

# FIRE Leadership: A Case Study of the Blaan Tribe in Municipality of Kiblawan, Davao del Sur.

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**Abstract**— the study was conducted to determine the long-established leadership system of Blaan Tribe on the aspect of Fortification, Integrity, Resiliency, and being Ethical. The tribal leaders were interviewed to determine the constructs of FIRE leadership based on the Blaan tribe Indigenous Knowledge Systems and practices. This study utilized qualitative methods of research using a case study research design employing appreciative inquiry. The design is appropriate since it gives a comprehensive description of an individual case and its analysis. Through in-depth interviews, the researcher has been able to gain knowledge regarding the type of leadership the Blaan has. They have fortified in the sense that leaders find ways, are responsible to their call of duty, and solicit suggestions to their elders to make just decisions. To be served as a role model of the community, the Blaan Leader admits guilt and takes responsibility for the actions he/she has made. Identifying the root cause is practiced to solve problems, and consensus amongst leaders and community members is the culture. Lastly, Blaan Leaders observe the procedural process of settling conflicts, have a moral principle, basing their decision with consensus, and depend on the traditional customary practices.

**Index Terms** – Fortification, Integrity, Resilience & Ethical Leadership

## I. INTRODUCTION

Over the past decades, the spectrum of leadership has grown so much. Numerous leadership theories have been developed, and many leaders are practicing those theories to become better leaders. Many indigenous people are living in Mindanao. One of which is the Blaans considered one of the largest due to their territorial position. The boundaries of their ancestral domain were the territories of their fellow Indigenous Peoples/Indigenous Cultural Communities (ICC's/IP's). With the implementation of the IPRA law of 1997, their rights are recognized, right to an ancestral domain, rights to social justice and human rights, right to cultural integrity, and right to self-governance and empowerment (ADSDPP, 2016). However, the problem arises when leaders fail to maintain the status quo of their jurisdiction. The problems they encounter along their way as a leader would test them how fortified they are in times of difficulties, how they practice integrity, how resilient they are while in toughness and challenging situations, and how ethical they are.

In the locality of Kiblawan, Davao del Sur, wherein it is dominated mainly by the Blaan people, leadership has been practiced. Brian has its system of choosing its leader. The leader among the Blaan is recognized through their *hard work, bravery, concern to its constituents*, and most of all, his

*knowledge* in settling conflict among the community members. The Blaan leader is sometimes not chosen but comes out as long as he possesses the leader qualification as mentioned earlier (ADSDPP, 2016). This pronouncement inspired the researcher to investigate and understand the traditional way of Blaan leadership in the Municipality of Kiblawan, Davao del Sur, and determine their cultural and customary practices.

### *Statement of the Problem*

This research sought to answer the question, what are the constructs of FIRE leadership; the case of Blaan Tribe in the Municipality of Kiblawan, Davao del Sur?

### *Significance of the Study*

The researcher decided to conduct the study to document and understand the characteristics of the Blaan leaders of Kiblawan when it comes to FIRE Leadership employing their Indigenous Knowledge System and Practices (IKSP), customary law, and tradition. The result of the study served as an eye-opener to the people of Kiblawan in understanding the way of the leadership of the Blaans. It also served as a reference for some related researchers and studies that would benefit the following:

This study is helpful to the **IP leaders** since they can use the result of this study as their reference in formulating policies, framework in strategic planning, and making decisions for the welfare of the tribe according to the ethical philosophy. Furthermore, the **Blaan community** could benefit from this study because it serves as their lens of identifying things or performing actions in conformity to the norms of their in-groups.

Nevertheless, this study is also essential to the **IP youth**, for it would serve as their guide in developing their sense of leadership and contributes to the formulation of effective plans for the welfare of the entire Blaan community, to be specific. Moreover, **future researchers** are other beneficiaries of this study. It would give future researchers a basis for conducting a study related to the subject matter. This would also provide instructional novelty, which would help people who are interested in pursuing research.

### *Scope and Limitation*

This study was limited only to the factors related to Blaan Tribe's customary and traditional leadership practices. The research coverage and scope were also limited to the selected

Indigenous Peoples Datus and Furlongs of the Municipality of Kiblawan, especially the Municipal Tribal Chieftain and councils, Barangay tribal Chieftains and councils, IP Youth, Women's and Elders federation presidents.

However, the data gathered from the participants were hampered because of the presence of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the researcher strongly believes that an ounce of prevention is always better than pounds of cure. In this case, the safety of the researcher and the participants are of paramount importance.

#### *Definition of Terms*

To aid the readers in deciphering the contents of this study, the researcher used the operational definition of terms to transcend the information accurately that would provide additional knowledge and broaden the reader's perspectives.

**A safe.** It is a Blaan term for “respect.”

**Ancestral Domain.** Refers to the lands, territories, and resources of indigenous peoples, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region. The term differs from indigenous land rights, Aboriginal title, or Native Title by directly indicating a relationship to land-based on ancestry. In contrast, domain indicates relationships beyond material lands and territories, including spiritual and cultural aspects that may not be acknowledged in land titles and legal doctrine about trading ownership.

**Blaan community.** This study refers to all members of this tribal group.

**Blaan Tribe.** are a tribal community of Southern Mindanao, the name of this indigenous group comes from the words *Bla* and *An*, meaning *Opponent People*. The Balance in South Cotabato and south of Davao Region were renowned hunters and food gatherers; they hunted wild animals and reaped grains, root crops, fruits, and herbs in colonial land's once vast open space known as *Kolon Datal*, nowadays Koronadal City.

**Customary practices.** Refers to the customs and practices of the Blaan community, established by or based on custom rather than common law or statute.

**Datu or Fulong.** This study refers to the oldest and wisest man in the village of Kiblawan.

**Dependent variable.** A variable that receives a stimulus and is measured for the effect the treatment has had upon it.

**Ethical.** It relates to moral principles or the branch of knowledge dealing with these; morally excellent or correct; avoiding activities or organizations that harm people or the environment.

**Ethnography** is the study of people in their environment through participant observation and face-to-face interviewing methods.

**Ethnographic research.** Involves a detailed description of the whole of a culture outside of the researcher's country of origin.

**FIRE.** Refers to the acronym of the title, which is Fortification, Integrity, Resiliency, and Ethical.

**Fortification.** the action of fortifying or the process of being fortified; A defensive wall or other reinforcement built to strengthen a place against attack.

**ICC.** It is the abbreviation of Indigenous Cultural Communities.

**IKSP. Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices (IKSPs)** are local knowledge developed over centuries of experimentation and are passed orally from generation to generation; It is the abbreviation of Indigenous Knowledge System and Practices.

**Integrity.** the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles; moral uprightness.

**IPRA Law.** The Indigenous Rights Act of 1997 recognizes and promotes all the rights of Indigenous Cultural Communities/Indigenous People of the Philippines.

**IPO.** Refers to the Indigenous political Organization of the Blaan tribe.

**IPS.** Refers to the Indigenous Political Structure of the Blaan tribe.

**Kaskade.** It is a Blaan term for “love.”

**Kasfala.** It is a Blaan term for “barter system.”

**Resiliency.** the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness; the ability of a substance or object to spring back into shape; elasticity.

**Respondents.** Refers to the Blaan IP Leaders identified by the researcher to be the source of information or data for the conduct of the study.

**Stayed.** It is a Blaan term for “trading and commerce.”

**Self-governance.** is the ability of a group or individual to exercise all necessary regulatory functions without intervention from an external authority.

**Tribe.** A social division in a traditional society consisting of families or communities linked by social, economic, religious, or blood ties, with a common culture and dialect, typically having a recognized leader.

**Tribal Chieftain.** This study refers to the leader of the Blaan tribe.

## II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Leaders are not born; they are made. Their great use of powers and commendable ways of ruling over their members is evident, proving that they are authentic and genuine leaders. Leaders are said to be effective if they have shown or influences their members a positive value in the desired way to

achieve the desired goal. Leadership is when individuals influence a group to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2010 as cited in Shaver, 2014). Moreover, it is also defined as a process of social influence enacted by individuals in formal positions of power or leadership positions in an organization (Barling & Kelloway, 2010 as cited in Karthikeyan, 2017). Precisely, leadership is not only a leader who plans for himself. Instead, an effective leader is goal-oriented who seeks the welfare of his constituents. Influential leaders are fortified, possess integrity, resiliency, and are ethical.

#### *Blaan Leadership*

The Blaan Community is headed by its "Fulong" or the tribal chieftain. The community chooses it from among their nobles. A man or woman is qualified to become a fulong for as long as the man/woman belongs to the fulong Libyan (family or former leaders or wise men). The community's choice of a fulong need not be directly communicated to the person chosen when people begin approaching him for help or assistance. Once chosen, the fulong must be brave, loyal to his people, trustworthy, honest, kindhearted, merciful, generous, hospitable, and friendly to be considered a good leader.

#### *The Tribal Council*

President Corazon C. Aquino marked Executive Order No. 122-C in 1987. The workplace for Southern Cultural Communities was made, which was ordered to sort out Tribal Council where each network is going by their Tribal Chieftain with Tribal Council Members made out of elders and leaders. The Tribal Youth were additionally composed and is enunciated to in the Tribal Council. National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, with their endeavor supporting the IP women to participate in the tribal council employing representation fully, was very successful and is being practiced up to the present.

The tribal council is the mainstream political structure recognized by the government units interfacing with Republic Act 8371 and RA 7160. At the barangay and sitio level, the leaders in the indigenous political structure of the Blaan ICCs/IPs are the same leaders constituting the barangay tribal council (IPS 2016).

#### *Theory Base*

Over the centuries, leadership has evolved, and perspectives, theories, and points of view were evident to distinguish leaders and non-leaders. While most research today has shifted from traditional trait or personality-based theories to a situation theory, which dictates that the situation in which leadership is exercised is determined by the leadership skills and characteristics of the leader (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009).

Charry (2012) noted that scholarly interest in leadership increased significantly during the early part of the twentieth century and identified eight major leadership theories. While the earlier of these focused on the qualities that distinguish

leaders from followers, later theories looked at other variables, including situational factors and skill levels. Although new theories are emerging all of the time, most can be classified as one of Charry's nine significant types. However, in this study, not all theories are applicable because of their internal relevance.

#### *"Great Man" Theory*

Grand man theories assume that the leadership capacity is inherent, that great leaders are born, not made. These theories often portray leaders as heroic, mythic, and destined to rise to leadership when needed. The term great man was used because, at the time, leadership was thought of primarily as a male quality, especially military leadership (See also, Oloolube, 2013).

#### *Trait Theory*

Like grand man theories, the trait theory assumes that people inherit certain qualities or traits that make them better suited to leadership. Trait theories often identify particular personality or behavioral characteristics that leaders share. Many have begun to ask of this theory; however, if particular traits are key features of leaders and leadership, how do we explain people who possess those qualities but are not leaders? Inconsistencies in the relationship between leadership traits and leadership effectiveness eventually led scholars to shift paradigms in search of new explanations for effective leadership.

In Blaan leadership, they are practicing this theory as means of choosing their leaders. The leader among the **Blaan** is recognized through their *hard work, bravery, concern to its constituents*, and most of all, his *knowledge* in settling conflict among the community members. The Blaan leader is sometimes not chosen but comes out as long as he possesses the leader qualification as mentioned earlier (IPS, 2016).

#### *Behavioral Theory*

Behavioral theories of leadership are based on the belief that great leaders are made, not born. This leadership theory focuses on the actions of leaders, not on intellectual qualities or internal states. According to behavioral theory, people can learn to become leaders through training and observation. Naylor (1999) notes that interest in the behavior of leaders has been stimulated by a systematic comparison of autocratic and democratic leadership styles. It has been observed that groups under these types of leadership perform differently. Autocratically led groups will work well so long as the leader is present. Group members, however, tend to be unhappy with the leadership style and express hostility. Democratically led groups do nearly as well as the autocratic group. Group members have more positive feelings, however, and no hostility. Most importantly, the efforts of group members continue even when the leader is absent.

#### *Relationship/Transformational Theory*

Relationship theories, also known as transformational theories, focus on the connections formed

between leaders and followers. In these theories, leadership is the process by which a person engages with others and can "create a connection" that results in increased motivation and morality in both followers and leaders. Relationship theories are often compared to charismatic leadership theories in which leaders with certain qualities, such as confidence, extroversion, and clearly stated values, are seen as best able to motivate followers (Lamb, 2013). Relationship or transformational leaders motivate and inspire people by helping group members see the importance and higher good of the task. These leaders are focused on the performance of group members and on each person to fulfill his or her potential. Leaders of this style often have high ethical and moral standards (Charry, 2012).

#### *Skills Theory*

This theory states that learned knowledge and acquired skills/abilities are significant factors in the practice of effective leadership. Skills theory by no means refuses to acknowledge the connection between inherited traits and the capacity to lead effectively but argues that learned skills, a developed style, and acquired knowledge are the real keys to leadership performance. A strong belief in skills theory often demands that considerable effort and resources be devoted to leadership training and development (Wolinski, 2010)

### III. ELEMENTS OF LEADERSHIP

#### *Fortify*

Leadership is not about the range of power, expansions of networks, or popularity. You were voted by the people, appointed or selected by the majority according to some performances. Thus, a leader is the epitome of being strong and having tough decisions. A leader should be fortified in an organization or any political entity.

Fortification is one of the attributes must possess by a leader. Anytime, a leader's bravery will be tested by any unexpected circumstances. Hence, he or she must be strong enough in dealing with the different problems that might jeopardize the members if the leader fails to do so.

In the Blaan tribe, it is evident that the members headed by tribal leaders are strong amidst unwanted and unexpected situations. This reflects the statement of President Rodrigo Duterte about the quality and quantity of life. The quality of life reflects those in the tribal groups, for they are fortified in most trying times, such as typhoons and other phenomena. In Blaan leadership, the leaders are chosen based on their exceptional attributes. The leader among the **Blaan** is recognized through their *hard work, bravery, concern to its constituents*, and most of all, his *knowledge* in settling conflict among the community members. The Blaan leader is sometimes not chosen but just comes out as long as he possesses the leader qualification as mentioned earlier (ADSPP, 2016).

#### *Integrity*

"The supreme quality for leadership is unquestionably integrity. Without it, no real success is possible, no matter

whether it is on a section gang, a football field, in an army, or an office" -Dwight D. Eisenhower. Integrity is a firm adherence to a code of especially moral or artistic values (Merriam Webster Dictionary, 2020). Integrity is one of the essential principles that should be abided by every leader of an organization or political entity.

In a recent qualitative study of leaders within the UK nursing profession, for example, some 15 themes emerged, and it was found that leaders, in that profession anyway, are not judged so much by their ethical decision-making skills or for managing change, but rather it is assumed, by their status and success, that leaders do lead with Integrity (Lewis & Shacklock, 2007). Integrity is the most significant attribute of leaders in our general public because it pays little heed to what other valuable qualities exist; individuals will not tail somebody except if they have set up a trust with them.

In addition, leadership theorists seem to agree that integrity matters, but lacking is a straightforward exploration of why leader integrity is fundamental in affecting follower decisions to engage as followers. Integrity is vital to leadership simply because its value appears obvious and intuitive (Palanski & Yammarino, 2007; Simons, 2008 as cited in Moorman & Grover, 2009).

In the context of business, the prevalence of calls for leader integrity in the business literature suggests that leader integrity should be a central theme in more academic business leadership theories (Grover & Moorman, 2007). Surprisingly, the academic business leadership literature has not elevated leader integrity to a similar level of importance or activity. One reason for this may be that leader integrity can be traced to trait theories of leadership (Bass, 1985 as cited in Stogdill, 2015) which have been discredited in some quarters (Lord, de Vader, & Alliger, 2014). For example, Judge, Bono, Ilies, and Gerhardt (2002) cites ten reviews of the traits associated with leadership and found that six includes mention of leader integrity or honesty (Bass, 1990; Daft, 1999; Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991; Northouse, 1997; Yukl & Van Fleet, 1992). However, Judge et al. (2002), as cited in Moorman & Grover (2009), suggested that these trait results have been devalued in the leadership literature because traits may only be associated with leader emergence rather than leader effectiveness (Lord et al., 1986 as cited in Moorman & Grover (2009). If leader integrity is considered a key trait in explaining effective leadership, it may fail, much like other leader traits, to compete with researcher interest in behavioral theories of leadership.

A second reason could be that leader integrity is central to leadership theory; however, its contribution is referenced by different names. As discussed above, integrity has been cited as a concept in need of clarification (Palanski & Yammarino, 2007), and it might be the case that definitional nuances have nudged the term —integrity— from a central role in leadership theories. For example, transformational leadership theory (Bass, 1960; Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978) includes behaviors defined as idealized influence. Leaders who offer idealized

influence are described by Bass (1998) as being —consistent rather than arbitrary...can be counted on to do the right thing, demonstrating high standards of ethical and moral conduct (p. 5). The consistency of behavior in idealized influence is consistent with the core of leader integrity (Palanski & Yammarino, 2007).

### *Resiliency*

A resilient leader is an individual who considers disappointments to be impermanent misfortunes they can recuperate from rapidly. They keep up an uplifting demeanor and a solid feeling of chance during times of disturbance. When confronted with uncertainty, a versatile leader discovers approaches to push ahead and abstains from stalling out. Numerous investigations have shown the significance of strength as both an individual and a leadership trait.

Resilient leadership is about the capacity to move forward from adversity, confidently transition into new roles when circumstances change, and maintain a leadership presence in the face of stress and challenging demands (The Resilience Group, 2015). In addition, resilience leadership (RL) is about supporting people in recognizing their worth and value, believing in themselves, appreciating their inherent strengths, recognizing their skills and talents, and being more resilient to reach their full potential. When we are operating from a place of full potential, we have the most significant capacity to impact our world (Resilience Leadership, 2020) positively. Moreover, resilience is often described as a personal quality that predisposes individuals to bounce back in the face of loss. Resilient leaders, however, do more than bounce back—they bounce forward. With speed and elegance, resilient leaders take action that responds to new and ever-changing realities, even as they maintain the essential operations of the organizations they lead (Reeves & Allison, 2009, 2010). Not exclusively do resilient leaders rapidly recover their magic, but since they comprehend that status quo, as usual, is impractical, they additionally use it to move mountains.

Great leaders lead with open eyes. A few leaders are so risking loath that they put on blinders to avoid seeing the reality of difficult circumstances. Others are so cynical about any turn of fortune that they overlook open doors for development. Nevertheless, a leader who pays attention to relevant data recognizes both opportunities and harbingers of disaster. Such a leader monitors signals of flagging resilience in his or her organization and shores resilience up. Here are five signals that indicate that a school's resilience is at risk (Allison & Reeves, 2011). Resilient leaders move with the punches, rouse positive thinking, and inspire their groups to be productive even against hard chances. They bestow the certainty expected to impact change and urge others to endure troublesome situations.

Wilson (2011) enumerated several factors for the resiliency of being a leader. A leader must possess an emotional quotient who knows how to be altruistic, has self-belief, personal thought processes, support networks, self-nurturing behavior,

and openness to change. Those factors affect the resiliency of an organization.

The resilient individual can adapt to stress, recover from setbacks, maintain a relatively stable trajectory of healthy functioning, harness resources to maintain well-being and personal growth as a healthy adaptation to crisis (Charney, Martini, Southwick & Southwick, 2017).

In educational leadership, schools must provide all of our youth, especially those most at risk, with experiences to build their resilience reservoir (Sagor, 2014). The same author posits that resilience can be thought of as an antibody that enables them to ward off attackers that might stop even the most formidable among us.

### *Ethical Leaders*

Ethics is dealt with the moral requirements and behavior performed by human beings in society. It is a set of values and moral principles that guides every human being in doing what is right and avoid what is wrong. Leaders with certain personality traits may be more likely to develop ethical leadership. The trait theory assumes that people inherit certain qualities or traits that make them better suited to leadership. Trait theories often identify particular personality or behavioral characteristics leaders share (Amanchukwu, Stanley & Olorube, 2015). Also, social learning theory posits that ethical leaders show specific personal characteristics that make them attractive and credible role models and allow them to influence followers' perception of ethical leadership and followers' ethical behavior (Bartnik, Haney, Ma, Kang & Ko, 2017).

Brown and Treviño (2006) discussed personality traits as antecedents of ethical leadership. They proposed that a leader's agreeableness and conscientiousness will support the emergence of ethical leadership. In contrast, neuroticism exhibited by the leader should hamper ethical leadership, as neurotic leaders will be less attractive role models, induce less emulation of their practices, and be less able to influence follower behavior.

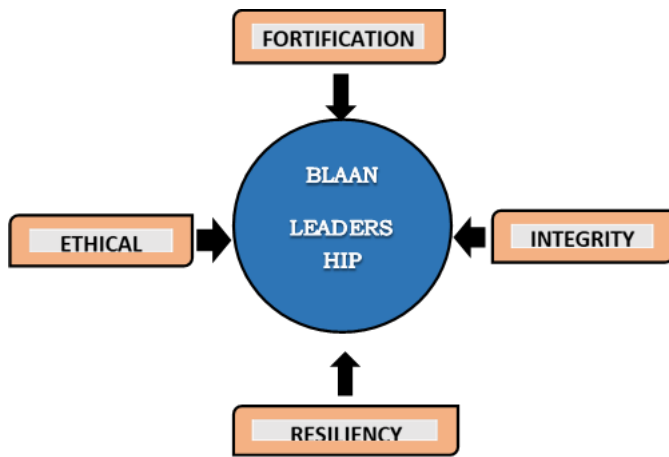
The concept of ethical leadership has emerged as a prominent theme in the empirical leadership literature, with a dramatic increase in related research since the mid-2000s. According to Brown, Treviño, and Harrison (2005), ethical leadership can be defined as “the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making.” In the study published by Hassan (2015) in the *Journal of Public Administration and Theory*, he enumerated the three essential attributes of ethical leadership, 1) being an ethical role model to others, 2) treating people fairly and 3) and actively managing ethics in the organization. The first two essentials refer to the moral person aspect of ethical leadership, while the last pertains to the moral manager aspect of ethical leadership.

Moreover, ethical leaders demonstrate honesty, integrity, and altruism and ethically conduct themselves even amid adversity and pressure. They also serve as ethical role models for others by showing normatively appropriate behaviors and treating others with consideration and respect. (Brown & Trevino, 2006; Brown et al., 2005; Brown, Trevino & Hartman, 2003).

*Conceptual Framework*

The diagram below shows the relationship of the variables in the study; it was mainly composed of two variables, namely, dependent and independent variables. As shown above, the independent variable is the Blaan leadership, while the dependent variables are fortified, integrity, resiliency, and ethics. The study aimed to examine if the independent variables influence the dependent variable.

Figure 1. Schematic Diagram



IV. METHODOLOGY

*Research Design*

The study obtained its data from Datus or Furlongs considered representative of the entire Blaan Indigenous group in the Municipality of Kiblawan. This study utilized qualitative methods of research using a case study research design. The design is appropriate since it gives a comprehensive description of an individual case and its analysis; i.e., the characterization of the case and the events, as well as a description of the discovery process of these features that is the process of research itself (Mesec 1998 as cited by Ribodji, 2013). In addition, Sagadin (1991), as cited by Ribodji (2013), states that a "case study is used when we analyze and describe, for example, each person individually (his or her activity, special needs, life situation, life history, etc.), a group of people (a school department, a group of students with special needs, teaching staff, etc.), individual institutions or a problem (or several problems), process, phenomenon or event in a particular institution, etc. in details.

Also, the researcher made use of appreciative inquiry to spot the positive core. Appreciative inquiry is the art of asking unconditional and positive queries to increase positive

potentials in just one-shots shot. The data was analyzed qualitatively since the approach gives the researcher an avenue to thoroughly discuss the paper's main points. This research methodology uses the experiences of individuals, which are carefully described, recorded, and examined (Antonsen, 2013). The analysis of their experiences as leaders often reveals structures, patterns, trends, and themes that are common among the participants who have the same experiences.

In this study, the researcher was able to identify the patterns and themes based on the responses given by the participants since qualitative research such as case studies and in-depth interviews; researchers may interview 5 to 25 participants who had experienced the same phenomenon, if one intends to achieve the goal of representativeness and generalizability as a criterion, from a small number of research participants (Creswell, 2007; Giorgi, 2009). Sample sizes of 10 to 15 are enough provided that participants can provide detailed descriptions of the phenomena (Carpenter & Speziale, 2007).

*Sources of Data*

The research study was conducted in the Municipality of Kiblawan, Davao del Sur. The prime participants are the Datu/Furlongs with individual and different hold positions under the Indigenous Political Structure. To know further some essential details related to the research, the researcher also included IP leaders and elders of the selected Barangay Tribal Council of Kiblawan.

*Research Locale*

The study was conducted in the municipality of Kiblawan, Davao del Sur. The respondents were interviewed in the Municipal tribal office; however, because of the threat brought by COVID-19, the researcher found any comfortable place that the respondent chose to wherein quarantine protocols were also observed. The researcher also gathered respondents residing in Municipality municipality and from selected IP leaders in Barangays. These respondents were interviewed via a questionnaire prepared. In addition, the researchers chose the place of implementation because it will give the researchers the needed information for people with Blaan Tribe leadership or the other way around. The study was conducted in the second semester of the academic year 2019-2020.

*Data Gathering Procedure*

Before the data collection, the researchers had a reflection journal wherein he wrote all the topics he knew about the study. Then, for the local participant, there was a site visit in Kiblawan, and the communication letter was also sent for approval of the Datus/Furlongs. The IP leaders were interviewed using in-depth interviews via open-ended questions, a list of questions prepared by the researcher in advance and answered by each leader.

Nevertheless, because of the existence of COVID-19, the algorithms of data gathering were changed; instead of

following the proper procedures, the researcher chose to distribute the questionnaires and allowing the participants to answer the different sets of open-ended questions on their respective houses.

#### *Research Instrument*

The researchers used an open-ended self-made questionnaire. An open-ended question is a question that allows the participants to express himself or themselves freely on a given subject. This type of question is, as opposed to closed-ended questions, non-directive and allows respondents to use their terms and direct their response at their convenience (Fauvelle, 2019). The researcher retrieved information through in-depth interviews; focus group discussion was not observed because of the danger brought by the pandemic.

In this process, the researcher distributed the sets of questions to the respective houses of the participants, so that quarantine protocols were followed.

#### *Role of the Researcher*

They were a member of this tribe and as the researcher prompted to conduct this study since there was no study conducted in the researcher's Municipality related to the subject matter. Moreover, the researcher wanted to know if the leaders of the tribal community are fortified, have integrity, resilience, and ethical leaders.

The primary role of the researcher is to gather information and shreds of evidence through in-depth interviews employing appreciative inquiry. This ensures that the participants could respond accurately and that the researcher could have sufficient and exact data to be used in the study. Also, part of the researcher's role was to identify and select the participant of the study. After that, the researcher then transcribed, translated, and encoded the data gathered and placed them orderly in themes or commonalities.

#### *Analyses of Data*

After collecting data undergoing an in-depth interview, the researcher with the adviser tried to explore all the information gathered better to understand the situation (Smith, 2004). It is where analyzing and summarizing mass data collected and presenting the results in a way that communicates the most salient features were undertaken (Tolentino, 2014).

The techniques used in data analysis included bracketing, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. According to Tolentino (2014), bracketing was used to mitigate the potentially deleterious effects of unacknowledged preconceptions related to the research and thereby increase the study's rigor. Moreover, Drew (2014) posited bracketing as 'the task of sorting out the qualities that belong to the researcher's experience of the phenomenon. Also, Gearing (2014) explained bracketing as a 'scientific process in which a researcher suspends or holds in abeyance his or her presuppositions, biases, assumptions, theories, or previous

experiences to see and describe the phenomenon. Furthermore, Starks and Trinidad (2007) noted that the researcher 'must be honest and vigilant about her perspective, pre-existing thoughts and beliefs, and developing hypotheses, engage in the self-reflective process of bracketing, whereby they recognize and set aside (but do not abandon) there a priori knowledge and assumptions, with the analytic goal of attending to the participants' accounts with an open mind.'

Data display, nonetheless, aided the study in organizing data and showing it in the form of graphic organizers that would enable the viewer to draw his conclusion (Suter, 2012). It is one step beyond data reduction, showing the data in an arranged and orderly manner, clearly showing the interrelationships of bits of information readily available to the viewer. At this stage, other higher-order categories could come out beyond those discovered during the first step of data reduction (Tolentino, 2014).

Conclusion drawing and verification was the last step of qualitative analysis. It involves going back to consider what the analyzed data mean and to assess their aftermaths for the questions at hand while verification, integrally linked to conclusion drawing, required revisiting the data as many times as necessary to cross-check or verify these emergent conclusions (Tolentino, 2014). At this point, no definitive judgments were made, but rather, the data were allowed to speak for themselves by the emergence of conceptual categories and descriptive themes. These themes were usually implanted in a structure of interconnected ideas that make sense. For the proper coverage of the data analysis, analyses were done step-by-step so that interpretation could be made visible to the readers of this study and give them an exact picture of the technical operations and chain of reasoning that led to the results.

#### *Ethical Consideration*

This study was exposed to particular moral contemplations. The essential considerations of this investigation were the rights, security, and prosperity of the participants. The researcher of this investigation ensured the participants' assurance from over-the-top interruption, trouble, physical and mental damage, personal humiliation, or enduring and demise. The prosperity of people is a higher priority than logical and social intrigue.

To respect the rights of the participants, the researchers allowed them to choose or decide if they were willing to participate or not. According to Stevens (2013), the participants have the power to know how far confidentiality can be guaranteed. The participants' choice ought to be regarded if they would confide in the researcher to uncover their actual self in the investigation. On the off chance that they will not have the option to acknowledge the terms and conditions displayed by the researcher, they were allowed to pull back from the interview lead. If documents are used as a reference for further research studies, participants will be

informed via the contact information they give to the researcher.

#### *Trustworthiness of the Study*

Four components were observed in this research study to establish trustworthiness. These are the following: credibility, conformability, transferability, and dependability, which were also observed by Shenton (2004).

To establish the credibility of this study, the researcher ensures that rigidity was adequately observed during the data collection, especially during the interviews, wherein the researcher avoided concluding the interviews but based everything on factual data directly from the participants. This is substantiated by Suter (2012) that *credibility* refers to the confidence of the believability of the findings, which is enhanced by evidence such as confirming evaluation of conclusions by research participants, the convergence of multiple sources of evidence such as interview transcripts, reflective field notes and investigator triangulation (De Wet, 2010) is used. This enhances the credibility of the study.

To address the conformability of the study, opinions, presumptions, and judgments of the researcher have been set aside to guard against distortion of data. Moreover, the audio-taking interview, note-takings, and journals have been kept to ensure conformability. The researcher conducted the study with as little interference as possible to accurately picture the participants' personal experiences. The researcher used the bracketing approach as part of the methodology to suspend personal biases and prejudice.

This is further substantiated by Ramsey (2010) that *conformability* refers to how well others confirm the results as an application of objectivity (neutrality) and the control of researcher bias in a research study.

To address transferability, the researcher described the research context and assumptions central to the research and showed all data as transparent as possible. The researcher made sure that the data were rich with descriptions so that the person who might wish to transfer the results to a different context is then responsible for judging how sensible the transfer is.

Ramsey (2010) confirmed that *transferability* refers to how well the findings apply to other school settings and depends upon the similarities between the two compared settings. Rich and thick descriptions allow readers to make judgments and decisions regarding transferability. The detailed descriptions in this article may enable the readers to transfer information to other settings and thus determine whether the findings can be transferred (De Wet, 2010).

To establish the study's dependability, the researcher ensured consistency during the data collection and analysis by doing the code-recode system during data reduction, and documentation also shows how dependable the study is.

Dependability is a criterion considered equivalent to reliability and similarly concerned with the stability of the results over time (Ramsey, 2010). Moreover, Suter (2012) that *dependability* is improved by common qualitative strategies such as audit trails, rich documentation triangulation, and also by traditional methods such as inter-coder or inter-observer agreement and code-recode consistency using the same "human instrument."

## V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This case study comprises 10 participants coming from different barangays in the Municipality of Kiblawan. In the case study, according to Carpenter & Speziale (2007), sample sizes of 10 to 15 are enough provided that participants can provide detailed descriptions of the phenomena.

PARTICIPANTS	AGE	SEX	LOCATION	AFFILIATIONS
A	64	Male	Balasio	Municipal Tribal Chieftain
B	61	Male	Poblacion	Municipal IPMR
C	56	Male	Maragaa	Municipal Tribal Secretary
D	70	Male	Maragaa	Barangay IPMR
E	53	Male	Bagong Negros	Barangay Tribal Chieftain
F	46	Male	Bunot	Barangay Tribal Chieftain
G	59	Male	Dapuk	Barangay Tribal Chieftain
H	59	Female	Bonifacio	Barangay Tribal Chieftain
I	48	Male	Kimlawis	Barangay Tribal Chieftain
J	66	Male	Tacub	Barangay Tribal Chieftain

To expedite the generation of comprehensive explanation for the above research problem, the following questions were asked during the in-depth interviews:

#### *Questions for FORTIFICATION*

1. *What made Blaan's leadership an exciting and empowering experience?*
2. *How do you use your power to help your members in most trying times?*
3. *As a leader, how do you protect your people in times of trouble?*
4. *What are your ways to encourage your constituents to become responsible citizens?*
5. *What are your ways to reinforce frustrations in decision-making processes?*

#### *Questions for INTEGRITY*

1. *As a leader whom to be emulated by the tribe, how do you adhere to the moral code of your tribe?*
2. *How do you regard honesty and integrity as critical personal values?*



3. *How do you keep your actions consistent with your stated values?*
4. *What do you do to insist on doing fair and ethical even when it is not easy?*
5. *How do you acknowledge or deal with your own mistakes positively?*

**Questions for RESILIENCY**

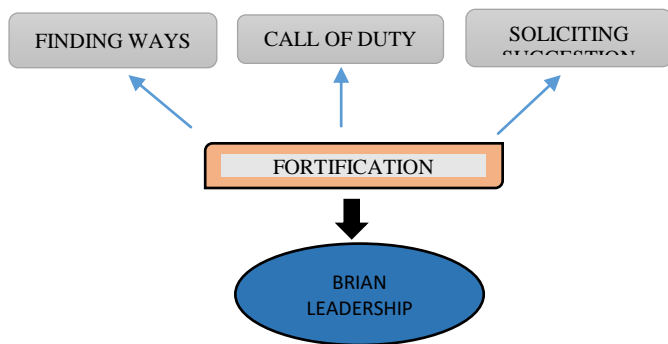
1. *What attracts you to the idea of Blaen leadership?*
2. *What excites you about being a leader?*
3. *What were the most positive things you learned about leadership in general and yourself as a leader?*
4. *As a leader, how do you show positive interaction towards unfavorable situations that affects you and the Blaen members?*
5. *In times of trouble or conflict, what do you usually do first that comes up in your mind and why?*

**Questions for ETHICAL**

1. *What are the ethical interventions you have made whenever some of the Blaen members violate the customary laws and practices of the tribe?*
2. *As a leader, how do you show concern for the ethical and moral values of the Blaen tribe?*
3. *How do you communicate clear ethical standards to your members?*
4. *How do you differ the ethical standards as the right way of doing things of the Blaen tribe among any other tribe?*
5. *How do cultural and moral differences (ethical relativism) impact the intersection of leadership and ethics?*

Below are diagrams and tables of emerging themes identified by the researcher in this study.

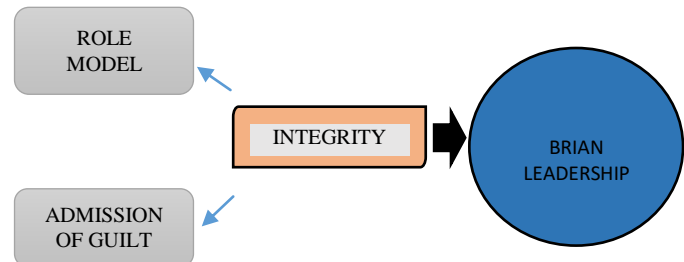
Figure 4: Schematic diagram of emerging significant themes on the element of Fortification.



The first central theme is **finding ways**, and this means that as a leader, you should look for ways to solve the problems and issues of your tribe. It is a great challenge for you to maintain the status quo of your tribe and how to cultivate your tribe. The second central theme pointed out **the call of duty**, and this suggests that as a leader, you should answer to the "call," which is to help your members at all costs. You have to use your power in order to seek help for the benefit of your members.

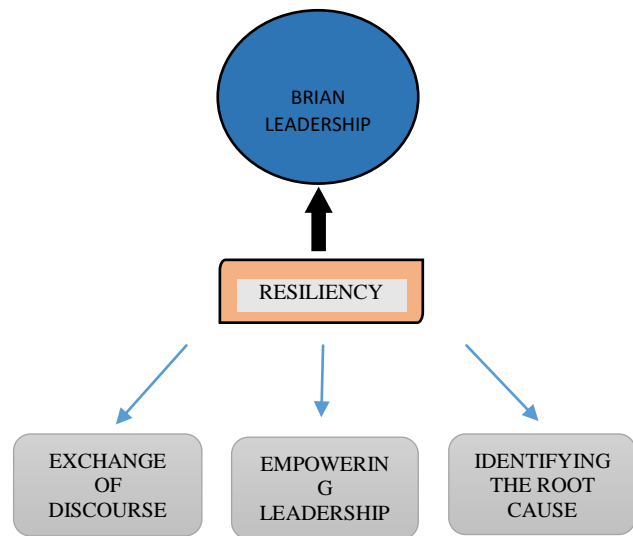
The last central theme under fortification is **soliciting suggestions**; this submits that asking for advice or suggestions from your constituents should be considered because their ideas or opinions might also be helpful to you as a leader.

Figure 5: Schematic diagram of emerging significant themes on the element of integrity.



The first significant theme accentuated on the **role model** elucidates that a leader is an epitome of an actual role model. According to Human Resource Services at the University of Florida, a role model is someone who serves as an example. They exemplify professional behavior and image. They recognize that what they say and do is imitated by others. The second central theme underlined on **the admission of guilt** illuminates that a leader must learn to admit his mistakes and be ready to ask for an apology. This implies that as a leader, you are ready to take responsibility for the actions that you have made.

Figure 6: Schematic diagram of emerging significant themes on the element of resiliency.



The first significant theme pointed out is the **exchange of discourse**; this expounds that consensus within the group should prevail because this might bridge the gap and disparity. Exchanging discourse and opinion lead to a better and peaceful tribal community. The second central theme is **empowering leadership**; This pointed out that training, workshops, and

seminars can empower leadership, and empowering leadership is of paramount importance because leaders will be guided and enlightened about how they will execute laws and even craft some programs that would benefit them the entire tribal community. The last central theme highlighted on *identifying the root cause* highlights the significance of knowing the origin of the problem, which means that part and parcel of settling a dispute is to identify the root cause of the problem so that as a leader, you can impose appropriate sanctions and grant correct verdict to the responsible person who committed such violations.

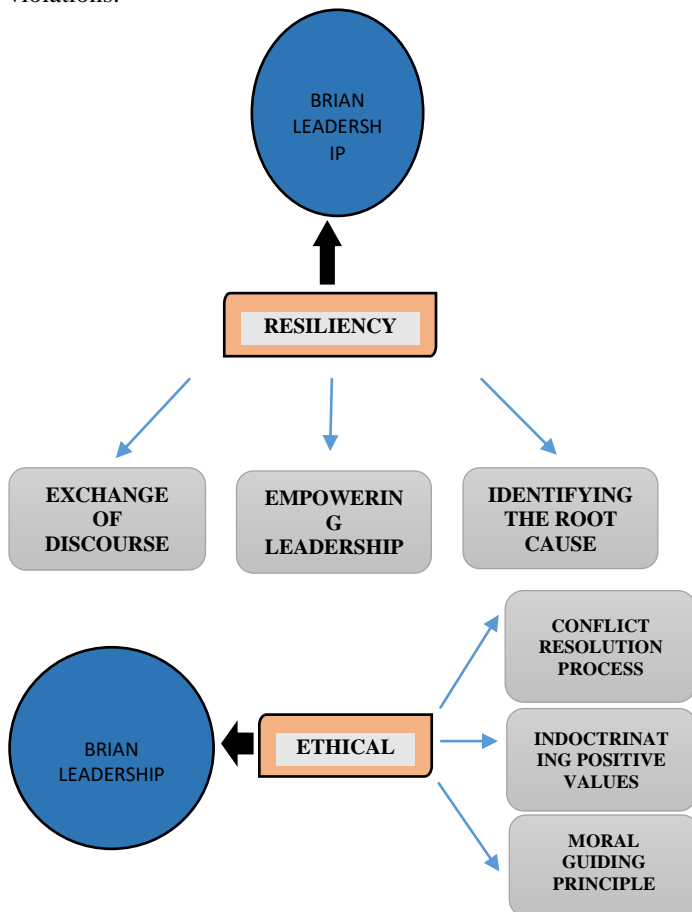


Figure 7: Schematic diagram of emerging significant themes on the element of Ethical.

The first central theme is the *conflict resolution process*; this enlightens that in the Blaán tribe, a procedural process is always observed. Tribal leaders always abide by the principle of the conflict resolution process so that conflict will be settled appropriately. The second central theme underscored *indoctrinating positive values*; It expounds that the Blaán leaders give importance to where their values stem up - The principle of life as aksafe (respect) and Kasakdo (Love). It calls for educating each and member of the tribe to preserve and illuminates good values. The last central theme is the *moral guiding principle*; this explains the ethical relativism became the foundation of the tribe in any form of decision-making the need to do so. Transparency is practiced to meet the ethical standards of a good leader.

## VI. CONCLUSIONS

From the findings of the study, the researcher concluded that Blaán leadership is very much different from others because the leadership on the lens of the Blaán tribe is more fortified, it is resourceful in finding immediate solutions to a problem that occurs and consider the suggestions of the member of the council on its decision making.

Blaán tribe leaders value the essence of integrity by admitting guilt when committed mistakes and ask forgiveness for the sake of the tribe; they show to the community that they serve as the role model to their co-member, employing being the responsible one. Despite many adversities encountered, Blaán leaders remain steadfast and resilient for the tribe. Follow the moral way of managing conflicts by identifying the cause and exchange discourse and hearing out those involved. They rely on its customary laws and practices yet are obedient to the moral principle of life in their decision-making. This is the ethical way of Blaán leadership in dealing with conflicts by following conflict resolution processes.

As a Blaán leader, who is sworn to serve, you have to look over the matter that concerns your tribe because it is part of your job description. Moreover, you have to respond to a call which means you need to help your constituents with the adversities and difficulties that they may encounter along the way. In order to make precise and accurate decisions, as a leader, you need to solicit suggestions from your people, especially from the elders of your tribe, because they can give advice that can help you in the decision-making process. Moreover, a Blaán leader is a role model, which means they are worth emulating because of their characteristics. They are highly respected in the tribal community because they are an excellent example to everyone. They know how to admit their own mistakes in which a genuine leader should possess. Admitting one's mistake is a character of a leader which is worth to be noted.

Significantly, being a leader, especially in a tribal community, is a great challenge. "A true leader not only mentors for the people who are following, but also shares the leadership and develops the leadership within the group or members.

## VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the initial findings and conclusions, the recommendations are as a result of this given. First, tribal leaders should always be open to criticisms and suggestions from the higher-ups or elders to make firm decisions. Next, a tribal leader should craft plans and programs with his colleagues to benefit the tribal members, such as extensive livelihood programs and further education for the youth.

Future research may be conducted and investigating the leadership of the Blaán tribe. Moreover, because no study is conducted in the locality, it is advantageous for the succeeding researchers to do imminent research connected with this topic. Future research will be more effective and exciting since there

is already a study that can help broaden the information and insights yielding with the same focal point. This research methodology would give a better opportunity to generalize the study findings.

Another future research may be undertaken to determine whether the previous participants' views and perceptions have changed over time by interviewing them again. Also, further research may be carried out to investigate a similar phenomenon. The findings of this study were viewed from the lens of the Blaan leaders. It would be valuable to conduct further research to know the leadership under fortification, integrity, resiliency, and ethics of Blaan leaders.

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