

Psychological Empowerment and Work Engagement among Non-Teaching Personnel in the Department of Education Division Office of Surigao del Norte

Berlyn B. Paglinawan

Department of Education, Schools Division Office of Surigao del Norte, Philippines

Email: berlyn.yriarte@deped.gov.ph

ORCID: 0009-0005-8820-8934

Page | 171

Abstract

This study examined psychological empowerment and work engagement among non-teaching personnel of the Department of Education, Schools Division Office of Surigao del Norte. It described the respondents' demographic profile, assessed perceived psychological empowerment in terms of meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact, measured work engagement in terms of vigor, dedication, and absorption, tested differences across profile groups, determined the relationship between empowerment and engagement, and examined the influence of empowerment dimensions on work engagement. A quantitative descriptive-correlational design was used with 117 non-teaching personnel from the Office of the Schools Division Superintendent, Administrative Services, School Governance and Operations Division, Curriculum and Instruction Division, and related support units. Standardized instruments adapted from Spreitzer's Psychological Empowerment Questionnaire and Schaufeli et al.'s Work Engagement Scale were used. Data were analyzed through frequency counts, percentages, means, standard deviations, independent samples t-test, ANOVA, Pearson correlation, and multiple linear regression. Results showed very high psychological empowerment across all dimensions, with meaning receiving the highest mean. Work engagement was also very high, with dedication as the strongest dimension. Significant differences were found for selected profile variables, particularly age, educational attainment, and years in service. Psychological empowerment was significantly and positively associated with vigor, dedication, and absorption. Regression analysis further showed that meaning, competence, and self-determination significantly predicted work engagement, while impact was not a significant predictor when other dimensions were controlled. The study concludes that empowerment is a critical organizational resource for sustaining engagement among non-teaching personnel and recommends an empowerment-focused improvement program centered on capacity building, participative governance, recognition, wellness, digital empowerment, and accountability.

Keywords: Psychological Empowerment, Work Engagement, Non-Teaching Personnel, Department of Education, Social Exchange Theory, Public Sector Administration

1. Introduction

Educational organizations depend not only on teachers but also on non-teaching personnel who provide the administrative, technical, financial, records, human-resource, planning, and operational support required for effective service delivery. In the Department of Education, non-teaching personnel sustain division-level operations and support the implementation of programs that directly affect schools, teachers, learners, and stakeholders. Their work is often less visible than classroom instruction, yet it forms a substantial part of organizational functioning. As public education systems face rising administrative demands, workload expansion, accountability pressures, and expectations for responsive service, the psychological conditions of non-teaching personnel deserve systematic attention.

Psychological empowerment refers to employees' intrinsic motivation and perceived capacity to shape their work through meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact (Spreitzer, 1995). Work engagement refers to a positive and fulfilling work-related state characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2002). These two constructs are important in the context of division offices because non-teaching personnel are expected to maintain accuracy, timeliness, coordination, and public accountability despite varying job demands. Empowered personnel are more likely to understand the value of their roles, feel capable of performing their tasks, exercise appropriate autonomy, and perceive that their work contributes to organizational outcomes. These perceptions may translate into stronger energy, commitment, persistence, and concentration at work.

The rationale for this study is grounded in the operational realities of the Schools Division Office of Surigao del Norte, where non-teaching personnel work across multiple functional divisions and support both mainland and island schools. The original thesis indicates that role overlap, workload pressures, accountability gaps, and limited authority to decline additional tasks may affect morale, autonomy, and motivation among support personnel. Although teachers have been widely studied in Philippine education research, fewer studies focus on non-teaching personnel as administrative contributors to educational quality. This gap justifies an inquiry into how psychological empowerment relates to work engagement in this public-sector educational setting.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

The study is anchored on Social Exchange Theory, which explains workplace relationships as reciprocal exchanges between employees and the organization. When employees perceive that they are trusted, supported, recognized, and empowered, they are likely to reciprocate through stronger motivation, commitment, and engagement. Psychological empowerment is also supported by Conger and Kanungo's empowerment perspective and by Spreitzer's four-dimensional model. Work engagement is framed through Schaufeli et al.'s model, which conceptualizes engagement as vigor, dedication, and absorption. In this study, respondent profile variables provide contextual background, psychological empowerment serves as the principal explanatory construct, and work engagement represents the work-related behavioral state associated with empowerment.

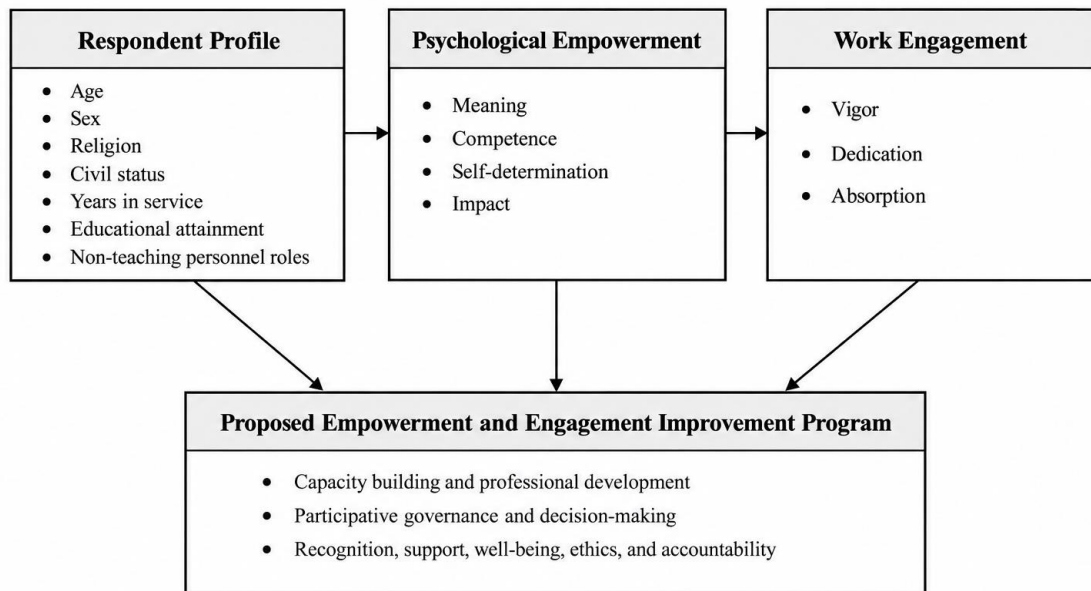


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

Note. Social Exchange Theory explains the reciprocal link between psychological empowerment and work engagement; psychologically empowered non-teaching personnel are expected to demonstrate stronger vigor, dedication, and absorption.

Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study. Social Exchange Theory explains the reciprocal relationship between empowerment and engagement. Respondent profile variables provide context, psychological empowerment is examined through meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact, and work engagement is examined through vigor, dedication, and absorption. The findings guide the proposed improvement program for non-teaching personnel.

Aim and Statement of the Problem

This study assessed psychological empowerment and work engagement among non-teaching personnel of the Department of Education, Schools Division Office of Surigao del Norte.

Specifically, it sought to:

- (a) describe the demographic profile of respondents in terms of age, sex, years in service, religion, civil status, and educational attainment;
- (b) determine the level of psychological empowerment in terms of meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact;
- (c) determine the level of work engagement in terms of vigor, dedication, and absorption;
- (d) test significant differences in psychological empowerment and work engagement when grouped according to respondent profile;
- (e) determine the relationship between psychological empowerment and work engagement;

- (f) determine the influence of psychological empowerment on work engagement; and
- (g) propose an improvement program for non-teaching personnel.

Hypotheses

At the 0.05 level of significance, the study tested the null hypotheses that:

- (a) there is no significant difference in psychological empowerment when respondents are grouped according to profile;
- (b) there is no significant difference in work engagement when respondents are grouped according to profile;
- (c) there is no significant relationship between psychological empowerment and work engagement; and
- (d) psychological empowerment does not significantly influence work engagement among non-teaching personnel of the Schools Division Office of Surigao del Norte.

2. Literature Review

The literature on psychological empowerment shows that empowered employees tend to demonstrate stronger intrinsic motivation, role ownership, and positive work attitudes. Spreitzer's model remains a major framework because it treats empowerment as a multidimensional construct rather than a simple perception of authority. Meaning enables employees to view their work as aligned with personal and organizational values; competence reflects confidence in the ability to perform work effectively; self-determination captures autonomy in initiating and regulating work actions; and impact refers to the perceived ability to influence organizational outcomes. Recent organizational studies continue to affirm that empowerment is associated with satisfaction, commitment, proactive behavior, and reduced turnover intention (Chompukum & Vanichbuncha, 2025; Llorente-Alonso et al., 2024; Ochoa Pacheco et al., 2023).

Work engagement is similarly treated as a multidimensional construct composed of vigor, dedication, and absorption. Vigor involves energy and resilience; dedication involves pride, enthusiasm, and commitment; and absorption involves concentration and immersion in tasks. Engagement is valuable in public organizations because it is linked to service quality, organizational citizenship, performance, and retention. The Job Demands-Resources literature indicates that engagement is strengthened when employees have sufficient resources, role clarity, supportive leadership, recognition, learning opportunities, and autonomy (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Mazzetti et al., 2023). These conditions are highly relevant for non-teaching personnel who work under administrative pressure and are expected to deliver accurate, timely, and accountable support services.

The relationship between empowerment and engagement is theoretically consistent with Social Exchange Theory. When employees perceive that the organization provides meaningful roles, competence-building opportunities, discretion in work processes, and recognition of impact, they tend to respond with increased effort and stronger psychological attachment. In the public education context, this relationship is important because non-teaching personnel provide the organizational infrastructure that allows schools and instructional leaders to function. However, the literature has focused more extensively on teachers, faculty, and private-sector employees than on non-teaching personnel in Philippine division offices. The current study responds to this gap by examining empowerment and engagement among DepEd non-teaching personnel in Surigao del Norte and by translating the findings into an improvement program.

3. Methodology

The study used a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design. This design was appropriate because the study described the demographic profile of respondents, measured levels of psychological empowerment and work engagement, tested differences across profile variables, examined the relationship between variables, and determined the predictive influence of psychological empowerment on work engagement without manipulating study conditions.

The study was conducted at the Department of Education, Schools Division Office of Surigao del Norte in the CARAGA Region. The locale included the Office of the Schools Division Superintendent, Administrative Services, School Governance and Operations Division, Curriculum and Instruction Division, and related support units. A total of 122 non-teaching personnel were invited, and 117 served as respondents. These personnel represented administrative, technical, planning, finance, records, supply, human-resource, legal, health, library, engineering, school governance, curriculum, and support functions.

Standardized instruments adapted from the Psychological Empowerment Questionnaire of Spreitzer and the Work Engagement Scale of Schaufeli et al. were used. Psychological empowerment was measured through meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. Work engagement was measured through vigor, dedication, and absorption. Responses were interpreted using a four-point scale: 3.25-4.00 as strongly agree/very high, 2.50-3.24 as agree/high, 1.75-2.49 as slightly agree/moderate, and 1.00-1.74 as disagree/low. Data collection followed a structured process involving permission from the Graduate School and Schools Division Superintendent, questionnaire distribution, retrieval, encoding, and statistical analysis. Ethical procedures included informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, anonymity, non-coercion, and use of data only for academic purposes.

4. Results and Discussion

Table 1. Demographic profile of the respondents

Profile category	f	%
Age: 20-25 years old	6	5.13
26-30 years old	21	17.95
31-35 years old	28	23.93
36-40 years old	22	18.80
41 years old and above	40	34.19
Sex: Male	32	27.35
Female	85	72.65
Civil status: Single	37	31.62
Married	74	63.25
Widowed	4	3.42
Separated	2	1.71
Years in service: 1-5 years	51	43.59
6-10 years	31	26.50
11-15 years	16	13.68
16-20 years	7	5.98
21 years and above	12	10.26
Religion: Roman Catholic	89	76.07
Iglesia Filipina Independiente	13	11.11
Christian	3	2.56
Iglesia Ni Cristo	3	2.56

Profile category	f	%
Baptist	2	1.71
Protestant	2	1.71
Assembly of God	1	0.85
Born Again Christian	1	0.85
Evangelical Christian	1	0.85
Seventh-day Adventist	1	0.85
UCCP	1	0.85
Educational attainment: High school graduate	3	2.56
Vocational course	1	0.85
Undergraduate level	3	2.56
College graduate	65	55.56
Master's unit earner	19	16.24
Master's degree	6	5.13
Doctorate unit earner	7	5.98
Doctorate degree	13	11.11

The profile shows that the largest age group was 41 years old and above (34.19%), followed by those aged 31-35 years (23.93%). Females comprised most respondents (72.65%). Most were married (63.25%), and the largest tenure group had one to five years of service (43.59%). Roman Catholic respondents constituted the majority (76.07%). In terms of education, most were college graduates (55.56%), while others had graduate units, master's degrees, doctorate units, or doctorate degrees. These results indicate a workforce composed of both early-tenure and experienced personnel, with varied educational backgrounds and service responsibilities.

Table 2. Summary of psychological empowerment

Dimension	M	SD	Verbal response	Interpretation
Meaning	3.78	0.45	Strongly Agree	Very High
Competence	3.72	0.45	Strongly Agree	Very High
Self-determination	3.49	0.56	Strongly Agree	Very High
Impact	3.57	0.55	Strongly Agree	Very High

Psychological empowerment was very high across all dimensions. Meaning obtained the highest mean ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 0.45$), indicating that non-teaching personnel perceived their work as personally significant and aligned with organizational goals. Competence also received a very high rating ($M = 3.72$, $SD = 0.45$), showing confidence in job-related capabilities. Impact was likewise very high ($M = 3.57$, $SD = 0.55$), while self-determination, although the lowest among the four dimensions, remained very high ($M = 3.49$, $SD = 0.56$). The pattern suggests that the respondents find purpose in their work and feel capable, while autonomy and perceived influence may still be strengthened through institutional mechanisms.

Table 3. Summary of work engagement

Dimension	M	SD	Verbal response	Interpretation
Vigor	3.54	0.53	Strongly Agree	Very High
Dedication	3.66	0.52	Strongly Agree	Very High
Absorption	3.42	0.57	Strongly Agree	Very High

Work engagement was also very high. Dedication recorded the highest mean ($M = 3.66$, $SD = 0.52$), indicating strong pride, involvement, and commitment to work. Vigor followed ($M = 3.54$, $SD = 0.53$), reflecting energy, alertness, and persistence. Absorption was also very high ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 0.57$), suggesting that personnel generally experience concentration and immersion while performing their tasks. The results show that non-

teaching personnel do not simply complete assigned tasks; they report strong commitment and focused involvement in their work.

Table 4. Significant differences in psychological empowerment and work engagement by selected profile variables

Profile variable	Dependent dimension	Test statistic	p-value	Interpretation
Age	Psychological empowerment - meaning	F = 3.09	0.019	Significant
Age	Psychological empowerment - competence	F = 2.61	0.039	Significant
Educational attainment	Psychological empowerment - impact	F = 2.37	0.027	Significant
Age	Work engagement - vigor	F = 2.73	0.033	Significant
Age	Work engagement - dedication	F = 3.50	0.010	Significant
Years in service	Work engagement - vigor	F = 2.45	0.050	Significant

Page | 177

Only selected profile variables produced significant differences. Age was significant for meaning and competence under psychological empowerment and for vigor and dedication under work engagement. Educational attainment was significant for impact, while years in service was significant for vigor. Most other comparisons were not significant. This means that empowerment and engagement were generally high across groups, but selected aspects differed according to career stage, educational background, and tenure. These differences suggest that improvement programs should not assume uniform needs across all personnel groups.

Table 5. Correlation between psychological empowerment dimensions and work engagement dimensions

Psychological empowerment dimension	Vigor	Dedication	Absorption
Meaning	0.70*	0.81*	0.42*
Competence	0.75*	0.73*	0.59*
Self-determination	0.70*	0.73*	0.54*
Impact	0.64*	0.59*	0.45*

*p < 0.05. All coefficients were significant at p = 0.000.

All psychological empowerment dimensions were significantly and positively correlated with the three work engagement dimensions. The strongest observed association was between meaning and dedication (r = 0.81), followed by competence and vigor (r = 0.75), competence and dedication (r = 0.73), and self-determination and dedication (r = 0.73). These results support the view that non-teaching personnel who find meaning in their work, feel competent, experience autonomy, and perceive impact are more likely to show energy, commitment, and absorption.

Table 6. Regression analysis of psychological empowerment dimensions predicting work engagement

Predictor	B	SE	Beta	t	p-value	Interpretation
Meaning	0.33	0.08	0.31	4.25	0.000	Significant
Competence	0.38	0.09	0.36	4.03	0.000	Significant
Self-determination	0.16	0.08	0.19	2.16	0.033	Significant
Impact	0.09	0.06	0.10	1.37	0.173	Not significant

Regression results showed that meaning, competence, and self-determination significantly influenced work engagement. Competence was the strongest predictor (Beta = 0.36, p = 0.000), followed by meaning (Beta = 0.31, p = 0.000) and self-determination (Beta = 0.19, p = 0.033). Impact was positive but not statistically significant when the other empowerment dimensions were included in the model (Beta = 0.10, p = 0.173). These findings indicate

that engagement is most strongly supported when personnel feel capable, see the personal and organizational value of their work, and experience discretion in how they perform their duties.

5. Conclusion

The study concludes that non-teaching personnel of the Department of Education, Schools Division Office of Surigao del Norte demonstrate very high psychological empowerment and very high work engagement. Meaning emerged as the strongest empowerment dimension, while dedication emerged as the strongest engagement dimension. Significant differences appeared only in selected profile-related comparisons, suggesting that empowerment and engagement are broadly experienced but may vary in relation to age, educational attainment, and years in service. The significant positive correlations between empowerment and engagement confirm that employees who perceive their work as meaningful, feel competent, experience autonomy, and believe that they contribute to organizational outcomes are more likely to demonstrate vigor, dedication, and absorption. Regression findings further show that competence, meaning, and self-determination are the most important empowerment predictors of work engagement. Overall, psychological empowerment is a critical organizational resource for sustaining the motivation and commitment of non-teaching personnel in the public education sector.

Page | 178

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings, the Schools Division Office may institutionalize an empowerment-focused improvement program for non-teaching personnel. The program should include capacity building and professional development to strengthen competence; participative governance and decision-making to improve self-determination; recognition and support systems to reinforce meaning and perceived impact; digital empowerment and innovation support to improve work efficiency; and wellness, values, ethics, and accountability mechanisms to sustain engagement. Supervisors may clarify roles, align tasks with Key Result Areas, recognize contributions from both permanent and job order personnel, and provide channels for workload consultation. Non-teaching personnel are encouraged to take ownership of their roles, participate in training, share best practices, exercise responsible judgment, and reflect on how their work contributes to division goals. Future researchers may extend this study to other Schools Division Offices, include qualitative interviews, compare permanent and job order personnel, and examine additional predictors such as leadership style, workload, organizational support, job satisfaction, and psychological well-being.

Declarations

Funding

This study received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Credit Authorship Contribution Statement

Berlyn B. Paglinawan conceptualized the study, collected and analyzed the data, interpreted the findings, and prepared the manuscript.

Ethical Statement

The study followed institutional and Department of Education ethical procedures. Participation was voluntary, informed consent was secured, confidentiality and anonymity were maintained, and data were reported only in aggregate form.



Declaration of Interests

The author declares no known competing financial or personal interests that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Data Availability

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the author upon reasonable request and subject to institutional privacy and ethics requirements.

AI Usage Disclosure

Artificial intelligence tools were used only for language refinement, formatting support, and manuscript preparation assistance. The author remains responsible for the accuracy, integrity, and final content of the manuscript.

References

- Afota, M., Robert, V., & Vandenberghe, C. (2025). Workaholism, work engagement, and affective commitment: Relationships to self-concept levels and work outcomes. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 15, Article 1434482. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1434482>
- Allan, B. A., Batz-Barbarich, C., Sterling, H. M., & Tay, L. (2019). Outcomes of meaningful work: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Management Studies*, 56(3), 500-528. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joms.12406>
- Bakker, A. B., & Demerouti, E. (2017). Job demands-resources theory: Taking stock and looking forward. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 22(3), 273-285. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ocp0000056>
- Blau, P. M. (1968). Social exchange. In D. L. Sills (Ed.), *International encyclopedia of the social sciences* (Vol. 7, pp. 452-457). Macmillan.
- Chompukum, P., & Vanichbuncha, T. (2025). Building a positive work environment: The role of psychological empowerment in engagement and intention to leave. *Behavioral Sciences*, 15(2), Article 131. <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs15020131>
- Conger, J. A., & Kanungo, R. N. (1988). The empowerment process: Integrating theory and practice. *Academy of Management Review*, 13(3), 471-482. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1988.4306983>
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 68-78. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.68>
- Echebiri, C. K., Amundsen, S., & Engen, M. (2020). Linking structural empowerment to employee-driven innovation: The mediating role of psychological empowerment. *Administrative Sciences*, 10(3), Article 42. <https://doi.org/10.3390/admsci10030042>
- Llorente-Alonso, M., Garcia-Ael, C., & Topa, G. (2024). A meta-analysis of psychological empowerment: Antecedents, organizational outcomes, and moderating variables. *Current Psychology*, 43, 1759-1784. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-023-04369-8>
- Mascarenhas, C., Galvao, A. R., & Marques, C. S. (2022). How perceived organizational support, identification with organization and work engagement influence job satisfaction: A gender-based perspective. *Administrative Sciences*, 12(2), Article 66. <https://doi.org/10.3390/admsci12020066>
- Mazzetti, G., Robledo, E., Vignoli, M., Topa, G., Guglielmi, D., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2023). Work engagement: A meta-analysis using the Job Demands-Resources model. *Psychological Reports*, 126(3), 1069-1107. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00332941211051988>
- Ochoa Pacheco, P., Coello-Montecel, D., & Tello, M. (2023). Psychological empowerment and job performance: Examining serial mediation effects of self-efficacy and affective commitment. *Administrative Sciences*, 13(3), Article 76. <https://doi.org/10.3390/admsci13030076>



Schaufeli, W. B., Salanova, M., Gonzalez-Roma, V., & Bakker, A. B. (2002). The measurement of engagement and burnout. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 3(1), 71-92. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1015630930326>

Spreitzer, G. M. (1995). Psychological empowerment in the workplace: Dimensions, measurement, and validation. *Academy of Management Journal*, 38(5), 1442-1465. <https://doi.org/10.5465/256865>

Topchyan, R., & Woehler, C. (2021). Do teacher status, gender, and years of teaching experience impact job satisfaction and work engagement? *Education and Urban Society*, 53(2), 119-145. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013124520926161>

Page | 180

