

GSJ: Volume 11, Issue 6, June 2023, Online: ISSN 2320-9186 www.globalscientificjournal.com

PROFESSIONAL TEACHING PROFICIENCY OF TEACHERS AND SOFT SKILLS OF STUDENTS

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Teacher I

Abstract

This study aimed to determine the relationship between professional teaching proficiency of teachers and soft skills of students. This study utilized the non-experimental quantitative research design using descriptive technique involving teachers in Malita North District of Davao Occidental Division, Philippines. The study was conducted on the second semester of School Year 2022-2023. Research instruments on professional teaching proficiency of teachers and soft skills of students were used as source of data. Using mean and pearson-r as statistical tools to treat the data, the study showed the following results: the level of professional teaching proficiency of teachers and is very high, the level of soft skills of students is very high, there is a significance on the relationship between professional teaching proficiency of teachers and soft skills of students.

Keywords: Professional Teaching Proficiency of Teachers, Soft Skills of Students, School Administration and Supervision, Quantitative Research, Philippines

1. INTRODUCTION

Students with poor soft skills tend to have unhealthy peer relations. The lack of soft skills among students can lead to issues such as diminished group cohesion, the emergence of egotistical attitudes, the inability to cooperate, and other conduct that obstructs lecture activities.

Students' poor soft skills is evident in almost all schools. As a proof, teachers in Bangladesh always face troubles with students who initiate fight with their classmates. If not fighting, other students do not acquire a sense of friendliness and often caught bullying and showing aggression against their classmates in the form of boxing or name-branding. While others are fond of verbal teasing, other students do not integrate themselves with their classmates during group activities (Nusrat & Sultana, 2019).

In the Philippines, as school children are supposed to develop a soft skill at the age they are expected to, there are some who have poor emotional stability as they frequently worry a lot, depressed on just anything, and even feel nervous when asked to answer on the board. There are students who even cry when asked to answer simple mathematical problems (Llenares & Deocaris, 2019).

In the local context, there are students with low self-concept and they have issues on emotional stability and general esteem. These student's manifest poor relationship with their classmates and are usually troubled and always caught bullying other classmates or getting poor scores in their assessments. These students become common concerns of teachers as subjects for behavior modification. These students display difficulty in dealing with classmates and those who tend to be frequently highly-strung, tense and restless, shy, and panicky, and those who are introverted to mingle with other students when asked to share their opinions in the class.

It is in this context that the researcher has rarely come across of local research that explores the professional teaching proficiency of teachers and soft skills of students. This undertaking therefore, can become a blueprint of new knowledge and supplementary to the existing document for every variable involved in this research. It is in this considerable

magnitude that the researcher decided to conduct the study as the weight of social skills of the students cannot be underscored.

This study is anchored on Instructional theory for skill development by Romiszowski (2009). This theory defines skill as the capacity to perform a given type of task or activity with a given degree of effectiveness, efficiency, speed or other measure of quantity or quality. He distinguishes between intellectual skills, motor, sensorimotor, or psychomotor skills, personal skills, and interpersonal skills.

In contrast to knowledge, which is something you either have or don't, skill is something that you gain with experience and practice. The hypothesis states that talents range in complexity from reproductive to productive along a continuum. Reproductive skills are those that are concentrated on putting regular practices or mechanized processes, such typing or number multiplication, into practice. On the other hand, productive abilities, like writing or playing chess, involve the application of ideas and methods.

According to Romiszowski, a skill's reproductive or productive nature has a significantly bigger impact on the choice and development of an instructional technique than its intellectual, motor, personal, or interpersonal nature.

According to skill development theory, while teaching complicated skills, the instruction should contain information about the learning process as well as feedback on the final product. According to skill development theory, we should provide knowledge of performance while instructing productive skills through debriefs and action reflection.

Students should also work on developing their soft skills. These are non-technical talents that outline your method of operation and interpersonal relationships. Unlike hard talents, such as data analytics or programming, they may not be something you learn in a school. Instead, they exhibit your manner of speaking, work ethic, and working style.

Soft skills are essential for developing strong bonds with classmates, expanding networks with seniors, and developing trust. For two key reasons, soft skills and personality development are crucial for students: They increase employability.

Soft skills are personality traits and character qualities that are indicative of how you function in general, with others, and on your own. Soft skills are also known as noncognitive, interpersonal, and core competencies. Although there are many different soft skills, communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and flexibility are typical examples of soft skills.

This study is also seen through the pronouncement of Palmer (2010) which stated that professional teaching proficiency of teachers draws students to develop their social skills. He added that creative teaching is similar to weaving a fabric of connectedness between the teacher and the students where students manifest an inner desire to engage themselves in their learning as they are motivated by the creativity of the teacher.

The professional teaching proficiency of teachers influences students to develop their soft skills as stressed by Lowman (1995). Creative teachers make students more connected to the lessons and to the classroom activities. It is the teacher's creative construct that connects students to create meaning on their classroom activities and in their learning in general.

The conceptual framework of this study is shown in Figure 1. The independent variable of this study is the *Professional Teaching Proficiency of Teachers* were taken from Illinois State Board of Education (2002) with following indicators: knowledge, teaching skills, assessment and evaluation, and professional values and behavior. Meanwhile, the dependent variable of this study is *Soft Skills of Learners* were taken from Project DATA-University of Washington (2014) with the following indicators: social play and emotional development, emotional regulation, group skills, and communication skills. *emotional development* is the behavior display by the students while playing with peers; *emotional regulation* is the understanding of owns emotion and regulate them to display flexibility and problem-solving skills; *communication skills* is the conversational skills of students during socialization which includes the nonverbal conversational skills, questioning, and giving compliments.

This study aims to find out the significance of the relationship between the professional teaching proficiency of teachers and soft skills of students.

This study is beneficial to the Schools Division Office where the study is conducted as it will give the personnel a concrete view of the levels of the variables which this study is aimed to identify. This will guide the personnel as their reference for future decision-making to improve on the aspects which the study is intended to uncover.

This study is aimed to determine the relationship between the strengthening sensitivity and proactive behavior of students. The study will be implemented in some public schools in Davao Occidental Division within the second semester of the School Year 2022-2023.

This study is limited to content knowledge, instructional delivery, communication, and assessment for professional teaching proficiency. On the other hand, for soft skills, it is limited only to social play and emotional development, emotional regulation, group skills, and communication skills.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study utilized non-experimental quantitative research approach utilizing descriptive correlational design. Quantitative research is defined as a systematic investigation of phenomena by gathering quantifiable data and performing statistical, mathematical, or computational techniques. Quantitative research collects information from existing and potential customers using sampling methods and sending out online surveys, online polls, and questionnaires. The results of which can be depicted in the form of numerical. After careful understanding of these numbers to predict the future of a product or service and make changes accordingly (Berg, 2009).

Quantitative research is mostly conducted in the social sciences using the statistical methods used above to collect quantitative data from the research study. In this research method, researchers and statisticians deploy mathematical frameworks and theories that pertain to the quantity under question. Quantitative research templates are objective, elaborate, and many times, even investigational. The results achieved from this research method are logical, statistical, and unbiased. Data collection happened using a structured method and conducted on larger samples that represent the entire population (Crano, Brewer & Lac, 2015).

This study is also descriptive in nature. Descriptive research is defined as a research method that describes the characteristics of the population or phenomenon that is being studied. This methodology focuses more on the what of the research subject rather than the why of the research subject. The term descriptive research refers to the type of research question, design, and data analysis that will be applied to a given topic. Descriptive statistics tell what is, while inferential statistics try to determine cause and effect (Bunge, 1995).

Descriptive research can be either quantitative or qualitative. It can involve collections of quantitative information that can be tabulated along a continuum in numerical form, such as scores on a test or the number of times a person chooses to use a-certain feature of a multimedia program, or it can describe categories of information such as gender or patterns of interaction when using technology in a group situation. Descriptive research involves gathering data that describe events and then organizes, tabulates, depicts, and describes the data collection.

The geographic location of this study was shown in Figure 2. This study is conducted in the public schools in Davao Occidental Division. It has 25 barangays and eight secondary schools. According to the 2009 LGPMS census, it has a population of 133,020 people in 20,526 households. Malita was known for various parts of its cultural heritage.

The research sample included only those teachers who have permanent position. They must also have a teaching experience for the public school for at least five years. The substitute teachers and those holding Learning Support Aid positions are excluded in the sample of the research. Likewise, this study is conducted only to one district of Davao Occidental Division and at least have more than a hundred teachers as sample.

This study utilized convenient sampling in determining the sample of this study. Only those teachers who manifested their willingness to participate in the research were included in the study. These students must have Informed Consent to show their voluntary participation of the study.

This study utilized adopted questionnaires. For Professional Teaching Proficiency of Teachers, the indicators were taken from the Illinois State Board of Education (2002) with following indicators: knowledge, teaching skills, assessment and evaluation, and professional values and behavior.

The five-point Likert Scale below was used in the assessment of the professional teaching proficiency of teachers.

Meanwhile, the indicators for the Soft Skills of Students were taken from Project DATA-University of Washington (2014) with the following indicators: social play and emotional development, emotional regulation, group skills, and communication skills.

The five-point Likert Scale below was used in the assessment of the soft skills of learners.

The following steps were undertaken in the gathering of data for this study. First, the researcher asked permission from the Superintendent of Davao Occidental Division. After the request was granted, the researcher also sent a letter to the district supervisor indicating the intention to conduct the study in the district. The researcher attached the letter of approval from the division superintendent. The same letter of request was also sent to the school heads.

The school allowed the researcher to gather data for the research during the activity period in the afternoon. This was a big challenge for the researcher because the travel going to the school's district usually takes more than half an hour from the station.

As soon as the researcher got into the school, he went to the office of the school head and showed the letter of approval and endorsement from the superintendent and from the district supervisor. After which, the researcher met the teachers and the school head and gave them a brief orientation on how they will respond to the questions in the questionnaire. As soon as the respondents were able to complete answering the questionnaire, the researcher collected them and tallied the responses. Interpretation followed after the statistician handed the data.

The following statistical tools were used in the analysis of data.

Mean. This was used to determine the level of professional teaching proficiency of teachers and soft skills of learners. Pearson r. This was used to determine the significance of the relationship between the professional teaching proficiency of teachers and soft skills of learners.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The standard deviation in the descriptive tables, Table 1 and Table 2 ranged from 0.30 to 0.40 which is less than 1.0 as the typical standard deviation for a 5-point Likert Scale. This means that the ratings in the accomplished questionnaires were close to the mean, indicating consistency of responses among the respondents (Wittink and Bayer, 1994).

Level of Professional Teaching Proficiency of Teachers

in terms of Knowledge

Presented in table 1.1 is the level of professional teaching proficiency of teachers in terms of knowledge with a mean score of 4.45 or very high. The result of this mean score is taken from the strands of the indicators which are as follows: has a thorough understanding of the curriculum, has a sound command of the subject content taught, has basic knowledge of child development, has a knowledge of a wide range of strategies, and has sound knowledge of instructional language.

The result of this study confirms the statement of Arenas (2009), and Deumert, Marginson, Nyland, Ramia and Sawir (2008) which stated that teachers need to upgrade themselves through trainings to acquire new teaching strategies that truly capture the interests of the students. The knowledge teachers will gain from trainings are essential tool

to successfully teach today's children whose needs are as vast as the information they get in the web. When teachers are unable to advance himself/herself, he/she might not be able to teach efficiently and students may lag behind.

<u>Level of Professional Teaching Proficiency of Teachers</u> <u>in terms of Teaching Skills</u>

Presented in table 1.2 is the level of professional teaching proficiency of teachers in terms of teaching skills with a mean score of 4.28 or very high. The result of this mean score is taken from the strands of the indicators which are as follows: demonstrates high quality classroom teaching skills; matches content, teaching approaches and student development and learning in planning; uses information technology to enhance learning; prepares appropriate learning material; and uses a range of behavior management strategies.

Level of Professional Teaching Proficiency of Teachers in terms of Assessment and Evaluation

Presented in table 1.3 is the level of professional teaching proficiency of teachers in terms of assessment and evaluation with a mean score of 4.46 or very high. The result of this mean score is taken from the strands of the indicators which are as follows: designs appropriate, valid, and reliable assessment; monitors and assess student progress and learning outcome; uses feedback from assessment tools to plan and organize for remedial work; maintains records of learners' progress; and uses appropriate assessment criteria.

Summary of Level of Professional Teaching Proficiency of Teachers

Presented in Table 1.4 is the level of Professional Teaching Proficiency of Teachers with the overall mean of 4.40 with a descriptive equivalent of very high indicating that all enumerated indicators were always observed. The overall mean was the results obtained from the mean of the indicators for the specific items from the questionnaire intended for this particular indicator which is appended in this study. Among the enumerated indicators, Assessment obtained the highest mean of 4.46 with a descriptive level of very high, content knowledge obtained a mean score of 4.45 or very high, and instructional delivery obtained a mean score of 4.28 or very high.

Meanwhile, the result of this study is also identical to the statement of Cook and Rasmussen (2012), McLaughlin (2009) and Monteagudo (2009) which stated that efficient teachers consistently create learning experiences that guide a number of students to identify their strengths, interests, and needs; takes risks; and challenges themselves to succeed and ensures a good soft and emotional atmosphere in the classroom. Promotion of learning and growth among the students should include creating an effective classroom environment.

This study is also in consonance with the statement of Hill, Ball and Schilling (2009), Franke, Kazemi and Battey (2007) and Wilson, Cooney and Stinson (2009) which stated that to achieve a meaningful teaching and learning environment, teachers should shift to a more balanced approach to teaching, which places more emphasis on understanding the content area of the subject. Whenever teachers master the content area of the subject, they can easily give real life examples during the lessons and they can instantly integrate essential life-skills among the students. Additionally, the teacher can design many engaging activities for students to get involved with when teacher has a mastery of the contents of the subject.

Results of this study showed that teachers have a high level of professional teaching proficiency. According to Ball and Bass (2008), Connell (2009), Ferguson and Brown (2008), Grimshaw (2009), effective teaching is one of the most important skills every teacher should manifest. In its absence, students are hardly able to master the competencies they should learn at their level. In this digital world, the learning landscape has dramatically changed. With the change brought by the demands of globalization, the learner's needs also go with the change in the educational system. To bridge the gap between the current trends in the educational system and the student's needs, teachers have to constantly update themselves.

Level of Soft Skills of Students

in terms of Social Play and Emotional Development

Presented in Table 2.1 is the level of soft skills of students in terms of social play and emotional development with a mean score of 4.43 or very high. The result of this mean score is taken from the strands of the indicators which are as follows: physically and verbally responds to interactions from peers; shares toys and talks about the activity with peers, even though the play agenda of the other children is different; invites others to play; plays cooperatively with peers during imaginative play; and obeys game rules.

The results of the study revealed that students manifested high level of soft skills. According to Wright (2006) student's soft skills are important for early school success and later adjustment. Those without adequate soft skills are at risk for difficulties including peer rejection, behavior problems, and poor academic achievement. One soft skill that brought out in the study was soft play and emotional development. This means that students shared toys and talks about the play activity even if the play agenda of the other child may be different and they followed game with rules when they play with other students.

Level of Soft Skills of Students

in terms of Emotional Regulation

Presented in table 2.2 is the level of soft skills of students in terms of emotional regulation with a mean score of 4.74 or very high. The result of this mean score is taken from the strands of the indicators which are as follows: demonstrates affection and empathy toward peers, refrains from aggressive behaviors toward peers, deals with being teased in acceptable ways, accepts not being first at a game or activity, and generates solutions to problems.

Another indicator of soft skills is emotional regulation. This shows that students demonstrated empathy towards peers and accepted mistakes without getting upset or angry. The result is cognizant of the belief of Willis (2008) who stated that students who managed emotions have an easier time getting along with their peers. The process of learning to manage feelings is a complicated one that starts as soon as a baby looks into her parents' eyes and begins to establish an attachment relationship.

<u>Level of Soft Skills of Students</u> <u>in terms of Communication Skills</u>

Presented in table 2.3 is the level of soft skills of students in terms of communication skills with a mean score of 4.73 or very high. The result of this mean score is taken from the strands of the indicators which are as follows: initiate conversation when it is appropriate to do so; makes a variety of comments, related to the topic during conversation; gives appropriate compliments to peers; asks for a favor appropriately; and asks for a favor appropriately.

Findings of this study revealed a high level of communication skills of the students which means that students make variety of comments, related to the topic during conversations with friends, answer soft question, and give compliments to peers. Wenglinsky (2005) believed that helping students improve public communication skills is motivating them to develop themselves. Practicing communicating with peers is important. With constant practice, students easily learn and become expert in what they at first afraid to do. In this regard, Hohlfeld, et al (2008) suggested that a teacher should create a group of children about the same age to hone their presentation skills, and the audience will hear the speaker and help evaluate the performance. This exercise will help students feel confident in front of a crowd, pinpoint areas where they are struggling, and share their own thoughts with other shy speakers.

Summary of Level of Soft Skills of Students

Presented in Table 2.4 is the level of soft skills of students with the overall mean of 4.63 with a descriptive equivalent of very high indicating that all enumerated indicators were oftentimes observed except the indicator soft play which has a descriptive level of moderate. The overall mean was the result obtained from the mean of the indicators for the specific items from the questionnaire intended for this particular indicator which is appended in this study

For emotional regulation, it obtained a mean score of 4.74 which means that students understand own emotion and regulate them to display flexibility and problem solving skills. students also label and identify emotions in oneself, demonstrate empathy towards peers, and accept making mistakes without becoming upset/angry; communication skills had a mean score of 4.73 which means that students manifest conversational skills during softization by means of nonverbal conversational skills, questioning, and giving compliments. Students also make variety of comments, related to the topic during conversations, answer simple soft questions, and give compliments to peers; soft play and emotional development had a mean score of 4.43 which means that students play simple games with peers, share toys and talk about the play activity even if the play agenda of the other child may be different, and follow game with rules. Likewise, students displayed soft skills by means of their group skills. Sugai and Horner (2006) stressed that most students who have a good soft facilitation when in group tend to have most friends because their peers feel comfortable with their presence. Peters (2009) added that a student who has group skills makes plenty of friends in school. The results of this study is in consonance with the findings of Capps and Miller (2006) that softization within the group is important among school children as this pave way to understanding other people as they discover themselves.

Significance on the Relationship between Professional Teaching Proficiency of Teachers and Soft Skills of Students

Displayed in Table 3 are the results of the relationship between the professional teaching proficiency of teachers and soft skills of students. Bivariate correlation analysis using Pearson product moment correlation was employed to determine the relationship between the variables mentioned. Based on the first correlation analysis, professional teaching proficiency of teachers and soft skills of students revealed a computed R-value of 0.687 with a probability value of p = 0.000 which is significant at the 0.05 level.

This implies that the higher the professional teaching proficiency of teachers there is, the higher will be the soft skills of students. Thus, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between professional teaching proficiency of teachers and soft skills of students is rejected.

This study is anchored on the pronouncement of Palmer (2010) which stated that professional teaching proficiency of teachers draws students to develop their social skills. He added that creative teaching is similar to weaving a fabric of connectedness between the teacher and the students where students manifest inner desire to engage themselves in their learning as they are motivated by the creativity of the teacher.

The professional teaching proficiency of teachers influences student to develop their soft skills as stressed by Lowman (1995). The creative teachers make students more connected to the lessons and to the classroom activities. It is the teacher's creative construct that connects students to create meaning on their classroom activities and in their learning in general.

The professional teaching proficiency of teachers makes the students developed their interest to develop their soft skills, hence, teachers at all times are encouraged to design learning activities that ignite students' interest to strengthen their engagement in all the classroom activities, thus foster increased student performance (Barkley 2010).

The professional teaching proficiency of teachers is linked to students' development of social skills. He added that when teachers are creative in the instruction, students are

generally engaged in the activities. Hence, it is suggested that teachers should put emphasis on creativity in teaching by creating authentic learning situations where students are engaged in their learning as they are thinking, feeling, and solving real problems Sternberg and Lubart (1996) noted.

4. MAJOR FINDINGS

The level of professional teaching proficiency of teachers has a mean score of 4.40 or very high and the level of school soft skills of students obtained a mean score of 4.63 or very high. Based on the correlation analysis between professional teaching proficiency of teachers and school interpersonal dynamics, it the computed R-value of 0.719 with a probability value of 0.000 which is significant at the 0.05 level.

5. CONCLUSION

With considerations on the findings of the study, conclusions are drawn in this section. The study found to exhibit a very high level of professional teaching proficiency of teachers is very high. This means that the provisions relating to professional teaching proficiency of teachers is embodied in the item is always manifested.

The study found to exhibit a very high level of soft skills of students. This indicates that the provisions relating to school soft skills of students are embodied in the item is always manifested.

The results of the study also confirm that there is a significant relationship between professional teaching proficiency of teachers and soft skills of students. This implies that the higher the professional teaching proficiency of teachers, the higher is the soft skills of students. Thus, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between professional teaching proficiency of teachers and school soft skills of students was rejected.

The study found a significant relationship between professional teaching proficiency of teachers and soft skills of students. The researcher therefore recommends that the District Office of the Department of Education where the study was conducted, the Public-School District Supervisor may conduct forum to teachers and include in the discussion the topics of this study so that the teachers will help develop on the indicators of this research as these two are essential in teaching and learning.

The study revealed a high level of professional teaching proficiency of teachers. The researcher recommends that school heads may conduct survey on the topic instructional delivery and find out which area on this topic the teacher needs technical assistance as this is the lowest mean score among the indicators.

The study revealed a very high level of soft skills of students. The researcher recommends that the District Office may provide technical assistance to teachers in terms of Soft Play and Emotional Development as this is the lowest among the indicators. Mentoring and on boarding may be utilized to help teachers on this aspect.

The researcher also recommends to future researchers to conduct similar study and explore some indicators that are not included in this study in another setting in order to uncover new knowledge relevant to the well-being of teachers.

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