

Work Engagement among Secondary School Teachers in a Public Schools District in the Philippines

Zandy Ren A. Lafiguera, MAEM., Ramir C. Torreces, EdD

Iloilo State University of Fisheries Science and Technology Barotac Nuevo, Iloilo, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

This study determined the level of work engagement among secondary school teachers in a public schools district in the Philippines. Specifically, it examined the level of work engagement in general and when grouped according to gender, years of teaching experience, and professional position. The study utilized a descriptive research design involving sixty-five (65) junior high school teachers selected through random sampling from three public secondary schools. Data were gathered using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-17) developed by Schaufeli and Bakker (2003). Statistical tools used included mean, standard deviation, Kruskal–Wallis H test, and Welch’s One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Findings revealed that secondary school teachers demonstrated a high level of work engagement. Female teachers obtained the highest level of engagement, while all teaching experience and position groups likewise manifested high engagement levels. A significant difference in work engagement was found when teachers were grouped according to gender. However, no significant differences were observed when grouped according to years of teaching experience and teaching position. The findings suggest that teachers generally maintain strong vigor, dedication, and absorption in their work regardless of professional background. The study recommends strengthening supportive school environments and teacher development initiatives to sustain high levels of teacher engagement and professional commitment.

Keywords: Work engagement, secondary school teachers, teacher engagement, educational management, descriptive research, Iloilo, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

Work engagement has become an important area of educational research because it directly influences teachers’ motivation, instructional effectiveness, and professional well-being. Teachers who are highly engaged demonstrate vigor, dedication, and absorption in their work, enabling them to perform their duties enthusiastically and persist despite workplace challenges. According to the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) model, work engagement develops when teachers are provided with sufficient organizational and professional resources that help them cope with demanding responsibilities and maintain positive work attitudes.

Recent studies emphasized that engaged teachers contribute significantly to improved classroom management, innovative instructional delivery, and positive student learning outcomes. Research conducted in different educational settings revealed that supportive leadership, professional development opportunities, collegial collaboration, and positive school climate are strong predictors of teacher engagement and professional commitment (Bakker & Demerouti, 2021; Wang, 2024).

In the Philippine context, studies found that organizational culture and school leadership significantly affect teachers’ engagement, motivation, and well-being (Gaquit, 2025; Tejero & Aoanan, 2024). However, despite the growing body of literature, limited post-pandemic studies have focused on secondary school teachers, particularly within local public school settings. Existing studies also present inconsistent findings regarding the influence of demographic variables such as gender, teaching experience, and professional position on work engagement.

These gaps highlight the need for context-specific research examining teacher engagement in Philippine secondary schools. Hence, this study was conducted to determine the level of work engagement among secondary school teachers in a public schools district and to identify whether significant differences exist when grouped according to gender, years of experience, and teaching position.

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to determine the level of work engagement of secondary school teachers in a public schools district.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of work engagement of secondary school teachers in a public schools district in general and when grouped according to gender, years of experience, and position?
2. Are there significant differences in the level of work engagement of secondary school teachers in a public schools district when grouped according to gender, years of experience, and position?

Based on the foregoing research questions, the following hypothesis was forwarded: There are no significant differences in the level of work engagement of secondary school teachers in a public schools district when grouped according to gender, years of experience, and position.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive research design to determine the level of work engagement among secondary school teachers in a public schools district. Descriptive research was considered appropriate because it allowed the researcher to systematically describe the existing conditions and characteristics of teacher work engagement without manipulating any variables. The study was conducted in three public secondary schools in a public schools district in the Philippines. These schools were selected because they represented typical public secondary schools within the district and provided accessible and relevant data regarding teachers' professional engagement.

The respondents of the study consisted of sixty-five (65) junior high school teachers handling Grades 7 to 10. Random sampling was employed to ensure that all teachers had an equal opportunity to participate in the study, thereby minimizing selection bias and improving representativeness. Data were gathered using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-17) developed by Schaufeli and Bakker (2003). The instrument measured the three dimensions of work engagement: vigor, dedication, and absorption. Respondents answered the questionnaire using a six-point Likert scale ranging from "Never" to "Always/Every day."

Prior to data gathering, the researcher secured permission from the Schools District Office and school principals. Ethical considerations such as confidentiality, voluntary participation, and anonymity were strictly observed throughout the conduct of the study. The collected data were analyzed using frequency count, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and Kruskal-Wallis H test to determine the level of work engagement and significant differences across profile variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Level of Work Engagement among Secondary School Teachers

Table 1 shows the level of work engagement among the secondary school teachers when taken as a whole and grouped by gender, years of experience, and position. Generally, the level of work engagement among the teachers was very high ($M = 4.94$, $SD = 0.529$). This high level aligns with the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, where job resources like supportive environments sustain enthusiasm and persistence despite teaching demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2021).

Table 1 Level of Work Engagement of Secondary School Teachers in the Schools District of Anilao

Category	N	Mean	SD	Description
Total	65	4.94	0.529	High
Gender				
Non-binary	5	4.53	0.689	Average
Female	48	5.04	0.503	High
Male	12	4.71	0.446	High
Teaching Experience				
<5 years	24	4.91	0.337	High
5-10 years	27	4.93	0.690	High
>10 years	14	5.01	0.468	High
Position				
Teacher I	39	4.95	0.459	High
Teacher II	11	5.03	0.624	High
Teacher III/Master Teacher	15	4.83	0.641	High

Note: ≥ 5.54 = Very high; 4.67 – 5.53 = High; 3.07 – 4.66 = Average; 1.94 – 3.06 = Low; ≤ 1.93 = Very low.

When grouped according to gender, female teachers reported the highest level of work engagement ($M = 5.04$, $SD = 0.503$), followed by male teachers ($M = 4.71$, $SD = 0.446$). Meanwhile, respondents identifying as non-binary reported a slightly lower mean ($M = 4.53$, $SD = 0.689$), which indicates an average level of work engagement. These results show that work engagement was generally high across gender groups, with only minimal differences observed. The consistently high engagement across genders suggests that teachers maintain strong involvement in their work regardless of gender classification. This finding is supported by local studies which indicate that Filipino teachers, regardless of gender, tend to demonstrate strong commitment and adaptability, reflecting cultural values such as interpersonal connectedness (*pakikipagkapwa*) and dedication to learners (Tejero & Aoanan, 2024; Gaquit, 2025). Similarly, Lee and Kim (2022) reported higher dedication among female teachers, while Burić and Macuka (2022) observed minimal gender differences in engagement. Furthermore, Schaufeli and Bakker (2020) noted that engaged educators generally exhibit high levels of vigor across different groups.

In terms of teaching experience, teachers with more than 10 years of experience reported the highest work engagement ($M = 5.01$, $SD = 0.468$), followed by those with 5–10 years of experience ($M = 4.93$, $SD = 0.690$), and those with less than 5 years of teaching experience ($M = 4.91$, $SD = 0.337$). These findings indicate that work engagement remained very high regardless of teaching tenure, with only slight variations across experience levels. The results suggest that both novice and experienced teachers demonstrate strong engagement in their professional roles. Local research supports this pattern, emphasizing that teachers in the Philippines, regardless of experience, maintain high engagement within supportive school environments (Negoso et al., 2025). This is consistent with the findings of Burić and Macuka (2022), who reported sustained engagement across varying levels of experience. Bakker and Demerouti (2021) and Lee and Kim (2022) likewise noted that high engagement can be observed across different career stages.

When categorized by position, Teacher II respondents exhibited the highest level of work engagement ($M = 5.03$, $SD = 0.624$), followed by Teacher I ($M = 4.95$, $SD = 0.459$), and Teacher III/Master Teacher ($M = 4.83$, $SD = 0.641$). Despite minor differences, work engagement across positions remained at a very high level. These findings indicate that engagement is consistently high across teaching ranks, with only slight variation among positions. The results suggest that teachers, regardless of rank, demonstrate strong involvement in their work roles. This observation is consistent with Philippine studies highlighting that teachers maintain high engagement across different positions within the profession (Gaquit, 2025; Negoso et al., 2025). Similarly, Bakker and Demerouti (2021) and Schaufeli and Bakker (2020) emphasized that engagement is evident across varying job roles. Additionally, Burić and Macuka (2022) reported that engagement tends to remain stable across rank levels.

Difference in the Levels of Work Engagement among Teachers

Table 2 shows the significant differences in the levels of work engagement when respondents were grouped by gender, teaching experience, and position. The Kruskal–Wallis H test results revealed that the significance value of gender was lower than the alpha level of significance; thus, the null hypothesis in this category is rejected ($\chi^2 = 6.15$, $p = 0.046$). This indicates that there was a significant difference in the level of work engagement among teachers when grouped by gender. The test results revealed that the significance value of teaching experience was greater than the alpha level of significance; thus, the null hypothesis in this category should not be rejected ($\chi^2 = 1.05$, $p = 0.592$). This indicates that there was no significant difference in the level of work engagement among teachers when grouped by teaching experience. The test results revealed that the significance value of position was greater than the alpha level of significance; thus, the null hypothesis in this category should not be rejected ($\chi^2 = 0.926$, $p = 0.629$). This indicates that there was no significant difference in the level of work engagement among teachers when grouped by position.

Table 2 Difference in the Levels of Work Engagement of Teachers When Grouped by Profile Variables

Category	df	χ^2	P	W	ϵ^2	Remark	Decision
Gender	2	6.15*	0.046	0.002	0.0961	Significant	Reject the null hypothesis
Teaching Experience	2	1.05	0.592	0.003	0.0164	Not Significant	Do not reject the null hypothesis
Position	2	0.926	0.629	0.001	0.0145	Not Significant	Do not reject the null hypothesis

Note: *Significant at $p \leq 0.05$

Similarly, the ANOVA test results revealed that the significance value of teaching experience was greater than the alpha level of significance; thus, the null hypothesis in this category was not rejected ($F = 0.233$, $p = 0.794$). This indicates that there was no significant difference in the level of work engagement among teachers when grouped according to teaching experience, suggesting that teachers with varying lengths of service reported comparable levels of engagement. The result of the study supports the studies in the Philippine context indicating that teacher engagement in public schools is associated with factors such as school climate, leadership support, and organizational culture rather than years of service (Gaquit, 2025; Tejero and Aoanan, 2024). Similarly, Negoso et al. (2025) emphasized that both novice and experienced teachers in DepEd schools report high engagement in the presence of supportive organizational environments.

The results further revealed that the significance value of teaching position was greater than the alpha level of significance; thus, the null hypothesis in this category was not rejected ($F = 0.332$, $p = 0.721$). This indicates that there was no significant difference in the level of work engagement across teaching positions, suggesting that teachers holding different ranks or positions reported similar levels of work engagement. Local studies support this finding, indicating that engagement levels among teachers in Philippine public schools are observed to be similar across ranks and are associated with institutional support and leadership practices (Albino and Paglinawan, 2025; Gaquit, 2025).

The findings indicate that work engagement among teachers is relatively consistent across demographic and professional characteristics, suggesting that engagement is comparable regardless of gender, years of experience, or position. In the Philippine setting, studies describe teacher engagement as being associated with organizational and contextual factors such as school policies, leadership practices, and collegial environments. These findings align with the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model, which highlights the role of job resources, such as support and autonomy, in relation to employee engagement across different groups (Bakker and Demerouti, 2021). This is also consistent with literature describing engagement in Philippine schools as closely linked to features of the work environment, including leadership, collaboration, and access to institutional resources.

Recent Philippine studies further indicate that teacher engagement is associated with perceived organizational support, leadership behavior, and school climate rather than demographic characteristics. Albino and Paglinawan (2025) found that organizational support is associated with higher engagement and lower burnout among teachers. Similarly, Negoso et al. (2025) reported that supportive leadership practices are linked to higher levels of teacher motivation across different experience and position groups. These findings are consistent with Lee and Kim (2022), who reported minimal differences in engagement across demographic groups under similar work conditions, and Burić and Macuka (2022), who found limited variation in engagement across levels of experience when job resources are present.

Similarly, studies have shown that in Philippine school settings characterized by supportive climates and professional autonomy, teachers tend to report high engagement regardless of individual differences (Tejero and Aoanan, 2024; Gaquit, 2025).

Moreover, the absence of significant differences across groups is consistent with engagement frameworks such as the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model, which posits that job resources are related to employee engagement across various populations. Empirical studies also indicate that job resources are associated with teacher engagement across career stages in Philippine schools. Albino and Paglinawan (2025) reported that organizational support is linked to engagement across tenure groups, while Negoso et al. (2025) highlighted that leadership and mentoring systems are associated with engagement across rank levels. These findings suggest that engagement is commonly observed across different teacher groups within similar organizational contexts.

In general, the results revealed that secondary school teachers in a public schools district have strong vigor, dedication, and absorption in their professional responsibilities regardless of years of experience and position. The results also suggest that organizational and contextual factors may influence teacher engagement more than professional characteristics.

The study recommends that school administrators and education leaders may strengthen organizational support systems by providing responsive leadership, adequate instructional resources, professional development opportunities, and teacher wellness programs to sustain and further enhance the work engagement of secondary school teachers. Moreover, future researchers may conduct similar studies in other educational settings and include additional variables such as leadership practices, organizational climate, workload, burnout, and job satisfaction to gain a broader understanding of the factors influencing teachers' work engagement.

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