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THE METAPHORS OF PRINCIPALSHIP AS A PROFESSION: THE PORTRAIT

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ABSTRACT

There are diverse views of the principals to principalship as a profession. Utilizing qualitative design, through metaphorical statements from the results of the interview, this study capitalized the language of describing principalship as a profession.

Through this study, the researcher stretches statements beyond their initial meaning through metaphors. Findings show that the meaning of principalship as a profession vary according to the perspectives of every leader.

Ten metaphorical words summarize their descriptions to principalship as profession were used as follows; infinity, conductor, driver, coach, tour guide, parson, academic prophet, welder, harlequin and the president. With these interesting emerged themes, the researcher adapted a new concept in leadership from the emerged theme and calling them, faces of principalship profession that shows what the principal is doing, performing and acting.

Keywords: *Principalship, Principal, School Head*

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INTRODUCTION

A good metaphorical explanation of principalship (Arnold and Harris 2000), ''Principalship is much like a song. In order for it to be fully appreciated it must include all aspects working in harmony. When song is sung with harmony one can hear how the different parts work together to make a whole".

Metaphors can provide a wide panoramic view of principalship as a profession (Linn, Sherman, Gill, Peggy 2007). And in different disciplines like literature, art and religion, law, science, medicine, music, computer and technology, communication studies, philosophy, social science, linguistics, aesthetics, mathematics, behavioural science and psychology, business, history (Lucero and Leones 2010 P. 11).

Principalship as profession is an international phenomenon. From the survey in 2001 characterized the principalship as very complex and demanding position (NASSP 2001. P. 1 cited by Eckman and Kelber 2009). Effective educational leaders develop, advocate, and enact a shared mission, vision, and core values of high-quality education and academic success and well-being of each student (National Policy Board for Educational Administration (2015).

Skria, Erlandson & Reed (2005 (P.19), differentiated principal to principalship" The principal is a man or woman who occupies a position as the chief executive officer of the school. Principalship represents the entire leadership function that must be performed in the school.

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In the Philippines, the study of Lucero and Leones (2010), identified and noted five metaphorical views called panorama these were; (a) leading; (b) linking panorama; (c) life-giving panorama; (d) life long learning; (e) leveraging. Thus, principalship as a profession can be viewed and described using different perspectives.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Perceptions is best measured through metaphorical analysis. A purposive sampling was conducted among twenty (10) Elementary and (10) Secondary Public School Principals in Caloocan. These principals were recruited to answer the research instrument which is based on the study of (Lucero and Leones 2010) about Filipino's perception on principalship.

The qualitative approach to research facilitated the researcher in dealing with the respondents' life experiences.

The metaphorical description taken from the survey form were transcribed and were later subjected to phenomenological reduction via the construction of repertory grid for the researchers observe both cool and warm analyses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The demographic profile of the respondents' gender: females (65 %) and males (35%); age; (30%) 41-45 , (25%) 56-60, (20%) 46-50, (10%) 51-55, (10%) 61-65; marital status: married (75%), single(20%) and widow (5%); number of years as School Head;(35%)

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3-7 years, (20%) 8-12 years, (15%) below 3years, (10%) 18-22 years, (5%) 23-26 years, (5%) 27-31 years, (5%) above 31 years and highest educational attainment; Ph.D graduate (35%), M.A graduate (25%), with Ph.D units (20%), with M.A units (15%) and Ed.D graduate (5%).

Amazingly, most of the respondents participated to this study have similarities on their views on principalship as a profession.

Principalship as a profession: The infinity

Principal A, O and P compared principalship a river that is continuous flowing and harmonizing the organization. The principals agreed that there is a consistent flow of performance, commitment on quality education and guidance to teachers on the aspects of principalship as a profession. It is continuous and connecting the stakeholders towards the school's mission and vision.

Principalship as a profession is like a river which has no beginning nor end. It continuously and endlessly flows to give life, and does not get tired at all in giving much of itself to make others live. The river always finds its way, its power to reach out does not have limits, so does a principal. She can think of endless ways to address the schools concerns and numerous needs. Just like the river, the principal may be experiencing a wild and turbulent workplace, but it is in her personality that would bring calmness. It is continuous and connecting people.

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Principalship as a profession: The Conductor

Furthermore, Principals D, I and N perceived principalship as an orchestra that is harmonizing different instruments. The conductor manages and lead the flow of the school system and guarantee that everyone's is playing harmoniously.

He/ she makes sure that everyone' role is like an orchestra played well.

Principalship as a profession: The Driver

While Principals J,K and T, described principalship as a steering wheel that set the direction of the school ,teachers and personnel. The principal should know how to run a school smoothly to prevent possible risk. He is a driver that shows a deeper understanding of his crafts; resources and direction. He considers sudden curves of every road and assure safe and timely arrival to school's direction.

Principalship is like a steering wheel of a car the principal like a driver must know how to drive safely. She/He should know how to calculate in running a car to prevent danger. Somebody, a skilled one should teach him/ her until such time she / he can do it by himself/ herself. As a principal or as a driver is not a joke, it is a difficult and must determine yourself to run the car or to manage the office. There are certain curves you must consider like slowing down. I viewed principalship as a profession as a steering wheel of the personnel of the school. The principal direct/ steer personnel to go in a particular direction for the attainment of the vision, mission and goals of the institution.

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Steering wheel. I believe is the best metaphor for principalship as a profession. As the school leader and manager, the principal sets the direction for the school policies , program and activities that is aimed towards the achievement of the educational goal for the maximum development of the learners, including the teachers and staff are learner in the school.

Principalship as profession: The Coach

Meanwhile, Principals F, L, M and Q. agreed that principalship as basketball team. Being a coach, the principals do not only guide people but also inspires them to win. He has a skill to convert ordinary players to champions. Moreover, the principals do not take the whole picture for every success and failure, they rather share it to the team.

Principalship is not a power of manipulating people but it should be a leadership involving all the stakeholders so that everyone feels that they belong to the team, and every success hat group achievers should be celebrated/ recognized as an achievement of the whole team and every failure should also be dressed in by the group.

Principal is like the coach who gives orders and instructions to the team. A leader that motivates the team to work together for a common goal. He also assign specific task for each member of the team to accomplish for the entire duration of the game. It gives direction and instruction on to the team. Team work and inspire the entire team. Working as a team to give instruction and direction.

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Principalship as a profession: The Tour Guide

Two Principals (E and H) agreed that principals must have enough knowledge on the roads to principalship. The principals show direction to success. Being a tour guide the principals share experiences and guide the teachers to the righteous path. Sometimes, he is also giving precautions

Road to give direction to right path with map to know your goals correct direction and familiarity. In this kind of profession, we had we never stop our journey to success. In our journey we sometimes meet obstacles, problems but this road will guide us in our journey to reach our goal.

Principalship as a profession: The Parson

Principal B. discussed that principalship is a rosary because it is compose of mysteries. As parson the principals have strong spiritual foundations. The principal is an optimistic person and keeps faith to overcome challenges in his profession.

I choose Rosary because it is composed of mysteries, joyful, sorrowful, Light and glorious wherein I can relate my works / tasks as Principal. All the trials and challenge I considered them sorrowful and of course, not all the time because after resolving all those and you will be happy and success and that's the reality, considering that those are some impossible situations, but all the end fulfilled.

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Principalship as a profession: The Academic Prophet

Principal C. said that principalhip is like sun that gives light and life. As Academic prophet the principals never stop to enlighten the teachers. They serve as light and life in the midst of confusion.

Sun to give light and life.

Principalship as a profession: The Welder

Principal G. believed that principalship is a bridge for it is structured to be strong just like the leadership and as school leader. As a welder the principals connect and unite the academic force towards the mission and vision of school. The principals are skilful binder of the academic community.

A bridge for being structured to its being strong just like the leadership and as school leader.

Principalship as a profession: The Harlequin

Principal R. agreed that principalship is a comedy bar. It is a place where people are happy. Being the harlequin the principals are artists and performer. They are able to electrify the education community towards improvement.

It is a place where people laugh at themselves and realize how other people (stand up comedian) perceive them. Taken positively, realization may become a learning lesson for improvement.

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Principalship as a profession: The President

Principal S explained that principalship is a president where delegation and decision making take place. The principals are presidents of every academic community. They lead and serve their people. They are also good delegator.

Like a president to manage a country and delegate.

All of the metaphors presented were based on the description of the respondents. The checklist based on the study of (Lucero and Leones 2010) are the guide subjects for description. However, the respondents have all the freedom to choose the best object that will represent their ideas aside from the given list of metaphors. If it is not on the list, the respondents may have an option to write their own description of principalship as a profession.

Discussion

Apparently, there are so many descriptions about principalship around the world. Ng (2015), identified two sides of picture of principalship; On the personal front, a good principal has a moral purpose centered on personal values, a humble disposition, and exudes wisdom. On the interpersonal front, a good principal exhibits excellent relational skills, engages in people development, and develops trust among staff. At the organizational level, a good principal develops a positive school culture for teaching and learning, builds fruitful relationships with stakeholders, and manages complex issues competently. Likewise to the given view of this study that principalship is continuous to give life, a principal is resourceful to supplement the needs of the stakeholders. It also brings calmness in times of turbulence.

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As presented on the findings, the similar views evolved from the metaphors of the principalship exposed a deeper understanding about principalship as a profession.

As viewed by (Horng, Klasik, & Loeb, 2010 cited by Lemione 2014). An effective principal has always been expected to keep a school running smoothly; now, the literature on effective schools demands that the principal also spend more time as instructional leader.

According to Llganes, Corpuz, Bilbao (2006) the school head/ principal is an instructional leader. He/she is expected to learn necessary leadership behaviour and be held accountable for leading the schools in creating a culture that "inspires, optimism and hope", and promotes students culture of hardwork, responsibility and success.

Interestingly, some of the descriptions of the principals are similar to the metaphorical descriptions of (Lucero and Leones 2010) on Filipino private school principals. However, this study focused more on the perspectives of the Filipino public school principals about principalship. As mentioned in this study, the principal sets the direction for the school policies, program and activities that is aimed towards the achievement of the educational goal for the maximum development of the learners, including the teachers and staff of the school.

As presented on the findings, the similar views evolved from the metaphors of the principalship exposed a deeper understanding about principalship as a profession.

Finally, despite of the political pressure in principalship like what a president of a any countries experienced, the principal must be strong to serve as a bridge to the stakeholder going to the vision and mission of the school.

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Conclusion

Ten metaphorical words summarize their descriptions to principalship as profession were used as follows; infinity, conductor, driver, coach, tour guide, parson, academic prophet, welder, harlequin and the president. With these interesting emerged themes, the researcher adapted a new concept in leadership from the emerged theme and calling them, **faces of principalship profession** that shows what the principal is doing, performing and acting.

The metaphors of principalship paint the reality of the roles of principals in the public school setting. The dynamics of the roles of principalship as a position in education and society. Thus, these views are called principals road trails. The meaningful experiences of the principals crafted a trail that will serve as a guide for those travellers (the aspirants) who want to travel the road to principalship. Although, there are variety of cultures in every school. It is still never a coincidence that some of the principals mark the same trail of principalship and some made a different trails it is because they started the same starting point and that is the classroom. (Holloway Educational leadership 2000- 2003). The perceptions of the principals about principalship may serve as encouragement to those who want to follow the trail. And, a precaution to those who will dare to follow the trail.

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