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Research Article

Understanding the Role of Organizational Confidence on the Culture of Teacher Leadership in Public Schools in the Philippines

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to understand the role of organizational trust on the culture of teacher leadership in selected public-schools in the Philippines. The study utilized a qualitative research design involving public-school principals in Schools Division Marikina, Marikina City. Findings revealed that one of the leading themes that stood out in the responses was that teacher leadership is a skill that needs continuous development. The participants said that teacher leadership is being observed when school tasks are being properly managed and when there is a harmonious work environment in the institution. The most dominant challenges are the reluctance of teachers to accept challenging tasks, low self-confidence, and lack of compassion. Participants shared unique characteristics of leadership empowerment, such as being transparent, honest, responsible, and considerate. The majority of the participants agreed that organizational confidence can be achieved through teacher empowerment. Participants also stated that it is time for the organizational confidence to be established in order to effectively render a good quality education in the Philippines. Findings also revealed that being a good listener is a key factor in advocating teacher leadership and that building a working environment wherein everyone will have their own opportunity to experience leadership is also one the recommendations mentioned by the participants.

Keywords: *Organizational confidence, School culture, Teacher leadership*

Introduction

Roles in schools have changed in response to an evolving educational landscape over the last few decades. In the twentieth century,

distributed leadership is the preferred leadership model in organizations (Bush, 2019). Traditional models, in which responsibility and decision-making are vested in a single individual

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at the top of the organization, may no longer be effective. School leadership today includes not only the senior leader, but it can also be distributed among the staff in a school, where teachers at any stage are directly involved in leading learning. This leadership model redistributes power and realigns authority within the school organization. It is based on the idea that anyone can lead and that leadership is a responsibility that can be distributed or shared (Muijs & Harris, 2003).

Collaboration is an essential component of distributed leadership. School administrators and teachers collaborate to develop new strategies for a range of disciplines, including teaching practices such as effective classroom management. Teachers also work together in teams to bring about change and improvement by planning lessons, co-teaching, sharing resources, reviewing and supporting one another. Working in this manner, knowledge is constructed and collective leadership is demonstrated.

Organizational Trust

Organizational trust is one of the most important factors that can lead to the success of any institution today. Trust is regarded as one of the fundamental conditions of stable social relationships as it plays an important role in interpersonal solidarity and cooperation. It expresses the trust between the employees working together or affiliated with each other, the trust between the superiors and their subordinates, and the trust in the organization as a whole (Guinot, Chiva & Mallén, 2013). In this context, trust within the organization ensures healthier communication, stronger cooperation (Christen, 2004) and effective interaction among individuals (Koster, 2016). Based on mutual interactions, it also affects individuals' future behaviours (Caldwell & Clapham, 2003). In addition, trust among employees and groups within the organization is also a crucial factor in ensuring long-term stability and peace of mind in the organization (Cook & Wall, 1980).

In the field of educational administration, studies on organizational trust are conducted to support the thesis that trust is a predictor of teacher performance and school effectiveness. Organizational trust in schools is necessary in

creating an effective and productive learning environment because this may form healthy relationships and interactions among individuals. Eventually, this organizational effort will result in a healthy organizational environment (Ennis & McCauley, 2002). Trust in school improves the organizational climate and relationships between teachers and administrators (McMillan et al., 2004), makes a difference in the quality and quantity of educational processes, and results to better communication and interactions among those involved (Moye et al., 2005), which eventually lead to improvement in academic goals (Arslan, 2009). Finally, teachers who are confident in the school and its administration find it more motivating to share their teaching practices and techniques with fellow educators (Tschannen-Moran, 1998).

The Culture of Teacher Leadership

Teacher leadership culture refers to a school environment that encourages teachers to take on leadership roles. In such a school environment, the supportive working environment, professional cooperation, and administrative support are very evident (Demir, 2014). Teacher leadership can also be defined as compatible with the features of a target culture that is open-minded and powerful. It has features of collaboration supported by assumptions about learning and the development of continuity, beliefs, values, and norms supported by teachers, principals, and colleagues, where they work together and resolve issues together.

A school culture that supports teacher leadership is a positive environment as it focuses on professional development. Opportunities are offered for professional learning and leadership roles. Teachers' distinct behaviors are valued, and they are given opportunities to recognize and develop their full potential, as well as to participate in school decision-making processes (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001). Problems are regarded as an opportunity and learning tool, and teachers are seen as experts in a culture in which teacher leadership is supported. Furthermore, Danielson (2006) stated that the characteristics of a culture that can help the development of teacher leadership are risk taking, functional democratic norms, recognition of teachers as professionals,

participation, cooperation, and sharing of experience. There is autonomy, professional solidarity, participation in decision making, effective communication, and teachers support one another in this environment. These features can be categorized in three basic dimensions: teacher collaboration, managerial support, and supportive work environment. These dimensions comprise the culture of teacher leadership.

The Relationship Between Organizational Trust and Culture of Teacher Leadership

Trust is the foundation of dual and multiple relationships. It is the most significant determinant of interpersonal relationships. Trust in colleagues promotes teacher cooperation and fosters cultural change in support of professional development (Tschannen-Moran, 2009). In an environment of organizational trust, every individual is aware that his or her work and existence are valuable to the organization.

Trust appears to be frequently emphasized in qualitative research studies. Beachum and Dentith (2004) investigated the impact of teacher leadership on school culture transformation through interviews and observations of teachers. They found that trust and collaboration create a favorable culture for teacher leadership by causing a shift in traditional roles and approaches. In the study of Du (2007), participants emphasized the importance of trust in colleagues as well as a trust-based, collaborative environment for teacher leadership. Birky, Shelton, and Headley (2006) found that trust in administrators is important in encouraging teachers to take on teacher leadership. Browne (2009) found the significance of a supportive culture based on trust in school in his study examining the development of teacher leaders.

In contrast, in schools where relationships are not built on trust, teachers may be hesitant to depart from their traditional roles due to the fear of taking risks (Danielson, 2006). As a result, trust in the organization can be an important factor in establishing the culture required to achieve the teacher leader model (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001). There is professional solidarity, participation in decisions, and effective communication in a culture that is focused on professional development and

acceptance of teacher contributions to innovation.

Teachers' trust in principals, colleagues, and clients has a positive and significant impact on the realization of teacher leadership culture (Demir, 2014). Such a culture fosters a working environment in which teachers can collaborate to achieve a common goal while also learning from one another. It also encourages teacher development and leadership. It allows school administrators to give teachers opportunities to take on leadership roles. Thus, the goal of this study is to investigate the effect of organizational trust on the culture of teacher leadership in selected public-schools in the Philippines.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to understand the role of organizational trust on the culture of teacher leadership in selected public schools in the Philippines. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How would the public-school principals describe the idea of teacher leadership?
2. What are the challenges that the public-school principals encounter in empowering teachers in their school to become leaders in specific assignments or tasks?
3. How would the public-school principals describe their leadership characteristics which contribute to their sense of empowerment which they use in helping their teachers transform into leaders?
4. How do public school principals see the idea of teacher empowerment as a tool in building organizational confidence?
5. What do the participants have in mind that may promote teacher leadership in their schools?

Method

Research Design

The study utilized a qualitative research design involving the public-school principals in Marikina City. The goal of this study is to investigate the effect of organizational trust on the culture of teacher leadership in a public school in the Philippines. Their insights on the teacher leadership was identified to determine its value on building organizational confidence and

teachers leadership practice. A researcher-constructed interview protocol was used to lead the semi-structured interview. It is composed of 7-item questions which are based on the research questions of the statement of the problem of the study. The research instrument is validated by experts whose area of expertise are in line with the topic of the study. These provided the data for comprehensive findings and themes to help answer the research questions. The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of organizational trust on the culture of teacher leadership in a public school in the Philippines.

Participants

Participants in the study consisted of four school principals managing public secondary schools in SDO Marikina in Marikina City, The Philippines.

Data Collection Procedure

Qualitative data for this study were collected through in-depth, semi-structured and interviews designed and facilitated by the researcher.

1. Interviews- participants were interviewed face-to-face wherein the researcher asked the interview guide questions following a specific set of protocols. During the interview, the researcher guided the participants with protocols of the individualized interview. The researcher gave the participants time to speak freely about their thoughts and ideas that were pertinent to the study. Each interview was scheduled to last between 10 to 30 minutes. However, there are certain cases in which the natural flow of the interview often ended the session earlier or later than expected.
2. Focus Group Discussions- qualitative research method and data collection technique in which the group of participants discussed the arising concerns in-depth group discussion facilitated by the researcher. During the focus group discussions, the researcher guided the participants who are part of the procedure with protocols of the discussion. The researcher guaranteed that all of the members of the

group were given enough time to speak and share their perceptions and ideas.

Data Analysis

As the method of gathering data for this study, semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were employed. By thoroughly examining each interview the diverse insights and perspectives expected from each participating principals were examined. Data was reviewed for emergent themes and reoccurring terms and ideas that showed themselves throughout each conversation after each interview's transcription. Using coding as a method of data analysis, each interview was coded and then all of the interviews were evaluated to see if there were any patterns or differences in how participants perceived things. This paper illustrates the study's results in applying the six phases of reflexive thematic analysis as described by Braun and Clarke (2006): (1) familiarizing oneself with the data, (2) generating codes, (3) constructing themes, (4) reviewing potential themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) producing the report. The experiences of the participants are accentuated through each phase, outline strategies to support analytic quality, and share practical activities to guide the use of reflexive thematic analysis within the business context as applied to the determination of the potential effect of organizational trust on the culture of teacher leadership in a public school in the Philippines.

Results and Discussion

The primary focus of this study is to understand the role of organizational trust on the culture of teacher leadership in a public school in the Philippines.

1. How would the public-school principals describe the idea of teacher leadership?

Research question one gathered data on how participants describe the idea of teacher leadership. One of the leading themes that stands out with the responses was that teacher leadership is a skill that needs continuous development. One of the participants said that teacher leadership is being observed when school tasks are being properly managed and

when there is a harmonious working environment in the institution. The participants also described teacher leadership as when you give good influence to your fellow coworkers and that a healthy work environment will be established through teacher leadership. In this context, trust within the organization ensures healthier communication, stronger cooperation (Christen, 2004) and effective interaction among individuals (Koster, 2016). The participants described teacher leadership as when you are capable of inspiring others to lead. The participants also insisted that teacher leadership is about giving a positive attitude and encouragement to fellow colleagues. The participants also added that the concept of teacher leadership should not be seen only in one aspect, as it is a broad concept that encompasses the aspect of being a good listener, emphatic, collaborator and a follower. Moreover, teacher leadership is when there is a whole organized system that is being implemented and obeyed. Findings also revealed that teacher leadership is when school programs are student-centered. Prioritizing what programs or school projects will be beneficial for the students is what good teacher leadership is all about.

2. What are the challenges that the public-school principals encounter in empowering teachers in their school to become leaders in specific assignments or tasks?

The findings answered research question two pertaining to the challenges that the public-school principals encounter in empowering teachers in their school to become leaders in specific assignments or tasks. All the participants shared the same experiences and sentiments when it comes to the challenges, they have experienced in empowering teachers in their school to become leaders in specific assignments or tasks. The most dominant challenges are the reluctance of teachers to accept challenging tasks, low self-confidence and lack of compassion. The challenge where teachers are being reluctant to take a huge responsibility in a given assignment was observed by all the participants in their respective school. They also shared that the reluctance is influenced by the pressure from high expectations and standards. Teachers' lack of self-confidence also

contributed to the challenges encountered by the participants as teachers will always doubt their capabilities that lead to decisions to decline projects proposed to them. Teachers who are not passionate to become a leader also posed a challenge to empower them to become leaders. In schools where relationships are not built on trust, teachers may be hesitant to depart from their traditional roles due to the fear of taking risks (Danielson, 2006). Some of the recorded responses revealed that there are still teachers who are not that passionate to become a leader and prefer to be a follower. In relation to this, teachers who do not see themselves as leaders are often a result of being in the teaching profession for a short period of time that they see leadership as a huge responsibility that they cannot accommodate it with their hectic schedule and that they see themselves as novice in the institution.

3. How would the public-school principals describe their leadership characteristics which contribute to their sense of empowerment which they use in helping their teachers transform into leaders?

Research question three sought to explore the leadership characteristics of the participants that contribute to their sense of empowerment which they use in helping their teachers become a leader as well. Participants shared unique characteristics of leadership empowerment. The participants stated that one of their leadership characteristics is being transparent, he shared that being transparent is not about showcasing the receipts, documents and the likes. Transparency can also be associated with attitude and behavior. Letting your colleagues know what you think about their work performance and your evaluation with their work ethics is a form of transparency. Veracity is a form of transparency and this special trait empowers not just the teachers but also the other school personnel to become leaders. In relation to veracity, organizational trust in schools is an essential factor in creating an effective and productive learning environment because it ensures healthy relationships and interactions between individuals, resulting in a healthy organizational climate (Ennis and McCauley,

2002). The participants shared that being considerate is also one of the good characteristics that they utilize in helping teachers transform into leaders. The participants also added that being a leader is not about giving commands and tasks to be accomplished, leadership assessment is a key role in the teaching profession. One school project cannot be accomplished by different teachers in the same manner, one can finish it in one sitting, and the other will have to invest three days to finish the task. Therefore being capable of giving consideration is a good characteristic that a leader should possess. The participants also stated that taking responsibility is another unique characteristic used to empower teachers to become a leader. Responsible in a way that things have to go through the legal process and that no special treatment would be given to anyone. Being responsible is also one of the good foundations of being a leader. The findings suggest that these aforementioned characteristics help the participants empower teachers in their respective schools to consider becoming a leader in the near future.

4. How do public school principals see the idea of teacher empowerment as a tool in building organizational confidence?

Research question four sought to determine the perception of the participants with the idea of teacher empowerment as a tool in building organizational confidence. The majority of the participants agreed that organizational confidence can be achieved through teacher empowerment. The participants also claimed that letting teachers take part in the decision making necessary for the whole school organization will help build a relationship that will guarantee a benefit for the students and teachers. The participants also stated that it is time for the organizational confidence to be established in order to effectively render a good quality education in the Philippines. Making the teaching and learning process go hand in hand smoothly. Teacher leadership culture refers to a school environment that encourages teachers to take on leadership roles. In such a school environment, the supportive working environment, professional cooperation, and administrative support are very evident (Demir, 2014).

The participants also stated that if teachers will not be engaged in the most significant aspect of an organization, leadership training, it would also be difficult for them to give their full potential as an educator. Moreover, all of the participants agreed that teacher empowerment will also strengthen the bonds within the internal school organization therefore achieving organizational confidence. Being able to establish organizational confidence will lead to excellence.

5. What do the participants have in mind that may promote teacher leadership in their schools?

Research question five sought to explore a variety of recommendations to their fellow principals to guarantee that teacher leadership will foster in their institution. The participants shared different suggestions that will promote teacher leadership in their respective schools. The participants stated that giving encouragement is more than enough to promote leadership in their school. He also added that allowing the teachers to reach their full potential by not limiting their scope of practice will also promote leadership in them. The participants also shared that right treatment and with no belittling among teachers will also foster leadership skills. Showing them that you are working with them and that they are not working for you is also a good strategy to promote leadership skills to the teachers. Teachers' trust in principals, colleagues, and clients has a positive and significant impact on the realization of teacher leadership culture (Demir, 2014). Findings revealed that being a good listener is a key factor in advocating teacher leadership and that building a working environment wherein everyone will have their own moment to experience leadership is also one of the recommendations said by the participants.

Conclusion

1. Findings revealed that one of the leading themes that stands out with the responses was that teacher leadership is a skill that needs continuous development. The participants said that teacher leadership is being observed when school tasks are being properly managed and when there is a harmonious environment in the institution.

The participants also described teacher leadership as when you give good influence to your fellow coworkers and that a healthy work environment was established through teacher leadership.

2. All the participants shared the same experiences and sentiments when it comes to the challenges they have experienced in empowering teachers in their school to become leaders in specific assignments or tasks. The most dominant challenges are the reluctance of teachers to accept challenging tasks, low self confidence and lack of compassion. The challenge where teachers are being reluctant to take a huge responsibility in a given assignment was observed by all the participants in their respective school. They also shared that the reluctance is influenced by the pressure from high expectations and standards.
3. Participants shared unique characteristics of leadership empowerment. Veracity is a form of transparency and this special trait empowers not just the teachers but also the other school personnel to become leaders. The participant shared that being considerate is also one of his good characteristics that he utilizes in helping teachers transform into leaders. Being responsible is also one of the good foundations of being a leader. The findings suggest that these aforementioned characteristics help the participants empower teachers in their respective schools to consider becoming a leader in the near future.
4. The majority of the participants agreed that organizational confidence can be achieved through teacher empowerment. The participants also claimed that letting teachers take part in the decision making necessary for the whole school organization will help build a relationship that will guarantee a benefit for the students and teachers. Participants also stated that it is time for the organizational confidence to be established in order to effectively render a good quality education in the Philippines.
5. The participants shared different suggestions that will promote teacher leadership in their respective schools. Findings revealed that being a good listener is a key

factor in advocating teacher leadership and that building a working environment wherein everyone will have their own moment to experience leadership is also one of the recommendations said by the participants.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers thought that the utilization of teacher leadership in building organizational confidence will produce positive feedback if proper leadership training is provided. In addition to this, moral and technical support coming from school principals should be given to the teachers so they will be encouraged to hone their leadership skills and further improve their teaching strategies.

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