



Interpersonal Relationship and Well-Being of Public Elementary Teachers in Davao De Oro Division

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ABSTRACT

Strengthening teachers' well-being is what teachers need the most in any circumstances. Their well-being helps them to give their best at work. However, this had never been explored specifically in the local context. With this, the study determined the extent of interpersonal relationship and well-being of public elementary teachers in Davao del Oro Division. Also, it investigated the association of the involved variables. With the use of probability sampling, 200 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. Results revealed that there was a very extensive interpersonal relationship among teachers. Furthermore, there was a significant relationship between the two variables. Based on the findings, it was further suggested that higher officials in the Department of Education may craft programs considering the well-being of teachers. School heads may also find ways on how to be a contributing factor in enhancing the interpersonal relationship and well-being of teachers. Furthermore, future researchers may consider exploring other factors relevant to the variables involved in this study.

Keywords: Interpersonal relationship, well-being, descriptive correlation, Davao de Oro Division, Philippines

Introduction

The teacher's well-being significantly affects classroom climate and student work. Teachers interact with various individuals at work including colleagues and parents, but interactions with students have the most decisive influence on all positive and negative emotions involved. Wellbeing is seen as essential components and quality of life indicators (Ilgan et al., 2015). Maintaining a sense of wellbeing means being able to live life and manage its challenges with a sense of joy, balance, stability, and satisfaction, regardless of external conditions (Plisokova, 2021). The teaching profession is associated with high stress (Chirico et al., 2020). Stress is known to decrease the well-being of teachers (Chirico, 2017). Unfortunately, sustaining teachers' well-being has been a perennial problem.

In the global scenario, reports on Teacher Wellbeing Index 2018 showed that 64 percent of educational institutions do not regularly survey their teachers to establish levels of work well-being. When asked if education institutions had the budgets/resources that could be used for teachers' well-being, 48 percent said they did not know, 16 percent said there were resources available, and 36 percent said no financial resources for this. Apparently, there has been difficulty in responding and addressing problems holistically considering teacher's work well-being in this ever-changing education system (Gomendio, 2017).

In the Philippines, teachers' well-being is badly affected because of stress. Based upon the study conducted by von der Embse et al. (2019), due to the increased pressure from test-based accountability practices, teachers have reported high levels of stress and burnout. Public school teachers are confronted with numerous paperwork and workloads. They are surrounded by problems like finances, family, and health, which may trigger negative emotions in the classroom, resulting in poor teaching performance and affecting their overall well-being. Exposure of teachers to unnecessary stress hampers routine abilities decreased satisfaction and level of productivity that resulted in the development of feeling exhaustion and strain. When teachers are highly stressed, students have low social adjustments and academic performance overtly manifested in absenteeism, misbehavior, and dissatisfaction (Greenberg et al., 2016).

In the Division of Davao de Oro, the researcher observed that teachers were bombarded with heavy workload and had no more enough time to take care of themselves. Their demanding profession led them to isolation which resulted to poor interaction with their colleagues. The challenging demands exhausted some of the teachers resulting to poor well-being which was not fully explored. Given these situations, the researcher aimed to further explore the extent of interpersonal relationship and well-being of teachers specifically in Davao de Oro Division. Furthermore, it aimed to explore the correlation of the two variables. In this academic endeavor, the researcher intended to shed light regarding the interpersonal relationship and well-being of teachers. This undertaking also hoped to provide insights to the policy makers in crafting policies, programs, interventions, projects, activities that would motivate teachers to intensify their well-being the betterment of the school community. This study was mainly anchored on the sociological theory of symbolic

interactionism articulated by Blumer (1969). Other theories such as the Self-determination Theory by Ryan and Deci (2000) and Attachment Theory by Bowlby (1982) are also aligned to this study.

As the main theory, symbolic interactionism by Blumer (1969) and Mead (1934) established that the repetitive act of interaction, individuals as actors in relation to social groups constitute symbolic and shared meanings. Importantly, symbolic interactionism does not deny the unique; it is directly concerned with how distinctive meanings are adapted and interpreted through social practice. This theory was being used to better comprehend the relationship between teachers and their environment which involves their superior, co-teachers and their students. Using the sociological theory of symbolic interactionism. Symbolic interactionism investigates how humans build meanings and perceptions in their social environments. The way teachers interact with their environment by means of establishing interpersonal relationship may affect their well-being (Plisokova, 2021).

Furthermore, this research was backed up by Harris and Mossholder's (1996) hypothesis, which Park and Kim (2009) have corroborated. They thought that there are links between corporate atmosphere and employee well-being. Feldt et al. (2000) found a substantial association and interaction between a favorable organizational climate and a great atmosphere of consistency, both of which were associated to a high level of job satisfaction which leads to a healthy well-being.

Another theory that supported this study was the Self-Determination Theory by Ryan and Deci (2000). This theory postulated three universal needs of man: the need for autonomy (decision-making), the need for self-actualization, (belonging in a place where communication and friendship can be met), and the need for competence, (the ability to achieve goals and manage difficulties effectively). Meeting these three needs is vital for well-being. Creating and maintaining quality relationships and effectively managing stress and fulfilling goals is a prerequisite for any person to achieve a sense of well-being (Spilt et al., 2011).

The third notable theory for this study was the Attachment theory by Bowlby (1982). Attachment theory focuses on relationships and bonds (particularly long-term) between people. Individuals who are securely attached tend to be more trusting of their colleagues and more likely to cooperate with them. They tend to be emotionally stable and less likely to experience stress in the workplace.

In Spilt et al. (2011) study, which is quite noteworthy for the idea that new relationships and friendships are formed based on one's thought representations of oneself and others. These preconceptions – self-perception, one's perceptions of others, and the dynamics among these relationships – both control the development of new friendships and significantly shape established relationships. Further, it reinforces the idea that teacher's ability to handle disagreements as a fundamental aspect of a sense of wellbeing.

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 endeavor was considered as quantitative since it relied on the numerical data when analyzing and interpreting the data. It was descriptive since its purpose was to determine the extent of teachers' interpersonal relationship and well-being. In addition, this academic pursuit was correlational since its purpose was to measure the relationship between interpersonal relationship and well-being of public elementary teachers in the Division of Davao de Oro. Furthermore, it also aimed to determine the domains of interpersonal relationship that significantly influence the well-being of teachers.

Research Respondents

This study catered 200 public secondary teachers in the Division of Davao de Oro. Memon et al. (2020) believed that 200 samples are enough when testing the Pearson Correlation analysis. Hence, the 200 respondents were enough to address the purpose of this study. In the inclusion and exclusion criteria, all elementary teachers in the public school of the Division of Davao de Oro were given an equal chance to be part of the study. The elementary teachers with 5 years teaching experience had been chosen in this endeavor since the five years stay in the public school helped them to assess their interpersonal relationship with their superior and co-teachers and also the status of their well-being as a public servant. In this academic quest, those elementary teachers in the private schools were not considered. Furthermore, 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

The primary means of gathering the data was through administering a survey questionnaire. The survey questionnaire was divided into two sections. The first set was focusing about interpersonal relationship while the second set was about the well-being of teachers.

The interpersonal relationship questionnaire was adapted from Callaghan (2006). The instrument consists of 25 items. It has 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 .88 suggesting that the items have relatively *high* internal consistency.

The well-being questionnaire was adapted from Collie (2015). It was also subjected to pilot testing which revealed a result of .76, suggesting that the items have relatively *high* internal consistency. The tool has a total of 15 items. It has three variables, namely: workload well-being (1-6), organizational well-being (1-5), and student interaction well-being (1-4).

Table

Table 1

Summary on the Extent of Interpersonal Relationship

No	Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1	Assertion of Needs	4.52	Very Extensive
2	Bidirectional Communication	4.50	Very Extensive
3	Conflict	4.47	Very Extensive
4	Disclosure and Interpersonal Closeness	4.51	Very Extensive
5	Emotional Experience and Expression	4.47	Very Extensive
Overall		4.49	Very Extensive

Table 1 provides the summary on the extent of interpersonal relationship. It is exhibited that the overall mean of interpersonal relationship is 4.49, which is in a very extensive level. This means that interpersonal relationship is always evident.

Data show that all five (5) indicators are in a very extensive level. As arranged chronologically, assertion of needs has the highest mean score (4.52). This is followed by disclosure and interpersonal closeness (4.51), bidirectional communication (4.50), conflict (4.47), and emotional experience and expression (4.47).

With the very extensive interpersonal relationship, this reaffirms the widely held belief of Koula (2015) claiming that 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. It also plays an important role, as both represent the basic institutions of socialization of students. School and family are involved in the pedagogic process and are sharing common aims, even though in practice frictions between teachers and parents are not absent.

In the field of education, interpersonal relationship has been defined as wide range relationships that exist between all parties involved in education such as, among students in class, teachers and teachers, school leaders, and teachers and parents. Martin (2014) revealed the importance of interpersonal relationships established between teacher and pupil. Other than parents, caregivers, and peers, relationship with teacher is one of the most influential sources of relationship which influences the students' academic and non- academic lives.

As support, in the study conducted by Torres et al. (2015), it is found out that preschool interpersonal relationships with teachers and peers predicted academic success and was mediated by increases in emotional knowledge. The quality of the relationship between teachers and students is the developmental (macro- level) product of recurrent and cumulative (micro- level interactions between the teachers and the class or individual students that occur in real- time (Koopmans & Stamovlasis, 2016).

Table 2

Summary on the Extent of Well-Being

No	Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1	Workload Well-Being	4.50	Very Extensive
2	Organizational Well-Being	4.52	Very Extensive
3	Student Interaction Well-Being	4.58	Very Extensive

Overall	4.53	Very Extensive
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Table 2 provides the summary on the extent of well-being. It is exhibited that the overall mean of well-being is 4.53, which is in a very extensive level. This means that the well-being is always evident.

Data show that all three (3) indicators are in a very extensive level. As arranged chronologically, student interaction well-being (4.58) has the highest mean. This is followed by organizational well-being (4.52) and workload well-being (4.50).

The result implies that teachers have a very extensive well-being specifically in their workload well-being, organizational well-being, and student interaction well-being. This only proves that despite the challenging and demanding nature of their teaching profession, their well-being is still secured and is very evident.

The favorable findings of this study supported the findings of Roy et al. (2018) revealing that teachers who can demonstrate positive practices for students will have a positive impact on their well-being. The popular belief that teacher happiness is linked to student happiness and vice versa is validated by research. Unfortunately, the result contradicts the report of Evans et al. (2022) revealing that teachers ranked their well-being much lower than other professional vocations such as health, social work, finance, and human resources, according to a study of teaching employees in the United Kingdom.

Teachers' work revolves around the education of children and young people, and learner achievement underlies teachers' everyday effort, excitement, and devotion. Teachers are widely considered as the most essential in-school factor influencing student achievement, contentment, and success. The quality of a teacher's work (Roy, 2018) and its impact on student achievements are inextricably linked.

Table 3

Significance of the Relationship Between the Domains

Interpersonal Relationship and Well-Being

Interpersonal Relationship	Dependent Variable	r-value	p- value	Decision on Ho
Assertion of Needs		0.689	0.000	Ho is Rejected
Bidirectional Communication		0.675	0.000	Ho is Rejected
Conflict	Well-Being	0.655	0.000	Ho is Rejected
Disclosure and Interpersonal Closeness		0.679	0.000	Ho is Rejected
Emotional Experience and Expression		0.648	0.000	Ho is Rejected
Overall		0.669*	0.000	Ho is Rejected

*Significant at 0.05 significance level.

Presented in Table 3 are the data on the significance of the relationship between the domains interpersonal relationship and well-being. Reflected in the hypothesis, the relationship was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The overall r-value of .669 with a p-value of <0.05 signified the rejection of the null hypothesis. It means that there is a significant relationship between interpersonal relationship and well-being. This shows that interpersonal relationship is correlated with well-being.

Doing a pairwise correlation among the measures of both variables, it can be gleaned that assertion of needs, bidirectional communication, conflict, disclosure and interpersonal closeness, and emotional experience and expression revealed computed r-values of 0.689, 0.675, 0.655, 0.679, and 0.648 respectively with p-values which are less than 0.05 in the level of significance. This implies that as assertion of needs, bidirectional communication, conflict, disclosure and interpersonal closeness, and emotional experience and expression increases, the well-being of teachers increases.

The result is in consonance to the study conducted by Antonucci et al. (2014) revealing that interpersonal relationships play an important role in regulating individual well-being. The interpersonal relationships between teachers and students have been largely ignored as a factor of significance to teacher wellbeing (Spilt et al., 2011).

Moreover, Okekeocha et al. (2021) believed that the role of interpersonal relations developed between the teachers in the school is very important. Friendly environment promotes good interpersonal relationship which in turn positively influences job satisfaction among the teachers. Good interpersonal relationship among the teachers creates a fertile ground for the seed of job satisfaction. Furthermore, a good relationship between teachers and students can positively influence the subjective well-being of teachers. The promotion of teacher well-being and the development of interaction skills and strategies, which are part of interpersonal relationship, are of great importance not just for the teacher but also for overall student well-being and the achievement of more effective learning outcomes.

Conclusions

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

The extent of interpersonal relationship of the public elementary teachers implies that it is always evident in the among teachers. The consistent presence and extent of interpersonal relationships among public elementary teachers indicate a strong and pervasive culture of collaboration, communication, and mutual support within the teaching community. Meanwhile, the extent of well-being is always evident among teachers. The sustained focus on well-being underscores the importance of fostering a supportive and caring atmosphere, promoting work-life balance, and providing resources for self-care and professional development. Based on the findings, interpersonal relationship and well-being are correlated. Recognizing and nurturing this correlation is crucial for educational institutions, as it indicates that investing in fostering healthy relationships among teachers can have a direct positive impact on their well-being.

Recommendations

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

The higher officials in the Department of Education may craft effective policies, programs, projects, interventions and activities which may intensify the interpersonal relationship and well-being of teachers.

Furthermore, school principals may find means in enhancing the interpersonal relationship and well-being of teachers. They may also assess the status of their teachers' interpersonal relationship and well-being that would guide them in providing concrete solutions relevant to teachers' well-being. Moreover, they may also craft new interventions reinforcing teachers' interpersonal relationship and well-being.

More so, teachers may take an effort keep on upgrading themselves both in their interpersonal skills and well-being. They may attend various seminars, webinars, or any undertaking that would help them reinforce their well-being.

Lastly, future researchers may explore relevant information about interpersonal relationship and well-being of teachers. Also, other means of research approach may be utilized to further explore the involved variables in this study

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