

Joys and Pains of a Public School Principal: Educational Accountability in the Philippine Context

Yley Balicoco, Atty. Orlando S. Rimando National High School, The Philippines
Sylvia J. Pidor, University of the Immaculate Conception, The Philippines

The Asian Conference on Education & International Development 2017
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

While considerable interest has been accorded to evaluating the leadership effectiveness of school principals, rarely would research put focus on the things that enthuse or frustrate them in the course of acting in response to the call of educational accountability. As such, this qualitative study focused on an investigation of the hardships and milestones of principalship through a multiple case study of five public school principals with noteworthy personal and professional qualifications in Compostela Valley. Thematic analysis was used and was enriched by a cross-case analysis and evaluation of data gathered. Participant observation, annual implementation plans, leadership self-assessment questionnaire, and in-depth interviews were conducted. Findings revealed that joy of public school principals included accomplishing plans, inculcating discipline, generating more instructional leaders, facilitating teacher promotion, credit for success, thriving collegial relationship, and increasing student promotion. On the other hand, the pains faced by public school principals in relation to educational accountability were learning from criticism, indifference to teacher training, political game, leading change, dealing with failures and frustrations, being misconstrued, and professional jealousy. These themes disclose to us how school principals exert substantial effort to respond to their educational accountability which in turn may give them joyful or painful experiences as educational leaders.

Keywords: Educational Leadership, Qualitative Case Study, Public School Principals, Educational Accountability, Philippines

iafor

The International Academic Forum

www.iafor.org

Introduction

As a student, I once aspired to be a school administrator brought by the insistence of my father who was one before he retired from the service. I found school administrators to be inspiring, easy to speak with and genuinely interested in students. As a teacher, early experiences with principals captivated my spirit and from an observer's perspective, lent to highly enjoyable positions. However, later experiences as a teacher provided a different perspective of the school principal – pressured, overworked, and overburdened.

Surely, being a school principal is a tough job. I witnessed how both my father and my sister put essence to the enormous workload that a school principal faces. I have seen how they were always “on the job” even when they were off for vacation or on weekends. I have seen how the position has become a 24-hour job as the school is constantly in their thoughts. Nonetheless, it has to be because, as the leader, they are responsible for faculty, staff and, most importantly, the students.

Undeniably, principals' lives have become more stressful in and out of the workplace being constantly accessible via cell phones, email, and other methods of communication (Langer & Boris-Schacter, 2003). They are enjoying less vacation time, leisure time, and less quality time with family and friends, which can also increase work-family conflict (Tatman, Hovestadt, Yelsma, Fenell, & Canfield, 2006) leading to a lower quality of life.

In many developing countries, decentralization of education and School-Based Management (SBM) are creating new challenges for the school principal that few are able to meet (Chapman, 2000). Not to mention the social and political pressures by the community which significantly influence principals' job performance (Hughes & Jones, 2010). That is why in Thailand, they established a system that ensures principals are developed and nurtured regularly as outlined in their National Education Act to ensure that principalship position remains an attractive and a highly respected position (Numkanisorn, 2002). Afterall, the enormous workload in the job may lead to acute shortage of leadership at the helm of many schools (Kruger & Slegers, 2007).

Analogous to this, principals often work extended hours, with workweeks of 60 or even 80 hours (Gilman & Lanman-Givens, 2001), face tremendous pressure (Ackerman & Maslin-Ostrowski, 2002), and in recent years, many have found it virtually impossible to cope effectively with the multiple pressures of the job (Borsi-Schacter & Langer, 2006). Furthermore, the pressure on principals to be school managers, disciplinarians, and instructional leaders has made the job more difficult (Hughes & Jones, 2010).

Remarkably, the perennial problems of shortages in teachers, classrooms, books, seats, and water and sanitation facilities faced by Philippine public school principals seemed to have always been in the backseat (Masinag, 2012). The country's public schools, Alliance of Concerned Teachers alleged, is still short of 112, 942 classrooms since the 59, 671 budgeted classrooms were not built by the Department of Education in 2014. The group added that 4,281 schools still have no water supply because of the failure to implement 16,920 water supply projects last 2011. ACT added that 10,514

schools still have no electric service and at least 23,928,335 textbooks and modules are still needed. Only 12,775, 823 of that number were delivered last 2014 (Malipot, 2015).

With these scenarios, it is no surprise that studies about principals emphasize on the need for them to excel and neglect looking on what reasons make the job of leading a school attractive and at the same time frustrating (Malone, Sharp, and Walter, 2001). My interest in conducting this multiple case study was fuelled by Petrosko (2000) who highlighted the crucial role of principals as the most visible players in school reform efforts and as the most accountable for the success of students and the success of the school as a whole. Yet, too often teachers are solely held accountable for student learning to take place. Nonetheless, Galal (2002) explained that the challenges of instructional leadership can also be rooted in the principal-agent problem occupying the core of any education reform. The principal is interested in particular outcomes (such as good quality education), but has to rely on an agent (e.g., teachers) to obtain these outcomes (Chapman, 2008).

This multiple case study which utilized in-depth interviews of the informants enriched by interviews with faculty and students, and analysis of the school's Annual Implementation Plan presents the various lived experiences of the five public school principals in Compostela Valley Division, Philippines. This research was undertaken to investigate the question: "What are the joys and pains of school principals in relation to their educational accountability?" To ensure that informants' anonymity was maintained, pseudonyms were assigned to each and were used throughout the discussion of this research. On the whole, this multiple case study contributes to the budding literature that puts essence on how principals put emphasis on their role as they balance the inevitable joys and pains of educational leadership.

Conclusion

Indeed, school principals are one of the most misunderstood persons in the public school setting and the popular phrase "wait until you become" is true. Though as a teacher, I can observe how demanding a principal's job is, getting to know my informants and collaborating with them for four months for the fruition of this research endeavor gave depth and enriched my understanding on how tough their role is. Yet, behind the hassle and bustle, I was able to see the visage of prudent public school principals who constantly work with nobility and magnanimity despite the countless obstacles along the way.

Their journey from teaching to principalship significantly prepared them personally and professionally for the birth pains in leadership. Their experiences shaped them to effectively align their actions spot on to their goals making it possible for them to delight in the sweetness of the joys in educational leadership which include accomplishing plans, inculcating discipline, generating more instructional leaders, facilitating teacher promotion, credit for success, thriving collegial relationship, and increasing student promotion.

However, it is undeniable that the current role of school principals has swelled to include enumerable tasks. Hence, in the course of responding to these needs, they become inescapably vulnerable to the pains in educational leadership which may take

the form of learning from criticism, indifference to teacher training, political game, leading change, dealing with failures and frustrations, being misconstrued, and professional jealousy.

Joys of a Public School Principal

Accomplishing Plans. Iron Man, Wonder Woman, Miss Marvel, Professor X, and Batman expressed their satisfaction when things go according to plan and when they reap good results. When faced with hindrances, they admitted the importance of focusing on solutions rather than on problems as they are persons expected to step up being looked up to by the group for leadership. It is apparent that they put emphasis on setting plans that are realistic and are achievable given the resources the school has. All of them shared that because of the hectic schedules public schools are faced, it is vital to ensure justifiable information dissemination with regards to how plans for activities in the entire school year will be carried out comprehensively.

In the planning stage, Batman suggested the need for the school to coordinate with the Parents-Teachers Association especially on matters concerning fiscal allocation bearing in mind that the school's Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses cannot be used for purposes beyond those mandated by the Department of Budget and Management (DBM). While on the other hand, every single principal-informant emphasized the need to elaborately present all the relevant information to teachers necessary for these teachers to comprehend the expectations set for a certain school year. By keeping teachers well-informed, principals could anticipate greater commitment as teachers perform active roles in the execution of programs, activities, and the like. Ultimately, Miss Marvel accentuated the need for plans to be executed at the onset of every school year since schedules of activities initiated by higher offices inevitably go frenzy as the year progresses. These programs, unfortunately, are most of the time prioritized by principals over their long-planned school activities especially LGU-initiated activities and the like.

Along with the principal-informants' intent to accomplish their plans, Batman and Wonder Woman emphasized the need for an evaluation to ensure replication of effective practices and to avert failure in the execution of the outlined activities and programs. Nonetheless, Professor X conveyed that even the execution of the school's day-to-day routines make leaders feel accomplished like students refraining from breaking the school policies, their active role in the submission of school reports, day focused on class instruction, and the list goes on. Summing all of these is Iron Man's statement that collaborative efforts manifested by teachers make accomplishing all school plans even more victorious.

Inculcating Discipline. Iron Man and Wonder Woman both shared similar views on how nurturing a culture of discipline makes them happy and fulfilled as educational leaders. Along this, they mentioned the need for thoroughness and consistency in the implementation of school policies to communicate to students and teachers that they mean business. As such, they have various schemes to ensure policies instituted are followed. They assign specific roles for teachers, especially the advisers, to perform and even to the school's nonteaching personnel as they acknowledge the fact school principals when unaided, are constrained. Parallel to this, Wonder Woman highlighted

the importance of involving the community by motivating residents to take part in the execution of school policies. These insights reflect that principal-informants realize that indeed, in union there is strength.

To add, each of the principal-informants has unique strategies in ensuring that policies are followed – instituting fines, school maintenance works, demerits to teacher-advisers, etc. However, to ensure that everything is formulated with due consideration to parties concerned and to protect themselves from potential predicaments, they coordinate with teachers and especially with the Parents-Teachers Association to arrive at a sound agreement. Iron Man and Wonder Woman have seen the fruition of their efforts in instilling discipline through significant increase in student attendance and creation of a school climate fit for learning.

Generating More Instructional Leaders. It was gleaned from the responses of Iron Man, Wonder Woman, Miss Marvel, and Batman that they positively regard shared leadership as it lessens the bulk of responsibility they face in running the school. Such responses from them showed that they acknowledged the significance of empowering teachers and the need to encourage instructional leadership from everyone in school. The cases showed that their authority does not wane as others' waxes. This perception from the informants agrees with the notion that though principals have the most influence on decisions in all schools; however, they do not lose influence as others gain influence (Knapp, Copland, Honig, Plecki, & Portin, 2010).

Likewise, Miss Marvel and Batman showed that by developing a professional community of teachers who guide one another in improving instruction, teachers would not only be prepared for future career endeavors but at the same time, would be able to help the school achieve its goals of delivering quality instruction fit for the 21st Century. Drawing together their responses, it appeared that such purpose is materialized through the mobilization of Master Teachers (MTs) in crafting school-based trainings, coaching newly hired teachers, and compiling lesson plans for teachers to learn from each other's effective teaching strategies. On top of these practices, Iron Man and Wonder Woman manifested their positive regard for teachers engaging in graduate studies.

All four of them illustrated how they provide teachers with opportunities to practice leadership roles. After all, the support they accord to their teachers would help teachers to be more competent and committed in the endeavors of the school. Portin, Schneider, DeArmond, & Gundlach (2003) pointed out that when school principals positively view shared leadership, teachers' working relationships with one another are stronger and student achievement becomes higher.

Facilitating Teacher Promotion. Iron man, Wonder Woman, Miss Marvel, and Professor X all agreed that teacher promotion is a crucial motivating factor for teachers to continually do their best in the service as it reinforces efforts. They feel that promotion communicates to teachers a strong message that their school principals are attentive of their performance and are rewarding their contributions to the school. Principal-informants look forward that as consequence of promotion, their teachers will be able to experience considerable comfort in finances as their compensation increases. Moreso, it became apparent in the cases that school principals are distraught when their teachers retire from the service remaining as Teacher – I (T-I)

because it connotes their failure and inability to address the need for staff development.

Each of them has their distinct ways in facilitating the promotion of their teachers. They cite encouraging teachers to join professional development opportunities as through this, teachers are able to gain points needed to be in the lead during the ranking of items for promotion. Also, Miss Marvel and Iron Man have distinct ways of encouraging their teachers to enroll in graduate studies but both of them stressed the advantage of starting in the earliest time possible. They find seasoned teachers difficult to convince in pursuing graduate studies as they already have different priorities in life compared to the young, single teachers.

However, there are also instances when they remind their teachers to mellow down on their enthusiasm for promotion especially when they still are undeveloped in the service. Iron Man cited that by asking his teachers to craft a vision of themselves as part of their portfolio, he is guided in terms of staffing as those who aspire for administrative positions shall be accorded with administrative functions to better prepare them for the job.

Credit for Success. Noticeable in the cases of Iron Man, Wonder Woman, Batman, and Professor X is the view that participation and bringing home the most coveted prize in extra-curricular competitions are synonymous with school excellence which translate to success in their leadership. Such vary from the usual participation to school activities, to those in the higher levels – division, regional, and even national. Wonder Woman emphasized that it unfailingly brings joy to any school principal when teachers who thought that their prime years has already passed suddenly replenish their dynamism in scholastic competitions as a result of the school principal's motivation.

Understandingly, the vigor of school principals to participate in scholastic competitions and springs from the fact that these are avenues for the school's efforts to be noticed by the academic community as not only the students and the coaches are recognized but also the leadership manifested by the school principal. Meanwhile, the implementation of the Performance-Based Bonus (PBB) among government agencies allowed Iron Man to occupy the prestige he is now known for. This mechanism of the government gauges how well agencies, in this case schools, have performed for the past school year. More than the monetary reward, the prestige and honor to be identified as among the very few schools that are able to receive a PBB not lower than P20, 000.00 rejuvenates the commitment and dedication leaders have to hurdle the struggles of leadership and without fail steer their teachers towards excellence.

The happiness Iron Man and Wonder Woman feel in seeing their schools improve in terms of physical facilities stemmed from the idea that despite the limited resources public schools have, they were still able to provide their clients - the students, an environment conducive for learning. Both of them shared similar thoughts on their preference to be assigned in schools with incomplete facilities as this would provide them the essential challenge to work hard and in the end see how far they have achieved beholding the school's significant development. Afterall, they started from scratch.

Notwithstanding this, Iron Man emphasized the vitality of getting as much help as possible from different stakeholders for any school to realize its improvement goals. Such strategy has allowed him to provide the necessary instructional materials needed by his teachers and also furnish his school with equipment and facilities useful for students and teachers. He argued that the aesthetics strongly dictate public perception of the school as compared to curriculum efforts that may only be felt by people who are part of the school system. Nonetheless he cleared that the latter should not be put out of the way while striving for the former.

Thriving Collegial Relationship. Both Iron Man and Batman expressed their joy and satisfaction when they see their teachers gathered in one event and exude an atmosphere of brotherhood and togetherness. They regard that school achievements would be difficult if teachers are not united. Though Batman admits the inevitability of conflict as people have different mindsets, he claimed that these can easily be ironed out when a strong bond has already been established. He nurtures teamwork and camaraderie by guaranteeing that teachers feel that they are his equals and are not treated as his subordinates. Also, he makes use of special occasions to make his teachers feel that they are loved and appreciated as he gives simple gifts and tokens to them in the hope of making them experience his genuine regard for everyone.

While Iron Man also views nurturing camaraderie and teamwork as vital in fostering a harmonious work environment, he does this in his own unique ways. He arranges local and international educational tours with his teachers so that they are able to create memories together. Though along the process, there are those who show disagreement about their travels, however, he finds this tool effective as even his critics in the long run choose to abstain from being pessimistic and would choose to be with the group than retaliate.

Increased Student Promotion. The cases showed that principals are aware of their role in significantly paving the way for providing a positive impact in the lives of their students by helping them pass their subjects and graduate. They realize the importance of decreasing the achievement gap between advantaged and disadvantaged students by encouraging teachers to constantly monitor and exhaust all means possible to help these weaker students succeed. This of course, is done without compromising the standards of the Department of Education.

Iron Man insisted that as long as there is an observable improvement in the learning behavior of a student, it should be enough to help him pass and eventually, graduate. Possibly, he claimed, school achievement is not conclusive of student success in work and in life. In like manner, Miss Marvel, being assigned in a barangay school addressed the needs of learners whose absences are brought about by low family support and parents who sadly serve as roadblocks. She maximized the School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP) to feed not only malnourished children but also those who go to school in an empty stomach. Further Miss Marvel and Wonder Woman employ alike scheme in monitoring graduation rate via organizing a committee tasked to keep an eye on students who show signs of dropping out, and by providing them with modules to keep up with the class. Summing everything together, the perception of Miss Marvel and Wonder Woman concur with the discernment of Professor X as he holds that teachers of this era should be more effective in raising student achievement

as they are now aided with modern technology which when optimized can efficiently help students cope with their lessons.

It can be observed across the cases that school principals uphold the importance and endeavor to make certain that the Department of Education's thrust on "Education for All" gets picked up by the faculty and is underpinned in a school-wide learning improvement agenda that focuses on goals for student progress. School principals ensure that all means to help students succeed are exhausted and failing students would be the last option possible. This reflects that as long as students are supported, they will be able to show marked improvement and manifest concrete signs of learning.

Pains of a Public School Principal

Learning from Criticism. Collectively, the informants agreed on the difficulty of handling criticism in its various forms. Inevitably, Batman mentioned instances where people would try to initiate in him an undesirable feeling through bearing gossips about how others perceive him and his leadership. While, Iron Man's experience of being reprimanded by superiors in public on his alleged poor performance brought him to the realization on how degrading it is for a person to be in the same situation. This inspired him to not do the same to his subordinates. Besides, Professor X cited that criticism and gossips could not only spring from subordinates but also from fellow school principals who seem to be envious of their colleague's performance.

On this note, Wonder Woman cautioned her fellow leaders of the odds that teachers who seem to smile and seem to be tolerant of assignments may turn out to be one of their cynics. In this regard, Miss Marvel suggested how she has transformed criticism in to a self-evaluation tool for her benefit. Thus far, the cases convey that it would be beneficial for principals to learn to filter rumors as this may affect their demeanor with others. All of them expressed that criticism is inseparable to leadership since others do not necessarily share your values and principles. And so, they have settled with the idea that there would be days when they would have lots of friends and days when their position can be undeniably lonely.

Indifference to Teacher Training. Most of the informants manifested disappointment on how the Department of Education fails to address the need for funding when it comes to teacher trainings. They share the same sentiment that despite their positive regard on such as avenues for their teachers to learn, they are hindered since such trainings are offered on official time. When trainings are offered on official time, teachers are to spend from their own pockets to provide for the expenses. Further, while there are trainings offered on official business which can thus be funded by the school's Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE), still these does not entice some teachers since the release of the budget is in the form of a refund. As such, teachers need to spend first then process the liquidation report after the training for them to get their refund. Considering all of these, it gives a glimpse on why at times, the same set of teachers are sent and are exposed to trainings because they are those whose willingness are coupled with the capacity to finance for their own travel or source out solicitations from stakeholders.

Conversely, Professor X stressed out those restrictions on finances make him prone to allegations of hoarding memoranda and letters as others accuse him of sending his favorites. He argued that he himself is not enthused to send his teachers not only because such travel would be charged to personal finances but also because he does not want his teachers to be out from their classes. Aside from finances, Miss Marvel pointed out that her teachers are disinclined to join trainings as they feel inferior compared to teachers from mother schools and are apprehensive that they cannot deliver what is expected from them.

However, it is important to note that studies reveal how teachers' qualities (as measured by skills, knowledge and qualifications) play a decisive role in students' progress (Hanushek, 2003). Thus, this confirms the need to support teachers' participation and exposure to professional development activities which policy-makers need to address. They must provide means to equip educational leaders the financial capacity to send their teachers to professional development activities that would lead to increased student achievement in public schools.

Political Game. All of the informants expressed how their work as educational leaders can be likened to the game of politics, or at times, may be influenced by politics. This dilemma emerges especially since school principals were once classroom teachers and changing their dynamics with colleagues prove to be an ordeal of balance being a person in authority and a person who they previously relate as peer to communicate their concerns to. Batman and Miss Marvel exert conscious effort of keeping themselves diplomatic and professional to students, teachers, and parents despite scenarios where it is most convenient for them to flare out. The need to identify a good recipe for exercising power while at the same time according freedom to subordinates is necessary to avoid demoralizing teachers or to excessively liberate them leading to the pitfall of slacking and idle work environment.

More often than not, Iron Man and Wonder Woman mentioned how troublesome it is for school principals to balance their ethical stand on matters that need considerations especially if it involves the welfare of their subordinates. On the other hand, Professor X's experience mirrored the need for teachers to stay nonpartisan because political affiliations can meddle with the affairs of the school. The struggle of making the appropriate decisions which could satisfy the persons involved, and the agency without compromising their own well-being is in itself very tricky.

Leading Change. School principals see their position as having the influence to make a positive difference in the lives of students through executing their role as education leaders. Yet, this is not as easy as it seems for they are more often than not disliked by teachers when they require them to perform their jobs to the best that they could. Iron Man, Wonder Woman, Miss Marvel, and Professor X experience resistance because teachers feel that they should not be pressured to perform in ways that are out of their comfort zone. They acknowledge that succumbing to the negative rhetoric, being satisfied with the current situation, and having a hollow temperament will do them nothing to initiate the needed changes to improve teaching and learning.

They see the predicament of being liked but not delivering the necessary changes. It is in this case that Wonder Woman has accepted that she can't be the darling of the crowd because she would want results delivered and policies followed. However, Iron

Man and Professor X emphasized the need to make teachers feel that they are valued and that desired results are achieved without compromising teachers' welfare. Failing to do this would make teachers resent their leadership. After all, teachers are the prime implementers of school policies and programs. Without them, success would certainly be elusive.

Dealing with Failures and Frustrations. Iron Man, Wonder Woman, Miss Marvel, and Professor X revealed their frustration over failures in their leadership. Each of them has a unique representation of failures in their workplaces. Iron Man elucidated on how frustrating it is for him to not get the results he expects despite careful planning and commitment of teachers involved. On the other hand, Wonder Woman expressed her disappointment over failing to motivate those teachers who frequently turn down on tasks assigned to them. Less disheartening is Miss Marvel's sentiment over teachers who, despite their willingness to work, fail to execute the task as ordered. Yet, intensely, she expressed how demoralizing it is for her to invest trust on the wrong people and to accept that despite the school's relentless efforts to help students finish schooling, parents may become roadblocks. Meanwhile, Professor X presented how school principal's disappointment at work may be brought about by teachers whose commitment to work gradually declines. The enumerable mandates of the department provide frustration to Batman as these mandates do not come with the necessary funding to allow schools to proactively respond. Despite this, at the end of the day, failure to respond is still often blamed to the school principal for his inability to provide the needed assistance.

Notwithstanding this, informants expressed awareness that failures of the school are inescapably attributed to them. They all view that there has to be a scapegoat when schools fail and such responsibility inevitably is more conveniently blamed by others to them. Yet, Wonder Woman and Iron Man appealed that when schools triumphantly meet the expectation of the agency, they should be accorded with justifiable appreciation and reward. This frustration over the merit system of the Department of Education overwhelmed Wonder Woman whose performance-based bonus as reward of exceptional leadership was delayed. While Iron Man, despite his hardwork, was reprimanded in public. Nonetheless, they ask that it should be understood that no matter how dedicated they are as principals, there would be times when the factors around them inevitably fail.

Convincing subordinates to stand for the school's vision can prove to be challenging like in the case of Iron Man, Miss Marvel, and Professor X. While they are aware that emotions should be isolated in administration, but managing people is ultimately about relationships between and among sentient individuals. As such, they saw the need for them to be emotionally intelligent. That is, to be sensitive to different points of view and different backgrounds of people under their leadership. The individual differences and zing of an organization makes it hard at times to earn the approval of the group and to propel them to execute plans. Ultimately, it is wise to use the head but it is also equally significant to bring a leader's heart with him in the service.

Given the limited slots for promotion in the Department of Education, Iron man and Batman admitted that at times, teachers lose interest in participating to competitions, trainings, and related activities for they do not see promotion to be possible. This concretely presents how motivation for excellence is being affected by rigid career

progression in the department. In fact, Batman cited how he pities School In-charge who has been serving far-flung schools with duties likened to full-fledged principals but are not accorded the same privileges.

Wonder Woman and Professor X intently cited how disappointed they are on teachers who show diminishing enthusiasm and commitment for the teaching profession. It is their desire to rekindle the passion of these teachers to be back on track as the performance of teachers influence the achievement of the students and the school as a whole. As Wonder Woman puts it, if teachers create good classrooms, it is up to the school principals to create a good school. But in this aim, Professor X emphasized the need for school administrators to still suspend their judgment and exhaust ways to understand the reasons behind such poor performance.

Being Misconstrued. Professor X, Wonder Woman, and Miss Marvel declared that their position makes them the most paradoxical and misunderstood figure in the pantheon of educational leadership. They rationalize that subordinates fail to understand them because they do not have the same perspectives. The degree of responsibility and accountability attached to their position demand for them to look into the many possibilities prior to making decisions or even granting considerations to teachers. This in itself is a strong avenue for them to be misinterpreted as strict, cold-hearted, and indifferent. However, as Wonder Woman puts it, any principal has the option to be lax and to not be stringent on the implementation of policies but she chooses not to be such.

Yet, at the end of the day, Professor X upholds that no matter how many considerations he may have granted, or acts done in good faith, it does not guarantee that others will see his genuine regard for the school and for his teachers as he cannot please everyone. What the three of them believes is that as long as they are doing their tasks as educational leaders true to the mandates of the Department of Education, they will never go astray.

Professor X, Miss Marvel, and Iron Man persevere to pay no attention to allegations of them playing favorites as they are confident they are not guilty of such. They understand that others perceive it this way because they do have certain individuals whom they frequently call for help. However, they reason out that these are those persons who can execute the tasks as expected, persons who easily respond to their requests, and persons who do not have the personality to question their decisions. As Iron Man puts it, success would be vague if you rely on a person who doubts your leadership.

Professor X saw such accusations as a form of jealousy. He held that persons who accuse him of favoritism grew up in an environment of envy and insecurity. For this person to feel that he belongs to the organization, he needs affirmation from others of his contribution and significance in the group. With this, all of the informants agreed on the vitality of shunning from having favorites and clearing out suspicions. They held that favoritism is a potent motivation killer among members of the organization.

Professional Jealousy. In dealing with diverse individuals having various motivations and aspiration, Wonder Woman, Batman, and Professor X emphasize the need to guide teachers to be consistent in their performance not only because they are eyeing for promotion but because this will serve as a good breeding ground for

professional jealousy. They see it as part of their job to deal with members of the organization who show unpleasant attitude towards the promotion of their colleagues. Well, this is unfortunately one of the most common aspects of workplace life which is not only limited to schools.

It is in this case that Wonder Woman reminds her teachers to respect the position of their colleague even if they do not feel like he deserves the position he now occupies. In like manner, Batman tells his teachers to not wane their performance just because they got promoted. They should also develop a sense of responsibility being looked up to as seniors in the organization. Being a victim of it himself, Professor X just holds his head high and focuses on his work because he owes this to God and to the agency he serves.

Synthesis

It is no denying that a principal's role has become increasingly difficult because of constantly changing societal needs and expectations. I was able to discover how school principals direct their actions towards improving their schools through formulating and ensuring implementation of policies regardless if doing such makes them unpopular to their teachers. The cases presented offered to us a glimpse of the satisfaction felt by educational leaders once pedagogical and physical facilities improvement are achieved as these are among the crucial tasks of being a principal. They are aware that their job is one which has an immense impact in improving the lives of schoolchildren being the prime persons responsible for steering their teachers, students, and even the community to the direction that the Department of Education envisions. Even so, to achieve this goal, I saw how they put importance in mobilizing their teachers and creating an environment of trust.

Table 1. Comparison of Cross-Case Analysis

JOYS OF A PUBLIC SCHOOL PRINCIPAL		IRON MAN	WONDER WOMAN	MISS MARVEL	PROFESSOR X	BATMAN
1	Accomplishing Plans	/	/	/	/	/
2	Inculcating Discipline	/	/			
3	Generating More Instructional Leaders	/	/	/		/
4	Facilitating Teacher Promotion	/		/	/	/
5	Credit for Success	/	/		/	/
6	Thriving Collegial Relationship	/	/	/	/	/
7	Increased Student Promotion	/	/	/	/	
PAINS OF A PUBLIC SCHOOL PRINCIPAL		IRON MAN	WONDER WOMAN	MISS MARVEL	PROFESSOR X	BATMAN
1	Learning from Criticism	/	/	/		/
2	Indifference to Teacher Training	/	/	/	/	
3	Political Game	/	/	/	/	/
4	Leading Change	/	/	/	/	/
5	Dealing with Failures and Frustrations	/	/	/	/	/
6	Being Misconstrued	/	/	/	/	
7	Professional Jealousy		/		/	/

Looking into the experiences of each informant, I have seen how deteriorating and no-hoper schools were saved due to the relentless efforts of dedicated school principals. This, I hope, would touch the deepest recesses of naysayers who find it easy to criticize. At the same time, I look forward for this research to inspire school principals to push forward despite instances when recognition and acceptance from among their members seemed to be distant and bleak. Even when they become subject of coffee break chats, may they find the motivation they need to perform at their best. It is in this reason that policy-makers should have a clear understanding of what brings joy and pain to public school principals.

Acknowledgement

To Papa Enting, Mama Feling, Manang Felvic, Manong Belly, Ate Grace and Abel for being my pillars of strength;

To Dr. Reynante A. Solitario, OIC-SDS and Dr. Josie T. Bolofer, OIC-ASDS of Compostela Valley Division, Sir Felixberto L. Leray and the Atty. Orlando S. Rimando National High School faculty and staff, and Dr. Sylvia J. Pidor with the entire University of the Immaculate Conception Graduate School for the professional guidance and for the scholarly assistance;

To my informants for the benevolence in sharing your precious experiences;
My circle of friends for being there through thick and thin;
Above all, to the Almighty Father, for sustaining me in this pursuit of wisdom;

To all of you, this is my way of expressing my heartfelt thanks and gratitude for the help extended in the realization of this humble endeavor.

References

- Ackerman, R. H., & Maslin-Ostrowski, P. (2002). *The wounded leader: how real leadership emerges in times of crisis*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Retrieved on January 21, 2017 from: <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educationalleadership/summer04/vol61/num09/The-Wounded-Leader.aspx>
- Borsi-Schacter, S., & Langer, S. (2006). *Balanced leadership: How effective principals manage their work*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press Columbia University.
- Chapman, David. (2000). Trends in educational administration in developing Asia. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 36 (2), 283-308.
- Galal, A. (March 2002). The paradox of education and unemployment in Egypt. (Working Paper No. 67). The Egyptian Center for Economic Studies.
- Gilman, D. A., & Lanman-Givens, B. (2001). Where have all the principals gone? *Educational Leadership*, 58(8), 72-74.
- Hanushek, E. A. (2003). The failure of input-based schooling policies. *Economic Journal* 113 (February): F64–F98.
- Hughes, C., & Jones, D. (2010-2011). A relationship among public school leadership, ethics, and student achievement. *National Forum of Educational Administration and Supervision Journal*, 27(2), 50-73.
- Knapp, M., Copland, M., Honig, M., Plecki, M., & Portin, B. (2010). *Learning-focused leadership and leadership support: meaning and practice in urban systems*. University of Washington.
- Kruger, M. L., Witziers, B., & Slegers, P. (2007). The impact of school leadership on school level factors: Validation of a causal model. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 18(1), 1-20.
- Malipot, M. (April 4, 2015). Luistro debunks COA report alleging DepEd wasted millions on textbooks. Retrieved: Interaksyon. Com.
- Malone, B. G., Sharp, W. L., & Walter, J. K. (2001, October 24). What's right about the principalship? Paper presented at the Midwest Research Association Annual Conference, Chicago, IL.
- Masinag, C. (May 17, 2012). DepEd's old problem: shortages in teachers, classrooms, books when classes start in June. Retrieved. Interaksyon. Com.
- Numkanisorn, S. (2002) 'Business and Buddhist Ethics', *The Chulalongkorn Journal of Buddhist Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 39-58.

Petrosko, J. M. (2000).. Assessment and accountability. 2000 review of research on the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) (pp. 3-81). Lexington: Kentucky Institute for Education Research.

Portin, B., Schneider, P., DeArmond, M., & Gundlach, L. (2003, September). Making sense of leading schools: A study of the school principalship. Seattle, WA: Center on Reinventing Public Education.

Tatman, A. W., Hovestadt, A. J., Yelsma, P., Fenell, D. L., & Canfield, B. S. (2006). Work and family conflict: An often overlooked issue in couple and family therapy. *Contemporary Family Therapy: An International Journal*, 28(1), 39-51.

Contact email: ylcy_09@yahoo.com