

**FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH LEVEL OF COMMITMENT OF BASIC
EDUCATION TEACHERS IN SELECTED SCHOOLS
IN ILOILO CITY, SCHOOL YEAR 2000-2001**

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ABSTRACT

Background and Rationale of the Study

The Philippine educational system has been facing several issues and concerns: the low pupil achievement, inadequacy of human and material resources, relevance of the curricula and the shying away of quality students in the teaching career, to name a few. The report made by the Congressional Commission on Education in Making Education Work, An Agenda For Reform (EDCOM, 1991) states:

“The quality of Philippine Education is declining continuously. Our elementary and high schools are failing to teach the competence the average citizen needs to become responsible, productive and self-fulfilling.”

The decline in teachers’ teaching performance and in the quality of our graduates implied by the aforementioned statement has been attributed to several factors, among these are: inadequate teachers’ training, influence and effects of mass media to pupils, low pupil and teacher motivation, implementation of the merit and fitness system, and inadequacy of resources. Among these factors, the teacher factor seems to be the most critical. As stated in the EDCOM Report (1991), “the teachers are at the heart of the problem”.

In recognition of the vital roles teachers play in education, they deserve attention and support especially from the government. Angara (1991:1) said that: “The government has the obligation to ensure that teachers live in dignity and provide them opportunities to improve their expertise because they are the heart and soul of the educational system”.

How are the teachers in terms of prestige, financial remuneration, health and working condition? Some observations made by critics (IBON Facts and Figures, 1994:1 and 2000:1-2) include the following:

In the distant past, people had high regard for teachers. In fact, they were so respected that even renowned philosopher Plato thought they could actually become kings. In other countries, the profession that prepares the youth to be better and more productive citizens is rewarded immensely not only through remuneration but also of stature and other benefits from the government. Perhaps it is only in the Philippines where teaching as a profession also connotes doing hunger strikes, conducting rallies and pickets, among other protest actions- thus the teacher's role has lost its prestige. Teachers have to work hard and still earn less, and they have to work twice as hard and still be half as good (in the eyes of the public, that is).

Villamin (1995), stated that “teachers are considered as the single most important factor in education that cannot be replaced by the most sophisticated computer or machine. Their far reaching influence as agents of constructive change and molders of young immature minds in society is beyond question.”

She also pointed out that:

Our government is the biggest employer of teachers, however teachers are experiencing indifferences from the government. Its indifference to teachers is reflected in their work overload, that include several nonteaching assignments; low salaries; late or irregular payments of other benefits; weak system of classroom supervision; lack of a well-defined career path and a clear reward

system; meager opportunities for professional development; and lack of support to organize efforts to improve the teacher condition.

The problems mentioned by Villamin are faced not only by the public school teachers, but also by teachers in private schools. Many usually think that private school teachers are better off than their public school counterparts, since they are better-paid and more supported in terms of benefits and other privileges. However, this is not always true. They are in an equally worse situation, if not more (IBON Facts and Figures, 1994).

Teachers both in the government and private schools lack the two m's, money and morale. Their low salary definitely means low standard of living, thus they also lack good health. The EDCOM report (IBON Facts and Figures 1994) revealed that:

Teachers are the most sickly among the professionals. Tuberculosis (TB), a chronic and communicable disease affects many of our teachers. Seventeen (17) out of every 1,000 teachers suffer from TB due to heavy workload and the late hours they keep to prepare lesson plans and check examination papers. The teachers' meager salary also forces them to eat less nutritious food. The EDCOM adds that frequent inhalation of chalk dust may also be a contributing factor."

In addition to the low salaries teachers receive, they are also subject to salary deductions that further reduce their take home pay. The Senate Committee on Education, Culture and Sports survey (PDI, 16 February 2000) revealed that, "At least 100,000 out of 104,000 public school teachers across the country say that they have been receiving only half of their monthly salaries because of numerous deductions. The survey also showed that 25,584 teachers were incurring salary deductions greater than 50 percent of their gross income". Other sad realities experienced by the teachers include delayed salaries, long working hours, and lack of physical and laboratory facilities. If these

conditions/ scenarios continue to prevail, what kind of teachers will we have, and what kind of learners will they produce? The answer may lie in the teachers' commitment to their profession. Sutaria (1995) stated that, "Teachers must strive to deepen their commitment to service to humankind and they should manifest it everyday while in the teaching service. They should not shirk from their responsibilities as teachers when called upon even beyond regular class hours". If teachers are dedicated to their work, they will find ways and means to make students learn in spite of the problems and indifferences they are facing.

Torralba (1998) asserted that the teaching profession indeed demands quality and total commitment and only those who are idealistic enough to immerse themselves completely in it and those who give their all to quality teaching can draw the very best out of their pupils and students. Firestone and Pennel (1993), as cited by Singh and Billingsley (1998), pointed out that teachers' commitment is related to student achievement. This means that pupils have better achievement when their teachers are committed to teaching. This is so because a committed teacher has the motivation to teach well. Committed teachers are also more motivated to become better professionals and pursue changes in their practice while they deal with the high demands and different changes these demands bring.

How committed are the teachers, specifically those teaching in the public and private elementary schools and what factors possibly influence or contribute to their commitment? These are important questions which have to be addressed because available literature shows that only a few studies on basic education teachers commitment have been conducted. Most studies on teachers deal with teaching performance,

classroom management, teaching techniques in relation to performance, and the like. Studies on subjects/ topics related to commitment and variables like professional support and the recognition teachers received are rare. In Region VI, particularly in the Division of Iloilo City, no study has been done yet on elementary teachers' commitment. If teachers' commitment in relation to performance is understood, then baseline information about teachers' commitment should be examined. It is for this reason that this researcher conducted this study. It is hoped that the results of this study can serve as basis in improving the conditions of basic education teachers. Data on teachers' levels of commitment are useful not only to those who are directly involved in schools (school officials, administrators, teachers), but also to others who may not be directly involved in the academe (different civic-minded groups, non-governmental organizations) but are concerned with the improvement of our educational system.

The research problem specifically addressed by this study was: What is the level of commitment to teaching of basic education teachers in selected schools at Iloilo City during school year 2000-2001 and what factors influence commitment?

Major Findings

More than nine-tenths (90.1 percent) of the respondents were female. About two-thirds (64.8 percent) were bachelor's degree holder and had units towards a master's degree program.

About 42 percent of the respondents are highly experienced. This means that they had been teaching for 21 years or more. About four-tenths (41.7 percent) of them had low academic rank, and only three-fourths (25.3 percent) had high academic rank.

Teachers' Level of Commitment to Teaching and Its Sub-categories

More than nine-tenths (95.6 percent) of the teachers in this study were willing to work hard for the good of the teaching profession. More than four-fifths (84.6 percent) had strong belief in and acceptance of the professional goals and values (loyalty). About 94.5 percent had values which were congruent with the values of their profession.

On the whole, teachers in the three schools where this study was conducted were highly committed to their work.

Teachers' Level of Professional Support and Its Sub-categories

Slightly more than three-fourths (79.1 percent) of the teachers had received high level of support from their principals or school heads. More than four-fifths (82.4 percent) received high level of support from their co-teachers / colleagues. Most of the teachers (83.5 percent) had high level of professional support.

On the whole, teachers in this study had received high level of support both from and peers and the professional support.

Teachers' Level of Recognition and Its Sub-categories

As evidenced by the data gathered, the highest source of recognition teachers received came from the parents (in the form of token/ gifts). The least source was the community (specifically awards from civic-minded groups like the Metrobank Foundation and other award-giving organizations).

As a whole, teachers who were respondents in this study had high level (4-5) of recognition from the recognition combined. They were least awarded by the community.

Relationship Between Teachers' Personal/ Job Characteristics and Their Level of Principal Support

None of the teachers' personal / job related characteristics namely: gender, educational level, teaching experience and academic rank was significantly associated with their perceived level of principal support.

Relationship Between Teachers' Personal/ Job Characteristics and Their Level of Peer Support

Teachers' gender (being a male or a female) was found significantly associated with their perceived level of peer support. Other antecedent variables like: educational level, teaching experience, and academic rank were found not significantly associated with the level of support they received from their co- teachers or peers.

Relationship Between Teachers' Personal/ Job Characteristics and Their Level of Professional Support

None of the personal/ job characteristic variables namely: gender, educational level, teaching experience and the academic rank was found significantly associated with their perceived level of professional support.

Relationship Between Teachers' Personal/ Job Characteristics and Their Level of Recognition from Parents

Teachers' educational level or the highest degree/ educational attainment earned by the teachers and their academic rank were found significantly associated with the level of recognition they received from the parents of their pupils. Other personal/ job characteristic variables in this study namely: gender and teaching experience were found not associated with the recognition they received from the parents of their pupils.

Relationship Between Teachers' Personal/ Job Characteristics and Their Level of Recognition from Administrators

The teachers' gender was found significantly associated with the level of recognition they received from their principals or school heads. Male teachers had higher level of recognition from the administrators than the females. However, other personal / job related characteristics namely: educational level, teaching experience, and academic rank were not significantly associated with the level of recognition they received from their school administrators.

Relationship Between Teachers' Personal/ Job Characteristics and Their Level of Recognition from Community

Except for educational level or the highest degree/ educational attainment teachers earned, none of the personal/ job related characteristics of the respondents was found significantly associated with their level of recognition from the community.

Relationship Between Teachers' Personal/ Job Characteristics and Their Level of Recognition Combined

Teachers' educational level or the highest degree teachers' earned was found significantly associated with the level of recognition combined. The teachers' gender, teaching experience, and academic rank were not significantly associated with the recognition combined.

Relationship Between Teachers' Personal/ Job Characteristics and Their Level of Commitment

None of the personal and job related characteristics of the teachers included in this study was found to be significantly associated with their commitment to the teaching profession.

Relationship Between Teachers' Perceived Level of Support and Their Level of Commitment

Teachers' professional support, principal support and peer support were positively correlated with their dedication toward their profession. Teachers' perceived level of principal support, peer support and professional support were not positively correlated with teachers' loyalty. Furthermore, data show that peer support and professional support were positively correlated with identification towards teaching. On the whole, professional support was positively correlated with dedication and identification sub-categories only, not with loyalty.

Relationship Between Teachers' Level of Recognition and Their Level of Commitment

The degree of recognition teachers received from the parents of their pupils was positively correlated with their dedication towards their profession. Parents' recognition and the recognition combined were positively correlated with teachers' loyalty to teaching. Both the recognition from the administrators and from the community were not positively correlated with all the sub-categories of commitment, namely: dedication, loyalty and identification with the teaching career.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. Teachers in the study were highly committed to their profession. In terms of sub-categories of commitment, they were highly dedicated, identified with the teaching profession and loyal to their work. Furthermore, they were to a very great extent prepared to work for the good of the teaching profession, felt proud to

tell people that they are teachers and believed that teaching is the best profession for them.

2. Teachers in the study received high level of professional support, peer support and principal support. The highest level of support came from both their principals and peers combined.
3. Teachers in the study received high level of recognition combined. Specifically, the highest percentage of teachers received moderate level of recognition from the parents and low level of recognition from the administrators and the community. As to the source of recognition, the parents of the pupils were the highest source of recognition received by the teachers. Second highest was from the administrators, and from the least from the community. The most common form (highest in percentage) of recognition from the parents was in terms of tokens or gifts.
4. Teachers' gender is significantly associated with their perceived level of peer support. Their educational level, teaching experience, and academic rank are not significantly associated with the perceived level of colleague support they received.
5. Teachers' gender, educational level, teaching experience and academic rank are not significantly associated with the professional support they received.
6. Teachers' educational level and academic rank are significantly associated with the level of recognition they received from the parents of their pupils. Their gender and teaching experience are not significantly associated with the recognition they received from the parents.

7. Teachers' gender is significantly associated with the level of recognition they received from their administrators (principals/school heads). Teachers' educational level, teaching experience, and academic rank are not significantly associated with the level of recognition they received from their school administrators.
8. The educational level or the highest degree earned by the teachers is significantly associated with the level of recognition they received from the community. Teachers' gender, teaching experience, and academic rank are not significantly associated with the level of recognition they received from the community.
9. Teachers' educational level is significantly associated with the recognition combined. Their gender, teaching experience, and academic rank are not significantly associated with the recognition combined.
10. None of the teachers' personal/ job-related characteristics namely: gender, educational level, teaching experience, and academic rank is significantly associated with their level of commitment to the teaching career.
11. The principal support, peer support and the professional support received by the teachers are positively correlated with their dedication toward their profession.
12. The principal support, peer support and the professional support received by the teachers are not positively correlated with their loyalty towards teaching.
13. Teachers' level of peer support and professional support are positively correlated with their identification with the teaching profession.
14. The professional support received by teachers is positively correlated with their dedication and identification but not with loyalty towards the teaching profession.

Neither principal nor peer support is significantly correlated with teachers' loyalty towards their work.

15. The teachers' level of parents' recognition and their level of recognition combined are positively correlated with their loyalty towards teaching profession
16. The levels of recognition teachers received from the administrators and from the community are not positively correlated with any of the sub-categories of commitment namely: dedication, loyalty, and identification with the teaching profession. None of the recognition sub-categories is positively correlated with teachers' identification with the teaching profession.

Recommendations

1. More researches should be conducted to determine what other personal / job related characteristics of teachers are significantly associated with their commitment to teaching. Not one of the personal/job characteristics namely: gender, educational level, teaching experience, and academic rank was found significantly associated with teaching commitment.
2. Teachers should try their best to earn their master's and doctoral degrees because their earning these degrees could raise their academic rank and would increase the level of recognition they would receive from the parents, from the community and from the three sources of recognition combined. Data show that teachers' educational level is significantly associated with the level of recognition they received from the community and from the recognition combined.
3. The Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS) officials, university administrators, school superintendents and other school supervisors should

encourage school principals to be very supportive of and show quality leadership to their subordinates. Their support (principals') is critical to their subordinates' commitment to their work (specifically on their dedication and identification with the teaching profession).

4. Other than providing high level of support to their subordinates, the principals should promote a conducive collegial environment in their schools. The peer support exerts a large direct effect on professional commitment (Singh and Billingsley, 1988).
5. Principals should include the discussion of the roles parents' play during P.T.C.A. meetings and conferences with the parents to increase the level of commitment of their children's teachers. The parents' giving of tokens to teachers, their expression of thanks through letters and telephone calls could raise teachers' level of commitment (specifically in the dedication and loyalty sub-categories) to the teaching career.
6. Parents of the pupils, the school principals and the different teacher award-giving organizations should work together in recognizing teachers' outstanding performance for the teachers to remain loyal to their profession.
7. More researches should be conducted on other variables related to teachers' identification with the teaching profession like family members' recognition given to teachers, and the like, since none of the recognition sub-categories was found significantly correlated with their identification with the teaching profession.