

# Self-taught Choral Directors in School-based Choirs

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## Abstract

This study is a hermeneutic phenomenology that interprets the lived experiences of self-taught choral directors in school-based choirs. The phenomenon simply refers to choral directors who major in a different field but are handling choirs even without formal music education and have been chosen due to their musical experiences and interest. They are graduates of a non-music related degree and other non-allied fields. Through purposive sampling, nine participants from public and private junior and senior high schools in Tacloban City, Philippines which has established choral groups provided significant responses relative to their lived experience which was then treated with thematic analysis. The results coming from the interpretations of their lived experiences revealed that upgrading musical competence and being resourceful, collaborative, and disciplined were the secrets of the self-taught choral leaders to becoming successful in the field of choral singing. Moreover, factors such as the unavailability of qualified choral directors, the lack of support from the school, and the lack of training and workshops provided for choral singing and management for both the conductor and choristers have been the prevailing problems for the self-taught choral directors. Therefore, to provide substantial experience to the choristers, self-taught choral directors must ensure that they upgrade their musical competence through further studies and collaborations and that schools should ensure that the essential needs of the performing group be provided.

**Key Words:** Self-taught Choral Directors; School-based Choirs; Phenomenology

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## 1. Introduction

Researchers are divided on whether choral directing can be taught even to those with no solid foundation and formal music education. Still, they appear to agree that an effective conductor should have a variety of qualities, including skilled conducting gestures and movements, rehearsal techniques, excitement, and devotion (Varvarigou & Durrant, 2011). In other countries, Durrant (2003) investigated what constitutes successful conducting in the UK and proposed a tripartite model for deeper choral communication, communication that fosters the singers' responsiveness. The three components of the model choral conductor are musical-technical skills (aural skills, gestures, and rehearsal strategies), interpersonal and leadership skills, and knowledge of the choral repertoire, the human voice, and understanding of the conductor's role, which includes pedagogical principles and ways of fostering motivation and enjoyment of singing. Gumm (1993) identified eleven choral-teaching methods in the United States, each of which can be described by various patterns. The choral conducting profession needs to better align instructional behaviors, teaching styles, and musical standards in the choral classroom, according to two subsequent studies by Gumm (2004, 2007).

In the study of Zendel & Alexander (2020), they defined self-taught musicians as those who learned to play music through informal methods, such as with books, videos, or by ear; non-musicians, who had little or no music experience while formally trained musicians, who received formal music training through the conservatory. Research on choral singing and chorus involvement gives evidence of the musical and non-musical advantages of this activity for children and adults (Clift & Hancox, 2010). Where the professional education of choral conductors is regarded to be more systematic and controlled, there has been more research on the preparation of choral conductors (Billingham, 2008; Ruocco, 2008). Studies have emphasized the advantages of choir involvement for both the individual and the community. However, in any choral setting, the conductor is solely accountable for organizing and directing practices and performances. Although the numerous duties associated with the position of a choral conductor have been recognized, less focus has been placed on that individual's education. Effective choral conductors can be developed through education, provided that students have the chance to practice with choirs and that an "expert" is instructing. Theories of expertise have also been utilized to support this claim. Despite the fact that some studies have identified the necessary characteristics of an effective choral conductor (Gumm, 2007), the existing literature on choral conducting focuses primarily on technical issues, such as conductors' gestural vocabulary, suggested warm-up exercises, repertoire selection, rehearsal pacing, and planning techniques.

The Philippines is a nation with exceptional choirs, distinctive choral traditions, and unique composers. Most of the established Filipino choral conductors are, in a way, graduates of the top music conservatories in the country, which have contributed to their solid musical foundation. They are experts in the field and are well-versed in the diverse musical traditions of the Philippines that are greatly impacted by European and American customs, in addition to their strong tribal foundations (Yanson, 2010). Talented Filipino choral conductors are able to blend various styles, which results in a sound that is uniquely Filipino (Walker, 2022). As a result, Filipino choral conductors and music educators are able to choose from a wide range of Philippine choral works that are suitable for a variety of concert repertoire requirements.

Tacloban City, in the Eastern Visayas region of the Philippines, has a number of well-known choral conductors. Many of them have graduated with their baccalaureate degrees from music schools and conservatories and have been working with public and private schools to direct choral groups. However, some of them have been designated to handle school choral groups out of pure talent and sheer determination. These are the self-taught or self-learned choral directors who major in a different field but are handling choirs even without formal music education and have been chosen due to their musical experiences and interest. Self-taught choral directors as operationally defined in this study are those graduates of a non-music related degree and related courses such as diploma in music and certificate courses.

On this premise, this study was conducted to unveil and interpret the lived experiences of the self-taught choral directors in school-based choirs.

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

This study, therefore, intends to interpret the lived experiences of self-taught choral directors in church-based choirs. Specifically, this study ought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of the self-taught choral directors in school-based choirs?
2. What are the best practices of the self-taught choral directors in school-based choirs in their choral management?

### 1.2 Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Music Learning Theory of Edwin E. Gordon (2007). The Music Learning Theory describes how we learn when we study music. Based on an enormous amount of research and practical field testing by Edwin E. Gordon and others, Music Learning Theory is a comprehensive method for teaching audiation, Gordon's word for the capacity to comprehend music in the mind. The ideas of Music Learning Theory aid music teachers of all types – early childhood, elementary general, instrumental, vocal, and private studio – in constructing sequential curricular objectives consistent with their particular teaching techniques and views. The major purpose is to develop the tonal and rhythmic audiation of students. Students are able to derive additional meaning from the music they listen to, play, improvise, and write through audiation.

With the phenomenon being investigated, the theory serves as a framework to understand and interpret the lived experiences of the self-taught choral director handling school-based choirs. The theory will help unveil the essence of their experiences.

## 2. Methodology

A hermeneutic or interpretive phenomenological approach enabled the exploration and interpretation of the self-taught choral directors' lived experiences. It is based on the assumption that human experiences are interpreted through and through. The paradigms of interpretative or inductive naturalistic inquiry serve as the foundation for this qualitative investigation (Noblit & Hare, 1988). In this context, the meaning of life experiences can be considered in depth (Heidegger, 1962). Phenomenology was the selected approach and it has been used in similar research.

The study was conducted in private and public junior and senior high schools in Tacloban City, Philippines. The research environment was chosen based on the following criteria: a.) The school has an established choral group performing in different school activities; b.) The school has a self-taught choral conductor handling the performing group and c.) The researcher has access to the data needed. Purposive sampling was used to select the participants. The researcher was able to identify as many as fifteen (15) participants who were representative enough to enhance the possibility that certain phenomena might be captured but only nine (9) were involved in the study due to the saturation of data and they were chosen based on a set of inclusion criteria: a) Should be a self-taught choral director handling a choral group in a school-based choir; b) Should be willing to participate in the study by signing a consent form; and c) Should be able to express themselves orally in whichever language they were comfortable with (Wa-Mbaleka & Gladstone, 2018).

To collect the relevant data, a Google form was utilized to collect the demographic profiles, interview guide/schedule, and informed consent. Qualitative research, according to Creswell (1998), requires the primary involvement of the researcher. Permission to conduct the interview with the participants was initially secured prior to the start of the study. The interview was conducted using a semi-structured interview schedule, with open-ended questions and some follow-up detailed questions for clarity and verification. The interview was conducted and scheduled at the most convenient time for the participants. The views and explanations of the participants were the main emphases. In addition, audio and video from the interviews were recorded with consent to capture all the participants' responses. The observations through the interview focused on the participants' emotions, inquiries, stated feelings and replies to queries. Three qualitative research experts verified the interview guide used in this study, and it was improved based on their comments. The narratives were then transcribed, coded, and analyzed with the help of an Atlas. ti software. With the use of the software, line numbers in the transcripts were identified along with the coding of the participants to observe anonymity (e.g., P1 for Participant 1). The transcripts acted as the framework for the analysis of the latent data from the participants.

Whichever technique is used for data analysis, the three Cs of analysis, which includes the element of Codes, Categories, and Concepts, is a useful tool for data reduction in qualitative studies (Lichtman, 2006). Lichtman has broken down this process into six steps: creating initial coding, revisiting initial coding, developing an initial list of categories or central ideas, modifying the initial

list, revisiting the categories and subcategories, and moving from categories into concepts (themes). As a rule of thumb, five to seven concepts are the maximum number that can be found in a set of data (Lichtman, 2006). The researcher was able to arrange and analyze data using Lichtman's (2006) six-step procedure to arrive at a sensible saturation point. Within a week following the taped interviews, the verbatim transcriptions were stored on computer disks and cloud drives. Written transcripts of the interviews—which served as descriptive information or texts—were created through verbatim transcription. Following this procedure, the researcher reread the text several times to obtain a feel of its overall context before starting to analyze the facts. A second coder or rater examined the interpretation to ensure agreement on the themes that emerged from the interviews and asked clarifying questions as well as verifying the accuracy of the transcription of the interviews.

### 3. Results

This section presents the data gathered from the participants through the key-informant interviews that were conducted and the discussion for every theme generated.

Q. 1. What are the lived experiences of the self-taught choral directors in school-based choirs?

#### Theme 1. The Struggles in Handling Choral Groups

**“No Choice”.** In many of the responses from the participants, the most frequent answer was the school has no available music faculty who is well-trained to lead a choir. According to the participants, even though they love music, they have no other option but to accept the designation just for the school to have a performing group. In their accounts, they shared that they were designated to handle the choirs due to them being affiliated with church choirs. The assumption of the school administrator was the teacher will be able to lead a choral group due to the teacher's singing experience. At some point, this phenomenon is existent in several schools since singing skills are seen as a foremost reason and a core component of music education for all those teachers teaching music (Legette & McCord, 2014).

“No choice sila. Kasabot nira bakay member ako ha church hin choir pwede na ako pero anyway nakaya ko man pasalamat nala ako ha ira.” (No other choice. They knew I was a member of a church choir so they assumed that I am capable of leading it but anyway I was able to do it so I am also thankful to them) (P2: Line 9)”

One of the participants shared about finishing a music degree but because of financial difficulties, a more practical course is to be prioritized. In most cases, a lot of aspiring music teachers are having the same dilemma of wanting to pursue music programs to be equipped with hands-on experiences, pedagogies, and varied classroom settings (Legette, 2013).

“I was actually about to finish my music program before way back in college but because of financial problems, sadly I was not able to finish it and took a different degree. My school actually designated me to handle the choir because I have a background in it and no other teachers want to handle it.” (P3: Line 6)

The other participants just explained how they feel about being chosen because no other qualified teachers are available.

“...I don't know waray na hira napili ada na iba hahaha (I don't know maybe they were left with no other options) (P7: Line 6)

“Maupay gad hiya na practice actually parehos haam na love it music pero feeling ko kun mayda iba na mas capable dire gad ad aini ihahatag ha ak (This is a good practice actually, especially for us who love music but I know they will not give it to me if we have someone who is more capable” (P8: Line 5)

Designating a task that is convenient for you can be a reason for being efficient. The researcher himself believes that to be effective; you need to emphasize the strengths rather than the

weaknesses. In the study of Mather (2003), an individual sometimes controls which options are received. People often end up with options that were not chosen but were assigned by others, such as job assignments made by bosses, course instructors posted by a registrar, or vacation spots selected by other family members. How options are remembered, especially compared with opportunities that could have been had instead, may affect people's eventual sense of satisfaction.

**The Lack of Support from the School.** As stated by the participants, even though they were designated to handle these choral groups, the issue of support whether financial or through the provisions of equipment and rehearsal area was still a hindrance in producing quality repertoires for the group.

“Waray talaga. Bisan gud ano nga hatag na manla ha amon waray gud. Though I am not blaming the administration ha kay naintindi gihap ako ha ira kabutang na makuri gihap (There's none. We are not receiving anything for the group. Though I am not blaming the administration since I also understand how hard their situation is as well).” (P1: Line 20)

For the satisfaction of choral directors, coordination and collaboration with all design experts are essential if you want to create a rehearsal space that offers a complete experience for musicians. In addition to acoustic quality, it's critical to meet the needs of musicians with regard to temperature regulation, lighting, aesthetics, and ergonomics of space layout (Pop, et.al, 2019).

“Akon concern yana is waray kami rehearsal room kay maaringasa talaga kun makigdudrangan ako ha iba na regular classes. Diba iba baya it practices hit choir needed hin lugar na mamingaw (My concern as of the moment is the rehearsal room because it is really noisy if we rehearse along with the regular classes.” (P4: Line 11)

It was challenging for the participants to raise the quality of rehearsals with their singers. The noise and bad acoustics of the rehearsal rooms, which is originally designed for classes, impede the group's efficiency in fast and quality rehearsals.

“It's kinda difficult. Yeah. Danay gad hira nahatag pansnack pero saan aabot ang 200 pesos mo costume pa kaya? Like I am just being real here. It is really not enough to sustain the group (It is really difficult. They sometimes give us money for the snacks of the members how but it is still not enough, much more a costume. I am just being real here. It is really not enough to sustain the group).” (P9: Line 15)

Owoeye (2011) asserts that a school's facilities and equipment are evolving into game-changing interactive learning elements. It is impossible to overstate the advantages of teaching and learning in environments with enough technology and learning resources. It was evident from the instructors' experiences that the school's equipment needs to be more adequate to meet the demands of the learners. Akande (2014) states that a lesson is frequently understood when the learner is fully immersed in the setting. All resources that are easily accessible for use in the educational process are included. Hence, when all these necessary provisions on facilities and equipment are missing, a compromised learning process is inevitable.

**The Insufficiency of Training Provided for Choral Singing and Management for Both the Singers and Conductor.** Though it was evident that the phenomenon was really in existence. The participants of the study feel that they are left out. According to them, they have yet to experience being sent to training and workshops related to choral singing.

“Oo sana igsend kami ha trainings. Kay waray kami dinhi talaga nagpapatigayon nala danay (I hope that someday they send us to trainings because I have no memory of being sent to these trainings.)” (P1: Line 16)

*“Bagat feeling ko dinhi ha aton kulang liwat kasi hin nag-oorganize hin mga workshop kanan choral singing (I feel that here in the region only a few are organizing workshops on choral singing).” (P2: Line 13)*

The lack of active presence of professional organizations and institutions in the region offering training and workshops to choral directors to develop musicianship and leadership skills has been seen as a necessity. In the Philippine setting, competitive choirs are often handled by choral directors who are graduates of music conservatories and members of renowned choral groups who compete nationally and internationally.

*“Mas maupay siguro sir kun igsesend kami ha mga seminar ba or kamo ha iyo school magconduct kamo workshop ha amon kay kailangan talaga namon ito (I think it is better if the administration will send us to seminars or even your school sir if you are willing to conduct workshops for us because we really need it).” (P8: Line 21)*

In a music workshop, participants learn craftsmanship by examining how specifics are put together and what distinguishes excellent work from shoddy work. When these standards are used to assess a student's own work, they demand a higher standard of excellence and push students to use more of their own abilities.

*“I believe it's high time for us here in the region to provide training for the likes of us who know little about choral singing. I also hope that more opportunities will be provided to us.” (P9: Line 18)*

The study of Heaven et. al. (2006) has shown clearly that improvements in skills are only consistently maintained or generalized significantly if some intervention is provided.

## **Theme 2. The Secrets for the Success of the Self-Taught Choral Directors in Handling Choral Groups**

**Interest, Motivation, & Commitment.** As long as you love what you are doing, nothing will go wrong, and it will always be a learning experience. This was the general essence that was derived from this sub-theme. In the participants' lived experiences, they see this as an opportunity to develop their musical selves even more. No matter how hard a situation is, interest, motivation, and commitment are necessary to succeed in leading choral groups. According to them:

*“Okay, lang, anyways love ko man tak ginhihimo and this is actually just one of the many ways how I can cope with my stress (It is okay anyway, I love what I am doing and this is actually just one of the many ways how I can cope with my stress).” (P1: Line 5)*

There were times when the participants feel tired of continuing to handle the rehearsals and performances but because of their passion for their craft, they carry through the hardships and struggles.

*“Mayda times nga guggul-an ka talaga kay waray man suporta talaga pero basta love mo it im ginhihimo makakaya mo gihap ito (There are times that you will really feel tired because of the lack of support but since I love what I am doing I am able to make it).” (P2: Line 8)*

All of the participants emphasized that interest, motivation, and commitment will help their journey as choral directors succeed amidst the odds of leading a choral group. Interest in the context of learning is a significant behavioral motivation and a moving component to guide the attention span and facilitate schooling in the process of various contexts (Renninger & Hidi, 2011).

*“Yeah really for as long as you are committed to your job and you are willing to go the extra mile then anything is possible even though many challenges are there.” (P3: Line 9)*

*“...basta interesado ka liwat (..for as long as you're interested)” (P4: Line 15)*

The study of Chesnut and Burley (2015), it implies that teachers' perceptions of their own self-efficacy have an impact on their dedication to the teaching profession. The conceptual correctness of the self-efficacy measure and the source of the data, however, affects these effects differently. Measures of self-efficacy that were conceptually accurate had much larger impact sizes.

P5, P6, P7, P8, and P9 emphasized that motivation and commitment will help choral directors not just those who experience the same phenomenon – self-taught choral directors in school-based choirs. According to them:

“Kailangan mo la siguro i-motivate it imo sarili para makaisip more means of producing quality performances (Maybe you just need to motivate yourself to think of more means of producing quality performances).” (P5: Line 11)

“Basta commitment. Asya manla ito it akon (It really is commitment).” (P6: Line 13)

“Just do your part. Anyway, *when you're motivated* you will also feel fulfillment when you are able to create performances given the situation.” (P7: Line 9)

“Commitment lang.” (P8: Line 16)

“Dapat la ako mamotivate para siguro magpadayon la perme hini na *trabahuon*.” (P9: Line 22)

When utilized in relation to teaching, motivations provide insight into the elements that draw people to perform the role and may have an impact on how long they stay in their initial preparation and the field as well as the type and level of engagement and concentration on their task as well as their teaching roles and responsibilities. Motivation is thought to be what causes, maintains, and focuses conduct in the workplace (Steers et.al., 2004). As a result, they are directly related to and affect people's devotion to their jobs (retention, concentration). Work motivations have been defined more specifically as "a set of energetic factors that originate both within and beyond an individual's existence, and that launch work-related behavior and govern its form, direction, intensity, and duration."

**Musical Exposure.** Having the experience to naturally lead a choral group over time by coming from a musical family and being exposed to choral singing since childhood was a factor that helped the choral directors produce quality performances and sustain the leadership within the group.

“...*bata pa ako sir involved na man gud ako ha choir so yana bagat sanayan nalang hiya* (...since I was young I was already involved joining choirs and for now I feel like I am used to it). (P8: Line 24)

Music aptitude in some cases is dependent on musical exposure. Music, even though it is a subject that should be taught for students' appreciation and enjoyment, it is one of the most difficult subjects to be taught (Mabini, 2021).

“Maupay siguro an akon gin-again before nga ginpirit ako nak mga kag-anak nga magbinulig nagud ha choir han bata pa ako (Maybe that was fortunate I was forced by my parents to join choirs when I was young)” (P5: Line 19)

In the study of Rohrmeier & Rebuschat (2012), music; like our own language, is a historically advance, complex, and highly complicated form of human interaction and communication, which entails a series of cognitive processes in perception, resolution, and creation. Clear associations on implicit learning describe the whole experience. Implicit learning is a main factor for the acquisition of a complex, systematic, established environment from mere interaction, such as musical skill acquisition. On the other hand, learners as well need at least sufficient musical exposure to start appreciating and even indulging in it. According to an unofficial survey conducted in Britain, more than 75% of music educators who choose which students would receive instruction feel that students can't succeed unless they have unique intrinsic talents (Jellison, 2015).

Q. 2. What are the best practices of the self-taught choral directors in school-based choirs in their choral management?

### Theme 3. The Effective Practices in Choral Leadership for the Self-taught Choral Directors

**Resourcefulness.** By initiating any means of making something out of the limited resources, the self-taught choral directors were able to manage to sustain the group they lead. For the repertoires, the choral directors were reusing music scores, writing original arrangements, and utilizing repertoires in the public domain.

*“Kailangan mo la talaga maging resourceful danay labi na kulang man it suportang so patigayon talaga kay bisan mga pyesa danay recycled la or pwede gihap imo hinimo (You just need to be resourceful at times when you lack support by reusing your old repertoires and even arranging your own songs)” (P1: Line 23)*

For the costumes during the performances, the group makes use of the school uniform most of the time, personally-owned attires for formal occasions, and costumes out of the solicitations and donations for the group.

*“...uniform lat amon gingagamit danay actually kay tag-ihang man before they provide a new set of costumes for the group. (we are using their school uniform because it takes a lot of time before they provide a new set of costumes).” (P8: Line 10)*

Oftentimes, most choral directors who are successful even with limited resources possess a characteristic to overcome the adversities in the process of leading a choral group. By all means, for a group to thrive, it needs the gritty personality of the leader. In the study of Brand (2009), he compiled the characteristics of an effective music teacher based on existing studies conducted. It applies to all aspects of teaching and music performance. These teacher characteristics are leadership, patience, neatness, kindness, musical proficiency, honesty, business ability, well-integrated personality, emotional stability, initiative, good judgment, tact, adaptability, communication skills, consideration, ability to analyze situations, enthusiasm, self-confidence, like children, persistence, sympathy, social compatibility, philosophy of life, personal integrity, physical health, ability to plan, perseverance, general functional intelligence, self-sufficiency, cooperative spirit, and dependability.

**Collaborations and Linkages.** Building networks with the other choral directors in the field, especially the experts, was one way to raise their performance level. They often invite choirmasters from different groups to handle the rehearsal, critique, and provide constructive comments on how to improve their singing and perform in shows and concerts alongside the different choirs. In most of the responses from the participants, they find collaboration as a means to connect and be updated with the current trends in the field of choral directing.

*“Dako hiya nga bulig talaga ha amon skills labi na kun nakikipagcollab kay you are both learning from each other (It is a huge boost to our skills when you do collaborations because you learn from each other).” (P2: Line 29)*

By connecting to a wide network of musicians, the self-taught choral directors were able to tap their expertise. These norms governing group interaction revolve around a more constructivist approach to learning, where learners develop and co-construct knowledge by collaborating with others in their class and with the larger online community, with the instructor serving as the facilitator (Cremata & Powell, 2017).

*“...maupay talaga hiya kun mayda ka liwat mga kilala nga pwede mo pakianhan kun mayda ka mga concerns mas napapadali it imo trabaho sympre diba we don't have the monopoly of knowledge (it is good when you know somebody in the same field because you can seek help since we do not have the monopoly of knowledge).” (P7: Line 20)*

Collaborations in general help in promoting unity even with diverse principles and beliefs. With the advent of technology, connecting to people in the same field has made it more accessible. Ruthmann (2007) argued that since many are already familiar with these collaborative Web 2.0

practices such as social networking, blogs, and streaming media galleries from outside their formal school settings, they might be well equipped to take advantage of them in their collaborative music experiences.

**Continued Professional Development.** Participating in the masterclass of renowned choral directors in the country was a boost in the teachers' continued professional development. According to the choral directors, they should not be in a state of a plateau and must upgrade themselves to suit the current trends in choral singing and be able to provide appropriate exercises for the different voice classifications of the singers.

*"...it kuan nala hito kelangan mo talaga mag further studies anyway para man gihap iton ha imo (one way to solve that is through further studies anyway it's for you self-development)." (P9: Line13)*

In the study of Conkling & Henry (1999), they presented a characteristic of a master music teacher in the field of teaching who has already developed the necessary competencies. Master music educators frequently incorporate singing, playing instruments, improvising, reading, and notating music into their lesson plans to demonstrate their fluency as musicians. Their selection of musical genres demonstrates their profound awareness of their understanding of music in relation to history and culture, as well as the connections between music and the other arts. As they instruct, their pupils provide them with musical performances as feedback, which they then attentively listen to, break down, and assess.

*"You really need to upgrade yourself para (so that you are) still updated on the current trends in the field of you know, choir conducting." (P3: Line 16)*

Upgrading your competencies in choral conducting translates to more versatile leadership. In most cases, people who tend to be more dedicated in the quest for knowledge acquisition are more likely to achieve greater heights in their field (Kennedy, 2005).

**Setting Rules, Roles, and Boundaries.** Discipline imposed among the ranks of the choristers was one of the identified best practices of the choral directors. They are particular about time and attendance at every rehearsal and performance. The choral directors ensure that every group member has responsibilities; the group has an assistant conductor, voice or section leaders, a librarian, and a custodian.

*"It really is easier para sa amin (on our end) if we assign roles sa aming (to our) members to give them responsibilities." (P2: Line 22)*

In the experience of the researcher, designating roles among the ranks of the choristers provides efficient pacing in all of the processes in the choir. By doing so, you not only save time but also help the choristers develop a sense of responsibility.

*"...being strict danay (sometimes) really helps in putting together all kinds of singers with different voices to sing as one." (P4: Line 8)*

Strict imposition of rules helps in setting the right direction for the group. In a participant's response, this kind of practice binds a conglomerate of voices into one harmonious sound. In the study by Webb (2002) in the field of teaching, he stated that the teacher's power refers to teachers' professional discretion and is considered to be the foundation upon which to professionalize teaching.

#### 4. Conclusions

The results of this study seem to indicate that there are various ways to become an effective self-taught choral director and that informal music learning is achievable for choral conducting that is typically thought to be hard to master without years of study from formal schooling from prestigious music schools and universities. One could argue that there is a discrepancy in the degree of competence of the self-taught choral directors that can be attained because competence, especially in musical performance, is a social construct and comparisons across various cultural standards are not simple (Schneider et. al., 2002). It is also evident that these musicians solely believe they are only qualified to perform in the particular musical and social setting that they have

been designated and they have chosen. Even the self-taught musicians in this study got a form of training through seminars and brief workshops at some point, but there is no indication from their responses that this served as the foundation that is comparable to those who received formal musical learning.

A suitable social setting, which not only enhances skill acquisition for self-taught choral directors but may also increase the likelihood of further improvement is through appropriating support from the sponsoring school. The choral directors tend to be more independent with decisions for the group; hence, being resourceful in all aspects. There aren't many social constructivist explanations for how choral directors learn specifically. Collaboration and linkages are crucial game changers in the phenomenon. It narrows the gap between the self-taught choral directors' musical aptitude to the choristers they handle. Moreover, the fact that many musicians are self-taught, goes to show that it also has its advantages such as accessibility, flexibility, and affordability. The availability of various online resources for learning musical instruments has further facilitated self-teaching of music. Thus, a crucial query is whether musicians who self-taught themselves benefit from the same aural advantages as musicians who received professional training. Informal learning may somehow hold the key to enhancing the accessibility of participation in choral singing. The fact that this phenomenon exists in the research environment, a great number of schools in the country may also be experiencing the same phenomenon. Although this kind of approach is less common in the professional field, it is still important to understand the meaning of the experiences of self-taught choral directors.

## 5. Recommendations

The findings and interpretation in the previous chapter revealed that there is a varying impact on the choral group on the issue of being a self-taught choral director. On a macro scale, school institutions should only designate choral experts to lead a group; however, if no available qualified choral leaders are available, the school institutions should provide necessary training and workshops to their prospective faculty to lead the choral group. It was also evident that even though the self-taught choral directors were unbothered to the limited resources, they are still challenged on the provision of costumes and the procurement of copyrighted repertoires. With this, schools should support the performing group by allocating funds for these issues. On the other hand, initiatives from the choral leaders must also ensure that the choristers will be provided with substantial experiences by upgrading their musical competence through further studies and by connecting to other choral leaders through their expertise. A further need to conduct research with regard to the correlation of effectiveness between a self-taught choral director who has a long list of experiences and a choral director who is a product of formal music schooling is necessary to determine the extent of comparability of the former to the latter.

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