

---

## TEACHER-LEADERSHIP: EXPERIENCED AND PERCEIVED BY TEACHERS OF PIAPE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Mary Criz M. Bade<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Researcher, Rizal Memorial Colleges, Inc

---

### ABSTRACT

This research employed a qualitative method based on individual interviews of teachers. This study determines the ability of the classroom teachers of becoming teacher-leaders in Piape Elementary School in Piape, Padada, Davao del Sur. This study aimed to explore and characterize proficient teachers as teacher-leaders. The concept of teacher leadership still struggles to thrive in school organizations. This paper has highlighted two phenomena that make it a challenge for teacher leadership to blossom: one is the traditional 'principal-oriented' nature of leadership that is heavily entrenched to its system and second, the lack of leadership training and the teacher classification that they follow. The school can also foster teacher leadership through the determined themes - initiative and independence, partnership engagement and teamwork, and positive school environment. This study can also be a subject for further research to analyze if there is a significant difference between these types of leadership behavior, and use the same method and instrument but is implemented in a larger population. These conditions critically limit the role that teachers play in the school. With the recent educational reform, wherein K-12 curriculum was adopted, this study suggests that the application of teacher leadership in the local context can potentially make a significant contribution in shaping the culture of their schools, advancing student learning, and influencing practice among their peers.

**Keywords:** Proficient teacher, teacher-leader, public elementary school, teacher leadership, principal, K-12 curriculum

---

### 1. INTRODUCTION

One of the challenges of any newly established schools is to how each school-based programs and projects and of those mandated by the top management will be assigned effectively and efficiently with the limited number of proficient teachers and of the absence of Highly Proficient Teachers and Department Heads. It has been also a dilemma that aside from their job in curriculum and instruction, there are also ancillary works which do not match with the personal and professional characteristics and goals of the proficient teachers which yield undesirable outcomes. It is also found out that the process of becoming a teacher-leader from being an ordinary classroom teacher is gradual and recursive that occurs over a period of months or even years because most of the teachers do not set out to be leaders (Hunzicker, 2019).

This study research is highly needed in the current limitation of a combined interpretation of qualitative data regarding the emergence of proficient teachers as teacher-leaders. Most of the study researches recently primarily focus only on the qualitative aspects of the study. Also, some previous researches implement the problem in the primary schools and in the graduate school internationally. But with the present study we can look into how proficient teachers in a public elementary school are characterized as teacher-leaders within the Philippine setting and through the use of a qualitative method paradigm.

The role of education in the alleviation of poverty in the Philippines has been more palpable and urgent than ever. Hargreaves (2019) and Harris (2019) both considered education as still the most valuable gatekeeper of opportunity and a formidable distributor of life chances. In the Philippines, 90% of school children attend public schools in the hopes of improving their lives in the future. This is especially true for those who experience various consequences of poverty where good education is the only hope out of it.

Similarly, the Philippine government holds a strong stance that K-12 curriculum will be the key solution to the enduring crises faced by the country's basic education. This program aims to produce highly competitive graduates in terms of literacy, numeracy, and problem solving skills (Department of Education, 2019). However, this educational reform has received criticisms especially by families of poor socio-economic backgrounds who perceived this as time and financial burden. Some others doubted the capacity of this reform to bring forth change. Similar undertakings of the government have proven disappointment to make a difference mainly those directed to structural or program modifications.

Filipino scholars in the past have identified problems in the K-12 curriculum implementation in the country which includes teacher shortage, curriculum unsustainability, lack of resources and infrastructure, and incoordination of different bureaucratic bodies (Alegado, 2019; Calderon, 2019; Combalicer, 2019; Sergio, 2019). They also have similar recommendations to intensify teacher's role in the reform, to which the international scholarships have also

determined (Puryear, 2019; Yasuyuki, 2019). In the past 30 years, teachers have been identified as the 'problem in education' (Gunter, 2019).

However, changing literatures seem to support more the crucial role of teachers in educational transformations. Muijs and Reynolds (2021) believed that teachers and teaching were seen to 'matter'. Similarly, Harris and Muijs (2019) described that higher degrees of commitment and association by teachers resulted to more significant effect. Considering teacher's roles and responsibilities are huge and multi-faceted, this paper will focus only on teacher leadership in particular. International studies and research are increasingly becoming more captivated with teacher leaderships in school to promote teaching and learning both for the teachers and the students (Berry, Daughtrey & Weider, 2020; Galland, 2019).

Accordingly, this study sought to provide data from the proficient teachers of Piape Elementary School in Padada, Davao del Sur in terms of their experiences of teacher leadership and identify the challenges that goes with it and the insights of teachers to address the educational leadership problems.

This study aimed to explore the experiences as teacher-leaders at Piape Elementary School of Padada, Davao del Sur. Specifically, the study sought answer to the following questions:

1. How is teacher leadership practiced in schools as perceived and experienced by teachers?
2. What are the challenges that make it difficult for teachers to thrive as leaders in their respective schools and organizations?
3. What are the insights of teachers regarding teacher leadership?

Recent research on school development and change has pointed to dramatically different roles for teachers, including increased leadership roles. Crowther, et al (2022) noted that today, teacher leadership appears to be inseparable from successful school reform. Teacher leadership has been regarded as crucial to a school's capacity to improve itself (York-Barr & Duke, 2019) primarily because of its inherent potential to help counter the limitations of the hierarchical model of school organization (Frost & Durrant, 2019) and its emphasis on collective action, empowerment and shared agency.

The advocacy for teacher leadership is premised on the belief that as teachers are closest to the classroom, they can implement changes that make a difference to learning and learners (Harris & Muijs, 2018; York-Barr & Duke, 2019). Teachers are on the front lines and know the classroom issues, the culture of the school, and the kind of support they need to do their jobs. When teachers take on responsibilities that used to be reserved for those in the administrative hierarchy, their decisions are likely to be based on their experience and expertise and on what are actually needed to support teaching and learning for students and teachers. It is unfortunate that many initiatives to support, acknowledge, reward or better use teachers' abilities have maintained traditional views of most teachers' roles as implementers of curriculum decisions and procedures decided elsewhere in the bureaucracy (Darling-Hammond, Bullmaster & Cobb, 2021). These have limited the teachers' freedom to exercise leadership for change from within and have impeded the advancement of teacher leadership.

Based on a meta-analysis of teacher leadership research since the early 1990s, York-Barr & Duke (2019) offered the following definition of teacher leadership:

Teacher leadership is the process by which teachers, individually or collectively, influence their colleagues, principals and other members of the communities to improve teaching and learning practices with the aim of increased student learning and achievement.

It is worth noting from the definition of teacher leadership suggested by York-Barr & Duke (2019) that teacher leadership is a "process", the primary medium for the practice of teacher leadership is "influence", the intention of teacher leadership is the "improvement of teaching and learning practices", and the ultimate goal of teacher leadership is "increased student learning and achievement". The use of "process" in the definition signifies the centrality of interactions among leaders, followers, and their situation that Spillane (2019) ascribed to distributed leadership.

In the teaching profession, teachers influence their students each day, lesson by lesson and TLs are able to transfer these skills into work with colleagues. Formal positions are not necessary to influence others. Although the extent of teacher leadership influence in a school depends in large measure on the group ethos, collegial and professional norms, and customs of a school or district, motivating colleagues toward improved practice relies greatly on the personal influence of a competent teacher who has positive relationships with other adults in the school (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2020). Conversely, teachers allow themselves to be influenced by colleagues who exhibit behaviors they advocate (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2020) even if these colleagues are not assigned formal roles.

Although those in schools know first-hand and deep down that "teacher leadership has always been there", York-Barr and Duke (2019) claimed that the literature on teacher leadership is still largely descriptive rather than explanatory and more robust with argument and rationale rather than with evidence of effects of teacher leadership. Also, the empirical evidence concerning the actual effects of either formal or informal teacher leadership on schools and students report

mixed results (Leithwood et al, 2020). On a positive note, however, it is helpful that more studies have recently been undertaken to investigate the influence of teacher leadership on school improvement. Also, while there continue to be studies focused on leadership from formal leadership positions, informal means of leadership are now gaining more recognition.

Smylie (2020) proposed three related models of distributed leadership that have important implications for teacher leadership: (1) leadership as the performance of key tasks and functions rather than as the work of people in formal leadership roles, (2) leadership as an organization-wide resource of power and influence, and (3) leadership practice as constituted in the interaction of school leaders, followers and situations. The first model indicates that teachers can and do perform important leadership tasks within and outside formal positions of authority. The second implies that teacher leadership may make both independent and, with other sources of leadership, additive or multiplicative contributions to student achievement and school improvement. Distributed leadership implies thinking about leadership in a new way, one that goes beyond the Superman and Wonder Woman view of leadership (Spillane, 2019) and takes us from a person “solo” to a person “plus” perspective on leadership (Harris, 2019). This perspective is in contrast to a leader-follower relationship which connotes a power imbalance and a command and control approach to leadership.

The third model discussed by Smylie (2020) emphasizes that teacher leadership is a social process that exists in schools and teachers can exert influence by simply being part of the “webs” of relationships that define school organizations. Spillane’s emphasis on the interactions among leaders, followers, and their situation over the additive or multiplicative contributions of individual leaders to student achievement and school improvement indicates that even followers who are regarded as passive actors in the traditional leader-follower relationship contribute to leadership practice through interaction with the leaders and aspects of the situation.

Darling-Hammond, et al (2020) called attention to another example of teachers being given formal roles as TLs through professional development schools (PDSs). These schools were actually collaborations between schools and universities created to transform the entire educational enterprise by changing teaching, schooling and teacher education simultaneously. By allowing veteran teachers to assume new roles as mentors, school restructurers and TLs, these restructured organizational settings enabled teacher leadership for the teachers who worked in them and helped to grow a teaching force that assumed leadership naturally as part of a more professional conception of teaching work. Also, by allowing school and university educators to engage jointly in research and rethinking of practice, the PDSs created opportunities for the profession to expand its knowledge base by putting research into practice and practice into research. By re-conceptualizing teaching and learning, new forms of teacher leadership linked to new forms of teacher learning were created. Darling-Hammond, et al believed that the opportunities for new kinds of learning in the PDSs they studied led to new forms of leadership for teachers.

Gronn (2019) named four factors that determine the extent to which teachers take up organizational leadership functions: (1) features of the school’s structure and culture, (2) opportunities for capacity building, (3) nature of the relationship between the principal and the teachers, and (4) active encouragement and support for distributed forms of leadership by the principal. To ensure success for TLs, the school culture must value their work and foster an environment where they can be permitted and encouraged to try out leadership roles and the principal actively supports their work. Moreover, their colleagues must be willing to work alongside them and be ‘led’ by them.

Angelle (2019) found that the school cultures that supported teacher leadership approached problem-solving with enthusiasm and focused on students as the cornerstone of all decisions. Such schools were marked by collegiality, communication, and collaboration and fostered a high level of trust between teachers, principals, and the community. Such school cultures also provided capacity building for the TLs. For Day and Harris (2019) capacity building entails the creation of experiences and opportunities for people to learn how to do the right thing and to do it effectively in different circumstances, implying varied approaches for different schools and contexts. Initiatives must focus on building the capacity for change to increase the chances for sustained innovation and improvement directed towards raising student performance and achievement.

It is quite paradoxical that teacher leadership is a leadership that does not disengage from the leadership of the principal and actually requires effective principal leadership in order to flourish. Positive practices on the part of the principal included providing individualized support to TLs, building collaborative cultures and structures, providing intellectual stimulation, and modelling (Leithwood, 2020). Individualized support for TLs took the form of encouraging risk-taking and offering emotional support like appreciation for and recognition of a job well done. Building collaborative cultures basically meant establishing or maintaining a tradition of shared decision-making. The principals provided intellectual stimulation through their openness to new initiatives and by encouraging a culture of continuous improvement. They also modelled being a professional, having a high energy level, being gregarious, positive and approachable, and importantly, the willingness to share leadership, an important expression of their

sincere belief in teacher leadership. Miller (2020) added that the principal must demonstrate courage for innovation and action, responsibility to admit what needs to be changed, energy and commitment to complete the work, and confidence that changes are in the best interest of their students and the teachers who guide them.

Equally important is transformation from within the teachers themselves. They must have the initiative to take advantage of opportunities for professional growth and personal development that will increase their qualifications and credibility for leadership. Confidence in their abilities to be leaders (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2020), transcending the skepticism that may come along with the initial stages of shared governance (Allen & Glickman, 2020) and the ability to work with other adults are important given the tensions that exist between the cultures of teaching and creating new hierarchical roles for teachers (Hart, 2019; Barth, 2021). The teacher who steps in and distinguishes himself or herself from the others by assuming leadership violates a basic taboo of the egalitarian norms of teaching cultures which do not encourage teachers to be singled out from the group and draw attention to themselves in an environment that values treating all teachers equally. These teachers can end up paying a clear price in the form of rejection, isolation, and resistance from their former peers. There are many reasons behind the resistance experienced by TLs from colleagues, including some named by Barth (2021), for example, inertia in terms of the traditional roles of principals and teachers, aversion to risk entailed by following another especially someone who has not been officially appointed, the TL's personal and interpersonal skills, and plain active resistance to teacher leadership.

Also, although the assumption is that all teachers can lead (Barth, 2021) and the implicit goal is for all teachers to develop into TLs, Timperley (2019) has reminded us of the reality that TLs with high acceptability among their colleagues were not necessarily those with expertise, and, conversely, the micro-politics within a school can reduce the acceptability of those with expertise.

Time has also been named as a constraint to the practice of teacher leadership. Typically, those to whom leadership is being distributed have their plates full. It is helpful that emerging formal roles for teacher leaders such as those of full time mentor for new teachers enable TLs to leave the classroom to take on leadership roles. Katzenmeyer and Moller (2020) explained that formal TL roles can enable TLs to be valuable contributors to school improvement as long as they are not pulled into quasi-administrative responsibilities that take them away from the focus on teaching and their authentic relationships with fellow teachers.

The concept of teacher leadership is still disputed and highly contested, with different researchers proposing different meanings or adopting different approach (Cosenza, 2021; Lowery-Moore, Latimer & Villate, 2019; Jackson, Burras, Basset, & Roberts, 2020; Warren, 2019). Evers (2020) simply put teacher leadership as the 'exercise of influence' on others in teaching and learning contexts. However, Danielson (2019) has eloquently encapsulated more nuances and distinctions to his conceptualization of teacher leadership. Thus, will be deeply utilized on this study. He defines teacher leadership as a set of skills demonstrated by teachers who continue to teach students but also have an influence that extends beyond their own classrooms to others within their own school and elsewhere. It involves influencing others by mobilizing and energizing; with the aim of improving the school's performance of its critical responsibilities; related to teaching, student learning or even policy making. It goes beyond following an order from an authority or a principal.

A teacher becomes an influencer because he or she is well-informed and persuasive. Consequently, a teacher leader should possess essential characteristics such as expertise and skill in engaging others in their respective work environments. It requires a steadfast passion for the fundamental mission and vision of the school. It also instills courage to confront obstacles to achieving such. When teachers are put equally in the center of these missions and visions, a different approach might be in need to achieve school improvement. This can involve adopting different measures as part of the change process. For example, improvement can happen when teacher leaders try to motivate their teammates to become more skilled and thoughtful about their work by doing things differently or doing them better. From time to time, teacher leaders recognize a chance to initiate a practice to improve a program.

In such situations, teacher leadership can show others how to use the new approach and encourage to emulate. Fullan (2020) regarded 'mobility' as the litmus test of teacher leadership. If it mobilizes teacher's commitment to putting their energy into actions designed to improve things. It is individual commitment, but most importantly, it is collective mobilization. Another prominent study regarding teacher leadership was from Crowther (2019), he articulately described the dynamics and association of teacher leadership initiatives in four different countries and established a substantial relationship between teacher leadership and enhanced school improvement. However, Crowther concluded that the potential of teacher leadership has not been "fully actualized." Thus, more researchers called for the use and practice of teacher leadership in schools. For example, Collay (2019) believed that faculty should accept this concept in educational leadership pedagogy and to become partners in preparing teacher leaders. Louis et al. (2020) studied that high student achievement was exceptionally notable in schools where inputs from all stakeholders, especially teachers, were highly regarded and valued.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

This study employed descriptive study research as its research design through qualitative investigative paradigm. According to Creswell (2019), qualitative method is a research approach in which researchers collect, analyze, and integrate qualitative data in a sustained long-term program of inquiry to address their research questions. The data was collected through interviews of the participants.

This study used simple random sampling as its sampling procedure within the population of proficient teachers. The sixteen proficient teachers were asked to participate in a survey. Based on the results of selection of the principal, the proficient teachers were requested to participate in individual interviews. Specifically, there are sixteen (16) proficient teachers who participated and completed the answering of the survey-questionnaire.

To characterize the proficient teachers as teacher-leaders at Piape Elementary School, participants were selected and subjected for a one-on-one interview to better understand the complexities of teacher leadership in this institution, how the school can improve teacher collaboration, how the school can improve active participation among teachers in making important decisions, and what the school can do to improve open communication.

One-on-one interviews in this study preferred because this structure allowed the researcher to interact on a more personal level with the interviewee. Creswell (2019) suggested that one-on-one interviews have a high response rate and allow for the interviewee to ask questions or respond beyond initial questions. It also enables the interviewer to ask sensitive questions. Downfalls to one-on-one interviews include lack of anonymity, potential lack of comfort answering more personal questions, and potential researcher influence on the participant's responses. Open-ended questions must be carefully constructed. Open-ended questions do not limit the responses of the person being interviewed, and instead, allow the interviewee to generate responses that reflect their personal experiences (Neuman, 2020).

One-on-one interviews were conducted with the participants who were willing to participate in an interview. Descriptions from the responses were used to generate the open-ended interview questions to elicit further details about each of the selected teacher leaders. These responses helped to answer the second and third research questions about the challenges encountered and insights of teacher-leaders. Each interview was audio recorded for analysis.

For triangulation purposes, a semi-structured interview was done to understand fully the complexities of the characteristics of the proficient teachers as teacher-leaders, to explain clearly the challenges the teacher-leaders encounter and the insights of teachers to develop leadership skills among the proficient teachers.

The results gathered from the oral interviews on how can the school foster teacher leadership are carefully treated and interpreted through thematic analysis by identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data. By using it, it is possible to link the various concepts and opinions of teacher-participants.

The constant comparative method is a way of analyzing themes found in a set of qualitative text-based data. It is a process of "gathering data, sorting it into categories, collecting additional information, and comparing the new information with emerging categories" (Creswell, 2019). Through a repetitive analysis of the data, the researcher was able to ensure that all of the data has been compared, thereby identifying all possible themes. Ruona (2019) suggested a seven-step process to this type of qualitative data analysis: 1) data preparation, 2) familiarization, 3) coding, 4) develop a set of rules 5) analyze results and draw conclusions 6) construct descriptions of the responses and 7) generalizing meaning.

Interview data was prepared and analyzed using the process described by Ruona (2019). First, participants' recorded responses to the interview questions was transcribed by the researcher into a Microsoft Word document. Using a six-column chart, interview data was labeled and coded as responses were repeatedly reviewed. Coding the data guided the researcher to, "make sense out of text data, divide it into text or image segments, label the segments with codes, examine codes for overlap and redundancy, and collapse these codes into broad themes" (Creswell, 2019). As a result, meaningful data was extracted while less significant data was disregarded. Open coding allows the researcher to identify codes as the data is analyzed, while closed coding restricts the researcher to the occurrences of predetermined codes during analysis. Similar codes were then grouped to identify themes. Then, the data was merged to begin the process of identifying themes.

## 3. RESULT

Teacher leadership practiced in schools as perceived and experienced by teachers Among the themes, the participants directly experience the following: (1) Difficulty in managing time and harmonizing classroom and other functions/ roles; (2) The existence of the "crab bucket culture" and isolation; and (3) Lack of incentives or recognition for engaging in leadership activities; (4) Lack of leadership training and inadequate support and resources to carry out leadership functions; and (5) Uncertain opportunities for promoting teacher leaders.

Challenges that make it difficult for teachers to thrive as leaders in their respective schools and organizations Through interviews, the following challenges have been identified regarding the practice of teacher leadership I schools as experienced and perceived by teachers. I divided the discussion in three main parts. The first follows an analysis of the principal-oriented nature of leadership in the country. Second, a discussion about the difficulties teachers face. And lastly, a future direction of teacher leadership based on teachers' response was also included.

Insights of teachers regarding teacher leadership Teacher leaders' roles are seldom well-defined. Some school heads consider teacher leaders as a source of manpower when schools are understaffed. As a result, many teacher leaders spend their time as assistants in administration and management—managing the canteen, substituting for absent teachers/staff, or supervising the logistics—rather than utilizing their instructional expertise to improve teaching and learning. At present, there is no structured system for teacher leadership. In fact, it is not known to many yet. Although teacher leadership practices are now evident in schools, it has not been formally introduced. Therefore, teacher leaders need support to overcome challenges and barriers created by the norms of school culture.

### Analysis

These experiences encountered by teacher leaders do not only impact their professional lives but also affect their personal and day-to-day lives. The succeeding discussions present the experiences encountered and their impact on the lives of the participants on professional and personal levels.

All participants cited difficulty in managing time and overlapping school activities as major challenges of being a teacher leader. A Teacher Leader claimed that it is very difficult to meet the deadlines. As a result, reports and tasks assigned to him are sometimes submitted or carried out late.

These responses are also evident in the study of Bongco and Ancho (2019) that teachers find it challenging to complete mandated tasks within the eight-hour workday and all participants unanimously believe that the said time is not enough to accomplish everything that must be done. Moreover, teachers show frustration that the workload, especially the 'related tasks' tends to be competing with the time that should have been spent teaching the students. Teachers claim that while the core function of teachers is to teach, they believe that they were not able to discharge this duty as they should, due to related tasks that take priority due to pressing deadlines.

The lack of incentives for engaging in leadership activities has been shown empirically to impede the development of teacher leaders. The Philippine education system lacks incentives and motivation for teachers who perform leadership roles which prohibits them from stepping up as leaders. The idea is that only through recognition of their leadership capabilities can teachers have maximum impact on student achievement and school success.

The participants unanimously shared that they could carry out their functions better if they are to attend leadership training and if resources are adequately provided. All the participants in this study have not attended leadership training, yet. Moreover, they are all experiencing inadequate support and provision of school resources needed for teaching, learning, and performance of their additional duties.

Therefore, professional development should be prioritized if teachers were to lead the improvement of the school and student learning in their instantaneous roles as teachers and leaders. The inadequacy of professional development training and programs across the system could also be the root of the displeasure and may be part of the reason behind some teachers' lack of confidence which made them shy away from practicing leadership duties (Alegado, 2019).

Despite the improvement in the process and promotion guidelines, teachers still find it very difficult to be promoted. In the Philippines, teachers can be promoted to the principal position through two different career tracks, one is the school administration track and the second is the master teacher career under the classroom teaching track with the criteria which include educational background, training, experience, and performance. To Alegado (2019), this can serve as a hindrance to teacher leadership because these policies do not encourage teacher leadership and these policies discourage those with leadership potential but without further academic qualifications or teachers who can lead but no incentives. Also, teachers do not enjoy ample support from such policies.

The responses reflect why the participants are considered leaders. They have acquired the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary in leading fellow teachers and contributing to the school's success. That is why despite the challenges they encounter; teacher leaders are hopeful of the opportunities coming their way. Their current roles serve as a springboard to further personal and professional growth.

Teachers can advance in the profession through one of two career tracks - school administration (leadership) or classroom teaching. A teacher may eventually be promoted as principal following the school administration career track or as Master Teacher under the teaching career track. There are four Master Teacher levels and for each level, there are prescribed qualifications measured in terms of educational preparation, performance rating, and teaching experience. There is a quota system for the allowable master teacher positions in the schools. Master Teachers have regular teaching loads but are expected to guide other teachers toward improving their competencies and to take the

lead in the preparation of instructional materials. Master Teachers also serve as demonstration teachers whose classes are made available as exemplars whenever there are visitors. The school administration track covers head teachers and principals. There are six Head Teacher levels and four Principal levels with specific requirements and corresponding compensation rates. Teachers who aspire to be promoted to head teacher levels or principal positions need to comply with the criteria which include educational background, training, experience, and performance.

Moreover, it is also possible for them to branch out from what they already know and expand upon the expertise they have already gained. It could be transitioning to a new role entirely or simply enhancing their duties while remaining in the classroom with their students.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

One of the questions that is being asked to the proficient teachers being interviewed is to cite the aspects that the school should improve to foster teacher leadership, and what are those activities that the school is doing great. Common answers of the proficient teachers primarily suggest that the school should improve and try hard helping the new teachers be successful especially when these teachers are given coordinatorship of school-based programs or projects. School must also provide assistance, guidance or coaching if needed. Continually, school must actively support the professional development of faculty and staff to gain new knowledge and skills. Hence, the proficient teachers are expecting that the school and the staff are supportive of each other personally and professionally. On the other hand, the school is often very dynamic in terms of sharing new ideas and strategies gained from each other.

It is apparent, according to the interviewee, that many of the teachers in the school can often take leadership roles. However, the school administration in the school should have confidence with these proficient teachers in terms of their professional skills and competence. Other teachers should also recognize the skills and competence of the proficient teacher who is trying to do leadership role.

Also, the ideas and opinions of teachers should be valued and respected in the school so that they will feel involvement and importance. The interviewee also added that the school should celebrate each other's successes e.g. the successful work of teacher-leaders, the reclassification and/or promotion of teachers, and etc. Initiative and Independence The main responsibility of a teacher is to ensure that students are learning.

The interviewee explained that they are often free to make judgments and take initiative for the improvement of their students in their role as a teacher. Also, she added that they often have the freedom to make choices about the use of time and resources, know how to bend the rules if necessary to help the students learn, have input to develop a vision for the school and its future, and can be innovative if they choose to be. But with all of these, the school just sometimes supports the proficient teachers in making changes in their instructional strategies. Partnership Engagement and Teamwork In any organization, partnership and teamwork is a must to make the work effective and efficient. In this case, the interviewee agreed that the teachers in the school often observe one another's work with students. Also, other teachers have helped find the creative ways to deal with challenges faced during classes, and the conversations among them are focused on students.

However, she explained that there are also activities that school is just sometimes doing, that is, teachers influence one another's teaching, teacher talks with other teachers about her teaching and the curriculum, and teachers and administrators work together to solve students' academic and behavior problems.

The administrator and the teachers should work hand in hand in the different educational processes. The involvement of teachers in the decision-making process for the betterment and future of the school is also an indicator of good management. However, the interviewee said that the participation of the proficient teachers in this activity is low and sometimes considered. It means that the school should let teachers have input to decision about school changes, have a say in what and how the things are done, share decisions how time is used and how the school is organized, and understand, use and reach the consensus process before making important decisions. Thus, the opinions and ideas of the proficient teachers should be sought by the administrator in the school.

Communication is an integral aspect of management. This is an area in which the interviewee has a similar perception and experiences when doing the decision-making process. She said that the opportunity in communication with the higher management and with the other teachers is low and sometimes made. With this, the school improve the system through staying aware of what is happening because teachers and administrator share ideas at work, and talking freely and openly about feelings, opinions, and concerns in productive ways such as dealing with ways to better serve the students and their families, and using faculty meeting time for discussions and problem solving. Importantly, the members of the institution should not blame each other when things go wrong, but talk about ways to do better the next time. According to the interviewee, one of the things often done in the school in maintaining the positive school environment is to treat teachers as professionals at all times, to be respected by parents, students, and administrators,

and to feel positive about the ways they are responding to the student's needs. However, there are instances that some of these expected activities are sometimes done including the general satisfaction with the work environment among teachers while working in partnership or as a team with the administrator.

The characteristics of the proficient teachers as teacher-leaders are dominant in self-awareness, diversity, and instructional proficiency than the other types of leadership behavior namely leading change, communication, continuous improvement, and self-organization. Specifically, the strength of the characteristics of the proficient teachers is traced in self-awareness and diversity. However, one of the identified weaknesses is in instructional proficiency and the other is in leading change. The school can also foster teacher leadership through the following determined themes with many positive remarks from the proficient teachers: initiative and independence, partnership engagement and teamwork, and positive school environment. In a general sense, it can be deduced that the school has already the activities often conducted, and these activities should be always done to satisfy the leadership behaviors of the proficient teachers as teacher-leaders frequently.

The following are for future directions of the study.

With the identified characteristics of the proficient teachers in leadership behavior, the school must establish a training program in which the teachers will have the opportunity to enhance their strengths and improve their weaknesses in doing leadership roles.

Based on the themes determined by the proficient teachers, the administration must improve itself to the different activities that require constant conduct to foster effectively teacher leadership.

This case study can also be a subject for further research. The author only does the descriptive statistics with the quantitative data of the types of leadership behavior. The future researcher can also study the parameter of the population if there is a significant difference between these types of leadership behavior.

## 5. REFERENCES

- [1] Hunzicker, J. (2019). From Teacher to Teacher Leader: A Conceptual Model. *International Journal of Teacher Leadership*, 8(2), 1-27.
- [2] Hargreaves, A. (2019). Introduction (pp. 1-14). In A. Hargreaves (Ed.), *Extending educational change: International handbook of educational change*. AA Dordrecht, the Netherlands: Springer.
- [3] Department of Education. (2019). *Primer on the enhanced K to 12 basic education program*. Unpublished report. Philippines: DepEd.
- [4] Alegado, P. J. E. (2019). Unraveling social epidemia through the lens of public education in the Philippines. *World Council of Comparative Education Societies (WCCES) Chronicle*, 2(1). Retrieved from <https://www.worldcces.org/article-2-by-alegado>
- [5] Calderon, M. T. (2019). A critique of K-12 Philippine education system. *International Journal of Education and Research*
- [6] Combalicer, L. F. (2019). Best practices and problems in the initial implementation of the K+12 curriculum among teachers in Infanta, Quezon: Implications to an effective implementation of senior high school. *Journal of Education and Social Sciences*.
- [7] Sergio, M.R. (2019). *K-12 education reform: Problems and prospects*. Ateneo de Naga University Press.
- [8] Puryear, J. (2019). Producing high-quality teachers in Latin America. Policy brief, PREAL, Inter-American Dialogue, Washington, DC.
- [9] Yasuyuki, I. (2019). On 'Japanese style' teacher education reform: Considering issues of quality development under an 'open system'. *Educational Studies in Japan: International Yearbook*, 9, 81-97
- [10] Gunter, M. (2019). Teacher leadership: Prospects and possibilities. In M. Brundrett, N. Buron, and R. Smith (Eds.), *Leadership in Education* (pp. 118-131). London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- [11] Muijs, D. & Reynolds, D. (2021). *Effective teaching: Evidence and practice* (3rd ed.). London: Sage.
- [12] Harris, A. (2019). Distributed leadership: What we know. In Harris, A. (Ed), *Distributed leadership: Different perspectives*. New York: Springer.
- [13] Berry, B., Daughtrey, A., & Wieder, A. (2020). *Teacher leadership: Leading the way to effective teaching and learning*. The Center for Teaching Quality (TCQ).
- [14] Galland, C. (2019). *Effective teacher leadership: A quantitative study of the relationship between school structures and effective teacher* (Doctoral Dissertation). University of Missouri, Columbia, USA.



- [15] York-Barr, J. & Duke, K. (2019). What do we know about teacher leadership? Findings from two decades of scholarship, *Review of Educational Research*, 74(3), 255–316.
- [16] Frost, D., & Durrant, J. (2019). Teachers as Leaders: exploring the impact of teacher-led development work. *School leadership & management*, 22(2), 143-161;
- [17] Darling-Hammond, L., Bullmaster, M. L., & Cobb, V. L. (2021). Rethinking teacher leadership through professional development schools. *The Elementary School Journal*, 96, 87-106. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1086/461816>
- [18] Spillane, J. (2019). *Distributed leadership*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.
- [19] Katzenmeyer, M., & Moller, G. (2020). *Awakening the sleeping giant: Helping teachers develop as leaders* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- [20] Leithwood, K., Sun, J., & Schumacker, R. (2020). How School Leadership Influences Student Learning: A Test of “The Four Paths Model”. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 56(4), 570-599.
- [21] Smylie, M. A. (2020). Teacher learning in the work place: Implications for school reform. In T. R. Guskey, & M. Huberman (Eds.), *Professional development in education: New paradigms and practices* (pp. 92-113). New York: Teachers College Press.
- [22] Harris, A. (2019). Distributed leadership: What we know. In Harris, A. (Ed), *Distributed leadership: Different perspectives*. New York: Springer.
- [23] Gronn, P. (2019). Distributed Leadership. K. Leithwood & P. Hallinger (Eds.), *Second International Handbook of Educational Leadership and Administration*. Dordrecht; Boston: Kluwer Academic. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-94-010-0375-9\\_23](http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-94-010-0375-9_23)
- [24] Angelle, P. S., & DeHart, C. A. (2019). Teacher Perceptions of Teacher Leadership: Examining Differences by Experience, Degree, and Position. *NASSP Bulletin*, 95(2), 141-160. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192636511415397>
- [25] Day, C., & Harris, A. (2019) Teacher leadership, reflective practice and school improvement. In K. Leithwood & P. Hallinger (Eds.) *Second international handbook of educational leadership and administration* (pp. 957-978). Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers
- [26] Allen, L. and Glickman, C. (2020). Restructuring and renewal: Capturing the power of democracy. In A. Hargreaves (Ed.), *Extending educational change: International handbook of educational change* (pp. 225-248). AA Dordrecht, the Netherlands: Springer.
- [27] Hart, S.L. (2019) A Natural-Resource-Based View of the Firm. *Academy of Management Review*, 20, 986-1014.
- [28] Barth, R. S. (2021). Teacher Leader. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 82(6), 443-449. <https://doi.org/10.1177/003172170108200607>
- [29] Timperley, H. (2019). Using assessment data for improving teaching practice [Paper presentation]. 2019 - Assessment and Student Learning: Collecting, Interpreting and Using Data to Inform Teaching. [https://research.acer.edu.au/research\\_conference/RC2019/17august/7](https://research.acer.edu.au/research_conference/RC2019/17august/7)
- [30] Cosenza, M. N. (2019). Defining teacher leadership: Affirming the teacher leader model standards. *Issues on Teacher Education Journal*
- [31] Lowery-Moore, H., Latimer, R.M., & Villate, V.M. (2019). The essence of teacher leadership: A phenomenological inquiry of professional growth. *International Journal of Teacher Leadership*.
- [32] Jackson, T., Burrus, J., Bassett, K., & Roberts, R. (2020). Teacher Leadership: An assessment framework for an emerging area of professional practice. Center for New Constructs, ETS, Princeton, New Jersey
- [33] Warren, L.L. (2019). The influence of teacher leaders in education policy development. *Journal of Education & Social Policy*.
- [34] Evers, C. (2020). Lifelong learning and knowledge: Towards a general theory of professional inquiry. In D. Aspin (Ed.), *Philosophical Perspectives on Lifelong Learning* (Vol. 11, pp. 173–188). Springer Netherlands. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-6193-6\\_11](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-6193-6_11)
- [35] Danielson, C. (2019). *Teacher leadership that strengthens professional practice*. Alexandria: ASCD.
- [36] Fullan, M. (2020). The three stories of education reform. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 81(8), 581-584.
- [37] Crowther, F., Ferguson, M., & Hann, L. (2022). *Developing teacher leaders: How teacher leadership enhances school success*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

- 
- [38] Collay, M. (2019). Discerning professional identity and becoming bold, socially responsible teacher-leaders. *Educational Leadership and Administration*, 18, 131-146.
- [39] Louis, K. S., Leithwood, K., Wahlstrom, K. L., & Anderson, S. E. (2020). Investigating the links to improved student learning: Final report of research findings. St. Paul, MN: University of Minnesota.
- [40] Creswell JW (2019) *Qualitative inquiry and research design: choosing among five approaches* (3rd edn.). Sage Publications, USA.
- [41] Neuman, W.L. (2020) *Social research methods qualitative and quantitative approaches*. 4th Edition, Allyn & Bacon, Needham Heights.
- [42] Ruona, W. E. A. (2019). Evolving Human Resource Development. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 18(4), 551-565. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1523422316660968>
- [43] Bongco, R. T., & Ancho, I. V. (2019). Exploring Filipino Teachers' Professional Workload. *Journal of Research, Policy & Practice of Teachers & Teacher Education*, 9(2), 19–29.