

Teachers' Engagement and Performance in Teaching Key Stage One Learners in Selected Deped Schools in Cavite

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Abstract — This study aimed to examine the relationship between teachers' engagement and performance in teaching key stage one learners from the selected DepEd schools in the District of Rosario, Division of Cavite, for the school year 2023-2024. The respondents assessed the following factors, including the demographic profile (age, sex, years of teaching, position, and grade level taught), and the teacher's level of engagement in terms of self-leadership, teacher-student relationship, positive teacher behavior, partnership, and environmental support. The researcher applied the quantitative research design and used a self-made survey questionnaire as the main gathering tool. The respondents were fifty-three teachers (key stage one teachers and master teachers) from Mayor Calixto D. Enriquez and Silangan Elementary School, and therefore total sampling method was used. Moreover, the highlights of the study are the significant relationship between the engagement and performance of teachers' respondents and the best practices of the teachers. Based on the survey, teachers have responded with a high level of engagement in self-leadership, teacher-student relationships, positive teacher behavior, partnership, and environmental support. The study revealed that there is a significant relationship between teachers' engagement and performance. This means that more engaged teachers tend to perform better in the school setting. This relationship shows that increasing teacher engagement could lead to improved performance outcomes. Teachers who are more actively involved, motivated, and committed to their work tend to perform better in their professional roles, and this reflects in their classroom effectiveness, lesson delivery, student performance, and overall contribution to school outcomes. The findings proved that teacher engagement is crucial in creating a dynamic, inclusive, and supportive learning environment. Therefore, it is recommended to utilize the best practices for teacher engagement, such as being involved in school community activities, offering support to learners who are struggling academically, fostering open and respectful communication in the classroom, participating in professional development, and ensuring a safe and comfortable space for learners.

Keywords — **Key stage one, self-leadership, student-teacher relationship, positive teacher behavior, partnership, environmental support, teachers' engagement, teacher performance**

I. Introduction

Key stage one is a vital period in a child's education characterized by significant cognitive, social, emotional, and physical growth. Basic education in the Philippines is divided into four stages: Key Stage One (Kindergarten-Grade 3), Key Stage Two (Grade 4-6), Key Stage Three (Grades 7-10), and Key Stage Four (Grades 11-12). Additionally, early childhood education spans from birth to eight years of age; thus, development during this stage is widely considered the most critical period, which lasts until elementary school, as highlighted in the comprehensive literature review by Syuraini et al. (2020). Therefore, providing children with high-quality care in the early years of life can greatly improve and impact their opportunities to succeed. It is a universal fact that one factor that influences early child learning, besides the parents, is the teacher. Teacher engagement and performance are important factors in promoting a child's learning behavior and academic achievement, yet have been neglected, according to *Frontiers Psychology* (2022).

In recent years, Misu and colleagues (2022) stated that the education system is increasingly concerned with raising teachers' performance, work engagement, and efficacy. In their investigation, the authors mentioned that increasing teachers' engagement and performance is perhaps the safest direction for a better acquisition of skills in the learning process. Hence, recognizing the vital role of teacher engagement and performance is crucial in shaping pupils' learning outcomes in the classroom. The researcher believes that the heart of effective teaching lies in the teachers' engagement and performance. Thus, developing a better understanding of teachers' engagement and performance in teaching may lead to insight into ways to enhance teachers' well-being and build their effectiveness in the classroom (Klassen, 2021).

The quality of education is influenced by engagement, well-being, retention, and performance of teachers (Shibiti, 2020); however, teachers experience burnout due to high demands of responsibilities and pressures, which can negatively impact their ability to engage and perform in the learning environment. In today's education system particularly in the public schools in Cavite, classroom teachers are bombarded with numerous tasks such as accomplishing immediate paper reports, general administrative tasks, property and physical facilities custodianship, school disaster risk reduction and management coordinatorship, feeding managers, records management, plus implementation of projects and programs from division office supervisors down to different school district to teachers. This agrees with the article published by the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (2019), stating that giving teachers numerous administrative tasks will distract them from their main job as educators. Needless to say, teachers' engagement and performance in the teaching environment will also be affected.

Previous research has shown that the learning environment could influence teachers' engagement inside the classroom Ruqaishi (2021). A study conducted by Aro et. al (2019) about work burnout and engagement among teachers, wherein the authors identified two profiles among teachers- engaged and engaged burnout profiles- found that engaged teachers had more job and personal resources. In contrast, engaged teachers burn out and experience more work

demands. Additionally, teacher work engagement and job satisfaction were also found to be reciprocally linked over time (Granziera & Perera, 2019). High levels of teacher engagement are also linked to improved learner outcomes, such as academic achievement, better student behavior, and increased learner motivation and enthusiasm for learning. Furthermore, as our school heads quoted, teacher performance is often measured through learners' outcomes, classroom management, and the instructional quality given to the learners.

One notable deficiency in previous studies is the lack of exploration of other factors that may affect teachers' engagement and performance, such as self-leadership, teacher-student relationship, positive teacher behavior, partnership, and environmental support. Addressing these gaps in knowledge, which affect teachers' engagement, leads to improved overall well-being among teachers, improved learning outcomes of learners, positive contributions to the learning environment and school community, and inclusive learning for all students.

Building on the insights of previous studies, the specific objective of this research is to examine factors such as self-leadership, teacher-student relationship, teachers' positive behavior, partnership, and environmental support and their collective impact on teacher engagement and performance in teaching key stage one pupils. Specifically, this study aims to determine the relationship of the extent of teachers' engagement in terms of self-leadership practices, the quality of teacher-student relationships, positive teacher behaviors, partnerships with stakeholders, and environmental supports in teaching key stage one pupils of selected DepEd schools in the District of Rosario, Division of Cavite. The researcher argues that there is a need to determine the extent of the teachers engagement in terms of self-leadership, student relationship, positive teacher behavior, and environmental support to seek insights into the multifaceted nature of teachers' engagement and identify opportunities to support and enhance teachers engagement and performance in the classroom because knowing and understanding the challenges that both learners and teachers encountered will put the researcher the best position to offer alternatives to the problem.

Statement of the Problem

The present study focused on determining the teachers' engagement and performance in teaching key stage one pupils in selected DepEd schools in Cavite.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the teachers in terms of:
 - 1.1. Age;
 - 1.2. Sex;
 - 1.3. Years of Teaching;
 - 1.4. Position; and

- 1.5. Grade level taught?
2. What is the extent of the teacher engagement in terms of:
 - 2.1. self-leadership;
 - 2.2. teacher-student relationship;
 - 2.3. positive teacher behavior;
 - 2.4. partnership; and
 - 2.5. Environmental support?
3. What is the performance rating of the teacher respondents for the school year 2023-2024?
4. Is there a significant difference in the extent of engagement when grouped according to their profile?
5. Is there a significant relationship between the engagement and performance of teacher respondents?
6. What can be proposed based on the findings of the study?

Literature Review

The review of related literature and studies gives some background about the topic. It also serves the purpose of identifying gaps within the existing body of knowledge that the current study aims to address. It aims to pinpoint specific areas within the research landscape where additional insights and contributions can be made. This review of related studies provides a comprehensive overview of the existing literature on the following topics: teachers' engagement and performance, teacher self-leadership, teacher-student relationship, teacher-positive behavior, partnership, and environmental support.

Teachers' Engagement and Performance

Keeping educators fully engaged throughout the school year is crucial for a successful and productive learning environment. The need to encourage teachers and students to stay fully involved in learning cannot be overstated. When educators and learners are fully engaged, the benefits are far-reaching and contribute to a positive and valuable educational experience (Jones & Joseph, 2023).

Misu and colleagues (2022) stated that the education system is increasingly concerned with raising teachers' performance, work engagement, and efficacy. Teacher engagement is an emerging issue in the educational system and all over the world rigorous research is taking place

in the area of employee engagement with the intent of maximizing employee contribution to organizations' success (Raphael, 2022). In the educational context, Hargraves (2020), defines engagement as directing attention and energy at the moment toward a particular task or activity while in the classroom context, the term engagement is often used to refer to the extent of students' and teachers' active involvement in a learning task or a specific role.

Exploring the idea of employee engagement in the teaching workforce, Raphael defines engagement in the teaching profession as a synonym for teacher commitment, dedication, and involvement in the workspace. Wang et. al (2022) define teacher engagement as a motivational construct reflecting the voluntary allocation of teachers' resources and energy across teaching-related activities. However, Siddique et al. (2022) synthesized previous research findings, that teachers' work engagement has various implications such as teachers' performance, personal, and motivational implications.

A recent correlational study conducted on teachers by Siddique and colleagues (2022) about work engagement and job performance, concluded that work engagement had a favorable effect on teachers' ability to do their jobs. The author advised that teachers should engage in their work to carry out their responsibilities in a classroom setting effectively.

Moreover, research articles highlighted that teachers engaged in instructional design, knowledge explanation (mastery of the subject matter), and student-teacher relationship positively affects students achievement and satisfaction (Wang et.al 2022). Thus, teachers' engagement is highly regarded in creating a positive and effective learning environment. Therefore, the quality of education is influenced by the engagement, well-being, retention, and performance of teachers consensus to Shibiti (2020) from his study published in the SA Journal of Industrial Psychology.

Teacher Self-Leadership

According to Tummers and Bakker (2021), every organization needs leadership to solve coordination problems someone has to decide alone or with others. Further, Tummers and colleagues define leadership as an intentional influence to guide, structure, and facilitate others and it is essential for employee well-being and performance. The current definition highlights self-leadership as the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and guide themselves or others toward achieving a personal goal, aspirations, and professional growth.

Similarly, according to a study published in the Journal of Science Publishing Group, self-leadership is a practice in which one intentionally influences their thinking, feelings, and actions to achieve specific goals. Thus, self-leadership is an aspect of positive self-influence by defining how one excels within the teaching profession and the classroom (Warren, 2021). In addition, in the study conducted by Skaalvik (2019) on Norwegian elementary and middle school teachers, were Norwegian Teacher Autonomy Scale was administered and it was found that

teacher autonomy (self-leadership) is a predictor of engagement and job satisfaction. Therefore, self-leadership can be a factor that affects teachers' engagement since teachers' engagement is positively correlated with student achievement consensus by Smith et al. (2019) from a study published in the Journal of Educational Psychology.

In determining the level of teachers' self-leadership Turkoz (2020) conducted a study using a survey method of 41 teachers to determine the level of teachers' self-leadership, most teachers' responses were positive indicating that teachers' positions on self-leadership were positive values. Therefore, the author concluded that self-leadership is an important factor that affects and is affected by different factors.

Teacher-Student Relationship

Positive teacher-student relationships boost academic motivation, trust, and participation, and create a conducive learning environment. On the other hand, negative teacher-student relationships can lead to student disengagement, poor academic achievement, and emotional discomfort. Similar studies have explored similar insights about the teacher-student relationship as the most basic interpersonal relationship in school. Cultivating harmonious teacher-student relationships can create a relaxed and enjoyable learning climate and not only ease students' emotional obstacles and learning anxiety but also promote students learning motivation and autonomous learning consciousness according to the perspective of Educational Philosophy published by Scientific Research Journal (Yan, 2019). Thus, the researcher perceived that student-teacher relationship has positive and negative effects on students' overall growth.

Additionally, because teacher-student relationships are an essential part of learners' interpersonal aspect in school that affects their academic milestones, Martin & Collie (2019) conducted a study about the relative balance of negative and positive teacher-student relationships in high school students, it was found out that there is a significant effect of teacher-student relationship with an increase in the number of positive relationships. The authors significantly emphasized that when the relational balance became predominantly negative, student engagement was lower; otherwise, when the relational balance became predominantly positive, student engagement was higher and became increasingly more so as the number of positive teacher-student relationships outnumbered the negative. Therefore, positive teacher-student relationships outweigh negative teacher-student relationships.

Previous research has shown that children who had closer and less conflictual relationships with their teachers demonstrated greater improvements in all domains of school readiness across the preschool year (Nguyen et. al., 2020). However, the authors further narrate that preschoolers did not experience the optimum academic benefits from high-quality classroom environments unless they also had high-quality individual relationships with their teachers.

Teachers Partnership

Partnership in the teaching context is a collaboration between parents, schools, and communities to benefit the social, linguistic, and academic achievement of students, while teacher partnership is defined in the definition of terms as collaborative efforts between educators to enhance instructional practices, improve student outcomes, and foster a supportive professional environment. According to Science Direct Journal (2022), successful partnership includes personal affinity, professional development and compatibility, open communication, a sense of belonging to a class group, and teamwork in which the main interpersonal factors influencing partnerships are feeling at ease, trust, respect, and valuing one another. Hence, establishing an effective working partnership is an activity that requires time and commitment.

Previous research highlights the importance of professional development as an effective working partnership for teachers, and a similar study provides an extensive overview of the existing knowledge for teachers' professional development as crucial in improving students' outcomes because the authors believe teacher professional development includes multidimensional structure and changes across a teacher's professional life (Sancar et al.,2021). Furthermore, the authors found that effective professional development is attentive to support, control, and collaboration.

Teacher Environmental Support

Environmental support in teaching refers to the various physical, social, and organizational factors that create a conducive atmosphere for effective teaching and learning. It encompasses a broad range of elements that can enhance the educational experience for both teachers and students by providing the necessary resources, structures, and conditions that facilitate the teaching and learning process. The literature review conducted by Careemdeen (2024) mentioned the six community factors that influence learners' achievement these include schools, educational status, financial position, communication, environment support, and cooperation. The researcher believes that school and environmental support of teachers somehow influence the learning atmosphere of the child. Speaking of the physical environment in the classroom, this is a well-designed classroom with resources and materials, safety, and cleanliness, which the teachers need to consider and secure. The social environment includes supportive relationships among colleagues, administrators, and parents in the classroom, while the organizational environment includes support to teachers from school leaders and supervisors. However, the study conducted by Ambawani (2024) about the impact of student activity and environmental support on the academic performance of high school students, found that there is no significant influence between environmental support on the academic achievement of the students at Surakarta High School.

II. Methodology

Research Design

In this study, the researcher utilized a quantitative research design. The purpose of using a quantitative design is to analyze and correlate the results affecting teachers' engagement relative to teachers' performance in teaching key stage-one pupils in selected schools in Cavite. The researcher used a research-made survey questionnaire to generate data on the extent of teachers' engagement in terms of self-leadership, teacher-student relationship, teacher-positive behavior, partnership, and environmental support in the classroom.

According to Kharbach (2023), the quantitative research design is an inquiry into a human problem based on testing a theory, measured and analyzed with statistical procedures. Hence, this research design seemed to be the most appropriate since this study involved the testing of hypotheses.

Population and Sampling Techniques

The primary respondents of this research study are key stage one teachers from kindergarten to grade 3 of selected DepEd schools in Cavite (Mayor Calixto D. Enriquez Elementary School and Silangan Elementary School) for the academic year 2023-2024. This comprises ten (10) kindergarten teachers, fifteen (15) grade one teachers, fifteen (13) grade two teachers, fifteen (15) grade three teachers, including the master teachers in each grade level, with a total of 53 teachers who asked to participate in this research study. Therefore, the total sampling method was applied. In addition, the teacher respondents served as the main sources of information and from whom the data about factors of teachers' engagement and performance in teaching key stage one pupils was collected.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the present study are fifty-three (53) teachers from selected schools in Cavite (Mayor Calixto D. Enriquez Elementary and Silangan Elementary School) for the school year 2023-2024. Ten (10) teachers from kindergarten, fifteen (15) teachers from grade one, thirteen (13) teachers from grade two, and fifteen (15) teachers from grade three, including the master teachers in each grade level.

Instrumentations

To generate the information needed for this study, the researcher utilized the existing numerical performance rating data of the respondents of the school year 2023-2024 and a self-made survey questionnaire to determine the extent of teachers' engagement and performance in teaching. The questionnaire has two parts: (1) the demographic profile of the respondents; and (2) questions related to teachers' level of engagement such as self-leadership, student-teacher

relationship, teacher-positive behavior, partnership, and environmental support, and each indicator has seven questions to be rated by the respondents with corresponding scale level. To get the scores and percentage of the answers from the respondents, the researcher used the four-point Likert scale.

III. Results and Discussion

The following significant findings are summarized from a thorough analysis of the data collected and the results obtained.

1. Most of the respondents are between thirty-one and thirty-five years old, female, of lower rank or position, and tenured.
2. Teacher engagement, such as self-leadership, teacher-student relationship, positive teacher behavior, partnership, and environmental support are all highly engaged and has a verbal interpretation of a high level of engagement.
3. The teacher's performance rating is outstanding for the school year 2023-2024.
4. There is a significant difference in the extent of teachers' engagement when grouped according to age, however, there is no significant difference in the extent of teachers' engagement when grouped according to sex, years of teaching, and grade level taught.
5. There is a significant relationship between engagement and the performance of the teacher respondents.
6. The researcher was able to identify best practices for teacher engagement in terms of self-leadership, student-teacher relationships, positive teacher behavior, partnership, and environmental support.

IV. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were derived:

1. In this case, most teachers teaching in Key Stage One, aged thirty-one to thirty-five, typically have moderate to high experience in the teaching field. By this age, most teachers have gained substantial experience and often seek professional growth and adapt innovation to improve teaching-learning outcomes. In addition, this age group is most likely in lower-ranking positions and desires career growth and promotion opportunities. Key stage one teachers are mostly female teachers. Teachers with six to fifteen years of experience are often highly engaged because they have developed a deep commitment, teaching strategies, and classroom management skills crucial in dealing with learners.
2. The High levels of teachers' engagement in self-leadership, teacher-student relationships, positive teacher behavior, partnership, and environmental support have a positive impact on teachers' professional lives, students' performance outcomes, and the overall school community.

3. Teachers with an outstanding performance rating, meaning they had consistently exceeded expectations of the key areas and objectives set for the evaluation period. The teachers demonstrated exemplary performance in their instruction, learning delivery, innovation, leadership, intervention, and community involvement.
4. In teaching key stage one learners, teachers' age and position strongly influenced teachers' level of engagement at work. They could be more engaged in their teaching roles in the classroom. On the other hand, sex, years of teaching, and grade level taught do not strongly influence teachers' level of engagement at work. Both males and females have the same level of engagement; whether a teacher is new or has been teaching for many years does not affect their engagement, and teachers of different grade levels do not affect each other's engagement. The teaching position of teachers impacts their engagement at work. This means a teacher's job title or rank influences how teachers engage at work. Master's Teachers or those in higher-ranking positions may feel more engaged because they have more responsibilities, experience greater job satisfaction, and receive better incentives than regular or lower-ranking teachers.
5. The significant relationship between engagement and the performance of the teacher respondents has a direct impact on how well they perform their duties inside and outside the classroom. This implies that teachers who are more engaged tend to be more effective. On the other hand, teachers with low engagement reflect a lack of enthusiasm, are less effective, and can negatively affect student learning.
6. The identified best practices for teacher engagement in terms of self-leadership, student-teacher relationships, positive teacher behavior, partnership, and environmental support
 - (a) The teacher might be involved in school community activities because engaging teachers in these activities not only enriches the educational environment but also fosters stronger relationships among students, parents, and the community
 - (b) The teacher might offer support to learners who are struggling academically or personally, to promote learners' success, address each learner's needs, foster emotional well-being, prevent disengagement, build a positive learning environment, and improve learners' behavior
 - (c) The teacher shall foster open and respectful communication in the classroom to create a safe and inclusive learning environment, encourage student engagement and participation, promote collaboration, build strong teacher-student relationships, empower students, and improve academic outcomes
 - (d) The teacher participates in professional development activities to continually improve their skills, provide high-quality education, improve student learning outcomes, stay updated with educational trends and technology, foster collaboration, strengthen instructional leadership, and address students' diversity
 - (e) The teacher ensures a safe and comfortable space for learners to support effective learning, promote emotional and mental well-being, foster a positive learning environment, encourage student participation and confidence, prevent bullying and discrimination, build trust and respect, promote equity and inclusion, maximize student potential, and uphold the rights of learners.

V. Recommendations

Based on the results and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are suggested.

1. The identified best practices for Teacher Engagement Through Self-Leadership, Teacher-Student Relationship, Positive Teacher Behavior, Partnership, and Environmental Support may be utilized by the DepEd Division of Cavite
2. School administrators are encouraged to offer professional development focusing on teacher self-leadership, teacher-student relationships, positive teacher behavior, partnerships, and environmental support to sustain and strengthen these teachers' engagement areas.
3. Teachers are encouraged to undergo graduate studies of Education to harness their skills. Furthermore, they are also encouraged to attend seminars and workshops to update themselves on the current trends in teaching.
4. Parents are encouraged to attend and participate in all activities of the school and be involved in community services. Moreover, teachers with very satisfactory ratings might need to work on specific aspects such as their teaching strategies, teaching innovation, and classroom management skills to achieve an outstanding rating in the future.
5. To the school head, it is recommended that teachers aged between 31 and 35 and high-ranking teachers be assigned to teach key stage 1 learners. Teachers in lower-ranking positions might engage more in mentorship programs and professional development opportunities to enhance their engagement and performance.
6. Future researchers may need to investigate what drives teachers' performance, such as effective teaching methods, curriculum design, or support from school leadership.

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