

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POLITICAL SKILLS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE ORIENTATION OF THE TEACHERS

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Abstract

The primary aim of the study was to assess the relationship between political skills and social justice orientation. This study made use of the descriptive-correlational method of research which utilized standardized questionnaires as primary data gathering technique. The respondents of the study involved 182 secondary teachers in the Schools Division Office of the City of Malolos during the school year 2022-2023. The results were processed using the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS), and the data were presented using appropriate tables and texts. The results were analyzed and interpreted using statistical tests such as weighted mean procedures on determining the level of political skills and social justice orientation, and Pearson R correlation analysis to determine the relationship between political skills and social justice orientation. The level of political skills got a skillful rating as evidenced by 3.09 overall mean percentage score. The level of teachers' social justice orientation got an oriented rating as evidenced by 3.23 overall mean percentage score. There is significant relationship between the political skills of the teachers and their social justice orientation. A proposed development program was proposed based on the findings of the study especially for networking ability and efficacy for political skills and for social justice orientation, respectively. Findings mean that teachers who possess strong political skills are more likely to actively support and work towards social justice goals. These individuals are equipped with the knowledge, abilities, and strategies necessary to navigate political systems, advocate for change, and influence policies in favor of social justice.

Keywords: Political Skills, Social Justice, Teachers, School.

Introduction

Teachers nowadays are recognizing the importance of intersectionality in addressing social justice issues. They understand that different forms of oppression are often interconnected, and they teach students to consider this when examining societal problems. It reflects a growing emphasis on equipping teachers with the skills and knowledge necessary to foster social justice in the classroom, engage in political activism, and create inclusive learning environments that prepare students to be active, informed, and empathetic citizens in an increasingly complex world.

Thomas and Madison (2020) argued that social justice should be included in evaluation education as a fundamental value in evaluation practice. A social justice orientation will provide students with a perspective that will enable them to challenge existing evaluation hegemonic ontological, epistemological, theoretical, and methodological practices that diminish groups at the margins of society and normalize injustice. Authors suggested four major areas where educators can intersect social justice and evaluation in classroom and field experiences. These include intersecting social justice with evaluation (a) theoretical knowledge, (b) methodological knowledge, (c) interpersonal knowledge, and (d) professionalism. Further, we maintain that a social justice orientation can be evident in pedagogical approaches and the professors' articulation of students' expected learning outcomes. Selected readings and various activities are provided that educators can utilize to integrate social justice, evaluation theory, and methodology in graduate training in an effort to produce a more critical evaluator.

Moreover, political skill is important because it is associated with an array of job attitudes, stress indicators, and orientations. More specifically, political skill is moderately associated with job satisfaction, organizational commitment, burnout, task performance, organizational citizenship orientations, and overall career success (Chen et al., 2021; Munyon et al., 2019; Summers et al., 2020). Though most of the research has not been conducive to thoroughly testing the question, there is some evidence that some of these connections are more pronounced in jobs with more social demands (Bing et al., 2021; Chen et al., 2021), which suggests greater potential utility in child welfare roles, from

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frontline staff through upper management.

Political skill has been considered to consist of four dimensions: social astuteness; interpersonal influence; networking ability; and apparent sincerity (Ferris et al., 2019). Social astuteness is the ability to accurately understand social interactions and interpret one's own orientation as well as that of others, and to be keenly attuned to diverse social situations. Interpersonal influence means the ability to exert a powerful influence on others in a subtle and convincing manner, and to appropriately adapt and calibrate one's own orientation to each situation to elicit particular responses from others. Networking ability is the capability to develop and use diverse networks of people to secure assets that are valuable and necessary for personal and organizational success. Finally, apparent sincerity means the ability to appear to others as possessing high levels of integrity, authenticity, sincerity and genuineness (Ferris et al. 2020).

In secondary public schools in the Schools Division of City of Malolos, teachers are expected to possess competencies that are aligned with the Philippine Professional Standard for Teachers or the PPST as indicated in their Individual Performance Commitment Form or IPCRF. Based on the consolidated Self-Assessment Tool of the teachers conducted in the school year 2022-2023, it was found out that they are challenged in terms of the following priority for development: managing classroom structure to engage learners, individually, or in groups, in meaningful exploration, discovery, and hands-on activities within a range of physical learning environments and management learner behavior constructively by applying positive and non-violent discipline to ensure learning-focused environments. This means to say that teachers' political skills are really intended to engage with learners in terms of managing the classroom and in addressing the individual thirst of the learners to learn and discover new things. They need to be politically uprights so that they can be able to give justice on their profession and in relating themselves with their learners.

The main objective of this study is to determine the relationship between political skills and social justice orientation of public secondary school teachers in the Schools Division of City of Malolos during the school year 2022-2023.

The study hopes to assist the school policy makers to formulate relevant programs, projects and activities for the teachers in improving their political skills and social justice orientation which would ultimately help them not just as a person but a teacher to their students.

Theoretical Framework

This study is primarily anchored on Campbell's (2021) theory of social justice orientation which states that sociology prepares the way for social justice, and in that sense, the two are intimately connected. Sociology is the science of social life, so the idea of sociology was that the old ways of thinking about the social world were inadequate. Humans had already begun to gaze upon parts of the physical world in a new way, using observation and logic to identify patterns such as the rotations of planets and the speed of falling objects. Sociologists claimed that the social world was another part of observable reality and that we could study it similarly. And if the social world could be understood like the natural world, it could be manipulated. The natural sciences provided new insights about reality, and in doing so, they enabled new technologies. Technologies manipulate the world toward human ends - faster travel, faster communication, deadlier weapons, etc.—and if the natural sciences could make new wonders possible, surely the social sciences could as well. Sociology offers the promise of social technology to enable people to live happier lives, to have more peaceful relationships, and to distribute resources more fairly. It raises the hope of social justice.

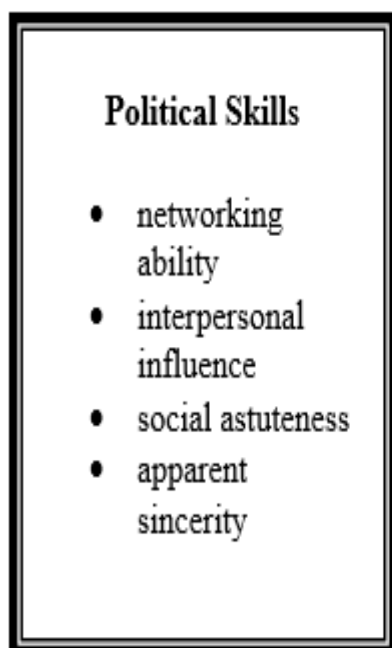
This means to say that social justice and sociology are intimately connected is that those who pursue social justice need sociology to help them pursue their goals. If individuals are going to reorganize society to reduce violence, say, or inequality, they need to know the conditions that lead to peace and violence, or equality and inequality. Just as they would not try building and flying an airplane without first knowing something about physics. Social justice activists need sociology to guide them toward policies that will have the effects they intend, to ensure their attempts to reorganize society do not make things worse.

In a classroom context, teachers need to be politically upright in order to obtain peace and harmony among students. They cannot do this by mere instruction but by way of modeling. A teacher needs to demonstrate social justice through fairness among co-workers, school administrators, parents, and even with the learners.

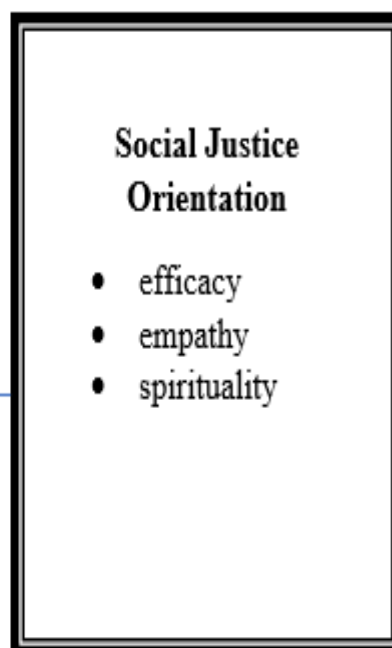
Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 presents the conceptual model which was used in evaluating the relationship between political skills and social justice orientation of the teachers. The independent variable of this study which is political skills were assessed in terms of networking ability, interpersonal influence, social astuteness, and apparent sincerity. Meanwhile, the dependent variable which is social justice orientation was assessed in terms of efficacy, empathy, and spirituality. The solid line indicates the assumed relationship between the two variables.

Independent Variable



Dependent Variable



Statement of the Problem

The general problem of the study was to determine the relationship between political skills and social justice orientation of the teachers. Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions:

1. How may the level of political skills of teachers be described in terms of:
 - 1.1. networking ability;
 - 1.2. interpersonal influence;
 - 1.3. social astuteness; and,
 - 1.4. apparent sincerity?
2. How may the social justice orientation of the teachers be described in terms of:
 - 2.1. efficacy;
 - 2.2. empathy; and,
 - 2.3. spirituality?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the political skills and social justice orientation of the teachers?
4. What professional development program can be proposed based on the findings of the study?

Scope and Delimitation

The range of the study was to determine the relationship between political skills and social justice orientation of the teachers. The political skills were assessed in terms of networking ability, interpersonal influence, social astuteness, and apparent sincerity. Meanwhile, the social justice orientation was assessed in terms of efficacy, empathy, and spirituality.

The respondents of the study involved 182 secondary teachers in the Schools Division Office of the City of Malolos during the school year 2022-2023. The data were processed and analyzed using mean procedures, and Pearson R correlation analysis.

Methodology

Research Design

This study used descriptive-correlational method of research since this method is concerned with the description of the independent and dependent variables. According to Ferreira et al. (2020), a correlational research design comprises collecting data to determine whether, and to what extent, a relationship exists between two or more variables. The researcher was primarily interested in describing relationships among variables, without seeking to establish a causal connection. This is the appropriate methodology for this study because it aims to create a snapshot of the current state of affairs whereas correlational research helps in comparing two or more entities or variables. Specifically, this study aimed to know if political skills and social justice orientation have significant relationship or none.

Participants/Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study involved 182 secondary teachers in the Schools Division Office of the City of Malolos during the school year 2022-2023.

Secondary Schools in the Schools Division of City of Malolos	Teachers	
	Population	Sample
School A	51	13
School B	450	13
School C	13	13
School D	39	13
School E	31	13
School F	28	13
School G	47	13
School H	16	13
School I	9	9
School J	21	13
School K	14	13
School L	33	13
School M	13	13
School N	84	13
Total	843	182

Table 1: Respondents of the Study

Instrument/s of the Study

To gather the necessary data for this study, the researcher used the following questionnaires:

Political Skills Inventory. This questionnaire is developed and validated by Ferris et al. (2005) which aimed to describe the level of political skills among teachers. This is a 4-point Likert scale comprised of 18 items which is divided into 4 parameters such as networking ability, interpersonal influence, social astuteness, and apparent sincerity. The respondents answered the statements by choosing from 1-4 where 4 is strongly agree, 3 is agree, 2 is disagree, and 1 is strongly disagree. This instrument is reliable and valid as shown by .89 cronbach alpha.

Social Justice Orientation Questionnaire. Meanwhile, this questionnaire was developed and validated by Taylor (2009) which aimed to describe the social justice orientation among teachers. This is a 4-point Likert scale comprised of 23 items which is divided into 3 parameters such as efficacy, empathy, and spirituality. Just the like first questionnaire, the respondents answered the statements by choosing from 1-4 where 4 is strongly agree, 3 is agree, 2 is disagree, and 1 is strongly disagree. This instrument is reliable and valid as shown by .78 cronbach alpha.

Data Collection and Analysis

The mode of the gathering was survey method. In gathering the data, the researcher observed the following procedures:

The researcher got the approval of the Review Ethics Committee of the La Consolacion University Philippines after the revision of the paper and the approval from the panel members. After REC clearance, a letter was sent to the Schools Division Superintendent of the Schools Division Office of the

City of Malolos, and to the school heads to ask permission to conduct the study. With their approval, the researcher prepared the google forms to link indicating the consent form on the first part of the survey and then distribute them to the respondents through the school heads.

Ethical Considerations

Following the Data Privacy Act of 2012, the researcher made sure that ethical standards set by generic research ethics were followed. In so doing, the participants were informed about all the steps that were taken in this thesis. The respondents are more important than the study, and therefore always respected. They were informed that the study is completely voluntary and would bring no harm in their lives as teachers and as persons, even their families, in any way. Hence, confidentiality was provided, as the respondents' personal information was not sought by anyone. Lastly, the data collection material was kept and destroyed upon completion of the study.

Result and Discussion

The primary aim of the study was to assess the relationship between political skills and social justice orientation.

This study made use of the descriptive-correlational method of research which utilized standardized questionnaires as primary data gathering technique. The respondents of the study involved 182 secondary teachers in the Schools Division Office of the City of Malolos during the school year 2022-2023.

The following null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 significance level with 0.95 confidence level:

No significant relationship exists between political skills and social justice orientation.

The results were processed using the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS), and the data were presented using appropriate tables and texts. The results were analyzed and interpreted using statistical tests such as weighted mean procedures on determining the level of political skills and social justice orientation, and pearson r - correlation analysis to determine the relationship between

political skills and social justice orientation. Having said that, the results of the study may be summarized as follows:

Summary of Results

Problem 1: How may the level of political skills of the teachers be described?

The level of political skills got a skillful rating as evidenced by 3.09 overall mean percentage score.

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. Networking Ability	2.78	Skillful
2. Interpersonal Influence	3.04	Skillful
3. Social Aptitude	3.05	Skillful
4. Apparent Sincerity	3.50	Skillful
Weighted mean	3.09	Skillful

Table 2: Mean and Interpretation of Problem 1

Problem 2: What is the level of teachers' social justice orientation?

The level of teachers' social justice orientation got an oriented rating as evidenced by 3.23 overall mean percentage score.

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. Efficacy	3.06	Skillful
2. Empathy	3.17	Skillful
3. Spirituality	3.46	Skillful
Weighted mean	3.23	Skillful

Table 3: Mean and Interpretation of Problem 2

Problem 3: Does school learning action cell exert significant effects on teachers' self-efficacy?

There is significant relationship between the political skills of the teachers and their social justice orientation.

Problem 4: What professional development program can be proposed based on the findings of the study?

A proposed development program was proposed based on the findings of the study especially for networking ability and efficacy for political skills and for social justice orientation, respectively.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. The political skills of the teachers got a high level of assessments. The highest level of assessment was noted on apparent sincerity. This indicates that teachers demonstrate a genuine care, empathy, and authenticity in their

interactions with students, colleagues, and parents. It encompasses the ability to convey a sincere interest in the well-being, growth, and success of students, rather than simply going through the motions or appearing superficially engaged.

2. Social justice orientation also got a high level of assessment especially in terms of spirituality. Findings indicate the integration of teachers' spiritual beliefs, values, and practices with their commitment to social justice. It recognizes the potential for spiritual perspectives to inform and inspire teachers' actions towards creating a more just and equitable society.
3. Political skills have significant relationship with social justice orientation. Findings mean that teachers who possess strong political skills are more likely to actively support and work towards social justice goals. These individuals are equipped with the knowledge, abilities, and strategies necessary to navigate political systems, advocate for change, and influence policies in favor of social justice.

A proposed professional development plan was crafted about networking ability and efficacy.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are hereby offered:

1. The indicator which got the lowest score under political skills was the networking ability. It was recommended that the school administrators should provide inter-school seminar or team building activities that would help connect teachers in the district or in the division.
2. The indicator which got the lowest score under social justice orientation was the efficacy. It was suggested that the school administrators should provide technical assistance to teachers through seminar workshop on social responsibility and service to the community.
3. Social justice issues often require collaboration and coalition building among diverse groups and stakeholders. Political skills play a crucial role in bringing together different individuals and organizations who share a common interest in social justice. Teachers are challenged to form and sustain coalitions, negotiate shared goals, and build consensus which is the key to achieving meaningful and sustainable change.
4. A closer attention should be given for the proposed professional development of teachers by including these findings on the Annual Implementation Plan for the school administrators in the Schools Division of City of Malolos for the school year 2023-2024.
5. This study affirms Thomas and Madison (2020) argument that social justice should be included in evaluation education as a fundamental value in evaluation practice. A social justice orientation will provide students with a perspective that will enable them to challenge existing evaluation hegemonic ontological, epistemological, theoretical, and methodological practices that diminish groups at the margins of society and normalize injustice.
6. Future researchers may focus on the effects of networking ability on efficacy.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest by the author in this manuscript.

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