



# WORKING CONDITION AND WORK ENGAGEMENT OF PUBLIC SCHOOL ELEMENTARY TEACHERS OF DAVAO DEL NORTE DIVISION

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## ABSTRACT

The study explored the relationship of working condition and work engagement of public elementary teachers in Davao del Norte Division. Also, it investigated the association of the involved variables and the domains of working condition that significantly influence the work engagement of teachers. 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, Product-Moment correlation and Regression Analysis. Results revealed that there was an extensive working condition and an extensive work engagement among the respondents. Furthermore, there was a significant relationship between the two variables. Moreover, all domains of working condition were found to have significantly influence the work engagement. Based on the findings, it was further suggested that higher officials in the Department of Education and school heads may identify means on how to help teachers to be establish positive work engagement by addressing the concerns in the working condition. More so, future researchers may further explore the involved variables considering other factors and research methods.

**KEYWORDS:** Working condition, work engagement, descriptive correlation, Davao del Norte Division, Philippines

## INTRODUCTION

The work engagement among teachers has a substantial impact, not only on their own professional growth but also on various aspects of students' development, including their physical and mental well-being, as well as their academic performance. In general, a high degree of engagement in their work is correlated with increased commitment, improved involvement, and enhanced productivity among teachers. Highly engaged teachers typically experience job satisfaction, and they are more inclined to exhibit organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB) and engage in innovative practices, as elucidated. Regrettably, teaching ranks as one of the most stressful professions. Consequently, the issue of work engagement is acknowledged universally, as underscored by Klassen et al. in 2012. Teachers with lower engagement often endure burnout, health problems, and severe turnover.

Many researchers reveal that the level of work disengagement is a universal concern (Musenze et al., 2020). Hewitt (2012), in Total Reward Survey, explain that the number of employees who have high engagement is very low, which is less than a quarter of the global working population, and around 39% have medium work engagement. Meanwhile, according to the latest Global Workplace report, it was found that a large number of employees (up to 85%) are not engaged at work (Oehler & Adair, 2019). Hastings and Agrawal (2015) reported that in overall, only 30% of U.S. teachers are engaged in their work, matching the national average for all workers. A majority, 57%, of full-time K-12 teachers in the U.S. are "not engaged. They report, on average, 11.3 unhealthy days per school year days that keep them from doing usual activities resulting in an estimate of about 3.5 missed workdays per school year.

In the Philippines, the public-school teachers in the Philippines complain of heavy workload (Tomacruz, 2018). Because of their reported heavy workload, they experience stress to add to all the other responsibilities that they have in their personal lives. Teachers' heavy workload is undoubtedly a source of stress in teachers' workplace not to mention the practice of overloading which is also equally stressful among public school teachers. Yazon and Ang-



Manaig (2019) found out that teachers greatly feel that there is too much work to be done. They stated that teachers sometimes try doing more than one thing at a time. Similarly, Bongco and Ancho (2019) revealed in their study that teachers' duties do not end with teaching but required related duties which may be regular curricular activities and school-related tasks. These overwhelming tasks led them to be less engaged.

In the Davao del Norte Division, it was observed that teachers were overburdened with too many responsibilities and accountabilities that restrained them to get engaged in teaching. They faced heavy workloads, including lesson planning, grading, administrative tasks, and extracurricular responsibilities leading to reduced engagement. They also had problems on the lack of necessary teaching materials, technology, and classroom resources that hinder them to effectively engage students and lead to frustration. More so, they were in an unsupportive school culture, including poor relationships with colleagues or administrators.

Nonetheless, it was important to note that the conditions mentioned were observed in isolation, as there had not been explored in any prior research that specifically examined the work engagement of teachers in the local context, with a particular emphasis on their working environment. Given this situation, the researcher was motivated to investigate the current state of the working environment and how it influences the work engagement of teachers, particularly in the public elementary schools of Davao del Norte Division. Furthermore, the aim was to investigate the correlation between these two factors.

This undertaking also aimed to provide meaningful perspectives for policymakers in shaping policies, initiatives, interventions, projects, and undertakings that can promote the cultivation of a positive work environment among all educational leaders. The objective of these endeavors was to bolster teachers in establishing a robust basis for their work engagement. Additionally, the researcher would intend to share the findings of this study in diverse local, national, and international platforms, with the ultimate aspiration of publishing it in a journal indexed by Scopus.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

In this research, a quantitative approach was utilized, precisely employing a descriptive correlational technique. Quantitative research involves gathering numerical data and then applying mathematical analysis, frequently integrating statistical tools. This methodology is employed to clarify and offer insights into particular problems or phenomena (Apuke, 2017). In the realm of descriptive correlational studies, the emphasis is on delineating variables and the inherent relationships that emerge among them (Davis, 2021).

Descriptive research involves a non-interventionist approach by the researcher, observing variables without any manipulation. Its principal aim is to offer a comprehensive comprehension of the fundamental attributes of these variables, as highlighted by Korrapati (2016). Conversely, a correlational study aims to ascertain if a relationship exists between two variables. According to Kabir (2016), this entails assessing whether a change, either an increase or decrease, in one variable is connected to a corresponding increase or decrease in the other.

This study fell under the quantitative category as it depended on numerical data for analysis and interpretation. It was descriptive in nature as it sought to assess both the working condition and the work engagement of teachers. Furthermore, this academic undertaking was considered correlational because it examined the association between the working condition and the work engagement of teachers in public elementary schools of Davao del Norte Division.

### Respondents and Sampling

A total of 150 public elementary teachers were invited to participate in this study. According to Hair et al. (2018), it is suggested that a minimum of 50 samples is required for simple regression analysis, and typically around 100 samples suffice for most research scenarios. Therefore, having 150 respondents was more than sufficient to fulfill the objectives of this study.

In selecting the study's sample, a two-staged cluster sampling, a form of probability sampling, was utilized. This sampling method allows for determining the probability or likelihood of inclusion for each item. Essentially, every member of the population has an equal and independent chance of being part of the sample (Ragab & Arisha, 2018). In research, cluster sampling is a widely adopted technique that involves dividing the population into clusters. A



cluster comprises unique units, forming exhaustive and mutually exclusive subsets (Thomas, 2020). The two-stage cluster sampling is employed due to the random selection of a sample from each specified cluster or division. In the context of this study, all elementary teachers from the public elementary schools in Davao del Norte Division were taken into account.

The inclusion and exclusion criteria for this study specify the selection of elementary teachers with a minimum of 2 years of teaching experience. This criterion was essential as it allowed teachers with at least a 2-year tenure in public schools to effectively evaluate the working condition and its impact on their work engagement. Additionally, participants who felt uneasy or uncomfortable answering the survey questionnaire had the option to voluntarily withdraw from participating in the study. They did not face any pressure to continue their involvement, and their decision to withdraw was fully respected, emphasizing the paramount importance of the respondents' welfare in the study's conduct.

### **Research Instruments**

Regarding data collection, this study utilized a customized survey questionnaire. The questionnaire used in this study had two distinct sets. The initial set centered on evaluating the working condition, while the subsequent set focused on assessing the work engagement of teachers.

**Working Condition.** The working condition questionnaire was adapted from North Carolina Survey (2022). The instrument consists of 25 items. It comprises the following indicators, namely: time (1-5), facilities and resources (1-5), community support and involvement (1-5), managing student conduct (1-5), and professional development (1-5). The questionnaire was subjected to a pilot testing having a result of .77 suggesting that the items have relatively high internal consistency.

**Work Engagement.** The work engagement questionnaire was adapted from Schaufeli, Taris, and van Rhenen (2008). The tool has a total of 25 items. It has nine indicators, namely: dedication (1-4), vigor (1-6), retention (1-5), satisfaction (1-5) and performance (1-5). The questionnaire was subjected to a pilot testing having a result of .76 suggesting that the items have relatively high internal consistency.

The instruments employed in this study were tailored to align with the study's objectives. The researcher incorporated and consolidated all feedback, comments, and suggestions provided by the adviser, panel members, and expert validators to enhance and refine the research tools, thereby ensuring the achievement of construct validity.

### **Data Analysis**

For more comprehensive interpretation and analysis of the data, the following statistical tools were utilized.

*Mean.* This was used to measure the extent of working condition and work engagement of teachers.

*Pearson r.* This was utilized to determine the relationships between working condition and work engagement of teachers.

*Regression Analysis* This was employed to determine the significant influence of working condition on work engagement of teachers.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Presented in this chapter are the findings based on the results of data gathered, the conclusions drawn from the findings and the recommendations for consideration.

### *Findings*

The main focus of the study was to determine the significance of the relationship between working condition and work engagement of public elementary teachers. The study was conducted in the selected elementary schools in Davao del Norte Division. There were one hundred fifty (150) elementary teachers who participated in this study. Descriptive correlational method of research was used in this study utilizing adopted research instruments. The said instruments were validated by the panel of experts and subjected to pilot testing before it was made ready for administration. Mean,



Pearson Product Correlation of Coefficient, and Regression Analysis were the statistical tools used in analyzing the data. The hypotheses raised in this study were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

The extent of working condition has a mean score of 3.42. Its descriptive equivalent is extensive which means that working condition is oftentimes evident among the respondents. The extent of working conditions, with its descriptive equivalent being extensive, implies that working conditions are frequently observed among the respondents. This suggests a consistent pattern of favorable working conditions, indicating that educators often experience an environment that supports and facilitates their professional roles.

Meanwhile, the extent of work engagement among the respondents has a mean score of 3.49. It has a descriptive equivalent of extensive which means that it is oftentimes evident. The extent of work engagement among the respondents implies that a high level of engagement is frequently evident. This suggests that individuals participating in the survey often experience a strong and dedicated connection to their work, contributing to a positive and motivated professional environment.

It was found out that there is a significant relationship between working condition and work engagement of teachers as reflected on its p-value .000 which is less than the .05 level of significance. The hypothesis of no significant relationship between working condition and work engagement of teachers was rejected. The study's findings reveal a noteworthy and statistically significant relationship between the working condition and work engagement of teachers. This conclusion is supported by the remarkably low p-value of .000, which is well below the standard .05 level of significance. Consequently, the null hypothesis suggesting no significant relationship between the working condition and work engagement of teachers was firmly rejected. These results emphasize the importance of considering and improving the working conditions and overall work environment for teachers, as these factors play a vital role in shaping their engagement to their profession.

More so, it was revealed that all the domains of working condition significantly influence the work engagement of teachers. This is reflected on its  $r^2$  value which is .442 and its p-value .000 which is less than .05 level of significance. The study's findings indicate that each domain within the working condition significantly affects the work engagement of teachers. This is evidenced by the substantial R-squared value of .442, indicating that 44.2% of the variance in work engagement can be attributed to these domains.

## Conclusions

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

The extent of working condition implies that it is oftentimes evident in the school. In fact, only time is found to be occasionally evident while some dimensions are oftentimes evident in the schools, namely, facilities and resources, community support and involvement, managing student conduct, and professional development.

Meanwhile, the extent of work engagement of teacher is oftentimes evident. Apparently, all indicators are found to be extensive specifically on dedication, vigor, retention, satisfaction, and performance.

Based on the findings, working condition and work engagement are related. All domains of working condition are linked to the work engagement of teachers.

Also, working condition significantly influences work engagement of teachers. In fact, all domains of working conditions, namely, time, facilities and resources, community support and involvement, managing student conduct, and professional development significantly influence work engagement of teachers by registering a p-value of .000 which is less than .05 in the level of significance. This leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Further, the result indicates that for every unit increase in the eight domains of working condition, the work engagement will increase.

## Recommendations

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

The higher officials in the Department of Education may prioritize comprehensive measures to enhance both the working conditions and work engagement of teachers. This involves investing in adequate resources and



infrastructure, ensuring classrooms are well-equipped and providing teachers with the necessary tools for effective instruction. Implementing streamlined administrative processes and reducing unnecessary bureaucratic burdens can contribute to a more efficient work environment. Additionally, fostering a positive and collaborative school culture, promoting open communication, and recognizing teachers' efforts through regular appreciation programs can significantly impact their work engagement. Professional development opportunities tailored to individual needs and career growth, along with flexible scheduling to accommodate work-life balance, are vital components. Moreover, school heads may prioritize initiatives aimed at improving both the working conditions and work engagement of teachers within their institutions. This involves conducting regular assessments of the physical and technological infrastructure, ensuring classrooms are well-equipped and conducive to effective teaching. School heads may actively seek feedback from teachers regarding administrative processes, workload, and resource needs to address specific concerns and streamline operations. By actively addressing these aspects, school heads may contribute to a more supportive and empowering environment, fostering higher levels of work engagement and overall job satisfaction among their teaching staff.

Furthermore, teachers may take an active role in improving their working conditions and work engagement by fostering open communication and collaboration with school administrators. By actively contributing to a culture of collaboration, continuous improvement, and mutual support, teachers may play a crucial role in shaping a more conducive and engaging work environment that benefits both themselves and their students.

Lastly, future researchers may undertake in-depth investigations into the specific impact of varying working conditions, including time management, resource availability, community support, and professional development opportunities, on teacher satisfaction and engagement. They may consider exploring innovative interventions and solutions that go beyond traditional frameworks, taking into account the evolving landscape of education.

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