

FROM TEACHING TO MANAGEMENT: LIVED EXPERIENCES OF NEWLY APPOINTED SCHOOL PRINCIPALS**Isagani C. Canonizado, PhD**

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ABSTRACT

School heads serve as leaders in the community where they inspire and motivate their teachers, learners, parents and other stakeholders to build harmonious relations towards the attainment of educational goals. This study explored the challenges encountered and the opportunities gained by newly appointed school heads as shifts in their roles from teaching to management took place. It used a phenomenological research design and selected the participation of 35 newly appointed school heads among the selected public secondary schools in the Philippines. Guided questions were used for structured interviews while thematic analysis was utilized in order to formulate meanings based on the significant responses of the participants. Results revealed that newly appointed school heads encountered shift in responsibilities, time management constraints and lack of experience in management as they embrace their new positions. However, while they encountered different challenges, their appointment and new responsibilities as school heads enabled them to advance their professional competence, contributed to the imposition of positive school culture. Thus, the study proposed a Leadership Development Program (LDP) which aimed to enhance the leadership competencies through series of trainings and workshops for newly appointed school heads.

Keywords:

Teaching, management, challenges, opportunities, newly appointed, school heads

INTRODUCTION

School administration is vital for the development of schools and the community since it underscores proper implementation of education-related orders, circulars and laws. School heads on one hand, hold enormous responsibilities and functions in the schools as they lead, manage, supervise and monitor the sound implementation of all educational policies in local school contexts. They serve as leaders in the community where they inspire and motivate their teachers, learners, parents and other stakeholders to build harmonious relations towards the attainment of educational goals. In the Philippine context, school heads also perform with enormous responsibilities where they socially act as actors for development and transformation. The functions and roles of school heads are very substantial for ensuring the quality of education is accorded to all learners in the community. In fact, the 1987 Philippine Constitution provides that quality education shall be provided among Filipino learners where they are taught with relevant, inclusive and proper education. Surrounding quality education is the manner and means by which school heads implement rules and regulations properly in accordance with the intent and goals of the state or government. In this regard, school heads pose diligence just to ensure that these educational goals are met and translated into positive educational outcomes. On one hand, school heads commonly hold Principal position as positions created by the government under the Department of Education (DepEd). The selection and recruitment for principalship position is tedious and critical process. There are several criteria that shall be complied by the aspirants for the position before holding the same. Structured process and series of procedures are laid in the selection which is commonly done through ranking system. In this line, ranking system becomes a traditional way of selection process but has been modified through the Expanded Career Progression System. The newly implemented system of ranking and promotion underscores merit-based selection and promotional process. Core concept of this system is that public servants are given leverage to obtain certain level of position and tracks based on their accomplishments as aligned with the standards set forth by the department. Along this line, school heads positions are commonly classified based on the accomplishments of the concurrent employees of the government in the field of education.

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The researchers collectively observed that there are numbers of teachers, head teachers and assistant principals who are appointed as school principals. Along this observation, most of the newly appointed school heads gain their basic and primary experiences in line with the government service through teaching. In other words, they began their careers with instruction where they became first as classroom teachers. Supported by this observation is the structured system of selection where aspirants for the position of school head shall be exposed to teaching, management and supervision aspects. The researchers further note that newly appointed school heads are immensely exposed to teaching. Added to this, they are exposed with either higher professional studies where they studied complex concepts and theories relating to education and management as they either completed their masters or doctorate degrees respectively. Further, the researchers observed that most newly appointed school heads are in the adjustment and adaptive phases which they are newly exposed to management and supervisory functions. Following these significant observations, this paper explored the lived experiences of newly appointed school principals among selected secondary schools in the Philippines.

Consequently, implications for principal preparation program and hiring policies indicated that newly appointed principals experienced challenges and impacted their ability to manage the school culture and institute that changes there were needed for ensuring improvement in teaching and learning (Medford & Brown, 2022). There were strong, positive perceptions toward the effect of leadership coaching on the reduction of stress, the ability to cope with new obstacles and overall positive use of leadership coaching for newly appointed school leaders (Hayes & Burkett, 2020). Newly appointed principals commonly dealt on the needs and expectation on the school leadership development program so that contents of existing development programs could be improved to meet their needs. It also demonstrate that the newly appointed principles were expected to be equipped with the administrative skills of human resource management and practical technique of financial management (Ng & Szeto, 2015). Further, newly appointed principals are expected to possess content knowledge, interactive skills, resource management skill, professional skills, personal inclinations, managerial attitude, physical and mental ability and organizational brilliance (Delshad et al., 2021). In addition, newly appointed school heads adjusted to new leadership roles, studied teachers' emotions surrounding visions, posed positive impact on students' development programs and gradually provided teachers' instructional needs (Garipagaoglu & Kaban, 2025).

As the researchers find strong knowledge gap where previous published studies concentrated on the experiences of newly appointed school heads. These studies utilized quantitative methods where based on the personal deductions of the researchers limited the explorations of newly appointed school heads' experiences. Also, these previous studies purely concentrated on the administrative and managerial experiences but failed to compare the teaching experiences and managerial exposure of newly appointed school heads. With this, this paper explored the lived experiences of newly appointed school heads among the selected secondary schools in the Philippines, focusing on their transitions from teaching to managerial roles. Apparently, significance of the study lies in the provision of insightful findings so as to understand the current conditions and experiences of newly appointed school heads in their administrative, managerial and supervisory roles. Thus, the study developed a proposed intervention program that may help newly appointed school heads to advance or sustain their managerial, administrative, supervisory and leadership competencies.

OBJECTIVES

This study explored the lived experiences of newly appointed school heads among the selected secondary schools in the Philippines. Specifically, it explored that challenges and opportunities encountered by newly appointed school heads drawn from their experienced transitions on teaching to administrative dimensions. Also, this study aimed to propose an intervention program which may help develop or sustain newly appointed school heads' leadership competence involving their administrative, supervisory and managerial skills.

METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a phenomenological research design in order to explore the lived experiences of newly appointed school heads among the selected secondary schools in the Philippines. Apparently, the researchers used a validated guide questions for the conduct of structured interviews among the purposively drawn newly appointed school heads. There were thirty-five (35) newly appointed school heads who participated in the study.

They were selected based on the inclusion criteria such as: (1) those who have been exposed to teaching for more than 10 years, (2) those who were holding school head positions and (3) those who were willing to participate in the study. The researchers posted a call for participants through their social media accounts and, deleted such post after selecting a substantial number of participants. On one hand, as to the construction of guide questions, the researchers formulated 10 questions for the challenges encountered by newly appointed school heads relating to their experiences as newly appointed school heads and there were 10 questions for the opportunities gained by the participants as they hold school head positions. These guide questions were inductively arranged. The same set of questions were validated by three (3) experts in the field who held school heads positions and doctorate degree specializing in educational management. In accordance with the validation process, the expert-validators rated the developed guide questions as highly acceptable and commendable that signified that these developed guide questions were strongly aligned with the research objectives of this paper. Thereafter, the researchers proceeded to actual data collection where they sent Google Meet links to the participants. Before the actual conduct of the structured interview, the researchers administered a short orientation where they discussed the nature and context of the study. Along this line, the researchers also distributed electronic copies of informed consent. Once all the participants agreed to participate, a formal online interview commenced. Each individual participant was given 10-15 minutes to express their thoughts, views and insights for each question. Then, the researchers encoded all the responses made by the participants based on the stored audio recordings. In this line, the researcher used coding-decoding schemes and thematic analysis in order to extract the significant statements of the participants. Thus, the use of thematic analysis enabled the researchers to create meanings from the statements shared by the participants. As to the ethical considerations, the researchers complied the basic and fundamental ethical protocols in the conduct of an independent study such as the conduct of short orientation, provision of informed consent, anonymity of the participants and the confidentiality of their responses. In addition, the researchers stored the gathered recordings and deleted the same after the completion of this paper.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The transition from teaching to management is a normal condition in the public school system which also marks as pivotal opportunity in the career development of teachers in the public schools. Thus, newly appointed school heads face a complex roles and functions as they enter new educational landscape where terrains are purely constructive to leadership and management. Shifts from classroom teaching roles to administrative and managerial roles became paramount experiences of the newly appointed school heads. They embraced the duties and obligations of a school leader who is responsible for the total development of the school and the community in general.

On the Challenges Encountered by Newly Appointed School Heads. There were three (3) significant themes emerged relating to the challenges encountered by the participants. First theme emerged was *shift in responsibilities* with subthemes such as increased administrative duties and time management. This reflected that participants often find themselves overwhelmed by the extensive administrative tasks that come from various management and leadership dimensions. The participants found it challenging as they transitioned from instructional works to managerial works which commonly included budget preparation and fiscal responsibility. Also, the participants found it challenging to ensure that all educational policies were implemented properly. They also emphasized that these policies must be implemented with higher level of diligence and care. For major theme 2, it focused on *time management* with subthemes such as: burnout and neglect of instructional leadership. The participants commonly experienced difficulty in balancing their diverse responsibilities as a newly appointed school heads. First, they were typically confronted with an inability to effectively prioritize tasks leading to risk of burnout. Aside from this, they also experienced that as they were more exposed to higher leadership and management dimensions, they almost neglect their instructional leadership roles as they commonly challenges with voluminous administrative tasks which consumed a large amount of their time. Also, they also expressed that they experienced less opportunity to engage directly with their teachers and learners daily. Lastly, for major theme 3, it emphasized *lack of experience in management* where the participants were challenged as they were newly appointed in the position, they accepted the fact that they lack on managerial experience. Under this theme, it reflected subthemes such as: navigating complex situations and understanding educational leadership. In this regard, newly appointed school heads struggled to address conflicts, manage staff dynamics or implement change effectively. On one hand, they were also challenged in understanding

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educational leadership as the transition required shift in mindset and behavior to becoming a good school leader. As expressed by one of the participants, *"I am really shocked because I have gained no leadership and management exposure."* Results of the study supported the study of Cenge (2017) which concluded that several problems emerged as encountered by newly appointed principals such as the provision of quality instruction and provision of conducive school environment because on the lack of management and leadership exposure.

On the Opportunities Gained by Newly Appointed School Heads. There were two (2) significant themes emerged relating to the opportunities gained by newly appointed school heads such as *professional growth with subthemes: skills development and learning experience* and *influence on school culture with subthemes: shaping vision and goals and implementing positive change*. Along the professional growth theme, the participants showed that with their new positions, there were able to embrace a chance to develop their leadership skills involving their conflict resolution strategies, strategic planning and effective communication dimensions. They also gained significant opportunities in line with learning from experience and exposure which directly or indirectly shape their leadership and managerial skills and competence. Meanwhile, under the second theme, the participants also gained positive influence on school culture where were able to contribute to the creation and development of realistic vision and goals of the schools that drive towards total development. In addition, the participants shared that they were given favorable opportunity to articulate their positions, thoughts and initiatives to help the school and the community develop. With this, they also embraced that positive changes were easy to realize as they were able to introduce innovative practices and policies. These contributed to the development of the school system which they handled and the total teaching and learning outcomes. With their position, the participants were able to engaged themselves into serious and impactful school programs which they personally and professional endeavored. In fact, one of the participants shared that, *"I am now given leverage to fully implement policies and programs which I think favorable for the school and for the community."* In addition, another participate expressed that, *"With my new position, I was able to develop my professional competence and leadership potentials."* Results of the study supported the study of Arrieta and Ancho (2020) which revealed that novice school heads engaged themselves in professional and personal development to enhance their leadership competence.

On the Development of Program Intervention. This proposed intervention program titled: Leadership Development Program. It is designed to support newly appointed school heads in enhancing their leadership competencies specially by focusing on their leadership competencies, supervisory and managerial skills. The program would also provide series of trainings and mentorship activities to effectively foster effective and relevant school leadership and administration. Components of the program included workshops and training sessions where these would delve on leadership skills development and administrative training. Another was the mentorship program which involved peer-partner where newly appointed school heads would be paired to the experienced ones.

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CONCLUSION

The transition from teaching to management is a normal condition in the public school system which also marks as pivotal opportunity in the career development of teachers in the public schools. Conclusively, it found out that newly appointed school heads encountered shift in responsibilities, time management constraints and lack of experience in management as they embrace their new positions. However, while they encountered different challenges, their appointment and new responsibilities as school heads enabled them to advance their professional competence, contributed to the imposition of positive school culture. Thus, the study proposed a Leadership Development Program (LDP) which aimed to enhance the leadership competencies through series of trainings and workshops for newly appointed school heads.

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