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EXPLORING THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN SELF-CONCEPT AND PROFESSIONAL ENGAGEMENT OF TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to assess the extent of teachers' self-concept and professional engagement, examine the relationship between these variables, and determine which domains of self-concept significantly influence the professional engagement of teachers. A quantitative, descriptive-correlational research design was employed involving 297 public elementary school teachers in the Division of Davao del Norte. The respondents completed two standardized questionnaires measuring self-concept and professional engagement. Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to determine the extent of the variables, Pearson's r to test the significance of their relationship, and regression analysis to identify which domains of self-concept significantly influence the professional engagement of teachers. The results revealed that teachers demonstrated extensive levels of both self-concept and professional engagement. A statistically significant relationship was found between the two constructs, indicating that higher self-concept is associated with better professional engagement. Furthermore, all domains of self-concept such as competence, interpersonal perception, acceptance of risks and initiatives, relationship with students, satisfaction, and self-acceptance were found to significantly influence professional engagement. It is recommended that the Department of Education implement policies and programs that strengthen teachers' self-concept through professional development, mentoring, and recognition systems. Teachers are encouraged to enhance their self-concept through reflective practice, continuous learning, and collaboration to sustain professional engagement. School principals may foster supportive environments that promote teachers' confidence, participation, and professional growth. Future researchers may explore additional factors and use varied research designs to further examine and strengthen the relationship between self-concept and professional engagement.

KEYWORDS: *self-concept; professional engagement; self-perception; professional dedication; Descriptive-correlational design*

INTRODUCTION

Teachers' self-concept and professional engagement are key factors influencing educational quality, teacher retention, and student success. In the context of teacher shortages, high attrition, and increasing demands, understanding the factors shaping teachers' identity and engagement is crucial. Self-concept underpins motivation, resilience, and commitment, while professional engagement reflects participation in continuous learning, collaboration, and innovative practices. Research highlights their strong connection, especially in marginalized fields where teachers face undervaluation and limited growth opportunities. A weak self-concept can lead to disengagement, burnout, and early exit from the profession.

Globally, educational systems vary in how they support teacher self-concept and engagement. For instance, in Australia, professional development programs often fail to incorporate teachers' voices, leading to misalignment between institutional agendas and educators' actual needs. Research by Cooper et al. (2020) highlights that top-down initiatives, driven by school improvement plans, frequently sideline teacher perspectives, resulting in programs perceived as irrelevant or ineffective. Similarly, in East Asian contexts such as Shanghai, teachers' self-reported growth mindsets do not always translate into classroom practices due to institutional pressures and competitive educational environments. Further, the study revealed incongruence between their mindset beliefs and actual feedback practices, attributing this gap to systemic factors like high-stakes testing and performance-driven policies (Xu & Wang, 2024).

Across education systems worldwide, teacher quality remains one of the strongest school-based predictors of student learning. Two psychosocial constructs such as teachers' self-concept and professional engagement are increasingly recognized as foundational to teacher effectiveness and retention amid rapidly changing instructional

demands and digitalization (Yu & Bailey, 2024). In broad terms, self-concept refers to individuals' perceptions of themselves, shaped by experiences and interpretations across specific domains in teaching. Empirically, teachers' self-beliefs and identity-related perceptions correlate with engagement and related outcomes. Studies across diverse contexts report that personal resources are positively associated with work engagement and reduced withdrawal intentions. (Mérida-López, et al, 2020).

In the Philippine educational landscape, where teachers often face challenges such as heavy workloads, limited resources, and evolving curricular demands, understanding the interplay between self-concept and professional engagement is essential for improving teacher retention, job satisfaction, and instructional quality (Santos, 2024). Teacher quality remains a central driver of learning in the Philippines, where persistent learning deficits underscore the need to strengthen the teacher workforce. Philippine evidence, though still emergent, points in the same direction: teacher self-beliefs and relational resources predict performance and retention dynamics observed locally (Gonzaga, 2024). Within this agenda, teachers' psychosocial resources especially self-concept and professional engagement are pivotal because they shape teachers' motivation, instructional choices, wellbeing, and persistence in the profession (Ramos, et al, 2023). However, challenges such as inadequate salaries and high stress levels can erode teachers' self-concept, leading to burnout and attrition (Santos, 2024).

In Davao del Norte, research highlights that teachers with a strong and positive self-concept tend to exhibit greater resilience, adaptability, and professional commitment, especially in under-resourced schools. Findings reveal that educators who perceive themselves as highly competent guided by their values, beliefs, and teaching philosophies are more effective in fostering student engagement and motivation. This underscores the crucial link between teachers' self-perception and overall classroom effectiveness. Ongoing issues like overwhelming workloads, insufficient support from institutions, and the way society often overlooks the value of teaching still affect how teachers see themselves and their worth. Consequently, educators in the province experience emotional exhaustion and burnout when their self-concept is weakened by systemic pressures and unmet professional needs (Oracion, et al, 2024).

THE STUDY'S OBJECTIVES

This study examined the association between self-concept and the professional engagement among elementary school teachers in the Division of Davao del Norte. Specifically, it sought to:

1. Determine the extent of self-concept of teachers in terms of Competence, Interpersonal Perception, Acceptance of Risks and Initiatives, Relationship with Students, Satisfaction, and Self-Acceptance.
2. Assess the extent of citizenship behavior of teachers in terms of Emotional Engagement, Social Engagement: Colleagues, Cognitive Engagement, and Social Engagement: Students.
3. Establish whether a significant relationship exists between self-concept and professional engagement of teachers.
4. Identify which domains of self-concept significantly influence the professional engagement of teachers.
5.

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodology used to investigate the organizational empowerment and citizenship behavior of teachers. The discussion includes the method used, sources of data, data gathering instruments, sampling technique, procedures of the study, statistical treatment, and ethical considerations.

Method Used

The study utilized a quantitative research design, specifically adopting a descriptive-correlational approach, to address the research questions and analyze variables such as self-concept and professional engagement. This approach was suitable for investigating the relationship and potential impact between these variables.

A quantitative research approach was ideal for investigating the study's variables, as it facilitates the systematic gathering and evaluation of numerical data to address research questions and test hypotheses. This method allowed researchers to objectively measure and analyze constructs in real-world contexts, improving the reliability and ecological validity of findings. Importantly, it supported the examination of variable relationships without altering them, preserving the genuineness of the observed results (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The descriptive aspect of this research design aimed to offer a detailed depiction of the current state of self-concept and professional engagement within the educational context being studied. Establishing this baseline understanding was crucial for determining the initial levels of these variables before exploring their potential relationships. This approach aligned with methodological strategies supported by recent research, which

highlights the need to accurately represent variables as they naturally manifest in specific populations, particularly when addressing complex constructs (Johnson & Christensen, 2019).

A correlational research design was deemed appropriate for examining the complex relationship between health-related quality of life and perceived sense of efficacy. This methodology allows for the statistical assessment of both the magnitude and the direction of the relationship between the variables under investigation. By utilizing quantitative data, the study can employ suitable statistical methods to identify whether a positive, negative, or no correlation exists among participants. This design was particularly effective for analyzing naturally occurring variables without any manipulation (Field, 2018).

Sources of Data

The research involved 297 out of 1152 elementary school teachers from the Davao del Norte Division. The sample size was determined using Slovin's formula, $n = N / (1 + N(e^2))$, with a 5% margin of error ($e = 0.05$), ensuring the sample was statistically significant and representative of the broader population for accurate and reliable findings.

To improve the representativeness of the sample, teachers from different public schools within the Davao del Norte Division will be considered for inclusion, reflecting diverse teaching experiences, backgrounds, and challenges. This diversity strengthens the study's relevance and generalizability.

Data Gathering Instrument

This study utilized structured questionnaires as the main instrument for gathering data, designed to measure self-concept and professional engagement through closed-ended, Likert-scale questions that quantify participants' perceptions and experiences. The survey were divided into two sets: one focused on the extent of self-concept and the other on the extent of professional engagement.

Teacher Self-Concept Evaluation Scale (TSCES). This scale was developed by Sánchez, A. & Calvete (2001) and was s designed to measure teachers' perceptions of their own professional competence, effectiveness, and identity as educators. It assesses how teachers view their abilities, confidence, and role in the teaching profession. The instrument consisted of 33 items. It has six indicators namely: Competence (9), Interpersonal Perception (5), Acceptance of Risks and Initiatives (5), Relationship with Students (4), Satisfaction (5), and Self-Acceptance (5)

To assess the reliability and validity of the Teacher Self-Concept Evaluation Scale, a pilot test was conducted with a group of teachers sharing similar characteristics to those in the main study. The pilot testing yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.84, indicating strong internal consistency among the 33 items and thereby affirming the reliability of the instrument in assessing the four dimensions of teacher self-concept. These results suggest that the scale effectively and accurately measures teachers' perceptions and experiences of their self-concept, ensuring the research's integrity. The rating scale used to gauge the extent of teacher self-concept is outlined below.

Mean Interval	Descriptive Level	Descriptive Interpretation
4.20 - 5.00	Very Extensive	Teacher self-concept is always evident.
3.40 - 4.19	Extensive	Teacher self-concept is oftentimes evident.
2.60 - 3.39	Moderately Extensive	Teacher self-concept is occasionally evident.
1.80 - 2.59	Less Extensive	Teacher self-concept is seldom evident.
1.00 – 1.79	Not Extensive	Teacher self-concept is never evident.

Professional Engagement Scale (PES). This is developed by Klassen, Yerdelen, and Durksen (2013) and was designed to measure the level of commitment, involvement, and enthusiasm teachers or educators exhibit toward their work. It evaluates how confident teachers feel in their professional roles, which directly affects motivation, decision-making, and teaching performance. The instrument was composed of 16 items distributed evenly across four indicators, namely emotional engagement, social engagement with colleagues, cognitive engagement, and social engagement with students, with each indicator comprising four items.

To evaluate the reliability and validity of the Professional Engagement Scale, a pilot test was conducted with a group of teachers who shared similar characteristics with the main study's participants. The pilot testing produced a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.82, indicating a high level of internal consistency among the 16 items and thereby establishing the reliability of the instrument in measuring the four dimensions of professional engagement. This suggests that the scale accurately captures teachers' beliefs and experiences related to their professional engagement, which is crucial for the study's findings. The grading scale used to measure the extent of professional engagement is provided below.

Mean Interval	Descriptive Level	Descriptive Interpretation
4.20 - 5.00	Very Extensive	Teacher professional engagement is always evident.
3.40 - 4.19	Extensive	Teacher professional engagement is oftentimes evident.
2.60 - 3.39	Moderately Extensive	Teacher professional engagement is occasionally evident.
1.80 - 2.59	Less Extensive	Teacher professional engagement is seldom evident.
1.00 – 1.79	Not Extensive	Teacher professional engagement is never evident.

The research instruments were carefully designed to correspond with the specific objectives and contextual framework of the study. To enhance clarity, relevance, and construct validity, all recommendations and comments from the research adviser, panel members, and subject matter experts were duly incorporated. This iterative refinement process is designed to improve the tools' quality and suitability, ensuring accurate measurement of the intended variables within the local setting.

Sampling Technique

A stratified random sampling method will be utilized to achieve proportional representation among different teaching levels and types of schools, thereby allowing a more comprehensive examination of self-concept and its association with professional engagement across diverse educational settings.

Stratified random sampling improves sample representativeness by guaranteeing that essential subgroups within the population are included in proportion to their actual distribution. This method accommodates the diversity across strata, improving the precision and generalizability of the study's findings (Levy & Lemeshow, 2018).

This research, focused on the Davao del Norte Division, offers specific insights into the relationship between teachers' self-concept and professional engagement. Localized studies like this are essential for understanding how unique contextual factors shape teachers' experiences (Cohen et al., 2018).

Slovin's formula remained a widely accepted method in educational and social science research for determining sample size. It offers a practical approach for sampling when the population was known but conducting a full census is impractical due to resource constraints. Researchers have emphasized the methodological robustness of Slovin's formula, noting its capacity to ensure statistical precision while being feasible for field research (Daniel & Cross, 2018).

Procedure of the Study

The data gathering process of this study followed a systematic and ethically guided procedure to ensure the accuracy, reliability, and integrity of the research findings. It involved securing the Ethics Compliance Certificate, obtaining an endorsement from the Dean, requesting a permit from the Schools Division Superintendent (SDS), coordinating with school principals, and the distribution and retrieval of research questionnaires.

Ethics Compliance Certificate. Before the study was conducted, the researcher obtained an Ethics Compliance Certificate on February 11, 2026, confirming that the research complied with the required ethical standards for studies involving human participants. The ethics review verified that the rights, dignity, and welfare of the respondents were safeguarded throughout the research process. Ethical principles such as voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality, and proper data handling were strictly observed in compliance with the provisions of the Data Privacy Act of 2012. The issuance of the certificate signified that the study met all ethical requirements and was approved to proceed.

Endorsement Letter from the Dean. Following the approval of the ethics committee, the researcher obtained an endorsement letter from the Dean of the Graduate School of Rizal Memorial Colleges, Inc. on February 21, 2026. This endorsement confirmed that the study had undergone proper academic review and was aligned with the requirements of the graduate program. It further certified that the research was legitimate, methodologically sound, and appropriate for implementation. The endorsement served as official institutional support in requesting permission from the Schools Division Office.

Permit to Conduct the Study from the Schools Division Superintendent (SDS). With the endorsement letter, the researcher submitted a formal request for a Permit to Conduct the Study to the Schools Division Superintendent (SDS) of the Division of Davao del Norte on March 2, 2026. The request included the study's title, objectives, target respondents, and data collection procedures, along with supporting documents such as the research instrument and endorsement letter. Upon approval, the permit granted official authorization to conduct the study in the selected schools within the division.

Letter to the Principals. Upon securing the endorsement letter, the researcher sent formal letters to the school principals of the identified schools within the Division of Davao del Norte from March 6 to March 16, 2026. The letters outlined the objective of the study, the target respondents, and the data collection procedures. Coordination with the school heads was conducted to schedule the administration and retrieval of questionnaires without disrupting regular school activities. Their cooperation ensured effective communication and a smooth data collection process. A summary of the participating schools, number of respondents, and dates of data collection is presented below:

NAME OF SCHOOL	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	DATE OF DATA COLLECTION
1. Sto. Niño Central Elementary School	41	March 6, 2026
2. Naseco Integrated School	36	March 6, 2026
3. Tibi-Tibi Elementary School	35	March 6, 2026
4. Basak Integrated School	37	March 9, 2026
5. Mesolong Integrated School	40	March 9, 2026
6. Banaog Elementary School	38	March 10, 2026
7. Nasilaban Integrated School	36	March 16, 2026
8. Lumabag Integrated School	34	March 16, 2026
Total	**297**	

Distribution and Retrieval of Questionnaires. The validated survey questionnaires on the organizational empowerment and citizenship behavior of teachers well-being were distributed to 297 elementary teachers who met the inclusion criteria within the Division of Davao del Norte. Prior to the administration of the questionnaire, the respondents were properly oriented regarding the study's objectives and the ethical considerations involved, such as voluntary participation, assurance of confidentiality, and their freedom to withdraw at any time without consequences. Informed consent was secured before data collection. The questionnaires were administered and sufficient time was provided for completion. Retrieval of all questionnaires was conducted within the agreed period from March 4 to March 18, 2026. After collection, responses were carefully organized, tabulated, and prepared for statistical analysis. These procedures ensured the validity, reliability, and integrity of the data while maintaining the confidentiality and comfort of all participants.

Statistical Treatment

During the data analysis phase, suitable statistical techniques were applied to address the research questions and examine the stated hypotheses.

In this research, the *weighted mean* served as the main statistical technique for assessing teachers' self-concept and professional engagement. Unlike the simple arithmetic mean, the weighted mean accounts for the relative importance of responses, making it more suitable for analyzing data from multi-item questionnaires and scales. The average scores for each domain under self-concept and professional engagement were computed to generate a consolidated view of participants' perspectives. This method effectively highlights central tendencies and patterns in the data, thereby offering a comprehensive overview of teachers' perceived efficacy and overall professional experience (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Standard Deviation is a statistical metric that quantifies the extent to which individual data points vary from the mean, serving as a critical indicator of consistency or diversity within a research sample. In the study examining the relationship between self-concept and professional engagement, it is utilized to determine the stability of participants' self-perceptions and the uniformity of their dedication to their roles. By analyzing this variance alongside the mean, the researcher can assess the reliability of their data and ensure that the subsequent correlational analyses which link a teacher's internal identity to their outward professional involvement accurately reflect the group's behavior rather than being skewed by extreme outliers (Aulivola et al., 2020).

To answer the third research question concerning the relationship between teachers' self-concept and professional engagement, the *Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (r)* was employed. This analytical technique is appropriate for determining the strength as well as the direction of linear associations between two continuous variables. The analysis determined whether a significant relationship exists between the two constructs, using the standard significance threshold of $p < 0.05$ to minimize the likelihood of random error. Pearson's r was appropriate in this context, as both self-concept and professional engagement were assessed using interval-scale measures, under the assumption that the data satisfy normality and linearity conditions required for correlation analysis (Schober & Schwarte, 2018).

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to identify which particular domains of self-concept significantly influence teachers' professional engagement. This statistical method allowed for the simultaneous examination of multiple independent variables (self-concept domains) and their combined effect on a single dependent variable (professional engagement). By controlling for the influence of other variables, multiple regression identified the unique contribution of each self-concept domain to professional engagement. This approach provided a nuanced understanding, helping to pinpoint which aspects of a teacher's self-concept are the strongest predictors of their engagement. The findings were considered statistically significant if the p-value is less than 0.05 (Hair, et al, 2018).

Ethical Consideration

The ethical considerations section of this study prioritized treating teacher-respondents with respect, fairness, and care throughout the research process. It adhered to essential ethical principles, including informed consent, confidentiality, and minimizing risks, to safeguard participants' rights and well-being.

Social Value. This study aimed to examine the effect of teacher's self-concept on professional engagement, sought to provide insights that can enhance educators' effectiveness in the Division of Davao del Norte. Its social value laid in its potential to improve teachers' self-concept, encouraging greater professional engagement to cultivate collaborative and professional school environments. The findings informed policies and strategies to support teacher development, benefiting the educational community by fostering a culture of engagement and cooperation that may enhance student outcomes. Additionally, the study's insights could have wider implications, inspiring positive changes in educational systems beyond the local context, potentially influencing other divisions or districts.

Informed Consent and Assent. Informed consent served as a vital ethical requirement for this study. Teacher participants received complete information about the study's purpose, goals, and procedures prior to taking part. This explanation emphasized that participation was voluntary, outline that no risks were involved, and highlight their right to discontinue participation at any time without any adverse consequences. All details were communicated in straightforward, easy-to-understand language, and participants have the chance to ask questions before providing written consent. The researcher also made sure that participants understand how their data were handled and protected, promoting trust and transparency throughout the research.

Vulnerability of Research Respondents. Although the teacher-respondents were not considered inherently vulnerable, the researcher took special precautions to address any potential vulnerabilities related to the study's topic. Conversations about self-concept and professional involvement might prompt personal reflections, some of which could be sensitive or uncomfortable. The researcher prioritized the emotional and psychological welfare of the participants by fostering a supportive setting where they feel free to express their views without fear of judgment or pressure. Emphasis were placed on the voluntary nature of participation, and respondents have the option to skip any questions or withdraw from the study if they experienced any discomfort or uneasiness.

Privacy and Confidentiality. Teacher-respondents' privacy and confidentiality were rigorously safeguarded in this research. All data collected were anonymized by removing any personal identifiers to prevent individual identification in published findings. The collected data were stored securely in password-protected files, with access restricted solely to the researcher. Participants were duly informed about how their information would be used and safeguarded. The study strictly followed confidentiality protocols in accordance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012, ensuring that all data were handled ethically and securely throughout the research process. This approach promotes trust and aligns with best practices for protecting sensitive information in educational research.
Risk, Benefits and Safety. This research poses minimal risk to participants, as it used non-invasive data collection methods like surveys and interviews. Nonetheless, any potential emotional discomfort linked to discussing self-concept and professional engagement were handled with care. To reduce any unease, participants have the option to skip questions or withdraw from the study without any penalties. The study's benefits outweigh these risks, aiming to enhance teacher self-concept and professional engagement, which can foster more positive school environments and ultimately support both educators and students. Additionally, respondents were given access to the study's findings, offering insights that may aid their professional growth.

Justice. The principle of justice were maintained by providing all teachers within the Division of Davao del Norte who qualify an equal opportunity to take part in the study. The selection process were conducted without bias or discrimination, and efforts were taken to share the research benefits, including findings and recommendations, fairly among all stakeholders. No group were unfairly burdened or denied access to the potential advantages of

the research. This dedication to fairness guarantees that the study's results were relevant and beneficial across diverse educational settings.

Transparency. Transparency was upheld throughout the entire research process, starting from participant recruitment to the sharing of results. Before consenting, participants were fully briefed on the study's aims, procedures, possible risks, and anticipated benefits. The researcher offered ongoing updates about the study's progress to both participants and relevant stakeholders, promoting an open and accountable research environment. Upon completion of the study, the findings were made available to respondents, schools, and policymakers, ensuring accessibility for all contributors.

Qualification of the Researcher. The researcher is a graduate of Bachelor of Elementary Education and has nine (9) years of experience in teaching. In addition, the researcher has actively participated in various trainings and seminars conducted by the Department of Education (DepEd) which contributed to her continuous professional development. The researcher possesses extensive experience in educational research, particularly in the areas of teacher self-concept and professional engagement. This expertise guaranteed that the study is carried out with a thorough understanding of the topic and the essential ethical considerations. The researcher was also skilled in data collection and analysis methods, ensuring the study meets rigorous academic and ethical standards. Furthermore, the researcher has completed training in research ethics, especially regarding privacy and informed consent, which ensures that the study was carried out in a responsible manner, upholding and respecting the rights of the participants.

Conflict of Interest. The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest in this study. The researcher has no financial or personal interests that could improperly affect the results. The research was independently conducted and self-funded, which guaranteed that the findings remain objective and are based entirely on the collected data. Any potential conflicts were disclosed to participants and stakeholders to ensure transparency and uphold the integrity of the research process.

Adequacy of Facilities. The research took place in a suitable and well-resourced setting, guaranteeing that all data-gathering processes were effective, convenient, and mindful of participants' confidentiality. Appropriate facilities such as quiet spaces for interviews and protected digital platforms for surveys were made available to allow respondents to take part without interruptions. The researcher also ensured that all required resources, including secure data storage and survey tools, are prepared to facilitate smooth and safe data collection.

Community Involvement. The study actively engageg the educational community, especially teachers and school leaders, in both designing and carrying out the research. This collaborative approach ensures the study tackles meaningful concerns and reflects the community's priorities. The researcher gathered input from key stakeholders to fine-tune data collection tools and align the study's aims with the overarching goal of enhancing teacher self-perception and professional involvement in schools. Once completed, the findings were shared with the community to encourage discussions on applying the results to shape future policies and teaching practices.

Results

The findings revealed that teachers demonstrated a high level of self-concept across all dimensions, with an overall mean of 4.18 described as extensive. Among the dimensions, satisfaction obtained the highest mean (4.34, Very Extensive), followed by competence, interpersonal perception, and self-acceptance (4.15 each), relationship with students (4.14), and acceptance of risks and initiatives (4.12). These results indicate that teachers generally possess strong confidence in their abilities, positive interpersonal relationships, adaptability, and satisfaction with their profession. The high ratings suggest that teachers maintain a positive professional self-perception that supports motivation, resilience, and effective teaching practice.

The findings support the studies of Huang et al. (2020), Perera et al. (2021), and Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2021), which emphasized that teacher self-concept and self-efficacy are central psychological resources that enhance professional confidence, motivation, and engagement. Teachers who perceive themselves as competent and valued are more likely to demonstrate enthusiasm, persistence, and commitment to their work. Likewise, positive self-concept contributes to resilience, professional satisfaction, and reduced burnout (Burić & Kim, 2020; Aloe et al., 2023).

In terms of professional engagement, teachers also exhibited a high level of engagement with an overall mean of 4.12, interpreted as extensive. Emotional engagement ranked highest (4.13), followed by social engagement with colleagues and students (4.12), and cognitive engagement (4.10). These findings indicate that teachers are

emotionally connected to their work, maintain positive relationships with colleagues and students, and remain mentally invested in teaching tasks.

The results align with the findings of Wang et al. (2022), Yin et al. (2023), and Perera et al. (2021), which describe professional engagement as a multidimensional construct involving emotional, social, and cognitive involvement. Teachers who experience enjoyment, positive relationships, and intellectual investment in teaching are more likely to sustain motivation, commitment, and professional effectiveness. Positive engagement also contributes to teacher well-being, job satisfaction, and retention in the profession (Simbula et al., 2022; Aloe et al., 2023).

The correlation analysis further revealed a significant relationship between teachers' self-concept and professional engagement ($r = 0.780$, $p < 0.05$), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. All dimensions of self-concept were significantly associated with professional engagement, indicating that teachers with stronger competence, interpersonal perception, self-acceptance, satisfaction, and positive student relationships tend to demonstrate higher emotional, social, and cognitive engagement in their profession.

This finding is consistent with the studies of Ye, Cheng, and Yang (2025) and Wang and Pan (2025), which emphasized that positive self-concept strengthens professional identity and increases engagement in work-related activities. Similarly, Saxena et al. (2022) and Canrinus et al. (2022) highlighted that teachers with a positive self-image are more resilient, motivated, and committed to professional responsibilities.

Regression analysis also confirmed that self-concept significantly predicts professional engagement ($R^2 = 0.736$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that 73.6% of the variance in professional engagement is explained by the dimensions of self-concept. Among the predictors, satisfaction showed the strongest influence on professional engagement. These findings suggest that teachers who are satisfied with themselves and their professional roles are more likely to demonstrate stronger commitment, motivation, and engagement in teaching.

The findings support Self-Determination Theory, Social Cognitive Theory, and Person–Environment Fit Theory, which explain that positive self-concept enhances intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, and professional commitment (Chen et al., 2025; Wang et al., 2025; Aliazas et al., 2023). Teachers with strong self-concept are more likely to engage actively in teaching, maintain positive relationships, and sustain professional effectiveness. Overall, the study confirms that self-concept plays a vital role in strengthening teachers' professional engagement and sustaining effective educational practice.

Summary

The primary aim of this study was to examine the significance of the relationship between teachers' self-concept and professional engagement. The research was conducted among 297 elementary school teachers in the Division of Davao del Norte. A descriptive-correlational research design was employed, utilizing adopted research instruments that were validated by a panel of experts and pilot-tested prior to administration.

Data were analyzed using appropriate statistical tools, including weighted mean, standard deviation, Pearson product-moment correlation, and regression analysis. All hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance. The key findings of the study are as follows:

1. The findings indicate that teachers possess an extensive level of self-concept across all dimensions, with satisfaction emerging as the most dominant indicator. High levels of competence, interpersonal perception, and self-acceptance suggest that teachers perceive themselves as capable, socially connected, and confident. Moreover, strong relationships with students and a readiness to take risks and initiatives reflect proactive and engaged professional behavior. Overall, the results demonstrate a consistently well-developed self-concept among teachers.
2. Teachers also demonstrate an extensive level of professional engagement across all indicators. Emotional engagement is the most pronounced, indicating a strong personal connection to their work. This is followed by social engagement with colleagues and students, highlighting effective collaboration and relationship-building. Although slightly lower, cognitive engagement still reflects a considerable level of mental focus and commitment, showing that teachers remain actively involved in their professional responsibilities.
3. The findings of the study indicate a significant relationship between self-concept and professional engagement, suggesting that teachers' perceptions of themselves strongly influence their level of involvement in their work. A positive self-concept is associated with higher emotional, social, and cognitive engagement, indicating that confident and self-assured teachers are more motivated and committed to their profession.
4. All dimensions of self-concept, namely competence, interpersonal perception, acceptance of risks and initiatives, relationship with students, satisfaction, and self-acceptance are found to significantly predict

professional engagement. This confirms that self-concept is a key determinant of teachers' engagement and supports existing theoretical perspectives. The findings highlight that strengthening teachers' self-concept through personal and organizational support can effectively enhance their professional engagement.

Conclusions

Based on the results of this study, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. The study concludes that teachers possess a highly developed self-concept, characterized by strong satisfaction, competence, interpersonal awareness, and self-acceptance. This indicates that teachers generally view themselves as capable, confident, and socially connected professionals, which supports proactive behavior and positive relationships with students.
2. It is also concluded that teachers demonstrate a high degree of professional engagement, particularly in terms of emotional connection to their work, supported by strong social interaction with colleagues and students, and sustained cognitive involvement in teaching tasks. This reflects a well-rounded and active participation in their professional roles.
3. The study further concludes that self-concept significantly influences professional engagement, affirming that teachers who maintain a positive self-perception are more likely to be emotionally, socially, and cognitively engaged in their work. This underscores the importance of self-concept as a foundation for motivation and commitment in teaching.
4. Finally, the study concludes that all dimensions of self-concept serve as significant predictors of professional engagement, establishing self-concept as a critical determinant of teachers' professional behavior. These findings support relevant theoretical frameworks and highlight the need to strengthen teachers' self-concept through both individual development and organizational support to sustain high levels of engagement.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

For higher officials of the Department of Education, it is recommended that policies and programs be formulated and implemented to deliberately enhance teachers' self-concept as a vital factor in promoting professional engagement. This may include sustained professional development initiatives, mentoring and coaching programs, and recognition systems that affirm teachers' competence, autonomy, and professional identity.

For Teachers, they are encouraged to actively nurture a positive professional self-concept by engaging in reflective practice, continuous professional learning, and constructive collaboration with peers. Seeking feedback, celebrating professional growth, and aligning personal values with teaching roles may enhance confidence, motivation, and commitment to the profession. Strengthening self-concept can help them sustain high levels of professional engagement and instructional effectiveness in the face of evolving educational demands.

For School Principals, they are encouraged to create and sustain a school climate that reinforces teachers' positive self-concept through supportive leadership, open communication, and opportunities for professional growth. Providing constructive feedback, recognizing accomplishments, and empowering teacher's participation in decision-making processes can enhance teachers' sense of professional value and strengthen their engagement.

For Future Researchers, they are encouraged to expand this study by examining additional factors such as organizational support, leadership styles, and job satisfaction that may mediate or moderate the relationship between self-concept and professional engagement. Employing longitudinal or mixed-methods research designs across diverse educational contexts may provide deeper insights into causal relationships and long-term effects. Further studies may also explore intervention-based approaches aimed at enhancing teachers' self-concept to sustain professional engagement over time.

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