English teacher empowerment: The contribution of professionalism and work ethic in a non-formal education

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Abstract

Since empowerment significantly contributes to the development of organizations and individuals, including schools and teachers, the issues of empowerment have drawn a lot of attention from all different types of organizations. Thus, the study set out to investigate the effects of professionalism and teacher empowerment on the work ethic of those who teach in non-formal education. This survey's cross-sectional study methodology was used, and the respondents were non-formal teachers who were employed as permanent English teachers in English language institutions. In this study, a causal survey method and a path analysis technique were both employed. The study indicated that professionalism and empowerment both considerably affect work ethics, and professionalism greatly affects empowerment. It also showed how professionalism has a substantial indirect impact on empowerment in terms of work ethic.

Keywords

INTRODUCTION

In education sector, the study of teacher empowerment has been researched in different contexts among intellectuals and practitioners. For example, the study of measured empowerment amongst science and mathematics teachers (Rangel et al., 2020), the effect of empowerment on teacher commitment and team participation to the school organization (Dee et al., 2003), the participatory action research project of teacher empowerment in developing a curricular management system (Erawan, 2008), the organizational antecedents of teacher empowerment, which show the importance of leadership for fostering empowerment (Kang et al., 2021), and the relationship between teacher empowerment, job satisfaction and organizational climate, which shows positive significance (Jiang et al., 2019). In addition, teacher empowerment has given positive contributions with a variety of work related outcomes for teachers, including teaching quality and innovation, job satisfaction, school climate, teacher leadership, professional commitment, organizational commitment, all of which may have an impact on classroom improvement and school efficacy (e.g. Bogler & Somech, 2004; Ghani, Nik Azida Abd Hussin & Jusoff, 2009; A. N. Lee & Nie, 2014; J. C.-K. Lee, Yin, Zhang, & Jin, 2011; Muijs & Harris, 2003; Short & Rinehart, 1993; Wan, 2005; Zembylas & Papanastasiou,

2005). On the other word, the study of empowerment, which has been conducted for decades in any sectors, takes an essential factor both for the management and the individual progress.

In any attempts, teachers are crucial to enhance education (Frymier, 1987). As change agents (Brown, 1994), teachers also play a central role and a key component to educational transformation and school improvement (Hargreaves, Andy & Fullan, 1992) and serve as role models in society (Whitbeck, 2000). Rosenholtz (1991) pointed out that the culture of a school changes considerably when experienced teachers cease acting in isolation and begin cooperatively tackling challenges connected to students' learning. In any endeavour to improve schools, consideration must be given to the role of decision-making and improved chances for meaningful, collective engagement in crucial areas of activity within the organization that focus on organizational goals (Short et al., 1994). The empowerment of school staff, particularly teachers in this study creates a positive work environment, in which teacher empowerment plays a profound contribution to the school quality and learning quality. In the perspective of Short, Greer and Melvin (1994), a favourable work environment created by school participants who can originate and carry out new ideas, leads to enhanced learning opportunities for students.

Despite the positive correlation of some mentioned variables to empowerment, not many studies attempted to investigate the contribution of professionalism and work ethic, which becomes the focus on this study, particularly for English teachers in non-formal education setting. The contribution of English teachers in non-formal education (NFW) has not been a concern compared to formal education given that they also make a major contribution to the quality of student learning and the education system as a whole. NFE is described as any organized, systematic educational activity carried out outside the formal system to provide specific learning formats to certain population categories, including adults and children (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974; Ihejirika, 2000). In addition to, or as a substitute for, formal education, NFE is defined as education that is structured, intentional, and organized by an educational provider as a part of a person's lifetime learning process. Short courses, workshops, and seminars are typically used to deliver it, and it can be short-term or low-intensity (UNESCO, 2012). Vermaak (1985) also emphasized NFE programs in underdeveloped nations should act as a national service connected to an integrated development strategy. It is also possible to teach knowledge and skills outside of the traditional educational system, which serves as the primary objective of education and is anticipated to be employed productively in society (Asiyai, 2018).

In Indonesia, the research conducted in non-formal education setting revealed that empowerment affects teachers' job performance significantly (Wijayanti et al., 2020). In terms of teacher professionalism, teacher empowerment today encompasses a wide range of concepts, including teacher participation in school governance, new respect for teachers and improved working conditions, higher salaries and new professional structures, teacher control of the profession, increased teacher autonomy, and professionalism (Maeroff, 1988). Some other scholars also noted that real empowerment includes elevating teachers as competent professionals in addition to involvement in decision-making (Clift et al., 1992; Fang et al., 2004; Kasten et al., 1989), which also encompasses teachers on an individual level, schools on an organizational level, and system-level activities such as teacher learning networks among schools (Erawan, 2008).

Work ethic is a vital component of education that serves as a fundamental driving force not only for the growth of individuals but also for the development of a nation (Lumpkin, 2008). It is assumable that the good image of educational institutions cannot be separated from the work ethic of the teacher, which will produce quality teachers. If teachers are empowered and adopt a professional demeanour that is supported by the educational institution, their work ethic will develop. With empowerment being an essential issue in improving schools, class improvement and individual progress, related other variables need to take into consideration as well. Thus, to examine the contribution of empowerment to professionalism and work ethic in non-formal educational setting, we posed the following questions: 1) To what extent does empowerment contribute to professionalism?; 2) To what extent does empowerment contribute to teachers' work ethic? ; and 3) To what extent does professionalism contribute to teachers' work ethic?

METHOD
Research design
A causal survey method was used in conjunction with path analysis technique in this quantitative investigation. The study is made up of three variables: empowerment as one exogenous variable, and professionalism and teacher work ethic as two endogenous variables. For empowerment variable, professionalism is an endogenous variable, but for teacher work ethic variable, professionalism is an exogenous variable. Thus, this study was to investigate the contribution of empowerment and professionalism to teachers' work ethic. Because of the time constraint, the study was conducted in a cross-sectional manner, with data collected at a single moment in time, and then extended across a number of days. The use of a cross-sectional survey design is supported by the fact that we should use a single temporal observation that includes all of the study's proximate and ultimate variables. Teachers at English language institution in the Jakarta, Tangerang and Depok area were given questionnaires to gauge their perceptions of the researched variables, and the data acquired was processed as an individual data source.

Participants
This study used probability sampling, which is a simple random sampling method. Each person has an equal probability of being chosen in this form of sampling. The advantage of this sampling method is that it is more likely to yield a representative sample while reducing sample error and bias (Creswell, 2012). Because time and finance are limited for this study, this strategy is more suited to undertake while yet retaining a high participation rate. The participants are all English teachers who work in one of the most well-known English language institutions, which has several branches in the district of Jakarta, Tangerang and Depok. There are fourteen English language institution branches, which employ 140 teachers comprising permanent teachers, non-permanent teachers, and assistant teachers. Total of 140 questionnaires were distributed in all branches, and 35 questionnaires were returned because we focused only on permanent teachers who have been working for at least five years. Before distributing the questionnaire, we did pilot test for 30 participants to test validity and reliability of the instrument.

Table 1. Cronbach's alpha for study variable

Variable	Cronbach's alpha	Number of items
Work ethic	0.896	27
Empowerment	0.965	30
Professionalism	0.911	24

Instruments

The data needed to answer the study questions was gathered through a survey questionnaire. The researchers created a questionnaire that included a cover letter and brief instructions on how to fill out each section. The questionnaire had 81 items and was organized into two sections. The researchers prepared section one of the questionnaires, which pertain to general information and demographic data. Participants were requested to provide information regarding to age, gender, years of teaching experience, years of teaching at the present school, types of employment and highest degree attained. The second session is the questionnaire of the research variables. To measure the researched variables, the researchers developed the instruments based on several literatures. The constructs of work ethic (27 items) include responsibility, discipline, hard work, desire to work, and pride in work. The constructs of empowerment (30 items) include clarity of purpose, morale, fairness, appreciation, teamwork, participation, communication, and healthy work environment. The constructs of professionalism (24 items) include change agent, professional code of conduct, social function, and particular knowledge. The participants responded to the items along a five-point Likert scale of frequency level that is "never" = 1, "rarely" = 2, "sometimes" = 3, "often" = 4 "always" = 5 (Vagias, 2006).

Data analysis

Data were analyzed descriptively and inferentially. Descriptive analysis consists of presenting the data with a histogram, calculating the mean, median, mode, standard deviation and theoretical range of each variable. For inferential analysis, we conducted hypothesis test with path analysis. Previously, it is necessary to test the requirements of data analysis, namely the normality test, and linear regression. The computer programs of SPSS and LISREL were used to analyze this study, which includes testing data of normality, linearity, correlation coefficient and path coefficient.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results
Contribution of empowerment to professionalism

From the analysis, it was found that the path coefficient (P_{21}) was 0.622. Meanwhile, the t arithmetic coefficient was 4.562. To state that H_0 is rejected and H_1 is accepted, the coefficient of t is compared with the t table. Because t value is greater than t table, namely $4.562 > 2.031$, then H_0 is rejected and H_1 is accepted, which means that there is a positive and significant contribution of empowerment to teacher professionalism. Based on the results of this analysis, it is concluded that there is a positive and significant contribution of empowerment to teacher professionalism. This implies that the teacher's professionalism will increase in direct proportion to the level of empowerment given to them.

Empowerment contribution to teacher work ethic

From the analysis, it was found that the path coefficient (P_{31}) was 0.486. While the t $_{value}$ coefficient obtained is 3.304. To state that H_0 is rejected and H_1 is accepted, the coefficient of t is compared with the t table. Because t is greater than t table, which is $3.304 > 2.031$, then H_0 is rejected and H_1 is accepted, which means that there is a positive and significant contribution to empowerment to the work ethic of teachers. Based on the analysis' findings, it is determined that empowerment has a significant impact on teachers' work ethic. This implies that a teacher's work ethic will improve in direct proportion to the degree of their empowerment.

Contribution of professionalism to teacher work ethic

From the analysis, the path coefficient (P_{32}) is 0.344. While the t $_{value}$ coefficient is 2.339. To state that H_0 is rejected and H_1 is accepted, the coefficient of t is compared with the t table. Because t is greater than t table, namely $2.339 > 2.031$, then H_0 is rejected and H_1 is accepted, which means that there is a positive and significant contribution of professionalism to the work ethic of teachers. The analysis' findings support the conclusion that professionalism makes a good and significant impact to teachers' work ethics. This implies that a teacher's work ethic will increase in line with their level of professionalism.
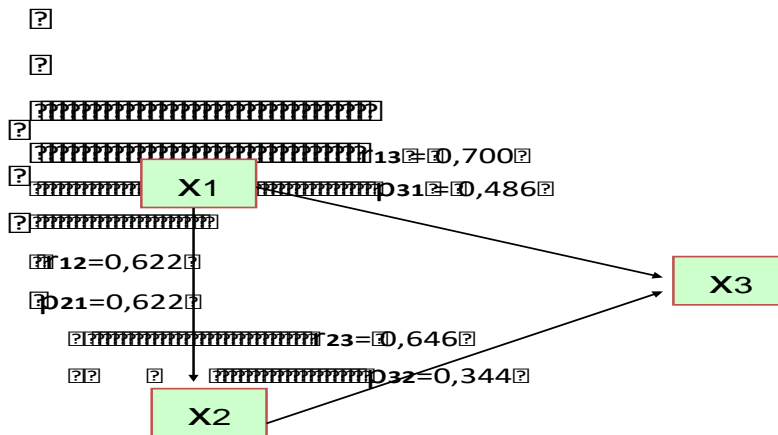
Indirect contribution of empowerment to teacher work ethic through professionalism

From the analysis, it can be concluded that the amount of indirect contribution of empowerment to the work ethic of teachers through professionalism is 0.075 with t $_{value}$ of 2.081. The results of this calculation mean that there is a significant indirect contribution of empowerment to the work ethic of teachers through professionalism. The estimated coefficient of direct contribution of 0.075 is obtained through multiplying the coefficient of direct estimation of empowerment towards professionalism (intervening variable) and the coefficient of direct estimation of professionalism on teacher work ethic, namely $0.417 \times 0.180 = 0.075$ (Coefficient of 0.417). Meanwhile, the total contribution of empowerment to the work ethic of teachers is obtained by a coefficient of 0.246. This coefficient is obtained from the sum of the estimated coefficient of the direct contribution of empowerment to the work ethic of the teacher and the coefficient of the indirect contribution of empowerment to the work ethic of teachers through professionalism, namely $0.171 + 0.075 = 0.246$ with t $_{value}$ of 5.628 (coefficient of Total Effects of X on Y).

Testing Results of the Path Coefficient Model

Based on the results of hypothesis testing, it was found that empowerment contributes to professionalism, namely $P_{21} = 0.622$ and $r_{12} = 0.622$. Empowerment contributes to the work ethic of the teacher, namely $P_{31} = 0.486$ and $r_{13} = 0.700$. Professionalism contributes to work ethic, namely, $P_{31} = 0.344$ and $r_{23} = 0.646$. From the results of the analysis it is stated that everything is significant which means that: 1) There is a positive and significant direct contribution to empowerment towards professionalism, 2) There is a positive and significant direct contribution to empowerment to the work ethic of teachers, and 3) There is a positive and significant direct contribution.

professionalism towards the work ethic of the teacher. From these results, the final model of the causal relationship in this study can be described as follows:

Figure 1 Test Result of Path Diagram Model

Based on the final model of the path diagram above, model testing is carried out, which is as follows:

r 12 = P21 = 0,622 (fit)
r 13 = P31 + P32 r 12 = 0,486 + (0,344 x 0,622)
$\qquad$ = 0,486 + 0,214 = 0,700 (fit)
r 23 = P31r12 + P32 = (0,486 x 0,622) + 0,344
$\qquad$ = 0,302 + 0,344 = 0,646 (fit)

Discussion

$\qquad$ A number of researchers have indicated the contribution of NFE on human development. The study shows that it is proven that NFE expands human and national development in terms of poverty reduction and skill development (Kedrayate, 2012; Ololube & Egbezor, 2012). In the words of Ukwuaba (2015), NFE is critical for the economic, social, political, and technical development of human capital. In addition, the study reported that both formal and non-formal education support the conservation of students' cultural identities (Bogossian-Porto & Bogossian, 2021). On the other words, NFE has a considerable role in fostering and developing people's skills and competence. Thus, investigating the professionalism, empowerment and work ethic of the teachers in non-formal education setting is of great importance. In line with this current research, prior study reported that empowering teachers to improve their professionalism is the most effective strategy (Sweetland & Hoy, 2000). Empowerment possibly will facilitate

teacher leadership, professionalism, work life quality, and create a greater feeling of conviction in one's own competence (Bolin, 1989; Katzenmayer & Moller, 2001). The findings of a panel survey of all North Carolina public-school teachers reveal that responsive leadership is critical for creating empowerment, but that other organizational variables, such as prior performance, organizational type, structure, size, also play a major role in empowerment (Kang et al., 2021). The study reported that highest correlation was found between perceived empowerment and professionalism; teachers who are empowered perceived a higher level degree of professionalism (Pearson & Moomaw, 2005). They also added that many educational reformers take into account the fact that teacher empowerment, which is another panacea is essential in school restructuring and for optimum teacher development (Pearson & Moomaw, 2005). Teacher empowerment also appears to be interrelated to a variety of positive teacher and school outcomes, comprising teachers' organizational and professional commitment (Dee et al., 2003; A. N. Lee & Nie, 2014; Somech, 2005), in which one indicator of professionalism is also commitment. Based on comparative studies of teachers, nurses and social workers in United State of America it was suggested that to empower teachers to be full professionals, deliberate attentiveness to their professional development is required (Bair, 2016).

As one of the most significant stakeholders in the education system, it is also critical for teachers to own and promote the highest standards of work ethic and to serve as a role model for their students and society (Turk & Vignjević, 2016; Whitbeck, 2000). Henceforth, teachers' work ethic and moral values become one of the most significant aspects in the educational process, pedagogical profession and school atmosphere (Turk & Vignjević, 2016). The influence of family, influential colleagues, peers, and place of work develop one's work ethic during his/her early years (H. Park & Hill, 2016). Work ethic is also considered to be a component of culture, which is essentially a process of facing and responding to challenges faced by people that is developed through a long cultural process that shapes a personality (Asy'arie, 1997). Hence, the occupational work ethic of teachers should be examined through a culturally appropriate perspective (Turk & Vignjević, 2016). The ideas of professionalism rely on individual's personal driving force and approach to work ethic (Martinez et al., 2010). The studies have demonstrated that desirable teachers have their teaching philosophy, a strong sense of pride and duty for their calling and desirable personality traits. In addition to master relevant content knowledge, love and respect their students, provide good counselling for students, they are also very responsible and adaptable to changes, have professionalism, and exhibit a strong work ethic (Chi, 2011; Y. S. Lee & Kim, 2008).

CONCLUSION

The study intended to investigate the contribution of empowerment to professionalism on work ethics of English teachers who work as permanent teachers in one of English institutions. It was found that 1) empowerment contributes significantly on work ethic and professionalism; 2) professionalism contributes significantly to work ethic; and 3) there was a significant indirect contribution of empowerment to the work ethic of teachers through professionalism. On the other word, all the hypotheses are proven based on this statistical analysis.

Although the results can be extrapolated based on the quantitative approach paradigm, there are significant population constraints in this study. Additionally, since this study only considers permanent teachers, the findings would probably vary if applied to all teachers of the institution. It is suggested that the further study will employ different methodological consideration such as a mixed method approach to explore more deeply about the research topic and bigger population.

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