

Managing Deferred Responsibilities: Insights from School Heads' Experiences

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Abstract: This study investigated the experiences of school heads in managing deferred responsibilities among teachers, particularly focusing on the challenges they face, the coping mechanisms they utilize, and the insights they gain from their experiences. A qualitative research design using a phenomenological approach was employed, with data collected through in-depth interviews from five school heads. Thematic analysis of the interview data revealed five primary challenges that school heads encounter: lack of accountability, difficulty in managing time, motivational barriers, lack of professional support, and gaps in communication. The study also uncovered several coping strategies, including implementing regular follow-ups and check-ins, providing time management training, and establishing clear communication channels to ensure task completion. Key insights from the research highlighted the importance of setting clear expectations, offering supportive leadership, equipping teachers with time management skills, and providing professional development opportunities to improve overall performance. The study suggests that by implementing these strategies, school heads can create a more efficient and productive educational environment that reduces procrastination and enhances teacher accountability. The findings contribute to the body of knowledge on educational leadership and offer practical recommendations for improving task completion in schools.

Keywords: School Leadership, Teacher Procrastination, Accountability, Time Management, Professional Development, Educational Management.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The study examined how school heads managed and mitigated deferred responsibilities among teachers, which involved the habitual delay in completing professional duties. It aimed to identify effective leadership strategies that improved school performance. The researcher chose this topic to gain insights into approaches that support timely task completion. The findings provided valuable information for school administrators on effective management practices and highlighted support systems beneficial to teachers.

Deferred responsibilities among teachers had been linked to increased stress, burnout, and reduced job satisfaction globally. Studies showed that these delays negatively affected both teacher well-being and student outcomes by lowering instructional quality. Various interventions, such as time management and self-regulation training, were proposed but relied heavily on leadership support. In the Philippines, deferred responsibilities contributed to academic burnout, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, which worsened teacher workloads. Reports from the Department of Education and local studies in Davao City highlighted how delays in administrative

tasks hindered school efficiency, emphasizing the need for effective and localized management strategies.

The study aimed to address the lack of research on how school heads in the Philippines manage teacher deferred responsibilities. It sought to explore the experiences and strategies of school leaders, with the goal of informing policy and improving teacher performance and student outcomes.

This study aimed to explore the strategies used by school heads to manage teacher deferred responsibilities, with the goal of identifying effective practices that improve teaching performance and school operations. The findings intended to help school leaders promote timely task completion and create a more efficient and productive educational environment.

The literature review highlighted a multifaceted approach to managing teacher deferred responsibilities, emphasizing strategies that address personal and environmental factors. Effective methods included cognitive-behavioral techniques, time management tools, goal-setting, and creating organized workspaces. Digital tools also supported task completion. Additionally, self-compassion and mindfulness practices helped manage

emotional challenges, promoting resilience and reducing avoidance.

This study was grounded in Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and Temporal Motivation Theory (TMT) to understand and address teacher deferred responsibilities. SDT emphasizes the role of intrinsic motivation and the fulfillment of psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—in reducing avoidance behaviors. It highlights how supportive leadership can enhance teacher motivation and task completion. TMT, on the other hand, explains procrastination through factors like delay, task value, and expectancy, offering insights into how school leaders can make tasks more immediate, meaningful, and achievable.

II. METHOD

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological design to explore the lived experiences of school heads in managing teacher deferred responsibilities. Phenomenology was chosen to capture the personal meanings and insights school leaders attach to their strategies, providing a rich, contextual understanding of educational leadership. This approach enabled the identification of common patterns and unique experiences, offering practical insights into how school heads address this complex issue.

This study was guided by key philosophical assumptions—ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodology—that shaped its design and interpretation. Ontologically, it assumed that reality is subjective and shaped by individual experiences, allowing for multiple perspectives from school heads. Epistemologically, knowledge was seen as co-constructed through interactions between the researcher and participants. Axiologically, the study acknowledged the influence of personal and participant values, with a commitment to reflexivity. Methodologically, a qualitative approach was used to deeply explore the complex, context-specific experiences of school heads in managing teacher deferred responsibilities.

As a qualitative researcher, the researcher approached this study with the assumption that understanding is deeply rooted in the unique experiences and interpretations of participants, particularly the school heads involved. This assumption reflects a commitment to capturing the depth and complexity of how each school head perceives and addresses deferred responsibilities among teachers, viewing their strategies as contextually informed and personally constructed. In line with an interpretive approach, the researcher prioritized allowing these educational leaders' voices and insights to shape the findings, acknowledging that knowledge is contextual and co-created through researcher-participant interactions.

The study involved 10 school heads from Arakan, Cotabato, selected through purposive sampling to gain rich insights into managing deferred teacher responsibilities. Participants were required to be current school heads with at least three years of leadership experience and active

involvement in supervising or mentoring teachers, ensuring relevant and meaningful contributions to the research.

The study used an interview guide as the main tool to conduct in-depth interviews with school heads about managing deferred teacher responsibilities. This structured yet flexible approach helped focus on key leadership themes while allowing participants to share their perspectives freely.

The researcher gathered data through in-depth interviews (IDIs) using a structured interview guide to explore school heads' management of deferred teacher responsibilities. Five school heads who met the inclusion criteria were recruited and informed about the study's purpose and confidentiality. During the interviews, the researcher asked open-ended questions to encourage detailed responses, creating a conversational and flexible environment. With participants' consent, interviews were recorded and transcribed to accurately capture their insights for analysis.

The researcher employed Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis to analyze data from the in-depth interviews. The process began with familiarization through repeated reading of transcripts to understand participants' experiences. Initial codes were generated by identifying relevant text segments related to leadership strategies and challenges. These codes were then grouped into broader themes that reflected key ideas, such as leadership practices and obstacles to task completion. The researcher reviewed and refined the themes for accuracy and relevance, defined each theme clearly, and produced a report that linked the findings to the school heads' experiences managing deferred responsibilities.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

School heads encounter challenges such as low accountability, time management issues, motivational barriers, insufficient professional support, and communication gaps, all of which hinder timely task completion and impact school performance.

School heads also manage deferred teacher responsibilities by using strategies like regular follow-ups, time management training, and clear communication, which promote timely task completion and enhance accountability.

School heads, further, learn that clear expectations, supportive leadership, time management, professional development, and effective communication are key to improving teacher accountability and preventing task delays.

School heads face several challenges in managing deferred responsibilities among teachers, including a lack of accountability, poor time management, motivational issues, insufficient professional support, and communication gaps.

To address these challenges, school heads implement strategies such as regular follow-ups, time management

training, and clear communication channels. Consistent monitoring and feedback help keep teachers accountable and on schedule, while training programs enhance their time management skills.

Through their experiences, school heads have gained valuable insights emphasizing the importance of clear expectations, supportive leadership, professional development, and effective communication.

The challenges faced by school heads highlight the need for targeted interventions to address deferred responsibilities among teachers. Issues such as lack of accountability, poor time management, and low motivation hinder task completion and impact school performance. To address these, school heads may need to implement clearer expectations, frequent monitoring, and professional development programs focused on time management and motivation.

The coping strategies used by school heads offer valuable lessons for managing deferred responsibilities. Regular follow-ups, time management training, and clear communication help foster accountability and reduce procrastination. These practices should be institutionalized and supported through systems like mentorship or peer collaboration to reinforce skills and encourage timely task completion.

Insights from school heads emphasize the importance of supportive and structured leadership in improving teacher performance. Clear expectations, professional development, and motivational support are crucial for timely task completion. Additionally, effective communication ensures teachers understand their responsibilities and deadlines.

Department of Education officials should implement policies that promote accountability, time management, clear communication, and standardized support systems nationwide, supported by consistent professional development for school heads and teachers. School heads are encouraged to strengthen accountability measures, offer targeted training to address procrastination, and foster open communication within their schools. Teachers should actively engage in professional development, take responsibility for their tasks, and collaborate with peers to improve performance. These efforts will enhance teaching efficiency, benefiting students through timely feedback and better instruction while also helping educators instill valuable time management skills in learners. Future research should further investigate the long-term effects of leadership strategies and school culture on teacher procrastination and student outcomes to better inform interventions.

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