

Leadership Behavior and Self-Efficacy of Principals as Determinants of Professional Learning Community Practices: A Convergent Design

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the influence of leadership behavior and self-efficacy of principals on professional learning community practices using convergent design. The participants were the teachers from the selected public elementary schools in Region XI, Philippines. The participants for the quantitative phase and for the qualitative phase were purposively chosen from the selected public elementary schools to participate in the in-depth interview and focus group discussion. Regression and thematic analysis were used to analyze the corresponding data gathered. In the quantitative phase, the results showed that the status of leadership behavior and self-efficacy of principals were both described as very high which means that principal leadership is always observed, and the principal's self-efficacy is always manifested while the status of professional learning community practices in public schools was also described as very high which means that professional learning community practices are always evident. Further, it was revealed that leadership behavior and self-efficacy of the principal significantly influenced the professional learning community practices of the public elementary schools. In the qualitative phase, a validated researcher-made interview guide was used to probe the participants' lived experiences with regard to the professional learning community practices and how these shaped the teachers' beliefs, attitude and commitment. The result showed two essential themes that emerged pertaining to the participants' views on professional learning community practices which include nurturing environment for competence development and charismatic instructional leadership. Likewise, three essential themes emerged on the role of participants' experiences in shaping the beliefs, attitude,

and commitment towards professional learning community practices. These include deepened awareness of professional growth, openness and positive outlook in pursuing school goals, and service with academic integrity and professionalism. Finally, findings of the integration revealed that the results of two phases corroborated with each other.

KEYWORDS: Education, principal leadership behavior, self-efficacy, professional learning community practices, convergent design, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

Teachers are having several issues regarding their professional learning community (PLC) practices (Hairon et al., 2017; Zhang et al., 2017). Teachers perceived insufficient timing, unsupportive leadership from administrators, unfavorable accountability system, and lack of collaboration of teachers as the barriers to implementing PLC (Zhang et al., 2017). Other challenges include overwhelming workload for teachers and lack of a thorough understanding of the concept and implementation of Professional Learning Community (PLC) (Hairon et al., 2017). Likewise, initiating and leading structural and cultural changes in schools to develop a well-functioning PLC has become the biggest challenge faced by school leaders (DuFour et al., 2016).

In a nutshell, as emphasized by Qiao et al. (2018) and Wang (2016), resolving identified barriers in the PLC and providing betterment of PLC requires school administrators who have leadership behavior that demonstrate support for teachers and who exhibit self-efficacy in distributive leadership practice with teachers. On the contrary, Zhang et al., (2016) conceptualized PLC practices in terms of collaborative learning, professional competency, facilitative leadership, structural support, and cultural barriers based on the findings of an empirical study conducted in Shanghai Chinese schools. Wang (2016) found that the actual practices of PLCs in two high-achieving senior high schools in Northeast China were characterized by collective enquiry, collaboration, and shared practices. Wang (2016) further emphasized that institutionalized collaborative teams were perceived to be effective in facilitating collaborations as well as spontaneous conversations among teachers. Apart from that,

researchers in Taiwan claimed that the practice of PLC is positively associated with elements, such as shared vision, supportive and shared leadership, and collegial trust in order for the teachers to collaborate effectively and reflect upon each other while practicing PLC (Chen et al., 2016).

Advocates of PLCs viewed teacher isolation as a problem and professional collaboration as a solution (Hord et al., 2015). Research not just in schools but in other organizations as well showed that working in a group can heighten productivity in several ways. For teachers faced with classrooms of diverse abilities, behaviors, and personalities and with covering a broad curriculum, exchanging tips and techniques can be valuable (Kearns, 2014). But it is more than just exchanging ideas on classroom practice, group-based work can lead to superior quality designs for curriculum, plans for staff training, and analysis of productivity data (Kirwan, 2013). While group work like this may not have direct and immediate effects on practice, it builds group and organizational capacity what some call organizational learning (Senge, 2014).

The importance of teacher collaboratively learning from one another has been highlighted to be significant in improving education systems (Mourshed et al., 2010). With the increasing demands in education reform to improve student academic outcomes, school leaders have pressed for the implementation of professional learning communities (PLCs) as an approach for reorganizing and constructing school improvement (Voelkel et al., 2017).

Moreover, research findings supported that PLCs can get people to work smarter and harder which should translate into greater student learning (Ferguson, 2013; Fulton et al., 2010; Smith, 2012). On the other hand, research and experience also highlighted that PLCs do not automatically produce great results (DuFour et al., 2016). It means that if leadership is weak, if a group's objectives are ill-defined, if a group's objectives are unrelated to larger organizational goals, and if group members are not given time and support for their work, then time spent in group work can be unproductive, failing to benefit either the participants or the organization. Worse, unproductive group work can be detrimental, a bad experience damaging morale and souring people to future collegial efforts (Elbousty et al., 2010).

In order to raise the global labor competitiveness, some Asian countries such as Japan, Korea, Singapore, and China started to

transfer theories and practices of the PLC into their education systems in the last few decades. Generally, Asian countries, like China, developed cultures more collective than Western countries (The Hofstede Center, 2013). Wong (2010) contends that the tradition of collectivism has laid a more solid foundation for teachers to work collectively than their Western counterparts. Researchers, such as Seo and Han (2012), argue that Korean teachers' performance of collaboration at the practice level is the worst compared to other performances in PLCs.

Likewise, it is understandable that there have been increasing interest and popularity of PLCs including all other forms of teacher learning communities regardless of the terms being used (Lieberman & Miller 2011). However, the knowledge base on PLCs has been drawn predominantly from Western contexts. Relatively little analysis has been done on the nature and implementation of PLCs in Asian contexts (Hairon & Dimmock 2012; Wang 2014). Not surprisingly, context has been reported to be essential in understanding how PLCs are enacted (Hairon et al., 2015). More conceptual and theoretical work thus needs to be done on PLCs drawn from Asian contexts especially in the Philippines. Furthermore, with growing interest in PLCs in Asian settings the apparent need to develop an Asian knowledge base on PLCs has increased is felt by the researcher of this study.

To fill the research gap, this study attempted to shed new insights into the PLC practices in the local context. Specifically, through the use of convergent design, this study could provide better understanding of the academic community of public elementary education in Region XI regarding the leadership behavior and self-efficacy of principals as determinants of the professional learning community practices. Ultimately, the findings of this study could provide school leaders and teachers with research-based recommendations to improve the PLC practices in their respective schools.

Worldview and Theoretical Lens

As a pragmatist, the researcher adhered to a pragmatic worldview that the creation of individual realities is treated as a derivative of varying personal experiences and ideas encountered and not of an absolute default (Maddux e al., 2015). Through pragmatic exploration, optimum answers are provided, as facts and accuracy

may differ crossways between and among people, places and period. Moreover, like Terrell (2012), he did not focus on issues and approaches by not exclusively using one method, instead he embraced the pragmatic paradigm that engages mixing data collection methods and data analysis procedures within the research processes (Creswell, 2003).

This study was anchored on the exemplary leadership theory of Kouzes et al., (2012). The theory consists of a set of principles that address the leadership responsibilities and intrinsic motivations necessary for leaders to accomplish their personal best within the educational practice. The five core practices embedded in this theory are positively related to both the effectiveness of leaders and the level of commitment, engagement, and satisfaction of those being led. The five practices of exemplary leadership include: inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, encourage the heart, model the way, and enable others to act. These practices serve as guide for nurturing the leadership capacity in anyone.

In addition, the study was anchored on Social Learning Theory of Bandura (1977) which is often used in education to highlight the idea that portions of an individual's knowledge acquisition can be directly related to observing others within the context of social interactions, experiences, and outside media references. He asserted that people learn in social settings while observing and interacting with others. The theory focused on observation. Most human behavior is learned by observing and modeling. A key component of a PLC is that people learn by observing and modeling.

Further, the study was also based on the theoretical foundation of the Self-Efficacy Theory (Bandura, 1997). The theory stated that self-efficacy is the people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performance. A principal self-efficacy is a judgment of his or her capabilities to structure a particular course of action in order to produce desired outcomes in the school he or she leads (Bandura, 1997). Both positive and adverse consequences of behavior experiences can affect self-efficacy. A person's self-efficacy can measure how confident a person is in performing a task (Walter, 2015). People who have a strong belief in their abilities approach difficult tasks as challenges rather than threats to be avoided

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

In this study, the researcher employed mixed methods specifically convergent design. This is an evolving research technique that promotes the systematic synthesis or mixing of quantitative and qualitative data within a single study or ongoing investigation or inquiry (Creswell, 2013). This method collects and analyzes both quantitative and qualitative data and integrates data during data collection, analysis and discussion. This method uses procedures that implemented quantitative and qualitative components concurrently (Creswell, 2017).

The mixed methods design is the sibling of multi-method research in which either solely multiple quantitative or solely multiple qualitative approaches were combined. The convergent design both gave equal emphasis on the analysis and interpretation of the collected data (Mertens, 2018). Convergent design simultaneously gathered the quantitative and qualitative data and the data analysis (Creswell, 2017). The purpose of this design is to use qualitative results to assist in confirming and interpreting the findings of a quantitative study.

In the quantitative phase, the researcher specifically used descriptive correlation approach in order to address the problems in the study and achieve its purpose. This approach measures two or more relevant variables and assess a relationship between or among them (Schmitz, 2012). The relationship between leadership behavior, self-efficacy of principals, and PLC practices were described and examined. Survey method was employed using adapted survey questionnaires with a five-point Likert scale.

Meanwhile, in the qualitative phase, the researcher used phenomenological approach. A phenomenological study describes the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or phenomenon and focuses on the commonality of their lived experience (Creswell, 2013). Typically, interviews were conducted with a group of individuals who have first-hand knowledge of an event, situation or experience. Phenomenology is the most appropriate approach to use because the researcher wants to understand the lived experiences of the teachers on the professional learning community practices in public elementary schools in Region XI (Creswell, 2017).

Place of the Study

The study was conducted purposively in public elementary schools in Region XI. The locale is also known as Davao Region in Southern part of Mindanao shown in Figure 3. It consists of five provinces namely; Davao del Norte, Davao Oriental, Davao del Sur, Davao De Oro, and Davao Occidental, and one highly urbanized city like Davao City and five component cities namely; Digos City, Island Garden City of Samal, Mati City, Panabo City and Tagum City. The Davao Region comprises five provincial schools divisions such as Davao de Oro, Davao del Norte, Davao del Sur, Davao Occidental and Davao Oriental and six schools city divisions namely Davao City, Digos City, Tagum City, Island garden City of Samal, Panabo City and Mati City. Region XI is surrounding the Davao Gulf, bounded on the north by the provinces of Surigao del Sur, Agusan del Sur and Bukidnon; on the east by the Philippine Sea, and on the west by the Central Mindanao provinces.

Participants

The participants of the quantitative strand were the 308 teachers in the selected public elementary schools in Region XI who are involved in the Professional Learning Community. For multiple linear regression, Bujang et al. (2017) suggested a minimum sample size of 300 or more to generate an approximation of estimates with parameters in a survey. The researcher employed stratified random sampling in selecting the participants from purposively selected schools in Region XI practicing PLCs in Region XI with gender as the basis for stratification. Stratified random sampling is a type of probability sampling that allows researcher to improve precision relative to simple random sampling wherein the population is divided into non-overlapping groups, or strata, along a relevant dimension such as gender (Salkind, 2020).

In the qualitative strand, the researcher purposively selected 10 public elementary school teachers for the IDI and 7 public school elementary teachers for the FGD. A total of 17 public elementary school teachers were invited as participants. Inclusion criteria used were as follows: have been teaching for at least three years in the public elementary schools which have been implementers of PLC.

Data Analysis

Mean was used to comprehend the characteristics of specific data sets. In simple terms, mean measures the central tendency of the responses (Creswell, 2017). The **standard deviation** measured the spread of the data distribution and used to determine how varied the responses of the participants are. **Pearson correlation coefficient**, known as r was used to determine the relationship between the independent variables and dependent variable in this study. Moreover, the **multiple regression analysis** was used to determine the particular variable that significantly influenced professional learning community practices. While the data from the IDI and FGD were analyzed using thematic analysis. The interview was recorded so that data and notes obtained could be analyzed to determine the emerging codes and themes. This method emphasizes pinpointing, examining, and recording patterns or themes within data. Themes are patterns across data sets that are important to the description of a phenomenon and are associated to a specific research question (Mertens, 2018).

Trustworthiness of the Study

To establish the trustworthiness of the study, the researcher followed the four proposed criteria in evaluating interpretive research work by Lincoln and Guba (1985), which are as follows: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Trustworthiness of this study was addressed through a thorough collection of data by survey and in-depth interview and was supported by FGD for triangulation.

RESULTS

The Status of the Leadership Behavior of Principals

The status of Leadership Behavior as assessed by the teachers in the public elementary schools reflected in table 1.1 has an over-all mean of 4.38 described as very high. In addition, its minimal standard deviation of .61 showed that public elementary school teachers' responses about the leadership behavior of their principal closely resemble each other. The domain encouraging the heart has the highest mean of 4.41 described as very high which are supported by the item mean ratings ranging from 4.28 to 4.47. While the lowest

mean domain is challenging the process with a mean of 4.36 described as very high.

Table 1.1
The Status of the Leadership Behavior of Principals

Indicators	Mean	SD	Descriptive Level
Modelling the Way	4.37	.66	Very high
Inspiring a Shared Vision	4.38	.62	Very high
Challenging the Process	4.36	.60	Very high
Enabling Others to Act	4.38	.67	Very high
Encouraging the Heart	4.41	.68	Very high
OVERALL MEAN	4.38	.61	VERY HIGH

The Status of Self-Efficacy of Principals

Table 1.2 shows that in totality, the Self-Efficacy of principals as assessed by teachers in the public elementary schools is very high with an over-all mean rating of 4.41 described as very high. Considering the degrees of dispersion of the responses in this variable, the over-all standard deviation is .58 indicating that the responses are relatively clustered around the mean. The second domain is the highest among the three which about efficacy for instructional leadership. It has a category mean of 4.45 described as very high. Meanwhile, efficacy of management has the lowest mean of 4.48 described as very high.

Table 1.2
The Status of Self-Efficacy of Principals

Indicators	Mean	SD	Descriptive Level
Efficacy of Management	4.38	.61	Very high
Efficacy for Instructional Leadership	4.45	.62	Very high

Efficacy for Moral Leadership	4.41	.60	Very High
OVERALL MEAN	4.31	.58	VERY HIGH

The Status of Professional Learning Community Practices in Public Elementary Schools

It is shown in Table 1.3 that in totality, the status of professional learning community practices in public elementary schools is very high with an overall mean overall mean rating of 4.39 described as very high. The dispersion in this variable, has a standard deviation is .56 indicating that the responses are relatively clustered around the mean.

Shared values and visions and collective learning application are the two indicators with the highest mean of 4.42. While the indicator with the lowest mean is shared and supportive leadership with a mean of 4.32.

Table 1.3
The Status of Professional Learning Community Practices in Public Elementary Schools

Indicators	Mean	SD	Descriptive Level
Shared and Supportive Leadership	4.32	.63	Very High
Shared Values and Vision	4.42	.57	Very High
Collective Learning Application	4.42	.56	Very High
Shared Personal Practice	4.40	.58	Very High
Supportive Conditions-Relational	4.40	.60	Very High
Supportive Conditions-Structural	4.36	.58	Very High
OVERALL MEAN	4.39	.56	VERY HIGH

Influence of Leadership Behavior and Self-Efficacy of Principals Towards Professional Learning Community Practices in Public Elementary Schools

Table 2 shows the results of the multiple regression analysis. Leadership behavior of the principals significantly influenced the PLC practices in public elementary schools with a p-value that is different from zero at the 0.05 level of significance (2-tailed) ($p < .05$) with a positive standardized beta value of .29. Thus, for every unit increase in the value of leadership behavior of principals, there is a corresponding increase of .29 in the in-PLC practices in the public elementary schools.

Table 2
Influence of Leadership Behavior and Self-Efficacy of
Principals Towards the Professional Learning Community
Practices of Public Elementary Schools

		Professional Learning Community Practices			
		Standardized Coefficients	t	p-value	Remarks
Leadership Behavior		.29	4.49	.00	Significant
Self-Efficacy		.63	9.97	.00	Significant
R	.90				
R ²	.82				
F	675.70				
p	.00				

Further, it also shows that the self-efficacy of principals influenced the PLC practices with a p-value that is different from zero at the 0.05 level of significance (2-tailed) ($p < .05$) with a positive standardized beta value of .63. Hence, it suggested that for every unit increase in the value of the self-efficacy of principals, there is a corresponding increase of .63 in the professional learning community practices in the public elementary schools. Notably, between the two

independent variables in this study, self-efficacy of principals recorded a higher influence towards the professional learning community practices in the public elementary schools. Importantly, the combined influence of the independent variables, leadership behavior, and self-efficacy of principals towards professional learning community practices in public elementary schools is significant ($F = 675.70$, $p < .05$). Meanwhile, 82 percent of the variance of the professional learning community is explained by the variables, leadership behavior and self-efficacy of principals, explored in this study as indicated by $R^2 = .82$. This means that 18 percent of the variance of the professional learning community practices can be attributed to other factors aside from the variables explored in the study.

Profile of the Participants of the Qualitative Strand

There were 17 participants who met the inclusion criteria were chosen for the IDI and FGD. Ten of them were chosen IDI wherein six were females and four were males while seven composed the FGD, four females and three males. Importantly, pseudonyms are used to protect the identity of the participants, who were the public elementary school teachers from the purposively chosen schools.

Table 3.1
Profile of the Participants

No.	Pseudonyms	Sex	Study Group	Location
1	Ann	F	IDI	Tagum City
2	Eden	F	IDI	Davao Oriental
3	Riza	F	IDI	Davao City
4	Rodge	M	IDI	Tagum City
5	Jennifer	F	IDI	Davao de Oro
6	Jess	M	IDI	Mati City
7	JR	M	IDI	Tagum City
8	May	F	IDI	Davao del Sur
9	Joy	F	IDI	IGACOS
10	Elie	M	IDI	Davao de Oro

11	Juhai	F	FGD	Davao Oriental
12	Grace	F	FGD	Davao Oriental
13	Roman	M	FGD	Davao Oriental
14	Riza	F	FGD	Davao City
15	Steph	F	FGD	Davao City
16	Diosdado	M	FGD	Davao Oriental
17	Mark	M	FGD	Davao City

Lived Experiences of Public Elementary School Teachers about Professional Learning Practices

Nurturing Environment for Competence Development.

This is one of the essential themes that emerged based on the IDI and FGD responses of the participants of this study as regards the lived experiences of the teachers in the public schools regarding their professional learning community practices. As shared by the participants,

...PLC sessions are very informative and needed for our professional growth (Ann, IDI # P01)

... we've learned new things and discovered new ways to solve problems in the classroom (Eden, IDI # P02)

...we share strategies and ideas on how to solve issues and problems encountered during PLC meetings. (May, IDI # P08)

...we collaborate in teams; have discussions and deliberations about teaching and learning. (Riza, IDI # P03)

Charismatic Instructional Leadership. Another essential theme identified from their shared lived experiences regarding the

behavior of their principal towards PLC activities in school was charismatic instructional leadership. As shared by the participants about the behavior of their principal as regards to their PLC activities are as follows:

... walks the talk (Roman, FGD # P13)

... checks and monitors the conduct of PLC sessions (May, IDI # P08)

... gives me a lot of trust and provides good working relationship among teachers. (Juhai, FGD # P11)

... participates in learning with us her eagerness encourages us to also learn and venture into something new in teaching. (Ann, IDI # P01)

... coaches us and shares insights during our PLC activities... (Rodge, IDI # P04)

The Roles of Experiences in Shaping the Beliefs, Attitude and Commitment of Teachers on Professional Learning Community Practices

Deepened Awareness of Professional Growth. This essential theme emerged from the responses of the participants. The core ideas of the responses are approximately equal in number. When asked on the description of the influence of their experiences in their belief towards PLC practices, some of the responses of the participants are as follows:

...meeting with our PLC team help us grow professionally. It can bring new ideas to our teaching strategies and

solve particular challenges that one might be facing with a particular concept of lesson. (May, IDI # P08)
... a successful PLC will stray away from negativity... towards positivity and solution-oriented members. (Roman, FGD # P13)

...feel like working with fellow teachers is awesome. I am such a better teacher. (Elie, IDI # P10)

...PLC is a source of new and relevant topics especially now during this new normal setting unlike before that topics were boring and ... not interesting and relevant. (JR, IDI # P07)

Openness and Positive Outlook in Pursuing School Goals. Another essential theme identified from the responses of the participants of this study is *openness and positive outlook in pursuing school goals*. This theme emerges from the code *Positive outlook and personal willingness* and *being open to work with others*. Several participants' responses are as follows:

... I have now a positive outlook towards PLC. I have seen that it has positive effects to the professional growth of teachers. (Ann, IDI # P01)

...I am now open for learning with the team and eager to learn. (JR, IDI # P07)

...I developed ...attitude ...to excel inside and outside the school. (Rodge, IDI # P04)

...I am looking for self-improvement.
(Jess, IDI # P06)

... meetings and PLC sessions,
encourages us to take risk and positive
changes throughout the process of
teaching and learning. (Eden, IDI #
P02)

Service with Academic Integrity and Professionalism.

Another essential theme identified from the responses of the participants of this study. Several participants' responses are as follows:

... maintain the commitment of the
scheduled time for PLC to sustain it.
(May, IDI # P08)

... have frequent meetings and
sessions. (Joy, IDI # P09) and the
principal ...will lead the members as
one for a better and quality outcome.
(Eden, IDI # P02)

Data Integration on the Salient Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

Merging- Converging. The following pairs of quantitative and qualitative data denote agreement or confirmation with respect to the ratings from the survey and the recurring insights from the IDI and FGD. These convergences are established in the following, namely: the status of leadership behavior of principals which got a very mean rating of 4.50 in *challenging people to try out new and innovative ways to improve what we do*; very high mean of 4.47 in item 1 of *encourage the heart* category particularly on *praising people for a job well done*; and very high mean of 4.46 in item 3 under *modeling the way* category about *following through on the promises and commitment that he/she makes is rated very high* had converged with the identified core ideas gathered from the IDI and FGD among elementary public school teachers. As revealed in table 3.2, the core ideas namely: *encouraging and motivating the teachers for high level PLC participation, coaching and mentoring teachers on effective instruction, being responsive to the needs of teachers and acting as a role model or exemplary leader*

are qualitative findings that resulted to merging as the nature of data integration and converging as the functional integration with the quantitative findings on Leadership Behavior regarding PLC practices.

Further, the quantitative findings on Status of the Principal Self-Efficacy under indicator 2 *efficacy for instructional leadership* item 4 about *creating a positive learning in school* was rated very high with a mean of 4.52; under *efficacy for instructional Leadership*, the item 1 about *motivating teachers* was rated very high with a mean of 4.49, and for item 3 about *managing change in school* rated very high at a mean of 4.46 were parallel with the qualitative findings on the leadership behavior and self-efficacy of the principals as regards to schools professional learning community practices highlighting the core ideas *coaching and mentoring teachers for instruction, encouraging the teachers for high level PLC participation, and valuing collaboration and teamwork in sharing updated teaching-learning practices*. Evidently, the nature of data integration was merging and converging as functional integration.

Likewise, on the status of the PLC practices in public elementary schools under indicator 2 *shared values and vision*, the item 6 about *having policies and programs that are aligned to the schools' vision* was rated very high with a mean of 4.50, under indicator 5 *Supportive Conditions-Relational*, the item 1 on *existing caring relationships among staff and students that are built on trust and respect* was rated very high at a mean of 4.47; and indicator 4 *Shared Personal Practice* on item 5 about *existing opportunities for coaching and mentoring* was rated very high at a mean of 4.46 had matched with the core ideas on teachers assessment regarding the leadership behavior and self-efficacy of the principals as regards to schools PLC practices which are namely on: *being an oversight authority in facilitating PLC activities, valuing collaboration and teamwork in sharing updated teaching-learning practices, and coaching and mentoring teachers on effective instruction*. Thus, the nature of qualitative and quantitative data integration was merging, and the functional integration was converging.

The significant influence of leadership behavior and self-efficacy of principals towards PLC practices in public elementary schools with p-value of .00 ($p < .05$) had merged with the qualitative data findings. The codes on the roles of experiences in shaping the commitment of teachers towards PLC practices namely: *dedication to self-growth to serve better* and *professional nobility*, with the essential theme service with integrity and professionalism with the core ideas: *driving*

the teacher to be more dedicated to reach full potential and serving better through open and clear communication.

DISCUSSION

The status of leadership behavior in public elementary schools of Region XI through the lens of the teachers is very high. This means that the principal leadership behavior is always observed and their behavior forms as basis for them to be more productive in the workplace. This is supported by the Exemplary Leadership Theory of Kouzes and Posner (2012) asserting that when leaders experience their personal best, they display five core behaviors and practices, they model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act and encourage the heart.

Meanwhile, status of self-efficacy of principals in public elementary schools of Region XI through the lens of the teachers is very high. This implies that the teachers view that their principals possessed the needed capabilities to structure a particular action that will produce desired outcomes in the school. This means that the principals' self-efficacy is always manifested. This finding supports the study of Flessa (2012) which reported that school principals with high levels of self-efficacy display quality supervision of teachers, persistence in pursuing goals and accomplishing tasks, and are more open and willing to adapt to change. Therefore, these leaders are better positioned to influence the quality of teaching and learning by maintaining a positive school climate for both staff and students (Price, 2012; Smith et al., 2006). This variable has three indicators namely efficacy of management, efficacy of instructional leadership, and efficacy for moral leadership.

Also, the status of professional learning community practices in public elementary schools of region XI through the lens of the teachers is very high. This means that the professional learning community practices are always evident. This result supports the findings of Buttram and Farley-Ripple (2016) that principals play a central role in communicating key reform initiatives because most teachers do not have direct access to such initiatives. In addition, finding is in consonance to the study of Wilson (2016) which revealed that real professional learning communities involve shared governance among members that will ultimately result in school

improvement. Likewise, Hoaglund et al. (2014) revealed that professional learning communities are designed not only to determine what students will learn, but also to develop a space for teachers to determine how to respond when students do not learn.

The result of the multiple regression analysis revealed that the independent variables leadership behavior and self-efficacy of principals significantly influenced professional learning community practices in public elementary schools. This denotes that the two independent variables have a very high influence on the dependent variable. Notably, self-efficacy recorded a higher influence towards the professional learning community practices in public elementary schools in Region XI. This means that the increase in the level of leadership behavior and self-efficacy of principals would also likely increase the professional learning community practices of public elementary schools in Region XI. This conforms to the study of Mindich and Lieberman (2012) which revealed the importance of the principal's role in the development of PLCs from their findings in their research by arguing that principals need conviction to push their staffs to take on this effort, but they also need to support and adjust the process. They discovered that professional communities were more prevalent when principals were viewed by staff as having an inclusive facilitative leadership. Additionally, finding is in consonance to that of Mullen and Huting (2008) who noted that principals are able to create, sustain, and foster teacher development through partnerships; therefore, principals are in a position to build capacity within teachers.

The essential theme nurturing environment for competence enhancement developed from the codes provision of professional development opportunities, and existence of positive academic climate implies that PLC provides opportunities for teachers to upgrade knowledge and skills by sharing updated teaching and learning practices. In addition, school leadership must provide an environment that motivates teachers to improve the ways in which they deliver instruction, which can empower students and help them to improve their academic performance. This is similar to the study of Spillane (2008) which reported that school leadership can shape a learning environment that is productive and meaningful to teachers and students.

Another essential theme identified from the codes on functional leadership actualization, and persuasive coaching and

mentoring on effective instruction is charismatic instructional leadership. This means that successful PLCs need to have principals who will act as role model and instructional leaders who coach and mentor teachers for effective instruction. This is supported by the study of Manaseh (2016) who reported that instructional leadership is one of the most useful tools for creating effective teaching and learning environments to improve the quality of education. Instructional leaders know what is happening in the classroom and develop the capacity of their teachers and staff by building their strengths and reducing their weaknesses.

The experiences of participants regarding professional learning community practices influence in shaping their beliefs, attitude, and commitment toward PLC.. The implication of the three essential themes which were drawn out from the in-depth interviews and focus group discussion of the participants are as follows: The first theme that emerges is deepened awareness of professional growth culled out from the responses of the participants when asked on the role of their experiences that shapes their beliefs towards professional learning community practices. This essential theme formed out from the codes becoming engaged and empowered teachers and awareness of self-development. The responses of the teachers revealed that their experiences have shifted their perspective about PLC practices and have changed their paradigm as being more positive about self-development and being engaged and active participant in professional development activities. This finding supports the study of Burns and Lawrie (2015) which noted that increasing the awareness of teachers needs to be developed professionally throughout the course of their careers to be effective.

Another theme emerged from the responses of the participants with regards to the role of experiences in shaping their attitudes towards professional learning community practices is openness and positive outlook in pursuing school goals. This theme emerged from the codes namely positive outlook, personal willingness and being open to work with others. It connotes that teacher should embrace the positive outlook on PLC activities on their professional growth and being open in working collaboratively with the PLC community in finding better ways of teaching a challenging lesson. This implies that experiences of the participants affect their attitude towards PLC practices; majority of them responded that it is strengthening positive outlook on PLC activities

and openness in working collaboratively with the community to achieve school goals. This finding supports the study of Woodland et al. (2013) that teacher's learning can be positively improved through collaboration with colleagues, through sharing ideas, experience, and resources, through giving feedback in order to become reflective about the teaching practice, and through supporting each other. Moreover teachers' attitudes towards teaching play an irreplaceable role in collaboration and these attitudes must be positive (Smith et. al., 2009).

The third essential theme that emerged from the responses of the participants with regard to the role of experiences in shaping their commitment towards professional learning community practices is service with integrity and professionalism. This theme emerged from the codes namely dedication to self-growth to serve better and profession nobility. This implies that to implement PLC practices in schools, teachers must possess the passion, drive and dedication to work as a team to achieve school goals. Further, professional commitment can be augmented through teacher collegiality (Sha 2012).

The corroborative findings on the aspect of leadership behavior indicate that challenging the process has a parallel result as compared to *Encouraging and motivating the teachers for high level PLC participation and being an oversight authority in facilitating PLC activities*. This implies that the leadership behavior of principals in challenging people to innovate has a great impact on their PLC participation. This also means that the leadership behavior of principals in challenging the process is very high and getting encouragement, motivation and having oversight authority during PLC activities are major concerns. This finding supports the study of Kwo (2010) which reported that rather than restricting learning space for teachers to schools and institutional environments, teacher learning should be observed in a wider global space. In addition, finding is similar to the study of Cochran-Smith and Demers (2010, that teacher learning does not come in a form of a set day-to-day activity but is rather a process of teachers' engagement in taking challenges and opportunities with thoughtful reconnections within their inner worlds. Thus, it is important to stress that new instructional approach and new pedagogies are certainly an educational must in all of today's social and economic contexts (Fullan and Langworthy, 2014).

Similarly, research studies have demonstrated that leadership behavior impacts the teachers' participation in the community. In other words, if the leadership behavior of principals is exemplary, they can encourage and motivate teachers to participate in self-improvement activities.

Implication for Educational Practices

The results of this study imply that professional learning community practices in public schools is giving opportunity for teachers to work collaboratively resulting in better student achievement. It is giving all teachers equal opportunities to participate in professional development activities that will ultimately result in significant changes and improvement in teaching cultures and practices. As a leader of a school, there are lots of responsibilities that are laid on the administrator's shoulders to ensure the practice of PLCs. It is important to provide school heads with training opportunities for them to acquire self-efficacy in management, instructional, and moral leadership thereby developing their competence in creating and sustaining PLC practices in schools. Further, it is imperative to develop exemplary leadership behavior among principals that are able to model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act and encourage the heart of teachers that will have a significant impact to the teachers, organization and the community. The DepEd can assist and support the schools in promoting and building effective PLC practices by providing the schools with the resources and technical assistance in the form of workshops and training. School heads should be trained on the skill how get support for this PLC.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were established. The leadership behavior and self-efficacy of principals in the public elementary schools in Region XI is always observed as assessed by the teachers. Similarly, the professional learning community practices were seen to be always evident. Further, the leadership behavior and self-efficacy of principals significantly influenced professional learning community. Additionally, self-efficacy recorded a higher influence towards the professional learning community practices in public elementary schools in Region XI.

Importantly, the combined influence of the independent variables, leadership behavior, and self-efficacy of principals towards professional learning community practices in public elementary schools is significant. In the qualitative aspect, there were two emerging themes that emerged relevant to the lived experiences of teachers with regard to professional learning community practices. These include competence enhancement and instructional leadership competence. These themes highlight how the professional learning community was practiced in the selected public elementary schools in Region XI. In addition, there were three essential themes that emerged on the role of experiences in shaping the attitude and commitment of teachers towards professional learning community practices. These include deepened awareness of professional growth, openness and positive outlook in pursuing school goals and service with academic integrity and professionalism. These themes highlight how the beliefs, attitude, and commitment of public elementary school teachers are shaped through their experiences in professional learning community practices. Finally, the salient quantitative and qualitative findings revealed a parallel result. This corroborated finding means that the quantitative and qualitative findings merged and converged each other.

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