

The administrative practices of manila cathedral school of the archdiocese of manila

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Abstract

Education remains a cornerstone of national development, shaping individuals into productive citizens. The COVID-19 pandemic, however, disrupted learning worldwide, forcing schools to adapt to unprecedented challenges. Private Catholic schools faced declining enrollment and financial instability, with some institutions closing permanently. Despite these difficulties, Manila Cathedral School (MCS) sustained operations, highlighting the importance of strong administrative practices. Rooted in faith and tradition, MCS integrates academic excellence with values formation, emphasizing holistic development. This study investigates the administrative practices of MCS, focusing on governance, curriculum updating, instructional leadership, resource management, partnerships, and learning outcomes. By examining these practices, the research aims to identify attributes that contribute to sustainability and propose an administrative model that can guide other Catholic schools. Ultimately, the study underscores the role of effective leadership and community collaboration in ensuring continuity of quality education amidst crises.

Keywords: Education; Manila Cathedral School; COVID-19

1. Introduction

Education is universally recognized as a vital investment for both individuals and nations. Schools serve not only as centers of knowledge but also as institutions that nurture values, discipline, and holistic development. The COVID-19 pandemic posed severe challenges to education systems, particularly private Catholic schools, which experienced declining enrollment and financial strain. While many institutions were forced to close, Manila Cathedral School (MCS) demonstrated resilience, maintaining operations and continuing to provide quality education. This resilience highlights the importance of effective administrative practices in sustaining schools during crises. MCS, deeply rooted in faith and tradition, integrates academic instruction with spiritual formation, emphasizing compassion, service, and moral integrity. This study explores the administrative practices of MCS along its vision, mission, curriculum updating, instructional leadership, resource management, partnerships, and learning outcomes. Through qualitative inquiry, it seeks to uncover attributes that strengthen administration and propose a model of best practices. By doing so, the research contributes to the discourse on educational management, offering insights that may benefit other Catholic schools facing similar challenges. Ultimately, the study affirms that strong leadership, community support, and faith-based values are essential in ensuring educational continuity and excellence.

2. Materials

The study utilized both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data were gathered through face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) with fifteen purposively selected participants: five school administrators, five teachers, and five parents of enrolled students at Manila Cathedral School. These respondents were chosen for their direct involvement and insights into the school's administrative practices. Secondary data were

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collected from books, journals, published and unpublished theses, government memoranda, and official documents such as the Philippine Constitution and relevant Republic Acts. These materials provided contextual grounding and supported the interpretation of findings. The interview guide served as the main research instrument, structured around the school's vision, mission, curriculum updating, instructional leadership, resource management, partnerships, and learning outcomes. Validation of the instrument was conducted by experts to ensure clarity and reliability. Together, these materials provided a comprehensive basis for analyzing MCS's administrative practices.

3. Methods

This study employed a qualitative research design, specifically thematic content analysis, to explore administrative practices at Manila Cathedral School. Data collection was conducted through purposive sampling, selecting fifteen participants: five administrators, five teachers, and five parents. Semi-structured interviews and FGDs were used to elicit detailed responses, allowing participants to share experiences and perceptions. The interview guide was validated by experts to ensure clarity, relevance, and alignment with research objectives. Data gathering followed strict ethical protocols, including informed consent, confidentiality, and adherence to COVID-19 health measures during face-to-face sessions. Interviews were conducted in both English and Filipino, recorded for accuracy, and transcribed for analysis. Thematic analysis was applied to identify recurring patterns and themes related to governance, curriculum, instructional leadership, resources, partnerships, and learning outcomes. This approach enabled the researcher to derive meaningful insights into the strengths and challenges of MCS's administrative practices.

4. Results

The findings revealed that Manila Cathedral School effectively sustained operations during the pandemic through strong administrative practices. First, the school remained anchored in its vision, mission, and goals, ensuring that faith-based education continued alongside academic instruction. Curriculum updating was evident in the integration of flexible learning modalities, teacher-made materials, and stakeholder involvement. Instructional leadership was demonstrated through proactive communication, online updates, prayer sessions, and emotional support for students and staff. Human and financial resources were managed efficiently, with administrators ensuring transparency and accountability in budgeting and payroll. Partnerships with alumni and community stakeholders provided additional support, reinforcing trust and collaboration. Learning outcomes were maintained, as evidenced by accreditation and continued student performance. One administrator noted that MCS even surpassed enrollment figures of larger institutions, reflecting strong community confidence. Overall, the results highlight that values-driven leadership, resource mobilization, and stakeholder engagement were key attributes sustaining MCS's resilience and success.

5. Discussion

The study's findings emphasize that effective administrative practices are central to sustaining Catholic schools during crises. Manila Cathedral School demonstrated that aligning vision and mission with updated curriculum and instructional leadership fosters resilience. The integration of faith-based values into academic programs ensured holistic development, while proactive leadership-maintained trust among stakeholders. Efficient resource management and strong partnerships with alumni and community groups further reinforced sustainability. These practices suggest that Catholic schools can thrive when administrators balance accountability with compassion, transparency, and innovation. The surpassing of enrollment figures compared to larger institutions underscores the importance of credibility and community confidence. The proposed administrative model offers a replicable framework for other schools, highlighting governance, curriculum responsiveness, instructional support, and stakeholder collaboration. Ultimately, the discussion affirms that education, rooted in faith and service, remains a vocation that requires adaptive leadership to ensure continuity and excellence.

6. Conclusion

The study affirms that Manila Cathedral School's sustainability amidst the pandemic was anchored on effective administrative practices. By aligning its vision and mission with updated curriculum, instructional leadership, and resource management, MCS ensured continuity of learning and faith formation. Strong partnerships with stakeholders and alumni further reinforced its resilience, while clear governance structures provided stability. These practices highlight that Catholic schools can thrive despite external challenges when leadership is proactive, values-driven, and community-oriented. The findings suggest that replicating such practices may benefit other institutions struggling with enrollment decline and financial constraints. Ultimately, education remains a lifelong vocation, and administrators play a pivotal role in safeguarding its mission. The proposed administrative model offers a framework for continuous

improvement, balancing accountability with holistic development. In doing so, Catholic schools can remain relevant, resilient, and committed to their dual mission of academic excellence and spiritual formation.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest should be disclosed.

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