

The Mediating effect of Conflict Management styles of School Heads on the relationship between Ethical Climate and Organizational Commitment among Public Elementary Schools in region XI

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Abstract-*This study aimed to investigate the mediating effect of conflict management styles of school heads on the relationship between ethical climate and organizational commitment of teachers among 520 teachers in Davao Region, Philippines. This study employed non-experimental design utilizing descriptive correlation technique. The statistical tools used were mean, pearson-r and regression technique. Research instruments on conflict management styles, ethical climate and organizational commitment which were pilot tested and content validated were used as sources of data. Using pearson-r, the results revealed significant relationships between ethical climate, organizational commitment of teachers, and conflict management styles of school heads. Utilizing medgraphSobel z-test, the results of the study revealed partial mediating effect of conflict management styles of school heads on the relationship between ethical climate and organizational commitment of teachers. This implies that the mediating role played by conflict management styles of school heads partially assisted in clarifying the process that was responsible for the relationship between ethical climate and organizational commitment of teachers.*

Keywords: Educational Management; Mediating Effect; Conflict Management Styles of School Heads; Ethical Climate; Organizational Commitment; Philippines.

1. INTRODUCTION

The commitment level of the teachers in Turkey was perceived to be low which caused them to leave the school and impact their productivity. Teachers with low commitment hinder the working environment of the school and may deviate from the educational purpose of the school as well (Mentese et al., 2013)[23]. In the Philippines, it has been revealed that teachers have least degree of commitment (Tabuso, 2007)[34]. In addition, Aquino (2013)[4] averred that lower-level commitment of teachers creates a dilemma that could affect negatively the effectiveness of an educational organization and may cause teachers to be less efficient in their professional performance.

Teacher's organizational commitment is important for school effectiveness and indirectly is able to affect the students' outcome (Gempes, et al, 2012 & Hamid et al., 2013)[13][15]. Teachers' commitment to organization plays a key role in the formation of an integrated effort in the school organization. Ahmad et al. (2012)[1] espoused that school organization needs to build up the necessary efforts to encourage and enable the teachers to strive their strong commitment to the organization. This will enable the school organization to meet future challenges and at

the same time maintain teachers' attachment to the organization.

Relatively, there are factors that may influence the organizational commitment of teachers such as the ethical climate. In fact, there are alarming statistics regarding the amount of unethical behavior that occurs within organizations which in turn negatively affect the commitment of people within the organization (Ethics Resource Center, 2007 and Cullen et al 2003)[12][10]. Most studies have showed that the ethical climate of an organization is linked directly to a range of negative work behaviors including tardiness, absenteeism, and social loafing (Peterson, 2002)[29]. On the other hand, Lang (2009) [20]added that conflict management inside the organization has also a definite influence to organizational commitment. It has been pointed out that conflict management is something that leaders need to deal with since conflict significantly affects the commitment and morale of the employees.

It is on the above context that the researcher would like to determine the mediating influence of conflict management styles on the relationship between ethical climate and organizational commitment in school organizations. As such, concerned beneficiaries may find the study as a useful means in coming up with the possible solutions for related problems. Through

extensive readings of various literatures, the researchers found the significant relationships between the three variables (Alakavuklar&Cakar, 2012[3]; Ahmad &Marinah, 2013[2]; Boonsathorn, 2007[7]; Boucher, 2013[8]; Cullen et al., 2003[10]; Dobkin&Pace, 2006[11]; Hairunnisa et al., 2012[14]; Inon et al., 2003[16]; Komaraju et al., 2008[19];Ma et al., 2010; Nik&Sharmin, 2002; Onishi& Bliss, 2006[27]; Schwepker, 2011[31]; Shafer, 2009[33]; Tsui&Huang, 2008[36]; Vitell& Hidalgo, 2006[39]. However, most of these studies were conducted internationally and did not specifically examine the mediating influence of conflict management styles on the relationship between ethical climate and organizational commitment, which is the prime concern of this study, making this dissertation a contribution to the literature for local setting and a means for the generation of new knowledge.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Presented in this section are readings from the related literature, different books, journals, articles, and internet of different authors relevant to the present research work. The researcher made a review of various literature covering ethical climate, organizational commitment and conflict management styles focuses on the conflict management styles.

Effective ethical climate may increase the likelihood of organizational followers to behave ethically (Mayer et al., 2009; Toor&Ofori, 2009[35]; Zhu, 2006[41]. In fact, positive ethical climate within organization increases the commitment of its members (Cullen et al., 2003[10]; Hairunnisa et al., 2012[14]; Schwepker, 2011[31]; Shafer, 2009[33]; Tsui&Huang, 2008[36]; Vitell& Hidalgo, 2006[39]. Hence, various authors (Ireland &Hitt, 2005[17]; Neubert et al., 2009[25]; Sama&Shoaf, 2008[30] stated that leaders should significantly contribute to affecting the sustainability of an ethical work climate.

Ethical climate is a subcomponent of an organization's culture. Ethical climate is a component of the individual's environment as perceived by the members. Also, ethical climate is the psychological environment in which individual behavior takes place (Buchan, 2006[9]; Cullen et al., 2003; Shacklock, 2011)[32]. A view of how ethical climate and an organization's culture relate is important. Verbos et al. (2007)[38] suggested that positive ethical organizations emerge because of the presence of certain organizational element.

Employee organizational commitment directly influences employee work performance (Malhotra& Mukherjee, 2004[21]; Steyrer et al., 2008). Leaders, who encourage participative decision-making, treat employees with consideration, are fair, and care for others, foster higher organizational commitment among employees (Cullen, et al., 2003; Zhu et al., 2004). These characteristics are attributes of ethical leaders. Ethical leaders not only display moral traits such as honesty and integrity, but they

reinforce ethical behavior in the accepted practices and policies of their organizations. It is plausible that this constancy of behavior and positive environment found in ethical leadership is consistent with increased employee organizational commitment

Conflict handling styles have been analyzed by considering different organizational phenomena such as emotions, personality or even religions (Bell &Song 2005)[6].This authors accorded that there has been an increasing interest for deeper examination of the impact of culture on conflict handling styles. Conflict is a recurring decimal in all human relationships, be it in the family, institution or organization. The school, like any other modern institution is not without potential negative features, incompatible behaviors and conflicts which might be counter-productive and give rise to inefficiency, ineffectiveness or dysfunctional consequences in the achievement of goals and objectives. The school as a bureaucratic organization with division of labor, line of authority in terms of teacher-principal, subordinate-super ordinate relationships, rules and regulations, communication flow - upward, downward and horizontal is bound to have conflicts (Uchendu et al., 2013)[37].

3. METHOD

The quantitative, non-experimental design of research using correlational technique was used in this study. Correlational technique is a non-experimental design, where researcher examines the relationship between two or more variables in a natural setting without manipulation or control. In correlational studies, the researchers examine the strength of associations between variables by looking how change in one variable is correlated with change in the other variable (Patidar, 2013)[28].A mediation model was used in this study. Mediation model is one that seeks to identify and explicate the mechanism or process that underlies an observed relationship between an independent variable (ethical climate) and a dependent variable (organizational commitment) via the inclusion of a third explanatory variable, known as a mediator variable (conflict management styles). Rather than hypothesizing a direct causal relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable, a mediational model hypothesizes that the independent variable influences the mediator variable, which in turn influences the dependent variable. The study was conducted among selected City Central Public Elementary Schools in Region XI, Philippines particularly on six city divisions. This includes the Division of Davao City, Division of Digos City, Division of Mati City, Division of Panabo City, Division of Tagum City, and Island Garden City of Samal.

Shown in Figure 1 is the map of the Philippines highlighting the Davao Region. The archipelago of the Philippines consists of 7,107 islands. Its total land area is 300,000 square kilometers which is equivalent to 115,831 sq. mi. Philippines is divided into three groups of island

which are the Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. Mindanao is the second largest island in the Philippines. One of the regions in Mindanao is the Davao Region. Davao Region is located in the Southeastern portion of the island of Mindanao surrounding the Davao Gulf. It is bounded on the north by the provinces of Surigao del Sur, Agusan del Sur and Bukidnon.

In the east it is bounded by the Philippine Sea; and in the west by the Central Mindanao provinces. Within the broader geographic context, the Davao Region area faces Micronesia in the Southern Pacific Ocean to the east, and the Eastern Indonesia through the Celebes Sea to the south. It is composed of 5 provinces including Davao del Sur, Davao Occidental, Davao del Norte, Davao Oriental and Compostela Valley; 1 independent city which is the Davao City; 5 component cities including Digos City, Tagum City, Mati City, Panabo City and Island Garden

City of Samal; and 43 municipalities and divided into 1,160 barangays.

This study has a total of 520 teacher respondents. The total sample of 520 was the decision of the researchers to increase by 120 the 400 maximum sample of the Slovin's formula. The purpose of the researchers is to provide ample allowance for the number of respondents. The study was conducted from November to January, 2016 in the school year 2015-2016.

Regression was used in determining the initial mediating effect of conflict management styles of school heads on the relationship between ethical climate and organizational commitment among public elementary schools in Region XI. The three steps in mediation analysis using regression was patterned after Baron and Kenny (1986) [5]. After the initial mediation analysis, medragph of Jose (2003) [18] was applied for confirmation of the results of analysis.

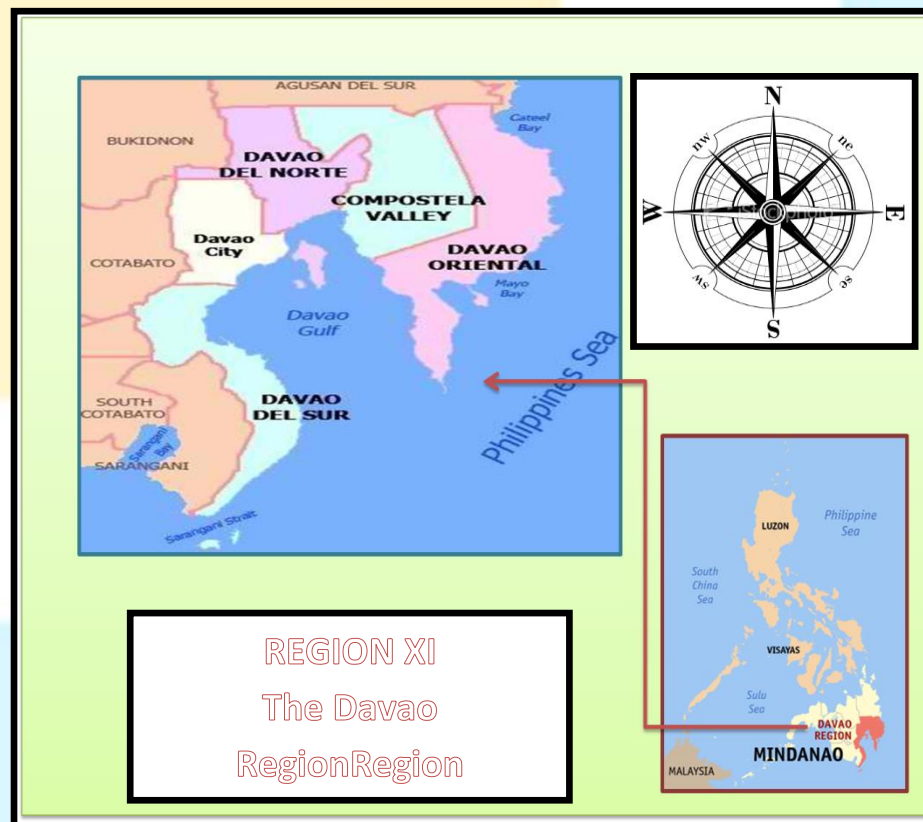


Figure 1. Map of Region XI

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Shown in Table 1 is the correlation between variables. The r -value of .812 with a p -value $< .001$ signified the rejection of the null hypothesis. It means that there is significant relationship between ethical climate and organizational commitment among public elementary school teachers. On the other hand, ethical climate and conflict management styles of school heads obtained r -value of .503 with a p -value $< .001$ null hypothesis was rejected. This means that there is significant relationship

between ethical climate and conflict management styles of school heads. Conflict management styles of school heads and organizational commitment of teachers obtained an r -value of .559 with a p -value .001 thus, null hypothesis was rejected which means there is significant relationship between conflict management styles of school heads and organizational commitment among public elementary school teachers.

Table 1: Correlation between Variables

Correlated Variables	r-value	p-value	Decision HO
Ethical Climate and Organizational Commitment	.812	.000	reject
Ethical Climate and Conflict Management Styles	.503	.000	reject
Conflict Management Style and Organizational Commitment	.559	.000	reject

In Table 2, the results of the regression analysis are evidently displayed. Mediation analysis developed by Baron and Kenny (1986) was used as the initial analysis for mediation. There are three steps to be met for a third variable to be acting as a mediator as presented in Table 2. These are categorized as Steps 1 to 3. Step 4 is the final stage. In step 1, ethical climate as the independent variable (IV) significantly predicts organizational commitment of teachers, which is the study's dependent variable (DV). In step 2, conflict management styles, the mediating variable (MV) predicts organizational commitment of teachers. In step 3, ethical climate significantly predicts the conflict management styles of school heads. Because the three steps (paths a, b and c) are significant, further mediation analysis through medgraph is warranted, involving the Sobel z test to assess the significance of the mediation effect. If the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable becomes non-significant at the final step of the analysis, full mediation will be achieved. It means all of the effects are mediated by the mediator variable. In addition, if the regression coefficient is substantially reduced at the final step but remain significant, only partial mediation is obtained, which implies that part of the independent variable (ethical climate) is mediated by the mediator (conflict management styles) but other parts are either direct or mediated by other variables that are not included in the model. The result of mediation analysis is presented in Figure 2. The sobel Z-value of 6.281728 yielded $p < .001$ hence, significant partial mediation occurred. The association between ethical climate and organizational commitment has been

significantly reduced by the inclusion of the mediating variable which is conflict management styles of school heads. It could be seen in the graph that .812 is reduced to .711 in the subsequent regression. The 95% confidence interval conclusively tells that the significant mediation has occurred. It yielded a small standard error (se).02089 obtained by subtracting the lower limit (.09026) from the upper limit (.17213) and dividing the difference with 3.92(constant). The small se measures, the precision of the estimate of the coefficient. The smaller the standard error, the more precise the estimate.

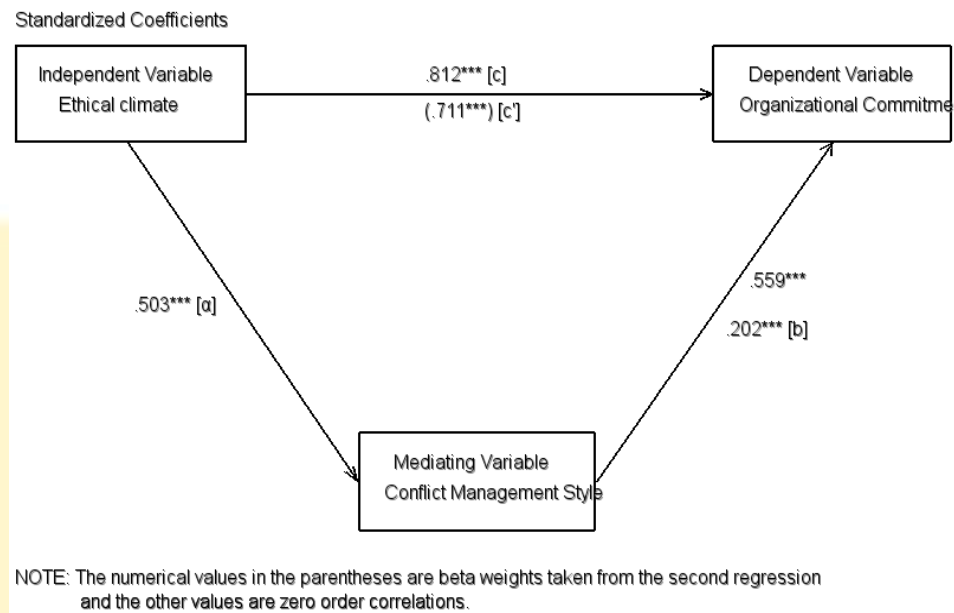
The effect size (.125) measures how much of the effect of ethical climate on organizational commitment can be attributed to the indirect path (IV to MV to DV). The total effect (.812) is the raw correlation between ethical climate (IV) and organizational commitment (DV). The direct effect (.102) is the size of correlation between ethical climate (IV) and organizational commitment (DV) with conflict management styles of school heads (MV) included in regression. The indirect effect is the amount of the original correlation between IV and DV that now goes through the mediator to the DV ($a*b$) where "a" refers to the path between IV and the MV and "b" refers to the path between the MV and the DV. The ratio index is computed by dividing the indirect effect by the total effect; in this case, 0.711 by 0.812 equals 0.125. It seems that about 12.50 percent of the total effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable goes through the mediator variable, and about 87.50 percent of the total effect is either direct or mediated by other variables not included in the model.

Table 2: Mediating Effect of Conflict Management Styles of School Heads on the Relationship between Ethical Climate and Organizational Commitment of Teachers

Independent Variable (IV) Ethical Climate	
Dependent Variable (DV) Organizational Commitment	
Mediating Variable (MV) Conflict Management Styles	
STEPS	
1. Path C (IV and DV)	
Organizational Commitment on Ethical Climate	
B (Unstandardized regression coefficient	1.049
e (Standard error)	.033
Significance	.000
2. Path B (MV and DV)	
Organizational Commitment on Conflict Management Styles	

B (Unstandardized regression coefficient)	.964
e (Standard Error)	.063
Significance	.000
3. Path A (IV and MV)	
Conflict Management Styles on Ethical Climate	
B (Unstandardized regression coefficient)	.377
e (Standard Error)	.028
Significance	.000
4. Combined Influence of MV and IV on DV	
Organizational Commitment Regressed on Conflict Management Styles and Ethical Climate	
Conflict Management Styles:	
B (Unstandardized regression coefficient)	.348
SE (Standard Error)	.049
Beta (Standardized regression coefficient)	.202
Part Correlation	.175
Ethical Climate:	
Beta (Standardized regression coefficient)	.711
Part Correlation	.614
Total R Square	.690

Results:		
Significance of Mediation		Significant
Sobel z-value	6.281728	$p = < 0.000001$
95% Symmetrical Confidence Interval		
Lower	.09026	
Upper	.17213	
Unstandardized Indirect Effect		
a*b	.13120	
Se	.02089	
Effect size Measures		
<u>Standardized Coefficients</u>		
Total:	.812	
Direct:	.711	
Indirect:	.102	
Indirect to Total Ratio:	.125	



*** significant $p < 0.001$

Figure 2. Medgraph Showing the Variables of the Study

5. CONCLUSION

The respondent public elementary school teachers perceived a very high ethical climate, so with conflict management styles of school heads and organizational commitment of teachers. The results of the study also confirm that there is a significant relationship between ethical climate and organizational commitment of teachers. In the same manner, there is a significant relationship between ethical climate and conflict management styles of school heads. A significant relationship also exists between conflict management styles of school heads and organizational commitment of teachers. Lastly, the results of the study also suggest that conflict management styles of school heads significantly but partially mediates the relationship between ethical climate and organizational commitment of teachers. This study particularly supports the proposition of Nair (2008) that conflict management plays a vital role in establishing an ethical climate in the organization which will in turn affect the level of commitment of its employees.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The significant relationship between conflict management styles of school heads and organizational commitment of teachers suggests that school administrators should take the responsibility in improving the knowledge base of teachers as to the strengths and weaknesses of the different conflict management styles. As such, as school heads they can work easily on the proper use of each style in accordance with the existing situation.

In addition, the study found a significant relationship between ethical climate and organizational commitment of teachers. The researcher therefore recommends that the Department of Education, especially it's working units in the regional, division, city and district levels as well as the public school administrators may look on the findings of the study as an imperative basis in initiating school-based activities that reorient the school heads as well as teachers on the value of exhibiting favorable ethical behaviors inside the school, considering the code of ethics, in order to maintain a favorable school organizational culture especially preserving high teachers' commitment.

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