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EXPLORING THE MODERATING ROLE OF COLLEGIAL SUPPORT ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCHOLASTIC ENVIRONMENT AND TEACHER CREATIVITY IN PANABO NORTH DISTRICT, PANABO CITY

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to assess the moderating effect of collegial support on the relationship between the scholastic environment and teacher creativity in Panabo North District, Panabo City, using a non-experimental quantitative design with a descriptive-correlation approach. The study involved 217 public elementary school teachers selected through simple random sampling. Data were collected using modified and enhanced adapted survey questionnaires, which were pilot-tested for reliability and internal consistency. Findings indicate that the scholastic environment is generally rated as moderately extensive, with innovative teaching practices being the most prominent. In contrast, engagement in learning activities is the least evident, suggesting that teachers may benefit from more active learning strategies. Teacher creativity is also rated as moderately extensive, with creative problem-solving as the most evident and encouraging student expression as the least. Collegial support is moderately extensive, with open communication and idea-sharing being the most prominent, while participation in group discussions is the least evident. The analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between the scholastic environment and teacher creativity, with collegial support acting as a significant moderator. Specifically, the interaction effect of scholastic environment and collegial support enhances teacher creativity, confirming the importance of supportive peer relationships in fostering innovative teaching practices.

KEYWORDS: *Scholastic Environment; Teacher Creativity; Collegial Support; Moderation Analysis; Educational Practices*

INTRODUCTION

Poor teacher creativity poses significant challenges to the educational process, leading to a lack of innovative teaching methods that engage students and stimulate critical thinking. When teachers struggle to employ creative strategies, classrooms often become rigid and dependent on rote learning, which limits student engagement and hinders the development of higher-order thinking skills. As a result, students may become disengaged and less motivated to actively participate in the learning process, which can negatively impact their academic performance. Moreover, poor creativity in teaching fails to address diverse learning styles, leaving students with varying abilities at a disadvantage. The lack of creative instructional methods restricts the flexibility needed to adapt lessons to real-world contexts, making learning less relevant and meaningful for students.

Given these challenges, it is necessary to explore the impact of collegial support as a moderator between the scholastic environment and teacher creativity. Collegial support, in the form of collaboration, peer feedback, and shared practices, can provide the encouragement and resources teachers need to develop and implement creative teaching approaches. Teachers who feel supported by their colleagues are more likely to experiment with new ideas, knowing they have a network to rely on for feedback and assistance. Understanding the moderating effect of collegial support can help school administrators and policymakers create an environment where teachers not only feel empowered to be creative but also have the peer support needed to sustain their innovative practices. Exploring this relationship is critical for identifying strategies to enhance teacher creativity and, ultimately, improve the overall effectiveness of the educational process.

In the USA, poor teacher creativity has been a concern, particularly in traditional, risk-averse educational settings. Henriksen et al. (2021) explored how creativity and risk-taking are often stifled by a focus on standardized testing and rigid curricula, limiting teachers' freedom to implement innovative approaches. This issue is exacerbated by a lack of professional development opportunities focused on fostering creative teaching methods. Patston et al. (2021) similarly found that international curricula often fail to define creativity clearly, leading to confusion about how it should be

implemented in the classroom. In the U.S., this ambiguity contributes to a disconnect between the goals of creativity and actual teaching practices, hindering the development of a more creative teaching environment.

In Arabian countries, the focus on traditional educational values and teacher-centered approaches has similarly limited opportunities for fostering teacher creativity. Al-Dababneh et al. (2019) highlight that teachers in Jordan perceive a lack of self-efficacy and support in cultivating creative environments, which restricts their ability to encourage children's creativity. This issue extends across the Gulf region, where teachers often struggle to balance cultural expectations with modern, creative approaches to teaching. Al-Thani et al. (2021) discuss how in Qatar, teacher development programs aimed at fostering creativity are often under-resourced or not prioritized, further limiting the potential for creativity in classrooms. The challenge of integrating creativity into educational systems in Arabian countries is closely tied to the tension between preserving cultural traditions and embracing innovative teaching strategies.

Across Asia, teacher creativity faces several challenges due to the prevalence of rote learning and exam-oriented education systems. Cramond et al. (2021) observed that in countries such as China, Japan, and South Korea, creativity is often undervalued in favor of memorization and academic performance, which limits teachers' ability to adopt more creative approaches in their classrooms. Additionally, Samiee et al. (2019) compared creativity education programs in Japan, Korea, and Singapore, noting that while some progress has been made, there is still a significant gap in how creativity is fostered in primary education. Teachers in these countries often lack the resources and support necessary to implement creative methods, with strict curricula leaving little room for innovation.

In the Philippines, teacher creativity is also constrained by structural and systemic issues. Mugot and Sumbalan (2019) noted that while the Philippine teacher education curriculum emphasizes 21st-century learning skills, many pre-service teachers feel unprepared to implement creative teaching practices in real classroom settings. The rigid structure of public education and large class sizes contribute to this challenge, making it difficult for teachers to foster creativity. Raymundo (2020) found that online collaborative projects offer a promising solution for promoting creativity among both students and teachers, but limited access to technology and inadequate training for teachers remain significant barriers. These issues highlight the need for greater investment in teacher development programs focused on creativity and innovation in the Philippines.

The existing literature on scholastic environments and teacher creativity has extensively explored how supportive educational settings can foster innovation and creative teaching practices. However, a notable research gap exists in understanding the specific role that collegial support plays in moderating this relationship. While previous studies, such as those by Henriksen et al. (2021) and Cramond et al. (2021), have examined teacher creativity and the challenges it faces in various contexts, they have not focused on how peer collaboration and collegial interactions influence the impact of a positive scholastic environment on creativity. Moreover, research on the moderating effects of collegial support is limited, particularly in educational settings similar to those in Panabo North District. This gap highlights the need for a deeper understanding of how collegial support might enhance or hinder the relationship between the scholastic environment and teacher creativity, providing insights that are specific to the local context and its educational dynamics.

The urgency of conducting this study in the Panabo North District, under the Matatag Curriculum, stems from the district's unique educational challenges and the lack of comprehensive research on how collegial support impacts teacher creativity. This exploration is vital for harnessing the potential of peer collaboration to enhance innovative teaching methods in this specific context. By understanding these dynamics, the study promises to offer actionable insights that could guide educational leaders and policymakers to foster environments that support creative teaching practices. The anticipated outcomes aim to not only bridge a significant research gap but also to enhance the overall educational strategies and effectiveness within the district, thereby enriching learning experiences and outcomes for students under the Matatag Curriculum framework.

REVIEW OF SIGNIFICANT LITERATURE

This section provides a comprehensive understanding of the key concepts and research findings related to scholastic environment, teacher creativity, collegial support among elementary school teachers. This section will explore existing theoretical frameworks, empirical studies, and gaps in the literature to establish a foundation for the current research and highlight the significance of investigating these variables in elementary school settings.

Scholastic Environment

A scholastic environment refers to a learning atmosphere that actively motivates and engages students through creative, supportive, and stimulating teaching practices. It fosters curiosity, critical thinking, and enthusiasm for learning, encouraging both personal and academic growth among students (Campbell, 2020). In the study by Kuiper and Stein (2019), the authors explore the paradox of the mediated voice of award-winning teachers, emphasizing how their teaching practices engage, innovate, and inspire students in higher education. The research highlights the importance of fostering creativity and enthusiasm in classrooms, where teachers' ability to inspire plays a crucial role in enhancing the learning experience. This underscores the value of a high-level scholastic environment, as it drives student engagement, encourages innovative teaching methods, and ultimately leads to more effective educational outcomes.

A strong scholastic environment significantly contributes to increasing student engagement and motivation, as demonstrated by Cornejo-Araya and Kronborg (2021), who introduced the Inspirational Teachers' Model within the field of gifted education. Their research highlights how teachers can create an environment that stimulates curiosity, creativity, and intellectual development, particularly for gifted students. This model underscores the idea that a scholastic environment strengthens the bond between teachers and students, leading to improved educational outcomes. Similarly, Vermote et al. (2020) emphasize the role of teachers' intrinsic motivation and positive attitudes in shaping an encouraging teaching style. Their circumplex model shows that motivated teachers cultivate a more supportive and scholastic academic atmosphere, promoting student learning and growth.

Moreover, Vermeulen et al. (2022) focus on transformational leadership in schools, demonstrating that leadership, when combined with a positive learning climate, encourages teachers' innovative behaviors. This further highlights the role of a scholastic environment in fostering creativity and innovation among educators. Freeman and Fields (2023) also explore the impact of school leadership on teachers' commitment to students, particularly in urban settings. Their research underscores that inspiring leadership and an engaging scholastic environment can lead to higher teacher commitment, which in turn influences student success, proving that a high level of inspiration within educational settings benefits both teachers and students alike.

In the area of teacher education, Soruç and Griffiths (2023) investigate how pre-service English language teachers can be inspired to develop ELF-awareness (English as a Lingua Franca). The study highlights that teachers who experience scholastic environments are more inclined to incorporate innovative methods, such as ELF-awareness, into their teaching practices. Tuomainen (2023) similarly explores how university teachers can deliver high-quality education that inspires and supports students. Her findings emphasize that scholastic environment nurtures trust and a sense of belonging, ensuring students feel encouraged and supported throughout their academic journey.

Meanwhile, the relationship between a scholastic environment and teachers' creativity is closely interconnected, as environments that promote inspiration often foster greater creativity among educators. In their study, Žydžiūnaitė et al. (2022) highlight the role of leadership in shaping a phenomenological structure that nurtures teacher creativity, emphasizing that scholastic environments enable teachers to explore innovative methods and approaches. Similarly, Szabó et al. (2019) argue that Finnish educational models, which focus on everyday creativity, create spaces where teachers feel empowered to integrate creative resources into their teaching. Both studies underscore that when teachers work in environments that stimulate inspiration, they are more likely to engage in creative behaviors, benefiting the overall learning process.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study aimed to explore the moderating role of collegial support in strengthening the relationship between the scholastic environment and teacher creativity in Panabo North District, Panabo City. More specifically, this research sought to address the following key questions:

1. What is the extent of scholastic environment in terms of:
    - 1.1 engagement in learning activities;
    - 1.2 positive classroom atmosphere;
    - 1.3 innovative teaching practices; and
    - 1.4 student autonomy and responsibility?
2. What is the extent of teacher creativity in terms of:
    - 2.1 innovative lesson planning;
    - 2.2 adaptability and flexibility;
    - 2.3 creative problem-solving; and
    - 2.4 encouraging student expression?
3. What is the extent of collegial support among elementary school teachers?
4. Is there a significant relationship between scholastic environment and teacher creativity?
5. Do collegial support significantly moderate the relationship between scholastic environment and teacher creativity?

METHODOLOGY

This section contains the research design, research respondents, ethical consideration, research instrument, data gathering procedure, data collection, and data analysis.

Research Design

In this study, the researcher employed a quantitative research approach, specifically utilizing the descriptive-correlational technique to gather and analyze relevant data. Quantitative research design was a systematic approach that involved the collection and analysis of numerical data to identify patterns, relationships, or trends. It typically used statistical methods to test hypotheses and make generalizable conclusions about a population based on a representative sample (Bloomfield & Fisher, 2019). This research design was appropriate for this study as it allowed the researcher to measure and analyze the strength of relationships between these variables. By using statistical tools, the study quantified the impact of the scholastic environment and collegial support on teacher creativity, providing concrete evidence for the proposed hypotheses.

Additionally, the use of a quantitative approach enabled the researcher to generalize findings across the district, offering actionable insights for educational stakeholders.

The descriptive research method involved systematically observing and documenting characteristics or phenomena as they existed in their natural state, without manipulating variables. It aimed to provide a detailed, accurate portrayal of the subject under study, often using surveys, observations, or case studies to gather data (Rahi, 2017). This method was appropriate for conducting this study as it allowed for a thorough exploration of how these factors interacted within their natural school settings. By using descriptive research, the study captured the existing levels of collegial support, the quality of the scholastic environment, and the extent of teacher creativity without altering any conditions. It provided a clear, factual basis to understand the relationships among these variables and how they manifested within the district.

In addition, the correlational research method was a non-experimental research technique used to examine the relationship between two or more variables to determine if they were statistically associated. This method did not imply causation but instead identified patterns or correlations between variables (Seeram, 2019). In the context of this study, the correlational research method was highly appropriate. It allowed the researcher to explore how strongly the scholastic environment and teacher creativity were related and whether collegial support significantly moderated this relationship. By examining these correlations, the study provided insights into how these variables interacted without manipulating any factors.

Lastly, moderating analysis was a statistical technique used to examine whether the relationship between an independent variable and a dependent variable was influenced by a third variable, known as the moderator. In hierarchical regression, variables were entered into the model in steps to determine how the inclusion of the moderator impacted the strength or direction of the primary relationship (Memon et al., 2019). This method was appropriate for this study because it allowed the researcher to assess how collegial support altered the effect of the scholastic environment on teacher creativity. By using hierarchical regression, the study determined if the interaction between the scholastic environment and collegial support significantly predicted teacher creativity. This approach provided deeper insights into how collegial relationships enhanced or limited the creative capabilities of teachers in different academic environments.

Research Respondents

The study sampled 217 elementary school teachers from Panabo North District in the Division of Panabo City. To generate a sample of 217 respondents from a population of 489 teachers in Panabo North District, the Raosoft calculator was utilized, applying standard parameters to ensure the selection of a statistically representative sample. The margin of error was set at 5%, allowing for an acceptable level of precision in the study's findings, and the confidence level was set at 95%, meaning the results accurately reflected the population 95% of the time. A response distribution of 50% was used to account for maximum variability within the population. By inputting these values into the Raosoft calculator, a sample size of 217 teachers was determined, ensuring that the study could generalize its findings while maintaining statistical reliability and validity.

In this study, the researcher made use of the simple random sampling technique to select respondents. Simple random sampling was a technique in which each member of the population had an equal chance of being selected, ensuring that the sample was unbiased and representative of the larger group. This method involved randomly choosing participants from the population, often using random number generators or drawing lots (Noor et al., 2022). In this study, the researcher first obtained a complete list of all 489 teachers in Panabo North District. Using a random number generator, the researcher assigned numbers to each teacher and then randomly selected 217 respondents based on the calculated sample size. This process ensured that every teacher had an equal opportunity to be included in the study, eliminating selection bias and ensuring a representative sample.

In selecting respondents for the study, the researcher considered several inclusion criteria. First, respondents were required to be full-time teachers employed in any of the schools within Panabo North District to ensure they were fully immersed in the scholastic environment. Second, they needed to have a minimum of one year of teaching experience in the district, ensuring that they had sufficient time to engage with their colleagues and experience the school's academic culture. Third, respondents were required to be willing to participate in the study and provide informed consent, as their voluntary participation was crucial for gathering accurate data. Lastly, teachers who were involved in regular collaborative activities or peer support initiatives were particularly relevant for exploring the role of collegial support in fostering creativity.

Research Instrument

The study employed three questionnaires that fit the context of the respondents of this study. The first part of the instrument was about the scholastic environment. This questionnaire was measured in terms of engagement in learning activities, positive classroom atmosphere, innovative teaching practices, and student autonomy and responsibility. As a guide in determining the extent of the scholastic environment, the researcher used the range of means, description, and interpretation as presented below:

Data Analysis

The following were the statistical tools utilized by the researcher in processing the gathered data:

Mean. This was used by the researcher to determine the average scores of scholastic environment, teacher creativity, and collegial support based on survey responses. It provided a general understanding of the overall levels of these variables among the respondents and established a baseline for comparison in the analysis.

Pearson Product Moment Correlation. This was used to examine the relationship between scholastic environment and teacher creativity. It allowed the researcher to isolate the direct impact of the scholastic environment on teacher creativity and determine how collegial support influenced this relationship.

Hierarchical Regression Analysis. This was conducted to examine the moderating effect of collegial support on the relationship between the scholastic environment and teacher creativity. In this process, the independent variable (scholastic environment) was entered in the first step, followed by collegial support in the second step. In the third step, the interaction term (scholastic environment * collegial support) was added to determine if collegial support significantly altered the strength or direction of the relationship between the scholastic environment and teacher creativity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the results generated from the data gathered. It is sequenced based on the objectives of the study as presented in the first chapter. Thus, it presents the extents of scholastic environment, teacher creativity, and collegial support; the significant relationship among these variables; and the moderating role of collegial support in strengthening the relationship between the scholastic environment and teacher creativity in North District, Panabo City. Scholastic Environment in Panabo North District, Panabo City

Table 1 reveals that the scholastic environment in terms of engagement in learning activities among students is generally rated as moderately extensive, with an overall mean score of 3.12. This indicates that while teachers occasionally create opportunities for active student engagement, such practices are not consistently observed in all learning activities. A moderately extensive rating suggests that students sometimes participate in active learning, but there may be missed opportunities for enhancing their engagement further. As emphasized by Sugden et al. (2021), active engagement in learning activities promotes critical thinking and student motivation, which are essential for effective learning. Therefore, encouraging more consistent use of interactive teaching strategies can significantly enhance student involvement and participation.

The range of means for the specific statements on engagement in learning activities varies from 2.99 to 3.30, all interpreted as moderately extensive. The highest-rated statement is Encouraging students to actively participate in class discussions, with a mean of 3.30. Conversely, the lowest-rated statement is Assigning tasks that require critical thinking and active involvement, which has a mean of 2.99. As highlighted by Wen (2021), providing students with critical thinking tasks and active learning opportunities enhances their cognitive development and problem-solving skills. Schools are encouraged to integrate more activities that promote higher-order thinking to foster a more engaging and intellectually stimulating learning environment.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This part of the paper presents the conclusion and recommendation of the researcher. The discussion is supported by the literature presented in the first chapters and the conclusion is in accordance with statements of the problem presented in this study.

Findings

This study aimed to assess the moderating role of collegial support in strengthening the relationship between the scholastic environment and teacher creativity utilizing non-experimental quantitative design using descriptive-correlation technique. The researcher selected the 217 public elementary school teachers from the North District, Panabo City as the respondents through simple random sampling method. The researcher made use of modified and enhanced adapted survey questionnaires which was pilot tested in a nearby school to ensure high reliability and internal consistency of the items in the instrument. The result of the study are summarize as follows:

First, the findings reveal that the scholastic environment in Panabo North District, Panabo City, is generally rated as moderately extensive. Among the indicators, innovative teaching practices demonstrate the highest descriptive level of extensive, reflecting that teachers frequently integrate creative and engaging methods into instruction. Conversely, engagement in learning activities is rated as moderately extensive, indicating that students may benefit from more active and participatory learning opportunities.

Second, the extent of teacher creativity in Panabo North District is generally rated as moderately extensive, suggesting that while teachers demonstrate creative practices, these are not yet fully consistent. Among the indicators, creative problem-solving is the most evident, highlighting that teachers frequently use innovative strategies to overcome instructional

challenges. On the other hand, encouraging student expression is the least evident, suggesting that teachers may further promote student voice and creative participation in classroom activities.

Third, the findings show that collegial support among teachers in Panabo North District is generally rated as moderately extensive. The highest-rated indicator is encouraging open communication and idea-sharing, suggesting that teachers benefit from collaborative discussions and mutual support. In contrast, participating in group discussions or meetings focused on improving teaching practices is the least evident, indicating that teachers may benefit from more structured opportunities for collective professional development.

Fourth, the results reveal a significant positive relationship between the scholastic environment and teacher creativity in Panabo North District. Specifically, positive classroom atmosphere and student autonomy show the strongest positive correlations with teacher creativity, indicating that supportive and empowering environments foster creative instructional practices. However, engagement in learning activities shows a weak but significant positive relationship, suggesting that while active learning is beneficial, it may require further enhancement to consistently support creativity.

Fifth, the findings confirm that collegial support significantly moderates the relationship between scholastic environment and teacher creativity in Panabo North District. While scholastic environment alone positively predicts teacher creativity, the interaction with collegial support enhances this effect, indicating that supportive peer relationships amplify the positive impact of a conducive learning environment. However, the moderating effect is complex, with excessive or misaligned collegial support potentially suppressing creative expression among teachers.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study several conclusions were generated:

The study concludes that the scholastic environment in Panabo North District, Panabo City, is generally rated as moderately extensive, particularly in terms of innovative teaching practices. This suggests that while teachers frequently use creative methods to engage students, there is still room for improvement in actively involving students in learning activities. Schools may enhance this by promoting student-centered strategies, encouraging active participation, and integrating more interactive and collaborative learning experiences.

Similarly, the extent of teacher creativity in Panabo North District is also rated as moderately extensive, with creative problem-solving being the most evident. This indicates that teachers are capable of developing innovative solutions to instructional challenges but may need further support in promoting student expression. Schools can foster teacher creativity by providing targeted professional development on creative teaching techniques and creating a supportive environment that values originality and risk-taking in instruction.

Moreover, the study reveals that collegial support among teachers in Panabo North District is generally moderately extensive, with open communication and idea-sharing being the most evident. This implies that while teachers benefit from collaborative discussions, there may be a need to enhance formal professional development and group learning sessions. Schools are encouraged to establish structured peer mentoring and collaborative learning activities to strengthen collegial relationships and support professional growth.

The study further concludes that there is a significant positive relationship between the scholastic environment and teacher creativity, particularly in terms of positive classroom atmosphere and student autonomy. This suggests that supportive, student-centered learning environments foster teachers' creative practices. Schools may strengthen this by promoting a positive classroom culture, encouraging student choice, and providing teachers with the flexibility to explore innovative instructional strategies.

Finally, the results confirm that collegial support significantly moderates the relationship between the scholastic environment and teacher creativity in Panabo North District. This means that supportive peer relationships enhance the positive impact of a conducive scholastic environment on teacher creativity. These findings support Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory, which emphasizes the role of social interactions in shaping behavior, and Amabile's (1983) Creativity Theory, which highlights that social environments can enhance creative performance. However, the results partially contradict Burns' (1978) Transformational Leadership Theory, as collegial support rather than direct leadership significantly strengthens teacher creativity, indicating that peer influence is more critical than leadership direction in this context.

Recommendations

Schools may focus on enhancing engagement in learning activities, which shows the lowest mean among the indicators of the scholastic environment. Teachers can incorporate more interactive and collaborative activities in their lessons, such as group discussions, hands-on projects, and inquiry-based learning, to actively involve students. Additionally, regular monitoring and feedback can help ensure that students remain consistently engaged in classroom activities.

To strengthen teacher creativity, schools should enhance the opportunities for teachers to promote student expression, which has the lowest mean. Teachers can be encouraged to design more activities that allow students to share their thoughts creatively, whether through art, presentations, storytelling, or open-ended problem-solving tasks. School administrators can support this by providing training on creative teaching techniques that foster a more expressive classroom environment. In terms of collegial support, schools should improve peer collaboration and resource sharing among teachers, which received the lowest mean. School leaders can establish regular peer mentoring sessions, where teachers can share best practices, teaching materials, and innovative strategies. Moreover, teachers can be encouraged to engage in professional learning communities that promote mutual support and collaborative problem-solving.

Given the non-significant relationship between awareness of alignment with child development needs and literacy skills development, schools should provide targeted training for teachers on child development principles. This training can demonstrate how developmental stages relate to literacy skills and guide teachers in designing age-appropriate literacy activities. Practical examples and model lessons can further enhance teachers' understanding of developmental alignment. To maximize the influence of scholastic environment on teacher creativity, schools should promote structured collegial support, focusing on peer collaboration, mentoring, and resource sharing. School leaders can create collaborative professional development sessions, where teachers can jointly develop innovative teaching strategies and reflect on best practices. This will ensure that teachers not only benefit from a positive learning environment but also from consistent peer support that enhances their creativity.

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