

Awareness, Practices, and Compliance with the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers

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Abstract:

This study examined public elementary teachers' awareness, practices, and compliance with the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers in a medium-sized school district in the central Philippines during the School Year 2023-2024. The data were collected from 166 teachers using a descriptive research design and a self-made questionnaire. Teachers' profiles were analyzed using frequency and percentage scoring, while their awareness, practices, and compliance were assessed through mean scoring. Statistical tests, including the Mann-Whitney U and Spearman Rho, were applied to analyze significant differences and relationships. Findings indicated that teachers demonstrated a "very high" level of awareness and practices and a "very great" extent of compliance with the Code across key areas: relationships with the profession, higher authorities, learners, parents, and the community. Age and length of service impacted teachers' awareness and practices in relation to learners, while age and educational attainment influenced practices with higher authorities. Moreover, a significant relationship was identified between teachers' awareness and their practices and between awareness and compliance and compliance and practices with the Code. The study concludes that teachers maintain high awareness, practice, and compliance levels, reflecting a strong commitment to professionalism and ethical practice. This is vital in an evolving pedagogical and education landscape, where teachers' full adherence and solid allegiance to ethical standards help sustain the respect, harmony, and trust which are essential to their roles. Likewise, for educators, maintaining this professionalism is fundamental, as they serve as lifelong role models, exemplifying the principles of ethics and excellence in education.

Keywords: Awareness, compliance, code of ethics, practices, professional teachers

Introduction:

Nature of the Problem

Under the provisions of R.A. No. 7836, also known as the Philippines Professionalization Act of 1994, and P.D. No. 223, as amended, the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers was adopted to guide educators in fostering trust, integrity, and collaboration in their profession (PRC, 1997). Ethical principles shape teachers' conduct and interactions, ensuring fairness and professionalism in the workplace (Bordia, 2022). As role models, teachers must navigate ethical challenges holistically, preparing to meet the evolving demands of education (Decker, Wolfe et al., 2022). Teaching, regarded as a noble profession, has empowered Filipino learners since formal education began in 1565. Over the years, education and teaching practices have transformed, influenced by technological advancements and shifting cultural norms. This evolution has redefined traditional teaching roles and ethical standards, emphasizing the need for continuous improvement in professional ethics (Caslib, 2022).

Teaching professional ethics is essential for future educators to internalize and practice in their professional lives. However, some teachers fail to consistently apply these principles, often due to challenges in managing emotions and maintaining professionalism (Çetin, Nayir et al., 2021). This can lead to unethical decisions that negatively impact the profession and generalize stakeholders' perceptions of teachers. The Code of Ethics for professional teachers provides best practices and ethical guidelines to promote integrity, competence, respect, and hard work. Teachers are expected to prioritize professionalism over personal interests, exercise sound judgment in decision-making, and uphold ethical standards in interactions with colleagues, school heads, authorities, and stakeholders (Hayes, 2023).

For more than two years in service, the researcher has observed a lot of concerning developments in some schools in one of the districts in a medium-sized school division, which concern professionalism and ethical values that should be given attention to. Simple mistakes by teachers open the possibility of great risk to their profession. The researcher wanted to pursue this study because of the current trends and issues with recent unusual cases in which the teacher's

profession is at risk. Thus, in this study, truths will be revealed about the teachers' awareness, practices, and compliance with the Code of Ethics for professional teachers since there are a lot of queries in the curious mind of the researcher who is in search of answers and solutions in this dilemma as to why a teacher can act such thing.

Current State of Knowledge

Burell (2021) emphasized that ethical knowledge is integral to distinguishing moral principles, enabling teachers to demonstrate respect, fairness, patience, and empathy. Teachers who embody ethical values enhance their pedagogical skills, going beyond teaching the curriculum to fostering a respectful and inclusive environment. Ethical practices include timely feedback, sensitivity to student needs, fairness in recognizing achievements, and avoiding humiliation. Despite the daily challenges of teaching, educators must strive to uphold ethical behavior and act with integrity. Thornton (2020) added that ethical leadership requires self-awareness, accountability, and a commitment to respect and care for others, moving beyond selfishness and temporary gains.

Teachers are role models of dignity, integrity, and morality, influencing their communities beyond the classroom (Gelicame, 2022). They are expected to lead and inspire, embodying good character and upholding high moral standards. Effective communication between teachers and parents is vital for student development, and modern technology such as email, text messaging, and apps has made interactions more efficient. Regular updates, like weekly progress reports, foster parental involvement and strengthen the learning process. Healthy communication ensures unity, integrity, and collaboration without unethical practices like bribery (Llego, 2023). Cheng & Nuñez (2023) found that while teachers and school heads are aware of the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers, its practice can be inconsistent. The Code helps maintain boundaries and avoid misuse of power. Teachers must work within legal frameworks, like the Philippine Professionalization Act of 1994 (R.A. 7836), balancing personal and professional ethics when making decisions. Public school teachers are expected to contribute to societal progress by molding students into well-rounded individuals. Niere-Gumahad (2020) recommends continuous professional development and adherence to the Code of Ethics to improve teaching performance.

Active teaching practices help educators adapt to diverse student needs, fostering engagement and academic success (Eads & Gafner, 2023). Since no single approach guarantees success, teachers must develop unique styles that prioritize students' best interests (Meader, 2019). Building strong relationships with students, parents, peers, and administrators creates a supportive environment and enhances job satisfaction. Teachers should maintain professionalism by respecting administrative decisions, involving parents in learning, and creating inclusive opportunities for connection, while offering private, constructive criticism to guide, not embarrass, students. The Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers is vital for ensuring professionalism, integrity, and respect in teaching, emphasizing responsibilities toward students, colleagues, and society. It promotes values like dignity, academic freedom, and social responsibility, highlighting teachers as catalysts for societal change. The code encourages ongoing professional development, reflective practice, and openness to feedback to improve teaching effectiveness, helping teachers act with compassion, professionalism, and dedication to advancing both their students and society (Roy, 2023).

Teachers must align their actions with school policies, seek proper permissions from authorities, and maintain respectful communication with parents to support students' learning progress. Failure to follow protocols can result in misconduct charges, which carry serious consequences, including termination. Teachers have rights and should consult legal advice when facing such accusations to ensure fair resolutions (Vibo, 2020). While professionalism encompasses more than physical appearance or social status, some Filipino teachers struggle to embody the Code of Ethics due to systemic challenges. Heavy workloads, low salaries, and lack of adequate support often push educators into debt or force them to seek better opportunities abroad. These factors hinder the recognition of teachers as true professionals, highlighting the need for improved benefits and support to uplift the teaching profession (Paez, 2022).

Mullen (2021) emphasizes that while compliance can boost efficiency, an overemphasis on it may reduce effectiveness. Teachers benefit from greater autonomy, allowing them to foster deeper thinking, though some compliance is still needed to maintain structure and achieve goals. Scilex (2023) stresses the importance of collaboration among stakeholders, including teachers, administrators, parents, and the community, to ensure effective outcomes. Nipales (2022) highlights that children's learning is a shared responsibility between parents and teachers, with teachers serving as mentors and lifelong learners to improve student support. Professionalism in teaching involves adhering to ethical standards and continuously improving to enhance student learning (Camaya & Gabriel, 2019; Abrogar, 2023). Society's negative perception of teachers, including low pay, impacts their job satisfaction and professionalism, leading many to consider other professions. To improve this, it's recommended that teacher compensation, recruitment, professional development, and ethical standards be revisited, and awareness campaigns be launched. Kraft & Lyon (2022) note declining teacher satisfaction, with many leaving the profession due to stress and poor working conditions. Efforts to improve collaboration, respect, and working conditions are essential. Das & Mohapatra (2023) argue against the return of corporal punishment, stressing the need for educational reform and adaptation to modern times.

Theoretical Underpinnings

This study is anchored on four ethical theories: Aristotle's Ethics of Character or Virtues and Vices, Kant's Ethics of Duty or Deontology, Bentham and Mill's Ethics of Consequences or Utilitarianism, and Ayn Rand's Ethics of Selfishness or Ethical Egoism. Aristotle emphasized that a good life stems from strong character and virtues, while vices hinder success (Hinman, 2016). Deontological ethics focuses on actions being morally good based on their intrinsic qualities, regardless of outcomes, and emphasizes duty for its own sake (Duignan, 2023). Utilitarianism, proposed by Bentham and Mill, advocates maximizing goodness, equating ethical acts with satisfying outcomes and fairness (Driver, 2022). Ethical egoism, as discussed by Shaver (2023), promotes moral actions driven by self-interest, cooperation, and the pursuit of rewards, with a focus on minimizing personal loss. Together, these theories provide a framework for understanding attitudes, personality, and character, guiding teachers in their professional development and ethical conduct.

Objectives

This study aimed to determine the level of awareness, level of practices, and extent of compliance of Public Elementary School Teachers with the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers in a district of a medium-sized schools' division, in central Philippines during the School Year 2023-2024. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions: 1) the level of awareness of Public Elementary School Teachers on the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers according to the area of teachers and the profession, teachers and the higher authorities in the profession, teachers and the learners, teachers and the parents, and teachers and the community; 2) the level of Practices of Public Elementary School Teachers on the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers according to the aforementioned areas; 3) the extent of Public Elementary School Teachers' Compliance with the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers according to the aforementioned areas; 4) the significant relationship between the level of Awareness and level of Practices of Public Elementary School Teachers to the Code on Ethics for Professional Teachers; 5) the significant relationship between the level of Awareness and extent of Compliance of Public Elementary School Teachers with the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers; and 6) the significant relationship between the extent of Compliance and level of Practices of Public Elementary School Teachers on the Code on Ethics for Professional Teachers.

Methodology

This section presents the discussion of the research methodology used, the subjects and respondents of the study, the research instruments used, the validity and reliability of the instruments, the procedure for data gathering, and the statistical tools and procedure for data analysis.

Research Design

The researcher has chosen a qualitative approach to obtain deeper insights. This descriptive research design was used to determine the level of awareness, level of practices, and extent of compliance with the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers in a district of a medium-sized school division in the central Philippines during the School Year 2023-2024. According to Heat (2023), descriptive research is an exploratory type of research method. It allows researchers to accurately and systematically describe a population, phenomenon, or circumstances. Thus, descriptive design was used in this research because the researcher considered it as the most appropriate design in determining and describing the conditions and situation. This design is suited for the study, which aims to describe, explain, and validate findings in order to have precise, accurate, and reliable data and good results.

Study Respondents

The respondents of the study were 166 public elementary school teachers from a total population of 290. Since it is quite large enough to handle the number of respondents, stratified sampling and random sampling techniques were used, as the Cochran formula was used to find the sample size. To get the percentage, the respondents coming from each school are divided by the total number of respondents and multiplied by the sample size. The respondents were randomly selected by the researcher from each school using the lottery technique.

Instruments

This study was done using a self-made questionnaire to gather all the important data from the respondents. It was divided into 2 parts. Part I aims to gather the respondents' personal profiles, such as age, length of service, civil status, and highest educational attainment. Part II is the questionnaire proper consisting of 10 items per area, such as Teachers and the Profession, Teachers and the Higher Authorities in the Profession, Teachers and the Learners, Teachers and the Parents with the subtotal of 30 items under Awareness, another 30 items under Practice, 30 items under Compliance with the overall total of 90 items. The respondents were given options for their answers. The

assessment on the level of Awareness and Practice in each item under the aforementioned areas was measured from the continuum of 5 to 1; 5 as the highest or "always," 4 as "often," 3 as "sometimes," 2 "rarely," to 1 as the lowest or "almost never." The research instrument was subjected to validity (4.85-excellent) and for the reliability index was 0.721 for Awareness, which was interpreted as acceptable; for Practices, it was 0.770, interpreted as acceptable; and for Compliance, it was 0.818, interpreted as good, making the instrument reliable. All of them were interpreted as worthy and good; respectively.

Data Gathering Procedure

The validity of the instrument was determined after the panelists gave their approval of the questionnaire. The Schools Division Superintendent's authority was then requested through the PSDS and School Heads by submitting a request, or a letter of communication asking permission to establish reliability and conduct the study. The researcher personally administered the survey to the respondents, explained its purpose, and assisted them in filling out the questionnaire. Face-to-face interaction was used to retrieve the research questionnaire while also adhering to safety and health protocols. The researcher assured the respondents that the information gathered was confidential.

Data Analysis and Statistical Treatment

Objective No. 2 used the descriptive analytical scheme and mean to determine the level of Awareness of Public Elementary School Teachers on the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers according to the following areas: Teacher and the Profession, Teacher and the Higher Authorities in the Profession, Teacher and the Learners and Teacher and the Parents.

Objective No. 3 used the descriptive analytical scheme and mean to determine the level of Practice of public elementary school teachers on the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers according to the aforementioned areas.

Objective No. 4 used a descriptive-analytical scheme and mean to determine the extent of compliance of public elementary school teachers with the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers in the aforementioned areas.

Objective No. 11 used the relational analytical scheme and Spearman Rho to determine the significant relationship between the level of Awareness and level of Practices of Public Elementary School Teachers on the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers.

Objective No. 12 used the relational analytical scheme and Spearman Rho to determine the significant relationship between the level of Awareness and extent of compliance of Public Elementary School Teachers with the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers.

Objective No. 13 used the relational analytical scheme and Spearman Rho to determine the significant relationship between the extent of compliance and level of Practices of Public Elementary School Teachers to the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers.

Ethical Consideration

To ensure the study's ethical validity, the researcher followed the general ethical principles of respect for people, beneficence, and justice. The researcher assured the participants of confidentiality by using aliases or pseudonyms for their names in accordance with the Data Privacy Act of 2021. In the researcher's opinion, the participants did not exhibit any vulnerability as educated, employed adults. In the context of the new normal, the researcher values the various viewpoints of school principals and presidents of teachers' leagues and considers the study to have significant social value in ensuring the quality of instruction. Participants have the option of choosing not to answer any questions that might in any way distress them because this study is based on their experiences. In light of the current health crisis, the researcher and participants strictly followed health and safety procedures during the face-to-face distribution.

Results and Discussion

This section deals with the presentation, analysis and interpretation of data gathered to carry out the objectives of this study. All these were made possible by following certain appropriate procedures so as to give the exact data and solution to each specific problem.

Table 1

Level of Awareness on the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers in Teachers and the Profession

Area	Mean	Interpretation
A. Teachers and the Profession		
<i>As a teacher, I am aware that I...</i>		
1. made an oath as a promise of my commitment to my profession.	4.61	Very High Level
2. shall be at my best at all times and in the practice of my profession.	4.70	Very High Level
3. have to live up to the standards set by the Department of Education (DepEd).	4.61	Very High Level
4. shall make the best preparations every day for my teaching career.	4.12	High Level
5. must show enthusiasm and pride in teaching.	4.79	Very High Level
Overall Mean	4.57	Very High Level

Table 1 reveals that the overall awareness of the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers in Teaching and Profession is very high, with a mean score of 4.57. The highest mean, 4.79, was for the statement "As a teacher, I am aware that I must show enthusiasm and pride in teaching," while the lowest, 4.12, was for "I am aware that I shall make the best preparations every day for my teaching career," indicating a high level of awareness. This suggests that while teachers recognize the importance of enthusiasm and motivation, there is a need for better attention to time management and preparation. The results align with the study of Bhebhe & Nxumalo (2016), which highlighted the complexity of teaching and the need for specialized skills and innovation. Teachers value the profession highly, but the burden of paperwork, lesson planning, and preparation, coupled with time constraints, makes it difficult to balance all responsibilities. However, with better time management, teachers can effectively manage both preparation and administrative tasks.

Table 2

Level of Awareness on the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers in Teachers and the Higher Authorities in the Profession

Area	Mean	Interpretation
B. Teachers and the Higher Authorities in the Profession		
<i>As a teacher, I am aware that I...</i>		
1. shall make it my duty to honestly understand the DepEd orders, memos, and other policies and guidelines set by the higher authorities.	4.78	Very High Level
2. have to follow orders accordingly, including the prohibited selling by the teachers inside the classroom.	4.59	Very High Level
3. must willingly submit to my superiors' directions toward any given task or coordinatorship assigned to me.	4.64	Very High Level
4. have to work with complete integrity without getting myself involved with forgery, theft, and cheating.	4.63	Very High Level
5. have to keep my private opinion without saying negative remarks against any DepEd official.	4.34	High Level
Overall Mean	4.60	Very High Level

As shown in Table 2 the level of awareness of the Code of Ethics for professional teachers in Teaching and the Higher Authorities revealed that the overall mean was 4.60, interpreted as a very high level. Item number 1, "As a teacher, I am aware that I shall make it my duty to honestly understand the DepEd orders, memos, and other policies and guidelines set by the higher authorities" registered the highest mean of 4.78 interpreted as a very high level; while item number 5, "I am aware that I have to keep my private opinion without saying negative remarks against any DepEd official" obtained the lowest mean of 4.34 interpreted as high level. This indicates that teachers have the knowledge to stay informed about DepEd Orders, memos, policies, and guidelines set by the higher authorities to ensure they are up-to-date with the instructions and rules. However, teachers must be reminded that it is crucial for them to keep professionalism by not making or posting negative comments or rants on social media or gossiping about superiors. Bandojo (2022) reminded the teachers about the obedience of the higher authorities, such as in the Regional Memorandum No. 702. 2023 supports this, which states, "Reiteration of the Norms and the Use of Social Media by DepEd Personnel," which reminds professional teachers to be mindful of the spreading of false rumors, sharing content, avoid posting online attacks against colleagues, and must remember that teachers should be aware of the honor and reputation of this profession.

Table 3

Level of Awareness on the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers in Teachers and the Learners

Area	Mean	Interpretation
C. Teachers and the Learners		
<i>As a teacher, I am aware that I...</i>		
1. have to set my learners as my first and foremost concern.	4.83	Very High Level

2. have the right and duty to determine the academic marks and promotion of my learners in the subject I handle.	4.64	Very High Level
3. shall make fair decisions in the grading system without making deductions from the offending learners' scholastic ratings as a punishment for their misconduct.	4.70	Very High Level
4. have to choose my language and actions not to hurt or discriminate against my learners.	4.13	High Level
5. have to adhere to the DepEd Order no. 40 series of 2012, known as the "Child Protection Policy", I must avoid corporal punishment to the learners.	4.83	Very High Level
Overall Mean	4.63	Very High Level

Table 3 shows that the overall awareness of the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers regarding teachers and learners is very high, with a mean score of 4.63. The highest mean scores, 4.83, were for "As a teacher, I am aware that I have to set my learners as my first and foremost concern" and "I have to adhere to DepEd Order No. 40 series of 2012, known as the Child Protection Policy, and avoid corporal punishment." The lowest mean score, 4.13, was for "I am aware that I have to choose my language and actions not to hurt or discriminate against my learners." This suggests teachers understand the importance of prioritizing learners and following the Child Protection Policy, but need to be more mindful of their language, especially in moments of anger. The findings align with Nipales (2022), who emphasized that teachers should nurture learners without causing harm, even when faced with challenging behaviors. Casipe & Bete (2021) also noted that a strong teacher-student relationship is essential for meaningful learning. However, teachers face challenges in disciplining students, and the Child Protection Policy, while protective, can lead to confusion and difficulty in enforcement. Teachers, even when patient, may sometimes unintentionally harm a student when overwhelmed by anger.

Table 4

Level of Awareness on the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers in Teachers and the Parents

Area	Mean	Interpretation
D. Teachers and the Parents		
<i>As a teacher, I am aware that I...</i>		
1. shall cater to the parents' concerns without asking for or accepting malicious gifts from them in return for favoring the academic ratings of the learner.	4.68	Very High Level
2. must attend to any school concerns of parents.	4.61	Very High Level
3. shall establish and maintain cordial relations with parents.	4.48	High Level
4. shall immediately take appropriate actions, observing due process if there's a case of any complaint from the parents.	4.25	High Level
5. shall respect the parents regardless of their literacy level and status in society.	4.48	High Level
Overall Mean	4.50	Very High Level

Table 4 reveals that the overall awareness of the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers regarding teachers and parents is very high, with a mean score of 4.50. The highest mean score, 4.68, was for "I shall cater to the parents' concerns without accepting malicious gifts for favoring academic ratings," while the lowest, 4.25, was for "I shall take appropriate actions, observing due process, if there's a complaint from parents." This indicates that teachers are mindful of the law against accepting gifts and showing bias, but they need to be more aware of due process when handling parent complaints. Meader (2019) emphasized the importance of involving parents in the classroom while respecting their concerns, and Dsouza (2017) highlighted that teachers must follow an ethical code of conduct to maintain professionalism and objectivity in their duties.

Table 5

Level of Awareness on the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers in Teachers and the Community

Area	Mean	Interpretation
E. Teachers and the Community		
<i>As a teacher, I am aware that I...</i>		
1. am a facilitator of the learning and development of the youth.	4.99	Very High Level
2. am a leader that shall actively support community movements for moral, social, educational, economic, and civic betterment.	4.37	High Level
3. shall give my best service to the learners and all the stakeholders in the community.	4.15	High Level
4. am an innovator and shall take the initiative to support activities and promote the good of the communities that surround the school.	4.52	Very High Level
5. shall behave with honor and dignity at all times without getting myself involved in gambling, vices, and other illicit relations.	4.54	Very High Level
Overall Mean	4.51	Very High Level

Table 5 shows that the level of awareness of the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers in teachers and the community is very high, with an overall mean score of 4.51. The highest mean score, 4.99, was for "I am a facilitator of the learning and development of the youth," while the lowest, 4.15, was for "I shall give my best service to learners and all stakeholders in the community." While teachers and the community show strong awareness, the slightly lower score for item 3 suggests a need to emphasize commitment to service and community involvement. Thornton (2020) supports this, stating that teachers must act beyond self-interest and prioritize the well-being of all stakeholders to create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment. Ethical leadership requires consistent respect and concern for others.

Table 6

Level of Practices on the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers in Teachers and the Profession

Area	Mean	Interpretation
A. Teachers and the Profession		
<i>As a teacher, I do my best to...</i>		
1. practice professionalism at all times wherever I go.	4.99	Very High Level
2. enroll myself in a graduate school as part of my professional development.	4.12	High Level
3. engage myself in meaningful discussions about the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers during the Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions.	4.79	Very High Level
4. manifest genuine enthusiasm in teaching every day.	4.78	Very High Level
5. prepare my lessons and visual aids for fun and meaningful learning.	4.13	High Level
Overall Mean	4.56	Very High Level

Statistics in Table 6 reflect the data on the level of practice on the Code of Ethics for professional teachers in teachers and the profession obtained the overall mean score of 4.56, interpreted as a very high level. Item number 1, "As a teacher I do my best to practice professionalism at all times wherever I go" obtained the highest mean score of 4.99 interpreted as a very high level; while in item number 2, "I do my best to enroll myself in a graduate school as part of my professional development" obtained the lowest mean score of 4.12 interpreted as high level.

This implies that the teachers are committed to doing their best in practicing professionalism, but they must have more motivation in doing their best to enroll themselves in a graduate school continuously. This implication was supported by the study of Niere-Gumahad (2020), wherein the author mentioned that teachers should develop more on their performance, enroll in graduate studies, keep updated on the DepEd issuances, and teachers should be reminded of the Code of Ethics from time to time. Insights of Esguerra & Callo (2021) support this result, stating that teachers should be committed to the job with which they made an oath. Teachers' professionalism and good conduct reflect the competence of a teacher. The teachers may be encouraged to continuously pursue graduate programs and become full-fledged in the higher degree without taking a pause just because they were already promoted but because they have the passion for continuing professional development and other seminars and pedagogical training related to teaching and coping in the new normal education.

Table 7

Level of Practices on the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers in Teachers and the Higher Authorities in the Profession

Area	Mean	Interpretation
B. Teachers and the Higher Authorities in the Profession		
<i>As a teacher, I do my best to...</i>		
1. practice integrity with complete loyalty to the order of the higher authorities in DepEd no matter what happens.	4.48	High Level
2. set aside my personal feelings and problems at work.	4.15	High Level
3. set myself as an example even on social media without posting rants or hateful opinions about my colleagues and superiors.	4.83	Very High Level
4. honor my School Head and supervisors without making false accusations or charges against them.	4.64	Very High Level
5. wholeheartedly obey whatever instructions of my Superior without arguing, complaining, or opposing.	4.70	Very High Level
Overall Mean	4.56	Very High Level

Table 7 reveals that the level of practice on the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers in teachers and higher authorities is very high, with an overall mean score of 4.56. The highest mean score, 4.83, was for "I do my best to set myself as an example even on social media," while the lowest, 4.15, was for "I do my best to set aside my personal feelings and problems at work." While teachers and higher authorities generally adhere well to the Code,

the lower score suggests a need for support systems or training to help teachers manage personal challenges while maintaining professionalism. Francisco (2020) emphasized that teachers' ethical conduct affects their daily work and student outcomes, urging teachers to separate personal issues from their professional responsibilities. Similarly, Yağan et al. (2022) recommended annual self-evaluations to support professional development and ensure that personal challenges do not compromise the welfare of students.

Table 8

Level of Practices on the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers in Teachers and the Learners

Area	Mean	Interpretation
C. Teachers and the Learners		
<i>As a teacher, I do my best to...</i>		
1. practice and promote fairness and equality among the learners without bias or favoritism.	4.61	Very High Level
2. perform my duties excellently without accepting favors or gifts from learners or parents in exchange for requested concessions.	4.70	Very High Level
3. let my learners feel accepted, belong, and loved regardless of their culture, diversity, and status in society.	4.61	Very High Level
4. praise my learners with positive words to motivate them and boost their confidence.	4.78	Very High Level
5. keep calm and compose myself when the learners are unruly or when they show naughtiness.	4.34	High Level
Overall Mean	4.61	Very High Level

Table 8 shows the level of practice on the Code of Ethics for professional teachers in teachers and learners with an overall mean of 4.61, interpreted as a very high level. Item number 4, "As a teacher, I do my best to praise my learners with positive words to motivate them and boost their confidence" obtained the highest mean score of 4.78 interpreted as a very high level, while item number 5, "I do my best to keep calm and compose myself when the learners are unruly or when they show naughtiness" obtained the lowest mean score of 4.34 interpreted as high level.

This implies that teachers practice professionalism verbally because they praise more of their students, especially when a learner does a great job. Nonetheless, it was found that teachers should be trained more in handling misbehaved learners as teachers recognize the unique challenges that emerge in classroom management. These findings are supported by the study of Casipe & Bete (2021), who stated that teachers in this era had a hard time disciplining the children in this generation of millennials. The student discipline is far from the traditional way of the educational system many years ago. Therefore, teachers should at least maintain positive discipline among learners and have self-control, calming themselves through breathing exercises when things get rough.

Table 9

Level of Practices on the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers in Teachers and the Parents

Area	Mean	Interpretation
D. Teachers and the Parents		
<i>As a teacher, I do my best to...</i>		
1. be open to suggestions and recommendations from parents.	4.48	High Level
2. deal professionally with conflicts and complaints.	4.99	Very High Level
3. reach out to parents immediately regarding the alarming behavior or absence of the learner.	4.37	High Level
4. respect every parent regardless of their attitude, culture, and way of living.	4.79	Very High Level
5. inform the parents gently about the disability manifested by the learner in class.	4.02	High Level
Overall Mean	4.53	Very High Level

Table 9 shows that the level of practice on the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers in teachers and parents is very high, with an overall mean score of 4.53. The highest mean score, 4.99, was for "I do my best to deal professionally with conflicts and complaints," while the lowest, 4.02, was for "I do my best to inform parents gently about the disability manifested by the learner in class." The results indicate that teachers are professional in handling conflicts and complaints but need to improve communication with parents regarding learners' special needs. Casipe & Bete (2021) support these findings, emphasizing that proper communication with parents is key to fostering student success. Teachers should be mindful of the Code of Ethics to protect their professionalism and dignity. Collaborative efforts, including involving professionals and working closely with parents, are essential to meeting the needs of students, particularly those with special needs.

Table 10

Level of Practices on the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers in Teachers and the Community

Area	Mean	Interpretation
E. Teachers and the Community		
<i>As a teacher, I do my best to...</i>		
1. live for and with the community to understand local customs and traditions.	4.83	Very High Level
2. uphold the good values of the community without disparaging it.	4.68	Very High Level
3. integrate and introduce in my lessons the history and culture of the school's surrounding community.	4.61	Very High Level
4. help the school keep the people in the community informed about the school's work, accomplishments, and even its needs and problems.	4.05	High Level
5. become one of the partners of the community in educating children about personal hygiene and solid waste management.	4.61	Very High Level
Overall Mean	4.56	Very High Level

As shown in Table 10, the level of practice on the Code of Ethics for professional teachers in teachers and the community obtained the overall mean score of 4.56, interpreted as a very high level. Item number 1, "As a teacher, I do my best to live for and with the community to understand local customs and traditions," obtained the highest mean score of 4.83, interpreted as a very high level. Item number 4, "I do my best to help the school keep the people in the community informed about the school's work, accomplishments, and even its needs and problems," obtained the lowest mean score of 4.05, interpreted as a high level.

This implies that the teachers are adept at mastering the culture of the community the school is surrounded by. However, there is a need for teachers to maintain healthy cordial relations with the stakeholders regarding the school's performance, needs, and problems. The results were aligned with the study of Calderon & Ancho (2018), which they imply in their study that teachers should continue to build good relations with the other stakeholders in the community to stay connected when there is a need or problems in the school and in the Philippines, usually, this could be done quarterly through presenting the School Monitoring, Evaluation and Adjustment (SMEA) report to the stakeholders of the community. Scilex (2023) also supports this idea, stating that all stakeholders need to be invested in the plan and the process. Collaboration through intentional thought and planning will make goals easier to achieve.

Table 11

Extent of Compliance with the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers in Teachers and the Profession

Area	Mean	Interpretation
A. Teachers and the Profession		
<i>As a teacher, I follow the...</i>		
1. proper dress code for professional teachers according to the guidelines of DepEd.	4.83	Very Great Extent
2. conduct about the abstinence of intoxicating and other high alcoholic drinks that could result in drunkenness.	4.83	Very Great Extent
3. official time of the school while observing punctuality and avoiding absences.	4.68	Very Great Extent
4. manner of being honest in writing the exact time of my arrival at school in the logbook.	4.01	Great Extent
5. proper ways of personal discipline without engaging myself in any illegal businesses.	4.79	Very Great Extent
Overall Mean	4.63	Very Great Extent

Table 11 presents the extent of compliance with the Code of Ethics for professional teachers in teachers and the profession, which obtained an overall mean score of 4.63, interpreted as a very great extent. Item number 1, "As a teacher, I follow the proper dress code for professional teachers according to the guidelines of DepEd" and item number 2, "I follow the conduct about the abstinence of intoxicating and other high alcoholic drinks that could result in drunkenness" both obtained the highest mean score of 4.83 interpreted as very great extent; while item number 4, "I follow the manner of being honest in writing the exact time of my arrival at school in the logbook" obtained the lowest mean score of 4.01 interpreted as great extent.

This implies that teachers are professional enough to discern what is right from wrong or what is good from bad. However, in terms of time in and time out, there could be instances when the school time differs from teachers' personal time. If the school is using biometrics, there is the possibility that the time set in biometrics could be late or advanced and left unadjusted. Still, it is expected that teachers should be honest no matter what.

This result was supported by Komba & Mukadi (2021), who stated in their study that professional ethics is a set of values, standards, and norms that every individual regarded as a professional should consider. The researchers

sought to measure teachers' compliance with the professional code of ethics and conduct in four areas: professionalism, responsibility, care, respect, integrity, and honesty. Teachers are highly obliged to comply with stipulated codes. In addition, Dsouza (2017) said that teachers are strong role models and need to have rational behavior toward the students. Following the above ethics will help them be impartial in their field and do the job honestly and with professionalism.

Table 12

Extent of Compliance with the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers in Teachers and the Higher Authorities in the Profession

Area	Mean	Interpretation
B. Teachers and the Higher Authorities in the Profession		
<i>As a teacher, I follow the...</i>		
1. Republic Act No. 6713, known as "An Act establishing a Code of Conduct and Ethical standards for Public officials..." prohibits teachers from selling anything in the classroom.	4.23	Great Extent
2. requirements needed on time, such as the results of the item analysis, consolidation, etc.	4.48	Great Extent
3. instructions or memos are passed down from the Central Office to the Regional Office, then the Schools Division Office, and finally to the school.	4.99	Very Great Extent
4. tasks entrusted to me to comply without complaint and murmuring.	4.37	Great Extent
5. DepEd Order no.19 s. 2008 that notify the teachers to observe the "No Collection Policy."	4.61	Very Great Extent
Overall Mean	4.54	Very Great Extent

The data in Table 12 presents the extent of compliance with the Code of Ethics for professional teachers in teachers and the higher authorities in the profession and has clearly obtained the overall mean score of 4.54, interpreted as a very great extent. Item number 3, "As a teacher, I follow the instructions or memos are passed down from the Central Office to the Regional Office, then the Schools Division Office, and finally to the school," obtained the highest mean score of 4.99, interpreted as a very great extent. Item number 1. "I follow the Republic Act No. 6713 known as "An act establishing a Code of Conduct and Ethical standards for Public officials." which prohibits teachers from selling anything in the classroom," obtained the lowest mean score of 4.23, interpreted a great extent.

Results show that the teachers can certainly comply with the National, Regional and Division memoranda because teachers have the capability to understand the prescribed requirements to prepare and complete a task to be done and followed in an instant. The suggestion of Casipe & Bete (2021) supports the result when they mentioned about effectiveness of professional development when there are Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions which could also be effective and at the same time, Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers or Code of Conduct and Ethical standards for Public officials, could be inserted or discussed at the first, middle or last part of LAC. Seminars, trainings, and workshops for teachers could increase professional demographics.

Table 13

Extent of Compliance with the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers in Teachers and the Learners

Area	Mean	Interpretation
C. Teachers and the Learners		
<i>As a teacher, I follow the...</i>		
1. daily monitoring of my learners' attendance.	4.99	Very Great Extent
2. course of action in disciplining my learners positively as I teach them respect.	4.04	Great Extent
3. correct process of conducting home visitations.	4.64	Very Great Extent
4. approved schedule of class remediation to give my learners ample time to read, write, and do Math.	4.70	Very Great Extent
5. activities mandated by DepEd strengthen the literacy and numeracy level of the learners.	4.61	Very Great Extent
Overall Mean	4.60	Very Great Extent

Table 13 shows that the extent of compliance with the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers regarding teachers and learners is very high, with an overall mean score of 4.60. The highest mean score, 4.99, was for "I follow the daily monitoring of my learners' attendance," while the lowest, 4.04, was for "I follow the course of action in disciplining my learners positively while teaching them respect." This indicates that teachers consistently monitor attendance but need to find better ways to implement positive discipline, especially in teaching respect. Nipales (2022) emphasizes that the learner should always be the central focus of education, with teachers serving as mentors who guide and support students in their learning. Casipe & Bete (2021) also note that disciplining students today is

challenging, and when teachers lack a clear understanding of discipline policies, it can lead to confusion. Despite their patience, teachers may sometimes lose control, especially in handling millennial students. Therefore, teachers should strive to maintain positive discipline and practice self-control, such as using calming techniques when challenges arise.

Table 14

Extent of Compliance with the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers in Teachers and the Parents

Area	Mean	Interpretation
D. Teachers and the Parents		
<i>As a teacher, I follow the...</i>		
1. expectation of DepEd to every teacher to conduct myself to merit parents' confidence and respect.	4.15	Great Extent
2. appropriate instructions to encourage parents and learners to participate in all school activities without forcing them.	4.60	Very Great Extent
3. guidelines for electing the Homeroom Parent Teacher Association (PTA) officers and their involvement in school.	4.70	Very Great Extent
4. correct principles on how to deal with the parent's complaints with sympathy and understanding.	4.63	Very Great Extent
5. suitable means of conducting Parent-Teacher conferences for those misbehaved learners.	4.78	Very Great Extent
Overall Mean	4.57	Very Great Extent

Table 14 shows that the extent of compliance with the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers in teachers and parents is very high, with an overall mean score of 4.57. The highest mean score, 4.78, was for "I follow the suitable means of conducting Parent-Teacher conferences for misbehaved learners," while the lowest, 4.15, was for "I follow the expectation of DepEd to conduct myself to merit parents' confidence and respect." While teachers excel in conducting parent-teacher conferences, the lower score suggests a need for further initiatives to strengthen parent-teacher relationships and build trust. Dsouza (2017) emphasizes that teachers must engage positively with parents to shape a child's future, ensuring meetings with difficult parents are managed appropriately. Teachers should uphold ethical behavior to remain impartial, professional, and effective in their role.

Table 15

Extent of Compliance with the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers in Teachers and the Community

Area	Mean	Interpretation
E. Teachers and the Community		
<i>As a teacher, I follow the...</i>		
1. standards of DepEd that a teacher must carry the profession with high morale as an educator and a role model to the learners and the community.	4.61	Very Great Extent
2. directives in maintaining harmonious relationships with the barangay leaders so I can quickly seek help and support for the school.	4.83	Very Great Extent
3. statutes of showing humility to other professionals, government officials, and all community stakeholders.	4.83	Very Great Extent
4. efficient measures in handling and dealing with conflicts and issues toward other stakeholders in the community.	4.04	Great Extent
5. ethical and biblical views in life without using my position to become dogmatic and convert the people in the community.	4.78	Very Great Extent
Overall Mean	4.62	Very Great Extent

Table 15 shows that the extent of compliance with the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers in teachers and the community is very high, with an overall mean score of 4.62. The highest mean scores, 4.83, were for "I follow directives in maintaining harmonious relationships with barangay leaders" and "I show humility to other professionals, government officials, and community stakeholders." The lowest score, 4.04, was for "I follow efficient measures in handling conflicts and issues with community stakeholders." This suggests that while teachers are professional and courteous with stakeholders, there is a need for additional training in conflict resolution. Camaya & Gabriel (2019) emphasized that professionalism involves adhering to moral and ethical standards in all professional settings. Abrogar (2023) added that teachers, as lifelong learners, play a key role in innovating education, fostering student development, and maintaining peaceful relationships with all community stakeholders.

Table 16

Relationship Between the Level of Awareness and Level of Practices to the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers

Variable	rho	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Level of Awareness				
	1.000	0.000	0.05	Significant
Level of Practices				

Table 16 presents the relationship between the Level of Awareness and Level of Practices to the Code of Ethics for professional teachers with the computed p-value of 0.000, which is lesser than the level of significance of 0.05. Hence, there is a significant relationship between the Level of Awareness and the Level of Practice in the Code of ethics for professional teachers. This implies that there is a significant association between teachers' awareness of the Code of Ethics and their adherence to it in their professional practices. It reflects that teachers who are more aware of the Code of Ethics are expected to practice it more constantly. The findings support Soliven's (2017) view that being a professional teacher is a lifetime commitment. Every teacher in the service is expected to always be faithful in service and a good follower of the DepEd's standards. Teachers have great power and authority over students and in the classrooms. Either they can make a student happy or sad and active or passive. It's the impact that drives the learners what kind of teacher they have. Teachers who are committed have so many experiences in the field of teaching because they precisely know the methods and techniques to become a source of inspiration or discouragement. All of these situations are possible with only one teacher. Thus, teachers should be good decision-makers and must have full discernment to uphold what is moral and ethical.

Table 17

Relationship Between the Level of Practices and Extent of Compliance with the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers

Variable	rho	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Level of Practices				
	1.000	0.000	0.05	Significant
Extent of Compliance				

Table 17 shows a significant relationship between the level of awareness and extent of compliance with the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers, with a p-value of 0.000, less than the 0.05 significance level. This indicates that higher awareness of the Code is associated with greater compliance. Teachers who are more knowledgeable about ethical guidelines are more likely to adhere to them in their professional conduct. This finding supports Camaya & Gabriel's (2019) view that professionalism involves applying moral and ethical standards in all professional settings and being aware of and adhering to norms of conduct while fulfilling public duties.

Table 18

Relationship Between the Extent of Compliance and Level of Awareness of the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers

Variable	rho	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Extent of Compliance				
	1.000	0.000	0.05	Significant
Level of Awareness				

Table 18 shows a significant relationship between the extent of compliance and the level of practices regarding the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers, with a p-value of 0.000, less than the 0.05 significance level. This suggests that compliance with the Code strongly influences how teachers apply these ethical principles in their daily professional activities. Teachers who consistently comply with the Code are more likely to integrate ethical standards into their behavior. These findings align with Komba & Mukadi (2021), who emphasized that ethics maintains order in schools and integrates morally acceptable values. The study found that teachers who adhere to the professional code of ethics display good behavior both inside and outside the classroom, highlighting the importance of teaching professional ethics as independent disciplines to ensure accountability and proper conduct.

Conclusions

The study found that teachers exhibit high awareness, practice, and compliance with the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers, demonstrating strong professionalism and integrity. While both younger and older teachers show very high awareness, younger teachers are more aware of interactions with parents, and older teachers show higher awareness in this area. Teacher compliance with the Code varies based on age, length of service, and interactions with higher authorities and learners. The study emphasizes that increased ethical awareness improves practices and compliance. Recommendations include age-specific professional development, workshops on ethical dilemmas, family engagement plans, quarterly ethical training, scenario-based learning, forming an ethics committee, and launching public awareness campaigns. These initiatives aim to build on strengths, address areas for improvement, and promote a unified, ethical educational environment.

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