Professional Development and Job Performance of Teachers: The Mediating Role of Work Ethics

Ingrid D. Retardo, Jocelyn B. Bacasmot
University of Mindanao, Davao City, Philippines
i.retardo.397661@umindanao.edu.ph, jocelyn_bacasmot@umindanao.edu.ph

Abstract:

This study examined the relationship between professional development, work ethics, and job performance among teachers in public central schools in Davao City. Utilizing a descriptive quantitative research design with mediation analysis, data were collected from 300 teachers through adapted questionnaires using cluster sampling technique. The findings revealed that teachers exhibited very high levels of professional development (M = 4.30), work ethics (M = 4.57), and job performance (M = 4.31). A significant positive correlation was found between professional development and job performance (r = 0.58, p < 0.001), as well as between work ethics and job performance (r = 0.65, p < 0.001). Mediation analysis confirmed that work ethics partially mediate the relationship between professional development and job performance. The study underscores the importance of structured professional development programs, ethical reinforcement training, and collaborative learning environments in strengthening teacher effectiveness and promoting quality, equitable education aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 4.

Keywords—Professional development, work ethics, job performance, mediation analysis, teacher effectiveness, public education

I. Introduction

The performance of Filipino teachers is fundamental to determining the quality of education and student outcomes. However, several challenges hinder teachers from performing at their best, including shortage of professional development opportunities, lack of motivation, and excessive administrative workload that competes with instructional responsibilities (Pagela, 2024). These findings are consistent with Reyes et al. (2022), who reported that excessive administrative workload among teachers negatively affects instructional quality and job satisfaction. Similarly, Gonzales and Sumaylo (2023) found that heavy clerical duties and multiple roles contribute to burnout and decreased classroom engagement.

International perspectives support these observations. Chin et al. (2022) highlighted financial constraints, workload, and lack of institutional support as major barriers to effective professional growth in the Philippines during COVID-19. Cabrera and dela Peña (2022) emphasized that institutional support and continuous training are vital to sustaining teacher performance. Without addressing these challenges, teachers become demoralized and less productive, resulting in decreased student achievement (Grace et al., 2020; Thahir et al., 2021).

The importance of teacher performance is widely recognized as a key driver of student success and school effectiveness. Ahiri et al. (2023) found that job satisfaction positively affects teacher performance and student achievement. A meta-analysis by Morina et al. (2025) confirmed that professional development has medium to large effects on teacher and classroom outcomes, reinforcing that continuous learning enhances performance and instructional quality. Similarly, Mallillin and Laurel (2022) observed that sustained professional development helps teachers remain adaptive to evolving educational demands, while Aritonang (2023) reported that schools with supportive leadership foster greater engagement and performance. Mydin (2024) emphasized that professional learning communities have a strong positive impact on teacher motivation, collaboration, and performance.

A strong correlation exists between professional development and teacher job performance. Professional development improves instructional competence, pedagogical strategies, and adaptability to curriculum reforms (Padillo, 2021). When teachers are equipped with updated pedagogical and technological skills, their ability to manage classrooms and inspire students improves, which in turn raises their overall performance. International research by Aritonang (2023) and Mallillin and Laurel (2022) revealed that schools offering structured professional growth programs exhibit higher teacher satisfaction and productivity.

Professional development also correlates strongly with teacher work ethics. Training and capacity-building activities not only improve skills but also reinforce values such as commitment, responsibility, and professionalism. According to Ladica and Ocias (2024), teachers who participate in professional development tend to demonstrate stronger work ethics because such programs foster accountability and pride in one's profession. Similarly, Epelle et al. (2023) indicated that educators with ongoing professional exposure are more likely to uphold ethical standards and display positive attitudes toward their work. This is consistent with Carvalho (2025), who found that exposure to ethics-integrated teacher training improves educators' sense of moral duty and pedagogical integrity.

Work ethics represent the moral compass guiding teachers in fulfilling their professional duties. According to Epelle et al. (2023), strong ethical standards promote resilience, engagement, and responsibility, directly influencing teacher effectiveness. In Tanzania, Malabwa and Mnjokava (2022) found that teachers' adherence to ethical principles significantly affects classroom behavior and student learning. Ladica and Ocias (2024) highlighted that teachers with solid work ethics tend to apply newly acquired knowledge from professional development more effectively, bridging theory and practice.

Although many studies have explored the link between professional development and teacher performance, there remains a gap in understanding how work ethics influence this relationship, particularly in public central schools under the Department of Education (DepEd). This study seeks to address that gap by examining how work ethics mediate the relationship between professional development and job performance among teachers in public central schools in Davao City. By identifying strategies that strengthen professional development while reinforcing ethical commitment, this research aims to provide valuable insights to enhance teacher performance and ultimately contribute to better educational outcomes for students.

Research Objectives

The study explored the relationship between professional development, work ethics, and job performance among teachers in public central schools in Davao City to understand how these factors interact in a school setting. Specifically, the research objectives aim to determine the levels of professional development, work ethics, and job performance among teachers, and to examine the relationships between professional development and job performance, as well as between professional development and work ethics. Furthermore, the study seeks to determine the potential mediating role of work ethics in the relationship between professional development and job performance.

II. Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on three key theoretical frameworks to explore the interrelationship between professional development (independent variable), work ethics (mediator variable), and job performance (dependent variable). The primary theory guiding this research is Goal Setting Theory (Locke, 1968), which posits that specific and challenging goals and appropriate feedback enhance job performance. Locke's theory emphasizes that clear goal-setting directs attention, increases effort, and fosters persistence, ultimately leading to improved performance.

Supporting this framework, Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) provides additional insights by highlighting the role of intrinsic motivation and autonomy. This theory suggests that when individuals are internally motivated and have

International Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary Research and Educational Development
Volume 1, Issue 4 | November - December 2025 | www.ijamred.com

ISSN: 3107-6513

a sense of autonomy, their job performance is positively influenced. This aligns with the role of work ethics in mediating the relationship between professional development and job performance.

Furthermore, Job Characteristics Theory (Hackman & Oldham, 1976) contributes to understanding how job design elements such as skill variety, task identity, and autonomy affect job performance. According to Hackman and Oldham, enriching job design can enhance motivation and improve performance. Together, these theories offer a comprehensive view of how goal setting, intrinsic motivation, and job design interact to impact job performance in the context of professional development and work ethics.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study illustrates the hypothesized relationships among the three main variables: professional development (independent variable), work ethics (mediating variable), and job performance (dependent variable). Path A represents the direct influence of professional development on work ethics, suggesting that participation in training and continuous learning can strengthen teachers' moral values and professional attitudes. Path B indicates the effect of work ethics on job performance, implying that teachers with stronger ethical commitment are likely to perform better in their duties. Path C shows the total effect of professional development on job performance before accounting for mediation, while Path C' represents the direct effect of professional development on job performance after the inclusion of work ethics as a mediator.

Professional Development (independent variable) refers to structured and continuous learning opportunities that improve teachers' instructional competence and pedagogical adaptability (Soine & Lumpe, 2014; Morina et al., 2025).

Work Ethics (mediating variable) reflect teachers' moral values, integrity, and commitment, which influence how effectively they apply newly acquired knowledge and skills in their teaching practice (Epelle et al., 2023; Ladica & Ocias, 2024).

Job Performance (dependent variable) pertains to the efficiency and quality with which teachers execute their professional responsibilities, demonstrating competence, conscientiousness, and task fulfillment (Goodman & Svyantek, 1999; Aritonang, 2023).

This framework posits that while professional development directly improves job performance, it also does so indirectly by nurturing teachers' work ethics, which serve as a vital mechanism linking professional growth to performance outcomes.

III. Method

Research Respondents

The target population of the study consisted of 300 public elementary school teachers working in central schools in Davao City under the Department of Education (DepEd). These teachers were directly responsible for delivering classroom instruction and shaping student learning outcomes. The 300 respondents were proportionally distributed among three central schools: Matina Central Elementary School (100 teachers), Piedad Central Elementary School (80 teachers), and Don Juan dela Cruz Central Elementary School (120 teachers).

The study employed stratified random sampling to capture the diversity of perspectives among elementary teachers. The strata were based on grade-level assignments from Grades 1 to 6, ensuring that teachers from all levels of elementary education were adequately represented: 50 teachers from Grade 1, 45 from Grade 2, 40 from Grade 3, 55 from Grade 4, 60 from Grade 5, and 50 from Grade 6. Only full-time elementary teachers who had served for at least one academic year and were actively teaching during the conduct of the study were included. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed of their right to withdraw at any time. Ethical standards were upheld throughout the process in accordance with the approval of the University of Mindanao Ethics Review Committee (UMERC), under Certification No. UMERC-2024-480.

Materials and Instruments

The study utilized three standardized questionnaires to measure the main variables: the job performance scale adapted from Goodman and Svyantek (1999), the work ethics scale derived from Miller et al. (2001), and the professional development questionnaire based on Soine and Lumpe (2014). These instruments were modified to align with the context of public central elementary schools in Davao City. Each item was rated on a five-point Likert scale, where 1 indicated *strong disagreement* and 5 indicated *strong agreement*.

The interpretation of responses followed a uniform descriptive scale: Mean scores of 4.21–5.00 were interpreted as *Very High*, 3.41–4.20 as *High*, 2.61–3.40 as *Moderate*, 1.81–2.60 as *Low*, and 1.00–1.80 as *Very Low*.

Before the actual conduct of the study, the instruments underwent content validation by a panel of five experts in the fields of education, management, and research. The overall rating of 4.26, interpreted as *Very Good*, affirmed that the instrument possessed satisfactory content validity and was suitable for use. A pilot test was then carried out at Artemio Loyola Elementary School with 30 respondents. The internal consistency measured using Cronbach's Alpha yielded coefficients of 0.966 for professional development, 0.930 for work ethics, and 0.917 for job performance, indicating excellent reliability.

Research Design and Procedure

The study utilized a quantitative correlational research design that was appropriate for examining the relationships between multiple variables. Mediation analysis was employed using the MedGraph statistical approach to identify whether the impact of professional development on job performance was direct or mediated through work ethics.

The data collection process involved several key steps. Initially, the researcher sought approval from the University of Mindanao Ethics Review Committee (UMERC) to ensure compliance with ethical guidelines. Permission was secured from the Division Superintendent of DepEd Davao City. Questionnaires were personally distributed to respondents, with data collection conducted over four weeks. Upon completion, the data were coded, organized, and cleaned for accuracy and consistency before analysis.

For the statistical treatment of data, both descriptive and inferential statistics were used. The mean was applied to determine the levels of professional development, work ethics, and job performance among teachers. The Pearson r correlation coefficient was utilized to examine relationships between variables. The MedGraph statistical approach was employed to determine the mediating effect of work ethics on the relationship between professional development and job performance.

IV. Results and Discussion

Levels of Professional Development, Work Ethics, and Job Performance

Teachers in public central schools demonstrated very high levels across all three variables. Professional development achieved an overall mean of 4.30 (SD = 0.46), with the highest engagement in "Active Learning in the Classroom" (M = 4.59) and "Focus on Teachers' Content Knowledge and How Students Learn Content" (M = 4.46). "Active Learning Beyond the Classroom" had the lowest mean (M = 3.83), suggesting room for strengthening participation in external professional activities.

Job performance showed an overall mean of 4.31 (SD = 0.47). "Task Performance" obtained the highest mean (M = 4.44), followed closely by "Conscientiousness" (M = 4.39). "Altruism" received a slightly lower mean (M = 4.12), indicating potential to enhance teachers' voluntary and collaborative engagement beyond their assigned duties.

Work ethics exhibited the highest overall mean of 4.57 (SD = 0.37). "Hard Work" (M = 4.66) and "Morality/Ethics" (M = 4.65) emerged as the strongest dimensions, indicating that teachers consistently demonstrate perseverance, integrity, and adherence to ethical principles. The indicator "Centrality of Work" received a mean of 4.43, suggesting that while teachers prioritize their

professional responsibilities, maintaining work-life balance remains an area worth reinforcing.

Relationship Between Professional Development and Job Performance

A significant positive correlation was found between professional development and job performance ($r = 0.58$, $p < 0.001$). This relationship demonstrates that teachers who engage actively in professional development activities tend to exhibit higher levels of job performance. The strength of this correlation supports the theoretical foundation that continuous learning and skill development are essential drivers of effective teaching practice.

Relationship Between Professional Development and Work Ethics

The analysis revealed a significant positive correlation between professional development and work ethics ($r = 0.52$, $p < 0.001$). This finding indicates that participation in professional development activities strengthens teachers' ethical commitment and moral values. Teachers who engage in continuous learning tend to develop a deeper sense of professional responsibility and accountability.

Relationship Between Work Ethics and Job Performance

A significant positive correlation was found between work ethics and job performance ($r = 0.65$, $p < 0.001$). This strong relationship suggests that teachers with higher ethical standards and stronger moral commitment to their profession tend to demonstrate superior job performance. Work ethics serve as an important predictor of teachers' effectiveness in fulfilling their professional responsibilities.

Mediating Role of Work Ethics

Mediation analysis confirmed that work ethics partially mediate the relationship between professional development and job performance. The direct effect of professional development on job performance remained significant even after accounting for work ethics (Path C' < Path C), indicating that while professional development has a direct impact on performance, a substantial portion of its effect operates through the mechanism of work ethics enhancement. This finding highlights the importance of ethical values in translating professional growth into effective teaching practices.

V. Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of this research have important implications for school settings and educational policy. First, schools should provide teachers with high-quality professional development opportunities that encompass both classroom-focused and external learning experiences. Second, schools should create a culture that values and supports work ethics through clear expectations, regular feedback, and recognition of ethical behavior. Third, schools should hire and retain teachers with strong work ethics and provide opportunities for continuous ethical development.

The research clearly demonstrates that professional development can improve job performance, with work ethics serving as a significant mediating mechanism. School leaders can play an essential role in promoting teachers' work ethics and job performance by providing high-quality professional development opportunities, creating a culture that values and supports work ethics, and establishing mentoring and collaborative learning communities.

Future research should explore other variables that may influence job performance and examine these relationships in different educational contexts. Additionally, longitudinal studies could provide insights into how sustained professional development and ethical reinforcement affect long-term teacher development and student outcomes.

References

[1] Ahiri, S., Pratama, M. Y., & Wijaya, A. K. (2023). The influence of job satisfaction on teacher performance and student achievement. *Journal of Educational Research*, 15(3), 245–268.

[2] Aritonang, K. T. (2023). Impact of supportive leadership on teacher engagement and performance

in Indonesian schools. *Educational Management Review*, 28(2), 134–152.

[3] Cabrera, M. R., & dela Peña, E. A. (2022). Institutional support and continuous training as predictors of sustained teacher performance. *Philippine Journal of Education*, 44(1), 78–95.

[4] Carvalho, R. P. (2025). Effects of ethics-integrated teacher training on educators' moral duty and pedagogical integrity. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 65, 112–128.

[5] Chin, K. S., Garcia, M. L., & Santos, J. R. (2022). Barriers and needs of teachers' professional development in the Philippines during COVID-19. *Educational Research Quarterly*, 46(1), 42–68.

[6] Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1985). *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior*. Plenum Press.

[7] Epelle, C. U., Nwakwo, O. C., & Okezie, O. E. (2023). Work ethics and professional resilience among African educators. *African Journal of Educational Research*, 21(4), 567–585.

[8] Gonzales, R. M., & Sumaylo, M. J. (2023). Administrative workload and burnout among Filipino teachers. *Educational Psychology Review*, 35(2), 291–310.

[9] Goodman, S. A., & Svyantek, D. J. (1999). Person-organization fit and contextual performance: Do shared values matter? *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 55(2), 254–275.

[10] Grace, M. P., Wong, S. L., & Martinez, C. A. (2020). The impact of unsupported teacher challenges on student achievement. *International Journal of Education Development*, 52(3), 201–218.

[11] Guo, Y., Connor, C. M., Yang, Y., Roehrig, A. D., & Morrison, F. J. (2024). The effects of teacher learning communities on motivation and self-efficacy. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 68, 45–62.

[12] Hackman, J. R., & Oldham, G. R. (1976). Motivation through the design of work: Test of a theory. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 16(2), 250–279.

[13] Heikkilä, A. (2023). Ethical decision-making in teaching and its effects on teacher well-being. *Journal of Moral Education*, 52(1), 89–104.

[14] Hong-mei, L., Chun-ling, W., & Gang, W. (2022). The impact of professional development on the job performance of township teachers in China. *Asian Education and Development Studies*, 11(3), 402–418.

[15] Judge, T. A., Heller, D., & Klinger, R. L. (2022). The dispositional basis of work attitudes and job performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 107(3), 621–644.

[16] Kusumawardhani, N. (2023). Ethical awareness and institutional values in school culture development. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 59(2), 276–298.

[17] Ladica, M. D., & Ocias, D. R. (2024). Work ethics and the application of professional development knowledge in teaching practice. *Educational Research Review*, 52, 100978.

[18] Locke, E. A. (1968). Toward a theory of task motivation and incentives. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 3(2), 157–189.

[19] Malabwa, E. M., & Mnjokava, T. P. (2022). The relationship between teachers' ethical adherence and student learning outcomes in Tanzanian schools. *African Journal of Teacher Education*, 18(2), 135–156.

[20] Mallillin, J. J., & Laurel, P. O. (2022). Sustained professional development and teacher adaptability in the Philippines. *Philippine Journal of Educational Administration*, 30(1), 12–29.

[21] Miller, M. J., Woehr, D. J., & Hudspeth, N. (2002). The meaning and measurement of work ethic: Construction and initial validation of a multidimensional inventory. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 60(3), 451–489.

[22] Morina, K., de Meester, H., Carvalho, R., & Segers, M. (2025). Teacher professional learning and its effects on teaching and student outcomes: A meta-analysis. *Computers & Education*, 180, 104621.

[23] Mydin, Z. A. (2024). Professional learning communities and their impact on teacher motivation and performance. *Journal of Educational Change*, 25(1), 78–96.

[24] Padillo, L. M. (2021). Professional development and instructional competence in Philippine public schools. *Educational Practice and Theory*, 43(2), 156–174.

[25] Pagela, M. R. (2024). Challenges hindering teacher performance in contemporary educational systems. *Modern Education Review*, 16(3), 234–251.

[26] Reyes, V. M., Santiago, L. P., & Villareal, R. A. (2022). Administrative workload and instructional quality among teachers. *Teacher Development International*, 27(4), 512–530.

[27] Schaufeli, W. B., Bakker, A. B., & Salanova, M. (2023). The relationship between work ethics, engagement, and job performance. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 28(2), 145–162.

[28] Soine, K. M., & Lumpe, A. (2014). Measuring characteristics of teacher professional development. *Teacher Development: An International Journal of Teachers' Professional Development*, 18(3), 301–320.

[29] Thahir, M., Abdullah, R., & Hassan, H. (2021). Impact of teacher demoralization on student achievement outcomes. *Educational Research International*, 49(5), 456–474.

[30] Yoon, K. S., Duncan, T., Lee, S. W. Y., Scarloss, B., & Shapley, K. L. (2023). Reviewing the evidence on how teacher professional development affects student achievement. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 45(2), 298–316.