

The Separation-Unification Experiences of Itogon Districts I and II: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT: The study determined the socio-demographic profile of the school administrators from 37 public elementary schools, compared the performance of administrators under the separated Itogon districts and their performance under the unified Itogon district, determined the relationship between socio-demographic factors and administrative performance, and found out the problems encountered by administrators. There were more males than females among the administrators, whose mean age was 50.7 years. The majority were Ibalays, married, had three children on the average, had MA/MS units, had been in the service from 21 to 30 years, and had a mean annual salary income of 56,158.40 pesos. The school heads differed in age, civil status, and length of service but not in sex, educational attainment, annual income, ethnic affiliation and number of children. Under separated or unified district, administrators' performance on planning although satisfactory, significantly differed. Planning is thus better in separated districts than in unified district. The main serious problems of school administrators in the separated districts were entry of animals in the school vicinity, inadequacy of water supply and lack of classrooms. Recommendations included training young teachers for administrative work by old and experienced administrators, taking courses or working for degrees on school administration, giving old teachers administrative positions, redistricting or separating Itogon district or other large districts, and seeking assistance from Municipal School Board (MSB), nongovernmental institutions and Parents Teachers Association for the fencing of schools perimeter and for the repair and construction of water tanks.

KEYWORDS: Administrators, challenges, performance, socio-demographic profile

I. INTRODUCTION

Is school district size an important factor to be considered for effective school administration and supervision? This question needs a thorough analysis and study since most modern schools aim for effective school administration and supervision necessary for quality education. Many ideas on the size of elementary and secondary schools have been expressed by specialists in administration. Such ideas have been based partly on intuition, partly on common sense, and to a small degree, on research. Experience and expert opinion are best guide when available data are inadequate.

Size of a school is particularly a problem in re-organizing school districts, along with the very touchy problem of locating attendance centers. Standards of school size should be carefully considered along with data on population, geography, and roads of the proposed district and conclusions arrived at can be defended, not merely pulled out of the thin air. It is true that local conditions often require compromises with recommended standards. Local conditions ought to be seriously considered elements in the total situation (Navarro, 2022).

The aforementioned ideas emphasize mainly the significance of school size analysis in school district re-organization, i.e., separation or unification. In some school divisions of the Philippines, school districts are either divided or fused. In the Division of Benguet, instance, the school district of Itogon has been suffering from the separation-unification dilemma. To understand its case better, historical records must be considered. Most of the far-flung schools of Itogon, which are found in the frontiers of barangays Dalupirip, Tinongdan, and Ampucao, are reachable only by foot ranging for 1 to 6 hours. With this constraint, far-flung schools could hardly be visited during the rainy season from, June to November. One has to cross rivers and streams and climb steep and slippery mountains. Thus, supervisory visits in far-flung schools were done during dry season, that is, anytime from December to March. However, schools which may be reached by vehicles or traversed by a four-hour hike were visited by the District Supervisor once a month or as frequently as necessary (Filongco et al., 2022).

Based on proven administrative and supervisory theories and principles, that efficiency of supervision is affected by some conditions such as the complexity of component schools to be supervised and administered, the availability of other materials and

The Separation-Unification Experiences of Itogon Districts I and II: A Case Study

support resources, and the multiplicity of job descriptions and responsibilities aside from the capability of executive manager to lead. Hence, Itogon District was again divided into Itogon Districts I and II by DECS Central Letter No. s. 1973, effective school year 1989-1990.

When the two district supervisors of Itogon I and II retired, each district was left without a district supervisor because of the promulgation of the "Co-terminous Policy" wherein the item given to a district supervisor terminates upon his retirement. Hence, there is no succession in the position of district supervisor. Thus, to provide educational leadership in the districts of Itogon, the two big districts were merged into one district in 1993 under a district supervisor who transferred from Atok District.

The separation of Itogon Districts I and II, which occurred more than once, certainly demanded adjustments from the school administrators and teaching force. Separation and unification of school districts involve re-organization. Reorganization, in turn, involves changes and changes finally necessitate adjustments (Khaw et al., 2022).

This research is informed by Bass's Transformational Leadership Theory and Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory. Collectively, these theories provide the conceptual framework to examine the relationship between the leadership actions of school administrators and teachers' self-efficacy. Transformational leadership, as defined by Bernard Bass (1985), comprises four essential components generally referred to as the 4 I's: idealistic influence, inspiring motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. A leader exhibiting idealized influence is perceived as trustworthy and esteemed as a role model. Formulating an engaging vision that inspires followers is an essential element of inspirational motivation. Intellectual stimulation fosters creativity and innovation by challenging assumptions and enhancing problem-solving abilities. A leader who demonstrates individualized concern recognizes the unique needs and capacities of each individual. These components collaborate to cultivate a leadership style that transforms followers into leaders while fostering a culture of high standards, development, and performance.

Bass elucidated those transformational leaders leverage vision and personal growth, rather than commercial ties, to foster commitment and enhance performance. This type of leadership has been associated with enhanced teacher performance, job satisfaction, and dedication to organizational objectives within the educational context (Abun et al., 2020). Transformational leadership serves as a crucial foundation for comprehending how school leaders may cultivate learning environments that foster creativity and success.

Albert Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory (1997) offers a psychological framework for analyzing personal motivation and performance. This theory posits that individuals' thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are significantly influenced by their self-efficacy, defined as their belief in their own ability to perform tasks. Bandura identified four sources of self-efficacy: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological/emotional states. Individuals with low self-efficacy tend to avoid challenging tasks and perform poorly, whereas those with high self-efficacy exhibit greater determination, resilience, and a willingness to confront challenges. The theory offers a robust foundation for examining the fundamental causes of behavior, especially in high-demand sectors like education (Cherry, 2023).

This theoretical foundation suggests that the integration of Transformational Leadership Theory and Self-Efficacy Theory offers a valuable framework for this study. Both theories highlight the dynamic interaction between internal psychological beliefs and external leadership behaviors. Bandura's sources of teacher self-efficacy are closely linked to transformational leadership practices, including the provision of personalized support, the demonstration of excellence, and the encouragement of others. It is crucial to comprehend the influence of school administrators on teachers' trust in their educational capabilities to improve educational practices and outcomes (Antonio, 2023).

The objectives of the study were: (1) To determine the socio-demographic profile of Itogon school officials in regard to (a) sex, (b) age, (c) civil status, (d) highest educational attainment, (e) length of service, (f) ethnic affiliation, (g) annual income, (h) sources of income, and (i) number of children; (2) To compare the performance of administrator the separated Itogon districts and the performance of administrators in the unified Itogon district situations as perceived by school administrators and; (3) To determine the relationship between the socio-demographic factors stated in number 1 and the administrative performance of the school administrators along the five elements mentioned in number 2; (4) To find out the administrative and supervisory problems encountered by the administrators under the separated Itogon districts and the problems under the unified Itogon district.

II. METHODOLOGY

The research utilized a descriptive research design. Descriptive research design to examine the administrators' leadership, data on their profile and their performance as required in this study. Descriptive research, as explained by Mustieles (2020), aims to identify patterns and relationships between variables. This aspect of the study identifies patterns and potential relationships/differences between the two variables, providing insightful information.

The Separation-Unification Experiences of Itogon Districts I and II: A Case Study

This research utilized several statistical methods to study. Descriptive statistics in the form of frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were utilized in presenting and summarizing gathered data. T-test was also employed to evaluate the considerable significant differences between the independent and dependent variables of this study.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-demographic Profile

The profile of the respondents is described in terms of sex, age, civil status, highest educational attainment, length of service, ethnic affiliation, annual income, source of income and number of children. Results of the study show that 60% of the administrator-respondents were males and six or 40 percent were females. The majority had ages ranging from 53 to 62 years, and from 43 to 52 years. The mean age of the administrators was 50.7 years. Thirteen percent of the administrator-respondents' percent were single. On educational attainment, 46.67% of the administrator-respondents were bachelors' degree holders with MA/MS with Ed.D/PhD units. Moreover, 60% of the administrators were in the service for 21 to 30 years. The average length of service of the school administrators is 24.5 years. Almost one-half of the administrator-respondents were Ibalays, followed in descending order by Ilocanos, Kankanaeys, Kalingans, Pangasinanes, and Bontocs. According to Burnett (2020) female populace still dominates the education sector. Females seem to have soft spot for educating young minds as well as in molding them to become better individuals someday. More so, female educators value their crafts by making sure that they are upskilling themselves with their skills and educational attainment making them at advantage situation when opportunities like promotions and handling administrative positions are available.

Goudeau et al. (2025) pointed out that one group may differ from another, especially if there is a wide divergence in their hereditary background, economic status, educational level, cultural norms or religious affiliation. It is important to consider these aspects so that misunderstandings will be avoided. This can also help the teachers and administrators in making or setting boundaries and in building trust and respect among others. The finding implies that more female teachers enter the teaching job than males, most of the teachers are in their middle age, some teachers prefer to remain single, most teachers attend graduate studies, most of the teachers are new in the service and come from their home province, have very low income, practice family planning and concentrate solely on teaching.

Administrative Performance

The administrative performance of the school administrator-respondents was assessed along five elements namely: planning, organizing, leading, evaluating, and communicating. In terms of Planning, In the separated Itogon districts (I and II), the administrators themselves to have very satisfactory performance along establishing specific targets; analyzing the situation and available resources to achieve objectives; listing courses of action that leads to the achievement of goals; and listing advantages and disadvantages of each of the courses of action. The situations that they perceived to have satisfactory performance were selecting the course of action that has the most advantage; identifying the aids and barriers to the goals; determining who will be involved, what resources will be assigned, how the plan will be evaluated, and the reporting procedures; and involving more concerned personnel in the planning process. Statistical analysis between the mean perceptions using t-test revealed a significant difference as shown by the computed t-value of 4.641 which exceeded the tabular value of 1.895 at 5% level of significance. Hence the hypothesis, that there is a significant difference of the administrative performance between the separated Itogon District and the unified Itogon District situations as experienced by the administrators along planning, is accepted. This finding implies that the administrator-respondents performed better when the two districts separated than when these were unified. The reason was for this significant difference could be that when agencies are separated, (1) it is easier to plan courses of action and oftentimes easier to implement the plans because of the fewer people involved, and (2) it is easier to coordinate and to get cooperation than in the case of a larger group.

In terms of Organizing, It shows that the administrator-respondents perceived themselves to have satisfactory performance on the following elements of organizing when the two districts in Itogon were still separated and when they were unified: detailing all the works that must be done to attain the organization goals; classifying and grouping activities; assigning individuals based on qualifications; charging individuals with not too heavy nor too light work; delegating authority to group leaders; combining the work of the organization members logically and efficiently; reducing inefficiency and harmful conflicts; making adjustments to maintain or increase new effectiveness of operation; orienting and socializing employees; selecting job candidates; and organizing school district official publication. The findings indicate that the attended to the attributes of administrator-respondents attended to attributes of smooth organization process both under the separated and unified districts. Nevertheless, a comparison between the mean ratings showed no significant difference as indicated by the computed t-value of 1.027 which is lower than the tabular value of 1.812 at 5% level of significance. Thus, the hypothesis, that there is significant

The Separation-Unification Experiences of Itogon Districts I and II: A Case Study

difference of the administrative performance between the separated and unified Itogon Districts situations as experienced by administrators along organizing, is rejected. Therefore, it could be inferred that along organizing, the performance of the administrator-respondents was the same whether the districts were separated or unified. The reason for this sameness could be that the elements of good organizing would still be present in any situation in order for the organization to run effectively and efficiently. Adjustment can be another factor why organizing in both separated and unified districts is equally satisfactory.

In terms of Leading, The elements of leading include the following: teaching employees job skills, acceptable organizational behavior and values; providing formal training, seminars or workshops to employees; showing concern for the individual employee; assisting employees in solving problems; telling and showing to employees what limits or guidelines and regulations exist and how these apply to their specific situations; exercising tact and concern for resolution of conflicts; giving credits, rewards and appropriate discipline; relaying suggestions, concerns and points of view to higher authorities; having unity of command and management; subordinating individual interests to the common good; and motivating employees perform efficiently. All these mentioned elements were rated satisfactory under the separated Itogon districts and under the unified Itogon to district. However, performance on having unity of command and management and motivating employees to perform efficiently was rated very satisfactory under the unified district. Moreover, the statistical analysis reveals no significant difference indicating that performance of the administrator-respondents along leading was the same regardless of the nature of the two districts (separated or unified). Hence, the hypothesis, that there is a significant difference of the administrative performance between separated and unified District situations as perceived by the administrators along leading is rejected. However, the elements of leading as identified agree with those cited by which include discipline, unity of command, subordination of individual interests to common good, remuneration of personnel, centralization and decentralization, and hierarchy.

In terms of Evaluating, under separated Itogon districts, rating of very satisfactory was found along encouraging all administrator and teachers to evaluate their own work based on objectives. All the other elements of evaluating were rated satisfactory. The mean rating was 2.30 (satisfactory). Under unified Itogon district, ratings of very satisfactory were found along encouraging all administrators and teachers to evaluate their own work based on continuous objectives and along making evaluation continuous. Statistical analysis reveals no significant difference between the mean rating under the separated Itogon districts and that of the unified itogon district. Hence, the hypothesis, that there is a significant difference of the administrative performance under the separated Itogon districts and the performance under the Unified Itogon district as perceived by administrators, is rejected. The finding that the school administrators had a satisfactory performance under separated Itogon districts and under unified Itogon district along evaluation agrees with the report of Mbogori and Ongeti (2020) who reported that evaluation should be based on the accepted objectives of the organization cooperative, Ruiz added that evaluation should be cooperative, comprehensive, self-appraisal oriented, continuous, and it should also be a means to an end.

In terms of communicating, the performance of the administrator-respondents under the separated districts and their performance under the unified district with respect to communicating was satisfactory. Those elements satisfactorily performed were: reporting the evaluation results or records to the organization members or the public; giving more organization members an opportunity to participate in the discussion of possible changes in policy as a result of the evaluation; requesting information from lower levels about the evaluation conducted; and allowing members to express their attitudes, feelings and gripes that influence performance directly and indirectly. The t-test reveals no significant difference between the two means. This indicates that the administrators performed well when the Itogon districts were separated and when the districts were unified. Hence, the hypothesis, that there is a significant difference of the administrative performance under the separated Itogon district and the unified district situations as perceived by administrators, is rejected. This finding is supported by the computed t-value of 2.045 which is lower than the tabular value of 2.132 at 5% level of significance. In short, although communication in both separated and unified districts is satisfactory, it needs further improvement to reach the very satisfactory or best communication rating.

Chirwa and Boikanyo (2022) assert that an effective communication network operates optimally when it facilitates both upward and downward flow, enabling those responsible for corrective action to receive necessary information. Downward and upward communication are essential to organizational management. Downward communication pertains to rules, policies, procedures, and various plans, assignments, and directives. It includes feedback on performance, general organizational information such as progress or status, and specific requests for information from subordinate levels. Upward communication pertains to the conveyance of ideas and suggestions aimed at improvement and problem-solving, requests for assistance, information regarding resources, and the expression of attitudes, feelings, and grievances that may directly or indirectly impact performance.

The Separation-Unification Experiences of Itogon Districts I and II: A Case Study

Socio-Demographic Factors and Performance

In the separated districts, there is no relationship between sex, civil status, educational attainment, length of service, ethnic affiliation, annual income, source of income and number of children and performance on planning. However, there is a relationship between the age of school administrators and their performance on planning. In the unified district, all the socio-demographic factors have no relationship with the administrative performance on planning. The finding, that age affects the administrative performance on planning jibes with the earlier finding in this study that there were more old than school administrators. Likewise, administrators have been in the teaching profession for several years and they rose from the ranks. It then implies that as the administrator becomes older, efficiency in planning for the organization improves. Likewise, experience helps the administrator prepare and implement plans. In short, the administrator becomes an expert in planning. This is supported by Jablonska et al. (2022) who reported that experiences and opinions become best guides when available data are inadequate. The hypothesis, that there is a relationship between the socio-demographic factors and administrative performance on planning, is rejected along sex, civil status, educational attainment, length of service, ethnic affiliation, annual income, source of income, and number of children but accepted along age in the separated districts. In the unified district, the hypothesis, that there is a relationship between the administrative performance on planning is rejected.

In terms of organizing, the separated districts, sex, age, educational attainment, length of service, ethnic affiliation, annual income, source of income, and number of children have no relationship with administrative performance on organizing. However, civil status was related to administrative performance on organizing. In the unified district, all the socio-demographic factors were not related to administrative performance on organizing. The finding implies that married administrators are more efficient in organizing the work in the school than the unmarried ones. Earlier in this study, it was found that most school administrators were married, i.e., they had their families.

The finding corroborates the paternalistic leadership discussed by Malik et al. (2022) who defined it as a management which took a fatherly or benevolent attitude toward employees, characterized by better wages, improved working conditions, and various programs designed to improve the worker's lot. The hypothesis, that there is a relationship between the socio-demographic factors and the administrative performance on organizing, is rejected along sex, age, educational attainment, length of service, ethnic affiliation, annual income, source of income and number of children but accepted along civil status in the separated district. In the unified district, the above-mentioned hypothesis is rejected in all the socio-demographic factors stated above.

In terms of Leading, the separated districts, age, sex, length of service, ethnic affiliation, annual income, source of income, and number of children were not related to administrative performance on leading. However, civil status and educational attainment were found related to administrative performance on leading. In the unified district, it was likewise found that sex, age, length of service, ethnic affiliating, annual income, source of income, and number of children were not related to administrative performance on leading. However, civil status and educational attainment were related to administrative performance on leading. The findings imply that married administrators with higher educational attainment performed better than those with lower educational attainment along leading. This is supported by the earlier finding in this study that married administrators performed better in organizing than the unmarried ones. Likewise, this finding is corroborated by Encila and Madrigal (2021), who asserted that a higher educational prerequisite is essential for policymakers and higher education planners. Moreover, leaders must possess academic achievements. The hypothesis posits a relationship between socio-demographic factors and administrative performance in leadership, specifically regarding civil status and educational attainment.

In terms of evaluating, in the separated districts, civil status was the only factor related to performance on evaluating. In the unified district all the socio-demographic factors (sex, age, civil status, educational attainment, ethnic affiliation, length of service, annual income, source of income an number of children) were not related to the performance on evaluating. The findings imply that married administrators had better evaluation performance than unmarried ones. This jibes with the earlier finding that civil status affected administrative performance on organizing and leading. This could further be attributed to the fact that married administrators have their families which necessitate daily evaluation and likewise become training grounds for a better administrative performance. Civil status is then related with experience. Experience is certainly a catalyst for a better administrative performance. This is supported by Schwanenberger et al. (2021) who pointed out that experience and expert opinion are best guides when available data are inadequate. The hypothesis, that there is a relationship between the socio-demographic factors and the administrative performance on evaluating, is rejected along sex, age, civil status, educational attainment, length of service, ethnic affiliation, annual income, source of income, and number of children but accepted on civil status in the separated districts. In the unified district, the hypothesis, that there is a relationship between the socio-demographic factors and administrative performance on evaluating, is rejected.

The Separation-Unification Experiences of Itogon Districts I and II: A Case Study

In terms of communicating, the separated districts, that there is relationship between the performance on communicating, civil status and educational attainment. In the unified district, age and length of service have relationship with performance on communicating. The findings imply that married old administrators with MA or PhD degrees several years in the service have better communicating performance than their counterparts.

Brinia et al. (2022) likewise recognized the importance of higher educational attainment in administration and recommended that school heads should have advanced degrees (master's and doctorate). Educational attainment, as found in this study, is necessary for better communicative performance. The hypothesis, that there is a relationship between the socio-demographic factors administrative the performance on communicating, is accepted along civil status and educational attainment in the separated districts. In the unified district, such hypothesis, is accepted along age and length of service.

Problems Encountered by School Administrators

The problems encountered by the school heads under the separated districts rated as serious were ranked based on seriousness as follows: entry of a stray animals to school vicinity due to the absence of durable and lasting perimeter fence; inadequacy of water supply to most schools; lack of classrooms; lack of classroom teachers; delay and difficulty in the distribution of school properties. Ranked in the order of seriousness, the problems which were rated not serious were as follows: discomfort, inattentiveness, and inexorable noise during district meetings or conference, delay in the giving of salary checks to teachers in far-flung schools, difficulty in claiming refunds for expenses incurred during trainings from the Municipal School Board, difficulty and time pressure in consolidating reports, difficulty and lack of time in visiting or inspecting the big number of schools especially those in far-flung places by the District Supervisor, lack of training for school administrators in developing their teachers professionally, promptness of responses to communication due to the far distance of the district office, and lack of resources (tools, equipment, textbooks, balls and nets).

A comparison between the degree of seriousness of the problems under separated districts and the problems under the unified district reveals a significant difference. This finding indicates that while it is true that the problems were seriously encountered, the school heads perceived that the enumerated problems have higher degree of seriousness under the unified district. This could be attributed to the fact that the unified district has become wider in coverage not only in geographical area but also in the number of teachers, facilities. In other words, the whole organization become large which is more complicated to handle or manage.

The above-cited finding is corroborated by the findings of Ngole and Mkulu (2021) that the rapid increase in the number of schools and school population made the school supervision and inspection more difficult. Supervision and inspection of all schools cannot be fully effective unless the supervisors and inspectors can actually and frequently observe classroom work and existing conditions to help the teachers in the field.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings on the previous page, the following conclusions were drawn.

The school administrators differ in age, civil status and length of service. Thus, there are more school administrators who are old, married, and have been in the teaching profession for several years than young, unmarried administrators with few years in the teaching profession.

On the other hand, the school administrators do not differ in sex, educational attainment, annual income, income, ethnic affiliation and number source of children. Of This finding implies that: (a) equal opportunities are given to male and female teachers in terms of promotion; (b) most school heads attend graduate studies; (c) administrators depend solely on salary with a mean annual income of P56,1158.40; (d) and have three children on the average; and (e) promotion does not depend on ethnic affiliation.

There is no discrepancy of the administrative performance between the separated Itogon districts and the unified Itogon district as perceived by school administrators along organizing, leading, evaluating, and communicating. However, discrepancy was found along planning. Hence, although the performance in the separated Itogon districts and the performance in the unified Itogon districts are satisfactory, the discrepancy implies that planning is better in the separated district than planning in the unified district.

There is a relationship between age, civil status, educational attainment and length of service with administrative performance. An implication is that school administrators who are married with higher educational attainment, and have stayed in the service for several years perform better than their counterparts.

The Separation-Unification Experiences of Itogon Districts I and II: A Case Study

There is a discrepancy in the problems encountered by the school administrators in the separated districts and the problems in the unified district although the problems were generally serious. Thus, the administrators' problems in the unified district are more serious than the problems in the separated districts.

There is a discrepancy of the seriousness level of problems encountered by the administrators and that of the teachers in the separated districts. As a whole, the school administrators are less affected by the problems encountered in the separated districts than the teachers.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions made, the following are the recommendations presented.

Young teachers who are candidates for administrative work must be trained through informal guidance by the old administrators, seminars, workshops, conferences and graduate courses.

Administrators attending graduate studies must pursue courses in school administration.

Male students should be encouraged to take teaching for there are some subjects which could be taught better by male teachers such as physical education, scouting, agriculture and other vocational subjects. Incentives could be given such as scholarship, higher salary, more employment and the like to attract male students to enroll in education courses.

Female teachers who are teaching physical education, agriculture, scouting and other vocational must attend relevant and applicable seminars about the afore cited subjects.

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The Separation-Unification Experiences of Itogon Districts I and II: A Case Study

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