Employment Relationship Quality among Public School Teachers in Southern Mindanao: A Causal Model

Avelino D. Bitang, EdD, Eugenio S. Guhao Jr., DM

Public School District Supervisor, Department of Education, Philippines
Dean, Professional School, University of Mindanao, Philippines

Abstract: This study aimed to determine the best fit structural model on employment quality among public school teachers in Southern Mindanao, Philippines. It examined the connections among global social bases of power, public leadership, and relational leadership with employment quality respectively. The study utilized a descriptive-correlational technique through structural equation modeling (SEM). A total of 414 respondents were randomly selected using proportionate quota sampling. Findings revealed that, overall, the level of exogenous variables were described as high and indicated a significant relationship with employment relationship. Moreover, the most sparing model (Model 4), conveyed a new idea that the endogenous variable, employment relationship quality was significantly best anchored on social bases of power which was grounded in terms of global power and compliance, and was highly reinforced by public leadership of school heads defined by its indicators: accountability and rule-following and further significantly strengthened by third exogenous variable, relational leadership, which was outlined by its domain: active and passive. In conclusion, the final model depicted the direct causal relationships of global social bases of power, public leadership, and relational leadership, and found to be the best model on the employment relationship quality of public school teachers.

Keywords: employment relationship quality, global social bases of power, Philippines, public leadership, relational leadership

I. Introduction

South African school heads lack insight, knowledge, and experience in equity-related employment relations expectations and are therefore unable to deal with the challenges posed by workplace diversity (Ntimba, 2015, Potgieter, 2014). Hence, there exists an internal dispute with school heads and teachers that seriously affecting the school environment, eroding a decent school atmosphere and impacting student performance (Crossfield & Bourne, 2018). In addition, England’s teacher satisfaction at work is comparably lower than in other countries. If the present problems confronted by teachers are not properly addressed, it will poorly affect the quality of the employment relationships (Shonje, 2016).

Good employment relationship quality (ERQ) is essential for the following reasons; teachers who are motivated to work generate commendable results, teachers’ competence improved due to their desire for excellence, client response is strengthened when teachers are good collaborators (Xesha, Iwu, Slabbert & Nduna, 2014). Moreover, School heads and subordinates are always jointly responsible for establishing, maintaining and promoting good quality employment relationship exchanges in school head relationships.

Recognizing the importance of employment relationship quality among public school teachers, the researcher conducted an extensive review of literature for possible variables that may have bearing on it. Several studies showed that social bases of power, public leadership, and relational leadership have something to do with employment relationship quality. The researcher has not come across a study in the local area that uses structural equation modeling (SEM) in exploring the relationship among global social bases of power, public leadership, relational leadership, and employment relationship quality. It is in the above context that the researcher decided to conduct the study dealing with the three variables as a construct of employment relationship quality. The result of this study served as the basis for enhancing employment relationship quality between school heads and public school teachers.
II. Literature Review and Theoretical Background

2.1. Literature Review

This review of selected resources is intended to develop a logical argument to justify the purpose of this study. The following discussions on related theories and studies starts with an extensive analysis that highlights the impact of global social bases of power (Nesler, Aguinis, Quigley, Lee & Tedeschi, 1999) with the following indicators: global power, resistance, and control power, compliance, reward power, legitimate power, expert power, and referent power; public leadership (Tummers & Knies, 2013) with accountability, rule-following leadership, political loyalty leadership, and network governance leadership as indicators; relational leadership (Fiset, 2014), with the following indicators: active, passive, unaware, aware, positive, and negative; employment relationship quality (Potgieter & Ehlers, 2015) with the following indicators: trust, justice, fairness, and good faith.

2.1.1. Global Social Bases of Power

Power as mentioned by Gangl, Hofmann, and Kirchler (2015), is defined as an institution or an individual's capacity to control the actions of other persons. Furthermore, Social power is outlined as the capacity to affect change (Ansari, 2014). This is supported by Wood (2013), who said that social power refers to one's inert ability to affect others' way of thinking. Furthermore, Farmer and Aguinis (2005), said that seeing that a person has the ability to affect himself makes the power legitimate, to the extent that one's convictions, goals, and activities change because of that recognition.

In addition, Dirik and Eryılmaz (2018), emphasized that constructive or pessimistic results of the application of power depends on the choice and viewpoints of individuals within the organization. Mahatma Gandhi as mentioned by Jones and York (2016), was an extremely powerful leader who had no authority title and never seeks power, but nevertheless was very powerful. He's been an effective leader. Gandhi influenced people by using referent and expert bases. He has shown the strength and permanence of these power bases in this respect. Hitler, on the other hand, wanted power and led by coercion, fear, and legitimate authority. One has to be an effective leader in order to maintain power. Since power can affect a group either positively or negatively, the relationship between the two is extremely unstable. An organization's performance requires the ability of the leader to control the unstable relationship between leadership and power.

Power stands out as an effective strategy for organizing and fostering mutually supportive relationships, conflict management, and performance enhancement (Belaya & Hanf, 2016). In addition, the basic framework for understanding control and how leaders affect a follower (French & Raven, 1959). They fused the ideas of social influence and power defining social influence as a transformation in the perceptions of an individual, and social power as the potential for change. French and Raven, therefore, conceived power as a relationship between two individuals. Furthermore, the stronger an individuals' control over someone else, the stronger the power base of that individual (Northouse, 2013).

The first one to discuss power dynamics working within organizational settings was French and Raven (1959). Their categorization originally composed of reward, coercive, legitimate, expert, and reference power (Ferdik & Smith, 2016). However, in the study conducted by Nesler, Quigley, Aguinis, Lee and Tedeschi (1999), they included global, resistance and control, and compliance in the original categorization (French & Raven, 1959).

Researchers were also fascinated in evaluating the global source of power which is anchored on two or more questions aside from concentrating on individual power bases. Primarily, a global power indicator will imply a source's general ability in a given context to influence a goal. Additionally, explicit power bases applied to forecast different compliance activity forms and other power relationship-related outcomes. Second, researchers were engaged in identifying the different backgrounds of insights of power and their comparative influence on the global power of a source (Brass & Burkhardt, 1993).

2.1.2. Public Leadership

A number of major leadership studies in public sector organizations have been carried out (Jacobsen & Andersen, 2014). Public organizations' study has explored organizational effectiveness, government reform enactment, and to manage networks correctly (Chapman, 2015).

In recent years, partnerships between an organization and its people have been a major interest in research and practice in public relations (Ledingham, 2003). Public leadership of today's dynamic and interlinked environment has more than just running organizations in the public sector. In addition, public officials must be able to initiate appropriate action not only within their own organizations but among stakeholders with diverse and conflicting interests in order to solve complex problems (Broussine & Callahan, 2016). Furthermore, “public leaders actively support their employees in dealing with public sector issues on accountability leadership, rule-following leadership, political loyalty leadership, and network governance leadership” (Tummers & Knies, 2016).
2.1.3. Relational leadership

Relational leadership pertains to a leadership framework or viewpoint that centers on the concept that effective leadership has something to do with the leader's capacity to build healthy interactions within the workplace. Further, it refers to the relational mechanism that creates and activates leadership. A relational leader is moral, collaborative and transparent, fostering organizational stability, creativity, and communication (Apollonia, Fidelis & Umogbai, 2016). As stated by Kurucz and Nicholas (2017) “relational leadership explores leadership as a social influence process through which coordination and change emerge” This viewpoint decentralizes individuals’ function and leadership condition.

Relational leadership can be grasped as a system of shared influence (Uhl-Bien, 2006), currently taking place in an ever-changing interactions (Dibben & Wood, 2015), with social pre-construction of leadership power (Cunliffe & Eriksen, 2011). Furthermore, it is an integrated and sequential way of influencing inter-agencies. Nevertheless, it addresses the need to assist in making participants aware of their relationships’ value. Earlier studies and hypotheses used to understand the connection between work and employee satisfaction mainly focused on an instrumental relationship approach (Cunliffe et al., 2011).

An instrumental relationship point of view presupposes that individuals participate in relationships even though the interaction is a matter of convenience, with the later part being just another purpose, such as help related to the job, control, authority or certain external motive. On the other hand, because of the inherent enjoyment, interest, and general happiness felt by persons as a product of shared experiences an implicit perception of collaborations finds them to be advantageous (Cunliffe et al., 2011).

2.1.4. Employment Relationship Quality

Employment relationship quality (ERQ) pertains to the degree that experiences, contacts and different mediators associated with a working relationship are perceived by the individual as positive or negative.” It depends on how positive or negative the relationship experience interactions between parties within the workplace” (Potgieter & Ehlers, 2015).

There seems to be a strong ERQ between employers and employees when their economic and social relations are perceived as productive and harmonious from their own viewpoint (Navarro & Cabrera, 2009). Furthermore, employers' duties in the employment relationship are varied and will rely on their hierarchical position in an organization. These responsibilities can range from legal action in an administrative relationship, income negotiation between management and workers’ rights, or a governing board developing social responsibility policies (Moloto, Brink & Nel, 2014).

Relationships in employment are essential to achieve organizational success. Since it is employees who respond to client needs and expectations firsthand, organizational success or failure depends entirely on employee performance and workplace behavior. Organizations, therefore, need to fulfill the employees’ need and interest by performance management practices to ensure success and thus establish a successful working partnership (Hadjigeorgiou, 2016). In response to organizational change, organizations need to adjust constantly if they are to remain successful and competitive in the workplace (Marković, 2008).

In addition, Ehlers (2013) performed a thorough investigation into what impacts on aspired organizational interactions, and thereafter a consistent study of appropriate organizational social interactions was developed. Trust, good faith, fairness, and justice are the common studies defined as linked employment relationship situations that are substantially linked to well-founded supervisory relationships. Such intercessors interlink with each other to impact the performance of the supervisor-subordinate relationship.

2.2. Theoretical Background

This study was anchored on certain theory and study based on the assumed interrelationship and causal relationship shown in the hypothesized models. First, it was anchored on Relational Leadership Theory (RLT) Framework by Uhl-Bien (2006), which stated that “leadership effectiveness has to do with the ability of the leader to create positive relationships within the organization”. It focuses on relational processes by which leadership is produced and enabled.

This was supported by the study of Akrama, Leia and Haidera (2016) that “relational leadership is a relational and ethical process of people together attempting to accomplish positive change”. Studies, on the other hand, have also shown that workers react badly to negative behavior of an employer (Potgieter & Ehlers, 2015). In addition, the effect of relational leadership on “employee innovative work actions in China's IT industry” led by Akrama et al. (2016), indicates that it will be easier to apply creative ideas throughout the organization when employer-employee relationship is in the higher extent.
This study also applied the proposition of Potgieter et al. (2015) which stated that “Employment Relationship Quality” (ERQ) corresponds to the extent to which employment-related encounters are viewed as either favorable or unfavorable by the groups. Good ERQ is evident when socio-economic interactions take place between the school heads and teachers are experienced as favorable and harmonious from the point of view in both parties.

This is supported by Xesha, Iwu, Slabbert and Nduna (2014), that good employment relations are important for various reasons. Such factors could include: workers who are motivated to work generate better and greater performance, customer service is enhanced as workers who have friendly relations with their employer are generally seen as good customer advocates due to their desire to improve.

Further, employment relationship is affected by power as emphasized by Belaya and Hanf (2016). Social power “refers to the latent potential of a person or group to influence the beliefs, attitudes, or behavior of another person or group”.

In addition, public officials must be able to initiate appropriate action not only within their own organizations but among stakeholders with diverse and conflicting interests in order to solve complex problems (Broussine & Callahan, 2016).

III. Research Method

This study utilized quantitative, descriptive-correlational research design employing structural equation modeling technique. This investigation aimed to come up with a best fit model of employment relationship quality among public school teachers.

Specifically, the study used the descriptive-correlational method. It is descriptive because it described the level of global social power bases, public leadership and relational leadership of school heads as well as the level of employment relationship quality of public school teachers. Meanwhile, it is correlational since it measured the degree of relationship between the exogenous and endogenous variables. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to generate the best fit model. It was also utilized as a means to analyze the hypothesized relationships where it starts with a theoretically based model, which is transformed into a path diagram.

This research was administered in Davao Region, known as Region XI, one of the regions in the Philippines located at the southern portion of Mindanao. Scientific process was used in determining the respondents of the study. A total of 414 public school teachers from different schools in Deped Region XI divisions of Southern Mindanao were surveyed for this study. Another research subject of the study were the school heads. Proportionate quota sampling was employed in determining the number of respondents per division. In proportionate quota sampling the percentage of every subgroup is set on the basis of actual proportion of the population (Alvi, 2016). Following the fundamental rule for the number of respondents appropriate for Structural Equation Modeling (Oke, Ogunsami & Ogunlana, 2012) which should be between 200 - 400, the researcher tried to work backward by making use of appropriate sample per strata in quota sampling which is 10 (Changing Minds, 2012) at .05 significance level.

Further, criteria were made for the participants to qualify as respondents of the study (inclusion). They must be a public school teacher, holder of permanent status in the Department of Education, with item positions teacher I to III and Master teachers I to IV. In addition, they can be of any gender, as long as they can provide answers to the questionnaire. The respondents were expected to give reliable information regarding the study of global social bases of power, public leadership, relational leadership, and employment relationship quality. On the other hand, excluded as respondents were those having head teacher positions, retired or resigned teachers in DepED, and also those coming from the private schools.

IV. Research Discussion

4.1. Employment Relationship Quality

The level of employment relationship quality of teachers obtained a high result in the study. This high rating is due to the rating given by the respondents on trust, justice, fairness, and good faith. This implies that school heads in Region XI are displaying good leadership traits in his role, engaging in sound human resource management practices, following workplace policies, performing his/her duties before expecting teachers to perform their duties, and acting in good faith. Teachers, on the other hand, believe that treating them with respect, Makes their working conditions healthy and worth stay in.

Findings of the study are parallel with the ideas of Potgieter and Ehlers (2015), which say that good employment relationship is apparent when socio-economic exchanges between school heads and teachers are experienced as favorable and harmonious from the standpoint of both parties. This is also supported by Xesha, Iwu, Slabbert, and
Employment Relationship Quality among Public School Teachers in Southern Mindanao: A Causal Model

Nduna (2014), who said that good employment relationship is important because workers who are motivated to work generate more and more results, the competence level of employees enhanced due to their desire to personally improve, client service is enhanced because employees who have sound relationships with their employer are mostly observe as good client service provider.

4.2. Global Social Bases of Power
The level of global social bases of power is high. This high rating is due to the rating given by the respondents on global power, compliance, reward, coercive, legitimate, expert, and referent power. This means that school heads in Region XI are giving good technical suggestions to the teachers, influencing teachers to work harder in their job, providing good job-related advice, and providing with needed specialized knowledge. This depicts that teachers give high regard to the decisions of their school heads.

This is supported by Belaya and Hanf (2016), who said that power stands out as an effective strategy for organizing and fostering mutually supportive relationships, conflict management, and performance enhancement. Further, Merchant and Seidel (2019) said that “the opinions, ideas, and decisions of people with expert power are held in high regard by other employees and hence greatly influence their actions. Such people are highly valued by organizations for their problem-solving skills”.

4.3. Public Leadership
The high level of public leadership is due to the high rating given by the respondents on accountability, rule-following, political loyalty, and network governance. This means that school heads in Region XI are encouraging teachers and their colleagues to explain their actions to various stakeholders, emphasizing that it is important to follow the rules and regulations in DepEd, stimulating to implement political decisions, even if it means additional responsibilities should be taken up, stimulating teachers to regularly work together with other colleagues.

This is consistent with the idea of Tummers and knies (2016) which defines network governance leadership as “leaders who encourage their employees to actively connect with stakeholders”. Moreover, as revealed by Broussine and Callahan (2016), public officials must be able to initiate appropriate action not only within their own organizations but among stakeholders with diverse and conflicting interests in order to solve complex problems.

4.4. Relational Leadership
The level of relational leadership obtained a high result in the study. This is due to the high rating given by the respondents on active, aware, and positive. This implies that in Region XI, the school heads are enthusiastically participating in team-building activities, is being mindful of workgroup interrelationships, caring about developing a harmonious work environment.

Result of the study is in consonance with the study conducted by Hangeiro and Ihagh (2016), which showed that relational leader is moral, collaborative and transparent, fostering organizational stability, creativity, and communication. In addition, it implies that effective leadership is the capacity of the leader to build healthy organizational interactions.

4.5. Correlation between Global Social Bases of Power and Employment Relationship Quality
The test of relationship between variables reveals a significant relationship between global social bases of power and employment relationship quality which leads to reject the null hypothesis of the study. This implies that global social bases of power is associated with employment relationship quality. Further, it implies that employment relationship quality has something to do with global social bases of power. The overall result of the global social bases of power of school heads in Southern Mindanao is significantly correlated with employment relationship quality. Specifically, indicators such as global power, compliance, reward, coercive, legitimate, expert and referent power are correlated to employment relationship quality. On the other hand, resistance and control is not correlated to employment relationship quality in its singular state but it still contributes to the overall correlation.

Findings of the study are consistent with the research of Dundon, Howcroft, Hughes and Keizer (2018) that there is an association between global social bases of power and employment relationship quality.

4.6. Correlation between Public Leadership and Employment Relationship Quality
The test of relationship between variables reveals a significant relationship between public leadership and employment relationship quality which leads to reject the null hypothesis of the study. This implies that public leadership is associated with employment relationship quality. Further, it implies that employment relationship quality has something to do with public leadership. The overall result of the public leadership of school heads in Southern
Employment Relationship Quality among Public School Teachers in Southern Mindanao: A Causal Model

Mindanao is significantly correlated to employment relationship quality. Specifically, indicators such as accountability, rule-following, political loyalty and network governance are correlated with employment relationship quality.

The result of the study is in consonance of Hassan and Hatmaker (2014) that there is a link between public leadership and employment relationship quality.

4.7. Correlation between Relational Leadership and Employment Relationship Quality

The test of relationship between variables reveals a significant relationship between relational leadership and employment relationship quality which leads to reject the null hypothesis of the study. This implies that relational leadership is associated with employment relationship quality. Further, it implies that employment relationship quality has something to do with relational leadership. The overall result of the relational leadership of school heads in Southern Mindanao is significantly correlated with employment relationship quality. Specifically, indicators such as active, unaware, aware, positive, negative are correlated to employment relationship. On the other hand, passive, is not correlated to employment relationship quality in its singular state but it still contributes to the overall correlation.

The result of the study is consistent with the study of Akrama, Leia and Haidera (2016); Hangeior and Ihagh (2016) that there is a connection between relational leadership and employment relationship quality as espoused in the theoretical framework of this study.

4.8. Best Fit Model that Predicts Employment Relationship Quality

4.8.1. Generated Model 4

Figure 1 displays the generated structural model 4. It shows the direct causal link of the exogenous variable with endogenous variable. It could be seen from the model that only trust and good faith remained as the measurement construct of employment relationship quality, out of the four indicators. Trust, an observed variable that predicts employment relationship quality, refers to the loyalty and commitment of employees to their superiors that significantly affect their organizations. As stated by

![Diagram of Model 4](image-url)

Fig. 1. Model 4

The Interrelationship among Global Social Power Bases, Public Leadership, and Relational Leadership and their Direct Causal Relationship towards Employment Relationship Quality with their final remaining indicators

Legend:
ERQ - Employment Relationship Quality
PubL - Public Leadership
TRU - Trust
ACC - Accountability
GF - Good Faith
ERQ - Employment Relationship Quality

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Employment Relationship Quality among Public School Teachers in Southern Mindanao: A Causal Model

Potgieter and Ehlers (2015) that trust is deemed a very important criterion in the management of the employment relationship because the manner supervisors handle themselves in an organization will have a major impact on the confidence level of their workers.

Another indicator of employment relationship quality is good faith. Good faith refers to standing in solidarity with one's deepest values. Moreover, Newburgh (2019) stated that a teacher who practices in good faith may completely overhaul her teaching ideology in the school, which will lead to quality performance and a higher chance of achieving success in the career. It implies that teachers perform their task based from their mandated duties and responsibilities in the school even without constant supervision of school heads.

For global social bases of power as one of the remaining exogenous variable in the best fit model, only two out of eight observed variables appeared to have causal link to employment relationship quality. Global power, refers to “subordinates’ general perceptions of their supervisors’ ability to influence” (Nesler et al., 1999). As mentioned by Belaya and Hard (2016) most scientists see it as a main behavioral construct emphasizing the value of power and defines as an effective method for the management and development of mutually supportive relationships, dispute resolution and performance enhancement.

Another remaining indicator of global social bases of power is compliance. It is acceptance of influence to refrain from punishments but instead gain rewards from the immediate supervisor (Ansari, 2014). In addition, it would be easy to implement compliance when the supervisor and the subordinates belong to the same community because the subordinate will anticipate and embrace the power base chosen by the supervisor (Mittal & Elias, 2016).

Public leadership as one of the important exogenous variables showed two out of four observed variables appeared to have a significant causal link to employment relationship quality. First is accountability which is one of the most important value in the public sector. It is typical for public leaders to be accountable to their constituents, (Wal et al., 2008). It starts with oneself, and it has to apply at all times and to everyone in order to create a culture of accountability which will have a massive impact on performance and results (Tredgold, 2017).

Another indicator of public leadership is rule-following as significant predictor of employment relationship quality. It is defined as “leaders who encourage their employees to act in accordance with governmental rules and regulations” (Tummers&Knies, 2016). In addition, DeHart-Davis (2009) said that the core principle of public administration is to abide official standards and regulations. Further, it was also mentioned by Bozeman and Bretschneider (1994) that in high public organizations the responsibility of leaders is to encourage people not to violate governmental rules and regulations.

For relational leadership as one of the remaining exogenous variables in the best fit model, only two out six observed variables appeared to have causal link to employment relationship quality. Active attempts to engage workers in the group's problems and to provide them certain part in addressing those problems. An active Leaders establishes goals, guides their members, and sets them free to handle the problems, allowing them to feel the sense of ownership of their outputs and outcomes. In addition, along with their team, successful leaders foresee problems before they get into trouble (Fein, 2016).

Passive is another remaining indicator of relational leadership that has a causal link to employment relationship quality. It is defined as “avoiding decisions, neglecting workplace problems and failing to model or reinforce appropriate behaviors” (Harold & Holtz, 2015). Passive leaders may exacerbate the target’s negative perceptions because they avoid taking responsibility and fail to provide the necessary resources to effectively accomplish organizational objectives, in addition to avoiding interacting with their subordinates as much as possible. As such, this type of behavior is expected to have negative effects both in terms of employees’ interaction with the leader and the understanding that the leader may not be available during times where interventions are necessary (Fiset, 2014).

V. Conclusion

The result of the study confirmed the Relational Leadership Theory (RLT) which claimed that success of leadership is linked to the potential of the leader to generate positive relationships within the institution. It focuses on relational processes by which leadership is produced and enabled.

The use of the structural equation model enhanced the reliability and profoundness of this study because the analysis goes through the process of model specification, model estimation, and model evaluation.
Results revealed that the level of global social bases of power is high; the level of public leadership is high; the level of relational leadership is high; the level of employment relationship quality of public school teachers is high. There is a significant relationship between global social bases of power and employment relationship quality of teachers. Likewise, there is a significant relationship between public leadership and employment relationship quality of teachers. Moreover, there is a significant relationship between relational leadership and the employment relationship quality of teachers.

Among four explored structural models, only model 4 found to have indices that consistently indicate a very good fit for the data because all the indices presented fall within each criterion. Thus, it was found to be the best fit model among all the tested models. This model indicates that employment relationship quality with indicators trust and good faith is strongly influenced by global social bases of power depicted by the indicators global power, and compliance; public leadership with indicators accountability, and rule-following; and relational leadership defined by indicators active, and passive.

The model fit for employment relationship quality among public school teachers is in consonance with the study of Hangeior and Ilagh (2016) which state that “leadership effectiveness has to do with the ability of the leader to create positive relationships within the organization”. Further, a relational leader is moral, collaborative and transparent, fostering organizational stability, creativity, and communication.

The findings of the study are parallel to the declaration of Xesha, Iwu, Slabbert and Nduna (2014) that good employment relationship quality (ERQ) is essential because teachers who are motivated to work generate commendable results, their level of standards improve because of aspiration for excellence, client service is enhanced because teachers having positive relationships with their school head are commonly seen as good mentors for clients.

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Employment Relationship Quality among Public School Teachers in Southern Mindanao: A Causal Model


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