

Fostering Teacher Leadership: Experiences from Bislig 2b District

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Abstract: This study provides a heartfelt glimpse into the lives of teachers from the Bislig 2B District in Bislig City, showcasing their dedication to becoming better leaders. It thoughtfully explores the challenges these passionate educators encounter along their journey and the invaluable lessons they learn from their experiences. In our quest for understanding, we engaged in in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with ten public elementary school teachers to listen to their stories. From our conversations, three key themes emerged that truly resonate with their journey as leaders: Empowerment through Collaboration, Professional Growth and Development, and the Personal Struggles they face in their leadership roles. To navigate these challenges, these teachers have forged strong bonds with one another, seeking support as they pursue professional development opportunities while cultivating resilience and adaptability. The insights we gathered underscore the importance of strong educational leadership. They highlight the critical role that school administration plays in empowering teachers to step into leadership positions. Building trustful and positive relationships among staff members is vital to creating a nurturing and supportive environment. Ultimately, this study calls for more institutional support, opportunities for capacity-building, and a culture of collaboration. By focusing on these areas, we can not only sustain but also elevate teacher leadership, which can lead to improved educational management and, hopefully, a richer learning experience for all students.

Keywords: *Teacher Leadership, Qualitative Research, Phenomenology, Bislig 2B District.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Education is a constantly changing landscape, and one of the most profound shifts we've witnessed is the rising significance of teacher leadership. The impact of great teacher leaders is undeniable; as they advance in their careers, they create richer and more meaningful learning experiences for their students. In the Bislig 2B District of Bislig City, it's important to honor the diverse journeys teachers take as they step into leadership roles.

This study aims to dive into the personal narratives of these educators, shedding light on how they manage their new responsibilities and the unique challenges they face. We want to celebrate their accomplishments while also acknowledging the hurdles they encounter along the way. By exploring their everyday experiences, this research hopes to reveal valuable insights that can enhance teaching practices and inform policies that truly support teacher leadership initiatives. Ultimately, our goal is to cultivate a better educational environment for everyone involved—teachers, students, and the wider community.

II. METHODS

In this heartfelt study, we connected with ten dedicated public elementary school teachers from the Bislig 2B District, each with unique and compelling stories to share about their teaching experiences. To truly understand their journeys, we conducted in-depth interviews and lively focus group discussions, allowing them to narrate their stories in their own words. Using a semi-structured interview guide helped keep our conversations focused while also giving them the freedom to express themselves fully.

As we listened to their insights, we engaged in thematic analysis to discover meaningful patterns within their narratives. Throughout this journey, we prioritized ethical practices, ensuring that we obtained informed consent and protected each participant's confidentiality. Our primary goal was to create a safe and welcoming atmosphere where they felt comfortable sharing their thoughts and experiences, highlighting the amazing contributions they make to the world of education.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The insights gathered from teachers about their experiences with leadership reveal some significant themes that many educators can relate to:

➤ *Empowerment through Collaboration:*

Teachers often mentioned how much they appreciated working alongside their colleagues. Collaborating on projects, offering each other support, and mentoring one another not only honed their skills but also fostered a deeper sense of connection and leadership. It is inspiring to see how teamwork can truly enhance teachers' willingness to step into leadership roles, similar to what Leithwood and Jantzi observed about the power of collaboration.

➤ *Professional Growth and Development:*

Many educators highlighted the vital role that professional development plays in their own development as leaders. They shared how meaningful workshops, training sessions, and mentoring programs have been in building their leadership capabilities. This aligns with findings from Darling-Hammond and others, who emphasized the importance of continuous professional learning in cultivating effective teaching practices.

➤ *Personal Struggles in Exercising Teacher Leadership:*

Teachers were candid about the emotional and psychological hurdles they encounter when taking on leadership roles. Feelings of burnout, lack of recognition, and occasional overwhelm were common threads in their stories. These reflections resonate with Dempsey's research, which discusses the more complex side of teacher leadership and how these challenges can contribute to feelings of isolation.

To tackle these hurdles, teachers consistently utilized three key strategies:

➤ *Collaborative Support Systems:*

A recurring theme was the value of having trustworthy colleagues to exchange ideas, resources, and emotional support. Building a supportive network within schools is essential for everyone involved, fostering a sense of community.

➤ *Professional Development and Training:*

Educators stressed the importance of ongoing, relevant training that enables them to develop flexible leadership skills. Regular workshops and training sessions are vital in helping teachers navigate their challenges effectively.

➤ *Resilience and Adaptive Mindsets:*

Resilience stood out as a crucial quality for educators facing both personal and professional challenges. Those who embraced a growth mindset tended to view obstacles as opportunities for growth, which can be incredibly empowering.

These insights underline the need for supportive school leadership that genuinely recognizes and nurtures teacher leadership. For educational management to thrive, cultivating

trust and strong relationships among staff members is essential, along with providing the necessary support to create an environment where teacher leadership can truly shine.

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