

Principals' Competencies and Teachers' Professional Well-being in Maa District

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Abstract — This study determined the relationship between principals' competencies and teachers' professional well-being in Maa district, Davao City division. A descriptive correlation design was used to explore the relationships between principals' competencies and teachers' professional well-being. The researcher employed random sampling to select 180 teacher-respondents from Maa district, Davao City division. The findings revealed that the level of principals' competencies in terms of instructional supervision, professional development practice, management behavior, and managing change were interpreted as very high, which means that the level of principals' competencies was always manifested in school. In terms of teachers' professional well-being, it garnered a very high rating, indicating that the professional well-being of teachers was always observed. Indicators such as self-care, practice competence, and professional development also registered very high ratings. On the significant relationship between principals' competencies and teachers' professional well-being, a positive high relationship between the two variables was evident. In addition, the indicators of principals' competencies, namely, instructional supervision, professional development practice, management behavior, and managing change, were significantly correlated with teachers' professional well-being. Further, the results presented that all domains or indicators of principals' competencies significantly influence teachers' professional well-being.

Keywords — *Principals' competencies, well-being, principals, teachers, descriptive, correlation, Philippines*

I. Introduction

Teacher well-being is a crucial issue for schools and society. It is seen as relating to teaching effectiveness, student outcomes, and educational governance. It has been demonstrated that high teacher well-being increases staff commitment and helps schools as organizations sustain their operations. Conversely, low teacher well-being is considered an obstacle to educational reform and school advancement, potentially leading to higher rates of absenteeism. TWB is also linked to various psychological constructs, such as motivation and commitment, resilience and flourishing, and satisfaction and happy emotions. Negative ones include teacher stress and burnout.

In Switzerland, 44% of teachers reported experiencing situations in which the pressures were almost intolerable (Federal Statistical Office, 2018). Moreover, a significant number of teachers experienced decreased well-being during their work due to emotional fatigue (Maas et al., 2022). Recent review studies on teacher well-being have highlighted that professional well-being

among teachers is at risk globally. This is largely because of the heavy demands of the teaching career, growing academic responsibility, increasing societal expectations, and the complexity of educational management systems. (Hascher & Waber, 2021; Cumming, 2017). Teachers in Asia are not exempted from experiencing low TWB, especially since the pandemic. In Hong Kong, Choy (2021) found that during the COVID-19 pandemic, educators rated their job-related stress at 6.97 out of 10, up from 6.4 before the pandemic.

In the Philippines, although Filipino teachers generally maintain a positive outlook on life, many experience psychological stress and anxiety due to lifestyle changes and concerns about the safety of their loved ones. (Talidong, 2020). Addressing teachers' mental health is crucial to preventing adverse psychological outcomes and reducing the risk of future mental health issues. (Kidger et al., 2016). Additionally, research conducted by Jimenez (2021) found that teachers' well-being significantly impacted their ability to develop learning resources. High stress levels were associated with decreased effectiveness in resource development, highlighting the need for support systems to address teachers' well-being. Further, Recede et al. (2023) findings indicated that while teachers had a relatively high level of well-being, they faced challenges in providing necessary support to students with mental health issues. This suggests a need for enhanced training and resources to equip teachers to address mental health concerns effectively.

In Davao City, particularly in the Maa District, teachers face numerous challenges related to their professional well-being and the competencies of their principals. While some schools in Maa District flourish under the exemplary leadership of their principals, others struggle due to inadequate leadership. Issues such as lack of clear communication, insufficient professional development opportunities, and a failure to address teachers' needs contribute to low morale and burnout. Additionally, in schools where principals lack the necessary skills in communication and fostering a positive school culture, teachers often experience insufficient guidance and support, leading to decreased job satisfaction and performance.

In view of the above circumstances, the researcher is motivated to undertake this research to examine the relationship between principals' competencies and teachers' professional well-being, particularly in the Maa District. This study has the potential to significantly improve the educational ecosystem by focusing on the essential role of school principals in shaping teacher well-being. Also, conducting a study on the influence of principals' competencies on teachers' well-being is essential to understand how leadership affects the professional and personal health of educators. This type of research can provide valuable insights into how school leadership practices shape the work environment and overall morale in schools.

The purpose of the study was to determine the relationship between principals' competencies and teachers' professional well-being in Maa district, Davao City division. Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the level of principals' competencies in terms of:

- 1.1 instructional supervision,
 - 1.2 professional development practice,
 - 1.3 management behavior, and
 - 1.4 managing change?
2. What is the level of teachers' professional well-being in terms of:
 - 2.1 self-care,
 - 2.2 practice competence, and
 - 2.3 professional development?
 3. Is there a significant relationship between principals' competencies and teachers' professional well-being?
 4. Do principals competencies significantly influence teachers' professional well-being?

Review of Significant Literature

Principals' Competencies

The effectiveness of school principals is pivotal to school performance and student success, as they oversee vision-setting, goal establishment, resource management, and evaluation of staff and students (Grissom, Egalite, & Lindsay, 2021). Principals influence teacher retention and student achievement by creating supportive learning environments (Burkhauser, 2017; Hitt & Tucker, 2016). Their leadership traits and behaviors significantly impact outcomes across schools (Hitt et al., 2019), and engaging in a broad range of leadership practices is essential (Liebowitz & Porter, 2019). According to Hallinger (2018), the practice of school leadership is shaped by various contexts—including institutional, community, sociocultural, political, economic, and school improvement factors. While core principals' competencies are broadly applicable across these diverse settings, their implementation must be adapted to fit the specific context in order to achieve the best outcomes. For instance, while developing a school vision is a valuable and widely effective leadership practice in schools with diverse communities, this may require increased communication with and involvement of parents to ensure inclusivity and relevance (Leithwood et al., 2019).

Instructional Supervision

Supervision focuses on supporting and guiding teachers to enhance instruction by encouraging changes in their professional behavior. (Ngipuo, 2015). The core roles of instructional

supervision involve enhancing the quality of teaching, organizing and selecting appropriate subject matter, and assessing teacher performance. To fulfill these roles, the supervisor's function encompasses planning, organizing, leading, supporting, evaluating, appraising, motivating, communicating, and making informed decisions. (Tongola Wabuko, 2016). Reinhartz (2015) viewed instructional supervision as a process that provides guidance and constructive feedback to teachers with the goal of improving their instructional skills and enhancing overall performance. As indicated by Wanzare and da Costa (2016), instructional supervision centers on fostering changes in teachers' instructional practices with the aim of improving their overall performance.

Professional Development Practice

Effective school leadership is widely recognized as essential for meeting future educational demands and helping students achieve academic and personal goals (Leithwood et al., 2017). Leadership is considered the second most significant factor influencing student learning after classroom instruction (Leithwood et al., 2020). This highlights the importance of intentional, structured professional development for school leaders (Bush, 2018). As leadership responsibilities grow, professional training has become a priority (Bøje & Frederiksen, 2019), though most programs focus on new principals and often overlook the needs of experienced leaders (Jensen, 2020). The debate continues on the most effective approaches for training both emerging and current school leaders (Jensen, 2016). Ongoing learning is crucial for principals to manage the evolving educational landscape (Boren et al., 2017), and leadership development should be continuous (Young & Crow, 2017).

Management Behavior

Effective school leadership relies on principals building strong, democratic relationships with all stakeholders, aligning staff expectations with school goals, and fostering a supportive learning environment (Akbaba & Örs, 2015; Getmez, 2018). A principal's personality traits and communication skills significantly influence school success by shaping morale, job satisfaction, and the educational climate (Waller, 2016; Aslanargun & Bozkurt, 2012). Negative behaviors can damage trust and performance, while courteous and inclusive conduct enhances organizational commitment (Abid et al., 2015). Through effective management, a principal can instill key values such as teamwork, support for teachers and staff, tolerance for risk, and openness to change. In turn, employees develop their perceptions of the organization's core values based on those communicated and modeled by the principal's leadership. (Hendarman & Rohanim, 2018).

Managing Change

Today's school leaders face the critical challenge of developing the skills to effectively manage and lead change in education. As managers at the school level, they play an essential part in shaping the success of their institutions. (Hallinger & Lee, 2013). There is no doubt that changes introduced within the education system aim to drive improvement at all levels, and their success is closely tied to the strength of organizational leadership capabilities (Ghitulescu, 2013). The

primary purpose of change is to adapt and align the organization with the continuously evolving conditions of its environment, ensuring it remains responsive and relevant over time. (Hallinger & Chen, 2014). An organization's ability to adapt to current circumstances allows it to create space for appropriate strategic responses.

Professional Well-being

Teacher professional well-being refers to how teachers socially and emotionally respond to the demands of their work. (Viac & Fraser, 2020). Additionally, it involves maintaining a balance amidst work and free-time pursuits that support health and personal well-being. This equilibrium is shaped by several factors, including teachers' abilities, social and emotional competencies, their answers to workload and working situations, as well as the quality of their professional relationships (Nwoko et al., 2023). Numerous perspectives have been explored in examining teacher well-being, including the demands placed on teachers, job satisfaction, work engagement, self-worth, working conditions, and enjoyment in the workplace (Brady & Wilson, 2020). Teacher well-being is defined as optimal psychological functioning and work experience, characterized by positive factors such as job satisfaction and passion for work, alongside the absence of negative elements like stress and emotional exhaustion. The employment and working environment significantly influence teachers' well-being. McCallum et al., (2017) supports this view, highlighting that the behavior of coworkers, administrators, and students, as well as the overall workplace environment, greatly impacts teachers' subjective and psychological well-being.

Self-care

Caring, as an integral component of teaching, carries positive implications and is frequently cited as a primary motivation for individuals entering the profession (Taxer & Gross, 2018). Self-care, or caring for oneself, is a proactive approach often characterized as a process, a skill, and a form of engagement with behaviors that draw from various well-being sciences to enhance subjective well-being (Kennedy et al., 2022). Promoting teacher well-being and self-care is vital for sustaining educators' health, maintaining a balanced professional and personal life, and enhancing overall job satisfaction. Several evidence-based strategies can be employed to prioritize this aspect of professional support.

Practice Competence

Competencies are understood as the multifaceted qualities that teachers apply in practice, developed through solid training, which enable students to engage in new educational experiences. These experiences foster the development of key skills essential for achieving comprehensive learning, equipping students to function effectively in today's complex, knowledge-based society (Nutov et al., 2021). Teachers' professional competence encompasses cognitive components such as subject-specific knowledge, beliefs about teaching and learning, as well as motivational and self-regulatory factors. (Lauermaann & König, 2016).

Professional Development

Professional Development (PD) can help decrease stress and enhance teachers' health and well-being. Research indicates that job satisfaction improves when teachers have access to PD opportunities (Ortan et al., 2021). Harding et al. (2020) recommend that effective PD should be tailored to teachers' specific needs, continuous, and include high-quality content. Focusing professional development on the inclusive growth of teachers can enhance teaching quality and foster positive changes in attitudes and practices, helping to sustain teachers' long-term professional well-being. This corresponds with the empirical data of Cicek et al. (2016), who reported that educators with stronger career commitment tend to experience more satisfying work outcomes, thereby boosting their subjective career success. Supporting this, Ingarianti et al. (2022) found that teachers are also more likely to have positive perceptions regarding their career progress and goal achievement.

II. Methodology

This section presents components of the method used in the study. These are research design, research respondents, research instruments, data gathering procedure, ethical considerations, and data analysis.

Research Design

This study utilized a descriptive correlation design. Descriptive research design aims to systematically gather information to describe a phenomenon, situation, or population. Specifically, it addresses the what, when, where, and how questions related to the research problem rather than focusing on the why (Dovetail Editorial Team, 2023). In this study, the design was used to assess the levels of principals' competencies and teachers' professional well-being. Further, a correlational research design examines the relationships between variables without the researcher manipulating them. Correlation measures the strength and direction of the relationship between two or more variables, which can be either positive or negative (Bhandari, 2022). In this study, this design was employed to examine the relationship between principals' competency and teachers' professional well-being. It also determined whether principals' competencies significantly influence teachers' professional well-being.

Ethical considerations

The researcher observed some ethical principles while conducting this study. These principles were social value, informed consent, risk, benefits and safety, privacy and confidentiality of information, justice, transparency, qualification of researcher, adequacy of facilities, and community involvement. After securing approvals from the RMC Ethics Review Board, Dean of Graduate Studies, and the Schools Division Superintendent, formal letter was sent to the Maa District Supervisor to School Principals. Participation is voluntary, and participants are

assured of their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Privacy and confidentiality are maintained through anonymized data handling, encrypted storage, and compliance with relevant data privacy laws such as the Philippine Data Privacy Act of 2012.

Research Respondents

The respondents of this study were the public elementary school teachers in Maa district, Davao City division. In the district, there was a population of 327 teachers. Using Slovin's formula, 180 teachers resulted from the computation that served as respondents to the study. The respondents were identified via random sampling. The inclusion criteria covered permanent teachers teaching for more than a year in Maa district. Also, these teachers were from the elementary department handling any subject area. On the other hand, the elimination criteria disqualified teachers who were not from the Maa district. Specifically, JHS and SHS teachers were not considered respondents to the study.

Research Instrument

This study utilized an adapted survey questionnaire regarding principals' competencies and teachers' professional well-being. The researcher asked the authors, Acera and Tan (2023), for approval on the principals' competencies questionnaire, which was composed of 16-item statements. The indicators were instructional supervision, professional development practice, management behavior, and managing change, with four items each. Similarly, the researcher sought the approval of Samosa et al. (2023) to allow the researcher to adapt the questionnaire. It was composed of 15-item statements. This was measured in terms of self-care, practice competence, and professional development. Each indicator has five items.

The questionnaires underwent content validation by a group of experts. These experts were personally chosen by the researcher with the recommendation of the panel members. The experts validated the questionnaires based on the criteria. The researcher gave comments and suggestions based on the expert's weight. The validated instruments yielded a mean of 4.86, or very high. This means that the items in the questionnaires were excellently valid. Before the final administration of the questionnaires, it was subjected to pilot testing by 20 teachers to determine the reliability index of the questionnaires. The result indicated a Cronbach alpha of .922 for the principal competencies questionnaire and .946 for teachers' professional well-being. This indicated that both questionnaires have excellent reliabilities.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS to examine the relationship between principals' competencies and teachers' professional well-being in Maa District. Results were analyzed and interpreted using data analysis tools. The statistical tools used were Mean to determine the level of principals' competencies and teachers' professional well-being, Pearson r to determine the significant relationship between principals' competencies and teachers' professional well-being,

and Multiple Linear Regression Analysis to determine the influence of principals' competencies on teachers' professional well-being.

III. Results and Discussion

Results

Table 1 presented the summary of the level of principals' competencies with four indicators, namely instructional supervision, professional development practice, management behavior, and managing change. Among the four indicators, managing got the highest category mean of 4.35, described as very high, followed by management behavior with a category mean of 4.32, described as very high, then professional development practice with a category mean of 4.29 or very high. On the other hand, instructional supervision obtained the lowest category mean of 4.21, which is interpreted as very high. The overall mean rating was marked as 4.29, which was labeled as very high. This means that the summary of the level of principals' competencies has four indicators, namely instructional supervision, professional development practice, management behavior, and managing change.

Table 1. Summary of the Level of Principals' Competencies

No.	Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
1	Instructional Supervision	4.21	Very High
2	Professional Development Practice	4.29	Very High
3	Management Behavior	4.32	Very High
4	Managing Change	4.35	Very High
Overall		4.29	Very High

Summary on the Level of Teachers Professional Well-being

Table 2 displayed the summary of the level of teachers' professional well-being with three indicators, namely self-care, practice competence, and professional development. Among the indicators, professional development registered with the highest mean of 4.41, which is described as very high, indicating that the professional well-being of teachers in terms of professional development is always observed. This was followed by practice competence with a mean of 4.37 described as very high, indicating that teachers' professional well-being in terms of practice competence is always observed. On the other hand, self-care garnered the lowest mean of 4.26, also described as very high, indicating that teachers' professional well-being in terms of self-care is always observed.

Additionally, the overall mean rating on this domain was marked (4.34), which was described as very high. This means that the summary of the level of teachers' professional well-being with three indicators, namely self-care, practice competence, and professional development, was always observed.

Table 2. Summary of the Level of Teachers Professional Well-being

No.	Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
1	Self-care	4.26	Very High
2	Practice Competence	4.37	Very High
3	Professional Development	4.41	Very High
Overall		4.34	Very High

Significant Relationship between Principals' Competencies and Teachers' Professional Well-being

Table 3 displayed the test of the relationship between principals' competencies and teachers' professional well-being. The result showed an overall r-value of .693 with a p-value of .000, which is less than .05 in the level of significance indicating significant. This means that there is a significant high relationship between principals' competencies and teachers' professional well-being. Further, this means that as principals' competencies increase, teachers' professional well-being also increases, or vice versa.

Table 3. Test of Relationship between Principals' Competencies and Teachers' Professional Well-being

Indicators of Principals Competencies	Professional Well-being			
	r-value	p-value	Decision on Ho	Interpretation
Instructional Supervision	.528	.000	Reject Ho	Significant
Professional Development Practice	.487	.000	Reject Ho	Significant
Management Behavior	.606	.000	Reject Ho	Significant
Managing Change	.484	.000	Reject Ho	Significant
Overall	.693	.000	Reject Ho	Significant

Domains of Principals Competencies that Significantly Influence Teachers Professional Well-being

Table 4 exemplified the regression test among the indicators of principals' competencies on teachers' professional well-being. The results revealed that if there are no variables in the model, the value of teachers' professional well-being is .750. On the other hand, each indicator of principals' competencies marked an unstandardized regression coefficient of .183 for instructional supervision, .17 for professional development practice, .304 for management behavior, and .179 for managing change. This indicates that for every unit increase of each indicator such as instructional supervision, professional development practice, management behavior, and managing change, the professional well-being of teachers will increase based on the value of unstandardized regression coefficients.

In addition, the model registered an R-squared value of .486, which indicates that 48.6 of the variations in teachers' professional well-being are explained by the indicators of principals' competencies, while the remaining 51.4% are influenced by other factors not accounted for in the

study. This suggests that although the predictors contribute to teachers’ professional well-being, a significant portion of variability is driven by external or unexamined influences. Additionally, this study garnered an F-value of 41.426 with a p-value of .000, indicating a model fit. This means that principals’ competencies can explain teachers’ professional well-being.

Table 4. Domains of Principals Competencies that Significantly Influence Teachers Professional Well-being.

Principals Competencies	Teachers Professional Well-being		t-value	p-value	Decision @ = 0.05
	Unstandardized Coefficients				
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)	.750	.288	2.609	.010	
Instructional Supervision	.183	.053	.229	3.477	Reject H ₀
Professional Development Practice	.170	.063	.172	2.680	Reject H ₀
Management Behavior	.304	.070	.310	4.331	Reject H ₀
Managing Change	.179	.058	.195	3.075	Reject H ₀

Discussion

On the level of principals' competencies, it garnered a very high rating, indicating that outstanding leadership attributes significantly impact teachers' professional welfare. These competencies comprising management behavior and change, professional development practice, and instructional supervision skills—cultivate a favorable school environment, improve job satisfaction, and strengthen teachers' dedication to their positions. This demonstrates that principals' proficient leadership and supervisory abilities are essential determinants of teacher work satisfaction, highlighting the significance of adept school leadership in fostering a supportive and flourishing educational atmosphere.

On the level of teachers' professional well-being, with very high rating signifies that educators encounter substantial job satisfaction, emotional fortitude, and a conducive work atmosphere. This well-being is associated with superior instructional quality, efficient classroom management, and constructive teacher-student relationships, all of which lead to higher student results. Also, this indicates that educators with elevated professional well-being are less inclined to contemplate exiting the field and are more likely to cultivate engaging and effective learning environments. In order to sustain teachers' professional well-being, an environment shall be created where teachers feel valued, respected, and part of a collaborative team is crucial. Open communication channels, regular recognition of achievements, and opportunities for peer collaboration contribute to a positive school culture, enhancing job satisfaction and reducing stress.

The significant relationship between principals' competencies and teachers' professional well-being garnered a significant high score. This demonstrates that principals' competencies bolster teachers' dedication to their work and overall pleasure. Furthermore, principals' technical

competencies, such as instructional monitoring and professional development assistance, enhance teacher productivity and job satisfaction. These abilities collectively build a supportive work environment that enhances teachers' professional well-being.

On the significant influence of principals' competencies on teachers' professional well-being, all domains of principals' competencies significantly influence teachers' professional well-being. The findings indicate that effective leadership, defined by robust communication, instructional direction, and inclusive decision-making, cultivates a positive school environment, hence improving teachers' well-being. Also, it demonstrates that principals possessing strong managerial competencies, encompassing interpersonal and technical skills, enhance teacher well-being.

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