, a new performance management system was installed. This system sought to align individual performance with organizational goals. It also emphasized the need to link the performance of each office to the national goals. It was from this framework that the current Results-Based Performance Management System in DepEd was implemented.

In general, the SMEA system was not imposed as part of the educational system for no reason. The immediate aim of the system is to provide information on the current progress of the innovations implemented and to make those people who could directly improve the outcomes adjust as necessary. The intentions of the SMEA have a great impact on those who wish to contribute to the success of the national goals. It is also important to consider the implications of a system to the current progress of the school heads and the context of the different schools they are leading. The schools on itself have different situations prior to any school leader who will be assigned to the school. Thus, we must determine the level of implementation and compliance of the current system to the goals and standards of monitoring and evaluation.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework of the study was anchored on the current issuances and guidelines set by the Department of Education on the ideal implementation of the School Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adjustment. This is important since the intention of every system oftentimes differ from the realities in the field (Parkay et. al., 2014). For the sake of this research, the level of implementation was adopted from the definition of Durlak & Dupre (2008) which defines the level of implementation as the way to check if the essence of the program is achieved. Every program has its essence for its existence. This is the reason why the program was created in the first place. If the level of implementation is high, then these objectives are expected to be achieved.

The study is primarily based on the guidelines stipulated by the Republic Act 9155 also known as the "Basic Education Act of 2001" The act details the framework by which basic education should be governed. Section 3 of the legislation says that the school should encourage local initiatives for the improvement of the school and to provide how these improvements may be achieved and sustained. Considering the sustainability of these initiatives means the school should continuously monitor its indicators and adjust as it sees fit. Consequently, the SMEA program was established to allow the school to continuously improve and adjust base on the target outcomes.

According to Scheerens (2016), the essence of every monitoring and evaluation in the field of education is to regulate desired levels of quality of educational outcomes and provisions. The Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda (BESRA) had formulated a set of National Strategies in the different key reform areas to be achieved in the coming years. These national reform agenda could never be achieved without constant monitoring and evaluation of the current progress of these key reform areas. In general, the BESRA aims to achieve the following: (1) make basic education accessible to all, (2) reduce the number of out of school youth and adults, (3) leapfrog the quality of basic education into global standards, (4) increase spending for basic education from all possible sources, and (5) tighten system governance and enhance school-based management. These main goals were arranged in five key results

areas: (1) KR1: Schools and School-Based Management, (2) KR2: Teachers and their development, (3) KR3: National Learning Strategies and Quality Assurance & Accountability, (4) KR4: Early Childhood, Alternative Learning and Private Education, (5) KR5: Institutional culture change of DepEd, modernization of finance, technological, administrative environments. These national goals are currently not completely achieved. It is thus imperative that these national goals dictate the implementation of programs and how performance is measured in the level of the division office to the implementation of Monitoring and Evaluation in schools.

The second reason why Monitoring and Evaluation are implemented is to hold educational systems accountable for their functioning and performance and support direct management of education (Scheerens, 2016). Those who directly run the school have a greater capacity to implement the change in their respective stations (Harris, 2004). It is thus imperative the school principals and the teachers should be aware of their current performance. Measurement of such enables them to be accountable and aware of their level of performance. This opens the door for pertinent adjustments to be implemented.

The next goal of every monitoring evaluation is to stimulate improvement in education (Scheerens, 2016). The accountability of the school heads and their ownership of the outcomes are expected to stimulate improvement in student outcomes. When the feedback is fed to the teachers and the school head, the probability of corrective action is higher. However, the approach should not be punitive but that of a constructive and proactive approach. Scheerens (2016) defines this as "formative evaluation" which eventually leads to organizational learning.

These three dimensions were taken as the basis for measuring the level of implementation of monitoring and evaluation. On the other hand, the level of compliance was adopted by the definition of Durlak et al., (2008) which defines the level of compliance as a measure of adherence of the program to the expected standards to which it should be implemented. In this research, the author measured the level of compliance in terms of validity and reliability. This was done because the School Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adjustment system are intended to measure performance. The standards set by reliability and validity are an important dimension

of every measurement process (DeVellis, 2016). Also, the level of compliance with the known standards and issued guidelines by DepEd was considered. Since the authority to conduct School Monitoring, Evaluation and Adjustment was devolved in the Regional level, the issuance at the regional level was the basis for determining the level of compliance. Regional Memorandum 29 s. 2016 entitled, "Guidelines in the Conduct of School Monitoring, Evaluation and Adjustment, District Monitoring, Evaluation and Adjustment and Division Monitoring, Evaluation and Adjustment for the Second and Third Quarter of the School Year 2015-2016," was used as the legal foundation for analysis. The regional memorandum specified the need to conduct a school, district, and division monitoring,

evaluation and adjustment conference where a specific committee headed by a chairman should ensure the conduct of the said conference. Specific schedules were also set and the scope of indicators was enumerated. This includes six main groups of indicators under the delivery of basic education services which are Monitoring, Evaluation and Adjustment Implementation, School Improvement Plan Accomplishments under Financial and Implementation Issues, Educational Resources, GAA funded Special Programs and Projects and the 6R's Regional Targets. The 6R's are Reach, Responsiveness, Returns, Ratings, Revenues and Recognition.

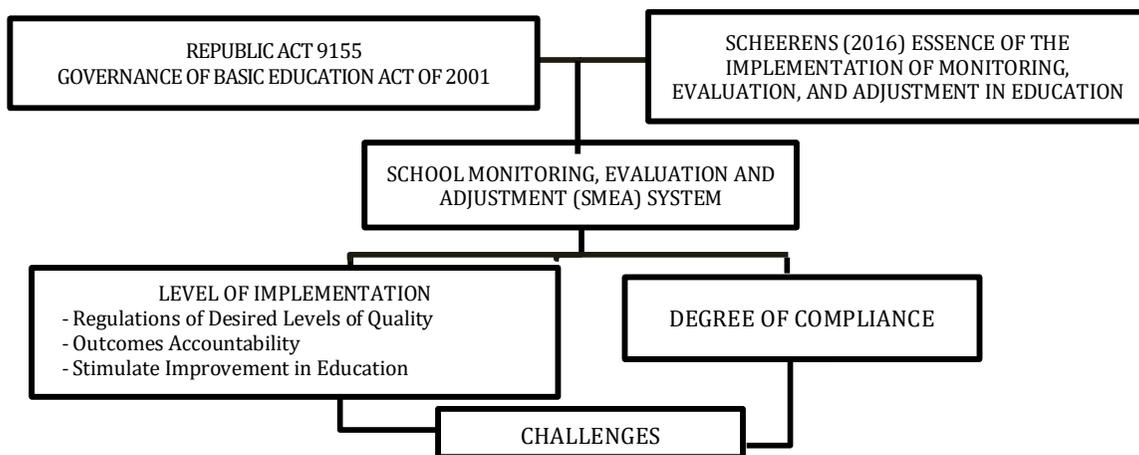


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Unified M&E System

As seen in the conceptual framework, the dimensions of the level of implementation and degree of compliance respectively were the basis for identifying the current challenges of the implemented SMEA system. Based on the level of compliance and level of implementation, the different challenges of the SMEA program were identified.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section discusses the different means and methods by which the study was conducted.

The study utilized the descriptive quantitative design as explicated by Polit and Beck (2012). The researcher designed an instrument based on the guidelines and issuances that govern School Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adjustment in DepEd. The level of implementation and compliance was then computed using the weighted mean description

based on the different descriptors of the Likert scale. The instrument was validated by a pool of experts from DepEd and the University of Visayas. The dimensions of each of the instruments were based on the dimensions presented in the theoretical framework. The primary approach to answering the second sub-problem was also considered as documentary analysis since the information gathered was from previous records of implementation. On the other hand, a descriptive qualitative approach was utilized to answer the third sub-problem. Specifically, a narrative analysis of their responses was used to determine the current challenges of the beneficiaries of the School Monitoring, Evaluation and Adjustment System.

Environment

The study was conducted in the public elementary and secondary schools in Toledo City, Cebu. It is

located around 50 kilometers away from Cebu City and is widely known for its huge mining industry. The office of the Department of Education, Schools Division of Toledo City is currently located at D. Macapagal Highway, Poblacion, Toledo City.

The Department of Education, Schools Division of Toledo City, became a Division in 1963. Before that, Toledo City was part of the Division of Cebu Province. The DepEd Toledo City shares the Vision, Mission and Core Values of the Department of Education while promoting the values of integrity, stability, and excellence to its stakeholders especially the learners.

The different schools in Toledo City are divided into four districts. The North District is composed of 20 public elementary schools and two public secondary schools. The East District is composed of 12 public elementary schools and three public secondary schools. The West District is composed of nine public elementary schools and five public secondary schools. While the South District is composed of nine public elementary schools and two public secondary schools. A total of 62 schools compose the entire Schools Division of Toledo City. Each school is manned by a school head or a designated teacher-in-charge.

Participants

The participants of this study were the school heads and teachers of the different public elementary and secondary schools in the Schools Division of Toledo City. The school heads provided information on the actual implementation of the SMEA system as well as the tools used in gathering the data from the school heads. The teachers provided information on how the implementation of the SMEA system affects their work. Therefore, a total enumeration of the current school heads and teachers was conducted (Tongco, 2007). This total enumeration was asked to answer a 5-point Likert scale that intends to measure the level of implementation of the SMEA system.

The level of compliance was measured based on the archives available in the previously submitted instruments for the SMEA. The level of reliability and validity was studied based on these archival records.

For Problem number 3, a random sampling among the participants was done. As soon as data saturation was reached and when theoretical concepts become iterative, the researcher stopped the data collection (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). Constant comparison was also regularly done in

every data collected. This was done to re-align newly collected information.

Since the study utilized complete enumeration, exclusion and inclusion criteria were not necessary. The study was limited to the individuals within the Toledo City Division. Since random sampling was utilized for the third statement of the problem, all the individuals working as either teacher or school head had equal chances of being part of the sample.

Instrument

The instrument utilized in this research was subjected to the approval of the team of experts from DepEd and the University of Visayas. As mentioned, the dimensions enumerated and argued in the conceptual framework were the basis for the instrument. The internal validity of the research was assured by taking into consideration the reliability and validity of the results. Reliability was checked using Cronbach Alpha using SPSS. The results should be above .80 to pass the test in reliability. The team of experts ensured the face and construct validity of the instrument. In terms of external validity, the study may not be generalizable to individuals who are not in the context similar to that of the samples. The study was designed to determine the implementation of a program in the context of the educational sector. It was important to note that the study had three major problems to address. The level of implementation was measured using a Likert scale which determined the levels by which the core goals of the School Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adjustment system were achieved or not. The instrument as mentioned was also subjected to reliability test using Cronbach-Alpha.

Problem No. 2, on the other hand, studied the archives of the previously utilized tools for School Monitoring, Evaluation and Adjustment while to answer the third sub-problem, a semi-structured interview where all components of the research questions were conducted. The researcher at this point was the best instrument since it was determined if further questions should be asked to delve deeper into the challenges and issues of the implementation of the SMEA. The researcher tried to delve through the questions that seemed to have an emotional trigger to the participants. Hence, a semi-structured approach was utilized (Longhurst, 2003).

Data Gathering Procedures

The study started with the approval of the title.

Preliminary information and literature search was conducted. A proposal was then crafted to conduct the research. Once the study got permission from the Institutional Review Board (IRB), the data gathering then followed.

Permission to gather data was sought from the Schools Division Superintendent of the Schools Division of Toledo City. The researcher then distributed the questionnaires to the schools' heads.

Since the participants included teachers from different schools, permission to conduct the study in the schools was sought from the school heads. The researcher then distributed questionnaires to teachers in the schools.

Prior to the conduct of the interview with the target participants, informed consent was provided. The participants were also provided with a certificate of confidentiality that research data would not indicate any names and that results would be kept confidential.

Data gathering started primarily on the current collection of the SMEA instruments. These data were archived in the division office and appropriate permission to access data was given to the appropriate authorities. The instrument utilized in the conduct of SMEA was studied in terms of reliability through Cronbach Alpha and in terms of construct validity. The basis for the analysis was the framework established in the conceptual framework.

Data Analysis

Data Analysis differed based on the questions being asked. For problem No. 1, the level of implementation was presented in tables and the weighted mean of the different dimensions was presented and analyzed. This provided important insights into the dimensions not fully implemented as of the moment.

The analysis in Problem No. 2 differed because it perused through the current and previous instruments utilized in the conduct of the SMEA. The reliability and validity of the instrument were thus checked if it's at par or in compliance with the expected standards.

The third research question utilized thematic analysis in collecting the realities or actualities for each dimension. Each theme was created from the codes derived from the transcripts of narratives. The different themes and their interrelationships were then presented using diagrams with examples capturing the essence of each theme.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The presentation was arranged based on the problems presented in the introduction. This was done to systematically present the findings, analysis, and interpretation of the results. The data are presented in tabular forms and are discussed thoroughly.

Perceived Level of Implementation of SMEA

The level of implementation as perceived by both school heads and teachers are presented below. The data gathered was a product of the questionnaire distributed to the respondents. The perceived level of implementation of both sets of respondents is presented in terms of the different dimensions of the SMEA as discussed in the theoretical framework. This includes regulations of levels of quality, outcomes accountability, and stimulate improvement in education.

Regulations of Levels of Quality

As an important dimension in the implementation of SMEA, the ability to regulate the levels of quality serves as an important indicator that the system is achieving its intended goals. The current perceived level of implementation of the SMEA under this dimension is presented in the following table.

Table 1. Regulations on the Levels of Quality

Statements	Teachers		School Heads		Average	Descriptor
	WM	Descriptor	WM	Descriptor		
Achievement of Target Goals...	3.67	High	3.76	High	3.72	High
Stakeholder's Utility...	3.72	High	4.35	Very High	4.04	High
Adjustment of the team...	3.70	High	3.59	High	3.65	High
Accurate Representation...	3.68	High	2.59	Moderate	3.14	Moderate
Insights into the current performance...	3.79	High	3.71	High	3.75	High

Note. n= 1456 *Legend: 4.21-5.0-Very High, 3.41-4.20-High, 2.61-3.40-Moderate, 1.81-2.60-Low, 1.00-1.80-Very Low

As seen in the table, the first statement, "The system has helped the school achieve the target national goals" showed a high level of implementation as perceived by both the teachers and the school heads. It is thus evident that both teachers and school heads agreed that the implementation of SMEA would help the Department of Education (DepEd) to achieve its goals. It could be noted that this statement had the lowest rating among teachers. This means that teachers perceived the current system as less likely to help achieve the target goals as compared to the other dimensions under regulations of the level of quality. Kusek & Rist (2004) have presented in their study ten steps to results-based monitoring and evaluation. One of the most important aspects of gaining more benefits is the need for the employees to recognize the importance of the indicators they are measuring to achieving their target.

The second statement which is "The system allows all the members of the school as well as the stakeholders to determine the target levels of performance" also showed the same high ratings. This means that both the school heads and teachers agreed on the fact that the SMEA system would help the stakeholders be guided and be able to gauge their targets to contribute to the national goals. This was most evident from the responses of the school heads. School heads generally recognized the importance of the SMEA system in tapping the stakeholders. It is important to note that the current SMEA system requires all schools to conduct an SMEA conference where the Supreme Student Government (SSG), the Barangay Council and the PTA are invited to attend. The presence of these important stakeholders in the SMEA conference has the potential to involve all these important stakeholders to the current struggles and problems of the school (Lewallen et al., 2015).

The third statement which is "Adjustment in the part of the team is evident after the feedback from the Monitoring and Evaluation is presented," also showed a high level of perceived implementation. This means that in the field, the need to adjust because of the feedback was evident among schools and its respective stakeholders.

The fourth statement, "The results of the Monitoring and Evaluation are an accurate representation of the school's performance" had the lowest rating among all the statements. It could be possible that many of the respondents, both teachers, and school heads, felt that the indicators were not the

representation of their current efforts and their performance. There could be a gap and less ownership between the indicators mandated by the Regional Memorandum 29 series of 2016. This lower level of implementation was perceived mainly by the school heads. The teachers, on the other hand, found this statement as highly implemented among schools although sitting close to a moderate rating. Considering both respondents, it was evident that the average of their perception was moderate.

The researcher would also like to note that most of the respondents would prefer to rate the Likert scale in the middle part. Perhaps, despite the explanations and forewarnings, the respondents seemed to be wary about putting their school down in terms of performance, thus, they were more inclined to rate the level of implementation somewhere in the middle part. Despite this fact, many of the respondents rated the level of implementation under the fourth item lower as compared to the previously mentioned statements. Therefore, the information still provided important implications on how data was utilized during SMEA conferences. The current SMEA system involves a great number of indicators. Important questions regarding its utilization should be carefully answered. For instance, do the data gathered truly represent the current effort of the school, the teachers and the community? Are the indicators used results indicators or behavioral indicators? If so, are the data gathered used to implicate the teachers and the school staff? These questions were further delved into the narrative analysis of the interview responses. The study of Huse (2005) has explicated the need for avoiding indicators that are not in complete control of the employees. Such indicators will lessen accountability since employees will feel the injustice of how their performance is measured.

The fifth statement, "The results of the Monitoring and Evaluation provided important insights on the nature of the school's current performance" was rated high by both teachers and school heads. Despite the fact the teachers and school heads seem to think that the data does not represent their efforts, they believed that the information from the SMEA conference provided important insights on the nature of the schools' performance. This high rating was especially evident from the responses of the teachers who rated this statement the highest as compared to the other statements under regulations of levels of quality. This means that the teachers recognized the importance of

the system in keeping them abreast of their current performance. As mentioned by Rummler & Branche (2012), anything you don't measure is hard to control. The act alone of taking note of these indicators provided an avenue for the teacher to self-reflect.

Outcomes of Accountability

Outcomes accountability is one of the dimensions of the School Monitoring, Evaluation and Adjustment System that generally focuses on the ability of the process owners to inflict change through a high sense of responsibility and accountability. The table below shows the perceived level of implementation of the statements under outcomes accountability.

Table 2. Outcomes Accountability

Statements	Teachers		SchoolHeads		Average	Descriptor
	WM	Descriptor	WM	Descriptor		
Teachers feel they have the responsibility to adjust...	3.76	High	3.88	High	3.82	High
School heads take the results positively...	3.77	High	4.24	Very High	4.01	High
The M&E helps the school heads implement programs...	3.75	High	4.24	Very High	4.00	High
Teachers use the program to improve...	3.82	High	3.82	High	3.82	High
Teachers take the outcomes positively	3.79	High	3.88	High	3.84	High

Note. n= 1456 ***Legend:** 4.21-5.0 – Very High, 3.41-4.20 – High, 2.61-3.40 – Moderate, 1.81-2.60 – Low, 1.00-1.80 – Very Low

In general, both the school heads and teachers had perceived a high level of accountability across all statements. It should be noted that there is still room for improvement since the high rating is a rank lower than the highest level of implementation which is categorized as very high.

The first statement, “All teachers feel they have a responsibility to adjust their performance based on the results of the Monitoring and Evaluation” had a higher rating among the school heads compared to the teachers. Although both of the groups categorically described the implementation as high, it would seem that the school heads scored it higher as perceived in the current implementation. It was notable that this statement had lower ratings for both sets of respondents compared to the other statements in terms of the level of implementation. It is thus imperative that even if the respondents categorically labeled it as high, compared to other dimensions this dimension was lowest in terms of implementation as evident in the average rating. This could be alarming since a high sense of responsibility is a precursor for

action (Heyler, Armenakis, Walker & Collier, 2016).

The second statement, "School heads take the results positively," seemed to have very high levels of ratings when school heads rated themselves. However, the teachers seemed to rate the statement lower. The positive response to the feedback given in SMEA is a positive indicator of the willingness of the school leaders to implement possible adjustments. It should be noted that overall, this statement has the highest level of perceived implementation.

The third statement, "The outcomes of the Monitoring and Evaluation helped the school heads implement the programs to achieve the targets" was rated high in terms of implementation among teachers. However, school heads rated this with a very high level of perceived implementation. As the primary subject of this statement, the school heads seemed to perceive the high implementation of this item. This could mean that school heads found the SMEA system helpful in terms of the implementation of different programs to achieve the targets.

The fourth statement, "Teachers use the outcomes of the monitoring and evaluation to improve their performance in the future," had the highest rating among the teachers' perceived implementation. Interestingly, the school heads rated this lowest across all dimensions. Although the rating could be categorized as high, compared to how the respondents rated the other statements, it would seem that on average this had the lowest level of implementation among all the other statements. This could mean that although teachers believed that there had been a certain level of adjustment to improve their performance in the future, the school heads would tend to believe that there is still a great deal to improve in the teachers' performance.

The fifth statement, "Teachers take the outcomes of the Monitoring and Evaluation Positively," was rated as high for both teachers and school heads. As mentioned earlier, the ability to take the outcomes positively could greatly benefit the next steps for adjustment. The teachers seemed to believe that there was a certain level of adjustment in part once data was gathered. Since the respondents were mostly teachers, they could attest to themselves the level of adjustment they had performed from the feedback given. It was important to note there is a great deal to improve yet since the high level is only at the second to the very high level of perceived implementation. Berryhill, Linney, and Fromewick (2009) had presented in their study how the level of accountability can either help or break teachers' motivation. This level of ownership for the results should be taken positively and any move to implicate the employees could have dire effects on the level of accountability, thus, impeding the possible adjustments necessary for change.

In contrast, teachers perceived that the school was lower in rating in terms of adjustment. This was expected since collectively the school is considered an aggregate of different groups. This includes the students, the faculty, administration and the community itself (Lewallen, Hunt, Potts, Zaza, Gilles, 2015). Hence, any adjustment at the school level would take time to develop which includes higher levels of accountability. Teachers are the front lines of the educational system, it is a positive indicator that the SMEA system is raising the level of accountability among teachers.

Stimulate Improvement of Education

One of the most important dimensions of the

School Monitoring, Evaluation and Adjustment is to ensure that all the efforts of the system stimulate the improvement of education. The table shows how the teachers and school heads rated the implementation of this dimension across different sub-statements.

Table 3. Stimulate Improvement of Education

Statements	Teachers		School Heads		Average	Descriptor
	WM	Descriptor	WM	Descriptor		
Stimulate improvement of school indicators...	3.74	High	4.00	High	3.87	High
Schools were able to achieve national goals...	3.78	High	4.12	High	3.95	High
Stimulate the implementation of programs...	3.72	High	3.82	High	3.77	High
Teachers trust the data will help stimulate improvement...	3.68	High	3.82	High	3.75	High
School heads trust the data will help stimulate improvement...	3.72	High	3.82	High	3.77	High

Note. n=1456 *Legend: 4.21-5.0 – Very High, 3.41-4.20 – High, 2.61-3.40 – Moderate, 1.81-2.60 – Low, 1.00-1.80 – Very Low

As seen in the table, the first statement, "Monitoring and Evaluation has a positive impact on the growth of the school indicators" has been rated high for both teachers and school heads. This means that both teachers and school leaders had observed growth in the school indicators since the implementation of the SMEA. The second statement, "Monitoring and Evaluation's essence is to allow the schools to achieve the national goals" showed a similar trend with the previous statement. The achievement of indicators in the school level was perhaps seen as a contributory factor in the achievement of the national goals. This alignment is important since the achievement of school indicators may not necessarily contribute to the achievement of the national goals. This is most especially true if the indicators chosen does not align with the national goals.

The third statement, "Since its implementation, the Monitoring and Evaluation have promoted the implementation of programs to achieve the national goals," had the second-lowest rating of implementation given by the teachers and had the lowest rating given by school heads tied with the fourth and fifth statements. Although it can still be described as high, this lower rating as compared to the other statements could mean that both teachers and school heads felt the need to improve the SMEA

system in its ability to promote the implementation of programs to achieve national goals.

The fourth statement, "Teachers trust the data will help stimulate improvement" was rated lowest among both teachers and school heads. It should be noted that both respondents categorically rated the statement as highly implemented. Considering how the respondents rated other statements, this statement was rated the lowest. The average level of implementation for all respondents showed the lowest score among all the statements. This would mean that at a certain level, the respondents lack the trust that the data gathered in the SMEA would help stimulate improvement in the delivery of basic education services.

The same could be observed in the fifth statement, "School heads have a deep trust on the data gathered in the monitoring and evaluation for the improvement of the delivery of educational services" which scored slightly higher among the teachers as compared to the fourth statement, but was lowest among the school heads tied with the third and fourth statements. Although the rating could be considered high, it should be noted that this is not considered as the highest level of implementation.

It could also be observed that, in terms of stimulating growth, teachers and school heads perceived the schools' contribution to national growth as the highly implemented dimension. Schools are considered the most basic governing body of the educational system. Hence, any improvement in the school level will greatly contribute to the achievement of the national goals. A good number of National Goals are currently being adopted by the Philippines. It is because of this that we have adopted dropouts as an important indicator for every school (Vinovski, 2015). It should be noted that this indicator may not be necessarily an important indicator. For instance, a school stricken with poverty will always have higher dropouts despite having the best teachers in their school. Hence, this indicator may not be a representation of their current performance.

Interestingly, teachers and school heads perceived the improvement of the delivery of educational services as the lowest in terms of implementation. This could be possible since any changes in the school level might take time to consummate. Also, learning can be observed on a long term basis and is oftentimes hard to measure even in the most standardized form of examination. True learning can only be evident in

how the students apply their learnings in real-life situations. The contrasting perception of the high rating in the achievement of national goals but lower ratings in terms of improvement of educational services could be because a certain level of achievement of national goals may not necessarily improve the delivery of educational services in a particular school.

Also, the school heads seemed to find the contribution of schools to national growth as the highest level of implementation. School heads, as leaders of the school, recognize that every school has the primary role in achieving the national targets. According to the study of Chiu, Balkundi & Weinberg (2017), the overall manager's school heads are a generalist in perspective. Teachers, on the other hand, rated this lower compared to the school heads. Here we see the difference between the perspective of the teachers and the school leaders. This difference in perspective might be useful in achieving a balance between details and the general direction of the school. It should be noted that achieving a certain goal would require a certain level of attention to detail and the necessary skill to analyze the general direction of things. Hence, an ideal balance of both will help achieve the necessary objective. According to Buckingham & Coffman (2014), the balance would differ based on the complexity and nature of the objective.

Summary of the Level of Implementation

To provide insights on the overall level of implementation of SMEA as perceived by the teachers and the school heads, the following table is presented.

As seen in the table, both teachers and school heads, in general, perceived a high level of implementation of the SMEA system. However, there is still a need to improve the system to raise its implementation to a very high level.

Degree of Compliance

To address the second objective of this research, the archives of the current questionnaire was used and scrutinized based on the standards of validity and reliability. The results of this are presented in this section.

An important aspect of compliance is the validity of the instrument used. One of the most important questions in taking into consideration the validity of

an instrument is to answer the question, “Is the instrument measuring what it is supposed to measure?” Another very important aspect of compliance is the reliability of the instrument. The instrument is reliable if it is capable of providing consistent results. Since the archives were examined qualitatively, the results are presented in themes emergent by the perusal of the archival records.

Based on the archival records of the Division Monitoring and Evaluation Team (DMET), schools were highly compliant with the tools provided for the SMEA system. This could be due to the fact that schools were required by the DMET to answer the data gathering tools. The following themes were worth noting.

One Size Fits All Indicators

One of the major observations or codes under this theme were as follows: (1) Many of the questions are not applicable to all teachers, (2) There are no aforementioned statements like “this is only for kindergarten teachers” or “for science teachers” or the like, (3) Teachers of different focus such as kindergarten teachers, and teachers handling different subjects for both junior high school and senior high school were given only one instrument to answer and (4) There is no indication in the above portion for junior high school teachers to start at row 332 for the junior high school. Instead, high school teachers might think that they have to fill up the first part as well.

Examining these codes, the researcher had the following reflection. The questionnaire seemed to be an attempt to create one size fits all questionnaire that could apply to all teachers. However, different indicators may fit certain contexts. The schools exist in different scenarios and certain indicators may not reflect the level of progress and performance of the school. Since SMEA is a means to adjust, the need for contextualization should be considered. Buckingham & Goodall (2015) had emphasized the need to contextualize how performance is assessed. The need for contextualization and the avoidance of one size fits all measurement should be considered. However, the authors warned that this path would require empowerment on the part of the immediate supervisors.

Overwhelming Number of Indicators

Upon the perusal of the archives, it was evident that a good number of indicators were included in the

questionnaire. There were a total of 667 indicators to be filled up by all teachers in every grading period. These indicators if filled up would require a lot of mental effort. In addition, a total of 667 indicators might be counterproductive. A study by Gauche, Beer and Brink (2017) showed how too much cognitive load could be counterproductive. Teachers are currently handling multiple roles since schools are generally lacking personnel. Hence, teachers are usually forced to adopt multiple roles such as the roles of non-teaching personnel.

In the questionnaire, teachers were asked to identify what grading period to teach such competency. If the teacher would have to answer all 667 questions, would there be a time to check each of the competencies in the curriculum guide? Wouldn't that take much time? Also, the question "How many times did you develop the following?" under the Principles and Integration of 21st Century Skills is hard to quantify. These skills are manifested in long term periods and it's hard to determine if you have successfully developed these skills.

Such an overwhelming number of indicators would also take a lot of time for the teacher to answer the questionnaire. Since teachers would have to take time to answer the questions, the school had to devise ways to meet the demands. This could include sacrificing contact time or even cancelling classes for the sake of completing the questionnaire. Considering the precious moments sacrificed for this purpose, benefits should outweigh the compromised time. However, it should be necessary to question if this sacrifice is necessary to monitor the current performance of the school. Hence, considering less time-consuming instrument should be a priority for further improvement.

Issues on Reliability

Since a total of 667 indicators were asked to be filled up, the researcher would argue that such questions are too detailed that it could not apply to all teachers. These observations could have an important effect on the reliability of the instrument used. The teacher might just provide data for the sake of providing information. The fear of stigma would also increase, so instead of providing the correct answers, the respondents might just provide the safest answer to the questions (Patten, 2016).

In addition, there could be a certain level of confusion in answering the questions. This confusion as stated could be caused by the following

observations in the questionnaire used. (1) Teachers were asked to rate themselves many times did they devote time for extracurricular activities and the number of times they have left their classes. (2) Questions like “Did you establish proactive and positive discipline in your classroom?” could easily be answered with a yes for fear of possible stigma. The follow-up question, “Is it effective?” could easily be answered with yes again. (3) The question “How many times did you develop the following?” under the Principles and Integration of 21st Century Skills is hard to quantify.

Thus, the researcher would like to contend that questions that require a complex method to answer would require previous actions prior to its collection. This may include monitoring sheets possibly implemented by the administration. A complex question such as the provision of discipline could not be answered by a simple yes or no. These indicators are not black and white but with different shades in between. Thus, these questions are not good indicators because they would provide inconsistent information.

Challenges of the SMEA System Implementation

This subsection focuses on the third objective of this study. The data gathered from the previous archival records were also taken into consideration. A very important addition in this subsection would be taking into account the social dimension and setting of the schools where SMEA was implemented. The themes which were identified were a product of the qualitative analysis performed in the transcripts of random interviews conducted. The results of the study were presented in the form of themes and the actual words spoken were quoted to explicate the meanings of the codes under the themes.

Lack of Ownership of Indicators

In general, the respondents agree on the importance of the SMEA system and its benefits in improving learning outcomes. However, during interviews, the majority of the respondents said that the cumbersome data is useless in the sense that it did not contribute anything to the progress of the school. For instance, one of the respondents said,

“Wala manay gamit kay gamay ra gani magamit sa DMEA Conference. Dili sad ta kaingon na naa mausab jud kay mahadlok man mga teachers masulti sa tinuod mao na sayup-

sayup ang data.” (The gathered data is just useless because only a few of the indicators are used during DMEA conferences. I could not say it made a difference because the teachers are afraid to tell the truth. That is why the data is not accurate.)

As mentioned in the statements, the teachers usually have that fear of stigma. Also, this would result in inaccurate information. As the saying goes “Garbage in, garbage out”. This means that since the system was fed the wrong information, the results of the conference would provide erroneous resolutions. These statements continually repeat across different respondents.

The school heads that were interviewed also felt distant from the indicators gathered in the SMEA questionnaire. For instance, a school head said,

“Nganung magkapoy-kapoy man ko anang SMEA. Maypag mag monitor ko sa akong mga plano sa School Improvement Plan (SIP). Kanang SMEA gapuno-puno rana sa atung trabaho.” (Why should I even bother regarding that SMEA? I should be monitoring the indicators I have prioritized for my school Improvement Plan not that SMEA which is an additional workload.)

Thus, it was imperative that there is a gap between what was expected to be measured in school and what was required in the SMEA system.

Time Consuming Questionnaires

The current SMEA system also requires a great deal of time. A statement that captured the essence of this code was stated by one of the teacher respondents,

“Kinanhanglan nko undangon akong klase para sa tibuok adlaw para lang ma fill inan ang daghan kaau nga answeranan.” (I have to cancel my whole day class just to fill in the forms with so many indicators. It takes a lot of time and I still have forms to fill up.)

The school heads have also similar views.

“Imagina, kinahanglan nko monitoron ang kapasas sa ilang pag answer kay kinahanglan na ipa submit sa division. Usahay wala nkoy choice ako nalang gipacancel ang klase.” (Imagine, I have to continuously monitor their speed in answering since I would have to submit it to the division as soon as possible. I have to cancel classes just because of this.)

It should be noted that schools, to raise their

performance, should be spending more time teaching students. Is the time spent for filling these long forms worthy of sacrificing contact time? If yes, is the return of the investment worth it?

Compliance Instead of Accountability

The teachers felt it is important to fill in the questionnaire because it is necessary and it should be submitted. For instance, a teacher said,

“Usahay ako nalang patak.an ug fill up. Lisud usahay sabton ngano taas man kaau nga importante raman unta ang atu mga studyante makat.un sa atung pagtudlo.” (Sometimes I just fill in everything. It’s hard to understand why there are so many indicators when what is important is that our students learn.)

It was evident from their statement that they feel exasperated by the fact that they had to fill up a very long-form every grading period. Most of these teachers have other roles in the school which they play for the normal functioning of the school. Most of the teachers are advisers, property custodians, guidance counselors, and subject coordinators. This additional burden may seem too much for them.

It should be noted that in problem number one, it was a common consensus that SMEA is important in terms of the dimensions specified. Despite this importance, the majority seemed to agree that SMEA is also a burden. This was captured in the statement by one of the respondents,

“Nindot manang SMEA kay ma check jud natu ang performance natu. Pero kung kinahanglan na mag fill up sa questionnaire murag maglabad akong ulo. Mag tutuk nalang ko sa suwatnon.” (SMEA is important because it provides an avenue for checking our current performance but when I stare at the long questionnaire, I felt like I have a headache. To think I need to spend so much time again filling up a very long test.)

The high cognitive load and the cumbersome preparation just to answer the very long questionnaire seemed to encourage compliance instead of accountability.

CONCLUSION

The SMEA System of Central Cebu Philippines had very high levels of compliance throughout Region VII. Teachers and school leaders in general also have seen their potential to regulate the desired levels of quality, increase accountability and stimulate

improvement. However, specific challenges remain in the system which includes low levels of accountability, time-consuming questionnaires, and submission for compliance sake mentality. These challenges pose a great threat to the validity and reliability of the results gathered. Thus, adjustments to the system could be made to allow the SMEA System to serve its purpose of sustaining the local initiatives of schools to achieve their desired outcomes.

Consequently, the following may be done to improve the system.

1. The DepEd Central Office may consider issuing a framework for the MEA system issued in a DepEd order in line with the decentralization movement issued under the concept of School-Based Management Program.
2. A strategy on integrating the Monitoring and Evaluation, School Improvement Planning and Results-Based Performance Management System, may be considered not only as a matter of policy in the Central Office but also in the level of the school. The cumbersome and overwhelming roles and responsibilities of the teachers require leaders who consider integrating different processes into a simplified unified system.
3. The following studies for improvement are also recommended:
 - a. The Ideal Number of Indicators of Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adjustment in DepEd.
 - b. Keystone Indicators for Maximum Performance in DepEd.
 - c. SMEA Implementation: Inventory of Training Needs for School Heads in DepEd.

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