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The Impact of Teacher Leadership in Public High School

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Abstract: This paper inspires Teacher leadership in Public Schools and its impact as the key for more school development and students achievement. In general, teacher leaders assume a wide range of roles to support school and student success. Whether these roles are assigned formally or shared informally, they build the entire school's capacity to improve. Because teachers can lead in a variety of ways, many teachers can serve as leaders within the school and among their peers. This is a qualitative research adapted the framework in Teacher Leadership of Crowther, F., Kagaan, S., Ferguson, M. & Hann, L. (2002). Through a case-study approach it determines the practices of teacher leaders in selected Public School and the significance contributions of these teacher leadership practices in school and for student achievement. This paper is an eye-opener for educators and school leaders that Teacher Leadership is important in Public School and necessary for positive cultural change to make our learning environment a better place to grow.

Key Words: Public Schools; Teacher Leader; Teacher Leadership, Student Achievement

1. INTRODUCTION

Leadership has been a timeless focus in educational researches and studies because leadership is the essential characteristic of educators and school leaders that has something to do in improving the impact of schools on the pupil outcomes that we greatly value. DeVita, Christine (2004) attested that it is in effective education leadership that makes a difference in improving learning and student achievement. And more importantly, it is in the role of the teachers that student achievement happens and fulfills. Teaching as Leadership is not a new concept. As Farr, Steven (2010) revealed about Teaching as Leadership, teachers who are successful at closing the achievement gap do exactly what all great leaders do when they face seemingly insurmountable odds. These teachers known as being teacher leaders who effectively lead even they are not appointed. It is

interesting to know, what then are the practices of these teacher leaders most especially in the context of public schools in our country that impact towards school effectiveness for students' achievement?

Oracion, Carmela (2007) described the Philippine public school system as the largest in the world. All public schools are under the supervision and regulation of the Department of Education locally known as DepEd. These schools are organized into districts, divisions and regional groupings. Today, there are about 50,000 public schools all over the Philippines with more than 22.8 million students enrolled in public schools nationwide. Unfortunately, shortages in classrooms, teachers and overcrowding will always same old problems that greet us every school year. Education Secretary Leonor Briones (2017) acknowledged the shortage of classrooms and attributed it to the "unavoidable increase in enrollment every year," while Education



Undersecretary Jesus Mateo (2017) said more classrooms are needed "because of the drive to meet lower class size, which leads to conducive learning."

In the research of (Palanca, Troy James 2015) conducted in the public schools emphasized that there is a large numbers of drop-out every school year caused by different issues like teenage pregnancy, family problem, and financial difficulties. Significantly, society still looks to the public schools where about 90% of Filipino schoolchildren are enrolled to increase the country's competitiveness in an increasingly global economy and to improve the future lives of Filipinos. It is thus critical to create in the Philippine public schools the conditions under which every student can achieve excellence and have a chance of a better life. Furthermore, Palanca, (2015) quantified that teachers as one of the major agent in giving education inside and outside the school; their leadership can make a difference.

Crowther, Kaagan, Ferguson, and Hann (2002) highlighted teacher leadership definition of Forster, Eloise (1997). These are teachers who set big goals, invest students and their families, plan purposefully by focusing on where students are headed, execute effectively by monitoring progress of student learning, continuously increase effectiveness by reflecting critically on student progress and work relentlessly in light of their conviction that they have power to work past obstacles for student learning (Farr, Steven 2010).

In the study of Oracion, (2007) about Teacher Leadership in Philippine Public School found the clear definition of Teacher Leader, they are: (a) excellent teachers specifically in terms of classroom management, (b) not necessarily in formal leadership positions nor interested in such positions, (c) holders of responsibilities beyond their classroom duties, (d) capable of leadership work, and (e) respected and looked up to by students and fellow teachers.

The purpose of this research is to determine the impact of teacher leadership in student achievement and school improvement of selected public schools. Furthermore, this undertaking may help the educational leaders and teachers for the success with which individuals and groups at the school and classroom levels help others to acquire the will and skill require to improve student

achievement through teacher leadership.

2. METHODOLOGY

The main purpose of the study is to determine the teacher leadership practices in selected national high school in the Division of city of San Jose del Monte Bulacan that directly foster the improvement of educational practices towards school effectiveness for student achievement. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. Who are the teacher leaders in the selected public schools and their characteristics that qualified them to be a teacher leader?
2. How do these teacher leaders practice or exercise the paradigm of Teacher leadership in the public schools?
3. How does teacher leadership impact the student achievement and school improvement in the public schools?

A case study was appropriate for determining the teacher leadership practices because the case study is "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the "case") in depth and within its real world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident" Oracion (2007), Yin (2014).

2.1 Population & Sampling

For this study, purposive sampling was used to select the public schools and the participants from each school. In purposive sampling, the researcher intentionally selected individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon based on the priori conceptual framework of Crowther et al., (2002). It was not expected that the schools or individuals chosen were themselves representative of the population but rather that they possessed the necessary information about the population (Oracion, 2007; Fraenkel and Wallen, 2007). The personal information of selected participants was assessed and evaluated through constructed questionnaire of the researcher.

2.1 Instrumentation

A semi-structured face-to-face individual and focus-group interview was utilized to operationalize teacher leadership through the voices of the principals and teacher leaders. Interviewing was used as the sole research tool in this study specifically because its flexibility was deemed appropriate for the purpose and nature of the research. Interviewing was the most commonly used method of data collection in qualitative research (King and Horrocks, 2010).

The interviews of the principals and the focus-group interviews of the Teacher Leaders explored similar themes based on how they applied in public school the Teachers as Leaders Framework (Crowther, 2002 et. al.):

The Six themes of Teacher Leadership practices from the priori conceptual framework of teacher leadership specifically in Philippine Public School:

- Convey convictions about a better world
- Strive for authenticity in their teaching, learning, and assessment practices
- Facilitate communities of learning through organization-wide process
- Confront barriers in the schools' culture and structures
- Translate ideas into sustainable systems of action
- Nurture a culture of success

The recognizable stages following the collection of data involve thematic analysis which was basically a search for patterns within data where emerging themes become the categories for analysis.

Participants	No. of Participant	Participants (at least 10 years in Service)	No. of Participant
Principal III	2	Teacher Leader	8

Table 1 Shows the Profile of the Participants

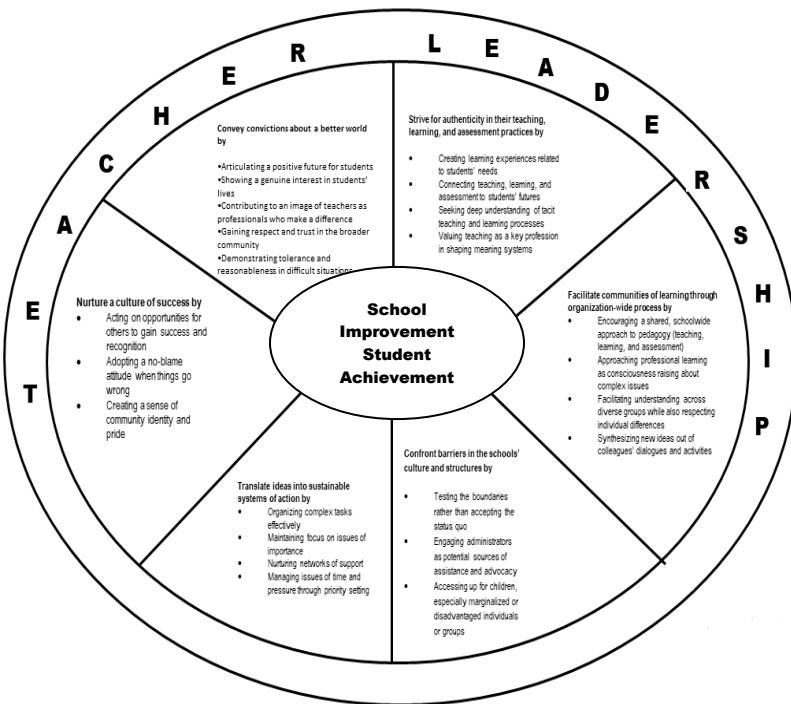


Figure 1 Framework of Teacher as Leaders by Crowther et al., (2002): A priori conceptual framework towards a Framework of Teacher Leadership in Philippine Public Schools

The analysis of the interview data involved a coding process which in Oracion (2007, p. 71), Scott and Morrison (2005) described as an early phase of a researcher's reinterpretation of the research participants' interpretations, an activity consistent with the double hermeneutic of educational research. In analyzing the data, the researcher selected software packages like NVivo and Vocalmatic website in transcribing the interview. The analysis of data culminated in linking the findings to the research questions and to the adapted Framework of Teacher as Leaders by Crowther et al., (2002). This involved interpretation which Patton (2002, p. 480), Oracion (2007, p. 72) described as "attaching significance to what was found, making sense of findings, offering explanations, drawing conclusions, extrapolating lessons, making inferences, considering meanings and otherwise imposing order on an unruly but surely patterned world".



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3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part presents the synthesis of the interview data, specifically it classifies and analyzes the characteristics of the teachers perceived to be teacher leaders in the selected public school and the practices they do, and thereby enlightening the nature of teacher leadership in the Philippine setting as practiced in this school. The researcher schematize the teacher leader practices from the interview through the themes in the adapted framework of Crowther, F., Kagaan, S., Ferguson, M. & Hann, L. (2002), Teacher as Leader, it is argued that teacher leadership is essential in the school improvement as well as for student achievement.

Convey convictions about a better world

According to the research participants, a teacher leader practices articulating a positive future for students by discussing the pros and cons of an action or behavior of the students so that they would become responsible in every words and actions they will do. A teacher leader also shows a genuine interest in students' lives by visiting homes of students' at risk of dropping out; contributing to an image of teachers as professionals who make a difference can be done by pursuing higher education; gaining respect and trust in the broader community by living a modest life; and demonstrating tolerance and reasonableness in difficult situations by abiding to the Child-Protection Policy.

Strive for authenticity in their teaching, learning, and assessment practices

Particular practices of a teacher leader under this theme identified by public school teacher participants are: contextualizing the lesson according to students need, discussing the assessment result such as grades so that they would know the requirements to meet a certain grades and promoting school rules and policies.

Facilitate communities of learning through organization-wide process

One of the evident practices of the above mentioned theme is the monthly observing and participating in the Professional Learning Cell where teachers can synthesize new ideas out of colleagues' dialogues and activities.

Confront barriers in the schools' culture and structures

A teacher leader accessing up for children, especially marginalized or disadvantaged individuals or groups through conducting a remedial class and teacher initiative intervention for failed students are practices briefly considered in this theme.

Translate ideas into sustainable systems of action by

Observing the WATCH (We Advocate Time Consciousness and Honesty) was a monthly program of the DepEd with the major goal of pushing forward the recognition of punctuality and honesty as two core values in promoting renewal and development. A teacher leader creates and facilitates activities for the students so that it will be done in the classroom.

Nurture a culture of success

A teacher who were perceived to be leaders at the same time did not necessarily have formal positions nor were interested in such but can act on opportunities for others to gain success and recognition by adopting a no-blame attitude when things go wrong. In terms of creating a sense of community identity and pride they can be involved in stakeholders' advocacies for the school by volunteer ship effort and treating them as community partners in undertakings.

The six major themes from the adapted framework of Teacher as Leader by Crowther, F., Kagaan, S., Ferguson, M. & Hann, L. (2002), are the bases of the practices of teacher leader in public school and the researcher schematized the data which are the particular practices under it. These features influence students' learning and achievement by addressing their issues and needs. It also helps to improve school programs and learning environment by means of teacher leaders' good



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character and passion that greatly affect the lives of their peers and students.

However, this research though intends to identify and characterize the teacher leader practices in selected public high school can be a limitation for this study because it cannot be generalized to the other schools, it was identified and characterized the way the participants in the study understood and experienced teacher leadership in their school. In addition, the sample may have led to more themes and provided a more comprehensive understanding of teacher leadership. Nevertheless, this study can contribute to the knowledge of teachers who seek to deepen their service and knowledge in the public schools in the Philippines as well as in any private schools, and can be a source of references for the best practices to achieve school improvement and student learning.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Teacher Leadership concept is never new whether in private or public schools in the Philippines. Unfortunately, this concept sometimes neglected in the educational field because of the lack of exploration and studies about it. This study strongly supported Teacher leadership especially in public schools and should be promoted through continuous conducting of research and eventually, can be a major theme and topics for school seminars and in-service trainings.

This study of Teacher Leadership in Public School is a continuation support of the study conducted by Oracion, Carmela (2007). In her study, she concluded her own definition of Teacher leadership,

is the willing response of teachers who may or may not have formal leadership positions, to opportunities to actively influence teaching and learning in collaboration with the principal, other formal leaders and colleagues. Directed towards school improvement and increased student achievement, the specific enactment of teacher leadership is shaped by the particular context in which it occurs (Oracion, Carmela, 2007).

With all the studies, readings and interviews conducted to make this research fulfilled, it comes up to:

Teachers can exhibit leadership in multiple ways. Some leadership roles are formal with designated responsibilities from the principal or school leader and informal which is manifested in their practices that have impact inside the classroom and within the whole school. These varieties of roles ensure that teachers can find ways to lead that fit their talents and interests. Regardless of the roles they assume, teacher leaders that do their practices with passion and good character shape the culture of their schools, improve student learning and achievement, and influence practice among their peers.

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