



The Interplay of Socio-Emotional Competence on Interpersonal Relationship of Public Elementary Teachers in Davao Del Norte Division

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the relationship of socio-emotional and interpersonal relationship of teachers. Also, this study determined the extent of socio-emotional and interpersonal relationship of public elementary teachers in Davao del Norte Division. With the use of probability sampling, 150 elementary teachers in the public schools were selected as the respondents. Utilizing the descriptive-correlational survey method, the data collated were analyzed through the use of Mean and Product-Moment correlation. It was revealed that there was an extensive socio-emotional competence and an extensive interpersonal relationship. Furthermore, there was a significant relationship between the two variables. Relevant to the findings of the study, it was further suggested that higher officials in the Department of Education and school heads may identify means on how to help teachers in strengthening their socio-emotional competence in order to attain interpersonal relationship. More so, future researchers may further explore the involved variables considering other factors and research methods

Keywords: Socio-emotional competence, interpersonal relationship, descriptive correlation, Davao del Norte Division, Philippines

1. Introduction

The quality of teacher-learner interpersonal relationships can affect some positive psychological constructs, including academic engagement, foreign language enjoyment, resilience, grit, self-efficacy, and wellbeing among learners in order to improve learners' healthy behavioral functioning (Derakhshan, 2021). Concerning learners' academic engagement, Dennie et al. (2019) found that teacher-learner interpersonal relationships significantly affected learners' academic engagement in educational contexts. They argued that teacher-learner interpersonal relationship positively affects learners' emotional requirements, which influence academic engagement. More so, the role of interpersonal relations developed between the teachers in the school is also important. The existence of these interpersonal relations in the school unit renders the school a cultural entity and a place of social learning, a social system with its "culture", which the members, principal, teachers and students are under a set of rules and values and interacting with each other (Koula, 2015). Unfortunately, teacher interpersonal relationship with other school members is greatly affected by teachers' overwhelming tasks.

In America, the increase of social media and computer technology, Americans are spending exponentially more time in front of a screen and less time interacting face to face with others. This has already led to decreased socialization at critical ages when communication skills are formed (Bauer, 2021). In Turkey, teacher's interpersonal relationship is greatly affected by conflicts at schools which are caused by differences of opinion and forming groups with like-minded people. This is based on inability to find common ground and disagreements, tension, unconformity, lack of communication and ideological clashes. Teachers who experience conflicts have negative feelings such as disappointment, insensitivity, stress, sorrow, uneasiness etc. and may dislike their professions, have low morale and motivation, form groups with like-minded people and have reduced performance. When conflict arises, teachers either respond, by arguing, evading the situation or using violence, or remain unresponsive (Goksoy & Argon, 2016).

In the Philippine educational setting, conflict among teachers is a normal situation. Conflict is an inevitable by-product of human relations. This somehow affects the interpersonal relationship of teachers towards all school members. One of the sources of conflict is the differences of values among teachers. People develop certain values as a product of their culture. These values reflect the various elements of the culture in which they were shaped. Interpersonal relationship is affected by unavoidable clash between formal authority and power and those individuals and groups affected. There are clashes over how tasks and duties should be divided, how the work should be done and how long and hard people should work. There are tensions, personal ambitions and weaknesses, differences of opinions, personal judgement and jurisdictional disagreements among individuals, departments, and between unions and management (Calora, 2020).

In the Division of Davao del Norte, the researcher observed that teachers' interpersonal relationship had been affected by personal interests, time constraints due to heavy workload, relationship concerns such as lack of trust, conflicts, communication issues, teaching and personality differences, and unwillingness to participate. Conflicts, unclear goals, poor communication, and little time can negatively impact interpersonal relationship. Given these

circumstances, the researcher determined the status of teachers' interpersonal relationship considering their socio-emotional competence. It also sought to investigate the relationship between the two variables.

The researcher was driven to investigate the relevant variables considering the dearth of studies involving socio-emotional competence and interpersonal relationship of teachers. This undertaking also offered policymakers insights into creating policies, programs, interventions, projects, and activities that would help public schools strengthen the socio-emotional competence and interpersonal relationship of teachers.

This study was mainly anchored to Jennings and Greenberg's Prosocial Classroom Model (n.d.). According to Jennings and Greenberg, teachers with high social and emotional competence are self-aware. Teachers' social and emotional competence and wellbeing are reflected in their classroom behavior and interactions with students—a primary mechanism for socialization. Teachers with higher social-emotional competence organize their classrooms and provide emotional and instructional support in ways that are associated with a high-quality classroom learning environment.

In addition, teachers with high social and emotional competence also demonstrate prosocial values—they have deep respect for their colleagues, students, and students' families, and they care about how their own decisions affect the wellbeing of others. Finally, such teachers possess strong self-management skills. Even in emotionally charged situations, they can regulate their emotions and their behaviors in healthy ways that promote a positive classroom environment for their students (Schonert-Reichl, 2017).

Another concept that supported this study was White (1959) notion proposing that competence is a central component in theories about the development of the self. White asserted that humans have an innate need to achieve a sense of competence and that this need serves as a fundamental motivating force in human behavior. According to White, the concept of competence as having motivational properties is an essential component of any biologically sound view of human nature. White also affirms that competence cannot be obtained simply through behavior motivated by drives or instincts but that the need for competence is contingent on behavior that shows an unrelenting focus on the environment and is exploratory and experimental.

White's concept of competence is a central component in theories about the development of the self that Goleman and Gardner believe can enhance self-awareness, empathy, classroom motivation and community building in schools (Norris, 2003). White's concept by asserting instruction in social-emotional learning needs to be provided in the context of caring, safe, well-managed, and participatory classrooms, schools, and other learning environments. They believe that the social and emotional learned skills need to be reinforced in the school, home and community to reap the benefits of this new learning strategy (Zins & Elias, 2007).

More so, it was claimed that all children might benefit from social-emotional instruction, including those who are at risk, those beginning to engage in negative behavior, and those already displaying significant problems (Zins & Elias, 2007). It appears that providing social and emotional learning might prevent behavior problems in a challenging learning environment. By promoting social and emotional competence, one can hope to eliminate the negative social interactions and behaviors that plague a safe, productive and healthy classroom learning environment.

Teachers are primary exemplars for social and emotional learning (SEL); they are central figures in the socialization of children and serve as important role models, guiding the development of their students' social and emotional competence and learning (Denham, Bassett, & Wyatt, 2007). Above and beyond delivering curriculum content, effective teachers foster the development of prosocial behaviors by modelling their own social and emotional competencies as they interact with their students, their students' parents and other adults. They provide examples of emotional awareness and self-management for their students. They teach relationship skills and social awareness by building supportive relationships with their students, fostering positive peer relationships, and establishing safe and effective classroom learning environments (Jennings et al., n.d.).

2. Methodology

Research Design

This study was a quantitative research approach utilizing the descriptive correlational approach. Quantitative research is a way to learn about a particular group of people, known as a sample population. Using scientific inquiry, quantitative research **relies on data that are observed or measured** to examine questions about the sample population. It is used by social scientists, including communication researchers, to observe phenomena or occurrences affecting individuals. The purpose of quantitative research is to generate knowledge and create understanding about the social world. Moreover, a descriptive correlation study is a study in which the researcher is primarily interested in describing the relationships between variables without attempting to establish a causal relationship (Allen, 2017).

This study was considered as quantitative since it depended on the numerical data when analyzing and interpreting the data. It was descriptive since its purpose was to determine the extent of socio-emotional competence and interpersonal relationship of teachers. In addition, this academic pursuit was correlational since its purpose was to measure the connection between socio-emotional competence and interpersonal relationship of public elementary teachers in the Davao del Norte Division.

Research Respondents

This study catered the 150 public elementary teachers in the Division of Davao del Norte. It was claimed that 50 to 100 samples are enough when testing the regression analysis (Hair et al., 2018). Hence, the 150 respondents were more than enough to address the purpose of this study. In the inclusion and exclusion criteria, elementary teachers with 3 years teaching experience were chosen in this endeavor since their 3 years stay in the public school would help them to assess the socio-emotional competence and interpersonal relationship among teachers. Respondents who felt awkward and

uncomfortable in answering the survey questionnaire were free to withdraw from their participation. They were not forced to be part of the study. Their decision to withdraw was respected. Apparently, the respondents' welfare was given utmost importance in the conduct of the study.

Research Instruments

As to the form of gathering data, this study utilized an adapted survey questionnaire. The questionnaire that was employed in this undertaking was divided into two sets. The first set was focusing on socio-emotional competence while the second set was about the interpersonal relationship of public elementary teachers.

The socio-emotional competence survey questionnaire which was used in this study was adapted from the developed instrument of Zhou and Ee (2012). It was a 24-item survey which consisted five indicators, namely: self-awareness (1-5), social-awareness (1-4), self-management (1-5), relationship management (1-5), and responsible decision-making (1-5). The questionnaire was subjected to a pilot testing having a result of .73 suggesting that the items have relatively *high* internal consistency.

The interpersonal relationship questionnaire was adapted from Callaghan (2014). The instrument consisted of 30 items. It had the following indicators, namely: assertion of needs (1-5), bidirectional communication (1-5), conflict (1-5), disclosure and interpersonal closeness (1-5), and emotional expression and experience (1-5). The questionnaire was subjected to a pilot testing having a result of .75 suggesting that the items have relatively *high* internal consistency. The instrument in this study was contextualized to achieve the purpose of this study. The researcher integrated all the comments and suggestions of the adviser, panel members and expert validators for the refinement of the tools and to achieve construct validity.

Table

Table 1

Summary on the Extent of Socio-Emotional Competence of Teachers

Table 1 provides the summary on the extent of socio-emotional competence of teachers. It is exhibited that the overall mean of socio-emotional competence of teachers is 3.58, which is in an extensive level. This means that socio-emotional competence of teachers is oftentimes evident.

No	Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1	Self-Awareness	3.56	Extensive
2	Social Awareness	3.56	Extensive
3	Self-Management	3.62	Extensive
4	Relational Management	3.57	Extensive
5	Responsible Decision-Making	3.59	Extensive
Overall		3.58	Extensive

Data show that all five (5) indicators are in an extensive level. As arranged chronologically, self-management has the highest mean score (3.62). This is followed by responsible decision-making (3.59), relationship management (3.57), self-awareness (3.56), and social awareness (3.56).

The implications of the results are quite striking, as the data indicates a comprehensive level of socio-emotional competence across all five indicators. These findings demonstrate that teachers generally exhibit a high level of competence in managing their emotions, making responsible decisions, and effectively handling interpersonal relationships. Such well-rounded socio-emotional competence can greatly benefit the educational environment and the overall learning experience for students.

With the extensive socio-emotional competence of teachers, this reaffirmed the widely held belief of Aldrup et al. (2018) citing that teachers' social-emotional competence plays a crucial role in effectively addressing the social and emotional challenges inherent in their profession and fostering positive teacher-student relationships. These relationships, along with social interactions between teachers and students, are vital for students' cognitive, social, and affective-motivational development.

Similarly, Aldrup et al. (2020) elaborated that socio-emotional competence refers to an individual's knowledge, skills, and motivation required to navigate social and emotional situations effectively. Herndon (2021) suggested that classroom environments that promote children's learning are more effective when children are supported by social-emotional learning, which helps them manage their emotions, focus their attention, and engage in successful relationships. The instruction and support of social-emotional learning for children are intertwined with the teacher's social-emotional competence and well-being, ultimately fostering a positive classroom environment and effective behavior management.

In addition, Schonert-Reichl et al. (2017) mentioned that teachers with strong social-emotional competence are better equipped to understand the role of emotions in children's behavior, respond to their emotional needs, and create a positive classroom environment that supports social-emotional instruction

and support. Ulloa et al. (2016) mentioned that current research provides evidence that teachers who receive training in emotional competence are more effective in meeting the emotional needs of children.

Table 2

Summary on the Extent of Interpersonal Relationship of Teachers

Table 2 provides the summary on the extent of interpersonal relationship of teachers. It is exhibited that the overall mean of interpersonal relationship of teachers is 3.54, which is in an extensive level. This means that the interpersonal relationship of teachers is oftentimes evident.

No	Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1	Assertion of Needs	3.51	Extensive
2	Bidirectional Communication	3.55	Extensive
3	Conflict	3.51	Extensive
4	Disclosure and Interpersonal Closeness	3.58	Extensive
5	Emotional Experience and Expression	3.57	Extensive
Overall		3.54	Extensive

Data show that all three (3) indicators are in an extensive level. As arranged chronologically, disclosure and interpersonal closeness has the highest mean score (3.58). This is followed by emotional experience and expression (3.57), bidirectional communication (3.55), assertion of needs (3.51), and conflict (3.51).

The data reveals that all three indicators exhibit a noteworthy and extensive level of influence. These results collectively emphasize the multifaceted nature of interpersonal dynamics and highlight the diverse areas where individuals prioritize their interactions and emotional connections with others.

The favorable findings of this study supported the findings of Balconi and Me (2017) establishing that interpersonal relationships play a crucial role in regulating individual well-being, with variations in their closeness, quality, and structure impacting mental health. Empathy levels significantly influence the quality of interpersonal relationships, and neurophysiological studies have highlighted the importance of empathy in positive and negative interpersonal interactions.

Furthermore, Tremayne (2014) disclosed that effective communication is vital in developing interpersonal relationships, and social skills can be enhanced through the use of effective communication skills. Humor has been found to promote physiological well-being, reduce stress and anxiety, and can be utilized to establish interpersonal relationships and improve communication.

Moreover, Raufelder et al. (2016) contended that teachers actively seek meaningful and personal relationships with their students, as contemporary teacher identity encompasses various social and psychological components. These relationships influence teachers' decision-making regarding pedagogical and interpersonal aspects of their profession. Conversely, negative relationships can adversely impact students, affecting their academic and non-academic development, including their emotional well-being and personality.

Torres et al. (2015) revealed that interpersonal relationships with teachers and peers predict academic success, mediated by improvements in emotional knowledge. This finding aligns with studies linking emotional knowledge and social competence, emphasizing the role of relationships in academic outcomes. The quality of teacher-student relationships is a developmental product resulting from ongoing interactions between teachers and their students in real-time. These interactions, occurring at the micro-level, shape the macro-level relationship and influence its outcomes. Interactions between individuals can be viewed as a process of subsequent events unfolding over time.

Table 3

Significance of the Relationship Between the Extent of Socio-Emotional Competence and Interpersonal Relationship of Teachers

Presented in Table 3 are the data on the significance of the relationship between socio-emotional competence and interpersonal relationship of teachers. Reflected in the hypothesis, the relationship was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The overall r-value of .580 with a p-value of <0.05 signified the rejection of the null hypothesis. It means that there is a significant relationship between socio-emotional competence and interpersonal relationship of teachers. This shows that socio-emotional competence is correlated with the interpersonal relationship of teachers.

Socio-Emotional Competence Indicators	Dependent Variable	r-value	p-value	Decision on Ho
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Self-Awareness	0.573	0.000	Rejected
Social Awareness	0.570	0.000	Rejected
Self-Management	0.592	0.000	Rejected
Interpersonal Relationship			
Relationship Management	0.577	0.000	Rejected
Responsible Decision Making	0.589	0.000	Rejected
Overall	0.580*	0.000	Rejected

*Significant at 0.05 significance level.

Doing a pairwise correlation among the measures of both variables, it can be gleaned that self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balance processing, relational transparency revealed computed r-values of 0.573, 0.570, 0.592, 0.577, and 0.589 respectively with p-values which are less than 0.05 in the level of significance. This implies that as self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship management, and responsible decision-making increases, the interpersonal relationship increases.

This finding underscores the existence of a significant relationship between socio-emotional competence and teachers' interpersonal relationships. In essence, socio-emotional competence is closely correlated with the quality of interpersonal interactions among teachers. Further exploration through pairwise correlations among the individual measures of both variables reveals intriguing insights. It signifies a strong and statistically significant relationship between these specific components of socio-emotional competence and interpersonal relationships. In practical terms, as self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship management, and responsible decision-making abilities increase, there is a corresponding increase in the quality of interpersonal relationships among teachers. These results illuminate the importance of these specific socio-emotional competencies in fostering positive and effective teacher-student relationships.

The result is in consonance to the study conducted by Hamre et al. (2014) revealing that teachers' social-emotional competence is considered important in order to master the social and emotional challenges inherent in their profession and to build positive teacher-student relationships. In turn, this is key to both teachers' occupational well-being and positive student development. Social interactions between teachers and students and the quality of their relationship are vital for students' cognitive, social, and affective-motivational development.

Similarly, Roffey (2012) mentioned that teachers with high socio-emotional are those who recognize an individual student's emotions, understand the cognitive appraisals behind that. These teachers in turn are able to make sense for their students' emotionally motivated reasons and the sequence behaviors. When teachers are able to understand their students' emotional expression and the respective appraisals, they have more feelings of their meaningful roles by their students' sides, likely to get closer to students' circumstances, understand them more and find the best way to support students overcoming their daily difficulties either physical and psychological ones. As such, teachers become the reliable and effectively supportive sources for students.

In particular, as stated in Jennings and Greenberg's review (2009), self-awareness and self-management could strongly provide teachers with crucial ability to deal with teaching's emotional demands. With these abilities, teachers are capable of controlling, regulating and navigating their emotions and behaviors more effectively. As a result, teachers could stay in well mental state which helps them utilize appropriate energy, capabilities to become the most responsive, helpful to their students' ever-changing needs. SEC helps teachers to maintain their wellbeing and career motivation. Teachers with positively emotional experience are likely to have resilient motivation, and feel more equipped to deal with the complex demands of teaching.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were offered:

The extent of socio-emotional of the public elementary teachers implies that it is oftentimes evident. In fact, all dimensions are oftentimes evident from the teachers, namely, self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship management, and responsible decision making.

Meanwhile, the extent of interpersonal relationship of teachers is high. Apparently, all indicators are found to be high specifically on assertion of needs, bidirectional communication, conflict disclosure and interpersonal closeness, conflict, and emotional experience and expression.

Based on the findings, socio-emotional competence and interpersonal relationship are related. All domains of socio-emotional competence are linked to the interpersonal relationship of teachers.

Also, socio-emotional of teachers significantly influences interpersonal relationship. This leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis..

Recommendations

The following suggestions were offered based on the conclusions of the study:

The higher officials in the Department of Education may contribute significantly to the attainment of socio-emotional competence among teachers and the development of positive interpersonal relationships by prioritizing the well-being and professional development of educators. They may invest in comprehensive teacher training programs that include emotional intelligence, self-awareness, and stress management components. Moreover, DepEd may establish a supportive work environment that values teachers' emotional and mental health, offering resources such as counseling and wellness initiatives.

Moreover, school heads may actively contribute to the attainment of socio-emotional competence among teachers and the cultivation of positive interpersonal relationships by fostering a supportive and empathetic school culture. They may lead by example, demonstrating emotional intelligence and self-awareness in their interactions with the teaching staff. School leaders may organize professional development sessions that focus on socio-emotional skills, conflict resolution, and effective communication, providing teachers with the tools they need to enhance their interpersonal relationships. Furthermore, school heads may create opportunities for teachers to collaborate, share experiences, and build a sense of community within the school.

Furthermore, teachers may actively contribute to the development of socio-emotional competence and the promotion of positive interpersonal relationships within their professional community. They may engage in ongoing self-reflection and self-improvement to enhance their own socio-emotional skills, serving as role models for their colleagues. Collaboration is key, so teachers may actively seek opportunities to share experiences, provide support, and foster a sense of unity among their peers. Additionally, teachers may organize team-building activities and promote a culture of mutual respect, empathy, and active listening.

Lastly, future researchers may play a vital role in advancing socio-emotional competence and fostering positive interpersonal relationships among teachers by conducting in-depth studies to identify the most effective strategies, interventions, and training programs. Their research may provide valuable insights into the specific socio-emotional competencies that are most relevant for educators and the interventions that yield the best results. Future studies may also explore the factors that facilitate or hinder positive interpersonal relationships among teachers, allowing for the development of targeted interventions.

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