



DOES TENURE INFLUENCE TEACHING PERFORMANCE?

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Received in February 2023 • Revised in October 2023 • Accepted in November 2023 • Published in May 2024

ABSTRACT - This study was conducted to determine whether tenure influences the teaching performance of selected tenured faculty members of a state university unit in Pampanga. According to the paired-samples t-test, the difference in the mean semesterly Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) scores before and after tenure was not significant. This result suggests that tenure does not influence teaching performance as measured by the mean semesterly SET scores. This is because tenure and job security are safety needs which once gained, will no longer motivate faculty members. They are also considered as hygiene factors which only keep faculty members from being dissatisfied with their teaching job. To keep faculty members motivated, they ought to have motivators, particularly recognition and promotion to higher ranks. The result is additionally explained by the fact that the SET is currently being used in the state university unit in Pampanga only as a stick, whereas in the other constituent units of the university system, it is also used as a carrot. The study recommends: (1) recognizing superior teaching performance through the awarding of certificates of recognition; (2) recognizing success in publishing articles in peer-reviewed or refereed journals through congratulatory messages on bulletin boards, in websites, and in social media accounts; and (3) lightening the workload of faculty members appointed to administrative positions to enable them to pursue a doctoral degree, conduct research, and perform extension activities.

Keywords: tenure, teaching performance, safety needs, hygiene factors, motivators

To cite this paper: De Leon, P. C. (2024). Does Tenure Influence Teaching Performance? Journal of Management and Development Studies Volume 10 Issue 2, 1-9.

INTRODUCTION

Tenure, which most dictionaries define as an employment status given to teachers after a probationary period that protects them from unjust dismissal, has recently become a contentious issue. Its effect on teaching performance has caught the attention of scholars both in the Philippines and abroad. On the one hand, the job security that tenure brings may motivate a

faculty member to perform well. On the other hand, the same job security that tenure gives may make the faculty member complacent.

In the Philippines, regular employees have security of tenure. Their employers cannot dismiss them unless the cause is justifiable or authorized (Bureau of Labor Relations, n.d.). Security of tenure, therefore, is considered as one of the 10 basic rights of employees (Official Gazette, n.d.).

The influence of tenure on the performance of teachers remains even after the related literature is reviewed. For instance, Reyes (2002), found a significant positive increase in the performance of teachers before and after the grant of tenure. Furthermore, Jones (2015) had observed K-12 teachers exhibiting increased activity during the tenure evaluation year but returned to their baseline activity after evaluation.

Phytanza & Burhaein (2020), meanwhile, found that tenure, motivation, and the possession of teaching certificates influence significantly the performance of teachers in Indonesia. Their finding implies the necessity of supporting the performance of teachers through the grant of tenure, enrollment in teaching certificate courses, and the giving of ample motivation. However, they recognize the need to study the following factors that might influence the performance of teachers: (1) educational levels; (2) welfare of teachers; (3) leadership; (4) competence; (5) work environment or climate; and (5) compensation.

Ortiz (2017), however, found the faculty members of the University of the Philippines Diliman exhibiting lower measured teaching quality if they were on tenure. This latter finding of Ortiz holds for all subjects and semesters, regardless of the length of the faculty members' experience in teaching, the length of their tenure, their personal characteristics, the characteristics of their classes, and the aggregate level characteristics of their students.

Cheng (2015), meanwhile, found that the performance of the University of California San Diego faculty members as rated by students was not influenced significantly by tenure. Similarly, Phillips (2009), and Goldhaber and Walch (2016) found no significant relationship between a teacher's tenure status and classroom performance.

The interacting factors that affect teacher tenure, however, had long been identified by Catedral (1964). These are (1) the teacher himself/herself including his/her personality, education and training, mental capacity, social intelligence, or the ability to get along with people, attitude, world outlook, and efficiency, (2) the employer, (3) the school, (4) the community, (5) the government, and (6) the cultural milieu.

In a related study, Perpiñan (1964) identified the following as the chief sources of teacher tenure problems in private schools: (1) short-term contracts; (2) comparatively low salaries; (3) absence of attractive privileges; (4) financial instability of private schools; and (5) unreasonable exactions imposed by some private schools on teachers.

The existence of the above-mentioned problems prompted De Veyra (1964) to suggest making private schools financially secure. Financial security was seen as a prerequisite to the provision

of economic, emotional, and social security to teachers. One of the ways of making private schools financially secure is the solicitation of endowments from individuals, firms, and foundations instead of depending on tuition fee collection alone.

In public schools such as state universities and colleges, some of the teacher tenure problems identified by Perpiñan (1964) may be nonexistent because of the unique characteristics of the bureaucracy or the public sector. In the public sector, employees have a tendency to resist change because they are so used to their work routines and coworkers (Cohen & Brand, 1993). In addition, they enjoy the stability and protection of civil service laws (Koehler & Pankowski, 1996).

In the current Philippine context, however, there are other factors that need to be considered. Sarabia and Collantes (2020), for instance, found that gender and position positively affect the teaching performance of selected elementary and secondary school teachers in Angeles City. On the other hand, they found job demand and seminars as negatively affecting the performance of these teachers. Faculty members on all campuses of the Pangasinan State University, meanwhile, were considered by their students as good teachers for their ability to teach good subjects or topics and explain them in a simple manner (Patacsil, Cenas, Roaring, Parrone, & Garcia, 2022). Finally, performance of teachers in Cavite was found highly satisfactory, as assessed by their students, because of their careful choice of pedagogical approaches, particularly, constructivism (Ereje & Ambag, 2020).

When investigating tenure's influence on the performance of teachers, two content theories of motivation may be used as theoretical frameworks: (1) Maslow's hierarchy of needs; and (2) Herzberg, Mausner, and Syderman's two factor theory.

According to Maslow (1943 as cited in Hanson, 1991, and Shafritz & Hyde, 1997), human motivation can be broken into five categories of needs. The two lowest categories are physiological and safety. In the middle are the social needs, while esteem and self-actualization occupy the top. Included in the safety category is job security. It is emphasized that once a need is satisfied, it will no longer serve as a motivator of behavior.

On the other hand, Herzberg, Mausner, and Syderman (1959 as cited in Hanson, 1991), argued that there are two kinds of factors that affect workers, namely, hygiene factors and motivators. Hygiene factors are factors that are not a part of the essential nature of the job. Policies implemented by the company or the institution, supervision of officials, relationship between employees and officials, working condition or environment, compensation or salary, relationship between coworkers, status or position, and security are examples of hygiene factors. In other words, hygiene factors are factors that avoid unpleasantness or reduce job dissatisfaction. Motivators, on the other hand, are factors that are a part of the essential nature of the job. Examples are the employees' achievements, their recognition or awards for a job well done, responsibilities assigned to them, and advancement or promotion to higher ranks. They are the factors that increase or improve job satisfaction (Herzberg, Mausner, & Syderman, 1959 as cited in Alshmemri, Shahwan-Akl, & Maude, 2017). It is clear from Herzberg, Mausner, and Syderman's categorization that tenure status and the security it offers are only hygiene factors and not

motivators. Their presence or availability will only keep faculty members from being dissatisfied. To motivate them, they must have, among other things, a sense of achievement, recognition, advancement, and growth.

This study was conducted to determine whether tenure influences the teaching performance of selected tenured faculty members of a state university unit in Pampanga as indicated by their mean semesterly Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) scores before and after obtaining a tenured status. The SET consists of 15 items with equal weights. For each item, 1.0 is the lowest possible score, while 5.0 is the highest. The format of the responses is in accordance to the observed frequency of particular teaching behaviors of the faculty members and lecturers. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the adjectival equivalents of the possible SET scores are the following: 1.0 – very high effectiveness of teaching; 2.0 – high effectiveness of teaching; 3.0 – average effectiveness of teaching; 4.0 – low effectiveness of teaching; and 5.0 very low effectiveness of teaching. During the COVID-19 pandemic, however, the rating scale was revised or reversed with 1.0 now having the meaning of very low effectiveness of teaching and 5.0 as having the very high effectiveness of teaching (Office for the Advancement of Teaching, n.d.). The null hypothesis of the study assumed no significant difference in the mean semesterly SET scores of selected tenured faculty members before and after obtaining a tenured status.

METHODOLOGY

This study used primarily a quantitative research approach and a survey research design. Faculty members of a state university unit in Pampanga who obtained tenure within the 2013-2020 period were collectively used as the study's unit of analysis. Only the SET scores from 2013 to 2020 were available from the unit's Computerized Registration System (CRS). Hence, faculty members who obtained tenure earlier than 2013 were excluded from the study.

On June 1, 2018, a written permission to use the SET scores of faculty members who were granted tenure for the above-mentioned period was obtained from the unit's director. Immediately thereafter, the School Credit Evaluator (SCE) and the Administrative Officer (AO) were instructed by the director to provide the needed data set for this study.

For the period considered, only six regular faculty members obtained tenure status. This relatively small number was due to the strict requirements of the state university for faculty tenure. Aside from maintaining a mean semesterly SET score of 2.0 or lower, a faculty member must also be able to publish an article in a peer-reviewed or refereed journal within three years upon entry as regular faculty. It should be noted that the study used the rating scale prior to the COVID-19 pandemic (with a score of 1.0 that means very high teaching effectiveness and 5.0 that means low teaching effectiveness) and that it covered six out of six or 100% of the teachers who obtained tenure in the study period (2013-2020). Thus, it can be considered as a census or complete enumeration.

The SCE protected the privacy and anonymity of the six faculty members by hiding them under these code names: (1) Carnation; (2) Dahlia; (3) Dandelion; (4) Magnolia; (5) Rhododendron; and

(6) Zinnia. Through separate interviews with the SCE, the six faculty members explained the changes in their mean semesterly SET scores before and after tenure and enumerated the problems or difficulties they encountered while working on the university's requirements for tenure.

The SCE summarized the data in a table and turned them later to the author of this paper. Upon receipt of the data, a paired-samples t-test was conducted to compare the mean semesterly SET scores of the six recently tenured faculty members before and after their tenure. The qualitative data, particularly the explanations of the selected faculty members on the changes in their mean semesterly SET scores before and after obtaining tenure, were also recorded and used in the Results and Discussion section of the paper.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

According to the paired-samples t-test, the difference in the mean semesterly SET scores of the six recently tenured faculty members of the state university unit in Pampanga before and after their tenure was not significant, with a p value of 0.128. Their semesterly SET scores before tenure have a mean of 1.5408 and a standard deviation of 0.11650. Meanwhile, their semesterly SET scores after tenure have a mean of 1.5836 and a standard deviation of 0.16516. Consequently, the null hypothesis of the study was accepted. This result suggests that tenure does not influence faculty performance as measured by their mean semesterly SET scores. This result validates the earlier findings of Phillips (2009), Cheng (2015), and Goldhaber and Walch (2016) on the absence of a significant relationship between tenure and teaching performance.

Tenure has given the six faculty members job security which satisfied one of their safety needs. But the job security that came along with their tenure could not motivate them any further. They were longing for the next higher category of needs – the social needs such as the need to belong to or associated with a collegial body of faculty members and lecturers.

An additional explanation for the failure of tenure to influence faculty performance is that tenure and its accompanying job security are mere hygiene factors. They would keep the six recently tenured faculty members from being dissatisfied from their teaching job, but they would not motivate them. What could positively influence their teaching performance after obtaining tenure would be the motivators, namely, achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement, and growth. Their need for these motivators was confirmed during the separate interviews conducted by the SCE.

At the state university unit in Pampanga, however, there is currently no system or program in place that recognizes superior teaching performance. The SET scores are used primarily to determine who among the lecturers or part-time faculty members will be given renewal of appointment. The Human Resources Development Office (HRDO) and the Academic Affairs Vice Chancellor's Office (OVCAA) prohibit the renewal of appointment of lecturers or part-time faculty members whose mean SET scores at the end of a semester are above 2.0. Regular or full-time faculty members, on the other hand, will not be given tenure if they consistently get a mean

semesterly SET score of above 2.0. In short, SET scores are used only as a stick. They are used only to punish poor teaching performance.

Although the SET has separate dimensions for a specific course, its faculty-in-charge, and students, only the dimension for the faculty is considered in tenure, appointment renewal, and promotion to higher rank. During their separate interviews with the SCE, all six recently tenured faculty members expressed their worry or fear that the SET is being used by some students who are failing in their courses to get even with their professors. They were able to confirm this vindictive practice by students through the qualitative comments in the SET. This vindictive student practice consequently jeopardizes the faculty members' chances of getting tenure and promotion.

The utility of the SET as a stick, however, also applies to students. According to the university's online primer on the SET, the SET is accomplished online by students during the last three weeks of the academic term (semester or trimester). Those who did not accomplish the SET in a particular academic term are barred from pre-enlisting their courses or subjects in the succeeding academic term.

In the other constituent universities of the state university system, particularly those in Manila and Los Baños, SET scores are used as carrots. They are used to motivate faculty members. The deans of the different colleges and schools award certificates of recognition to faculty members who consistently get superior SET scores.

At the state university unit in Pampanga, there is also no system or program in place that recognizes faculty members who publish in peer-reviewed or refereed journals. In the other colleges and schools of the state university, faculty members who were able to publish and those who were awarded the centennial professorial chairs and the centennial faculty grants for their research outputs as well as for their teaching and mentoring, are congratulated on bulletin boards, in websites, and in social media accounts. In the absence of such a system or program for recognition, some faculty members resort to posting their achievements on Facebook. But this activity has been criticized by some of their colleagues as "self-congratulatory behavior."

Appointment to administrative positions, meanwhile, is supposed to motivate faculty members because it is a recognition of their management skills or administrative capabilities. At the state university unit in Pampanga, however, these administrative positions consume a lot of the faculty's time and energy. Their teaching suffers and they no longer have time to pursue a doctoral degree and conduct research and extension activities which are essential for promotion to higher faculty ranks. This problem or complaint was expressed unanimously by all six recently tenured faculty members during their separate interviews with the SCE.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

For the recently tenured faculty members of the state university unit in Pampanga, tenure does not influence teaching performance as measured by the mean semesterly SET scores. The result

of the paired-samples t-test showed no significant difference in the mean semesterly SET scores before and after tenure.

The above-mentioned result was explained by the fact that tenure and job security are safety needs which, once gained, will no longer motivate faculty members. They are also considered as hygiene factors which only keep faculty members from being dissatisfied with their teaching job. To keep faculty members motivated, they ought to have the motivators, particularly, recognition and promotion to higher ranks. The result was also explained by the fact that the SET is currently being used in the state university unit in Pampanga only as a stick, whereas in the other constituent units of the university system it is also used as a carrot.

To motivate faculty members, the administrators of the state university unit in Pampanga should institute a system or program that recognizes: (1) superior teaching performance through the awarding of certificates of recognition similar to those given by the deans in the Manila and Los Baños campuses of the state university; and (2) success in publishing articles in peer-reviewed or refereed journals through congratulatory messages on bulletin boards, in websites, and in social media accounts. This recommendation is supported by the finding of Atencio (2019) that constant recognition by administrators of faculty members' good performance increases the latter's job satisfaction.

Administrators should also lighten the workload of faculty members appointed to administrative positions to enable them to pursue a doctoral degree, conduct research, and perform extension activities. After all, these are the things that matter most not only for tenure but also for promotion to higher faculty ranks. This recommendation is consistent with the finding of Garma (2019) that academic rank is a strong predictor of job performance among faculty members.

Aside from recognition and promotion to higher ranks, there are other factors that could motivate faculty members such as assistance or support from administrators (Atencio, 2019 and Vaquilar-Romo, 2018), job security and careful supervision of school heads (Baluyos, Rivera, & Baluyos, 2019), and having a family spirit and strong sense of belongingness (Manalo, de Castro, & Uy, 2020). These factors, however, were not expressed by the tenured faculty members of the case state university in Pampanga.

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