

Complying with Article 5 Section 5 of Code of Ethics for Teachers: A Case Study on Corrective Actions of a Novice Department Head in a New Workplace

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates how a newly appointed department head manages inappropriate behavior or misconduct among subordinates in a different workplace. It explores the challenges and strategies for adhering to Article 5 Section 5 of the Teacher and the Teaching Community Code of Ethics. Using a Single-Case Study qualitative approach, it focuses on a Licensed Professional Teacher transitioning to a department head role. Criteria for selection included individuals new to leadership in unfamiliar environments. The study unveils corrective measures, like fostering a Positive Working Environment with Subordinates, challenges of grappling with Transformational Leadership and Managing Personality Differences among team members. However, it also highlights coping strategies like prioritizing Continuous Development and acknowledging subordinates' challenges. These findings emphasize the need for personal and professional support, advocating leadership training and workshops to enhance teaching efficiency.

Keywords: Article 5 Section 5 of Code of Ethics for Teachers; Case Study; Corrective Actions; Novice department head; Coping mechanisms; Private Schools

Introduction

High-performing school systems focus on three fundamental aspects of the education system: (1) an effective mechanism for teacher selection; (2) an effective process for teacher training and development, and (3) an effective system and support structures. School leaders are numerous persons who lead and make sound decisions that benefit the organization in the educational setting. These include the principal, program or department leaders, and deans from other schools or universities' departments. According to Estacio and Estacio (2022), a school head is in charge of the administrative and instructional supervision of a school or cluster of schools.

Furthermore, leadership, management, and administration are all linked ideas that have received varying degrees of emphasis across time and in various circumstances. Leadership is crucial for boosting educational standards in English-speaking countries such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Professional and governmental standards disclosed leadership behaviors within the school context, as well as a variety of research. Furthermore, as leaders in society, headteachers impact the teaching profession. They are important role models and prominent members of the communities they serve. The ideals and goals of school administrators determine the accomplishments of schools. They are responsible for the education of current and future generations of children. Their leadership significantly impacts the effectiveness of instruction, students' academic progress, and the overall performance of the country's schools. Headteachers should model teachers' professional conduct and practices to avoid superfluous teacher work while allowing extensive staff continuing professional development. They obtain a condition for the kids' model behavior. They recognize diversity and establish vital academic performance requirements within and outside their institutions (Day et al., 2019).

Makgato and Mudzanani (2018) concur that school leadership is critical for operation and performance improvement. Their study investigated the leadership styles of African school leaders using a qualitative approach. The overall outcomes of the study revealed that democratic leadership styles mixed with transformational leadership styles best contribute to learners' high educational attainment. High- and low-performing school leaders adopt democratic leadership styles, with the latter being more liberal or forgiving regarding their students' inappropriate conduct.

Furthermore, some school leaders who are assigned or promoted to the positions of school head, program head, principal, or even dean were previously teachers. As a result, the Code of Ethics for Teachers or the rules of paragraph (e), Article 11, of R.A. No. 7836, also known as the Philippine Teachers Professionalization Act of 1994, and section 6, paragraph (a), P.D. No. 223, as amended, the Board of Professional Teachers adopts the Professional Teachers' Code of Ethics is also a foundation in leadership. The teaching profession considers the establishment and execution of the Professional Code of Ethics and Conduct (PCEC) as a means of maintaining acceptable professional standards. Teachers should maintain high ethical and moral standards in their relationships with other educational stakeholders (Teach Pinas, 2022).

According to Munir and Khalil (2016), referenced in Komba and Mukadi (2021), teachers support the teaching and learning process and play a critical role in facilitating day-to-day school activities and academic performance. Ethics contributes to the upkeep of law and order in schools and the incorporation of ethically acceptable ideals. Ethics entails always doing the right thing. Professional ethics is a collection of beliefs, standards, and traditions, and everyone who considers themselves professionals follows these.

Article 5 of the Code of Ethics for Teachers, generally known as the Teacher and the Teaching Community, on the other hand, has seven (7) sections concentrating on a teacher's position and obligation in the teaching community, particularly his or her role to his or her colleagues. Section 5 of Article 5 specifies that every instructor must take corrective action for any associates' unprofessional and unethical behavior. However, this is only possible if there is irrefutable evidence of such behavior (DepEd Tambayan, 2018). Seeking correctives to unethical behavior or any unpleasant behavior of subordinates is one of the most important obligations that school leaders must accomplish.

Employees who regularly engage with each other to achieve organizational goals are likely to experience disagreement, inconsistency, and incompatibility in facilities and relationships in organizations with intensive human interactions. These circumstances can lead to conflict. Human relations are also heavily emphasized in schools, among the most important educational institutions. For educational facilities to succeed, administrators, teachers, students, parents, and other personnel must constantly communicate and interact. As a result, debates, discussions, and incompatibilities are inherent in schools at the core of human resources (Erturk, 2022).

Given the significant responsibilities of school administrators, it is only possible for some. Leaders, whether new or experienced, bear the same level of responsibility. Leading and managing their instructors, as well as supervising their teachers, are some of the critical problems for newbie school leaders in a new workplace. New administrators are required to maintain positive connections with teachers while leading. In addition to dealing with teachers, novice principals face additional challenges, such as dealing with uncommitted teachers who cause "principal-ache" symptoms, as reported by novice principals in Kazakhstan (Mukhtarova, 2013) and Western Australian schools Clarke et al. (2011), as cited in (Tahir et al., 2021).

Furthermore, according to Medford and Brown (2022), the relationship between the new principal and the teachers at the school, with one's actions affecting the other, is a challenge for new leaders. Furthermore, changing and developing school culture is arguably the most demanding professional challenge new principals face. Furthermore, strained relationships with teachers surfaced as a severe issue for newly appointed school directors. Many need to be more experienced or qualified to lead the institution. Others believed that some teachers continually challenged and questioned their authority, resulting in toxic environments typified by opposition to change. While principals in public schools had to deal with teacher absenteeism and the legal repercussions of teachers' complaints, principals in private schools had to deal with teacher dropout and mobility.

A study in the National Capital Region, Philippines, found that novice academic heads need help with paperwork, culture, processes, superior expectations, and teacher supervision. They consult supervisors, mentor former leaders, and engage in professional and personal development to overcome these. A succession plan should integrate induction, leadership, and mentoring programs for future academic heads (Arrieta & Ancho, 2020).

This study holds significance for school administrators by offering crucial insights into the challenges faced by novice department heads, particularly in managing unfamiliar individuals and navigating unfamiliar school cultures. Focusing on corrective actions aligned with Article 5 Section 5 of the Code of Ethics for Teachers, the investigation provides administrators with valuable information to tailor leadership development programs. By addressing these challenges directly, administrators can enhance the leadership skills of novice department heads, promote ethical practices, improve organizational culture, and guide policy development for smoother leadership transitions within educational institutions. In addition, the findings from this research can facilitate a more comprehensive understanding of the interpersonal dynamics between novice department heads and existing staff, aiding administrators in implementing strategies to foster collaborative work environments and minimize misunderstandings. Ultimately, the study serves as a practical guide for administrators seeking to improve leadership within their schools and contributes to developing policies that offer adequate support structures for novice leaders, ensuring a smoother integration into their roles and promoting effective and ethical leadership practices within educational institutions. Furthermore, the

study contributes to the academic landscape by filling a gap in educational leadership literature, offering a nuanced examination of the experiences unique to novice department heads and enriching the broader understanding of leadership dynamics in educational settings.

Methodology

Selection of the participant

The participant of this qualitative case study is a novice department head in a new workplace. The participant is chosen based on the criteria that the participant is a newly assigned department head with no experience being a head in any institution but is a Licensed Professional Teacher, has a background in teaching, and started working in a new workplace different from the previous one. The participant has an entirely different experience from the prior job. The participant was purposely

selected as the key informant of the study because the participant has first-hand experience as a novice department head. Semi-structured interviews and observations were used in the study to describe the case in detail.

Moreover, the subject of this qualitative case study is a newly appointed department head overseeing the Science Department in a higher educational institution. Notably, the participant's subordinates consist entirely of colleagues already established within the institution before her arrival. All teachers under the supervision of the participants are first-time colleagues for the department head, further highlighting the unique challenge of assuming a leadership role over a team with pre-existing institutional tenure.

Setting

The study site is one of the private institutions offering different college programs, including education, commerce, secretarial, accountancy, engineering, architecture, and much more. Due to the other programs, teachers must be in a specific department; thus, department heads must also serve as leaders for each group.

The educational institution where the participant assumes the role of department head is within an urban setting. Catholic coeducational institution operates it, providing both primary and higher education. Governed by a congregation, the school accommodates a substantial student body, numbering in the thousands across various programs from kindergarten to tertiary levels. Furthermore, the institution employs hundreds of teachers to cater to its educational mandate. With these, Faculty members at the tertiary level are in distinct departments corresponding to their academic programs and specialized expertise. These departments include but are not limited to Science and Mathematics, Languages, Business and Secretarial Accountancy, Tourism and Human Resource Management, Engineering, and Architecture. This organizational structure ensures a focused and efficient allocation of academic resources, allowing for a specialized approach to education within each discipline. These programs and departments have their own agenda or department head. One of them is the participant in the study.

Design of the Study

A case study, which is a qualitative study design, was used to perform the research. The case study investigates an event, individual, or process in depth. A case study is a method that examines the case in its current environment. It is for issues where the current situation and environment are not detailed, and more than one data source is present, and it allows researchers to examine the case in depth by focusing on how and why (Creswell, 2007; Yin, 2003, cited in Erturk 2022).

The study is also a single case study. The term "single case study research design" encompasses a comprehensive examination of a limited, non-random sample. This design emphasizes a thorough and detailed analysis, setting it apart from other research approaches that perceive individual cases as inconsequential and interchangeable elements within a population or sample.

Moreover, the study employed this methodology because only one novice department head in her new workplace was observed and interviewed. This study investigated the corrective actions a newly assigned department head took in a new workplace when dealing with unpleasant behavior or misbehaving subordinates, as well as the challenges encountered and coping mechanisms used by the newly assigned department head when seeking corrections for undesirable behavior. Mainly, it investigates how the study participants comply with Article 5 Section 5 of the Teacher and the Teaching Community Code of Ethics for teachers.

Data Sources

Data collection employed a semi-structured interview guide and an observation checklist to delve into a novice department head's challenges and coping mechanisms in a new professional setting. The Interview Development Guide focused on one primary question and two probing questions, totaling three inquiries. The questions include the following: 1. How do "you" employ corrective actions on the unpleasant behavior of subordinates as stipulated in Article 5 Section 5 of the Code of Ethics for Teachers? What are the challenges you encountered in trying to employ corrective actions to address the unpleasant behavior of subordinates as stipulated in Article 5 Section 5 of the Code of Ethics for

Teachers? How do you cope with the challenges in employing corrective actions on unpleasant behavior of subordinates as stipulated in Article 5 Section 5 of the Code of Ethics for Teachers? Rigorous validation was ensured through assessment by two experts holding doctoral degrees, leading to subsequent refinements.

The researcher interviewed participants at their convenience, following a comprehensive discussion of the study's procedure and scope, with signed consent obtained before initiation. Permission to record interviews via a mobile phone was sought and noted. The researcher actively took notes during interviews, asking clarification questions as needed. Post-interview transcripts were meticulously organized and translated, as the responses were in English. Intelligent verbatim transcription facilitated a nuanced understanding of the challenges and coping mechanisms. Thematic analysis was then applied to discern prevalent themes in the experiences of the novice department head.

Data Analysis

This study utilized thematic analysis for the data gathered. Thematic analysis represents a qualitative data analysis method commonly employed for scrutinizing a corpus of texts, such as interview transcripts. Researchers delve into the data to discern recurring themes, encompassing prevalent topics, concepts, and meaningful patterns that emerge consistently throughout the texts. This approach typically adheres to a structured six-step procedure: familiarizing with the data, progressing to coding, identifying and developing thematic patterns, reviewing these identified themes, defining and categorizing them, and culminating in the synthesis and documentation of the findings. Adherence to this methodological process facilitates the mitigation of confirmation bias during the analytical phase (Caulfield, 2019).

Trustworthiness

Throughout the study, the researcher prioritized ensuring the trustworthiness of the research, focusing on credibility to depict the research problem accurately. Emphasis was placed on maintaining confidence in the applicability of findings to various contexts for enhancing transferability. The use of thick descriptions illustrated the potential application of study findings across diverse circumstances. Findings were solely derived from participants' responses to mitigate potential biases or personal motivations. An inquiry audit involving an external reviewer ensured the dependability of the research process and data analysis for consistency and replicability. Data validation included presenting findings to participants and an expert, reinforcing the validity and credibility of the collected data. These measures collectively bolstered the reliability and robustness of the study's outcomes, emphasizing the centrality of trustworthiness in research.

Results and Discussion

Assuming a leadership role is a formidable task, and the challenge intensifies when the leadership position is entirely new to an individual. The difficulty escalates when leading a team of unfamiliar individuals who have been long-standing institution members, thereby elevating the complexity of establishing authority. This situation becomes particularly challenging if these subordinates exhibit resistance and negative behaviors. While guided by the Code of Ethics for Teachers, addressing such behaviors presents a formidable challenge, simultaneously serving as a crucial framework for leaders to navigate their responsibilities. The intricate interplay of novelty in leadership, unfamiliarity with team members, and the need to address resistant behavior underscores the intricate nature of leadership dynamics, demanding astute navigation and adherence to ethical principles.

The findings are classified under three main categories: Strategies for Employing Corrective Actions, Challenges in Employing Corrective Actions, and Coping Mechanism in Addressing the Challenges in Employing Corrective Actions.

Strategies in Employing Corrective Actions

Different strategies are employed to seek corrective actions for the misbehavior of subordinates and their noncompliance to other work related to their job as teachers. These themes include Maintaining a Positive Working Environment and Promoting Open Communication. The participant said:

"I make sure that when I talk to them, I talk to them in a friendly manner. I don't embarrass or scold them because they are also professionals, and I don't really do that because it is not really effective... When I had a misbehaving subordinate, I message him and explained to him the reasons why I was calling him out, but in a friendly manner still."

Several studies in the literature, cited in Dilekci (2022), reveal that leaders significantly impact followers' moods and emotions, demonstrating the unbreakable link between leadership and emotions. Principals who respect and know their feelings and pay attention to and support them can boost teachers' job happiness. Additionally, administrators can help teachers experience happy emotions and let go of negative ones by acting in a relationship-focused and encouraging manner toward them (Berkovich & Eyal, 2018).

Another effective strategy is promoting open communication. The ability of school leaders to communicate must be dynamic and serve as a unifying force in the workplace if trust is to be fostered among the teachers. This agrees with

the findings of the study. According to the participant, open communication in correcting misbehavior is essential. The participant said:

"I talk to them, preferably in a fac-to-face manner so that we can understand each other, and so that I can communicate what I need to tell to them in a better way. I makes sure that I talk to them about their actions. I try to explain that I understand them, then explain that though I understand them, I need to still call them out."

The study of Salamandra (2021), cited in Glaze (2014), supports this finding. Understanding the practice involves grasping the benefits and barriers of effective communication. Establishing all three essential components—trust, transparency, and listening—is required. The characteristics of each stakeholder relationship present unique challenges and recommendations. Each group holds high expectations towards the educational system, and fulfilling those relies on excellent verbal and non-verbal communication skills. Effective education leadership necessitates excellent communication skills and a willingness to engage in challenging conversations as a teacher or administrator. Many stakeholders are present in schools: students, teachers, administrators, and families.

Furthermore, this finding also agrees with the study of Julianto and Carnarez, 2021, as referenced in Saputra, 2021. According to their study, high-quality education and the success of a professional organization rely heavily on effective communication. Efficient delivery of instruction and the ability of leaders to make accurate and effective judgments are ensured by this crucial factor, making it a critical requirement for educational institutions and professional organizations. Leaders make well-informed judgments with accuracy and effectiveness when they communicate effectively.

Challenges in Employing Corrective Actions

The second category includes the challenges of the participant. The participant experienced different challenges in employing corrective actions to misbehave or difficult subordinates or to their unethical actions. Two themes culled out from the participants' responses include Difficulty Building Authority and Difficulty Dealing with Personality Differences. School leadership aims to bring out the best in teachers and pupils. It is either instructional/pedagogical or transformative leadership (UNESCO, 2018). While instructional leadership emphasizes the value of teaching and learning to improve outcomes, transformational leadership is concerned with long-term planning and structural rearrangement. According to UNESCO (2018), school leadership jobs involve both management and leadership tasks, such as goal-setting and teacher evaluation, resource management, and teacher deployment. A school's daily operations are organized by those in administrative positions, who also supervise the teachers and pupils (UNESCO, 2018). However, being a transformational leader was the challenge encountered by the participant. The participant said:

"Since I am a new teacher, and I am new in the workplace, my subordinates are the ones who came first. They do not know me yet so it is hard for me to establish my authority, so I can't be like a leader to them. I see myself as one with them, so not having the authority is hard because you may not have a control over them too. Though when it comes to misbehavior, I did not encounter a lot aside from late passing of requirements. I just constantly remind them, though there's a repetitive action of late passing sometimes."

This study's finding aligns with the study of Ustun (2018). Being a leader, particularly with the duty to implement corrections, poses challenges, primarily when the leader's authority is not acknowledged. Leadership holds a pivotal role in resolving the hurdles encountered by school leaders. To address these challenges effectively, adopting optimal leadership practices becomes imperative for school leaders to navigate the intricate educational environment. Transformational leadership inspires and motivates followers toward a collective vision, stimulates intellectual growth, and provides personalized support to followers.

Additionally, the study of Day et al. (2020) agrees with the findings. Their study highlighted the challenge of supporting teachers to enhance their effectiveness. The study underscored the pivotal role of school administrators in aiding teachers to become proficient practitioners. Headteachers significantly influence the teaching profession, serving as crucial role models and respected figures in their communities. The principles and objectives of school leaders dictate the achievements of educational institutions. These responsibilities necessitate administrators to evaluate teachers' performance and devise solutions critically.

Additionally, they bear the responsibility for current and future generations' education, wielding immense influence over the effectiveness of education and student development nationwide. Headteachers exemplify professional conduct, encouraging educators to streamline their workloads while ensuring continuous professional growth. They cultivate an environment conducive to student success, establishing high academic standards, embracing diversity, and respecting cultural differences.

Another challenge the participant experienced was dealing with personality differences or those with different personalities or perspectives from the leader's viewpoint. The participant said:

"I had experienced correcting one of my subordinates and we had misunderstanding as to how he analyzed my words for correcting his unethical behavior. He did not talk to me because we failed to make a compromise perhaps because we have different point of view and he took it in a negative way although what I thought was I said it in a gentle and friendly manner only."

This finding aligns with the study of Al-Hothali (2018), which cited challenges in implementing the code of ethics in the workplace, particularly when applying corrective measures to subordinates. These challenges encompass suspending the punishment system, lacking role models, lacking religious and national consciousness, a preference for personal interests, and a deficit in mutual understanding between officials and staff. Correcting mistakes and outlining errors among mature and professional teachers proves to be a daunting task. Moreover, Valente and Lourenco (2020) also affirm the finding. Their study reveals that teachers often grapple with handling conflict situations with colleagues or students within the workplace, which can stem from differing views, motivations, interests, or expectations. Such conflicts can significantly impact the learning environment and teacher effectiveness. Consequently, teachers must cultivate emotional intelligence (EI) attributes to navigate conflicts constructively and maintain strong relationships.

Strategies in Addressing the Challenges in Employing Corrective Actions

The researchers asked the participants about coping mechanisms to address the challenges in executing corrective actions. The study findings indicated that the participant perceived aiming for continuous development and recognizing the hardship of subordinates as the coping strategies employed. The respondent mentioned:

"I was also a "subordinate" before becoming a department head. Thus, I applied what I learned from those other leaders. I revisit their leadership styles and make sure that I do not repeat the same mistake they did, and I continue to learn and study to become a more effective leader."

Continuous professional development (CPD) is essential for educational leaders to improve institutional performance and student learning outcomes (Faizuddin et al., 2022). The findings affirm Senol's (2019) study, which highlighted that in the era of globalization, the role of educational leaders has evolved significantly due to diverse education stakeholders' requirements and expectations. This underscores the need for ongoing professional development for these leaders to effectively fulfill their responsibilities. As educational leaders profoundly impact school culture, improvement, student learning, and achievements, continuous professional development remains crucial for their sustained success. Engaging in professional development initiatives allows educational leaders to refresh and expand their knowledge base, enhancing their job performance by applying updated educational practices. Moreover, Nooruddin and Bhamani (2019) supported this perspective, emphasizing the critical role of school leaders in guiding and supporting teachers as they embark on their learning journey. Influential school leaders are expected to anticipate and provide necessary technical resources and moral backing to facilitate teachers' growth, aligning with impactful teacher professional development principles.

Additionally, objectively recognizing the hardship of subordinates is another strategy to cope with the challenges. The participant said:

" I try to remind those who pass late with the deadline. If I see that they are struggling, I try to understand and adjust. I try to recognize other factors why they react that way so I will deal with them in an objective manner by talking to them and hearing their side of the story. I also try to employ democratic way of leading. Then, I make sure that I am able to personally talk to them to approach the problem properly, I believe I can be more objective in discussing with and correcting them if I said it in a face-to-face manner."

Sokal et al. (2020) supported the importance of displaying empathy and supporting teachers undergoing emotional challenges, signifying effective leadership. When managing educators juggling their students' learning and personal responsibilities, such as their children's education, demonstrating empathy and compassion becomes vital. People tend to feel powerless in these circumstances. Sokal et al. (2020) suggested addressing their perspectives on distance education, acknowledging their exhaustion to prevent burnout among instructors. Prioritizing teachers' mental well-being, enhancing collective confidence, and recognizing their workload is crucial for sustaining teaching and learning. Compassion emerges as an effective strategy for reducing anxiety and maintaining team focus during challenging decisions.

Additionally, the study of Edmondson & Lei (2014), referenced in Kock et al. (2019), also emphasizes the need to recognize and understand employees. At work, individuals require support and understanding, including empathy. Outside of the workplace, family and friends offer this support. Within the work environment, coworkers and colleagues serve as a source of assistance. Furthermore, leaders can provide empathy, establishing a robust connection that motivates and sustains followers in their efforts to enhance workplace performance.

Conclusion and Implications

The case study examined how a newly assigned department head in a different workplace handled unpleasant behavior among subordinates, addressing corrective actions and the challenges faced. It focused on the participant's adherence to Article 5 Section 5 of the Teacher and the Teaching Community Code of Ethics. The study uncovered various corrective actions the participant took to address unethical behaviors, highlighting challenges in implementation, including difficulty embodying transformational leadership and handling personality differences. However, the findings revealed strategies used by the participant, such as maintaining a positive working environment and aiming for continuous development. The study emphasizes the need for personal and professional support through leadership training and workshops to improve leaders and subordinates.

The study's findings strongly underscore the critical need for robust support mechanisms and ongoing professional development initiatives in leadership roles. Effective leadership demands a comprehensive approach that addresses challenges newly assigned leaders face, such as navigating corrective actions for subordinates' unethical behavior. The study's implications extend to the vital role of transformational leadership, highlighting the complexities in embodying this leadership style, especially when dealing with personality differences. Furthermore, the strategies employed by the participant, such as fostering a positive work environment and focusing on continuous development, serve as imperative tools for managing challenges within the organizational framework. These findings have significant implications for educational institutions, emphasizing the necessity for comprehensive training programs that target the development of both leaders and subordinates, thereby fostering a conducive and productive work environment.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The study holds several limitations. It primarily confines itself to a narrow scope of variables, limiting the depth of analysis. Additionally, it needs more data triangulation, which restricts a comprehensive understanding of the investigated phenomenon. Due to the nature of the research questions, the study predominantly relies on qualitative research methods, potentially limiting the breadth of insights gained. The survey mainly produces non-statistically significant results, possibly hindering the generalizability of findings. To address these limitations, future research could involve conducting multiple case studies across diverse contexts, including a broader range of participants from various fields. This approach would offer a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the subject matter, enriching the depth of insights and potential applicability across varied settings.

Contribution of authors

This paper has a single author and confirms that the author reviewed this study.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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