



## **Professional Identity as a Construct of Teaching Performance of Public Secondary Teachers in Davao Oriental Division**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The study aimed to assess the professional identity and teaching performance of public secondary teachers in Davao Oriental Division and to examine the relationship between these two factors. A sample of 150 secondary teachers from public schools was selected using probability sampling. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive-correlational survey methods, including Mean and Product-Moment correlation. Results indicated that teachers exhibited a significant level of professional identity and demonstrated extensive teaching performance. Moreover, a notable relationship was found between these variables. Based on these findings, it is recommended that higher officials in the Department of Education and school administrators explore strategies to enhance both professional identity and teaching performance among teachers. Additionally, future research may delve deeper into these variables, considering other influencing factors and employing different research methodologies.

Keywords: Professional identity, teaching performance, descriptive correlation, Davao Oriental Division, Philippines

### **Introduction**

Education holds a crucial position in the progress of a nation, and its quality depends not only on the educational procedures but also on the effectiveness of teachers in their roles as educators. Teacher performance, delineated as the outcomes and behaviors exhibited in carrying out their duties and obligations within a specified timeframe, stands as a pivotal factor in this equation. This is especially significant given the substantial influence of teacher performance on student accomplishments. It is imperative to acknowledge the intricate connection between a teacher's role and various factors such as the educational setting, student attributes, and school-related elements.

Furthermore, a teacher's capacity to inspire confidence, cultivate a supportive classroom atmosphere, maintain interaction, and establish rapport with students can bolster student engagement in the learning journey. Additionally, the instructional competencies of teachers, encompassing adept classroom management and cognitive stimulation, play a central role in motivating students to engage in learning (Kanya et al., 2021). However, it is crucial to acknowledge that the demanding and challenging nature of the teaching profession can potentially jeopardize teachers' performance.

The quality of educators in Indonesia is deemed inadequate, marked by deficiencies in competence, knowledge, and pedagogical skills (Rosser, 2018). According to the 2018 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) survey, Indonesian education ranks among the 10 lowest-performing categories, particularly in literacy, science, and mathematics (Tae et al., 2019). This poor performance can largely be attributed to the disparities in educational quality and the shortcomings within the teaching workforce. The subpar quality of teachers carries significant consequences, impacting various facets including student achievements and the overall learning process. Wangui, Omboi, and Irabo (2016) highlighted that teachers' performance is hampered by work-related stress, stemming from factors related to schools, teachers, and the community.

Similarly, in the Philippines, several unfavorable factors contribute to poor teaching performance (Haramain, 2018). These factors encompass inadequate intellectual and scholastic capabilities, insufficient preparation in Teacher Education programs, low salary or income levels, incongruent educational qualifications, ineffective pedagogical methodologies, challenging home environments, health issues, lack of professional development opportunities, unsuitable educational curricula, non-conducive school environments, outdated school systems, inadequate administrative management skills, insufficient and ineffective implementation of in-service training programs, and inadequate school equipment or facilities, alongside a lack of faculty coordination.

In Davao Oriental Division, teachers' inadequate performance was noted to stem from various factors. These factors encompassed overcrowded classrooms, students' passive engagement in academic, co-curricular, and extra-curricular activities, as well as the presence of lethargic and disinterested learners with poor educational foundations. Additionally, challenges included the lack of cooperation and support from parents, religious organizations, and the community, alongside the absence of effective community leadership and unfavorable community environments. Moreover, teachers lacked exposure to training opportunities that could enhance their professional skills.

However, these observations lacked validation through academic research. Hence, the researcher was inspired to investigate the levels of professional identity and teaching performance among public secondary teachers in Davao Oriental Division. The study aimed to uncover correlations between professional identity and teaching performance. Furthermore, it aimed to provide valuable insights to policymakers, facilitating the formulation of policies, programs, interventions, projects, and activities aimed at empowering teachers to strengthen their professional identity, thereby enhancing their teaching performance.

This study was primarily rooted in Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1989). This theory emphasizes that learning is most likely to occur when there is a close identification between the observer and the model, coupled with a strong sense of self-efficacy in the observer. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to master a particular skill. These beliefs play a crucial role in motivating human behavior, influencing affective responses, and guiding cognitive processes (Bandura, 1989).

In the context of this study, Puglia (2008) defined professional identity as the sense of fulfillment and pride in one's chosen field, understanding of one's roles and responsibilities as a counseling professional, and representation of the profession. Consequently, the perception of the profession is shaped by the quality of individuals' work, and a weak professional identity can negatively impact one's profession. Moreover, Edwards (2022) highlighted the importance of recognizing teaching as a significant component of professional expertise in its own right. Professional development opportunities contribute to enhancing the quality of education in schools and provide educators with avenues to grow personally and professionally, thereby strengthening their teaching skills. Hence, professional development opportunities are considered essential for educators.

Moreover, Prytula and Weiman (2012) noted that teachers possess an understanding of their own identities and perceptions of their roles. Their identity is deeply ingrained in the practices and traditions of the school, with the capacity for adaptation. Examining teacher learning and professional development through the lens of teacher identity is crucial for understanding how various factors such as environments, structures, and habits influence school progress, as these factors themselves evolve over time.

In the enhancement of professional identity, teachers engage in diverse professional development activities. Such activities often entail the reciprocal exchange of ideas, sharing of experiences, and active involvement in problem-solving endeavors. Numerous research findings have underscored the positive outcomes of professional development on teachers' knowledge and practices. Professional development initiatives have been shown to enhance teachers' understanding and competence in various academic domains such as reading comprehension, as well as in social aspects related to student learning. The enhancement of teachers' knowledge has been linked to increased levels of satisfaction and self-efficacy (Avalos, 2011).

Coldwell (2017) contended that international research has linked teacher professional development (PD) with increased teacher efficacy. He further noted that PD, by enhancing teachers' knowledge, contributes to their confidence and motivation, thus enabling them to become more effective educators. Coldwell's study participants reported that PD also allowed them to showcase their unique skills and attributes. This increase in knowledge, confidence, and motivation was closely associated with improved self-efficacy. Additionally, some teachers in Coldwell's study mentioned that participating in PD boosted their confidence levels, leading to a validation of their content knowledge. Some even became confident enough to apply for promotions. Many of Coldwell's subjects also discussed other benefits of PD, such as improved classroom practices and increased job satisfaction. Desimone, Porter, Garet, Yoon, and Birman (2002) affirmed that PD and ongoing learning opportunities have been found to enhance teachers' instructional techniques and classroom practices. They emphasized that PD plays a crucial role in deepening teachers' subject knowledge and enhancing their ability to teach to high standards.

Social Cognitive Theory, developed by Albert Bandura, emphasizes the impact of social interactions, observational learning, and self-efficacy on human behavior. When applied to teaching, this theory can support professional identity and enhance teaching performance. Teachers can observe experienced educators to learn effective teaching practices, classroom management techniques, and student engagement strategies. By witnessing successful teaching models, teachers can improve their performance and develop a stronger professional identity. Integrating the principles of Social Cognitive Theory into professional development and teacher support programs can help cultivate a positive professional identity and improve teaching performance by emphasizing observational learning, self-efficacy, social support, feedback, and ethical modeling.

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## Methodology

### *Research Design*

In this study, a quantitative research approach was utilized, specifically employing a descriptive correlational technique. Quantitative research methods involve the collection of numerical data and its subsequent mathematical analysis, often incorporating statistical tools. This approach is employed to elucidate and provide explanations for specific problems or phenomena, as highlighted by Apuke (2017). In the context of descriptive correlational investigations, the focus lies in describing variables and the naturally occurring relationships that manifest among them, as discussed by Davis (2021). This study was categorized as quantitative since it relied on numerical data for data analysis and interpretation. It was descriptive since its goal was to evaluate the professional identity and teaching performance of teachers. This academic endeavor was also correlational because it evaluated the relationship between professional identity and teaching performance of teachers in the public secondary schools of Davao Oriental Division.

### *Research Respondents*

A total of 150 public secondary teachers were invited to participate in this study. It was asserted that a minimum of 50 samples is required for simple regression analysis, with generally 100 samples recommended for most research scenarios (Hair et al., 2018). Therefore, the inclusion of 150 respondents

exceeded the requirements to fulfill the study's objectives. In establishing the inclusion and exclusion criteria, secondary teachers with a minimum of 2 years of teaching experience were selected for this investigation, as their tenure of 2 years in the public school system provided valuable insights into their professional identity and its impact on teaching performance. Participants who felt uncomfortable or hesitant in completing the survey questionnaire were given the option to withdraw from the study voluntarily. Their decision to withdraw was respected, prioritizing the welfare of the respondents throughout the research process.

#### Research Instruments

As to the form of gathering data, this study utilized an adapted survey questionnaire. The questionnaire that was employed in this undertaking was divided into two sets. The first set was focusing on professional identity while the second set was about teaching performance

The professional identity questionnaire was adapted from Noi, Kwok and Go (2016). The instrument consisted of 20 items. It had four indicators, namely: teaching beliefs (1-5), professional socialization (1-5), career progression (1-5), and professional competence (1-5). The questionnaire was subjected to a pilot testing having a result of .74 suggesting that the items have relatively *high* internal consistency.

The teaching performance questionnaire was adapted from Moreno-Murcia et al. (2015). The instrument consisted of 20 items. It had the following indicators, namely: planning (1-4); development (1-9); and results (1-7). The questionnaire was subjected to a pilot testing having a result of .72 suggesting that the items have relatively *high* internal consistency. The instruments in this study were contextualized to achieve the purpose of this study. The researcher integrated all the comments and suggestions of the adviser, panel members and expert validators for the refinement of the tools and to achieve construct validity.

## Table

**Table 1**

### Summary on the Extent of Professional Identity of Teachers

No	Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1	Teaching Beliefs	3.64	Extensive
2	Professional Socialization	3.63	Extensive
3	Career Progression	3.57	Extensive
4	Professional Competence	3.63	Extensive
<b>Overall</b>		<b>3.62</b>	<b>Extensive</b>

Table 1 provides the summary on the extent of professional identity of teachers. It is exhibited that the overall mean of professional identity of teachers is 3.62, which is in an extensive level. This means that professional identity of teachers is oftentimes evident.

Data show that all four (4) indicators are in an extensive level. As arranged chronologically, teaching beliefs has the highest mean score (3.64). This is followed by professional socialization (3.63), professional competence (3.63), and career progression (3.57).

The presented results illuminate the prevalent manifestation of teachers' professional identity, with data indicating an extensive level across all four indicators. Notably, teaching beliefs emerged as the dimension with the highest mean score suggesting that teachers place a significant emphasis on their philosophical convictions about teaching. Following closely, professional socialization and professional competence underscoring the importance teachers attribute to continuous learning, collaboration, and technological proficiency. While career progression received a slightly lower mean score, it remains a substantial aspect of teachers' professional identity. This chronology of scores implies that teachers, first and foremost, prioritize their foundational beliefs about teaching, followed by a commitment to ongoing learning and collaboration, technological adeptness, and career advancement. These findings collectively underscore the multifaceted nature of teachers' professional identity, reflecting a holistic integration of beliefs, socialization, competence, and career aspirations in shaping their roles within the educational landscape.

The strong professional identity demonstrated by teachers reinforces Regnery's (2021) widely accepted notion that a teacher's identity significantly influences their approach to administration, curriculum, and students, with these interactions further shaping their identity. In an autographic study, Vokatis and Zhang (2016) similarly found that becoming a professional teacher involves engaging with others' perspectives. Wallis (2023) suggested that the tension between a teacher's personal views on teaching and peers' expectations of professionalism can lead to deep introspection about identity.

Grillia and Daskolia (2023) argued that a teacher's identity is closely linked to their distinct practices, such as inquiry-based teaching, suggesting a strong connection between teacher identity and practices. Zhao and Zhang (2017) explained that teachers' professional identity is shaped by their diverse teaching practices across different contexts, leading them to form comprehensive views of themselves in relation to students, colleagues, professional goals, and teaching circumstances. Thus, teacher identity differs from specific teaching practices and functional roles, which are more associated with particular teaching tasks and skills, while teacher identity is a more personal aspect that reflects how one sees themselves as a teacher.

Table 2

## Summary on the Extent of Teaching Performance

No	Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1	Planning	3.59	Extensive
2	Development	3.57	Extensive
3	Result	3.56	Extensive
<b>Overall</b>		<b>3.57</b>	<b>Extensive</b>

Table 2 provides the summary on the extent of teaching performance. It is exhibited that the overall mean of teaching performance is 3.57, which is in an extensive level. This means that the teaching performance is oftentimes evident.

Data show that all three (3) indicators are in an extensive level. As arranged chronologically, planning has the highest mean score (3.59). This is followed by development (3.57), and result (3.56).

The reported results provide a comprehensive perspective on the frequent visibility of teaching performance across three key indicators. The data analysis indicates an extensive level for all three indicators, with planning having the highest mean score, followed by development, and result. The chronology of scores suggests that teachers place a paramount emphasis on meticulous planning as the foundation of their teaching performance. This likely involves careful preparation of instructional materials, thoughtful consideration of learning objectives, and strategic organization of the curriculum. Following planning, the focus shifts to development, indicating that educators actively engage in fostering a supportive and adaptable learning environment through accessibility, tailored content delivery, and effective use of resources. Finally, the emphasis on results underscores the commitment of teachers to achieving desired learning outcomes. Overall, these results highlight the multifaceted nature of teaching performance, spanning the preparatory phase, the facilitation of learning processes, and the attainment of measurable results, collectively contributing to the overall effectiveness of educators in their roles.

The favorable findings of this study are in line with the conclusions reached by Batuigas et al. (2022), underscoring the indispensable role of teachers as key figures entrusted with numerous essential responsibilities in shaping the youth into productive members of society. Teachers serve as central figures in the learning process, and their commitment and dedication to their profession are of paramount importance. Therefore, evaluating their performance in the field becomes crucial to assess its effectiveness. However, it's essential to acknowledge that various factors can impact teachers' performance.

Furthermore, according to Pitogo and Ecle (2019), the effectiveness of classrooms correlates with improved student outcomes and overall development. Teachers' effectiveness is seen as a result of their competent and enhanced performance, among other factors. Haryani and Cahyaningtas (2017) argued that to achieve optimal performance, teachers should develop all their competencies and foster a comfortable and conducive learning environment for students. Lian et al. (2020) stressed that genuine progress in education can only be attained when teachers are motivated, creative, innovative, dynamic, and fully engaged in every aspect of their profession.

Table 3

## Significance of the Relationship Between the Extent of Professional Identity of Teachers and Teaching Performance

Professional Identity of Teachers Indicators	Dependent Variable	r-value	p-value	Decision on Ho
Teaching Beliefs		0.473	0.000	Rejected
Professional Socialization		0.468	0.000	Rejected
Career Progression	Teaching Performance	0.464	0.000	Rejected
Professional Competence		0.466	0.000	Rejected
<b>Overall</b>		<b>0.612*</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>Rejected</b>

\*Significant at 0.05 significance level.

Presented in Table 3 are the data on the significance of the relationship between professional identity of teachers and teaching performance. Reflected in the hypothesis, the relationship was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The overall r-value of .468 with a p-value of <0.05 signified the rejection of the null hypothesis. It means that there is a significant relationship between professional identity of teachers and teaching performance. This shows that professional identity of teachers is correlated with the teaching performance.

Doing a pairwise correlation among the measures of both variables, it can be gleaned that teaching beliefs, professional socialization, career progression, and professional competence revealed computed r-values of 0.473, 0.468, 0.464, and 0.466 respectively with p-values which are less than 0.05 in the level of significance. This implies that as teaching beliefs, professional socialization, career progression, and professional competence increase, the teaching performance increases.

The reported results present a significant finding with an overall r-value of .468 and a p-value of <0.05, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This signifies a meaningful relationship between the professional identity of teachers and their teaching performance. These correlations indicate that as teachers' beliefs, socialization experiences, career advancement, and professional competence increase, there is a corresponding increase in teaching performance. This aligns with the notion that a strong professional identity, encompassing beliefs, socialization, career goals, and competence, positively influences and correlates with effective teaching. These findings underscore the interconnectedness of various aspects of a teacher's professional identity with their overall teaching performance, providing valuable insights for educators and policymakers aiming to enhance teaching effectiveness.

The findings of this study are consistent with the research conducted by Motalebzadeh and Kazemi (2018), highlighting the significant relationship between professional identity and teachers' performance. This suggests that a strong professional identity correlates with a more pronounced critical stance towards teaching performance. The quality of an individual's work may be influenced by a weak professional identity, thereby impacting the perception of the teaching profession.

Furthermore, as Mamino (2021) emphasized, teachers possess an understanding of their own identity and their perception of their role, which strongly influences practices and traditions within the school. Teacher identity is susceptible to change and is integral for examining teacher learning and professional development, considering the elements of teacher identity and understanding how environments, structures, and habits affect school progress, with the environment and work habits playing significant roles.

Samsudin et al. (2021) suggested that teachers enter the learning domain with professional self-images shaped by their experiences as learners, which are continuously re-contextualized based on their experiences as professionals. Teachers' responses to the question of who they are undergo continuous shaping through their perceptions of their future roles, contributing to the development of their identity as they embark on their careers. Han (2021) emphasized that a teacher's professional identity is crucial to the practices, behaviors, and skills reflected in their actions.

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## Conclusions

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

The extent of professional identity of teachers implies that it is oftentimes evident in the school. In fact, all dimensions are oftentimes evident, namely, teaching beliefs, professional socialization, career progression, and professional competence. Meanwhile, the extent of teaching performance of teacher is oftentimes evident. Apparently, all indicators are found to be oftentimes evident specifically on planning, development, and result. Based on the findings, professional identity of teachers and teaching performance are related. This leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

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## Recommendations

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

In light of the extensive professional identity and teaching performance exhibited by educators, it is recommended that DepEd officials acknowledge and capitalize on these positive trends to further elevate the quality of education. Recognizing and celebrating teachers' robust professional identity could involve creating platforms for knowledge-sharing and collaboration among educators. Additionally, fostering a supportive environment for continuous professional development, with an emphasis on aligning teaching practices with evolving educational needs, may contribute to sustained high teaching performance. Investing in targeted initiatives that promote teacher well-being, career progression, and technological competence could further enhance the overall professional identity and efficacy of educators within the system.

Moreover, school heads may leverage the extensive professional identity and teaching performance demonstrated by teachers to create a supportive and collaborative school culture. Encouraging regular forums for teachers to share successful practices, teaching methodologies, and innovative ideas can enhance the collective professional identity. Emphasizing and facilitating continuous professional development programs, specifically tailored to the identified strengths and interests of teachers, may further nurture their capabilities and expertise. Recognizing outstanding contributions and providing avenues for career progression within the school may foster a sense of accomplishment and motivation. Additionally, School Heads may consider

implementing mentorship programs that allow experienced teachers to guide and support their colleagues, promoting a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement.

Furthermore, teachers may leverage their extensive professional identity and teaching performance by actively engaging in ongoing professional development opportunities that align with their identified strengths and areas for growth. Collaborative initiatives such as peer mentoring, knowledge-sharing sessions, and collaborative lesson planning may further enhance the collective professional identity within the teaching community. Embracing technological advancements and incorporating innovative teaching methodologies may contribute to sustained high teaching performance. Additionally, teachers may be encouraged to actively participate in school-based decision-making processes, fostering a sense of ownership and commitment to the school's vision and mission.

Lastly, future researchers may explore the extensive professional identity of teachers and its correlation with extensive teaching performance should delve deeper into the specific factors that contribute to this positive relationship. Conducting in-depth qualitative studies, interviews, or focus group discussions may offer nuanced insights into the experiences, beliefs, and practices of teachers that shape their professional identity and effectiveness in the classroom. Moreover, exploring contextual factors, such as school culture, administrative support, and community involvement, may provide a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics at play.

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