

# Empowering Educators: Lived Experiences of School Heads in Cultivating Teacher Leadership

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## INTRODUCTION

### The Problem and Its Background

Teacher leadership has been used to address several challenges in education, such as school improvement and access to professional learning. However, we rarely discuss how best practices can actually enhance teachers' leadership capacity. Alegado (2018) found that the traditional, principal-centered leadership culture continues to limit teachers' ability to assume leadership roles greatly. Despite advocacy for shared governance in education reform, most schools still operate on a top-down system with the majority of decision-making power resting with the school principal. Teachers are often not supported by their institutions to lead projects or advance instructional practice, nor are they trained or empowered to do this work. The study indicates how educator leaders need to take steps to build a collaborative culture in staff meetings, distribute work, and provide ongoing professional development to help make teacher leadership sustainable.

Researchers Zhang et al. (2021) studied the influencing factors of teacher leadership in Chinese private higher education institutions. They found that hierarchical organizational structures and the restriction of teachers' decision-making voice in their work had greatly hindered the development of teacher leadership. While noting strong associations between teacher capacity and self-efficacy as predictors of leadership, the researchers said tight institutional cultures that maintain hierarchical authority over all aspects of schools prevent teachers from exercising influence and creativity. This raises a global issue in advancing teacher leadership.

A mixed-methods study of Tancinco et al (2025) conducted in the Calubian North District of Leyte Province showed that while much School-Based Management (SBM) is being undertaken by school leaders, including managing human, material and financial resources and building stakeholder trust, principals are unable to nurture teacher leadership because of a lack of instructional support for teachers, limited professional development opportunities for teachers and limiting factor such as inadequate facilities and human resource. Principals may hope to redistribute leadership and engage teachers more fully, but structural issues and administrative burdens often prevent teachers from taking control of functional responsibilities beyond their role boundaries.

One of the biggest issues facing school administrators in Compostela, Davao de Oro, in their efforts to cultivate teacher leadership is the dearth of professional development opportunities and support networks to enable teachers to assume leadership roles. Many teachers have the capacity and desire to be leaders, but a lack of formal mentoring, inadequate training, and little appreciation for teacher-led projects limits their development. Additionally, because of limited resources and centralized decision-making within the educational system, school administrators frequently struggle to achieve alignment between their administrative responsibilities and the goal of empowering teachers. This is because they are less able to adopt activities that foster leadership. To foster teacher leaders and improve cooperative school governance in Compostela, Davao de Oro, additional, long-lasting regional leadership development programs are required.

Even though the value of teacher leadership in raising student achievement and fostering cooperative learning communities is increasingly recognized, little is known about how school administrators can best support this kind of leadership among their faculty. Leadership techniques that directly involve principals in fostering teacher learning have the greatest impact, as Robinson et al. (2018) point out, although their application varies across

contexts. This gap highlights the need for further research on how school administrators should systematically cultivate and sustain teacher leadership to promote instruction and school advancement. This study will give insights to policymakers, educational leaders, and practitioners who will facilitate the improvement of teacher leadership in Philippine public schools.

### Purpose of the Study

The intention of this phenomenological study was to describe the lived experiences of the 7 school heads of Compostela East District in developing teacher leadership. More concretely, to discover the approaches that they applied in developing teacher leadership, the obstacles they met, and the way they cope with these difficulties, and what the reflections of their experiences were in developing sustainable teacher leadership for the continuous improvement of the schools. In-depth interviews were the data source.

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This section reviews some of the existing related literature, showing the other work done regarding the experiences and effects of the best practices for developing teacher leadership capacity.

**Cultivating Teacher Leadership.** The development of leadership usually happens when school leaders recognize talent in candidates and decide they have the potential to take on formal leadership positions, or, alternatively, when teachers express their desire to be in a leadership position and nominate themselves (Carswell, 2019).

Philippine school administrators work in a highly demanding field. Constraints in terms of resources and socioeconomic disparity, as well as varying government educational policies and pronouncements, define school leadership positions. Although student achievement and teacher efficacy are understood as being greatly impacted by school leadership (DepEd), Filipino school directors, especially in schools with large classes, poor facilities, and high community expectations, feel overwhelmed to balance their administrative and instructional leadership tasks. The financial and administrative obstacles that rural school administrators, as highlighted by Manolong et al. (2024), encounter while putting initiatives into action, obtaining the resources they need, and preserving stakeholder participation.

Additionally, the necessity for creative leadership techniques is highlighted by recent education reforms in the Philippines, including the introduction of the K–12 program and curriculum changes (Tagupa, 2019). The Matatag Curriculum seeks to promote inclusive education, teacher growth, and student well-being. Providing professional development opportunities, mentoring programs, and establishing frameworks that enable teachers to assume leadership responsibilities are all part of the endeavor to improve teacher leadership (Harris, 2003). For long-term school reform, teacher leaders' capacities must be strengthened.

It appears to be more successful to divide up leadership duties among employees. Teachers are bright individuals who have a lot to contribute to their learning environments. Distributed leadership should be founded on trust and the understanding that no one leader has the expertise, abilities, and aptitude to lead an organization. It should not just be a participatory democracy exercise (Reeves, 2006; Yu, 2023). Even though the number of teacher leadership positions has increased, the education community still lacks a consensus definition of teacher leadership and explicit standards for professional behavior (Swanson et al., 2011).

Likewise, roles and responsibilities are rarely the same, even when names are the same. Another problem is that teacher leaders are still not given enough credit or assistance. Teachers who are regarded as leaders by their peers, not necessarily because of their position, are characterized as informal teacher leaders. This is further explained by Daramola et al. (2023) as the distinction between roles and acts. Roles can be preceded or accompanied by actions, such as posing intelligent questions during a staff meeting, adding a different viewpoint to a discussion, or coming up with innovative ways to do duties. Teachers can always exercise leadership, even though they might not always be able to take on new responsibilities. In contrast, roles are collections of acts carried out within a designated framework.

A learning culture that promotes institutional improvement is created when teacher leaders are given the chance to assume tasks and responsibilities outside of the conventional classroom (Cansoy & Parlar, 2017; Demir, 2015; Teasley, 2017). However, the backing of school administration is crucial for teacher leadership. Building leadership capacity to generate teacher leaders depends on administrators' ability to mold campus culture (Louis & Wahlstrom, 2011; Yost et al, 2009) and cultivate leaders from current school-level employees (Bell et al, 2011). As the educational leader, it is the principal's duty to not only communicate their vision but also to foster a shared appreciation of its importance, which will strengthen the group's resolve to support organizational achievement (Fullan, 2011; Kirtman & Fullan, 2016).

In addition, successful leaders understand the need to give employees the freedom to act as stewards of the company, making choices that advance it continuously (Fullan, 2014). Teachers are empowered to fulfill their professional worth while preserving the classroom connection and daily interactions with students when a framework for teacher leadership roles within the learning community is established, and individuals are recognized for their contributions (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Shim & Thompson, 2024).

The learning community's potential for higher performance is increased when teacher leaders are included in the organizational process (Crowther et al., 2009; Ahn et al., 2024). Whether they are aware of it or not, the principle is instrumental in providing chances for teacher leadership in the learning community. Teachers may feel empowered or deterred from actively participating in the organization based on their behaviors (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Ventura, 2025). Effective teacher leadership is made possible by the organizational structure that the learning community provides for its instructors (Ventura, 2025). Within the learning community, teachers are provided with an organizational structure that facilitates successful teacher leadership (York-Barr and Duke, 2004).

More so, effective leaders, according to Preskill and Brookfield (2009), give people "opportunities to employ their experience and talents fully" in a setting of trust that reduces risk for the leader-in-training. Leaders can impart important leadership lessons while also enhancing the culture and climate, enhancing the experiences of students and school leaders, and strengthening the overall mission of the school organization by pushing teachers to take chances and explore uncharted territory outside of the cozy confines of their classrooms. By fostering the sense of fulfillment that comes from seeing a teacher mature and transform into the type of leader they may be, this, in turn, enhances the experience of leaders.

According to Wenner and Campbell (2017), implementing teacher leadership without the cooperation and support of colleagues at school would be unsuccessful. In order for the lead teachers to effectively fulfill their leadership position, the non-lead teachers should also support them (Helterbran, 2010). The effectiveness of professional development in the practice of teacher leadership is impacted by weak and hostile relationships among teachers, despite the fact that teacher leadership necessitates unity (Margolis, 2012). The growth of teachers' skills and the effectiveness of teacher leadership are hindered by an unfavorable work environment and poor relationships among administrators, lead teachers, and teachers (Angelle & Dehart, 2011).

Further, leadership techniques have been hindered by a school that encourages compulsion, self-centeredness, and guilt trips (Cooper et al., 2016). Moving away from the conventional top-down management style and toward teachers accepting accountability and responsibility are both necessary for the development of teacher leaders. The idea of teacher leadership holds that all educators possess the aptitude, skills, and talents necessary to lead and ought to be trusted to do so. Using teacher leadership is a crucial component of accomplishing school and classroom development objectives, according to proponents of school reform.

Principals serve as the core authority figures within schools. They occupy crucial leadership roles, making their support essential for the development and execution of teacher leadership initiatives. Therefore, principals ought to foster a school environment that promotes shared leadership and facilitates teacher leadership (Helterbran, 2010; Flood & Angelle, 2017). However, Monjong and Fon (2016) noted that certain principals are unwilling to delegate leadership responsibilities to teachers, often excluding them from the decision-making process. Additionally, teachers experience disempowerment and have limited autonomy in making decisions (Friedman, 2011). The effectiveness and success of teacher leadership practices relied on the principals' readiness to

distribute leadership roles among teachers, have confidence in them, and involve them in the decision-making process (Dampson et al, 2018; Flood & Angelle, 2017).

**Experiences in cultivating teacher leadership.** School leaders must recognize the capabilities of the human resources available to them in order to harness and nurture their potential and create frameworks and connections to reach the school's goals and objectives (Argyris 2011). It is essential for school leaders to convey these goals to the staff and inspire the entire school community to work towards achieving the school's objectives (English, 2008; Creswell & Traicoff, 2025). In the local context, the training programs offered to teachers, which encompass their participation in workshops and advanced studies, allow the researcher to gain a deeper insight into the managerial roles of school administrators. The professional requirements of the teachers were met through the Individual Performance Commitment Results (IPCR) development plans that teachers completed. As a result, school leaders ensure that the training provided to teachers addresses their weaknesses and strengthens their abilities in relation to achieving the school's goals and objectives.

Additionally, as stated in Section 32 of Department of Education (DepEd) Order No. According to the National Competency-Based Standards for School Heads (NCBS-SH) of 2010, school heads must be capable, dedicated, and responsible for ensuring that everyone has access to high-quality education by exercising transformational leadership and exhibiting a high level of professionalism. Similarly, the professional conduct and conduct required of excellent school leaders are spelled out in the Philippine Professional Standards for School Leaders (PPSSH). However, DepEd has implemented the Result-Based Performance System (RPMS), which requires them to complete their Office Performance Commitment and Review (OPCR) using the verifications that are attached in order to evaluate timeliness, efficiency, and quality.

Furthermore, school success and improvement depend heavily on competent educational leadership (Ololube et al, 2012). Most leaders desire to leave a legacy after they are gone, inspire others to follow in their footsteps, and do meaningful things (Hargreaves & Goodson, 2006; Holloway & Bishop, 2025). Leaders in education must cultivate sustainability in their approach to, dedication to, and defense of teaching and learning in schools if they hope to maintain their leadership. Additionally, in order to support and encourage teaching and learning, school heads in the island schools should take into account the effects of their leadership on school management, as well as how they maintain their vision and prevent burnout.

There is not a single, typical route for teachers to become principals. According to Gates et al. (2003), the majority of principals were taught before becoming administrators, but that may be the extent of shared pathways. Both the quantity of prior administrative experience and the amount of prior classroom experience vary greatly. While some administrators take on the position in a school with little to no experience, others work there for years before rising to the position (Spillane & Lowenhaupt, 2019).

As stated by Rhodes (2021), effective leadership practices are characterized by their ability to acknowledge and promote individual achievements as well as show consideration for the personal lives of employees. Organizing the different assignments and events gives the school direction and a sense of purpose. It is also significant since it describes the types of duties students will be carrying out and how their actions relate to the school's overarching objectives (Oosterlynck, 2011). The management roles and functions examined in this study are reflected in the school heads' management practices, which include collaborating with stakeholders and creating plans to direct the implementation of the goals, mission, and vision, including their staff.

Planning, according to Goodstein and McDonnell (2011), is a fundamental leadership activity that offers crucial information to direct monitoring and assessment. Other leadership responsibilities require it. It serves as the foundation for tracking and assessing real performance (McDonnell, 2011). In order to guarantee successful results, stakeholders should mutually agree on school plans (Eberhardt, 2025). School heads must collaborate with all parties involved to establish a professional learning and development environment in order to achieve this goal (DuFour et al, 2010).

Lastly, each school head is responsible for monitoring. If the school head wants to succeed, it must be done, even if it only entails strolling around the building to check on things, talking to students, visiting classrooms, and speaking with faculty. It may also entail creating complex information systems to assess the quality of



performance (Blankstein et al, 2010). School administrators often carry out monitoring tasks, such as window surveillance, campus patrols to ensure cleanliness, and conversations with teachers and students about the students' performance in their classrooms.

**Strategies used in cultivating teacher leadership.** Teachers are inspired and empowered to reach their full potential by leaders who exemplify and promote autonomy and teamwork. This frequently leads to improved teaching experiences, innovation, and creativity, all of which produce leadership traits. Existing forms of leadership development encourage dependence on outside sources, including conferences, seminars, online courses, and even national, state, or local leadership development initiatives (Lei et al., 2024).

As stressed by Bayler and Ozcan (2012), school principals' transformational behaviors were significantly related to collective teacher efficacy. Since teachers' propensity to go above and beyond the call of duty is closely correlated with elevated levels of intrinsic motivation, they must be empowered, treated as professionals, and given some degree of autonomy. As stated by Shwu Ming (2015), these elements are also thought to be crucial for teacher leader development, school improvement, and classroom efficacy.

Similarly, teachers should also take over leadership responsibilities and positions from the principals. To build teachers' leadership skills, principals and teachers should adopt a give-and-take mentality. In the long run, this would foster an atmosphere that encourages teacher leadership (Angelle & Teague, 2014). Additionally, educators ought to have autonomy and authority over their choices (Angelle & Dehart, 2011). Warmth, cooperation, mutual trust, and proactive engagement among school members can all be strengthened if teachers support one another in co-leading the institution (Derrington & Angelle, 2013).

In addition, Teachers who have the freedom to make their own decisions are can act appropriately and contribute to the school's success (Davignon, 2016). Teachers are also given the chance to participate in decision-making, which strengthens their dedication to achieving school objectives. To encourage teachers to take up leadership roles, they should be granted autonomy, skill, and a sense of trust or respect (Akert & Martin, 2012).

School leaders can improve the school environment, increase teacher engagement, and give students opportunities that might not otherwise be available by integrating leadership development into the school's culture through the discovery of teachers' individual talents, passions, and experiences (McDonnell, 2011). According to Goodstein 2011, mentorship works best when it is focused on real, meaningful experiences that are intended to pique the mentee's interest in either their personal or professional lives. Those participating must understand the goals and purpose. Take advantage of these chances to participate in reflective discussions with teacher leaders before, during, and after implementation.

The development and application of teacher leadership methods would be aided by the administrators' backing and the school's mission (Helterbran, 2010; Weiner, 2011). If the principal or lead teacher establishes goals and directives for the teachers to follow, they are willing to take on the role of a leader (Johnson et al., 2014). As a result, these visions direct educators to assume leadership positions (Weiner, 2011).

According to Chukowry (2018), there should be a clear vision for teacher leadership and encouragement for educators to take on leadership positions in schools. As a result, school administrators ought to establish a setting that gives educators the authority to lead their institutions and gives them the freedom to express their opinions and consider alternative viewpoints. As a result, principals are responsible for school matters and have authority (Helterbran, 2010).

More so, it is challenging to establish and enhance teacher leadership in schools due to highly classified school organizations that have a downward spiral of authority and administrative indolence. To encourage teachers to take up leadership roles in schools, these administrative systems ought to be streamlined or leveled. Thus, it is crucial to set up management that is organized, gives teachers authority, and encourages them to combine resources for teacher leadership (Angelle & Dehart, 2011).

The headteacher's effectiveness was based on their attitude and conviction. Being a headmaster is challenging for someone who lacks confidence, is relatively new to the teaching profession, and is less knowledgeable about the subject (Durias, 2010). As a result, as stated by Wenner and Campbell (2017), the headteacher will find it

difficult to persuade peers, which will ultimately affect the teacher's credibility if they are recruited as a leader. Despite their knowledge and skills, some instructors prefer the comfort of a position-less teaching style, which makes them reluctant to take on leadership roles. Without having a formal leadership position, they can indirectly contribute to knowledge and expertise (Fairman & Mackenzie, 2012). This was due to the instructors' heavy workload (Durias, 2010) and the need to build positive relationships with their coworkers (Flood & Angelle, 2017).

Lastly, building teacher leadership ability should be at the heart of a shared vision between educators and administrators in order to create good change in the educational system (Eyal & Roth, 2011).

**Challenges encountered by school heads in cultivating teacher leadership.** Leadership and management in education play a crucial role in determining the caliber and efficacy of educational establishments. Understanding the practice and difficulties of teacher leadership of academic managers is crucial for enhancing educational outcomes and creating supportive learning environments in the Philippines and many other nations (Afany & Syukri, 2024).

Section 2 of Article IV of the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers, as stipulated by R.A., every teacher is required by No. 7836 to uphold the highest standards of high-quality instruction. Teachers are required to prepare as well as they can for their teaching profession. Moreover when practicing his vocation, every educator will always be at the top of his game. Indeed, the previously indicated arrangements for every Filipino teacher were in danger due to numerous obstacles. If a teacher manages his challenges effectively, he can demonstrate professional efficacy. On the other hand, when a teacher responds poorly to challenges, it can lead to a state of stress that could be harmful to both their performance and well-being (Rabago-Mingoa, 2017; Tortola, 2024).

There were several difficulties in putting teacher leadership into practice. For instance, the structure, scenario, administrative red tape, time constraints, connections between teachers and management, and the disposition of teachers are all barriers to establishing teacher leadership in schools (Wenner & Campbell, 2017). The effectiveness of teacher leadership practices in schools is impacted by these barriers.

Periodically, schools undergo educational transformation. Change is therefore unavoidable. Members of the school community should therefore learn to embrace and adjust to the changes that occur in the educational system, particularly in schools. Furthermore, lead instructors are considered change agents due to their capacity to persuade colleagues to enhance their teaching methods (Cooper et al., 2016).

However, some schools oppose the shift in teacher leadership practices (Durias, 2010). In terms of professionalism and instruction, many educators also reject change. According to these educators, teacher leadership is increasing their burden, and they are utterly unrewarded for their job (Helterbran, 2010). Teachers receive leadership responsibilities from school leaders through shared leadership abilities, while school leaders direct school leadership (Sebastian et al., 2017). However, putting teacher leadership into practice in schools is challenging due to a lack of common objectives between leaders and educators.

Budgetary restrictions, subpar infrastructure, and a lack of instructional materials are just a few of the limited resources that Philippine public schools frequently face (Kilag et al., 2024). Additional difficulties faced by school administrators in the Philippines include shifting policies, administrative workloads, and restricted access to resources. As stated by Lagawid (2024), opportunities for collaborative planning and professional discussion are limited by the time poverty brought on by class preparation and evaluation activities.

According to Cojorn and Sonsupap (2024), regular team-building exercises are hampered by a lack of professional growth opportunities and practical limitations. To promote teacher leadership development, school administrators must manage these resource limitations (Uy et al., 2023). The community's expectations and pressures, such as local politics, community involvement, and parental demands, also affect school administrators (Bual & Madrigal, 2021). It can be difficult to strike a balance between these demands and the requirements of educators and learners. Together, these difficulties make it more difficult for academic administrators to support and maintain teacher leadership programs in Philippine public schools.

Meanwhile, Alegado (2018) also underlined that the principal is viewed as the primary figure in the conventional Philippine school leadership paradigm. The potential for teacher leadership may be overshadowed by the duties of principals, who are in charge of establishing policies, allocating funds, and monitoring teaching methods. Teachers' chances to participate in collaborative leadership practices, decision-making, and innovation inside schools may be restricted by the predominance of principal-centered leadership. The principal-centered method is still common in many Philippine public schools, despite the value of distributed leadership in creating a collaborative school culture and enhancing results.

According to Kilag et al (2024), school principals in the Philippines frequently deal with high levels of stress and turnover, which can have an impact on leadership continuity and school improvement initiatives. The practice of teacher leadership is influenced by political and cultural variables. Political factors can cause principal turnover, which can interfere with efforts to improve schools and maintain leadership continuity. The expectations and roles of teachers in schools can also be influenced by cultural norms.

Furthermore, administrative requirements and high turnover might be more challenging for the creation of teacher leadership. Because the intensity of work may bring up the workload and stress at high levels for school principals, since the principals are responsible for teacher supervision, relationship with community and parents, discipline of students, curriculum implementation, and other tasks related to the operation of the school (Sutherland & Brooks, 2013). Therefore, it may lead to a decline in morale and burnout of academic managers.

One of the primary problems is the high turnover of school principals. Political appointment to school head and reappointment cause school leadership to change too often (Luistro, 2014). The problem of turnover can impede school leadership continuity, and teacher leadership programs are difficult to establish on a long-term basis. Academic administrators are subject to administrative pressures, including legal obligations, red tape, and accountability measures (Alegado, 2018).

These responsibilities sometimes leave academic managers with little time and resources to foster teacher leadership in their institutions. Philippine public schools sometimes suffer from resource constraints, including budget constraints, insufficient facilities, and a lack of instructional materials (Kilag et al., 2024). Academic managers have to deal with these resource limits while trying to help teacher leadership development (Uy et al., 2023).

In addition, Helterbran (2010) suggested that teachers who are generally opposed to teacher leadership would avoid working with the lead teacher to avoid several problems, such as attitude issues and a lack of skills. This situation is made worse when teacher groups or alliances band together to oppose the lead teacher and impede the growth of teacher leadership in schools (Wenner & Campbell, 2017). The existence of other lead teachers who have acquired the trust and authority of principals to lead teachers in schools would eventually make instructors who were appointed as leaders feel threatened.

Moreover, educators think that lead teachers are frequently selected by favoritism rather than their qualifications and dependability (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). In addition, the non-lead instructors harbor animosity toward the lead teachers. Because they coerce themselves into attending teacher-organized events, these educators lack professionalism and leadership abilities. Furthermore, when planning effective programs or events, these teachers refuse to collaborate with the lead teacher (Margolis, 2012).

Accordingly, Bowman (2010) claimed that these rebellious educators believe they have no authority and subsequently attempt to control other educators. Teachers also feel undervalued in spite of their hard work and initiative to further their careers in schools. For instance, unpleasant peer mentors make instructors feel uneasy and under pressure, which obstructs the seamless advancement of education professionalism (Nguyen et al., 2019).

More importantly, this would affect how effectively they lead teachers. The largest obstacles teachers have when putting good teacher leadership into practice are time constraints and workload. According to Wenner and Campbell (2017), teachers frequently believe that they do not have enough time to fulfill their leadership duties because of the demanding nature of classroom instruction. In addition, they struggled to strike a balance between

their duties as teachers and their leadership abilities. As a result, the teachers experienced stress and fatigue (Wenner & Campbell, 2017). Administrators ought to give lead teachers a schedule for carrying out their leadership duties, particularly when collaborating with other educators to overcome these constraints (Chukowry, 2018). Schools should also give instructors enough resources so they can do their jobs well (Berry et al., 2010).

**Coping Mechanisms utilized to address the challenges in cultivating leadership.** A teacher's leadership style has a significant impact on how they collaborate. Transformational leadership strategies such as coaching, modeling behavior, and active listening have been shown to promote teamwork and create more inclusive school climates (Ko, 2024). Delegating tasks and taking the initiative empower others and cultivate self-respect and respect for others (Harris & Jones, 2020). In addition, school administrators need emotional intelligence and resilience to overcome the challenges of effective collaboration. Principals with high emotional intelligence are excellent at communicating, resolving conflicts, and fostering relationships, according to Afzal et al. (2023). These abilities are crucial for leading multicultural teams and maintaining inspiration in the face of adversity.

Numerous contextual elements, including the school culture, individual experiences, and the broader socioeconomic situation, most certainly have an impact on teachers' coping mechanisms. Effectively customizing support mechanisms requires a thorough grasp of these unique settings (Emeto et al., 2023). A principal may successfully give guidance and inspire staff to become teacher leaders by encouraging active cooperation, transparency, respecting common values, and identifying chances for participatory leadership that play to each person's abilities (Aryani & Haryadi, 2023).

To effectively lead from the middle, educators must be dedicated to the learning organization's objectives. While perceived power may be limited, collective power inside an organization may have no limits. To make sure that teacher leadership practices are accepted by stakeholders, endure beyond temporary deadlines, and become deeply embedded in the school culture, support systems must be put in place (Reeve, 2008; Brigola, 2023).

The quality and character of the school are influenced by the relationships that are formed among the adults in the learning organization. The effectiveness of the school is largely dependent on the type and caliber of the relationships that principals establish with the community and with the school (Barth, 2001; Rebore, 2014). A positive corporate culture is directly impacted by these behaviors. Professionalism is established in the classroom through ethical behavior. An essential component of an administrator's professional conduct while interacting with staff, students, and the community is setting an ethical and professional example for others to follow (Professional Standards of Educational Leaders, 2015).

Due to better learning and academic achievement, school administrators should honor educators who make children want to go to school (Höög & Olofsson, 2005; Ludwick, 2006; Schindler et al, 2016). According to Sahin (2011), when it comes to making changes, being open and cooperative, acting bravely, and working with others, the principal of the school serves as the main role model for both teachers and students. Only when leaders consciously cultivate a happy and stimulating school environment where expectations are well-defined and rigorously observed can these conditions be established (Carswell, 2018). In addition to purposefully scheduling time for introspection and teamwork, professors and administration should make sure they are close enough to one another to facilitate impromptu conversation and discussion (Hord, 2019).

More so, the study by Hancock et al. (2019) mostly showed that those who decided to pursue the principalship were affected by altruistic motivators, such as being creative, helping with curriculum creation, and enhancing student learning. A few self-serving motivators also played a role. Expanding professional prospects, more desirable job statuses, and salary increases also had a role. The mix of altruistic and personal motivators was acknowledged by Spillane and Lowenhaupt (2019), who cited a desire for more challenging work, a sense of moral and societal obligation, and a need for personal fulfillment. Aspiring leaders in turnaround schools were motivated by a desire to confront inequality, spur educational reform, and influence teachers' coping strategies for teaching and learning (Weiner & Holder, 2018).

Comprehending a teacher's individual experiences with coping mechanisms must encompass the diverse, situation-specific experiences of educators. This gap can be filled by a qualitative study that explores each individual's viewpoint on the coping strategies teachers use. We can learn more about the usefulness and



applicability of different coping mechanisms in diverse educational environments by elevating the voices of educators through qualitative research. In line with what has been said, a deeper comprehension might motivate useful professional development and useful mental health services (Esguerra & Quinto, 2025).

In a similar thought, school leaders must recognize the capabilities of the human resources available to them in order to harness and nurture their potential and create frameworks and connections to reach the school's goals and objectives (Argyris, 2011). It is essential for school leaders to convey these goals to the staff and inspire the entire school community to work towards achieving the school's objectives (Creswell & Traicoff, 2025).

In the local context, the training programs offered to teachers, which encompass their participation in workshops and advanced studies, allow the researcher to gain a deeper insight into the managerial roles of school administrators. The professional requirements of the teachers were met through the Individual Performance Commitment Results (IPCR) development plans that teachers completed. As a result, school leaders ensure that the training provided to teachers addresses their weaknesses and strengthens their abilities in relation to achieving the school's goals and objectives (Suttles, 2024).

Additionally, as stated in Section 32 of Department of Education (DepEd) Order No. According to the National Competency-Based Standards for School Heads (NCBS-SH) of 2010, school heads must be capable, dedicated, and responsible for ensuring that everyone has access to high-quality education by exercising transformational leadership and exhibiting a high level of professionalism. Similarly, the professional conduct and conduct required of excellent school leaders are spelled out in detail in the Philippine Professional Standards for School Leaders (PPSSH). However, DepEd has implemented the Result-Based Performance System (RPMS), which requires them to complete their Office Performance Commitment and Review (OPCR) using the verifications that are attached in order to evaluate timeliness, efficiency, and quality.

Furthermore, school success and improvement depend heavily on competent educational leadership (Ololube et al, 2012). Most leaders desire to leave a legacy after they are gone, inspire others to follow in their footsteps, and do meaningful things (Hargreaves & Goodson, 2006; Holloway & Bishop, 2025). This phenomenological study also examines the strategies used by school leaders to maintain the school's performance. Leaders in education must cultivate sustainability in their approach to, dedication to, and defense of teaching and learning in schools if they hope to maintain their leadership. Additionally, in order to support and encourage teaching and learning, school heads in the island schools should take into account the effects of their leadership on school management, as well as how they maintain their vision and prevent burnout.

## Theoretical Lens

The study was anchored in Transformational Leadership Theory, originally developed by Bernard Bass in 1990 (Bass, 1996). According to this theory, Transformational leadership theory is a style where leaders inspire and motivate their team by creating a clear vision, encouraging innovation, and fostering personal growth. They build trust and enthusiasm, helping their subordinates to exceed their own expectations and achieve big, positive changes together. Transformational leadership inspires positive changes in those led and is invested in the success of every single member involved in the process.

In the context of the study, the theory of transformational leadership usually possesses exceedingly strong internal values and ideals. They effectively promote their followers to act in a manner that supports the progress and success of the entire organization instead of their own interests. This explains what the strategies, challenges, and insights gained by the school heads from their experiences are, and how they cope with these challenges in cultivating teacher leadership. Through their lived experiences, school heads gain a firsthand understanding of how to empower and guide teachers, which leads to insights or realizations about effective leadership practices. These understandings inform how teacher leadership is fostered, for example, through coaching, working, and collective decision-making.

The barriers encountered when implementing these strategies, for example, the limited resources or non-cooperation of the teachers, are the "test" of how effective school heads are as leaders. School heads cope with these obstacles through the "coping strategies," such as reflection, adaptability, and help-seeking. Together, these

elements form a continuous cycle of learning, reflection, and action that strengthens the school heads' ability to nurture teacher leadership.

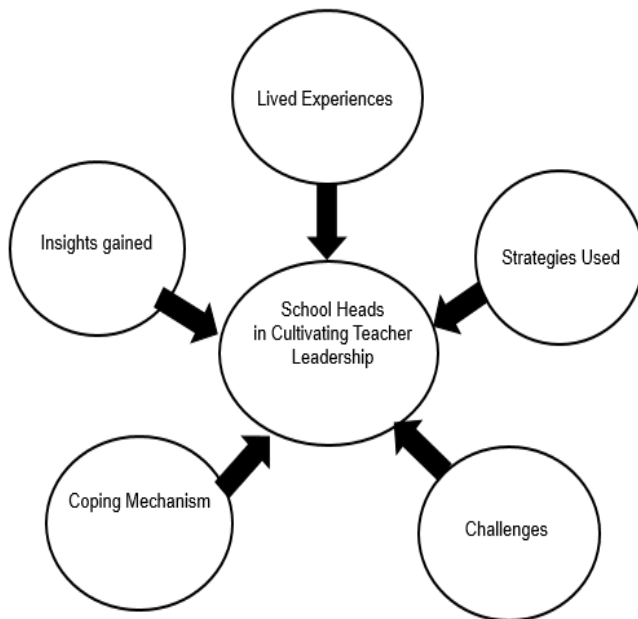


Figure. 1 Conceptual Framework

## Research Questions

The study aimed to explore the experiences, challenges and coping mechanism of school heads in cultivating teacher leadership. It was guided by the following questions.

1. What are the lived experiences of school administrators in cultivating teacher leadership?
2. What strategies do the school heads use to cultivate teacher leadership?
3. What are the challenges of school heads in cultivating teacher leadership?
4. How do the school heads cope with the challenges encountered in cultivating school leadership?
5. What are the insights gained by the school heads from their experiences in cultivating teacher leadership?

## Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This phenomenological study aimed to unveil the experiences, strategies used, challenges encountered, coping mechanisms utilized, and the insights gained by seven public school heads of Compostela East District. In-depth interviews were conducted during the second semester of the academic year 2025 – 2026 to gather the necessary data.

## Significance of the Study

The results of the study are beneficial to the following:

**Learners.** The findings of this study would help them by improving the overall quality of instruction and fostering a more collaborative and responsive learning environment.

**Teachers.** The study's findings would encourage them, as parents and mentors of the students, to take on leadership roles. They would be inspired to share best practices, mentor peers, and lead initiatives that can enhance teaching strategies and curriculum design, directly impacting student learning. As a result of this culture of teamwork, we anticipate teaching that is more uniform, creative, and productive, meets student differences, improves student engagement, and boosts school academic performance.

**School administrators.** Study findings would help them with effective management of the school and design of a sound distributed leadership model, and decrease the burden on administrative duties. The school administrators would assign tasks like mentorship, professional development, and curriculum development to some outstanding teacher leaders and could concentrate on the school's strategic planning and bigger issues.

**Department of Education.** The findings of the study would provide the basis of the Department of Education for Formulating programs for professional development for teachers and School Administrators to become more effective in response to the problems and challenges of public-school teachers. They would become more confident and effective in response to the problems and challenges in cultivating teacher leadership and become more confident and effective in the field.

**Future Researchers.** The findings of the study would encourage future researchers in the field of education by further building on the findings with more knowledge to add in reference to teacher professional education. The study could lead to further research on empowering educators and exploring the lived experiences of School Administrators in cultivating teacher leadership, and also contribute to efforts to advance teacher leadership and development.

## Definition of Terms

For a better understanding of the study, the following terms are defined operationally.

**Challenges.** This term refers to the difficulties, barriers, and constraints encountered by school heads in their efforts to cultivate teacher leadership. These may include limited resources, resistance to change, time constraints, policy demands, lack of professional development opportunities, or varying levels of teacher readiness and motivation.

**Coping Mechanisms.** This term refers to the adaptive strategies, actions, and responses school heads employ to manage and overcome the challenges they face in cultivating teacher leadership. This may involve reaching out to colleagues for assistance, using problem-solving abilities, demonstrating resilience, participating in professional development, or drawing on personal beliefs and leadership philosophies to continue their efforts.

**Insights.** This refers to the various insights, realizations, and lessons learned by school heads in their efforts to foster and develop teacher leadership. This is based on their extensive reflections on practices, leadership, and organizational factors that help support teachers in taking up leadership responsibilities. They are important for making future decisions, developing strategies, and implementing changes to advance teacher leadership in the school community.

**Lived experiences.** It is about the individual, direct experiences and thoughts of the principals or administrators in the process of enabling teachers to become leaders. It includes their opinions, problems, actions, and insights in the face of real-life circumstances in school leadership and teacher development.

**Strategies used.** It refers to the unique ways, methods, and activities school heads use to develop teachers as leaders and empower them. These tactics may include offering professional development opportunities, assigning duties, providing mentorship, encouraging collaboration, stimulating innovation, and building supportive settings that enhance teacher confidence and leadership skills.

## METHODS

This chapter first discusses the methodological approach that was employed in this study, outlining the specific strategies and techniques used to gather and analyze data related to the lived experiences of school heads in cultivating teacher leadership.

## Research Design

In this study, a qualitative phenomenological research design was employed to explore the phenomenon of empowering educators by proven strategies for cultivating teacher leadership. This investigation aimed to understand individuals' experiences, viewpoints, and perceptions of a specific situation. Phenomenological studies hold significant value in research as they provide a deep understanding of the lived experiences of individuals concerning a particular phenomenon (Neubauer et al., 2019). According to Yüksel and Yıldırım (2015), the phenomenological research approach aided researchers in uncovering the participants' experiences and gaining insights into their beliefs, feelings, and perceptions, focusing on the meaning these phenomena held for the individuals involved.

Furthermore, the design was more appropriate for the study. By delving into the experiences of individuals, phenomenological research contributes to the development of new theories, a deeper understanding of the individuals' experiences, and informed changes in policies or responses based on the insights gained from the study.

## Research Locale

This study was conducted at the Compostela East District, Schools Division of Davao de Oro, in the 7 schools. This includes Compostela National High School, Compostela Central Elementary School – SPED Center, Osmena Elementary School, Ngan Elementary School, Diosdado Macapagal Elementary School, Consuelo M. Valderama, and Diosdado Macapagal National High School. The Compostela East District consistently strives to meet the highest standards of an educational institution, tirelessly working towards academic excellence, discipline, and leadership development.

Compostela is a premier municipality in the Philippines' Davao de Oro province. Known for its wide farmlands that produce rice, corn, and bananas, it is one of the province's major agricultural and economic hubs. Surrounded by rivers and mountains, the town is known for its beautiful scenery, which enhances both its natural beauty and agricultural output. In keeping with its continuous expansion, Compostela is also home to several educational institutions and expanding local enterprises. The town still retains a strong sense of community and culture, even with industrialization.

Compostela National High School has 230 teaching personnel. It offers junior and senior high school programs, including special needs education. The school's culture of quality, inclusivity, and community involvement is promoted through a variety of academic and co-curricular activities.

Compostela Central Elementary School, on the other hand, is the town's major elementary school, with 102 teaching personnel, offering Kindergarten to Grade 6 programs, and managing a Special Education (SPED) Center for unique learners. Both schools are heavily involved in community-oriented programs such as Brigada Eskwela and health and wellness campaigns, reflecting their shared goal of developing well-rounded, responsible, and empowered learners in a nurturing and inclusive environment.

Ngan Elementary School is a public elementary institution with 20 teaching personnel located in Purok 4, Barangay Ngan, in Compostela, Davao de Oro, under the Compostela East District. It has been serving the community since its foundation in the late 1950s, providing basic education to learners in the village and surrounding rural areas. The school plays a key role in local education, adapting through many administrators and utilizing varied approaches to management and teaching as the community's needs evolve.

Consuelo M. Valderama, with 24 teaching personnel, is a secondary school, a public High School institution situated in Sitio Sta. Maria, Barangay, Ngan, Compostela, Davao de Oro, under the supervision of the Department of Education. It was renamed by Republic Act No. 5624 in 1969. The school has 24 teaching personnel and serves secondary grade learners in the local community, embracing the ethos of "home of transformational learners," and plays a key role in providing basic education to children in this rural area.





**Figure 2. Map of Compostela showing the location of the study**

### Role of the Researcher

According to Fink (2000), the role of the researchers in qualitative research was composed of seven stages, namely: thematizing, designing, interviewing, transcribing, analyzing, verifying, and reporting.

**Thematizing** is basically answering the question: what was to be studied, why that was to be studied, and how that would be studied. The answers to these questions were the background against which one proceeded to fieldwork, analysis, and reporting.

The **designing** stage was the step in which the methodological procedure was planned and prepared. What was the schedule, and how did the different steps interrelate? When the chosen technique is interviews, designing the research project involves determining which kind of interviews to use and whom to interview.

In **interviewing**, a structured interview using a guide made by the researcher, which outlined themes to be covered in the interview. The interview guide was normally written without the specificity of how to phrase exact questions, and questions were thus open-ended to encourage the participants to give long, elaborate answers.

In the next stage, **transcribing**, the recordings of interviews or discussions were carefully transcribed for analysis. This task was often handled by research assistants under the guidance of the researcher. Depending on the researcher's preference and the nature of the study, specific instructions were provided regarding how detailed the transcription should be. For instance, transcription could range from a highly detailed version that included every sound, pause, sigh, or hesitation, to a more focused version that only records statements directly relevant to the research questions. These transcription standards ensured consistency and accuracy in the interpretation of participants' responses.

Next was analyzing the data. The term coding commonly referred to the open coding phase of the analytic process, which included description and identification through close examination of data. Data can be coded via

one of the computer analysis package programs. However, whether or not one took the route of utilizing a computer program, it is always the researcher who defines and names the categories of data.

**Verifying** the data analysis concerned the generalizability, reliability, and validity of the findings. Generalizability was about whether one could generalize the results of the findings. Reliability spoke to issues of consistency of results or findings. Validity addressed the question of whether indeed the study investigated what it intended to investigate.

**Reporting** covered the portion of the research process where a researcher wrote a report to present their findings. The interview report was itself a social construction in which the author's choice of writing style and literary devices provided a specific view of the subjects' lived world.

## Research Participants

The participants of the study were seven school heads from the Compostela East District of Compostela, Davao de Oro. The research aimed to provide valuable insights into the developing leadership capacity among teachers based on their best practices. Participants were selected using universal sampling.

In addition, the researcher used inclusion criteria. Specifically, participants were required to have a minimum of three years in service as a school head and had to be assigned to the selected schools. Those who were three years below in service as school heads were excluded as research participants. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any time from the study.

## Data Collection Procedure

Before gathering data from the participants, the researcher will seek approval from the Ethics Review Committee (ERC) and secure an informed consent form (ICF). The researchers completed all of the forms provided by the institution's Research Ethics Committee, which contained detailed and accurate information. The documentation guaranteed that the study was carried out in accordance with accepted moral norms and human practices, with no harm to the participants. The researchers followed the Research Ethics Committee's guidelines and submitted their work for approval. The entire form was sent using the Research Ethics Committee's official Gmail account.

The researcher secured an endorsement letter from the Dean of the Graduate School of Assumption College of Nabunturan. After this, the researcher submitted a letter addressed to the Superintendent of the Schools Division of Davao de Oro, attached with the endorsement letter from the Graduate School, asking for approval to conduct the study. Upon receiving the response from the Division Office, the researcher wrote a letter to ask permission from the Public Schools District Supervisor.

After the study was permitted, the Informed Consent Form (ICF) was administered by the researcher to the participants, asking for their permission to participate in the study. In this part, participants were informed that they we're free to participate in the study or not. Since the participants voluntarily participated, they signed a consent form as proof that they participated in the study voluntarily.

The study utilized the In-depth Interviews (IDI) method to comprehensively investigate the viewpoints, experiences, emotions, and perspectives of the respondents. In-depth interviews were conducted to gather the necessary data for the study, employing the same interview guide that was used in the focus group discussion. Participants were chosen based on their strong willingness to contribute to this research. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and promptly coded following the completion of the interviews, and then proceeded to thematizing in order to derive significant insights and develop conclusions.

## Data Analysis

In analyzing the data, this study used a thematic analysis approach. Thematic analysis is a qualitative research method used for examining and analyzing the meaning of the data gathered in an interview. During the interview,

the researcher collected, recorded, and synthesized all the data to study all the information from the participants responses about their experiences on that particular topic, and after gathering enough data, the content analysis method was used to analyze further the information gathered in interview and this was the process where all the responses of the participants were categorized and organized by similarities and likeness using qualitative coding scheme.

### **Trustworthiness and Credibility**

The researcher explored four critical components integral to establishing trustworthiness and credibility in qualitative research: transferability, dependability, credibility, and confirmability.

**Credibility** was of utmost importance in assessing the dependability and believability of qualitative research findings, particularly regarding participants' views. Since the heart of qualitative research was to comprehend phenomena from participants' perspectives, their judgments were important. This criterion ensured that the data collected aligned with participants' perceived reality. Credibility was established through rigorous selection of study methodologies and processes, early immersion in participants' culture, and the use of purposive sampling to ensure participants have first-hand knowledge of the phenomenon.

To enhance credibility, triangulation was used in data collection through multiple techniques, including observation and individual interviews. This multi-pronged strategy confirmed information from several sources and perspectives.

**Transferability** concerns how the study's findings could be applied to different settings or groups. It was the job of the generalizer, based on study outcomes, to ensure transferability. The qualitative research enhanced transferability through detailed descriptions of the research setting and underlying assumptions, and through the transparent presentation of all data.

**Dependability** was achieved through the specification of the research aim, in-depth interviews, and the recording, transcribing, and analysis of data. Common motifs were identified through thematic analysis. The research design was a 'prototype model,' and the methods to establish reliability and validity were used.

**Confirmability** was essential for data trustworthiness. Knowing participants' backgrounds was important for targeted talks. The researcher agreed to lay aside personal beliefs and biases. Triangulation was used to minimize investigator bias, and self-awareness and identification of personal predispositions were important to verifying reliability. The research report was clear about its underlying ideas, the reasons for its chosen methodologies, and any weaknesses, demonstrating a commitment to addressing potential biases and limitations. The facts, however, then refuted preliminary theories presented with the results. In addition to the material, there was ongoing commentary about the decision-making processes and methodological choices. The research report clearly depicted the study's complexities, thereby demonstrating the researcher's honesty and ability to address prejudices.

### **Ethical Considerations**

All of the following ethical considerations have been religiously taken care of by the researcher in doing the investigation. Ethical considerations based on the following cited: Department of Science and Technology (DOST) – Philippine Health Research Ethics Board (PHREB). In the cited above the investigation was ethical in dealing professionally and ethically as well as to ensure the protection of informants from all physical and psychological harm. Even more important, to inform the informant of the right to withdraw from the study at any point deemed appropriate.

**Social Value.** This study adds an important addition to leadership and teaching methods. By exploring the lived experiences of school heads in cultivating teacher leadership, the research promoted collaboration, empowerment, and professional growth among educators, which led to more effective school governance and enhanced student learning outcomes. At the macro level, school policymakers of the Department of Education used the findings of the study to recommend policies, programs, and interventions for the improvement of

educational leadership and teaching practices. At the micro level, the gains from the macro level directly cascaded to the school and subsequently reinforced teacher work performance that drove improvement in the teaching-learning process. The results of the study were also used to improve the quality of education as one of the Sustainable Development Goals, knowing that the individual performance of teachers significantly affected the learning process.

**Informed Consent.** The purpose of informed consent was indispensable in providing the prospective informants with the important aspects of the study and expectations from their participation. The prospective informants were oriented regarding the ICF and their right to withdraw whenever they felt any discomfort when participating in the study, since their participation was voluntary. They were also informed of the duration of the administration of the instrument. They could also bring the interview guide questionnaire to have more time to answer. They were encouraged to ask questions if they had difficulties or needed clarification in answering the items. More importantly, they affixed their signature on the consent form to indicate their willingness to participate in the study.

**Risk, Benefits, and Safety.** The informants may have encountered problems with time that might have affected their non-teaching schedule or any untoward incident as they answered the questionnaire. To address the aforementioned predicament, the researcher ensured the safety of the informants by conducting interviews inside the school premises during their break time to avoid class disruption, or they were given an option to bring the interview guide questionnaire and answer it at home and send the answers to the researcher the following day. The informants were given a token for their participation. The study was beneficial to the respondents since the benefits of utilizing the results of this study in the form of programs or interventions improved teachers' organizational behavior as well as their work performance.

**Privacy and Confidentiality of Information.** The data gathered from the administration of the research instrument were treated with confidentiality and were exclusively used for academic purposes. The researcher ensured the anonymity of the informants and the confidentiality of the data. The data was encoded and protected by a password to prevent unintentional access to the computer file, and was in adherence to the Data Privacy Act of 2012. The electronic data file was deleted from the computer after the completion of the study.

**Justice.** The target population of the study had a fair chance of being selected by using the universal sampling technique. They were selected based on the criteria that they must be a school head; must be stationed in a DepEd-managed school in Region XI; must have been a school head for at least three years in the assigned workstation; and must have had regular and permanent employment status. The significant contribution of the respondents to the accomplishment of the study was duly acknowledged in the preliminary section of the research manuscript.

**Transparency.** The researcher disclosed any emerging conflict of interest. Since the study was for academic purposes, there was no conflict of interest involved. Should there have been opportunities to disseminate the findings of the study to a wider audience, either through research forums, conferences, or publication in a research journal, the researcher ensured that the facts were presented. The researcher allowed others to evaluate the method, data, analysis, and claims of the study.

**Qualification of Researcher.** The researcher was qualified to conduct this study since he was a candidate for the Master's Degree in Education, major in Educational Administration. The researcher had also been exposed to the rigorous nature of researching because he had already completed his master's degree. He also participated in various seminars, workshops, trainings, conferences, and forums related to research. At that time, the researcher was enrolled in the Writing Dissertation subject, which required him to undertake this study.

**Adequacy of Facilities.** The researcher administered the questionnaire inside the faculty room and ensured that the environment was free from noise so the teachers were not disturbed while answering the questionnaire.

**Community Involvement.** Involving the community of educators in this study under the nature of school leadership offered many advantages. Specifically, the representatives of the senior high school teacher population brought different perceptions of organizational behavior and work performance. The researcher ensured that the



development of the research questionnaire and data collection procedure prioritized respect for the culture and traditions of the respondents. The findings of the study brought knowledge of educational community concerns, needs, values, and priorities.

## DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

This chapter presents the discussions, conclusion, and recommendations of the study, which explored the lived experiences of seven school heads of Compostela East District in cultivating teacher leadership. The study was conducted at the Compostela East District, Schools Division of Davao de Oro.

The study involved seven school heads selected based on the inclusion criteria set by the researchers. Seven school heads participated in an in-depth interview. They were the sources of information and data for the phenomenon under study.

In order to conduct a comprehensive and reliable study that addresses concerns about the validity and generalizability of qualitative research, the researcher chose to utilize a qualitative phenomenological research design. This approach allows for a deep dive into the subject matter through individual interviews with participants. Moreover, the researcher employed participant observation to cross-check and validate the data and information gathered. This methodological decision ensured a complete and multi-dimensional exploration of the topic matter.

In this chapter, the data were presented in the same order as the research questions in the interview guide. In the discussion section, the themes were emphasized and supported by the linked literature and studies.

### Discussions

**Ways to Perceive Role in Cultivating Leadership Among Teachers.** The developing themes in this structured topic are: parental role; encouraging, providing opportunities, and accepting suggestions; giving them responsibility; recognizing teachers' talents; and delegating roles, becoming a facilitator of growth and empowerment, and a facilitator and mentor. These were the ways school heads saw their responsibilities in developing teacher leadership. The findings revealed that school heads saw their responsibility in developing teacher leadership as multifaceted and human-centered. They view themselves as mentors, supporters, and facilitators of teacher development rather than concentrating only on administration or supervision. Moreover, informants stated that assigning responsibilities and acknowledging teachers' qualities demonstrate that school administrators intentionally maximize each teacher's potential. They distribute work according to the knowledge and abilities of the teachers, which encourages productivity and the growth of leadership.

The findings support Carswell (2019), noting that leadership development typically entails either school leaders identifying talent in individuals they believe have the potential to advance into more formal leadership roles or instructors expressing interest in a formal leadership role and self-identifying. This finding is parallel to Ahn et al. (2024), who claimed that a learning community's potential for higher performance is increased when teacher leaders are included in the organizational process. This claim is also in consonance with Ventura (2025), who states that effective teacher leadership is made possible by the organizational structure that the learning community provides for its teachers. This also mirrors Katzyenmeyer and Moller (2019), arguing that teachers may feel empowered or deterred from actively participating in the organization based on their behaviors. The statement also confirms Chukowry (2018), stating that there should be a clear vision for teacher leadership and encouragement for educators to take on leadership positions in schools. As a result, school administrators ought to establish a setting that gives educators the authority to lead their institutions and gives them the freedom to express their opinions and consider alternative viewpoints.

**Significant Moments or Experience Influenced Approach to Cultivating Teacher Leadership.** The emerging themes in this structured theme are being a model, encouraging teachers during meetings, following the DepEd mandate and rules, being influenced by teachers' feedback, several significant moments, and assigning a teacher to lead a school-based project. The findings revealed that relevant experiences and interactions within the school context impact school heads' methods rather than them being formed in a vacuum.

These findings demonstrate that administrators use pivotal moments like monitoring teacher reactions, addressing difficulties, or putting initiatives into action to improve how they foster teacher leadership.

Principals serve as the core authority figures within schools. They occupy crucial leadership roles, making their support essential for the development and execution of teacher leadership initiatives. This aligns with Helterbran (2010), who stresses that principals ought to foster a school environment that promotes shared leadership and facilitates teacher leadership. This claim is parallel to Schindler et al. (2016), stating that due to better learning and academic achievement, school administrators should honor educators who make children want to go to school. It is similar to the view of Hord (2019) that to purposefully schedule time for monitoring, feedback, and teamwork, teachers and school heads should make sure they are close enough to one another to facilitate meetings and discussions. The outcome of the present study corroborates York-Barr and Duke's (2014) finding that within the learning community, teachers must be provided with an organizational structure that facilitates successful teacher leadership.

**Teachers Response when Given Leadership Responsibilities.** The emerging themes in this structured theme are some declines, easy for achievers yet difficult for others, teacher acceptance, different reactions, and hesitation and uncertainty. These findings imply that while some educators, especially those with significant competencies and experience, confidently take on leadership roles, others face challenges because of disparities in abilities, preparedness, or self-efficacy. Hesitancy and uncertainty show that some teachers are not ready to take on leadership responsibilities right away, which could result in resistance or even an initial rejection of such duties. Furthermore, the variety of responses from acceptance to resistance highlights the many perspectives and attitudes that educators have on leadership chances.

The finding is in consonance with Cansoy and Parlar (2017), stating that a learning culture that promotes institutional improvement is created when teacher leaders are given the chance to assume tasks and responsibilities outside of the conventional classroom. The statement also confirms Kirtman and Fullan (2016) arguing that as the educational leader, it is the principal's duty to not only communicate their vision but also to foster a shared appreciation of its importance, which will strengthen the group's resolve to support organizational achievement. This claim is also in agreement with Fairman and Mackenzie (2012), stating that despite their knowledge and skills, some instructors prefer the comfort of a position-less teaching style, which makes them reluctant to take on leadership roles.

The findings affirm Durias (2010) that without having a formal leadership position, they can indirectly contribute to knowledge and expertise. The statement also confirms Flood and Angelle (2017), noting that the result of the instructors' heavy workload is the need to build positive relationships with their coworkers.

**Specific Programs or Activities Implement to Encourage Teacher Leadership.** This structured theme elicited five emerging themes: SGOD and CID, school programs and activities based on EIP, learning action cell (LAC), encouraging to facilitate activities, and assigning different teachers as LAC facilitators. Collaborative professional development approaches and organized institutional procedures are used to operationalize the promotion of teacher leadership. The findings show that leadership opportunities are purposefully integrated into the educational system through contextualized school programs directed by the Education Improvement Plan (EIP) and aligned with division-level efforts (such as SGOD and CID).

The findings mirror Bayler and Ozcan (2012), noting that school principals' transformational behaviors were significantly related to collective teacher efficacy. Since teachers' propensity to go above and beyond the call of duty is closely correlated with elevated levels of intrinsic motivation, they must be empowered, treated as professionals, and given some degree of autonomy. The claim is parallel to Shwu Ming (2015), emphasizing that these elements are also thought to be crucial for teacher leader development, school improvement, and classroom efficacy. This aligns with Flood and Angelle (2017), stressing that the effectiveness and success of teacher leadership practices rely on the principals' readiness to distribute leadership roles among teachers, have confidence in them, and involve them in the decision-making process.

Also, the present study is parallel to Wenner and Campbell (2017), emphasizing that implementing teacher leadership without the cooperation and support of colleagues at school would be unsuccessful. This statement

also confirms Helterbran (2010), arguing that in order for the head teacher to effectively fulfill their leadership position, the non-lead teachers should also support them.

**Ways to Identify Potential Teacher Leaders.** The emerging themes were observing sense of responsibility, through programs and activities, considering teachers' position, observing teachers' performance, focusing on qualities and behaviors, formal roles, and observing initiative, commitment, communication skills, and willingness. This shows that formal and informal, practice-based evaluation procedures serve as the foundation for identifying future teacher leaders. The findings indicate that school administrators should assess teachers' daily work, professional dispositions, and demonstrated competency in actual school settings, rather than relying on assigned responsibilities or titles.

In addition, administrators can assess how instructors demonstrate accountability, initiative, and teamwork in real-world scenarios by observing leadership potential through participation in school programs and activities. Identification is context-sensitive, taking into account individual responsibilities, experiences, and contributions, as demonstrated by the positions and performance of teachers. Stressing traits like willingness, dedication, and good communication shows that proactive participation and intrinsic qualities, rather than formal authority, are what characterize leadership potential.

The findings support Angelle and Teague (2014), who stated that to build teachers' leadership skills, principals and teachers should adopt a give-and-take mentality. In the long run, this would foster an atmosphere that encourages teacher leadership. Additionally, this claim is also in consonance with Angelle and Dehart (2011), stressing that educators ought to have autonomy and authority over their choice.

More so, the outcome of the present study corroborates Derrington and Angelle's (2013) argument that warmth, cooperation, mutual trust, and proactive engagement among school members can all be strengthened if teachers support one another in co-leading the institution. The statement also confirms that Alegado (2018) stated that the principal is viewed as the primary figure in the conventional Philippine school leadership paradigm. The potential for teacher leadership may be overshadowed by the duties of principals, who are in charge of establishing policies, allocating funds, and monitoring teaching methods. The outcome of the present study corroborates Eyal and Roth's (2011) argument that building teacher leadership ability should be at the heart of a shared vision between educators and administrators in order to create good change in the educational system.

**Ways to Provide Support, Mentoring, Or Professional Development for Aspiring Teacher Leaders.** This structured theme elicited seven emerging themes: mentorship, sending them trainings and seminars, making an action plan, programs, activities, or strategies, providing emotional and financial support, providing structured guidance, meaningful opportunities and continuous feedback, mentoring, structured professional development, and authentic leadership opportunities, and various support provided. Through a multi-layered, integrated system of support, future teacher leaders emerge. The findings additionally reveal that formal and informal practices are utilized by schools for leadership capacity building, and experiential learning is supported through formal professional development programs. Teachers' leadership abilities are greatly shaped by mentoring and ongoing support, and their knowledge and skills are improved by having access to training and seminars. In order to maintain teachers' involvement in leadership development, it is crucial to attend to their personal and professional requirements. The provision of both financial and emotional assistance further demonstrates this.

The findings confirm Tagupa (2019), noting that the necessity for creative leadership techniques is highlighted by recent education reforms in the Philippines, including the introduction of the K–12 program and curriculum changes. Matatag Curriculum seeks to promote inclusive education, teacher growth, and student well-being. This also mirrors Harris (2003), stressing that providing professional development opportunities, mentoring programs, and establishing frameworks that enable teachers to assume leadership responsibilities are all part of the endeavor to improve teacher leadership. For long-term school reform, teacher leaders' capacities must be strengthened.

In addition, the finding supports Angelle and Dehart (2011), noting that the growth of teachers' skills and the effectiveness of teacher leadership are hindered by an unfavorable work environment and poor relationships

among administrators, lead teachers, and teachers. This is supported by Suttles (2024), who stressed that school heads must ensure that the training given to teachers is focused on their deficiencies and on improving their abilities in relation to the attainment of the school's aims and objectives. This blend of altruistic and personal motivators aligns with Spillane and Lowenhaupt (2019), who listed the desire for more challenging work, a sense of moral and societal obligation, and a need for personal fulfillment.

**Ways to Create an Environment on Empowering Teachers Leadership Roles.** The themes that emerged were: a parental role, opportunities to lead, trust, empowerment and guidance, an open environment, intentional structures, continuous support, delegation of coordinator and committee roles based on teachers' strengths and expertise, open communication and shared leadership, and fostering trust and respect. The results are indicative of how teacher leadership is developed, which requires planned intentional opportunities through relational trust, leadership support behaviors, structural processes, and participative environments where teachers are given the chance to experience and develop their sense of trust towards one another, to collaboratively work, continue their learning through continuous learning processes, and develop their own skills as leaders. Knowing that those issues are appearing, school administrators need to plan and create conditions under which teachers can demonstrate their leadership role through relational, structural, and participative approaches.

The findings support Davignon (2016), noting that teachers who have the freedom to make their own decisions are able to act appropriately and contribute to the school's success. This claim is parallel to Akert and Martin (2012), emphasizing that teachers are also given the chance to participate in decision-making, which strengthens their dedication to achieving school objectives. To encourage teachers to take up leadership roles, they should be granted autonomy, skills, and a sense of trust or respect. This also mirrors Weiner (2011), stressing that the development and application of teacher leadership methods would be aided by the administrators' backing and the school's mission.

The outcome of the present study corroborates with Johnson et al. (2014), arguing that the principal or lead teacher should establish goals and directives for the teachers to follow, and they are willing to take on the role of a leader. As a result, Weiner (2011) stated that these visions direct educators to assume leadership positions.

**Challenges or obstacles faced in promoting teacher leadership.** This structured theme elicited six emerging themes: teachers' different attitudes, work negligence, time management and prioritizing work, overlapping activities, various challenges encountered, hesitation to take on leadership roles, and teachers' resistance. A variety of organizational, institutional, and human obstacles frequently impede the growth and durability of teacher leadership. As some educators may exhibit low motivation, reluctance, or resistance to taking on more responsibilities, the emerging themes imply that differences in teachers' views have a substantial impact on their desire to take on leadership roles.

This teacher resistance also manifested as their refusal to take on leadership roles. The lack of confidence or the fear of added responsibility or uncertainty regarding expectations might be attributed to this reluctance. The results suggest that the success of teacher leadership development is not simple and is associated with organizational support, workload, teacher preparedness, and motivation. Such barriers suggest the need for strategic interventions in the form of building teacher leadership capacity, creating space for leadership practice, and clear expectation settings to reduce resistance and foster active involvement of teachers.

Results from this study are also similar to previous work by Wenner & Campbell (2017). In this study, numerous barriers to teacher leadership were identified; such barriers include organizational barriers, administrative difficulties, limited time, and interpersonal relations with school administrators and teachers. A number of issues also influenced teacher leadership, such as teacher resistance and negative attitudes, and interpersonal barriers among teachers in this current study.

This would further strengthen the claims by Helterbran (2010) that teachers do not want to work with lead teachers because of "problems with personal relationships, attitudes, and lack of skill" (Helterbran, 2010, p. 86). This is in line with the observations of McLaughlin (1992), who stated that teachers who are able to manage



difficulties in professional practices were able to exhibit professional self-efficacy, unlike teachers who have a negative attitude toward problems, which tends to increase tension (Rabago-Mingoa, 2017, and Tortola, 2024).

**Impact of Challenges to School's Leadership Initiatives.** Emerging themes identified, for example, the struggle of teachers in leadership roles to be fully involved, the impact on school operation, the big influence, late attempts, lopsidedness, the slow process of implementation, and reduced leadership program implementation. It is evident from the findings that the problems identified do cause a major impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of leadership functions in the school. The emergent themes reveal that partial teacher involvement in leadership does not contribute to full active participation and responsibility sharing within school governance. As a result, there is no sense of ownership of the leadership role, leadership responsibilities are not executed and delegated effectively, hence influencing school operations.

Furthermore, the 'huge effect' illustrates how hard it is to mess up an intended operation. The causes for program/initiative implementation delays are a lack of labor and competing demands; the lack of teacher preparation, and therefore the unequal spread of work burden on a couple of leaders. The slowness in leadership programs and initiatives shows that the aims of the organization are not met on schedule. It can thus be argued that the factors hindering teacher leadership have consequences for the overall performance of the organization. This suggests that systematic and effective measures need to be taken in order to have effective capacity-building programs and adequate support systems.

The present study supports what Kilag et al. (2024) said that these expectations demand that these expectations have "given school heads less time and resources in order to bolster teacher leadership within their school" (Kilag et al., 2024). The Philippines public schools have a shortage of resources; inadequate budgets, run-down school buildings, and insufficient teaching resources. It supports what Uy et al. Said (2024) "these are the constraints on resources the school heads face when developing teacher leadership". It also supports Lei et al. Who says "the prevailing leadership development practices encourage external resource dependency," such as "conferences, seminars, online classes, and even national, state or local leadership development programs" (Lei et al., 2024).

Furthermore, this is supported by Swanson et al. (2010) that even though teacher leadership positions have grown, there is no commonly agreed understanding of teacher leadership, nor guidelines on what and how a teacher leader should act, within the education society. As with Afapy and Syukri (2024), the understanding of the practice and implementation of teacher leadership among school heads can lead to improvement in teaching and learning.

**Particular Organizational or Personal Factors Made It Difficult to Sustain Teacher Leadership.** The organized theme generated seven subthemes, namely heavy workload and limited resources, lack of time for collaboration, no confidence in leadership skills, work devotion of teachers, fluctuating policy guidelines from DepEd, extra tasks on leadership, and fear and anxiety towards more accountability. The study showed that human predispositions and structural constraints pose significant limitations to the sustainability of teacher leadership strategies.

Other findings in the study were also indicative that teachers are overwhelmed and lack support from the school administration to act as leaders. The identified factors that hinder teachers from effectively playing their role as leaders were the constraints from the organizational context (e.g., workload, resource, and collaboration time). The constraints posed by the demands of the DepEd, on the other hand, do not allow teachers to continuously sustain the initiatives, given a consistent policy context and with additional leadership roles that preclude the role balancing of teaching and leadership. It is significant to note that some respondents reported no major impediment, as indicated by the "none" option, and this can be seen as an indicator of variation in experience across scenarios. Our findings suggest, in summary, that attention to both the restrictions of institutions and the need to develop personal capacity to sustain teacher leadership may be necessary to develop a more supportive and empowering climate for teachers.

Other challenges school administrators confront in the Philippines include changing policies, administrative responsibilities, and a lack of resources. The findings confirm Lagawid (2024), who asserts that the time poverty

caused by class preparation and evaluation activities constrains opportunities for collaborative planning and professional discussion. The statement also confirms Wenner and Campbell (2017) that teachers frequently believe that they do not have enough time to fulfill their leadership duties because of the demanding nature of classroom instruction.

The results of the present study are in line with Wenner and Campbell (2017), who reported that teachers experienced stress and weariness. Educators struggled to strike a balance between their duties as teachers and their leadership abilities. This claim is parallel to Kilag et al. (2024), who state that budgetary restrictions, subpar infrastructure, and a lack of instructional materials are just a few of the limited resources that Philippine public schools frequently face. This statement is consistent with Uy et al. (2023), who state that additional difficulties faced by school administrators in the Philippines include shifting policies, administrative workloads, and restricted access to resources.

**Response When Faced Difficulties in Cultivating Teacher Leadership.** The emergent themes of pause and think, and composure, openness of communication, and prayer, flexibility and reflection, and provide the support purposefully and reflect the approach again, and support and flexible approach, and guidance and reassurance further indicate that in overcoming the barriers of teacher leadership development, principals adopt multiple methods of introspective, flexible, and positive approach. The emergent themes of pause and think and composure may have indicated that the leader deliberately reflects and checks themselves to maintain their emotional balance while facing the barriers, thus responding calmly and logically to the challenge. It can be argued that the inclusion of reflection and method re-evaluation is a clear indication that leadership requires the leaders to continually reflect and modify their methods and techniques.

Furthermore, the stress put on the open talk suggests that the communication with teachers has to be honest, so as to achieve their trust and build a partnership relationship. The presence of the prayer represents the role of the religious basis and personal values as a coping mechanism, where the leaders would be able to make appropriate decisions ethically. The adaptiveness and willingness to adopt a supportive and flexible attitude suggest that the leaders are ready to adapt to the situation and provide support for teachers.

This finding is confirmed by Durias (2010), who emphasized that some schools oppose the shift in teacher leadership practices. In terms of professionalism and instruction, a number of educators also reject change. The outcomes of this study are consistent with the work of Helterbran (2010), which identified that teacher leadership is increasing their burden and they are utterly unrewarded for their job. This claim is also consistent with Sebastian et al. (2017), stating that teachers receive leadership responsibilities from school leaders through shared leadership abilities, while school leaders direct school leadership.

However, putting teacher leadership into practice in schools is challenging due to a lack of common objectives between leaders and educators. The headteacher's effectiveness was based on their attitude and conviction. This aligns with Durias (2010), stressing that being a head teacher is challenging for someone who lacks confidence, is relatively new to the teaching profession, and is less knowledgeable about the subject. Finally, the findings confirm the pronouncement of Wenner & Campbell (2017), which states that the headteacher will find it difficult to persuade peers, which will ultimately affect the teacher's credibility if they are recruited as a leader.

**Support Systems or Resources Helped Oneself Overcome with the Challenges.** This structured theme elicited four emerging themes: provision of teachers' needs, none, human resources, and various support systems. The findings revealed that the presence of sufficient resources, cooperative human support, and organized support structures had a significant impact on overcoming obstacles in developing teacher leadership. All together, these attributes of support produce a conducive and supportive environment for educational leaders and managers to deal with difficulties, as well as to keep leadership activities ongoing. On the other hand, the choice of 'none' implies that for some respondents, the support was not available or of no help. This implies a disparity in having adequate assistance and support among different settings, where support networks play a vital role in tackling obstacles, while lacking one can become a considerable disadvantage for a leader.

The findings mirror Bual and Madriagal (2021), who found that the community's expectations and pressures, such as local politics, community involvement, and parental demands, also affect school administrators. This

aligns with Argyris (2011), who states that school leaders must recognize the capabilities of the human resources available to them in order to harness and nurture their potential and create frameworks and connections to reach the school's goals and objectives. The claim is also consistent with Creswell and Traicoff (2025), who state that school leaders need to convey these goals to the staff and inspire the entire school community to work towards achieving the school's objectives.

More so, the present study is parallel to Argyris (2011), who states that school heads must recognize the capabilities of the human resources available to them in order to harness and nurture their potential and create frameworks and connections to reach the school's goals and objectives. The outcome of the present study corroborates with Creswell and Traicoff (2025) that school heads need to convey these goals to the teachers and inspire the entire school community to work towards achieving the school's objectives.

### **Specific Situation Encountered for Successfully Managed a Leadership-Related Problem among Teachers.**

The emerging themes were monitoring daily and consistency of discipline, IPCRF and PRAISE, challenging teachers' comfort zone, facilitating an open discussion meeting, working closely, providing mentoring, and encouraging teamwork. These themes demonstrate the formal and informal methods in which school administrators operationalize support. In particular, structured processes that direct teacher growth and responsibility are shown in the regular monitoring and application of performance-based technologies (such as IPCRF and PRAISE), which connect available resources with professional standards. In the meantime, methods like cooperation, open communication, and mentoring show how human resources and social support networks are mobilized to meet the professional and emotional requirements of educators.

Additionally, pushing educators to step outside of their comfort zones is an example of proactive assistance that promotes development and capacity-building. These findings imply that support systems are actively built by leadership actions that incorporate professional development, collegial engagement, and supervision in order to assist teachers in effectively navigating problems rather than being solely resource-based.

The finding supports the statement of Goodstein and McDonnell (2011) that planning is a fundamental leadership activity that offers crucial information to direct monitoring and assessment. Other leadership responsibilities require it. This claim is also consistent with McDonnell (2011), stating that it serves as the foundation for tracking and assessing real performance. The outcome of the present study corroborates Eberhardt's (2025) argument that in order to guarantee successful results, stakeholders should mutually agree on school plans. This claim is parallel to DuFour et al, 2010 stated that school heads must collaborate with all parties involved to establish a professional learning and development environment in order to achieve this goal.

Further, the outcome of the present study corroborates with DepEd Order no. 2, Series 2015, that the professional requirements of the teachers were met through the Individual Performance Commitment Results (IPCR) development plans that teachers completed. As a result, school leaders ensure that the training provided to teachers addresses their weaknesses and strengthens their abilities in relation to achieving the school's goals and objectives.

**Lessons or Realizations Gained from Experiences in Cultivating Teacher Leadership.** The emerging themes were accepting weakness and developing strength, being updated to DepEd orders and curriculum, giving a chance to discover teacher potential, learning to say sorry, teachers willing to lead when they feel trusted, valued, and supported, empowering teachers improves collaboration and school performance, and leadership development requires patience, trust, and consistent support. The findings demonstrate that essential components of experience-based learning include reflective practice, emotional intelligence, and a commitment to continuous support and capacity-building. They demonstrate that rather than relying solely on formal institutions, effective teacher leadership development is mostly fueled by leaders' willingness to grow, build trust, empower others, and uphold supportive connections within the school context.

The finding mirrors Cooper et al. (2016), noting that periodically, schools undergo educational transformation. Change is therefore unavoidable. Members of the school community should therefore learn to embrace and adjust to the changes that occur in the educational system, particularly in schools. Furthermore, head teachers are considered change agents due to their capacity to persuade colleagues to enhance their teaching methods. The

statement also confirms Sahin (2011), arguing that when it comes to making changes, being open and cooperative, acting bravely, and working with others, the principal of the school serves as the main role model for both teachers and students. This claim is parallel to Monjong and Fon (2016), who noted that certain principals are unwilling to delegate leadership responsibilities to teachers, often excluding them from the decision-making process.

Similarly, the present study affirms the view of Friedman (2011) that teachers experience disempowerment and have limited autonomy in making decisions. This also mirrors Rhodes (2021), stressing that effective leadership practices are characterized by their ability to acknowledge and promote individual achievements as well as show consideration for the personal lives of employees.

**Experiences Influenced Leadership Style or School Management Approach.** This structured theme elicited six emerging themes: benchmarking, teaching oneself to be more supportive, patient, and attentive to teachers' needs, making oneself wiser, leadership not just giving instructions, but working with teachers, and making leadership more collaborative and inclusive. Evidence to support that reflection and experience shaped the leaders' style was that emerging themes show the leaders made more informed decisions, self-coached to be more patient and encouraging, and to know and care for the teachers, and also compared leaders' best practices for benchmarking.

Leaders also understood that leading is more than simply issuing orders, and collaboration with teachers had developed a welcoming and participatory environment for learning. Ultimately, these experiences were helpful to the leaders in developing a school-wide atmosphere of shared trust, common ownership, and ongoing professional development for staff. The findings of this study are aligned with the study conducted by Ko (2024), which stated that teachers' leadership style significantly affects their teamwork. Transformational leadership strategies such as mentoring, modeling, and being an attentive listener could be used to improve teamwork and create a positive school climate. The statement also confirms Afzal et al. (2023), arguing that principals with high emotional intelligence are excellent at communicating, resolving conflicts, and fostering relationships. This claim is also consistent with Creswell and Traicoff (2025), stating that these abilities are crucial for leading multicultural teams and maintaining inspiration in the face of adversity. School leaders need to convey these goals to the staff and inspire the entire school community to work towards achieving the school's objectives.

The outcome of the study agrees with the articulation of Harris and Jones (2020) that distributed leadership promotes independence and respect for one another by allowing school administrators to delegate tasks and take initiative. Finally, this finding supports the statement of Holloway and Bishop (2025) that most leaders desire to leave a legacy after they are gone, inspire others to follow in their footsteps, and do meaningful things.

**Advice to Other School Administrators Who Wish to Promote Teacher Leadership Effectively.** The emergent themes were: help all students, create a supportive, trusting school atmosphere, treat instructors fairly, never practice favoritism, observe teachers' talents, interests, and attitudes, and trust and empower teachers. The results suggest that a positive and supportive school atmosphere is important for the effective development of teacher leadership. All participants underlined the need to treat all instructors equally, avoid favoritism, and provide support and tools. Administrators were also reminded to closely examine teachers' abilities, interests, and attitudes to identify future leaders, and to support and encourage teachers in their responsibilities.

The finding is comparable to Chukowry's (2018), who found that there should be a clear vision for teacher leadership and support for educators to take on leadership positions in schools. This also aligns with Helterbran (2010), who highlights the need for school administrators to create an environment where instructors feel empowered to lead their institutions and are at liberty to share their thoughts and evaluate opposing perspectives.

This finding is also consistent with Aryani and Haryadi (2023), who contend that a principal can effectively guide and motivate teachers to become leaders through active collaboration, openness, recognition of shared values, and the identification of opportunities for participative leadership that capitalizes on each individual's skills. The declaration also affirms Ololube et al. (2012) that school success and progress depend greatly on competent educational leadership. This idea relates closely to the concept by Holloway and Bishop (2025), which



suggests that many leaders desire to be remembered when they are no longer here, motivate followers to emulate them, and want to do extraordinary things.

### **Implications for Practice**

In relation to practice the findings suggest the following:

**On Ways to Perceive Role in Cultivating Leadership Among Teachers.** There is some deliberate reflection and articulation from school heads, head teachers, and master teachers on their role in making progress in teacher leadership. Instead of being seen as someone with power to oversee the group, they see themselves as a facilitator, mentor, and model, which leads toward an environment that feels more collaborative and accessible. This creates a culture of collective leadership. Increases in teacher motivation, professionalism, and effective school improvement efforts are the result of practice integration instead of a stand-alone or formal plan.

**On Significant Moments or Experience Influenced Approach to Cultivating Teacher Leadership.** It encourages school heads, head teachers, and master teachers to ponder on and relate significant experiences (for instance, mentoring, teacher feedback, initiatives in school, or professional problems) to build their managerial competencies. These experiences are experiential learning of sorts that determine how leaders, coaches, and encourage teachers to enter into leadership pathways. Instead of formal programs or theoretical frameworks, this approach fosters a culture of teacher leadership.

**On Teachers Response when Given Leadership Responsibilities.** A key role for school heads is to observe teachers' reactions when leadership opportunities are extended. What this demonstrates can tell schools a great deal about a teacher's work interest, confidence, and willingness to lead. Helping teachers develop their leadership capacity is not about providing training, mentoring, or a progressive distribution of responsibility, but rather offering it according to the degree of keenness or hesitation experienced. It is this that will ensure appropriate leader development, which in turn results in worthwhile leader development.

**On Specific Programs or Activities Implement to Encourage Teacher Leadership.** School heads can initiate and manage innovative projects such as teacher leadership-action research studies, mentorship programs, training seminars, and committees for developing teachers as leaders. Planned activities give a systematic framework for instructors to enhance their leadership skills in decision making, collaborative teaming, and instructional leadership. The implementation of this technique stresses that the leadership of teachers blossoms best when it is purposefully designed and not haphazardly happening.

**On Ways to Identify Potential Teacher Leader.** School heads are urged to adopt a systematic approach in identifying teachers with leadership potential, which can be done through observation of teaching quality, measuring teachers' initiative, assessing collaboration, understanding their preferences, and assessing their aspirations. The emphasis is on ensuring that highly motivated and capable teachers are provided with leadership opportunities and that a collaborative, responsibility and development-oriented culture is promoted as far as school leadership is concerned. This highlights that potential identification is more than task allocation; it is a rigorous training of an individual for leadership development.

**On Ways to Provide Support, Mentoring, Or Professional Development for Aspiring Teacher Leaders.** Principals, head teachers, and master teachers should deliberately create consistent and regular opportunities for teachers to improve and refine professional development, skills development, and mentoring. Mentoring, on-target instruction, training, and workshop experiences, constructive criticism, and appropriate leadership roles must be used to support teachers' goals and talents. This view believes that effective teacher leadership is practiced with intentional and context-specific supports rather than with periodic, isolated initiatives.

**On Ways to Create an Environment on Empowering Teachers Leadership Roles.** School heads are supported in building a school culture that encourages teachers to take initiative, to collaborate, and to be decision-makers, perhaps with the help of school leaders. This requires setting clear purposes, opening communication, establishing trust and value for teachers, and providing substantial leadership opportunities. This hints that teacher leadership develops through an individual process, supported and sustained by school cultures.

**On Challenges or Obstacles Faced in Promoting Teacher Leadership.** It should be incumbent upon school leaders to explore and address those barriers, among which include differing teacher beliefs and mindsets, teachers' lack of willingness to take on leadership roles, constraints of time, competing job responsibilities, and non-appreciation of work. Having understood these issues, the principal should formulate strategies, for example, by offering flexible time, differentiated support and opportunities, incentives, and clearly defined roles and responsibilities. This reveals that not just programs and opportunities are required to help develop teacher leaders; the human factors and context also need consideration in order to facilitate teachers' ability and willingness to lead.

**On Impact of Challenges to School's Leadership Initiatives.** It is important that school administrators remember to consider how resistance from teachers, inadequate resources, time restrictions, or dual role responsibilities might influence the efficacy of a leadership project and overall school growth. Planning, having adaptive strategies, and timely support for school leaders once the influence of these barriers becomes clear will help to avoid stalled projects.

**On Particular Organizational or Personal Factors Made It Difficult to Sustain Teacher Leadership.** The critical factors that school heads can support to ensure teacher leadership's continued existence should be identified and tackled; for example, workload, support of the school administration, resourcing constraints, a degree of self-doubt, or conflicting objectives. It would appear from the example that offering opportunities for teachers to continue with leadership was not enough; an environment needed to be created that responded, removed barriers, and supported a continued engagement with school leadership development over the longer term.

**On Response When Faced Difficulties in Cultivating Teacher Leadership.** Effective future-oriented, adaptive, and thoughtfully planned efforts can be developed by school leaders to address the needs for teacher-leadership development, by allowing leaders to role-model flexibility, offer guidance, and develop solutions that transform challenges into teachable moments, thereby solidifying school leadership.

**On Support Systems or Resources Helped Oneself Overcome with the Challenges.** For school heads and teachers, easy access to mechanisms for support, including training, learning communities, mentorship, and administrative assistance, is extremely beneficial in providing an additional source of leverage that can guide and assist school leaders and teachers in developing teacher leadership. Leaders and future teacher leaders are enabled to develop a greater sense of resilience, develop their capacity to solve problems, and avoid burning out and being discouraged by having identified and accessed support systems. The implications for practice are that schools need to intentionally create and develop strong support systems to guide and assist teachers toward leadership and sustained participation.

**On Specific Situation Encountered for Successfully Managed a Leadership-Related Problem among Teachers.** Actual cases of teacher leadership problems resolved can be recorded, reviewed, and reflected upon. Such examples can be a source of practical insights for different strategies, including collaborative problem solving, good communication, quick action, and direct support. In a concrete sense, this may mean employing lived experience as either a template or a case study to aid leadership decision-making, potential development, and provision of practical know-how to administrators and teachers in addressing the future development of a more resilient leadership culture in schools.

**On Lessons or Realizations Gained from Experiences in Cultivating Teacher Leadership.** Heads and teachers must reflect actively on their leadership practice in order to take away meaningful learning, which will inform their leadership style for future practice. The key learning that heads can take on to inform decision-making and develop future strategies and leadership support for teacher leadership includes learning that cooperation, patience, trust, flexibility, and consistent support are all essential. On a practical level, this suggests that leadership development is an ongoing process in which teachers' confidence, engagement, and leadership capacity are increased through the development of context-specific skills in the practice of leadership.

**On Experiences Influenced Leadership Style or School Management Approach.** The experienced should consider the leadership style and decision-making that they have developed for themselves in terms of teaching, giving and receiving feedback, working on projects, and solving problems. With the experiences, the school heads could establish a collaborative environment that will encourage shared leadership through a new, inclusive, and responsive style and method that responds to teachers' needs. Indeed, the points above imply that school leaders

must constantly learn from themselves and apply such experiences to their management style, leadership example, and the culture of leadership that would empower teachers to keep on learning, leading, and participating. On Advice to Other School Administrators Who Wish to Promote Teacher Leadership Effectively. Head Teachers must be intentional, reflective, and supportive in their approach when fostering teacher leadership. Recommended strategies: build relationships of trust, understand what motivates and energizes the teachers, create opportunities with purpose, provide ongoing coaching and support, avoid favoritism, and provide opportunities where teachers can lead independently. Research suggests that Heads of Schools who 'walk the walk' themselves, who develop an atmosphere of collective ownership, coupled with high expectations but consistent support, can develop teacher leaders effectively. When Heads employ these strategies, school leaders can build and extend the leadership capacity and effectiveness of a school through teacher development, ownership, and consistent leadership participation.

### **Implications for Future Research**

The implications for future studies on the school heads' response in Compostela East District of the Schools Division of Davao de Oro are limited to the following:

First, further investigation could examine the lasting impacts of specific approaches on teachers' leadership, including various programs, coaching efforts, and supportive networks, in order to determine which intervention has the longest-term effects. Secondly, the organizational characteristics affecting leadership practices' implementation and sustenance may also be studied in conjunction with relevant individual and environmental factors of teachers' response towards leadership opportunities.

Thirdly, comparison across school types, geographic locales, or cultural contexts may highlight effects of system and environmental influences in developing teachers' leadership. Students can be agents in developing a healthy and positive classroom community through engaging in school activities and leadership opportunities.

Lastly, long-term studies on how school heads' perceptions, involvement, and views on leadership shape the empowerment of teachers could be conducted.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Teacher leadership can be nurtured in a number of different ways, due to a number of individual and organizational circumstances. School leaders have a significant role to play in fostering teachers' leadership abilities through critical reflection, mentoring, structured programs, and supporting working environments. Teachers' acceptance of leadership responsibilities, the experiences and incidents faced by teachers during leadership practice, and the impact that these have on the teacher provide important lessons about providing authentic experiences, individualized coaching, and professional development opportunities. The difficulties encountered, in particular, resistances to accepting leadership roles, multiple conflicting responsibilities, and resource constraints, illustrate that there must be ongoing efforts and thoughtful planning, flexibility, and commitment to advancing teacher leadership.

Good teacher leadership is made not only during the formal training, but also during the actual practice, experience-based learning, and the context of the collaborative school culture. Administrators are called to take such practice, reflect on their own leadership, develop better school management methods through monitoring teachers' good practices, and give them independence and reliable support. Finally, these results help us build up a growing knowledge of the intricate relationship among leadership styles, teacher preparedness, and organizational context, and call for deliberate, inclusive, and contextually responsive practice of building and Sustaining Teacher Leadership in the school.

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