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PERCEIVED IMPACT OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS ON TEACHER ACCOUNTABILITY IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF PANABO CITY DIVISION

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ABSTRACT

The study explored the relationship between professional standards and teacher accountability in public secondary schools of Panabo City Division. It also identified which domains of professional standards significantly influence accountability. Using probability sampling, 143 public secondary teachers were selected as respondents. A descriptive-correlational survey method was employed, and data were analyzed using Mean, Product-Moment Correlation, and Regression Analysis. Results revealed that teachers exhibited very high professional standards and high levels of accountability. A significant relationship was found between professional standards and teacher accountability. All domains – content knowledge and pedagogy, learning environment, learner diversity, curriculum and planning, assessment and reporting, and community linkages and professional engagement – were shown to significantly influence accountability. Based on the findings, it was further suggested that higher officials in the Department of Education may identify means on how to strengthen the professional standards of teacher which would boost teacher accountability. More so, future researchers may further explore the involved variables considering other factors and research methods.

KEYWORDS: *Professional Standards of Teacher; Teacher Accountability; Panabo City Division, Philippines*

INTRODUCTION

Teacher accountability is essential in maintaining professional conduct and ensuring high-quality education. However, teachers often struggle to fulfill their responsibilities due to increasing workloads and complex demands. Globally, excessive accountability has led to stress and burnout, as seen in Malaysia, Australia, America, and Singapore. Despite their vital role in shaping future generations, the teaching profession remains undervalued worldwide.

In the Philippines, teachers face a wide array of duties beyond teaching, such as administrative work and extracurricular activities, which contribute to chronic overwork. This workload negatively affects classroom instruction and overall teacher performance. For instance, in the Bangsamoro region, many teachers scored poorly in reading comprehension despite training, highlighting a deeper learning crisis.

Professional standards are meant to guide teacher accountability, yet issues in adherence persist, impacting educational outcomes. In Panabo City, there has been little research on the connection between professional standards and teacher accountability in public secondary schools.

This study aims to explore the status and relationship between professional standards and teacher accountability, offering insights for policy formulation and school improvement. The findings will also be presented in international forums and submitted for publication.

REVIEW OF SIGNIFICANT LITERATURE

This study explores the relationship between professional standards and teacher accountability. Professional standards, as discussed by Morallo and Abay (2019), consist of six indicators: content knowledge and pedagogy, learning environment, diversity of learners, curriculum and planning, assessment and reporting, and community linkages and professional engagement. Meanwhile, teacher accountability encompasses the responsibility of educators toward students, parents, schools, society, and the teaching profession, as identified by Rahmatollahi and Zenouzagh (2021).

Professional standards serve as benchmarks for ethical and instructional practice, guiding teachers in enhancing their teaching quality and supporting their professional development. These standards provide clarity across various career stages

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and help educators improve through self-reflection and peer feedback (AITSL, 2022; Revai, 2018). Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK), for instance, integrates subject expertise with appropriate teaching strategies tailored to learners' needs (Deng, 2018; Adesola, 2023). Creating a positive learning environment is equally important, as it fosters a student-centered and well-managed classroom conducive to engagement and learning (Prameswari & Budiyanto, 2018; Michalak, 2024).

Respecting learner diversity requires inclusive teaching that addresses different backgrounds, needs, and learning styles, thereby promoting equity and student success (Onyishi & Sefotho, 2020; Shan, 2021). Effective curriculum planning involves giving teachers autonomy to align instruction with learners' needs while fulfilling broader educational goals (Alsubaie, 2022; Grundén, 2020). Assessment and reporting are also vital, as they guide instructional decisions and hold teachers accountable for their effectiveness (Chan et al., 2023; Pang, 2020). Moreover, community linkages and professional engagement highlight the importance of collaboration with families and stakeholders to improve school outcomes and build teacher capacity (Zikargae et al., 2022; Daly, 2022).

Teacher accountability, on the other hand, is central to educational professionalism. Teachers are primarily accountable to their students, ensuring their academic and moral development while adjusting instruction to meet diverse needs (Ghai, 2023; Thanavathi, 2022). They must also maintain strong partnerships with parents, fostering communication and shared responsibility for learning (Jailobaeva et al., 2023; Hawthorne, 2022). Within their institutions, teachers are expected to align with school goals, manage classrooms effectively, and contribute to school-wide decisions (Kapur, 2021; Putri et al., 2019). Accountability also extends to society, where teachers serve as moral stewards and nation builders (Islam, 2022; Rosenblatt & Raccah, 2018). Professionally, educators are guided by ethical codes and are encouraged to pursue continuous improvement and reflective practice (Geletu & Mihiretie, 2023; Fitzgerald, 2021).

Existing studies affirm that professional standards and teacher accountability are closely linked. Together, they support improved teacher performance and better student learning outcomes. When appropriately balanced, they foster professional growth, transparency, and overall educational quality (Sims & Fletcher-Wood, 2020; Ferlazzo, 2019).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study determined the relationship between the professional standards
and teacher accountability in public secondary schools of Panabo City Division. More specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of professional standards of teachers in terms of:
   - 1.1 content knowledge pedagogy;
   - 1.2 learning environment;
   - 1.3 diversity of learners;
   - 1.4 curriculum and planning;
   - 1.5 assessment and reporting; and
   - 1.6 community linkages and professional engagement?
2. What is the level of teacher accountability in terms of:
   - 2.1 students;
   - 2.2 parents;
   - 2.3 schools;
   - 2.4 society; and
   - 2.5 profession?
3. Is there a significant relationship between professional standards and teacher accountability?
4. Which domains of professional standards significantly influence teacher accountability?

METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides an overview of the methodology for this study, encompassing the research design, research participants, research tools, data collection procedure, and data analysis to be utilized in this investigation.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study employed a quantitative research approach, specifically using a descriptive correlational design. Quantitative methods allowed the researcher to collect and analyze numerical data to examine the relationship between professional standards and teacher accountability among public secondary school teachers in Panabo City Division. Descriptive correlational research was appropriate for assessing the levels of the variables and determining their relationship without implying causality.

In terms of ethical considerations, the study adhered to the guidelines of the Rizal Memorial Colleges Ethics Review Committee, prioritizing participant confidentiality, voluntary participation, and informed consent. Respondents were fully briefed and participated willingly, with their identities kept anonymous in compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012. The research involved 143 participants and was conducted only after obtaining approval from the ethics board and consent

from relevant education authorities. Risks were minimized, and the study posed no harm to participants. In return, it aimed to provide practical benefits for teachers and education stakeholders by offering insights that could guide improvements in teacher professionalism and accountability.

The researcher, a graduate student in Master of Arts in Educational Management at Rizal Memorial Colleges, carried out the study with significant contributions from the thesis advisor and followed all ethical and institutional protocols throughout the research process.

RESEARCH RESPONDENTS

This study targeted 143 public secondary teachers within the Division of Panabo City. In order to get this sample size, the researcher made use of the Slovin Formula considering a margin error of .05. Hence, the total population of 222 Grade 10 teachers who have 3 years teaching experience was reduced to 143. Most researchers concur that a correlational study should have a minimum sample size of 30, as a smaller sample may result in an inaccurate estimation of the relationship (Putra & Sulaiman, 2017). Hence, the 143 respondents were suitable to attain the intention of the study.

The researcher employed a probability sampling approach, specifically using cluster random sampling. This method involves dividing a large population into smaller groups, or clusters, from which data is collected. Each cluster represents a subgroup that researchers can study in detail. Cluster sampling is particularly useful for gathering accurate information from populations that are geographically dispersed (Good, 2023). In this study, all Grade 10 teachers from different schools were given the chance to be part of the study.

The researcher set specific qualifications to guide the selection of respondents. The study's inclusion and exclusion criteria required Grade 10 secondary teachers who have at least three years of teaching experience. This criterion was based on the premise that a three-year tenure in the public school system would enable teachers to effectively evaluate their professional standards and accountability. Consequently, Grade 10 teachers with less than three years of experience were excluded from the study. Furthermore, it was emphasized that participants had the autonomy to withdraw from the study if they felt uncomfortable or uneasy about completing the survey questionnaire. This decision was fully respected, highlighting the utmost importance placed on the respondents' welfare and well-being throughout the research process.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

To collect data, this study used a customized survey questionnaire specifically developed for this research. The questionnaire was divided into two sections to comprehensively address the research objectives. The first section focused on assessing professional standards, while the second section evaluated teacher accountability.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This study employed a quantitative research approach using the descriptive correlational method. Quantitative research focuses on collecting numerical data to identify patterns, test relationships, and generalize findings. In this case, the descriptive correlational design was appropriate for assessing the level of professional standards and teacher accountability and for determining the extent of their relationship without implying causation. The study was considered quantitative because it relied on numerical data as the basis for interpretation, specifically measuring the relationship between the two variables within public secondary schools in Panabo City Division.

Ethical considerations were strictly followed throughout the study. It prioritized responsible research practices, particularly regarding participant confidentiality and anonymity. Ethical standards were aligned with the protocols set by the Rizal Memorial Colleges Ethics Review Committee. All participants took part voluntarily, free from coercion, and were fully informed about the nature and purpose of the study. They were made aware of their right to withdraw at any time.

The privacy and confidentiality of participants were safeguarded in compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012. Identities were kept anonymous, and all data collected were treated with strict confidentiality. Informed consent was obtained from all respondents through signed consent forms, as all participants were adults and capable of providing their own approval.

A total of 143 participants were involved in the study. They were properly briefed regarding the study’s objectives and its relevance, which were also explained in the introductory letter attached to the survey instrument. The study was conducted only after receiving the necessary permissions from the thesis panel, the Ethics Review Committee, and the Schools Division Superintendent. Formal communication was also sent to the school administrators of the participating schools.

Risks to participants were minimal and addressed carefully. The researcher ensured the participants' well-being and safety throughout the data collection process. Their anonymity prevented any potential adverse effects, and all steps were taken to reduce possible discomfort during the survey. The potential benefits of the research were considered greater than any minimal risks involved.

The findings of the study are expected to offer valuable insights that can support the improvement of teacher professional standards and accountability. These results will benefit the Department of Education, school leaders, and teachers by informing policies and initiatives aimed at enhancing teaching performance and student learning outcomes.

The researcher, currently pursuing a Master of Arts in Educational Management at Rizal Memorial Colleges, Inc., conducted the study with guidance and input from an academic advisor and research panelists. Ethical integrity was upheld throughout the process, and the advisor contributed significantly to the development and finalization of the research.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Presented in this chapter are the findings based on the results of data gathered, the conclusions drawn from the findings and the recommendations for consideration.

The main focus of the study was to determine the significance of the relationship between professional standard and accountability of teachers in public secondary schools. The study was conducted in the selected public schools of Panabo City Division. There were one hundred forty-three (143) teachers who participated in this study. Descriptive correlational method of research was used in this study utilizing adapted research instruments. The said instruments were validated by the panel of experts and subjected to pilot testing before it was made ready for administration. Mean, Pearson Product Correlation of Coefficient, and Regression Analysis were the statistical tools used in analyzing the data. The hypotheses raised in this study were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

The level of professional standards of teachers is very high. The results indicate that the level of professional standards of teachers is at a very high level, suggesting that teachers consistently demonstrate the expected competencies and practices in their profession. This reflects their strong commitment to quality teaching, curriculum implementation, and student development. The findings imply that teachers are well-aligned with the standards set by the education system, which can positively impact learner outcomes and institutional effectiveness.

Meanwhile, the level of teacher accountability is high. The results reveal that the level of teacher accountability is high, indicating that teachers often fulfill their responsibilities to students, parents, schools, society, and the profession. This suggests a strong sense of professional duty and ethical commitment among teachers in carrying out their roles. The findings imply that high teacher accountability contributes to maintaining quality education and fostering trust within the educational community.

It was found out that there is a significant relationship between professional standards and teacher accountability. The results show a significant relationship between professional standards and teacher accountability, suggesting that as teachers demonstrate higher professional standards, their level of accountability also increases. This implies that professional competence plays a crucial role in enhancing teachers' commitment to their duties and responsibilities. Therefore, improving professional standards may lead to a more accountable and effective teaching workforce.

Furthermore, all domains of the professional standards significantly influenced teacher accountability. In fact, among all the domains, it is assessment and reporting which has the highest significant impact to teacher accountability. This indicates a strong relationship between adherence to standards and responsible teaching behavior. Among these, the domain of assessment and reporting emerged as the most influential, suggesting that teachers' ability to evaluate and communicate student progress greatly affects their sense of accountability. This highlights the critical role of effective assessment practices in fostering professional responsibility among educators.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were offered:

The level of professional standards of teachers means that it is always evident. Notably, diversity of learners and assessment and reporting are always evident while content, knowledge, and pedagogy, learning environment, curriculum and planning, and community linkages and professional engagement are occasionally evident.

Meanwhile, the level of teacher accountability is high. Specifically, accountability to students and accountability to profession are always evident while accountability to schools is oftentimes evident. On the other hand, accountability to parents and accountability to society are occasionally evident.

Based on the findings, professional standards and teacher accountability are related. All domains of professional standards are linked to the teacher accountability. This leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Moreover, all domains of professional standards significantly influence the teacher accountability.

The significant and positive correlation between the professional standards and accountability of teachers supports the principles established in Professionalism Theory by Freidson (2001). In the context of this study, it is believed that as

teaching becomes more professionalized, professional standards become more codified, and accountability mechanisms become more rigorous. This theory suggests that professional standards and teacher accountability are mutually reinforcing: higher standards necessitate stronger accountability, and effective accountability systems ensure that professional standards are upheld. This theory emphasizes the mutual reinforcement between setting high standards and ensuring accountability, contributing to the overall advancement and recognition of the teaching profession.

The Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers, which is built on NCBTS, complements the reform initiatives on teacher quality from pre-service education to in-service training. It articulates what constitutes teacher quality in the K to 12 Reform through well-defined domains, strands, and indicators that provide measures of professional learning, competent practice, and effective engagement. This set of standards makes explicit what teachers should know, be able to do and value to achieve competence, improved student learning outcomes, and eventually quality education. The professional standards, therefore, become a public statement of professional accountability that can help teachers reflect on and assess their own practices as they aspire for personal growth and professional development.

Recommendations

The following suggestions were offered based on the conclusions of the study:

Based on the findings, it is recommended that DepEd officials intensify efforts in providing continuous professional development programs that focus on enhancing the areas of content, knowledge and pedagogy, learning environment, curriculum and planning, and community linkages and professional engagement, as these domains were only occasionally evident. Strengthening these areas will not only raise the overall professional standards of teachers but also improve their accountability, particularly in aspects found to be less evident, such as accountability to parents and society. DepEd may also consider implementing school-based mentoring programs, community engagement initiatives, and contextualized in-service trainings that will equip teachers to better connect with stakeholders and uphold a stronger sense of responsibility. Furthermore, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms may be put in place to ensure alignment between the enhancement of professional standards and the expected outcomes in teacher accountability across all domains.

Moreover, school heads are encouraged to provide focused instructional leadership and support systems that will strengthen the less evident domains of professional standards, particularly in content, knowledge, and pedagogy; learning environment; curriculum and planning; and community linkages and professional engagement. They may conduct regular classroom observations, coaching, and learning action cell (LAC) sessions that directly address these areas to help teachers translate standards into accountable classroom practices. Additionally, school heads may create more opportunities for teachers to engage with parents and the wider community through structured outreach programs, parent-teacher dialogues, and local partnerships, thereby improving accountability to parents and society. Establishing recognition systems for good practices in accountability may also reinforce professional behaviors and motivate teachers to meet all accountability domains consistently.

Furthermore, teachers may enhance their practices in the domains of content, knowledge, and pedagogy; learning environment; curriculum and planning; and community linkages and professional engagement by actively pursuing relevant professional development opportunities and integrating best practices into their instruction. They may also strive to improve their accountability to parents and society by maintaining open communication, involving families in the learning process, and participating in school-community initiatives that promote education beyond the classroom. Teachers may keep reflective journals, seek peer feedback, and collaborate during LAC sessions to assess and improve their alignment with professional standards. They may not only elevate their teaching practice but also strengthen their overall accountability across all domains.

Lastly, future researchers may further explore the relationship between professional standards and teacher accountability by conducting longitudinal or comparative studies across different educational settings, such as public and private schools or urban and rural areas. It is also recommended to investigate the impact of specific professional development interventions on underperforming domains, particularly content, knowledge, and pedagogy; curriculum and planning; and community linkages and professional engagement. Additionally, qualitative approaches such as interviews or focus group discussions could provide deeper insights into the challenges teachers face in meeting accountability expectations to parents and society. Expanding the scope to include other influencing variables such as school culture, leadership practices, or teacher motivation may offer a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics at play.

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