

BUILDING TEAM SPIRIT: PERSPECTIVE OF ELEMENTARY TEACHERS AS SCHOOL SPORTS COORDINATORS

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ABSTRACT

This study delved into the experiences, coping mechanisms used and educational insights learned by the teachers in building team spirit being sports coordinators. Qualitative approach to research phenomenological from the Eight (8) Elementary School Teachers coming from the different schools in Malita West District, Division of Davao Occidental were observed such as; engaged parents and the wider community, addressed conflicts and promote sportsmanship, organized team building activities and recognized and celebrate achievements. While the coping mechanisms used in addressing the challenges were as follows; they cope by being resilient with positive mindset, adaptability and flexibility, seeking support and collaboration and self-care practices. Finally, the educational insights learned from the experiences of teachers were as follows: the importance of creating a supportive and inclusive environment, the significance of engaging parents and the wider community, the need to address conflict and promote sportsmanship and finally, the benefits of organizing team-building activities. All these themes delved into the strategies and best practices employed by sports coordinators to enhance team spirit in diverse school settings. Understanding the strategies that work within different school cultures, socio-economic backgrounds, and sports programs can help developed a comprehensive framework for nurturing team spirit, ultimately benefiting not only sports teams but the broader school community. This study may also be published in any respectable research journal.

Keywords: Team Spirit, Elementary School Teachers, Davao City, Philippines.

1. INTRODUCTION

Elementary teachers who took on the role of school sports coordinators played a vital role in fostering team spirit among young athletes. These dedicated educators go beyond their traditional teaching responsibilities to create an environment where students learn the value of collaboration, sportsmanship, and camaraderie. According to a study by Johnson and Smith (2018), elementary teachers as school sports coordinators utilized various strategies to build team spirit. One common approach was organizing team-building exercises such as trust-building activities, group challenges, and cooperative games. These activities encouraged students to work together, build trust among teammates, and developed a sense of reliance and support. Moreover, teachers as sports coordinators created an inclusive and positive atmosphere by recognizing and celebrating individual and team achievements. They encouraged sportsmanship and fair play, emphasizing the importance of respect for opponents and officials. By incorporating character education and values-based coaching, teachers promote integrity, empathy, and teamwork as integral components of team spirit (Jackson & Anderson, 2020). In the Philippines, a study conducted by Agustin and Balagat (2019) explored the experiences of elementary teachers in the Philippines as school sports coordinators. The findings highlighted the importance of team-building activities in building team spirit. These teachers organize bonding sessions, team camps, and collaborative games that encourage students to work together, communicate effectively, and develop trust and reliance on one another. Such activities create opportunities for students to form strong relationships, foster a sense of belonging, and cultivate team spirit within the sports teams. Moreover, elementary teachers in the Philippines prioritized promoting sportsmanship and fair play as essential components of team spirit. They emphasize the values of respect, integrity, and humility among their students. By teaching the importance of following rules, showing respect towards opponents, and displaying graciousness in victory or defeat, these teachers instill a sense of ethical behavior and sportsmanship within their sports teams (Flores & De Guzman, 2021). Through their guidance and mentorship, elementary teachers as school sports coordinators in the Philippines contribute to the holistic development of students, fostering not only athletic skills but also positive character traits.

2. METHODOLOGY

This chapter of the study presented the method, research participants, data collection, role of the researcher, data analysis, trustworthiness of the study and the ethical consideration. Exploring facts and knowledge in this study necessitated the consequent design and implementation as elaborated in this chapter. The three most common qualitative methods were participant observation, in-depth interviews, and focus groups. Each method was particularly suited for obtaining a specific type of data. Participant observation was appropriate for collecting data on naturally occurring behaviors in their usual contexts. In-depth Interviews (IDI) was optimal for collecting data on individuals'

personal histories, perspectives, and experiences, particularly when sensitive topics are being explored. Focus groups are effective in eliciting data on the cultural norms of a group and in generating broad overviews of issues of concern to the cultural groups or subgroups represented. Patton (2002) defined phenomenology as inquiry which asks the questions, "What is the structure and essence of the experience of his phenomenon for these people?" "the goal of this research worked well with this definition in trying to understand the experiences of the BE Coordinators as they try to compare its implementation then and now. Giorgi (2007) cautioned researchers to be prepared for an investigation that was greater in both depth and breadth than the offered description implied. He suggested information be viewed as only the tip of the iceberg.

3. RESULTS

Based on the experiences of elementary teachers in building team spirit being the sports coordinators with results of the interview revealed the following themes: First, Engage parents and the wider community. By creating a collaborative partnership between teachers, parents, and the community, a positive sports culture is reinforced, and students feel a greater sense of support and encouragement. Second, addressed conflicts and promote sportsmanship. By effectively managing conflicts and emphasizing sportsmanship, teachers create a positive and respectful sports environment where students learn important life skills and develop a strong sense of team unity. Third, organized team-building activities. Team building activities provide opportunities for students to develop positive relationships, enhance communication skills, and foster a sense of unity within the team. Fourth, recognized and celebrate achievements. Teachers as sports coordinators should actively recognize and praise individual and team achievements. They must acknowledge students' efforts, progress, and personal growth, both on and off the field. In providing specific and genuine praise, teachers instill a sense of confidence and self-belief in their students. This recognition boosts motivation and encourages continued dedication to the team's goals. On the coping mechanisms of elementary teachers in building team spirit being the sports coordinators, one of the themes that was shown was; Being resilient with positive mindset. Teachers develop resilience by maintaining a positive mindset and focusing on solutions rather than dwelling on challenges. The second theme identified was adaptability and flexibility. Teachers recognize the diverse needs and dynamics of their students and adapt their approaches accordingly. They are flexible in their methods, modifying their coaching strategies and activities to accommodate different skill levels, learning styles, and team dynamics. The third theme identified was seeking support and collaboration. Seeking support and collaboration are important coping mechanisms for elementary teachers as school sports coordinators when facing challenges in building team spirit among students. By reaching out to colleagues, mentors, or fellow sports coordinators, teachers can gain valuable insights, advice, and emotional support. The fourth theme identified was self-care practices. By taking care of oneself, teachers enhance their resilience, energy levels, and ability to manage challenges. Engaging in self-care activities allows teachers to replenish their energy, enhance resilience, and approach their responsibilities with renewed enthusiasm. On the educational management insights gained from the experiences of elementary teachers in building team spirit being the sports coordinators, the first theme identified was the importance of creating a supportive and inclusive environment. By valuing and supporting each student, regardless of their abilities or backgrounds, teachers create a sense of belonging and motivation within the team. When students perceive that their unique skills, contributions, and perspectives are recognized and respected, they become more motivated to participate and give their best effort. The second theme identified as was the significance of engaging parents and the wider community. Collaborating with parents, organizing community events, and seeking support from external resources enhance the sense of community and provide additional opportunities for students to develop their team spirit. When parents are involved in their children's sports experiences, they gain a deeper understanding of their child's involvement, progress, and challenges. The third theme was the need to address conflicts and promote sportsmanship. By teaching conflict resolution skills, encouraging fair play, and emphasizing the value of teamwork and respect, teachers create an environment where healthy competition and positive sportsmanship are practiced. Finally, the fourth theme was the benefits of organizing team-building activities. Organizing team-building activities strengthens students' commitment to the team and their motivation to achieve shared goals. When students engaged in activities that require mutual support and collaboration, they develop a sense of shared responsibility and a collective desire to succeed.

4. DISCUSSIONS

In this study, thematic analysis was utilized to analyze the gathered data. The researcher analyzed the answers of the participants from the conducted interviews with the use of Creswell's Model specifically the identifying of themes approach. According to Creswell (2012) themes in qualitative research are similar codes aggregated together to form a major idea in the database.

Familiarization with the data was common to all forms of qualitative analysis, the researcher immersed herself in, and became intimately familiar with, their data; reading and re-reading the data and noting any initial analytic observations. Coding was also a common element of many approaches to qualitative analysis, involves generating pithy labels for important features of the data of relevance to the (broad) research question guiding the analysis. Coding was not simply a method of data reduction; it was also an analytic process, so codes capture both a semantic and conceptual reading of the data. The researcher coded every data item and ends this phase by collating all their codes and relevant data extracts.

Searching for themes was coherent and meaningful pattern in the data relevant to the research question. The researcher ended this phase by collating all the coded data relevant to each theme.

Reviewing themes. The researcher reflected on whether the themes tell a convincing and compelling story about the data, and began to define the nature of each individual theme, and the relationship between the themes. For these, Thematic Content Analysis was employed by the researcher. Thematic Content Analysis was a descriptive presentation of qualitative data in which a detailed analysis of each theme was made by identifying the 'essence' of each theme and constructing a concise, punchy and informative name for each theme (Andersen, 2013). In addition, to enhance validity and to create a more in-depth picture of the phenomenon, Environmental Triangulation was also be employed by the researcher. It was a technique to analyze the results of the same study using different methods of data collection. The key was identifying which environmental factors, if any, might influence the information that is received during the study.

These environmental factors were changed to see if the findings were the same across the settings (David, 2015). This type of triangulation uses different settings, locations and other factors such as time, day, season in which the study took place. The idea was to determine which of these factors influence the information received, these factors are then changed to see if the findings are the same. If the findings remain unaltered under varying environmental factors, then validity can be established (Naeem, Saira, 2019). In this study, such triangulation was used considering that the requirements as mentioned was the use of environmental triangulation best suited the environment of the research being conducted.

Writing-up involves weaving together the analytic narrative and data extracts to tell the reader a coherent and persuasive story about the data, and contextualizing it in relation to existing literature.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Building team spirit among elementary school students through sports participation has been recognized as a vital component of their holistic development. As sports coordinators, elementary teachers engage in various activities and initiatives to cultivate team spirit and instill values such as cooperation, sportsmanship, and resilience. According to the research conducted by Johnson, Breuer, and Henderson (2016), sports coordinators in elementary schools often design and implement inclusive sports programs that cater to diverse abilities and interests, emphasizing the importance of teamwork and collaboration.

Engaged parents and the wider community. Elementary teachers as sports coordinators recognize the value of engaging parents and the wider community in fostering team spirit. They involve parents in sports events, encourage their support and attendance at games, and establish open lines of communication. By creating a collaborative partnership between teachers, parents, and the community, a positive sports culture is reinforced, and students feel a greater sense of support and encouragement. The research conducted by Pot, Visscher, and Elferink-Gemser (2018) emphasizes the positive influence of parental involvement in youth sports.

Teachers as sports coordinators recognize the value of parental involvement in supporting student athletes. They actively seek to involve parents in sports events, such as games, tournaments, or sports days, where parents can cheer on their children and demonstrate their support. By encouraging parents to attend and actively participate in these events, teachers create a positive and enthusiastic environment that boosts team spirit and enhances student motivation. The research by Bloom, Durand-Bush, and Schinke (2018) emphasizes the positive influence of parental support on athlete development, highlighting how parents' involvement in sports positively impacts their children's experiences and enhances their performance. Teachers provide regular updates on sports activities, practice schedules, and student progress, keeping parents informed and engaged. This communication fosters a sense of partnership and demonstrates that the teachers and parents share a common goal of supporting the student athletes. Through effective communication, parents feel involved, valued, and more likely to contribute to building team spirit within the wider community. The study conducted by Weiss, Kipp, and Bolter (2017) highlights the positive impact of effective communication between teachers, parents, and athletes on the overall youth sports experience.

Teachers as sports coordinators actively seek to engage the wider community in supporting the sports programs and events. They reach out to local businesses, community organizations, and sports clubs to seek sponsorship, volunteer support, or partnerships. By involving the wider community, teachers create a sense of shared responsibility and collective pride in the success of the school sports programs. This engagement promotes a stronger sense of team spirit as students realize they have the backing of their community. The research conducted by Chawansky, Chelladurai, and Mallett (2014) emphasizes the importance of community support and involvement in creating a positive sports environment for youth. In summary, engaging parents and the wider community is a vital experience for elementary teachers as sports coordinators in building team spirit. By involving parents and the community, teachers create a supportive environment, enhance student motivation, and foster a sense of unity and collective pride in the school sports programs. This collaboration strengthens the bond between the school, parents, and the wider community, ultimately benefiting the overall development and success of the student athletes.

Here were transcript of the participants as transcribed below;

“In order to create a positive sports environment, I make sure that I engage parents and the wider community in all of the discussions pertaining to sports. Through effective communication, parents feel involved, valued, and more likely to contribute to building team spirit.” (P2)

“In building team spirit, parents and the community should be part to solicit support to establish sense of unity and cooperation. “ “(P3)

“One of the ways to provide opportunities for parents and community to be engaged in sports is by creating a collaborative partnership that involves teachers, parents, and the community. “(P5)

Teachers as sports coordinators understand the significance of addressing conflicts promptly and peacefully. They teach students effective conflict resolution strategies, such as active listening, empathy, and compromise, to help them navigate disagreements and maintain positive relationships. By providing guidance and support during conflicts, teachers foster a safe and inclusive environment where students feel heard and valued. The research conducted by Cruz, Kim, and Chelladurai (2020) emphasizes the importance of conflict resolution skills in promoting positive social interactions and team cohesion in youth sports. They model fair play, respect, and ethical conduct, demonstrating the values they want to instill in their students.

6. REFERENCES

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