

Experiences of school heads in the lakbay albay program

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Abstract

This study examines the experiences of elementary and secondary school heads in the 1st Congressional District of Albay during the implementation of the Lakbay Albay Program in School Year 2025–2026. The program was designed to strengthen instructional leadership by equipping school heads with competencies in supervision, mentoring, communication, planning, and facilitation of professional learning communities (PLCs). Grounded in the 1987 Philippine Constitution and Republic Act No. 9155, the study highlights how trained leaders foster collaborative cultures, enhance teacher development, and improve instructional practices. Findings emphasize the shift from primarily administrative leadership to proactive, data-driven, and collaborative approaches. The research identifies challenges in sustaining collaborative practices and proposes learning and development plans to address them. Ultimately, the study underscores the significance of leadership transformation in promoting teacher growth, improving student outcomes, and advancing the broader goals of quality education reform in Albay.

Keywords: Instructional Leadership; Collaborative Culture; Lakbay Albay Program; Professional Learning Communities (Plcs)

1. Introduction

Instructional leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping collaborative and high-performing school environments. Trained leaders foster cultures of shared responsibility, mentoring, and professional learning communities (PLCs), ensuring that collaboration becomes embedded in daily school practices. UNESCO's Education 2030 Agenda underscores the importance of empowering school heads as pedagogical leaders, while the 1987 Philippine Constitution and Republic Act No. 9155 mandate the State to strengthen instructional leadership as a means of ensuring quality education. Within this framework, the Lakbay Albay Program was launched by the Schools Division of Albay as a strategic intervention to build the capacities of school heads. The program emphasizes proactive instructional supervision, coaching, mentoring, and data-informed decision-making. Prior to its implementation, leadership practices were largely administrative and reactive. After training, school heads demonstrated more collaborative and innovative approaches, actively engaging teachers in professional growth. This transformation highlights the program's potential to elevate instructional quality, foster collective accountability, and sustain educational reform. By documenting the experiences of school heads, this study seeks to assess the program's effectiveness, identify challenges, and propose development plans that strengthen leadership practices and contribute to improved teaching and learning outcomes.

2. Materials

The study utilized both primary and secondary sources to comprehensively examine the Lakbay-Albay Program's impact on instructional leadership. Primary data were gathered from ten school heads in public elementary and secondary schools who participated in the program. Their insights, experiences, and reflections were collected through structured questionnaires and interviews, providing authentic accounts of leadership practices, challenges, and

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contributions to collaborative culture. Secondary sources included official Department of Education reports, school performance records, training modules, policy documents, and related studies, which served to validate and contextualize the primary findings. The research instrument was divided into four parts: experiences in building collaborative culture, contributions to leadership development, challenges encountered, and workplace application plans. Validation was conducted through face and content review by experts in administration and supervision, ensuring clarity, reliability, and appropriateness. These materials provided a solid foundation for analyzing the program's effectiveness and its role in fostering professional learning communities.

3. Methods

This study employed a descriptive-documentary qualitative research design, complemented by a descriptive-survey approach. The method was chosen to systematically examine the experiences of school heads in implementing the Lakbay-Albay Program during School Year 2025–2026. Structured questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data, focusing on leadership practices, collaborative culture, and challenges encountered. The instrument underwent validation through face and content review by academic experts and school administrators to ensure reliability. Data gathering involved formal approval from the Schools Division Superintendent, distribution of questionnaires to respondents, and retrieval within three days to guarantee a 100% response rate. Confidentiality of responses was assured throughout the process. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, specifically frequency counts and weighted means, to identify trends in leadership styles and competencies. This methodological approach allowed the researcher to capture both qualitative insights and quantitative measures, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the program's impact.

4. Results

The results revealed significant changes in the instructional leadership practices of school heads following their participation in the Lakbay-Albay Program. Prior to implementation, leadership was largely administrative and reactive, with limited engagement in collaborative practices. After training, school heads demonstrated proactive, data-driven, and consultative approaches, fostering professional learning communities and supporting teacher development. Weighted mean analysis indicated high levels of improvement in competencies such as instructional supervision, mentoring, effective communication, and strategic instructional planning. Respondents reported increased visibility in classrooms, regular coaching, and active facilitation of collaborative activities among teachers. Challenges identified included resource limitations, sustaining collaborative culture, and balancing administrative and instructional responsibilities. Overall, the findings confirmed that the program strengthened leadership capacities, enhanced teacher support systems, and contributed to improved instructional quality. These results underscore the program's effectiveness in transforming school leadership toward a more collaborative and professionalized model.

5. Discussion

The findings highlight the Lakbay-Albay Program's effectiveness in reshaping instructional leadership within Albay's public schools. School heads transitioned from primarily administrative roles to proactive instructional leaders who foster collaboration, mentoring, and data-informed decision-making. The development of professional learning communities was a key outcome, enabling teachers to engage in shared reflection and continuous improvement. These results align with the mandates of the Philippine Constitution and RA 9155, which emphasize leadership as a driver of quality education. However, challenges such as limited resources, sustaining collaborative practices, and balancing multiple responsibilities indicate the need for ongoing support and refinement of the program. The discussion suggests that continuous professional development, policy reinforcement, and resource allocation are essential to sustain gains. Ultimately, the program demonstrates that leadership transformation is central to educational reform, offering a replicable model for other districts seeking to strengthen instructional leadership and improve teacher and student outcomes.

6. Conclusion

The Lakbay Albay Program represents a significant step in redefining instructional leadership within the Division of Albay. Findings reveal that school heads, once primarily focused on administrative tasks, have transitioned toward proactive, collaborative, and data-driven leadership practices. Through mentoring, coaching, and facilitation of professional learning communities, they have fostered environments that support teacher growth and enhance instructional quality. This shift underscores the program's effectiveness in aligning leadership practices with the constitutional and legal mandates of promoting quality education. However, challenges remain, particularly in

sustaining collaborative cultures, addressing resource limitations, and ensuring consistent application of leadership competencies across diverse school contexts. The study concludes that continuous professional development, structured support systems, and policy reinforcement are essential to overcoming these barriers. By strengthening instructional leadership, the Lakbay Albay Program contributes not only to improved teacher performance but also to better student outcomes and long-term educational reform. Ultimately, the program demonstrates that leadership transformation is a catalyst for advancing equity, accountability, and excellence in public education, offering a model that can inform similar initiatives across other districts and regions.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest should be disclosed.

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