Enhanced Social- Emotional Learning (Esel): An Intervention to Mitigate Work-Related Stress among Teachers

Jose C. Agoylo Jr *
Southern Leyte State University-Tomas Oppus Campus, Philippines
Email: Jose Agoylo Jr.

Federico P. Oclarit Jr
Pinut-an National High School, Southern Leyte Philippines, Philippines
Email: federicooclaritjr@gmail.comCharlene

Charlene Gay M. Alfaro
San Juan National High School, Southern Leyte Philippines, Philippines
Email: charlenegay.alfaro@deped.gov.phJustin

Justin T. Pimentel
Pintuyan National Vocational High School, Southern Leyte Philippines, Philippines
Email: justin.pimentel061@deped.gov.ph
*Corresponding Author

Abstract

An enhancement of social-emotional learning (SEL) is a process where teachers acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships among teachers and make responsible decisions, in order to cope and bridge the gap on teachers' management to work-related stress. The study used mix method where described quantitative able to get the weighted mean of the 30 teachers about their work-related stress however the qualitative able to explain the ESEL to the teachers using content analysis. The results of the study revealed that,70% of teachers agreed that they have experienced work-related stress stated on the results and were grounded into 2 major themes, (a) ESEL promotes a less discriminating and inclusive environment for students, and (b) ESEL contributes in achieving the goals of the teacher to be productive and have a meaningful teaching-learning experience. This study found out that teachers with high social and emotional competence (SEC) are effective manager of stress and have a more positive affect, greater principal support, higher job satisfaction and a sense of personal accomplishment.
Keywords: ESEL, Negative Emotions, Work-Related Stress. SEL

Introduction

Teachers play a significant role in shaping the lives of children. In addition to facilitating learning, teachers are key catalyst of socialization, helping students reach their maximum potential and develop into a responsible and productive citizen. However, over the past years, teaching has become increasingly stressful.

The 21st century has been marked as a "century of stress" due to the prevalence of stress reactions, a psychological phenomenon exacerbated by various factors including high demands, work pressure, and interpersonal conflicts (Shukla, 2020; Kusuma, 2018). Addressing physiological and psychological responses to stress is more challenging and costly than mitigating environmental stressors (Cohen et al., 2019). The teaching profession, in particular, faces significant stress due to relationship-based job demands, poor relationships with parents and students, the expanding use of ICT, and evolving teaching roles (Farmer, 2020; Othman & Sivasubramaniam, 2019). Teachers, despite their high-stress jobs, earn less than similarly educated professionals, contributing to growing concerns over occupational stress and its link to job attrition (Steiner & Woo, 2021; Haydon & Stevens, 2018). Environments where teachers feel respected and involved in decision-making can enhance their well-being (Kaynac Elcan, 2020). Urban school teachers face additional challenges, such as limited resources and high demands, leading to higher rates of stress and burnout, yet there is limited research on these issues and their impact on effective classroom practices (Bottiani et al., 2019). Stress is generally characterized as an unpleasant emotional experience triggered by environmental factors, associated with emotions such as tension, anger, and anxiety (Ouellette, 2018).

Teacher stress is linked to teaching performance and student academic outcomes. High stress levels are causing teachers to leave their profession, which causes instability among staff, students and the community. In response, the Department of Education is hiring newer teachers with less experience, resulting in lower student achievement and significant training costs for our nation's school systems. Studies revealed that teachers with high social-emotional competence (SEC) are effective manager of stress and found to have a better emotion regulation. Moreover, it is the desire of the researchers to come up with an innovative means of addressing the work-related stress among teachers through the utilization of enhanced social-emotional learning (ESEL) as an intervention and thus, improve teacher well-being and performance. This study aims to examine the possible effects and outcome of the utilization of enhanced social and emotional learning (ESEL) as an intervention to mitigate work-related stress, thus improve the teachers' well-being and performance in Pintuyan National Vocational High School. The primary objective is to make an effective intervention to mitigate work-related stress and improve teaching performance among teachers.

Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the question:
1. What are the level of work-related stress of among teachers?

2. Can enhance social-emotional learning (ESEL) mitigate the work-related stress among teachers?

3. Does enhance social-emotional learning (ESEL) improve the teaching performance and student outcome among teachers

Research Methodology

Research Methods

This study used a mixed method design specifically the content analysis method since it looks into the processes based on analyzing the effectiveness of enhanced social-emotional learning (ESEL) as an intervention to mitigate work-related stress among teachers. This utilized the survey method to gather data from the Junior and Senior High School teachers of Pintuyan National Vocational High School. This study used two research instruments, an observational checklist, and an interview guide, to measure and establish the consistency of the results.

Respondents

The respondents of this research were 30 teachers from Junior and Senior High Schools at Pintuyan National Vocational High School. The research environment focused inside the school's premises of Pintuyan National Vocational High School, Pintuyan, Southern Leyte.

Data Gathering Methods

The researchers adopted standardized tools for evaluation while crafting researcher-made instruments. Using research instruments such as checklist and unstructured interview guide questions to gather the data. The researchers conducted an orientation to the respondents about the benefits of ESEL as an intervention to address work-related stress such as its preventive measures and management program. After the orientation, the researchers let the respondents answer the research instrument, and some respondents were asked to answer the unstructured interview question about ESEL as an intervention to mitigate their work-related stress researchers found out that most of their responses were grounded into two major themes.

Data Analysis

After the data was gathered, it was tabulated and used described quantitative to get the weighted mean to determine the distribution of levels of work-related stress among teachers. Aside from that, the researchers employed an activity in line with ESEL to determine which types of ESEL interventions that would fit to their coping mechanism, teaching styles and strategies in their school setting. After determining the interventions, majority of the respondents established the types of ESEL interventions fit to their social and emotional context in school. Using content analysis, the researchers gathered the common themes based on the responses from the selected respondents in their unstructured interviews.

Results and Discussion

Table 1. Distribution of Levels of Work-Related Stress among Teachers

Work-Related Stress	Mean	Interpretation
1. Work Resources.	4.32	Very High
2. Job Demands	4.17	High
3. School Organizations	4.20	High
4. School Head and Teachers' social and emotional competence	3.40	Moderate
5. Inequity in education access is increased	3.36	Moderate
6. Disruptive relationships between schools and communities	3.38	Moderate

Legend: 1-1.80 - Very Low; 1.81-2.60 – Low; 2.61-3.40 – Moderate; 3.41- 4.20 – High; 4.21 – 5.00 - Very High

The table above contains statements about teachers' work-related stress. Descriptive analysis showed that of the 30 teachers who qualified as respondents in the Pintuyan National Vocational High School, more than 70% agreed that they have experienced all these statements as work-related stress.

Results showed that majority of the respondents significantly agreed that work resources was the topmost stressor in work-related stress and the implication to this was that the inaccessibility and malpractice of work resources limit the teacher's sense of autonomy and capacity in decision-making power. This was also relative in the case of school organization as the second most contributory stressor to teachers, as it explicitly implied that significantly most of the respondents undergo stress if there were lack of strong principal leadership and the absence of a healthy school climate and a collegial supportive environment. Conversely, it was generally agreed that improving the teacher's ability to cope with stress can be a valuable complementary strategy as part of the wider, collective and organizational process of combating work-related stress.

Table 2. Summary of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Intervention

Source	Types of Intervention	Targeted Student Outcomes	Program Duration
Dilmaç, Kulaksizo0lu, & Ek3i (2007	Human Values Program	Proactive: Development of responsibility, friendship/ amiability, pacifism, respect, honesty, and tolerance	7 weeks, 14 sessions
Demir & Kaya (2008)	Structured group guidance to improve friendship skills	Pro-active: Attitudes toward self and others, related to social acceptance	8 weeks, 40 min sessions
Duran & Eldeleklio0lu (2008)	Cognitive-behavioral therapy	Pro-active: Positive social behavior through anger management	10 sessions, 90 min sessions
Avcı, Yüksel, Soyer, and Balıkçıo0lu (2009)	Differentiated instruction in the classroom	Pro-active: Observable affective change regarding new or strengthened friendships	3 periods, 40 min. periods
Karata3 & Gökçakan (2009)	Cognitive-behavioral group therapy; psychodrama	Reactive: Conduct problems with respect to aggression	Cog-bhvr group: 10 sessions; Psycho-drama group: 14 sessions, 90-120 min

Source	Types of Intervention	Targeted Student Outcomes	Program Duration
	techniques		
Bulut Serin & Genç (2011)	Cognitive-behavioral group therapy	Re-active: Conduct problems related to anger management	10 weeks, no other info given
Karatas (2011)	Psychodrama intervention	Pro-active: a) Social-emotional skills; b) conduct problems	10 weekly sessions, 90-120 min sessions
Öz & Aysan (2011)	Cognitive-behavioral therapy	Pro-active: a) state-trait anger expression; b) coping c) communication skills	12 weeks, 90-min sessions

Results of this study claimed that based on the self-esteem enhancing program, it had significant positive effect on teacher's self-esteem. An in-class intervention by a teacher focused on the use of differentiated instruction by means of a "station strategy" and "interest centers". Although the period of investigation covered only three 40-minute class periods, the data collected for qualitative analysis was extensive.

According to the 22 teachers' opinions, differentiated instruction showed "positive influence on student learning"; this strategy also "led to the development of new friendship relationships and increased existing relationships among students" along with skills for giving and receiving help when needed. Analysis also includes a summary of problems encountered by teachers and suggestions for addressing each problem. Although the nature of this case study

does not allow for conclusive findings about the impact of this approach to differentiated instruction on SEL, still it provides an example of how case study can be used for examining the process of an in-class intervention. Among the suggested types of intervention, majority of the respondents significantly agreed that cognitive-behavioral group therapy and psychodrama techniques interventions explicitly offer positive impacts on managing their work-related stress.

There have been more cognitive-behavioral therapy programs reported for the support of anger management than other more uniquely designed programs; however, it appears that program developers as well as researchers are beginning to show interest in a handful of other SEL-related topics for supporting teacher's work-related stress. Of course, school-based interventions are not the only answer to supporting teachers' social and emotional learning. Other solutions include improved teacher training and in-service programs that give teachers a chance to more fully consider the SEL of their students, as well as programs to support students' physical and social development beyond schools. Research into pivotal elements of SEL school-based programs is just one step on a path to supporting young teachers to develop resilience in facing the social and emotional challenges that come with learning and working together in the modern era.

Based on the semi-structured interview question, the results were grounded into 2 major themes, (a) ESEL promotes a less discriminating and inclusive environment for students, and (b) ESEL contributes in achieving the goals of the teacher to be productive and have a meaningful teaching-learning experience. The following themes are represented with sample significant statements taken from the selected participants.

ESEL Promotes a Less Discriminating and Inclusive Environment

The respondents significantly stressed that ESEL provided them an avenue to cater to the diversified needs of their students where they could feel like they were welcomed and part of the group. Students may feel that they belong in the group and offer a common goal united as one. They collaboratively worked as one team and were goal-oriented in achieving it. ESEL offered them a welcoming atmosphere and inclusive mentality to students, minimized competition, and allowed them to promote cooperative learning among them.

ESEL Contributes to Achieving Goals of the Teacher to be Productive

The respondents significantly emphasized that ESEL effectively helped them become an effective manager of stress as they implied that they shifted from being aggressive in dealing with the discipline problems of the student which could greatly give them stress, into a more open minded and emotionally balanced in addressing their individual needs and differences. Teachers have become more aware of their mental health and awareness of work-related stress as they effectively manage their social and emotional well-being.

Conclusions

Based on the results, the researchers found that ESEL intervention significantly mitigate the work-related stress among teachers. As the teachers integrated the types of ESEL intervention that would fit to their teaching styles and strategies, thus made them more effective in dealing with the multifaceted roles in managing their social and emotional aspects towards students. Moreover, on the levels of the work-related stress, work resources found to be at the topmost contributor of stress and this can be effectively managed by cognitive-behavioral therapy programs based on the responses from the respondents. Thus, teachers may also adapt an intervention to fit their own circumstances and goals. In educational perspectives, teachers have several options for interventions that help them develop these competencies through classroom curriculum, changing the learning environment, engaging family and community members, and providing opportunities to learn and practice competencies outside the classroom and in out-of-schooltime contexts. The researchers found that most studies reported positive impacts on social and emotional competencies rather than on other outcomes, such as academic achievement. Emphasis of SEL interventions on helping teachers improve these competencies in dealing with their work-related stress. Of the two broad categories of social and emotional competencies we considered, interpersonal competencies (e.g., hostile attribution biases, prosocial behaviors, interpersonal communication, and social problem-solving skills) were more likely to be positively affected than intrapersonal competencies (e.g., attention, concentration, emotional regulation, and perseverance).

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion, it is recommended to:

1 Conduct trainings and seminars to teachers on the benefits of the social-emotional learning program as intervention to address work-related stress

2 Develop preventive measures that will improve the coping mechanisms both the students and teachers

3 Incorporate budget allocation on ESEL program like in the INSET with the parents and other stakeholders in the SIP, and;

4 Conduct research on the integration of mental health and psychosocial activities in all subjects

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