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# THE ROLE OF MORAL REASONING IN SHAPING PROFESSIONAL ETHICS AND INSTRUCTIONAL SATISFACTION OF TEACHERS

**Karl Rainier M. Alaba**
*Master of Arts in Educational Management, Rizal Memorial Colleges, Inc.*

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## ABSTRACT

*This study assesses how moral reasoning influences professional ethics and instructional satisfaction among public secondary teachers in North District, Panabo City. Using a descriptive-correlation method, the researcher gathered data through validated survey questionnaires from randomly selected teacher respondents. Results indicate that teachers display moderate moral reasoning overall, with notable strengths in fairness in discipline but less consistency in ethical decision-making, integrity, and value-based judgments. Teachers consistently show strong professional ethics, particularly in respecting diversity and accountability, although confidentiality of student information, despite being extensive, requires further reinforcement. Instructional satisfaction is extensive overall, driven by teachers' sense of achievement in student progress, though improvements are needed in curriculum delivery, classroom environment, and goal alignment. Significant positive relationships were found between moral reasoning and professional ethics, especially ethical decision-making, fairness, and integrity, but value-based judgments were non-significant. Moral reasoning strongly predicts instructional satisfaction, highlighting its critical role in teachers' professional fulfillment. The study implies that enhancing teachers' moral reasoning through targeted training can strengthen ethical standards and significantly improve instructional satisfaction. Educational leaders should integrate structured moral reasoning activities into professional development initiatives to promote ethical teaching and greater workplace satisfaction.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Moral Reasoning; Professional Ethics; Instructional Satisfaction; Professional Development; Teacher Retention*

## INTRODUCTION

The increasing challenges in the educational landscape, particularly in fostering ethical teaching practices and ensuring instructional satisfaction, drive the need for in-depth exploration of moral reasoning among teachers. In the Panabo North District, Panabo City, concerns have emerged regarding the alignment of teachers' ethical conduct with their professional responsibilities. Moral reasoning, which serves as a foundation for ethical decision-making, is critical in shaping how educators approach complex issues in their classrooms. As teachers are expected to model integrity and fairness, understanding the role of moral reasoning becomes essential in enhancing both their professional ethics and instructional fulfillment. Thus, this study seeks to explore how teachers' moral reasoning influences their ethical conduct and instructional satisfaction, with the ultimate goal of improving teaching quality.

The issue of poor professional ethics and instructional satisfaction among teachers in the USA is largely driven by challenging work conditions. Harris et al. (2019) highlight that teacher attrition is significantly influenced by negative perceptions of these conditions, with educators struggling to maintain high ethical standards. Overwhelming workloads, inadequate resources, and lack of administrative support hinder teachers' ability to uphold professional ethics, ultimately diminishing their instructional satisfaction. When work environments are not conducive to ethical teaching, job satisfaction declines, resulting in higher turnover rates. Similarly, Williams III, Svjada-Hardy, and Kwok (2024) find that teachers in under-resourced urban schools face constant pressures from large class sizes and diverse student needs, which conflict with their ethical obligations. These challenges make it difficult for teachers to consistently maintain instructional satisfaction and professional ethics. Therefore, improving working conditions and providing better support are essential for sustaining teachers' ethical standards and job fulfillment.

In Africa, poor professional ethics and low instructional satisfaction among teachers are pressing challenges that negatively impact the quality of education. Sahito and Vaisanen (2020) note that teachers in developing countries, including those in Africa, often face poor working conditions, insufficient resources, and limited professional development opportunities, which undermine their ability to uphold ethical standards. As a result, teachers struggle to maintain professional ethics, leading to disengagement and diminished instructional satisfaction. Similarly, Shibiti (2020) finds that public-school teachers in South Africa are often dissatisfied with retention factors like salary and working conditions, which further

erodes their job satisfaction and ethical commitment. When teachers feel unsupported and undervalued, their ability to maintain ethical practices and engage effectively with students is compromised. This creates a cycle where poor working conditions lead to decreased instructional satisfaction and professional ethics. Thus, addressing these issues is crucial for improving teacher ethics and job satisfaction across Africa.

In Asia, poor professional ethics and low instructional satisfaction among teachers are prevalent, particularly in developing countries where educational systems face significant challenges. Sahito and Vaisanen (2020) point out that inadequate salaries, lack of professional development, and poor working conditions undermine teachers' ability to maintain high ethical standards. As a result, teachers often struggle with ethical dilemmas, trying to balance heavy demands with limited resources, which leads to frustration and decreased job satisfaction. This decline in professional ethics is closely linked to instructional dissatisfaction, as teachers face difficulty meeting both personal and institutional expectations. Further, without systemic reforms to address these issues, the cycle of poor ethics and dissatisfaction is likely to persist, further affecting the quality of education. Furthermore, Shibiti's (2020) findings on job satisfaction in South Africa apply to Asian contexts, where teachers face similar challenges, including low pay and lack of recognition, leading to disengagement and diminished ethical commitment. Thus, improving working conditions and providing better support systems are essential for enhancing both professional ethics and instructional satisfaction in Asia.

In the Philippines, poor professional ethics and low instructional satisfaction among teachers are significant concerns, particularly within the broader educational context. Gonzales et al. (2020) highlight that factors such as teacher motivation, social support, and emotional exhaustion play a crucial role in job satisfaction, with many educators facing ethical challenges due to overwhelming workloads and insufficient support. These pressures often cause a misalignment between teachers' ethical standards and the realities of their work environment, resulting in diminished instructional satisfaction. Similarly, Anita, Tran, and Ho (2021) identify low salaries, inadequate professional development, and limited resources as key factors contributing to poor ethics and dissatisfaction among basic education teachers in the Philippines. Teachers, feeling unsupported by the system, are discouraged from fully committing to their ethical responsibilities, which further impacts their ability to meet both personal and institutional goals. Consequently, these challenges highlight the urgent need for improved teacher support, better working conditions, and stronger professional development programs to enhance both professional ethics and instructional satisfaction.

A notable problem that has surfaced in the district is the low level of professional ethics and instructional dissatisfaction among teachers, which directly impacts educational outcomes. Many educators report struggles with maintaining ethical standards due to conflicting demands and insufficient moral guidance in decision-making. This ethical dissonance often leads to decreased job satisfaction, as teachers find it difficult to align their values with institutional expectations. Moreover, instructional dissatisfaction stems from a lack of alignment between personal teaching goals and the school's objectives, further exacerbating professional frustrations. Addressing these issues by examining the role of moral reasoning could provide a pathway to strengthen both the ethical framework and instructional fulfillment of teachers in the district.

The motivation for conducting this study arises from the global challenges seen in regions such as the USA, Africa, Asia, and the Philippines. While research in these areas highlights the influence of poor working conditions, insufficient resources, and high workloads on teachers' professional ethics and satisfaction, there has been limited focus on how moral reasoning affects these dynamics in specific contexts. For example, in the USA, teacher attrition due to ethical conflicts and difficult environments reflects a broader concern that could similarly impact educators in the Panabo North District. Similarly, in Africa, resource shortages and professional dissatisfaction mirror the issues found in the Philippines, where emotional burnout and ethical dilemmas are common. These parallels suggest the need for more localized studies in public schools within South Cotabato to better understand how these global concerns manifest at the local level.

Additionally, the importance of this study in the Panabo North District is heightened by the limited exploration of how moral reasoning influences teachers' ethical behavior and satisfaction in local public schools. While previous research highlights systemic problems elsewhere, there is little investigation into how enhancing moral reasoning might help address challenges unique to this region. Furthermore, teachers in South Cotabato face struggles such as limited resources and emotional exhaustion, making it crucial to explore how moral reasoning could improve both ethical standards and instructional satisfaction. Gaining a deeper understanding of this relationship is essential for developing strategies that boost teacher effectiveness and satisfaction. Thus, this study aims to provide valuable insights that can lead to meaningful improvements in the professional and instructional climate in public schools in Panabo North District.

## REVIEW OF SIGNIFICANT LITERATURE

This section presents an exploration of the variable and its indicators, incorporating discussions of concepts, ideas, and perspectives from various authors. The insights were drawn from a diverse range of sources, including books, journals, and electronic publications.

### *Moral Reasoning*

Moral reasoning refers to the ability of teachers to assess and respond to ethical dilemmas in a manner that upholds justice, fairness, and responsibility in their professional practice. This involves consistently applying moral principles when making

decisions that affect students, ensuring their actions support a positive and equitable learning environment (Tahira et al., 2020). Also, moral reasoning plays a critical role in shaping prosocial behaviors in students, as teachers' ethical decisions influence how students perceive and practice empathy, fairness, and respect. By modeling moral reasoning, teachers indirectly encourage students to develop their own sense of ethical judgment, which is crucial for fostering a positive and cooperative classroom environment. Moreover, the study highlights that teachers' moral reasoning acts as a mediator in promoting values that contribute to students' prosocial behavior, aligning both instructional and ethical goals in education (Mohd Yusoff et al., 2022).

Moral reasoning among teachers plays a critical role in shaping ethical classroom practices and fostering students' moral development. Lim and Chapman (2022) define moral reasoning in the secondary education curriculum as the ability of teachers to engage in ethical decision-making that is operationalized through various pedagogical approaches. Their study emphasizes the importance of incorporating moral reasoning explicitly in the curriculum to cultivate teachers' capacity for making value-based decisions. This aligns with the need for a more structured approach to moral education, where teachers are equipped with frameworks to guide their ethical considerations. Similarly, Zulkifli and Hashim (2019) explore the use of Hikmah (wisdom) pedagogy to advance moral reasoning in teachers, particularly within moral education settings. They argue that moral reasoning is not a static attribute but can be developed through intentional teaching strategies that engage teachers in critical thinking and ethical discussions, thus fostering a reflective approach to classroom dilemmas.

In addition, Bronikowska and Korcz (2019) raise concerns about the moral competencies of pre-service physical education (PE) teachers, highlighting that the development of moral reasoning is often insufficient in teacher preparation programs. Their findings suggest that this gap can lead to challenges in upholding ethical standards in professional practice, ultimately affecting teachers' interactions with students. Addressing this concern requires enhanced training and support to ensure that future teachers can navigate moral complexities with confidence. Lo et al. (2020) further contribute to this discussion by examining how situational and cultural contexts influence moral reasoning. They argue that moral reasoning is not universal but is shaped by the specific social and cultural environment in which teachers operate, which can lead to varying interpretations of ethical behavior. This insight suggests the need for teacher education programs to address cultural influences on moral reasoning to better prepare teachers for diverse educational settings, ensuring that they apply ethical reasoning consistently across different contexts.

On one hand, the impact of teachers' moral reasoning on their professional ethics is a critical area of exploration, particularly in shaping ethical leadership and decision-making. Gurley and Dagley (2021) discuss how moral reasoning significantly influences the development of ethical leadership in K-12 school leaders, noting that higher levels of moral reasoning lead to more ethical decision-making in challenging situations. They argue that moral reasoning serves as a foundation for professional ethics, as teachers who engage in deeper ethical reflection are better equipped to navigate complex moral dilemmas in their professional conduct. Similarly, Tirri and Kuusisto (2022) emphasize that in Finland, teachers' professional ethics are strongly tied to their moral reasoning capabilities, which guide their decisions on fairness, responsibility, and respect. Teachers with well-developed moral reasoning are more likely to adhere to ethical standards that promote equity and integrity in the classroom, thus enhancing their professional ethics.

Also, peer influence and structured ethical training programs play a vital role in shaping the moral reasoning that informs teachers' professional ethics. Ohreen et al. (2022) apply Vygotskian theory to examine how peer interactions influence moral reasoning in business ethics education, suggesting that collaborative learning environments enhance moral reflection and ethical behavior. This peer-driven model can also be applied to teacher education, where moral reasoning is sharpened through discussions and ethical debates with colleagues, thereby strengthening professional ethics. Al-Disi and Rawadieh (2020) explore the impact of Kohlberg-modeled training interventions on pre-service teachers, demonstrating that moral reasoning can be intentionally developed through structured programs. These programs improve the ability of teachers to engage in ethical decision-making, directly impacting their professional ethics by fostering a commitment to fairness, responsibility, and moral leadership in educational settings.

On the other hand, te moral reasoning of teachers significantly influences their instructional satisfaction, as it shapes their approach to classroom ethics and student engagement. Unar and Hussain (2021) highlight that teachers with high levels of moral reasoning contribute positively to students' moral development, which in turn enhances their sense of fulfillment in teaching. Teachers who see their efforts reflected in the ethical growth of their students are more likely to experience satisfaction in their instructional role, as they feel that their moral and educational objectives align. This satisfaction is further supported by Sudirman et al. (2019), who emphasize that work discipline and ethics, rooted in moral reasoning, directly impact teacher performance. Teachers with strong moral foundations are better able to maintain disciplined and ethical classroom environments, which contributes to their instructional satisfaction by fostering a sense of control and purpose in their teaching practice.

Similarly, moral reasoning also impacts instructional satisfaction through its relationship with teaching quality and accountability. Song and Zhang (2024) discuss how academics' morality enhances teaching quality by ensuring ethical accountability, which results in higher instructional satisfaction among educators who value ethical teaching standards. Teachers who prioritize moral reasoning in their instructional methods are more likely to find satisfaction in their work, as they feel confident that their teaching aligns with ethical and professional expectations. Similarly, Kusumaningrum et al. (2019) explore the link between professional ethics and teacher performance, noting that teachers empowered by strong

ethical reasoning are more effective and satisfied in their roles. This empowerment through moral reasoning leads to a deeper sense of instructional satisfaction, as teachers find meaning in both their professional responsibilities and their impact on students.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of moral reasoning on the professional ethics and instructional satisfaction of teachers in North District, Panabo City. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the extent of moral reasoning of teachers in terms of:
    - 1.1 ethical decision-making;
    - 1.2 value-based judgments;
    - 1.3 fairness in discipline; and
    - 1.4 integrity in professional conduct?
2. What is the extent of professional ethics of teachers in terms of:
    - 2.1 confidentiality of student information;
    - 2.2 respect for diversity;
    - 2.3 accountability in teaching practices; and
    - 2.4 adherence to professional boundaries?
3. What is the extent of instructional satisfaction of teachers in terms of:
    - 3.1 contentment with curriculum delivery;
    - 3.2 positive classroom environment;
    - 3.3 achievement of student progress; and
    - 3.4 alignment with teaching goals?
4. Is there a significant relationship between:
    - 4.1 moral reasoning and professional ethics of teachers?; and
    - 4.2 moral reasoning and instructional satisfaction of teachers?
5. Do moral reasoning significantly predict professional ethics and instructional satisfaction of teachers?

## METHODOLOGY

This section contains the research design, research respondents, research instrument, data gathering procedure, and data analysis.

***Research Design***

In this study, the researcher employed a quantitative research approach, specifically utilizing the descriptive-correlational-comparative technique to gather and analyze relevant data. According to Bacon-Shone (2013), a quantitative approach involved the systematic investigation of observable phenomena through statistical, mathematical, or computational techniques. It emphasized objectivity and the quantification of data to understand relationships between variables, making it suitable for studies requiring measurable outcomes. This approach was appropriate for the study as it allowed for the quantification of teachers' moral reasoning, ethics, and instructional satisfaction. By collecting numerical data, such as survey responses or scores on standardized ethical reasoning assessments, the researcher analyzed patterns and correlations. Additionally, the statistical analysis provided by the quantitative approach enabled a clearer understanding of the strength and nature of the relationships between the variables.

Moreover, the descriptive research method aimed to provide an accurate portrayal or account of the characteristics of a particular phenomenon or group. It focused on collecting detailed information that described the current status of the variables without attempting to infer causal relationships (Taherdoost, 2022). This method was appropriate for the study as it allowed the researcher to systematically describe the levels of moral reasoning, professional ethics, and instructional satisfaction among teachers in Panabo North District. By using descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, means, and standard deviations, the study outlined the current state of these variables. Likewise, it helped in understanding the distribution of moral reasoning and ethical behaviors, providing a baseline for further analysis of their impact on instructional satisfaction.

In addition, a correlational research design sought to identify and examine the relationships between two or more variables without manipulating any variables. It aimed to determine the strength and direction of the association between variables, typically through statistical tools like correlation coefficients (Hassan, 2024). This design was appropriate for the study as it investigated the relationships between teachers' moral reasoning, professional ethics, and instructional satisfaction. Correlational analysis helped identify whether higher levels of moral reasoning were associated with better professional ethics and higher satisfaction in teaching roles. Additionally, the design allowed for the examination of the potential interactions between these variables, offering insights into how they might have influenced each other without the need for experimental manipulation.

***Research Respondents***

The study involved a sample of 248 secondary school teachers from the Panabo North District, Division of Panabo City. To determine this sample size from a total population of approximately 752 secondary school teachers, the researcher used

the Raosoft sample size calculator. Key parameters included a 5% margin of error, a 95% confidence level, and a response distribution of 50%. These criteria ensured that the sample was statistically robust and representative of the target population. Random sampling was then applied to give each teacher an equal probability of selection. The process involved compiling a comprehensive list of the 752 teachers and utilizing a random number generator to select 248 respondents. Prior to data collection, the researcher secured the necessary approvals from relevant authorities and obtained informed consent from all respondents, in strict adherence to ethical standards.

The inclusion criteria for this study focused on selecting respondents who were public secondary school teachers currently employed in the Panabo North District. To ensure relevance and consistency in the data, only full-time teachers who had been in service for at least one academic year were included, as they would have sufficient experience to reflect on their moral reasoning and professional ethics. Teachers were also required to have regular instructional duties, as this allowed the study to examine the direct link between their moral reasoning and instructional satisfaction. Additionally, respondents were expected to provide informed consent and actively participate in the study. This set of criteria ensured that the selected respondents were representative of the teaching population under study, facilitating reliable and meaningful findings.

Simple random sampling is a method where every individual in the population has an equal chance of being chosen, ensuring an unbiased and representative sample (Tipton, 2013). In this study, it was employed to randomly select respondents from the larger population using a random number generator. This approach was suitable as it mitigated selection bias, allowing each teacher an equal opportunity to be included in the study. By using this technique, the findings more accurately reflected the broader population of secondary school teachers. Consequently, this enhanced the reliability and generalizability of conclusions about the relationship between moral reasoning, professional ethics, and instructional satisfaction in Panabo North District.

***Research Instrument***

The study employed three questionnaires that suited the context of the respondents of the study. The first part of the instrument was about the moral reasoning of teachers. This questionnaire was measured in terms of ethical decision-making, value-based judgments, fairness in discipline, and integrity in professional conduct. The Cronbach alpha value for this instrument was 0.788, described as acceptable, and interpreted as moderately reliable and acceptable for most research purposes. In answering the questionnaire, the respondents made use of a 5-point Likert scale. As a guide in determining the extent of moral reasoning of teachers, the researcher used the range of means, descriptions, and interpretations as presented below:

***Data Analysis***

The following were the statistical tools that were utilized by the researcher in processing the gathered data:
***Mean.*** This was useful in determining the extents of moral reasoning, professional ethics, and instructional satisfaction of teachers, allowing for the comparison of average levels. This provided answer to SOP 1, 2 and 3.

***Pearson Product Moment Correlation.*** This was employed to measure the strength and direction of the relationship between moral reasoning and instructional satisfaction of teachers, as well as the relationship between moral reasoning and professional ethics of teachers. This provided answer to SOP 4.

***Regression Analysis.*** This was conducted to determine the predictive power of moral reasoning on professional ethics and instructional satisfaction of teachers. This provided answer to SOP 5.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the results generated from the data gathered. It is sequenced based on the objectives of the study as presented in the first chapter. Thus, it presents the extents of moral reasoning, professional ethics, and instructional satisfaction of teachers; the significant relationship among these variables; and the influence of moral reasoning on shaping the professional ethics and instructional satisfaction of teachers in North District, Panabo City.

***Moral Reasoning of Teachers***

Ethical Decision-Making. Table 1 shows that the mean score for moral reasoning in terms of ethical decision-making among teachers is 3.31, which is interpreted as moderately extensive. This suggests that teachers sometimes demonstrate moral reasoning practices, particularly in situations that require ethical judgment in the classroom. The result also indicates that ethical decisions are sometimes observed but not consistently demonstrated in practice. According to Ballangrud and Aas (2022), ethical decision-making in education requires continuous reflection and alignment with moral standards, emphasizing that occasional application may indicate a need for further professional development.

The range of means on this particular domain is 3.19 to 3.41. The highest-rated statement, Ensuring transparency in decision-making processes related to student assessments, recorded a mean of 3.41. Conversely, the lowest-rated statement, Making decisions that prioritize the well-being of students in challenging situations, received a mean of 3.19. This indicates

that teachers demonstrate ethical decision-making at a moderately extensive level, with slightly greater emphasis on transparency than on prioritizing student well-being in difficult scenarios. According to Campbell (2003), transparency in educational decision-making fosters trust and fairness, but true ethical practice must also center on the holistic welfare of students, particularly when navigating complex classroom challenges. This highlights the need for a more balanced emphasis across all aspects of ethical decision-making.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This part of the paper presents the conclusion and recommendation of the researcher. The discussion is supported by the literature presented in the first chapters and the conclusion is in accordance with statements of the problem presented in this study.

### *Findings*

The primary objective of this study was to assessed the influence of moral reasoning on shaping the professional ethics and instructional satisfaction of teachers utilizing non-experimental quantitative design using descriptive-correlation technique. The researcher selected the 248 public secondary school teachers from North District, Division of Panabo City as the respondents through simple random sampling method. The researcher made use of modified and enhanced adapted survey questionnaires which was pilot tested in a nearby school to ensure high reliability and internal consistency of the items in the instrument. The result of the study are summarize as follows:

Teachers in North District, Panabo City generally exhibit a moderately extensive level of moral reasoning. Fairness in discipline emerges as the most consistently demonstrated dimension, attaining an extensive rating. By contrast, ethical decision-making, value-based judgments, and integrity in professional conduct are each only moderately extensive, indicating room for enhancement through focused professional development and reflective practice.

Also, the teachers demonstrate an extensive overall commitment to professional ethics, reflecting frequent observance of ethical standards in daily practice. Respect for diversity garners the strongest endorsement, with accountability in teaching practices and adherence to professional boundaries also consistently rated as extensive, underscoring a robust ethical culture across instructional contexts. While confidentiality of student information ranks comparatively lower among the four dimensions, it remains within the extensive range, indicating a uniformly high—yet still improvable—commitment to safeguarding student privacy.

In addition, teachers in North District, Panabo City report an extensive level of instructional satisfaction, reflecting frequent positive experiences in their teaching roles. Satisfaction is strongest in relation to student progress, which is rated as extensive, whereas contentment with curriculum delivery, the classroom environment, and goal alignment remain moderately extensive, indicating these facets are encountered only sometimes. These findings suggest that while instructional satisfaction is generally high, targeted support in curriculum implementation and goal alignment could further enhance teachers' day-to-day fulfillment.

Meanwhile, findings indicate a statistically significant positive relationship between teachers' overall moral reasoning and their professional ethics, with ethical decision-making contributing the strongest link. Fairness in discipline and integrity in professional conduct also show significant, albeit weaker, associations, underscoring the role of just classroom practices and personal integrity in fostering ethical professionalism. In contrast, value-based judgments bears no significant connection to professional ethics, suggesting this dimension of moral reasoning operates independently of teachers' routine ethical conduct.

Further, moral reasoning shows a strong positive association with instructional satisfaction among teachers, implying that ethically reflective educators experience greater fulfillment in their instructional roles. The most pronounced links emerge when moral reasoning aligns with accountability in teaching practices and respect for diversity, indicating that ethical accountability and inclusivity serve as central drivers of instructional contentment. Moderate yet significant associations with adherence to professional boundaries and confidentiality of student information further demonstrate that consistent ethical safeguards also bolster teachers' satisfaction, underscoring the multifaceted influence of moral cognition on pedagogical well-being.

Furthermore, moral reasoning serves as a significant positive predictor of both professional ethics and instructional satisfaction among teachers in North District, Panabo City. It exerts a moderate influence on professional ethics yet displays a markedly stronger effect on instructional satisfaction, underscoring how ethically reflective cognition powerfully shapes teachers' sense of pedagogical fulfilment. These results suggest that strengthening moral reasoning within professional development initiatives simultaneously reinforces ethical conduct and elevates instructional satisfaction.

### *Conclusions*

Based on the findings of this study several conclusions were generated:

The teachers in North District, Panabo City exhibit moderately extensive moral reasoning overall, with fairness in discipline identified as their strongest moral practice, while integrity in professional conduct, ethical decision-making, and value-based judgments appear less consistently demonstrated. These findings imply that while teachers generally uphold ethical standards, targeted professional development could further enhance their capacity for consistent ethical decision-making and integrity. Strengthening these dimensions may yield improved ethical practices and foster greater trust within school communities.

On one hand, those teachers consistently exhibit extensive professional ethics across key indicators, particularly excelling in respect for diversity and accountability in teaching practices. This high level of ethical observance suggests a robust ethical foundation among teachers, fostering a conducive learning environment characterized by inclusivity and trustworthiness. However, continued reinforcement through periodic training on confidentiality practices could further solidify ethical consistency and professional integrity.

On the other hand, the secondary public school teachers in North District, Panabo City report extensive instructional satisfaction overall, primarily driven by a strong sense of achievement regarding student progress. However, their comparatively lower satisfaction with curriculum delivery, classroom environment, and alignment with teaching goals indicates areas requiring focused administrative attention. Addressing these aspects through tailored curriculum support and enhanced goal-setting strategies could significantly elevate teachers' professional fulfillment and effectiveness in instruction.

Meanwhile, the findings reveal a significant relationship between teachers' moral reasoning and professional ethics, particularly evident in ethical decision-making, fairness in discipline, and integrity in professional conduct. This underscores the critical role moral reasoning plays in shaping ethical behaviors among teachers. Educational leaders should thus integrate moral reasoning enhancement strategies into professional development programs to strengthen ethical practices consistently observed in school settings.

Moreover, the strong significant relationship between moral reasoning and instructional satisfaction highlights accountability in teaching practices, respect for diversity, adherence to professional boundaries, and confidentiality of student information as key contributing indicators. This implies that enhancing teachers' moral reasoning capacities could substantially improve their instructional satisfaction. School administrators should prioritize ethical and moral development in teacher training programs to foster more fulfilling and effective teaching experiences.

Furthermore, moral reasoning significantly influences both professional ethics and instructional satisfaction among teachers, with a notably stronger predictive effect on instructional satisfaction. This underscores that teachers who actively engage in reflective ethical considerations demonstrate higher professional standards and greater instructional fulfillment. Consequently, school leadership should emphasize moral reasoning development within teacher training programs to promote sustained ethical conduct and increased job satisfaction in teaching.

***Recommendations***

Based on the study's findings, it is recommended that educational leaders in North District, Panabo City initiate targeted professional development programs specifically addressing ethical decision-making, integrity in professional conduct, and value-based judgments. Given that these dimensions exhibited only moderately extensive ratings and that value-based judgments did not significantly relate to professional ethics, training should emphasize scenarios and reflective practices that help teachers critically engage with ethical dilemmas, promoting consistent and principled decision-making.

To further enhance professional ethics, particularly concerning confidentiality of student information—which, despite its extensive rating, emerged as the lowest-scoring indicator—school administrators should regularly conduct workshops reinforcing data privacy protocols and best practices for handling sensitive student information. Providing clear guidelines, updated resources, and interactive sessions can ensure teachers maintain high standards in confidentiality, thereby strengthening trust among students, parents, and school personnel.

Addressing instructional satisfaction, administrators should focus efforts on improving curriculum delivery, classroom environment, and alignment with teaching goals. Implementing collaborative planning sessions and feedback mechanisms can enable teachers to better align curriculum expectations with classroom realities, ensuring that instructional content remains engaging, relevant, and responsive to student needs, thereby elevating teachers' overall satisfaction.

Lastly, recognizing the significant predictive role of moral reasoning on both professional ethics and instructional satisfaction, education authorities should incorporate structured moral reasoning modules into continuous professional development programs. By fostering an ethical decision-making culture through mentoring, collaborative reflection, and ethical simulations, schools can ensure teachers are consistently supported in developing strong moral reasoning capacities, leading to enhanced professional ethics and greater instructional fulfillment.

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