

ENABLING SCHOOL STRUCTURE AND COLLECTIVE TRUST AS PREDICTORS OF TEACHER EMPOWERMENT IN SELECTED EVANGELICAL SCHOOLS IN DAVAO REGION

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ABSTRACT

This study determined the influence of enabling school structure and collective trust on the teacher empowerment in ACSCU-Member institutions in Region XI. The descriptive-correlational design was utilized in this study. A total of 245 teachers have participated in this study. The respondents were selected using purposive sampling technique. Sets of survey questionnaire were used as instruments in gathering data from the respondents. The Mean was used to determine the levels of enabling school structure, collective trust and teacher empowerment. Pearson product moment correlation was used to investigate the relationship between variables. Moreover, the multiple regression analysis was used to analyze the influence of the enabling school structure and collective trust on teacher empowerment. The results revealed that the levels of enabling school structure, collective trust and teacher empowerment is high. Moreover, the enabling school structure and collective trust were found to have significant positive relationship with teacher empowerment. Furthermore, both the enabling school structure and collective trust significantly influence teacher empowerment.

KEYWORDS: *Enabling school structure, Collective trust, Teacher empowerment, Evangelical schools, Davao City, Philippines*

INTRODUCTION

Understanding the importance of teacher empowerment is beneficial in the world of Christian school to improve the efficiency and effectiveness in a certain institution. Teacher empowerment has become of greater interest with education reform initiatives that highlight greater teacher capacity, involvement, and accountability (Scribner et al., 2001). In fact, many of the successful academic institutions are those that have applied the creative energy of teachers

toward constant improvement (Terry, 2000). Further, it is encouraged that academic institutions should design an environment conducive to empowerment, exhibits empowerment ideals, encourages all accomplishments toward empowerment, and assists all empowerment initiatives (Terry, 2000). Besides, those teachers who are empowered believe that they have autonomy and opportunity to contribute in decisions that contribute to their students and the school. Meanwhile, Yukl (2002) believes that empowerment gives positive contribution to the institution which promotes greater initiatives among employees, high optimism towards job, feeling of belongingness in the organization, and strong commitment to the task.

However, some studies have reported that teachers among schools feel less empowered and do not consider having part decision making process. As apparent in the study of Duffy (2006), it revealed that most teachers do not have access to decision making and do not seem to have a voice in place in the decision making process of school policies. Another finding showed that American teachers feel less empowered due to time controls, pressure from the parents, and when their principals do not adequately address discipline problems and are not supportive (Lintner, 2008). Similar finding in the Philippines have showed that the Filipino teachers are poorly motivated and display low levels of aspirations and self-esteem (UNICEF, 1998).

Teacher empowerment has been linked to positive educational outcomes such as teacher effectiveness (Sweetland & Hoy, 2000), school climate (Crossland & Johnson, 2001), teacher morale (Centolanza, 2007) and student achievement (Sweetland & Hoy, 2000). Because of these findings, it is important to assess the teacher's sense of empowerment and examine some of its predictors as these contribute to the educational outcomes of the school. Important antecedents of teacher empowerment include enabling school structure (Sweetland & Hoy, 2000), and collective trust (Forsyth, Adams & Hoy, 2011). However, these variables are not yet thoroughly explored as predictors of teacher empowerment particularly its application among Christian schools in the Philippines. Furthermore, the combined influence of these variables on teacher empowerment is not yet investigated.

With this, it was the hope of the researcher to find out the influence of collective trust and enabling school structure being the two rarely explored antecedents of teacher

empowerment to make recommendations on how to better capacitate teachers and improve more the educational outcomes. Hence, this can be helpful to the Christian school leaders who desire to transform their schools in order to achieve excellent educational outcomes and professional growth should foster an enabling environment of teacher empowerment.

Statement of the Problem

This study determined the influence of enabling school structure and collective trust on teacher empowerment in ACSCU member institutions in Region XI. Particularly, it sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the level of enabling school structure of ACSCU member institutions?
2. What is the level of collective trust in terms of
 - 2.1 trust in the principal
 - 2.2 trust in the colleagues
 - 2.3 trust in clients?
3. What is the level of teacher empowerment in terms of
 - 3.1 decision making
 - 3.2 professional growth
 - 3.3 status
 - 3.4 self- efficacy
 - 3.5 autonomy
 - 3.6 impact?
4. Is there a significant relationship between
 - 4.1 enabling school structure and empowerment of Teachers
 - 4.2 collective trust and teacher empowerment?
5. Do enabling structure and collective trust significantly influence teacher empowerment?

FRAMEWORK

This study was anchored on Kanter's (1977) Theory of Structural Empowerment. He asserted that the structure of the work environment is an important correlate of employee's attitude and behavior in organizations, and that perceived access to power and opportunity structures relate to the behaviors and attitudes of employees in organizations. He suggested that

individuals display different behaviors depending on whether certain structural supports were in place.

Moreover, it was pointed out that an empowered teacher is affected by opportunities which include growth and mobility, and the chance to increase knowledge and skills. Moreover, the accessibility of resources, information, and support from one's position in the organization to get the job done successfully are also important precursors that will contribute to the empowerment of people within the organization. This account describes the enabling school structure given that it talks about the system that fosters collaboration of people within the organization. Furthermore, he emphasized that empowerment can be influenced by guidance and feedback received from subordinates, peers, and supervisors. This premise describes collective trust as it demonstrates willingness among people to be vulnerable to another party based on the confidence that the latter party is benevolent, reliable, competent, honest, and open.

The model displays the direct path of enabling school structure and collective trust on teacher empowerment as represented by the arrow pointing from the independent variables to the dependent variable. Figure 1 displays the conceptual framework that shows the link of the variables. The independent variables are the enabling school structure and collective trust while the dependent variable is teacher empowerment.

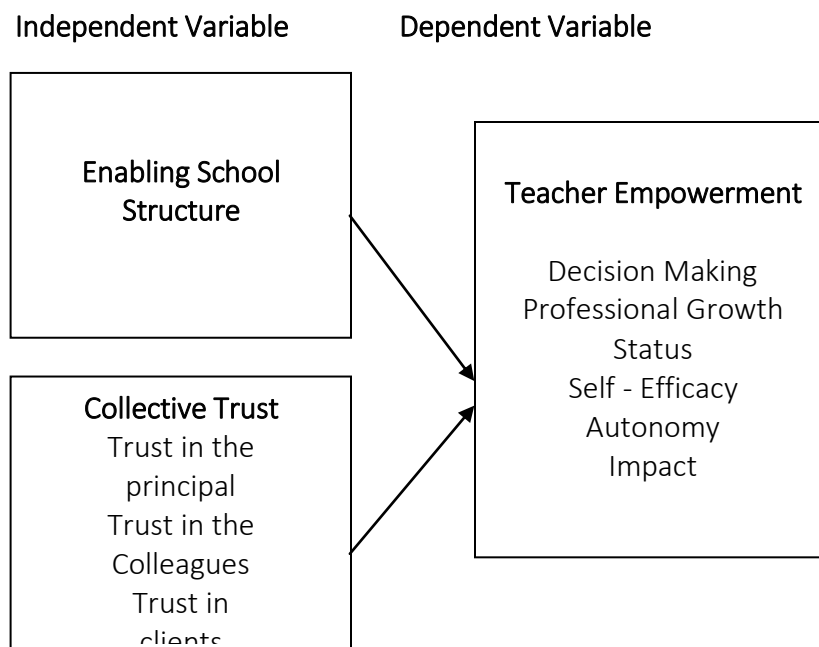


Figure 1. The Conceptual Framework Showing the Relationship of the Variables

METHODS

Research Design

This study has utilized the descriptive - correlation design. This approach is used to test the relationship of two or more variables (Zulueta and Costales, 2003). In this study, the relationships of enabling school structure and collective trust in relation to teacher empowerment were investigated.

Research Respondents

The teachers among the selected Evangelical schools of Region X1 which are also ACSCU member schools were the respondents of this study. A total of 245 teachers were selected using the purposive sampling technique. This technique aimed to achieve a homogeneous sample whose units share the same **characteristics or traits (Cresswell, 2003)**. **To achieve homogeneity, the selection of teachers adhered to the following criteria; they must be employed in an ACSCU member school, and teaching in basic education** and at least has served the institution for 3-years as full time faculty.

Research Instruments

Three instruments were utilized in this study namely: Enabling Structure Scale (ESS) a 12-item Likert-type scale questionnaire that determines the structure of the hierarchy as to whether it helps rather than hinders the effectiveness of teachers, the Collective Trust a Scale of 26 items likert scale that measures faculty trust - trust in the principal, trust in colleagues, and trust in

clients and the Teacher Empowerment Scale, was used to measure teachers' perceptions of their level of empowerment and utilized a 38- item Likert-type scale. The three instruments were adopted tools and already tested for construct validity and reliability. However, to ensure that the questionnaires were aligned to the local context, these tools were still subjected for content validity by experts and reliability analysis. The Cronbach's alpha values of the scales were above .70 which denotes high internal consistency.

Statistical Tools

The data were statistically analyzed to provide answer to the objectives. Mean was used to analyze the levels of enabling school structure, collective trust and teacher empowerment. Moreover, the Pearson product moment correlation was used to investigate the relationship between the variables. Furthermore, the Multiple Regression analysis was employed to measure the influence of enabling school structure, collective trust on teacher empowerment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Level of Enabling School Structure

Table 1 shows the level of enabling structure of the evangelical schools in Region 11. The results reveal that the overall mean is 4.22 which is described as high. This indicates that the enabling school characteristics are always manifested by the administrators.

In particular, the schools manifest the highest level in forging partnership with community and human service agencies with a mean of 4.37. This suggests that community-extension is part of the programs of the schools. This can be attributed to the directive of Department of Education that encourages schools to perform community related activities and outreach program.

Meanwhile, the lowest mean is 4.04 in the aspect of enabling authentic communication between teachers and administrators, which is described as high. This means that communication between administrators and teachers is oftentimes practice in the schools. This suggests transparency and willingness of the administrators to entertain issues and problems within the school community. The high level indicates that the system of rules and regulations in

the evangelical schools guides problem solving rather than punishes failure. This is aligned to the notion of Sweetland and Hoy (2000) that enabling schools are those having rules and regulations that are flexible and guides for problem solving rather than constraints that create problems.

Table 1. Level of Enabling School Structure of the Evangelical Schools

Enabling School Structure	Mean	Description
The administration rules in this school enable authentic communication between teachers and administrators.	4.04	High
The administrative hierarchy of this school enables teachers to do their job.	4.28	High
The administration rules help rather than hinder.	4.13	High
The administrative rules in this school are guides to solution rather than rigid procedures.	4.16	High
The administrators in this school use their influence to enable teachers to do their job.	4.20	High
The administration has a clear vision and priorities.	4.32	High
The administration act to ensure that education quality issues are collectively achieved.	4.37	High
The administrators effectively and efficiently support processes and systems of the school.	4.29	High
The administration modifies management style to suit situation.	4.19	High
The administrator develops strong collaboration with parents and community.	4.21	High
The administration design, plan, and organize activities to achieve maximum educational goals.	4.17	High
The administration provide leadership in forging partnership with community and human service agencies.	4.32	High
The administration develops strong collaboration with parents and community.	4.20	High
OVERALL MEAN	4.22	HIGH

Level of Collective Trust

Table 2 shows the level of collective trust which are measured in three indicators, namely trust in the principal, trust in the teachers and trust in clients. In the level of trust in the principal, the results show that the highest mean is 4.55 in the aspect of maintaining an environment which encourages mutual respect of teachers, staffs and students. This is followed by the items “The principal in this school demonstrate a positive attitude towards work and towards oneself a potentially productive worker” and “The principal in this school treats everyone with respect” with a value of 4.54 and 4.53, respectively. This result denotes a very high level of trust among teachers in their principal. On the other hand, the lowest mean is 4.44 in the aspect of acting in

the best interest of teachers. Nevertheless, the sub-mean is 4.50 which is described as very high. This denotes that trust in the principal is always evident among the evangelical schools.

In terms of trust in the teachers, the results revealed that the highest mean is represented by the item “The teachers in this school typically look out for each other” with a mean of 4.29. This is followed by the items “Even in difficult situations, teachers in this school can depend on each other” and “The teachers in this school trust their students” with the mean of 4.28 and 4.25, respectively. Meanwhile, the lowest mean is 4.10 in the item “The teachers in this school trust the parents”. The sub-mean value is 4.23 which is described as high. This denotes that teacher’s trust is always evident among the schools.

The level of trust in clients is high in all of its items. In particular, the highest mean is the faith and integrity of teachers onto their colleagues with a value of 4.22, while the lowest mean is 3.79 referring to the teachers trust to the parents. The sub-mean is 4.04 which is described as high. This means that trust among the clients is oftentimes evident among the schools. Lastly, the overall mean is high with a mean value of 4.26. This indicates that trust in the principal, teachers and clients is oftentimes evident among the evangelical schools in Region XI.

The results suggest that there is cooperation among the administrators, teachers and clients among the evangelical schools, and thus indicate a healthy organization. This is supported by Dirks and Ferrin (2002) that the higher the level of trust within the organization, the greater the likelihood of cooperation among its members, and thus promote positive expectations about others and facilitate positive behaviors.

It can also be noted in the results that the highest among the three subscales is trust in the principal. This suggests that teachers and clients really have positive outlook to their principal and find them worthy to lead their institution. Such characteristics would most likely produce positive school outcomes as confirmed by the study of Dirks and Ferrin (2002) that trust in leaders had a connection with variety of important outcomes, including constituents’ commitment to a leader's decisions, their commitment to the organization itself, reductions in reported intentions to turnover jobs, enhanced job performance and satisfaction, and increased levels of organizational citizenship behaviors.

Table 2. Level of Collective Trust

COLLECTIVE TRUST	Mean	Description
TRUST IN THE PRINCIPAL		
The teachers in the school trust the principal.	4.50	Very High
The principal in this school typically acts in the best interests of teacher.	4.44	High
The principal in this school maintain an environment which encourages mutual respect of teachers, staffs, and students.	4.55	Very High
The principal in this school provide students an family centered educational and social services.	4.47	High
The principal in this school treats everyone with respect.	4.53	Very High
The principal in this school demonstrate a positive attitude towards work and towards oneself a potentially productive worker.	4.54	Very High
Sub mean	4.50	Very High
TRUST IN THE TEACHERS		
The teachers in this school trust their students.	4.25	High
The teachers in this school typically look out for each other.	4.29	High
The teachers in this school trust the parents.	4.10	High
The teachers in this school trust each other.	4.23	High
Even in difficult situations, teachers in this school can depend on each other.	4.28	High
Sub Mean	4.23	High
TRUST IN CLIENTS		
The teachers can count on parental support.	4.06	High
When teachers in this school tell you something you can believe it.	4.13	High
The teachers think that most of the parents do a good job.	3.86	High
The teachers can believe what parents tell them.	3.79	High
The teachers in this school have faith and integrity of their colleagues.	4.22	High
The parents in this school are reliable in their commitments.	4.06	High
The students in this school care about each other.	3.93	High
The students in this school believe what the teachers tell them.	4.16	High
The parents in this school likes to talk to teachers.	4.06	High
The students in this school believe what the teachers tell them .	4.05	High
The students from this school share their problems to the teacher.	4.07	High
Sub mean	4.04	High
OVERALL	4.26	HIGH

Level of Teacher Empowerment

Table 3 shows the level of teacher empowerment among evangelical schools in Region 11. The results reveal that the highest mean for the decision making is 3.70 in the aspect of holding the responsibility to monitor program. On the other hand, the teachers have low empowerment in school budget decision which has the lowest mean value of 2.52. Nevertheless, the sub-mean for decision making is 3.03 which is described as moderate. This means that the teachers are sometimes involve in the decision making process of the school. Moreover, the results further suggest that teachers have inadequate participation in school governance and are centered only in instruction and monitoring of the existing programs.

Moreover, this results can be explained by CHED, the CMO 40, Series 2008, Section 7, objectives state that higher education train the nation's human resources in the required skills for national development, and to instill and foster the appropriate and relevant attitudes, skills and knowledge to enable each individual to become useful , productive, globally competitive , and gainfully employed member of the society. And Institutional Academic Freedom refers to the freedom of higher education institutions to determine their aims and objectives and how to attain them without threat or coercion or interference, except , when the overriding public interest calls for some restraints. So with the Institutional policies and rules means the standards prescribed by the higher education institution for the internal governance of its educational operations, as defined and approved by its governing body in accordance with law, and the applicable policies and rules of the commission.

Meanwhile, the schools offered high level of professional growth for teachers with a sub-mean value of 4.26. Specifically, the inculcation of human values and orientation of work has the highest mean with a value of 4.39 while the lowest mean is 4.04 in the aspect of participation in staff development. This denotes that professional growth for teachers is oftentimes evident among the schools. These findings can be explained by Short and Rhinehart (1993) that teachers should be given an opportunity for professional enhancement. In terms of autonomy, the teachers have the freedom to be creative in their teaching which exhibits the highest mean value of 4.40. However, the teachers only have moderate level of autonomy in selecting their own schedule with a mean value of 3.41. On the other hand, the sub-mean is 3.92 which is described as high. This means that teacher autonomy is oftentimes evident among the schools.

In the self-efficacy, the teachers have the highest level in the aspect of involvement in the special program for children with a mean value of 4.24. Nevertheless, the teachers only have moderate level in influencing the decisions made in the schools with a mean of 3.45. Meanwhile, the sub-mean is 4.01 which is described as high. This denotes that the self-efficacy is oftentimes evident among teachers. Musselwhite (2007) explained that empowered were more independent and confident in their own beliefs and abilities.

In the case of impact, the highest mean value is 4.19 in the opportunity of teachers to teach others about innovative ideas while the lowest mean is 4.00 in making parents feel comfortable in coming to school. On the other hand, the sub-mean value is 4.14 which is described as high. This means that teacher impact is oftentimes evident among the schools.

In the aspect of status, the teachers exhibit the highest mean in the opportunity to grow by working daily with others with a mean value of 4.18. On the other hand, the lowest mean is 3.52 in the opportunity to collaborate with other teachers in school. The sub-mean is 3.95 which is described as high. This indicates that empowerment in terms of status is oftentimes manifested by teachers in the schools.

The overall mean value is 3.88 with a description of high. This means that teacher empowerment is oftentimes evident among the evangelical schools. Moreover, this suggests that teachers in the evangelical schools believed that they are being treated with mutual respect and are part of trustful relations. This can be explained by Niehoff et al., (2001) that when teachers are empowered, schools become enriched and vibrant places of learning; empowerment strengthens teachers and provides them with a sense of ownership. There is gold in this simplicity that to be empowered teacher means to consciously decide what to do and how will you perform it by showing to the school community that as professional you love to learn. It is a joyful and purposeful journey of every teacher to have an opportunity to grow, develop and gain improvement as they continually work on their craft throughout their life.

Table 3. Level of Teacher Empowerment

SCHOOL EMPOWERMENT	Mean	Description
DECISION MAKING		
I am given the responsibility to monitor program.	3.70	High
I make decisions about the implementation of new programs in the school.	3.21	Moderate

I make decisions about the selection of other teachers in the school.	2.81	Moderate
I am involved in school budget decision.	2.52	Moderate
I make decisions about curriculum .	2.91	Moderate
Sub Mean	3.03	MODERATE
PROFESSIONAL GROWTH		
I function in a professional environment.	4.32	High
I participate in staff development.	4.04	High
I inculcate human values and the orientation to work.	4.39	High
Training plan is established for teachers to improve their work as a teacher .	4.31	High
I have given the opportunity for professional enhancement.	4.23	High
Sub Mean	4.26	HIGH
AUTONOMY		
I have control over daily schedules.	3.63	High
I have the freedom to make decisions on what is taught.	3.75	High
I can determine my own schedule.	3.41	Moderate
I can express my views freely on important school matters.	3.68	High
I am free to be creative in my teaching approach.	4.40	High
Standards of behavior in my classroom are set primarily by myself.	4.16	High
The materials I use in my class are chosen for the most parts by myself.	4.16	High
The selection of student- learning activities in my class is under my control.	4.18	High
Sub Mean	3.92	HIGH
SELF-EFFICACY		
I feel I am involved in an important program for children.	4.24	High
As a teacher I am able to get through to the most difficult students.	4.06	High
I can influence the decisions that are made in the school.	3.45	Moderate
have the skills to produced meaningful student learning.	4.18	High
I can do to promote learning where there is lack of support	3.99	High
I can motivate students who show low interest in school work.	4.12	High
Sub Mean	4.01	HIGH
IMPACT		
I understand that I have an impact on other teachers and students.	4.18	High
I have the opportunity to teach others about innovative ideas.	4.19	High
I perceive that I have the opportunity to influence others.	4.18	High
I can do to make parents feel comfortable in coming to school.	4.00	High
I feel that I am making a significant educational difference in the lives of the students.	4.15	High
Sub Mean	4.14	HIGH
STATUS		
I have the opportunity to collaborate with other teachers in the school.	4.15	High
Principal, other teachers, and school personnel solicit my advice.	3.52	High
I believe I have the opportunity to grow by working daily with others.	4.18	High
Sub Mean	3.95	High
OVERALL MEAN	3.88	HIGH

Relationship of Enabling School Structure and Collective Trust to the Teacher Empowerment

The data in Table 4 shows the correlation of enabling school structure and collective trust to teacher empowerment. It can be gleaned in the results that enabling school structure is significantly related to teacher empowerment as reflected by the p-value that is less than 0.05 and positive correlation coefficient, $r=.480$. This implies that the highly enabling school structure would likely increase teacher empowerment. This supports the premise of Hoy and Sweetland

(2001) that the more enabling the bureaucratic structure of schools, the more that teachers feel that they are empowered.

Similarly, the relationship between collective trust and teacher empowerment is found to be significant since the p-value is less than 0.05, and $r=0.468$. This means that the increase in collective trust in the school would also likely increase the teacher empowerment. This conform to the study of Hoy, Smith, and Sweetland (2002) that trusting relationships have association to teacher empowerment.

Table 4. Relationship of Enabling School Structure and Collective Trust to the Teacher Empowerment

Independent Variables	Teacher Empowerment		
	R	p-value	Remarks
Enabling School Structure	.480	.00	Significant
Collective Trust	.400	.00	Significant

Influence of Enabling School Structure and Collective Trust on Teacher Empowerment.

Table 5 presents the results of regression analysis which purpose is to show the significant predictors of teacher empowerment. The results indicate that enabling school structure and collective trust were found to be significant predictors of teacher empowerment.

In particular, it shows the influence of enabling school structure on teacher empowerment has generated a p-value that is less than .05 and positive standardized beta value of .375. This denotes that the regression weight for enabling school structure in the prediction of teacher empowerment is significantly different from zero at the 0.05 level (two-tailed). Thus, for every unit increase in enabling school structure, there is a corresponding increase in the in the teacher empowerment by .375. This implies that enabling school structure contributes to teacher empowerment. This conforms to the study of Hoy and Sweetland (2001) as revealed in their findings that enabling school structure have an effect to teacher empowerment.

In the same way, the influence of collective trust on teacher empowerment is found to be significant with a p-value that is less than 0.05 and positive standardized beta value of .176. This means that for every unit increase in collective trust, there is a corresponding increase in the teacher empowerment by .176. This finding suggests that collective trust in the school is a predictor of teacher empowerment. The result is aligned to the findings of Yin et al. (2013) that trust is a significant predictor of teacher empowerment.

Lastly, the findings were apparent in the results of the regression analysis where 25 percent of the variance of teacher empowerment were explained by the two independent variables as indicated by $R^2 = .25$. This means that 75 percent of the variation can be attributed to other factors aside from the two independent variables.

Table 5. Influence of the Independent Variables on Teacher Empowerment

Independent Variables	Teacher Empowerment			
	B	T	p-value	Remarks
Constant		8.950		
Enabling School Structure	.375	5.401	.000	Significant
Collective Trust	.176	2.543	.000	Significant

Note: $R = .500$, $R^2 = .250$, F-ratio = 40.39, p-value = .000

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The evangelical schools manifest high level of enabling school structure.
2. Trust in the principal is very high among schools. Hence, the collective trust involving principal, teachers and clients is at high level.
3. The teacher empowerment is high with some restriction especially in the aspects of decision making and governance.
4. There is a significant relationship between enabling school structure and teacher empowerment

5. There is a significant relationship between collective trust and teacher empowerment.
6. Enabling school structure and collective trust significantly influence teacher empowerment.

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