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TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM AS INFLUENCED BY SCHOOL POLICY IMPLEMENTATION OF DAVAO ORIENTAL

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the influence of school policies implementation on teacher professionalism among 84 selected elementary teachers in the Division of Davao Oriental. Utilizing a descriptive-correlational research design, validated and pilot tested survey instruments were employed to measure three key domains of school policies implementation, clarity of policies, support for policy compliance, and impact on student engagement, and their relationship with teacher professionalism. Data analysis was conducted using weighted mean, Pearson product-moment correlation, and multiple regression analysis. Findings revealed that both school policies implementation and teacher professionalism were rated at an extensive level. Moreover, a significant positive relationship was found between school policies implementation and teacher professionalism. Regression analysis further indicated that all three domains of school policies implementation significantly influence teacher professionalism, with an R^2 value of 0.6415, suggesting that 64.15% of the variance in teacher professionalism is explained by the predictors. These results align with theoretical frameworks such as Behaviorism, Social Cognitive Theory, Constructivism, and Adult Learning Theory, reinforcing the importance of clear, supportive, and student-focused policies. The study concludes that well-implemented school policies are vital in promoting and sustaining teacher professionalism and recommends policy enhancements, school leadership support, teacher engagement, and further research.

KEYWORDS: *School Policies; Teacher Professionalism; Policy Implementation; Teacher Behavior; Educational Leadership; Professional Development.*

INTRODUCTION

The implementation of school policies plays a pivotal role in shaping educational outcomes by guiding instructional practices and influencing teacher professionalism. Effective policies help standardize educational delivery, promote ethical conduct, and support teacher development. However, challenges in policy clarity, compliance support, and resource allocation can hinder these goals, particularly in elementary education.

Globally, inconsistencies in policy implementation have led to disparities in teaching performance and educational quality (Davidson & Kvist, 2020; Fernández-López et al., 2021). In the Philippines, although the Department of Education has introduced various policies aimed at enhancing professionalism, their impact is often limited by inadequate training, poor dissemination, and insufficient support systems (Perante-Calina, 2019; Navarro, 2020).

In Davao Oriental Division, these national challenges are mirrored at the local level. Teachers struggle with unclear guidelines, limited professional development, and a lack of institutional support, which affect their ability to meet core and ethical competencies. Policy clarity, communication, and compliance support are crucial in enabling teachers to align their practices with institutional expectations (Lopez & Macas, 2021; Calleja, 2020). Yet, resource constraints and gaps in structured implementation hinder progress.

This study aims to examine how the implementation of school policies in the elementary schools of Davao Oriental Division influences teacher professionalism—specifically focusing on core and professional competencies, ethical conduct, and time management. The research seeks to offer practical insights to improve policy execution and professional outcomes in education.

REVIEW OF SIGNIFICANT LITERATURE

The related literature of this study provided inputs about school policies implementation and teacher professionalism. Also, it presented varied studies showcasing the association of the involved variables in this study. The independent variable focused on in this study is school policies implementation. It has three indicators namely; support for policy compliance,

and impact on student engagement (Borja et al., 2024). Meanwhile, the dependent variable is teacher professionalism. It has four indicators namely; core competency, professional competency, ethical competence, and time management (Ayaneh et al., 2021).

School Policies Implementation

The implementation of school policies, especially within the Indonesian educational system, involves a complex interplay of policy directives, government authority, and local school community needs. Policies in education generally aim to create a consistent framework for guiding school activities, teaching practices, and learning outcomes. Public policy, as Abidin suggests, is typically backed by governmental authority and demands compliance, ensuring that schools adhere to set regulations to maintain standards (Syafarudin, 2018). Educational policy, a subset of public policy, is more specialized, focusing on the structure and strategies required to facilitate teaching and learning across different levels of education (Aminuddin, 2020). However, translating these structured policies into effective, actionable practices within schools requires careful consideration of contextual factors, including the power dynamics among stakeholders, the cultural ethos of the educational institution, and the capabilities of school leaders and teachers.

One of the challenges in policy implementation is navigating the centralized top-down model traditionally used in Indonesia. While the top-down approach provides a standardized framework, which is essential for nationwide consistency, it may not always address the unique needs and constraints of individual schools. Recent literature suggests that decentralization and autonomy allow schools to adapt policies more effectively to local contexts, enhancing relevance and responsiveness (Hasbullah, 2019). A shift towards a bottom-up model, where local governments, school boards, and school communities are involved in decision- making, supports more tailored approaches. This shift aligns with the decentralization of Indonesia's education system, which aims to distribute authority to regional and local governments, enabling them to make informed decisions on aspects such as finance, staffing, and localized policies (Agustiono, 2022).

Effective policy implementation is also shaped by the capacity and commitment of policy actors. As Meter and Horn's framework highlights, policy implementation involves specific actions directed at achieving policy goals through activities and engagement by various stakeholders, from government officials to school leaders and teachers (Agustino, 2022). School principals, in particular, play a pivotal role, as their management skills and authority directly impact the distribution and enforcement of policies within schools. Leaders who exhibit a high level of competence in policy management are more likely to achieve systematic and coherent policy implementation across their institutions (Edwards III, 2020).

A successful implementation process also requires an approach that combines both analytical and political elements. Lindblom's model of policy-making includes three approaches: an analytical approach, a political approach, and a combined approach, each bringing distinct perspectives to the policy-making and implementation processes. While the analytical approach focuses on data- driven decision-making, the political approach recognizes the influence of power, pressure, and control from various stakeholders (Syafarudin, 2018). The combined approach can provide a balance, addressing both the objective and subjective factors in policy implementation, and thus enabling schools to navigate challenges that arise from both internal and external pressures.

In practice, the process of implementing educational policies involves not only setting objectives but also coordinating activities and evaluating outcomes. As Allen et al. (2021) emphasize, school leaders require robust policies that are practical and adaptable to their unique environments. Regular evaluation of policy outcomes is critical to ascertain whether the policies are meeting their intended goals. Evaluation serves as a feedback mechanism that allows policymakers and school leaders to gauge the effectiveness of policies and identify areas that may need revision or additional support (Grindle, 2018). The success of policy implementation, therefore, hinges on an iterative process of monitoring, assessment, and adaptation.

Evidence-based policy design is essential in educational settings, as it provides a basis for consistent, high-quality standards. Research by Allen et al. (2021) highlights the importance of connecting empirical findings with real-world practices, suggesting that policies grounded in research can facilitate better teaching and learning outcomes by providing a more comprehensive understanding of what works in schools. The challenge lies in ensuring that these evidence-based policies are accessible and relevant to school leaders, who often face constraints such as limited time, training, and resources.

School policy development and implementation can be burdensome, given the diverse needs and pressures faced by school staff and leaders. High workloads, stress, and the demands of meeting regulatory requirements are common barriers that school leaders encounter in policy implementation (Roffey, 2012). To mitigate these challenges, support systems such as professional development, collaboration with policy experts, and access to policy resources are necessary. Providing school leaders with policy exemplars and frameworks can reduce the workload involved in policy creation and adaptation, allowing them to focus on more contextualized implementation efforts (Reupert, 2019).

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Ultimately, the implementation of school policies is a dynamic process that requires collaboration, adaptation, and ongoing support from both internal and external stakeholders. Effective implementation is achieved when policy goals align with the capabilities and needs of those responsible for enacting them, from policymakers to local school actors. School leaders, educators, and policymakers must work in concert to create an environment where policies are not only aligned with overarching educational goals but also are adaptable to the unique contexts of individual schools and communities. By fostering an inclusive policy environment that engages all stakeholders, schools can create policies that are both practical and effective in enhancing educational outcomes.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study determined the relationship between the school policies implementation and teacher professionalism. More specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the extent of school policies implementation in terms of:
   - 1.1. Clarity of Policies;
   - 1.2. Support for Policy Compliance; and
   - 1.3. Impact on Student Engagement?
2. What is the extent of teacher professionalism in terms of:
   - 2.1. Core Competency
   - 2.2. Professional Competency
   - 2.3. Ethical Competence
   - 2.4. Time Management
3. Is there a significant relationship between the school policies implementation and teacher professionalism?
4. Which of the domains of the school policies implementation significantly influence teacher professionalism?

METHODOLOGY

This chapter introduces the methodological aspect of the study. This covers the research design, research respondents, research instruments, data gathering procedure, and data analysis employed in this investigation.

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research approach using a descriptive correlational design. Quantitative methods focus on collecting and analyzing numerical data, which allows researchers to identify patterns and relationships within data sets (Apuke, 2017). The descriptive correlational design is suited for examining the relationship between school policy implementation (independent variable) and teacher professionalism (dependent variable) by measuring these variables in their natural settings without researcher manipulation (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). This approach is beneficial for identifying existing associations between variables in educational research, enabling a better understanding of how policy implementation may influence teacher professionalism outcomes.

Descriptive research in this context provides a comprehensive analysis of the characteristics and behaviors of the variables, emphasizing observation over intervention (Korrapati, 2016). This allows the study to highlight the current state of policy implementation and teacher professionalism, capturing insights that may guide future interventions. The correlational component, on the other hand,

specifically seeks to measure the strength and direction of the association between these two variables (Davis, 2021). By using statistical tools, the study assesses whether variations in school policy implementation practices correspond to changes in teacher professionalism, thus shedding light on potential areas for improvement in educational policy and management.

The descriptive correlational design also aligns with the study's objective of evaluating naturally occurring relationships without altering the study environment, making it ideal for educational settings where variables such as policy clarity and teacher competencies are better understood in their authentic context (Kabir, 2016). By providing data on the potential link between school policies and teacher effectiveness, the study aims to inform policy decisions and administrative practices that may enhance educational outcomes for teachers and students alike.

Research Respondents

The respondents of this study consist of 84 elementary teachers from the Division of Davao Oriental. This sample size was determined using Slovin's formula to ensure appropriate representation of the total teacher population while maintaining statistical validity. Given a total population of 106 teachers, the sample size was computed using the formula: , where N is the total population, e is the margin of error (0.05), and n is the required sample size. Applying these values, the calculation resulted in a sample of 84 teachers, ensuring that the study maintains a high level of accuracy while remaining feasible in data collection.

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To ensure the relevance and reliability of the gathered data, specific inclusion criteria are applied. Only elementary teachers from the Division of Davao Oriental with more than three years of teaching experience was selected as respondents. This criterion ensures that participants have substantial exposure to school policies and their implementation, allowing them to provide informed perspectives on policy clarity, support for compliance, and their effects on professional growth. Teachers with less than three years of experience are excluded to ensure responses reflect a deeper familiarity with the long-term effects of policy implementation.

A potential vulnerability issue in this study is response bias, particularly social desirability bias, where teachers may fee1 pressured to provide responses they believe are favorable rather than their true perceptions. This concern arises from the possibility that respondents may worry about administrative scrutiny or potential consequences if their responses indicate dissatisfaction with school policies. To address this, several mechanisms and interventions was implemented. First, confidentiality and anonymity was strictly maintained, ensuring that no identifying information is linked to individual responses and that data was presented in aggregate form. Second, neutral and secure data collection methods was employed, where surveys was self-administered, allowing teachers to complete them privately without external influence. Third, prior to data collection, respondents will receive a clear explanation of the study's purpose, emphasizing that their honest opinions are crucial for understanding and improving policy implementation rather than for evaluative purposes. Lastly, voluntary participation was reinforced, ensuring that teachers understand they may choose not to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences.

By implementing these measures, the study aims to minimize response bias, protect respondent anonymity, and ensure data accuracy and reliability. These mechanisms will help create a trustworthy research environment where teachers feel safe to share their true insights, thereby enhancing the overall credibility of the study's findings.

Research Instruments

The primary instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire designed to measure both, school policy implementation and teacher professionalism. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended questions with Likert-scale items to quantify perceptions and experiences.

For data collection, this study utilized an adapted survey questionnaire. The questionnaire that was employed in this undertaking was divided into two sets. The first set focused on the extent of school policy implementation. The second set focused on the extent of teacher professionalism.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data collected for this study, the following statistical tools are utilized.

Weighted Mean. Weighted mean was used to analyze the extent of school policy implementation and teacher professionalism in terms of their respective domains. Measure of central tendency (mean), was calculated for each of the school policy indicators as well as for the teacher professionalism indicators.

Pearson Correlation Coefficient. To address Research Question 3 and test Hypothesis Ho1, the Pearson correlation coefficient was used to examine the relationship between overall school policy implementation and teacherprofessionalism. This test is appropriate because it measures the degree of association between two continuous variables, indicating the strength and direction of their relationship. A significant Pearson correlation would indicate that higher levels of school policy implementation are associated with changes in teacher professionalism (either positive or negative).

Multiple Regression Analysis. For Research Question 4 and Hypothesis Ho2, multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine which specific domains of school policy implementation significantly influence teacher professionalism. In this analysis, teacher professionalism was the dependent variable, while the three domains of school policy implementation will serve as independent variables. This statistical technique will help identify the individual contribution of each domain to teacher professionalism, revealing which aspects of policy implementation have the most significant predictive power. A significant regression coefficient for a particular domain would imply that it has a meaningful influence on teacher professionalism, contributing to a deeper understanding of the factors driving effective teaching.

These statistical tools will provide a comprehensive analysis of the data, allowing for a detailed examination of both the extent of school policy implementation and teacher professionalism, as well as the strength and nature of their relationship.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the results of the study. These are the findings of the problems in the previous chapter. These are presented both in textual and tabular form.

The Extent of School Policies Implementation in terms of Clarity of Policies

Table 1 reflects the extent of school policies implementation in terms of clarity of policies. It shows that the overall mean is 4.04, at an extensive level. This means that the school policies implementation in terms of clarity of policies is oftentimes evident. It can be gleaned from the data that all statements reveal an extensive result. Of these, the three (3) items that have the highest mean scores are as follows: the extent to which the teacher understands the expectations set by school policies (4.10), the extent to which school policies are clearly communicated to all stakeholders (4.07), and the consistency in policy application across all school activities (4.06).

These items prove that the school policies implementation in terms of clarity of policies is oftentimes evident. The findings of this study imply that teachers have a clear understanding of what is expected of them through well-communicated and consistently applied policies. It also suggests that schools prioritize clarity and transparency in disseminating policy information, enabling teachers to navigate their roles with confidence and alignment to school goals.

The findings of this study align with the research of Glover et al. (2020), who emphasized that clarity in school policies fosters a structured and supportive learning environment. The teachers' responses revealed that school policies are clearly communicated and consistently applied, creating an atmosphere of predictability and stability. This supports the notion that when expectations are made explicit and policies are accessible; educators can more confidently perform their roles. It reduces uncertainty and promotes adherence, reinforcing the importance of clarity in maintaining school order and a positive culture for teaching and learning.

The results also resonate with the study of Korstanje (2021), which highlighted the importance of aligning school policies with the values and goals of the educational community. Teachers in the study acknowledged that their school's policies are reflective of shared values and institutional objectives. This suggests a unified vision where stakeholders work toward common goals, thereby fostering a culture of collaboration and mutual understanding. When school policies embody the mission of the school, teachers are more likely to internalize and support these guidelines, further strengthening professional alignment and school identity.

Also, the study findings support Martindale and Green's (2023) assertion that understanding the rationale behind school policies is essential for their effective implementation. Teachers reported that not only are school policies well communicated, but their underlying purpose is also clearly explained. This enhances the depth of understanding and leads to more thoughtful compliance. Rather than viewing policies as merely restrictive, educators are more inclined to see them as tools for professional guidance and student support, which minimizes conflict and encourages proactive engagement with school rules.
The findings of this research are also consistent with the perspectives of Lopez and Herbert (2022), as well as Smith and Lee (2019), who emphasized the importance of accessibility and consistency in school policies. Teachers expressed confidence in accessing information regarding policy changes and noted that these policies are applied uniformly across school activities. This reflects an institutional commitment to fairness and transparency, which are critical to the trust and functionality of any school community. As supported by Thompson and Rivera (2021), being informed about policy updates and changes cultivates a perception of accountability and responsiveness, which enhances stakeholder engagement and promotes a positive professional environment.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Presented in this chapter are the findings based on the results of the data, 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 school policies implementation and teacher professionalism. The study was conducted with the selected teachers from the Division of Davao Oriental. There were eighty-four (84) elementary teachers who participated in this study. A descriptive correlational method of research was used in utilizing adopted research instruments. The said instruments were validated by the panel of experts and subjected to pilot testing before it was made ready for administration. Weighted mean, Pearson product moment correlation, and regression analysis were statistical tools used in analyzing the data. The hypotheses in this study were tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

The major findings of the study were the following: the extent of the school policies implementation of the teachers is extensive. Meanwhile, the extent of the teacher professionalism of the teachers is also extensive. It was found that there is a significant relationship between school policies implementation and the teacher professionalism. The hypotheses of no significant relationship between school policies implementation and teacher professionalism and none of the domains of school policies implementation significantly influence the teacher professionalism were rejected.

Conclusions

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

The extent of school policies implementation is extensive, which implies that it is oftentimes evident. All dimensions of school policies implementation which include clarity of policies, support for policy compliance, and impact on student engagement, are at an extensive level, which means it is oftentimes evident. Meanwhile, the extent of teacher professionalism is also extensive, which means that it is oftentimes evident. All dimensions of teacher professionalism are oftentimes evident. Both variables call for all school members to work hand in hand to strengthen the existing status of the school policies implementation and teacher professionalism.

Based on the findings, school policies implementation, and teacher professionalism are correlated. Also, school policies implementation significantly influences teacher professionalism. All domains of school policies implementation, namely, clarity of policies, support for policy compliance, and impact on student engagement significantly influence teacher professionalism by registering a p- value of .008 which is less than .05 in the level of significance. This leads to the rejection of the null hypotheses. Further, the result indicates that for every unit increase in the three domains of school policies implementation, teacher professionalism also increases.

Recommendations

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

For higher officials in the Department of Education, it is recommended that the Department of Education prioritize the development and communication of clear, coherent, and well-supported policies. By ensuring that policies are not only well articulated but also adequately supported with resources, training, and incentives, higher officials can foster an environment where teachers feel equipped and motivated to improve their professional practice. Additionally, promoting policies that encourage teacher engagement with students will likely enhance overall educational outcomes. It would be beneficial for the Department to continue supporting schools in aligning their policies with these effective practices and consider implementing regular feedback mechanisms to assess and adapt policies in real-time.

For School Principals, it is essential for school leaders to prioritize the clear communication of policies and provide the necessary support to ensure compliance. Principals should work to create a school culture that values policy adherence while fostering a supportive environment for teachers. This can be achieved by offering professional development opportunities, encouraging collaboration, and providing regular feedback on the implementation of school policies. Moreover, principals should ensure that student engagement remains a central focus of policy efforts, as it has a significant impact on teacher professionalism. Engaging teachers in discussions about policy impacts and offering avenues for peer support and mentorship can further enhance the alignment between school policies and professional practices.

For Teachers, it is recommended that teachers embrace the policies set forth by their schools and engage with them actively to promote their professional growth. Teachers should also be proactive in seeking clarification on policies when necessary and contribute feedback to school leadership on the practical challenges they face in policy implementation. Furthermore, teachers should recognize the importance of continuous professional development and actively participate in opportunities that support policy alignment and foster student engagement. By doing so, teachers can not only improve their own professional practices but also contribute to the overall improvement of the educational environment.

For Future Researchers, Future research should further explore the nuances of how various school policy domains interact with teacher professionalism across different contexts and educational systems. In addition, longitudinal studies examining the long-term effects of school policies on teacher professionalism and student outcomes would provide valuable insights into the sustained impact of policy implementation. Researchers could also investigate the challenges teachers face in adhering to policies and how these challenges can be addressed through more targeted professional development programs. Moreover, comparative studies across regions or countries would offer a broader understanding of how contextual factors influence the relationship between policy implementation and teacher professionalism. Investigating the role of technology in policy implementation could be a useful avenue to explore, particularly in the context of modern educational demands and advancements.

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