



Implications of Teacher Empowerment for Student Achievement in Private Sectarian, Private Non-Sectarian, and Public Schools

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Abstract

This study examined the level of teacher empowerment dimensions in private sectarian, private non-sectarian and public schools. It also sought to determine the relationship between teacher empowerment and student achievement.

Respondents were the basic education teachers of private sectarian, private non-sectarian and public schools in one of the school divisions in Metro Manila, Philippines.

Result from the survey showed that there was a statistically significant difference between the status of private non-sectarian schools and public schools in terms of having opportunities for professional career growth, teacher status, self-efficacy, autonomy, and teacher impact. Another finding of this paper showed that a higher score in teacher empowerment resulted to a higher student achievement among sixth grade students, yet conversely true among the fourth year level students. With these findings, it is recommended that school administrators, policy makers and school teachers evaluate the level of teacher empowerment in schools so that necessary programs and improvements could be implemented for student achievement.

Keywords: Teacher empowerment, Student achievement

INTRODUCTION

“Education is not filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.” This quotation from one of the foremost figures of 20th century literature, William B. Yeats, says something about the vital role that education plays in the country’s social and economic growth. Society continually relies to education system for guidance, answers and solutions to problems that affect the nation. The ones carrying out this critical role in lighting the fire present in every one of us are the teachers. They are recognized as the critical educational authorities, the ones who guide the learning, growth and development of the students most closely (Lightfoot, 1986).

For schools to meet the needs of the 21st century learners, they need to metamorphose themselves from institutions bent on adherence and attendance into something that nurture commitment and awareness (Fullan, 2007). Therefore, the school’s core business should consist of those things on which its attention is fastened and its energy directed toward the attainment of optimal personal and organizational outcomes. This, in practice, will foster a transformation that not only defines the school’s critical roles, but will also expand the role of teachers to include a stake in the decision - making process. In order for this to happen, school leaders must empower teachers, and teachers must accept the responsibility that comes with empowerment[1].

In the Philippines, the term empowerment is not new. It has been used in the corporate world and adopted in the education arena. Its purpose is to achieve productivity, satisfaction and efficiency. The giving of power to be and power to act has been considered important especially when an organization or the workplace is in crisis.

For the past decades, Philippine education has been beleaguered by social, political and economic problems. It is haunted by perennial ills such as low quality of education, inadequate budget, incompetent and unmotivated teachers and personnel, lack of clear vision and direction, brain drain, teacher exodus and lack of parental and government’s support. Teacher and classroom shortages and poor facilities added to these woes. A report from United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) observed that the Philippines’ education crisis is still far from over. In fact, according to 2013- 2014 World Economic Forum report, the Philippines ranked 3rd least competitive among 10 Southeast Asian countries in terms of primary education and health (Rodriguez, 2014). Furthermore, student’s National Achievement Test results, both in the public and private schools most especially the public high school students, are declining.

It is in the light of the situations presented above that this research has been conceptualized. This study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the dominant teacher empowerment dimensions in public, private sectarian and private non-sectarian schools in the Division of Calocan City in terms of:

- a) Decision Making;
 - b) Opportunity for Professional Growth;
 - c) Teacher Status;
 - d) Self- Efficacy;
 - e) Autonomy; and
 - f) Teacher Impact?
2. Is there a significant difference on the level of teacher empowerment based on the school type?
 3. Is there a significant relationship among personal variables, the type of school and the level of teacher empowerment?
 4. Is there a significant relationship between teacher empowerment and the student achievement based on their National Achievement Test (NAT) scores?

Objective of the study

Central to the concept of empowerment is the idea of power. For most people, the words that come to mind when thinking about power are influence, control and domination. To Weber, power is often related to our ability to make others do what we want, regardless of their own wishes or interests. This gives us an understanding that power exists within the context of a relationship between people or things. Power does not exist in isolation nor is it innate in individuals. Thus, it is this idea of power, as a process that occurs in relationships, that gives us the possibility of empowerment.

Empowerment is something that should be done to the most valuable human resource in education- the teachers. In Sweet land and Hoy's research [2], four assumptions were made regarding teacher empowerment: first, teacher empowerment is most effective when it is oriented to increase teacher professionalism; second, empowerment has at least two dimensions- organizational and classroom; third, empowering teachers has its greatest impact on student achievement when the emphasis is on the core technology of teaching and learning in schools; fourth, to be effective, teacher empowerment needs to be authentic. Therefore, teacher empowerment is a crucial factor that affects school effectiveness (Bogler & Somech, 2004). To empower teachers is to give them opportunities to be involved in making decisions significantly affecting the students and the schools [3]. Similarly, student achievement is increased when teachers are involved in the planning and execution of key aspects of the organizational structure.

Squire- Kelly's (2012) study used standardized test scores as a measure of student achievement, the 2010- 2011 Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) score. The present study also used standardized test, the Mean Percentage Score (MPS) of 2013- 2014 National Achievement Test (NAT) as indicator to measure student achievement.

Controversies on the reliability of NAT result is at stake whether if it truly measures student achievement or not. But, the DepEd still rely on NAT result as indicator of student achievement and

school performance. A lot of researchers and practitioners also depend on it. Manalo in Abad stated that academic achievement determines how well the public elementary schools achieve their mission and goal of enabling each student to develop his/her potentials for self-actualization and productivity. Manalo further stated that public and school authorities used the results of achievement test to evaluate the effectiveness of the school. The researcher also cited Bidwell and Kasarda's findings that among the many vague goals of schooling, the academic achievement of students is not only among the clearest; it is also the only output that is widely and publicly measured.

METHODOLOGY

This study is a correlational research which tries to examine the levels of teacher empowerment in private sectarian and private non-sectarian and public schools. Then, the personal variables and school type and its relationship with teacher empowerment are also studied to determine if any significant relationship among the variables exists. The researcher also examined the relationship between teacher empowerment dimensions proposed by Short and Rinehart and student achievement.

The variables in the study are the socio-demographic profile of the respondents and the school type. Other variables are teacher empowerment dimensions proposed as determined by the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES). Added variable is student achievement that is measured in the Mean Percentage Score (MPS) of National Achievement Test (NAT).

The research participants of this study included the basic education teachers (Kindergarten, Elementary, High School) of private sectarian, private non-sectarian and public schools in the Division of Caloocan City. They were selected through convenient sampling from five (5) public schools, five (5) private sectarian schools and five (5) private non-sectarian schools. Sample respondents were gathered based on their willingness to participate in the study. In sum, the total number of participants in the study is one hundred fifty (N = 150).

Sample respondents were gathered based on their willingness to participate, indicating that the method of sampling was convenience. In this regard, in order to verify this assumption, Shapiro Wilk's Test was computed to check that data was indeed not normally distributed. Hence, non-parametric statistics were used in the inferential part of the analysis. In order to answer and determine if there was a significant difference in the level of teacher empowerment when grouped according to school type, Kruskal Wallis Analysis of Variance Test and Follow-up Test were used. Effect sizes for each personal variable was calculated and as a rule of thumb by Cohen, effect size of 0.02-0.12 was small, 0.13-0.25 was moderate/medium and 0.26 and above was large.

Bivariate relationships were computed using Spearman correlation coefficient to assess correlation between dimension scores and overall teacher empowerment, as well as to determine correlation of NAT scores to overall teacher empowerment.

Conclusions regarding significant differences or relationship were proven when p-values yielded were either less than or equal to 0.05. Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS) version 20.0 was used to compute all necessary statistics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Dominant Teacher Empowerment in Private Sectarian, Private Non- Sectarian, and Public Schools

The researcher used mean and standard deviation to determine the dominant teacher empowerment dimensions in the private sectarian, private non-sectarian and public schools.

Range of scores in analyzing the data was also used. This includes:

4.01 - 5.00	-	highest or most empowered
3.01 - 4.00	-	high
2.01 - 3.00	-	average
1.01 – 2.00	-	low
0.0 – 1.00	-	lowest or least empowered

Table 1: Overall Teacher Empowerment Dimension Values per School Type

Overall Teacher Empowerment	School Type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Teacher Empowerment	Private Sectarian	41	3.809	0.669
	Private Non-sectarian	48	3.939	0.398
	Public	61	3.748	0.649
	Total	150	3.826	0.589

Private non-sectarian school scored highest on the overall teacher empowerment assessment (3.939 ± 0.398), followed by private sectarian (3.809 ± 0.669) and least among the three was the public schools (3.748 ± 0.649). The finding suggests that administrators in private non-sectarian schools mostly involved the teachers in making critical decisions in school, opened a wider opportunity for professional development; give the highest status and autonomy and sense of self- efficacy and impact to the teachers. Private sectarian administrators also see to it that the teachers are empowered.

Difference on the level of teacher empowerment based on school type

This study showed different scores of teachers belonging to private (sectarian and non-sectarian) and public in empowerment assessment. Based on Table 2, results showed that teachers in public

schools were more empowered by their administration in terms of decision-making while teachers in private non-sectarian were empowered in terms of opportunity for professional growth, status, self-efficacy, autonomy and impact. However, there was no proven significance in the association between school type and teacher empowerment. Further, the derived correlation coefficients indicated weak relationship between the two variables as shown in the Table 2.

Ingerson (2009) supports the result of the present study. He posited that private school teachers were no more empowered than the public school teachers. He added that public and private schools, large and small, shared a high degree of within- school centralization. Furthermore, dissertation "Empowering Teachers: The Influence of Transformational Leadership in Christian Schools," found out that teacher empowerment in K to 12 Christian Schools are prevalent although teachers did not feel empowered in certain dimensions or subscales of teacher empowerment.

Table 2: Summary of probability values in comparing means of teacher empowerment dimensions per school type.

Teacher Empowerment Dimensions	Comparison of Means Within Groups			Multiple Comparison Test
	Comparing Private Sectarian and Private Non-Sectarian	Comparing Private Sectarian and Public	Comparing Private Non-Sectarian and Public	
				Kruskal - Wallis Test
				P-Values
Decision Making	0.834	0.55	0.368	0.666
Professional Growth	0.738	0.286	0.064	0.189
Status	0.161	0.69	0.046	0.124
Self Efficacy	0.591	0.202	0.065	0.151
Autonomy	0.442	0.956	0.301	0.569
Impact	0.537	0.469	0.271	0.485
Overall Teacher Empowerment	0.41	0.75	0.25	0.49
Note: Difference is significant if p-value \leq 0.05				

Differences in overall teacher empowerment means among the three school types (private sectarian, private non-sectarian and public) were not proven significant ($p\text{-value}=0.49>0.05$) as shown in Table 2. Similarly, no sufficient evidence was found to conclude significant differences in the differences between two school type sectors (all $p\text{-values} > 0.05$). However, it was shown that when private non-sectarian and public schools were compared in terms of status, the resulting differences in means on that dimension was statistically significant ($p\text{-value}=0.046<0.05$). It could be inferred based on this result that status was a significant determinant in the perceived overall teacher empowerment assessment scores.

Overall, based from the results of the answers from respondents in private sectarian, private non-sectarian and public schools, the researcher concludes that there was no sufficient evidence to prove that there is a significant difference on the level of teacher empowerment based on the perception of teachers in the private sectarian, private non- sectarian and public schools.

Relationship among personal variables, the type of school and the level of teacher empowerment

By calculating the mean rank differences in scores and the corresponding effect size, the researcher determined if the personal variables in terms of the respondents' age, gender, civil status, religion, highest educational attainment and years in service, the type of school as private sectarian, private non- sectarian and public school, and the level of teacher empowerment contributed to the decision-making skills, professional growth, impact, status, self-efficacy, autonomy, and overall teacher empowerment scores. The results showed that there was a significant difference in the overall empowerment means scores of teachers when grouped according to personal variables such as *age*, *civil status*, *level of education*, and *years in service*. However, the type of school was not a significant contributor in teacher empowerment.

Table 3: Relationship between teacher empowerment and student achievement based on national achievement test (nat) scores.

Personal Variables	Statistics	Teacher Empowerment
NAT MPS Grade VI	r_s	0.155
	P-Value	0.068
NAT MPS Fourth Year	r_s	-0.009
	P-Value	0.92
Note: Bivariate relationship is significant if $p\text{-value} \leq 0.05$ R – Spearman Correlation Coefficient –		

determines direction and strength of bivariate relationship

Further, data gathered showed that the higher the teacher empowerment level, the lower the NAT Mean Percentage Scores (MPS) for fourth year, which somehow did not make sense. Statistically speaking, the relationship between NAT MPS regardless if they were for Grade VI or Year IV, were not proven to be significantly related, with p-values=0.068 and 0.920 respectively.

Similar study conducted by Martin, Crossland and Johnson supported the above result. Their study showed inconclusive about the relationship between empowerment and student achievement.

However, the result opposed Klecker and Loadman statement that student achievement is increased when teachers are in the empowering environment. Also, in Squire- Kelly's (2012) study, the result found out a significant correlation between teacher empowerment and student achievement at all levels (high, middle, and elementary). The findings revealed status (teachers being recognized as experts) as having statistically significant correlation with student achievement.

Then, in a local study made by Mendoza in 2002 to one hundred eighty-nine (189) public school teachers in the Division of Zambales, the findings reveal that self- efficacy, one of the dimensions of Teacher Empowerment proposed by Short and Rinehart (1992), is related to student achievement and that teacher self- efficacy is associated with student performance.

Implication of teacher empowerment for student achievement

Student Achievement in school is the pinnacle of success. The success of teachers and schools is measured through the achievements of their students. Even Martin, Crossland and Johnson (2001) support this claim stating that the ultimate goal of educators and the school is student achievement.

One key factor to increase student achievement is Teacher Empowerment [4]. Empower teachers is to give them opportunities to be involved in decisions significantly affecting the students and the school. Empowerment is something that should be done with the teachers who are considered as the most valuable human resource in education.

The pillars that strengthen the art of Teacher Empowerment are involvement in decision- making, opportunity for professional growth, teacher status, self- efficacy, autonomy, and impact. These pillars should always be looked into and constantly nurtured so that Teacher Empowerment will become stronger in the school. The achievements of the students depend on how strong these pillars are and how they support each other.

Teacher Empowerment is founded on distinct demographics and school type. Socio-demographic profile of the teachers such their age, gender, civil status, religion, educational attainment, years in

service, and the School type are the bases that influenced teachers' involvement in decision-making, professional growth, status, self-efficacy and impact.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on the summary presented, this study concludes that the concepts of Teacher Empowerment in Private Sectarian, Private Non-Sectarian and Public School should be practiced in Educational Administration practice. This study confirms that power is no longer the domain of administrators but it is something to be shared by collegial organizations. Therefore, teachers' role in the organization must never be taken for granted. Likewise, school leaders must empower teachers, and teachers must accept the responsibility that comes with empowerment. The study concludes that based from the findings, private non-sectarian schools are more empowered than private sectarian and public schools in terms of opportunities for professional growth, teacher status, self-efficacy, autonomy, and teacher impact dimensions. However, public school teachers are best when it comes to critical situations that involves decision-making in school affairs compared to private sectarian and private non-sectarian school teachers. Then, teachers who are older, has good status in life, achieved high level of education, and who stays in the teaching profession for a longer period of time are good in decision-making skills. Likewise, these teachers enjoyed high level of autonomy in schools. Next, the personal variable such as the civil status is a contributing factor for teachers to pursue professional growth opportunities. Another variable such as age of teachers, level of education, and years in service are contributing factors for teachers to create impact in schools. These personal variables are significantly linked to teacher empowerment dimensions. Then, regardless of school type, teachers have sense of empowerment. In fact, empowerment dimensions are evident in all schools.

Finally, teacher empowerment leads to student achievement. Empowered teachers help students achieve success. However, NAT results are not significantly linked to teacher empowerment and student achievement. Although the result from the survey revealed weak relationship between Teacher Empowerment and Student Achievement based on the National Achievement Test (NAT) Mean Percentage Scores (MPS), teachers and school administrators should never stop finding ways and solutions to the achievement level of students. Other factors like standardized tests aside from NAT, participation in extra-curricular activities, promotion rate, among others are also indicators of school and student achievement.

It is recommended that School administrators of public, private sectarian and private non-sectarian schools should give the teachers the opportunity to be involved in decision-making, opportunity for professional growth, autonomy, self-efficacy, teacher status and impact. School administrators of private schools are also encouraged to look at the best practices of public schools in terms of empowerment practices, and vice versa so that teachers can feel the pride of being in the teaching profession. Policy-makers should embrace empowerment as being fundamental to develop sense of professionalism to teachers and aid the teachers in educational reform efforts. Give the teachers the avenue to develop their sense of professionalism. The welfare of the teachers, the ones putting the

educational system on solid ground, is the foremost concern of the people who are the essential players in successful educational institution. Teachers should improve their level of competence so that they would develop their self- efficacy, status, and impact in the school and in the Philippine educational system. Be proud of the teaching profession. Attend trainings and seminars that develop self- efficacy and leadership. Take advantage of career growth opportunities such as pursuing a graduate study, attending seminars and workshops related to education. Teachers' age, civil status, highest educational attainment, and number of years in service considered vital in the teachers' sense of empowerment. It is important that the teachers grab opportunities to develop in these areas.

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