

## **THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF TEACHER SENSE OF EFFICACY ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORKING CONDITION OF TEACHERS AND THEIR WILLINGNESS TO REMAIN IN THE PROFESSION**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study aimed to investigate the mediating effect of leadership framework of school administrators on the relationship between team-building and self-efficacy of teachers among the 400 teachers in Davao Region. This study employed non-experimental design utilizing descriptive correlation technique. The statistical tools used were mean, pearson-r, regression technique, and medgraph using Sobel z-test. Research instruments on teacher sense of efficacy, working condition of teachers, and willingness to remain in the profession which were validated were used as sources of data. Using pearson-r, the results revealed that there is a significant relationship between teacher sense of efficacy and working condition, there is a significant relationship between teacher sense of efficacy and willingness to remain in the profession, and there is a significant relationship between working condition and willingness to remain in the profession. Utilizing megradph Sobel z-test, the results of the study also suggest that there is also a partial mediation on the effect of teacher sense of efficacy on the relationship between working condition and willingness to remain in the profession.

*Keywords: Mediating Effect, Teacher Sense of Efficacy, Working Condition of Teachers, Teacher's Willingness to Remain in the Profession, Non-Experimental Quantitative Research Design, Educational Management Philippines*

## 1. Introduction

Today's teachers have an increasing number of demands on their time. In addition to jobs' and parental demands, teachers must manage parent conferences; attend staff meetings; and perform countless functions. Smith & Rowley (2005) noted that new teachers, especially, may struggle with time management because they are expected not only to create their own lesson plans and develop teaching and classroom-management strategies for a full schedule of classes but also to quickly learn administrative tasks, including taking attendance and reporting truancies, and communicating with parents, all in relative isolation. The result, teachers leave the teaching profession and find other jobs (Knapp, Elfers & Plecki, 2004; Dunlap, 2011).

Meanwhile, successful democracies and economies demand that all students acquire analytical thinking, adept communication, and complex problem-solving skills. This kind of authentic learning requires highly skilled, accomplished teachers working within a school climate that promotes powerful learning experiences stressed Smylie & Allen (2005). To deliver high quality education, schools must attract, develop, and retain effective teachers. Working conditions play an important role in a school's ability to do so. Schools that are able to offer their teachers a safe, pleasant, and supportive working environment and adequate compensation are better able to attract and retain good teachers and motivate them to do their best. Teachers' working conditions are important to students as well as teachers because they affect how much individual attention teachers can give to students (Murnane & Steele, 2007; Coburn & Russell, 2008; Sykes, 2008).

However, large class sizes or disruptive students, for example, can make both teaching and learning difficult. On the other hand, some aspects of teachers' working conditions go along with the job regardless of where a teacher works. For example, teacher salaries tend to be low relative to those earned by similarly qualified individuals in other professions regardless of the type or location of the school (Somech & Wenderow, 2006; Porter, Wrench & Hoskinson, 2007). Other aspects of teachers' working conditions, such as school safety and teaching workload, including the amount of time spent working, the number of classes taught, and the number of students in each class are some of the work condition of teachers that need to be addressed as the amount of time a teacher devotes to his or her job is partly self-determined, reflecting not only what the school requires or expects but also the teacher's efficiency, enthusiasm, and commitment (Odden & Kelly, 2008; Ingersoll, 2001).

Teachers who feel efficacious about their instruction, management, and relationships with students may have more cognitive and emotional resources available to press students towards completing more

complex tasks and developing deeper understandings. For Wheatley (2005) and Puchner & Taylor, (2006) those teacher who have a high sense of efficacy report higher overall satisfaction with their jobs, display greater effort and motivation, take on extra roles in their schools, and are more resilient across the span of their career. Moreover, teachers with higher levels of efficacy are more likely to learn and use innovative strategies for teaching, implement management techniques that provide for student autonomy, set attainable goals, persist in the face of student failure, willingly offer special assistance to low achieving students, and design instruction that develops students' self-perceptions of their academic skills. (Puchner & Taylor, 2006; Kozel, 2007; Hoy & Miskel, 2008).

Furthermore, the job of a teacher is to teach, that is, to help students learn. However, Fisler & Firestone (2006) noted that there are ineffective teachers, who make it difficult for students to learn or decreases students' desire to learn by not knowing the subject well, by not being able to communicate with students because of disorganization or other factors. Ineffective teachers fail to focus on the task of learning the subject during every available minute of instructional time and fail to use effective instructional approaches, or by ignoring the differing base levels of achievement which students bring to the classroom (Heckert, Latier, Ringwald & Silvey, 2006; Yeh, 2006).

The researcher therefore feels the importance of covering the three variables in the study. She rarely comes across with a similar study especially in the local setting. Thus, this undertaking can be considered as a new knowledge that will be added to the archive on the existing knowledge for each variable involved in the study. It is in this considerable perspective that the researcher decided to conduct the study. The magnitude of teacher's willingness to remain in the profession cannot be taken for granted. One important variable which contributes teacher's willingness to remain in the profession is the working condition as mentioned in various literatures such as that of Ingersoll, (2001), Subban, (2006), Strayhorn, (2008), and Coburn & Russell, (2008) among others.

## **2. Research Objective**

The purpose of this study was to find out the mediating effect of teacher's sense of efficacy on the relationship between working condition of teachers and their willingness to remain in the profession. Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following objectives:

1. To describe the level of teacher efficacy.
2. To describe the level of teacher's willingness to remain in the profession.
3. To describe the level of working condition of teacher.

4. To describe the significance of relationship between: working condition and teacher sense of efficacy, teacher sense of efficacy and teacher's willingness to remain in the profession, and working condition and teacher's willingness to remain in the profession.
5. To determine if the mediating effect of teacher sense of efficacy on the relationship between working condition of teachers and their willingness to remain in the profession is significant.

### **3. Methodology**

The study employed a non-experimental design utilizing the descriptive correlation technique of research which is designed to gather data, ideas, facts and information related to the study. It will also look into the relationship between three variables – teacher sense of efficacy, teacher's willingness to remain in the profession and working condition of teachers. The interest of the study is to investigate the relationship between teacher sense of efficacy and teacher's willingness to remain in the profession; the relationship between working condition of teachers and teacher's willingness to remain in the profession; and the mediating effect of teacher sense of efficacy on the relationship between teacher working condition and their willingness to remain in the profession.

The study was conducted in ten divisions in Region XI. This includes 400 teachers from the the division of Compostela Valley Province, Davao del Norte, Davao del Sur, Davao Oriental, Mati City, Digos City, Davao City, Panabo City, Tagum City, and Island Garden City of Samal (IGACOS).

### **4. Results**

#### **4.1 Level of Sense of Efficacy of Teachers**

The overall mean score on Sense of Efficacy 4.25 or very high level indicates that most of the items regarding sense of efficacy of the public school teachers are always manifested. The cited overall mean score was the result obtained based on the mean scores of 4.28 or very high for *efficacy in student engagement*, 4.25 or very high for *efficacy in instructional strategies* and 4.23 or very high for *efficacy in classroom management*.

The very high level for *efficacy in student engagement* indicated that sense of efficacy as felt by public school teachers was always manifested, if not Shown in Table 1 are the responses of the respondents on the level of sense of efficacy of public school teachers. The overall mean score of 4.25 or very high level indicates that most of the items regarding sense of efficacy of the public school teachers are always manifested. The cited overall mean score was the result obtained based on the mean scores of 4.28 or very high for *efficacy in student engagement*, 4.25 or very high for *efficacy in instructional strategies* and 4.23 or very high for *efficacy in classroom management*.

The very high level for *efficacy in student engagement* indicated that sense of efficacy as felt by public school teachers was always manifested, if not almost all of the time. The mean rating for this indicator which was 4.28 was the result of the very high scores assigned by the teachers to the specific items in the questionnaire appended in this study. This included getting students to follow classroom rules, motivating students who show low interest in school work, controlling disruptive behavior in the classroom, implementing alternative strategies in the classroom and using a variety of assessment strategies.

The respondents had a very agreeable rating on efficacy in instructional strategies. Its mean rating of 4.25 described as very high level specified that the sense of efficacy of public school teachers was always been felt by the teachers. The descriptors for this particular indicator as underscored in the questionnaire were providing an alternative explanation or example when students are confused, adjusting the lessons to the proper level for individual students, using a variety of assessment strategies, providing appropriate challenges for every capable students and assisting families in helping their children do well in school.

The rating of 4.23 for efficacy in classroom management obtained a very high level of descriptive rating as a result of the rating given by the respondents on the following items in the research instrument: establishing a classroom management system with each group of students, establishing routines to keep activities running smoothly, responding to defiant students, making expectations clear about student behavior and keeping a few problem students from ruining an entire lesson.

Overall, the results from the analyzed data indicated that the respondent public school teachers have very high sense of efficacy in the dispensation of their roles and responsibilities in their respective schools. This further denotes that public school teachers assess themselves to have always, if not most of the time, imbibe on practices that exhibit their self-efficacy.

#### **4.2 Level of Working Condition of Teachers**

The computations the level of working condition of teachers revealed an overall mean score of 4.03 or high rating indicating that the said respondents were high in perceiving the working condition of teachers. The score was derived from the mean scores of 4.30 or high for leadership, 4.10 or high for empowerment, 4.02 or high both for time and job commitment and professional intentions, 3.96 or high for mentoring, 3.92 or high for professional development and 3.91 or high for facilities and resources.

Data revealed that the respondents had manifested a very high level of leadership with a mean rating of 4.30 as manifested in the following descriptors in the questionnaire: maintaining discipline in the classroom, being focused on educating students, communicating clear expectations to students and parents, being committed to helping every student learn and having an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect.

In the same vein, the respondent's level of empowerment was high as evidenced by an overall mean score of 4.10, indicating that they have oftentimes observed and practiced the situations, which include taking steps to solve problems, being trusted to make sound professional decisions about instruction, being centrally involved in decision making about education issues, having available opportunities for advancement within the teaching profession and having an effective process for making group decisions and solving problems.

The mean rating of 4.02 for time obtained a high level score as a result of the rating given by the respondents on the following items in the research instrument: having available time to collaborate with their colleagues, having reasonable class sizes, affording teachers to have time to meet the educational needs of all students, being given minimal amount of administrative paperworks required by the school leader, having available time on school-related activities outside the regular school work and having sufficient non-instructional time.

Similarly, results revealed that the respondents had manifested a high level of job commitment and professional intentions with a mean rating of 4.02 as manifested in the following descriptors in the questionnaire: with professional development training, being empowered, having good working environment, having enough time to accomplish the tasks during the work day and having functional facilities and resources.

The mean rating of 3.96 for mentoring obtained a high level score as a result of the rating given by the respondents on the following items in the research instrument: having mentors who provide support for instructional strategies, having mentors who support for completing other school or district paperwork, having mentors who support for social and general encouragement, having mentors who provide support for classroom management or discipline strategies and having mentors who support for school and/or district policies and procedures.

A high level of professional development with the mean rating of 3.92 was also evident among the respondent public school teachers, denoting that they oftentimes felt this indicator. The descriptors in the questionnaire were: provided with training to improve the knowledge and skills most needed to teach effectively, being provided with opportunities to learn from one another, having adequate time provided for professional development, having sufficient training to fully utilize instructional technology and having sufficient funds and resources are available to allow teachers to take advantage of professional development activities.

With a mean rating of 3.91, the facilities and resources obtained a high level given from the responses of the respondents. This was indicated on the following specific items from the research instrument: having adequate professional space to work productively, having sufficient access to appropriate instructional materials

and resources, having sufficient access to instructional technology, including computers, printers, software and internet access, having sufficient access to communications technology including phones, faxes, email and network drives and working in a school environment that is clean and well-maintained.

### **4.3 Level of Willingness to Remain in the Profession**

For the overall level of Teachers' Willingness to Remain in the Profession, computations revealed an overall mean score of score of 4.02 or high rating indicating that the said respondents oftentimes perceived on the culture of the school. The score was derived from the mean scores of 4.29 or very high for pre-service orientation, 4.28 or very high for motivation to teach, 4.12 or high for in-service training, 4.10 or very high for school culture, 3.89 or high for emotional factors, 3.86 or high for external forces and 3.59 or high for compensation.

The mean rating of 4.29 for preservice orientation was very high. The descriptors in the questionnaire were: feeling confident of having the skills necessary to perform one's duties, being taught with classroom management in college years, course in college prepared teachers to teach the curriculum for the assigned courses, having trained in college days to deal with diverse students and being taught to handle student conflict in college years.

In the same vein, the mean rating of 4.28 for motivation to teach was very high. The mean rating was the outcome of the teachers' responses in the following items in the questionnaire: willing to remain when knowing a child has learned something from one's teaching and feeling like making a difference in the lives of children. On the other hand, the three following descriptors indicated on high level: having a lot of room to grow professionally in one's field, the social status of a teacher giving satisfaction to oneself and the philosophy of public school education inspiring oneself to continue to teach.

The mean rating of 4.12 for in-service training was high. The descriptors in the questionnaire were: professional involvement being stressed as a way increasing the skills level of teachers, having the opportunity to seek advice from experienced teachers, the feedback from mentor's visits to classroom being very useful and having development programs to enhance skills as a teacher. On the other hand, being encouraged to attend seminars and trainings was obtained and indicated on very high level.

A high rating was also seen on the public school teachers' school culture, based on the mean rating of 4.10. The descriptors in the questionnaire were: work environment very positive in nature, administrators making sure that new, inexperienced teachers do not feel isolated in their job, principal supporting the staff when trying new methods, administrators supporting teacher decision and actions and sense of efficacy created by a strong leadership team and support from the staff helping to create a positive teaching environment.

Emotional factors also indicate a high level with a mean rating of 3.89 from the given responses of the respondents. The descriptors in the questionnaire were: being happy with the support of colleagues, upbeat attitude helping oneself get away from stress, without anxiety attack and having no stress on one's job. On the other way, a very high level descriptive rating was obtained on one's day going better when attitude is positive. With a mean rating of 3.86 described as on high level for external factors given from the responses of the respondents. These was obtained for the following specific items: job encouraging, being happy that the parents/guardians of students always following up the academic progress of their children, being satisfied the way the school allocates money for school's maintenance and operating expenses, student's parents very supportive when being asked for their help and enjoying the available resources of community to deal with social problems of young people.

Lastly, the mean rating of 3.89 for compensation was found to be high among public school teachers. The descriptors in the questionnaire were: enjoying a fair system of getting rewards for increased efforts, school division providing extras for us in the way of leave, sabbatical, scholarships to further one's education and payment for coursework, work providing a lucrative retirement package, enjoying the fringe benefits (insurance, retirement plans) provided in my work that are extremely generous and salary adequately meeting one's needs.

#### **4.4 Correlations between Sense of Efficacy and Working Condition**

The results of the relationship between the independent (working condition), dependent (willingness to remain in the profession) and mediator (sense of efficacy) variables are presented. Bivariate correlation analysis using Pearson product moment correlation was employed to determine the relationship between the variables mentioned.

Based on the first correlation analysis, working condition and willingness to remain in the profession revealed a computed r-value of 0.758 with a probability value of  $p = 0.000$  which is lesser than 0.05 significance level. This implies that the higher the working condition, the higher will be the teachers' willingness to remain in the profession. Thus, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between working condition and willingness of public school teachers to remain in the profession was therefore rejected.

In the same manner, a second correlational analysis was also employed between working condition and sense of efficacy, which yielded an r-value of 0.726 with a probability value of  $p = 0.000$ , which is significant at 0.05 level. This implies that the higher the working condition, the higher will be public school teachers' sense of efficacy. Thus, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between working condition and sense of efficacy of public school teachers was therefore rejected.

The last correlational analysis was employed between sense of efficacy and willingness to remain in the profession, which yielded an r-value of 0.611 with a probability value of  $p = 0.000$ , which is significant at 0.05 level. This implies that higher the public school teachers' sense of efficacy, the higher would be their willingness to remain in the profession. Thus, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between sense of efficacy and willingness to remain in the profession was therefore rejected.

#### **4.5 Mediation Analysis of the Three Variables**

Data was analyzed with linear regression method as input to the medgraph. Mediation analysis developed by Baron and Kenny (1986) is the mediating effect of a third variable in the relationship between two variables.

There are four steps to be met for a third variable to be acting as a mediator. In Table 5, these are categorized as Steps 1 to 4. In Step 1, working condition as the independent variable (IV) significantly predicts willingness to remain in the profession of the public school teachers, which is this study's dependent variable (DV). In step 2, working condition significantly predicts sense of efficacy, the mediator (M). In step 3, sense of efficacy significantly predicts willingness to remain in the profession of the public school teachers. Because the three steps (paths a, b and c) are significant, further mediation analysis through medgraph is warranted, involving the Sobel z test to assess the significance of mediation effect. If the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable becomes non-significant at the final step of the analysis, full mediation will be achieved. It means all of the effects are mediated by the mediator variable. In addition, if the regression coefficient is substantially reduced at the final step but remains significant, only partial mediation is obtained, which implies that part of the independent variable (working condition) is mediated by the mediator (sense of efficacy) but other parts are either direct or mediated by other variables that are not included in the model. In this case, as gleaned in step 4, the combined effect of working condition on willingness to remain in the profession was found to be significant after mediated by sense of efficacy. Therefore, partial mediation took place since the effect was found to be significant at 0.05 level.

Furthermore, the result of the computation of mediating effects is shown in Figure 3. The Sobel test yielded a z-value of 2.712 with a p-value of 0.001, which is significant at 0.05 level. This means that the partial mediation accounted by sense of efficacy on the relationship of working condition and willingness to remain in the profession of public school teachers is significant. In addition, the causal relationship between working condition and willingness to remain in the profession has been reduced from a significant beta coefficient value of 0.758 to 0.665, which is still significant, at the inclusion of sense of efficacy, the mediator variable.

Lastly, the figure shows the results of the computation of the effect size in the mediation test conducted between the three variables. The effect size measures how much of the effect of working condition on willingness to remain in the profession can be attributed to the indirect path. The total effect value of 0.758 is the raw correlation between working condition and willingness to remain in the profession. The direct effect value of 0.665 is the size of the correlation between working condition and willingness to remain in the profession with school culture included in the regression. The indirect effect value of 0.094 is the amount of the original correlation between the working condition and willingness to remain in the profession that now goes through sense of efficacy to willingness to remain in the profession ( $a*b$ , where “a” refers to the path between the independent variable and mediator variable and “b” refers to the path between the mediator variable and the dependent variable). The ratio index is computed by dividing the indirect effect by the total effect; in this case, 0.094 by 0.758 equals 0.123. It seems that about 12.3 percent of the total effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable goes through the mediator variable, and about 87.7 percent of the total effect is either direct or mediated by other variables not included in the model.

## **5. Conclusion**

With considerations on the findings of the study, conclusions are drawn in this section. Working conditions of public school teachers were found to be very high, exhibit high level of sense of efficacy and high level of willingness to remain in the profession. The results of the study also confirm that there is a significant relationship between working condition and willingness to remain in the profession of public school teachers. In the same manner, there is a significant relationship between working condition and sense of efficacy. A significant relationship also exists between sense of efficacy and willingness to remain in the profession of public school teachers. Lastly, the results of the study also suggests that sense of efficacy has a partial mediating effect the relationship between working condition and willingness to remain in the profession of public school teachers.

## **6. Recommendations**

The study found a significant relationship between working condition and willingness to remain in the profession of public school teachers. The researcher therefore recommends that the Department of Education in the regional, provincial, city and district levels, as well as the public school administrators may glean on the results and discussions of this study as a preliminary basis in evaluating the work stations as well as working relationships of the teachers. There is a need to conduct peer-evaluation, self-evaluation and supervisor evaluation on the necessary areas of competency of the teacher to gain better level of efficacy in the dispensation of their functions at school. The study also reveals a significant relationship between working

condition and willingness to remain in the profession of public school teachers. The researcher therefore recommends that the school administrators may look on the findings of the study as an essential basis in assessing the current working conditions of the teachers, and improve the areas that need addressing and improvement. The study also reveals that there is a significant relationship between sense of efficacy and willingness to remain in the profession of public school teachers. The researcher therefore recommends that the school administrators may also look on the study's findings in developing school-based reorientation, needs assessment among the teachers and evaluation of their performance to improve them as well.

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