

Professional Development of Teacher Self-Efficacy: A Qualitative Investigation

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study examines the impact of professional development (PD) on teacher self-efficacy in the Labason District, Zamboanga del Norte, using Bandura's social cognition theory as a framework. The research highlights the critical role of teachers in driving educational change and seeks to understand how PD programs influence their perceived competence and instructional effectiveness. Employing a qualitative methodology, the study gathers personal experiences and perceptions of eight teachers from diverse backgrounds through in-depth interviews. These narratives provide insight into how PD activities are integrated into teaching practices and their effects on self-efficacy. Key findings indicate that tailored PD programs significantly boost teachers' confidence and effectiveness, with reported improvements in classroom management, instructional strategies, and student engagement. The study underscores the importance of aligning PD activities with teachers' specific needs and the realities of their educational environments. Supportive school leadership and a collaborative school culture are also identified as crucial for maximizing the benefits of PD programs. The research highlights challenges such as limited resources and unequal access to quality PD opportunities. Despite these issues, the study emphasizes the transformative potential of well-designed PD initiatives in creating a positive learning environment and enhancing student achievement. Contributing to the broader understanding of teacher development, the study offers practical recommendations for policymakers and educational leaders to improve teacher self-efficacy and educational outcomes in the Labason District and similar contexts.

Keywords: teacher self-efficacy, professional development (PD), educational change, instructional effectiveness

1. Introduction

Teachers have a crucial role in education as catalysts for change and facilitators of learning. Their effectiveness, in terms of both their perceived competence and their actual teaching methods, has a dramatic impact on student achievements. Professional development (PD) is a vital aspect that significantly impacts teacher efficacy. It plays a pivotal role in improving teaching techniques and cultivating good attitudes among teachers. It is crucial to comprehend the dynamics of teacher self-efficacy and the impact of professional development (PD) in the Labason District, where educational problems are combined with distinct local and contextual elements.

Various research have examined the correlation between professional development and teacher self-efficacy in different educational contexts. Bandura's social cognition theory asserts that self-efficacy beliefs have a substantial impact on individuals' behaviors, motivation, and overall performance. Teachers' attitudes on their competence to effectively teach students, handle classroom management, and overcome obstacles significantly influence their instructional methods and the academic achievements of their pupils.

The research conducted by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) highlights the significance of teacher self-efficacy in enhancing student achievement and cultivating a favorable learning atmosphere. Moreover, research conducted by Guskey and Yoon (2009) and Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) emphasizes the crucial impact of top-notch professional development programs in bolstering teacher effectiveness and enhancing instructional methods.

Nevertheless, despite the abundance of literature on professional development and teacher efficacy, there is a lack of qualitative investigations particularly examining these processes within the distinct setting of Labason District. It is essential to comprehend how instructors in this area perceive, experience, and incorporate Professional Development activities into their teaching practices. This understanding is critical for developing specific interventions that can support teacher development and improve student learning outcomes.

Labason District, located in Labason, Zamboanga del Norte, encounters distinct difficulties and prospects in the field of education. The success of professional development activities and teacher self-efficacy may be influenced by factors such as inadequate resources, cultural diversity, and geographical limits. Furthermore, it is crucial to comprehend the local

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educational policies, socio-economic situations, and community expectations in order to properly interpret the findings of this study and guarantee their validity and applicability to the specific context of the Labason District.

Although the importance of teacher self-efficacy and professional development in influencing educational results is widely recognized, there is a lack of research that specifically investigates these phenomena in the context of Labason District. Although quantitative studies offer useful insights, they frequently overlook the intricate experiences, views, and difficulties encountered by teachers during their professional development process. The proposed qualitative analysis aims to fill this gap by providing a thorough knowledge of how professional development programs and teacher self-efficacy interact in Labason District.

The significance of this research arises from the immediate necessity to enhance educational achievements and tackle the distinct difficulties encountered by schools and instructors in Labason District. Amidst a period marked by swift technological progress, evolving teaching methods, and shifting student populations, educators necessitate ongoing assistance and chances for professional development. This project intends to empower teachers, improve instructional practices, and eventually promote student learning outcomes in Labason District by identifying effective techniques for boosting teacher self-efficacy through focused professional development activities.

The main objective of this qualitative study is to examine the influence of professional development on teacher self-efficacy in the Labason District. The aim is to gain a detailed understanding of the relationship between professional development and teacher self-efficacy. This study seeks to provide insight into the experiences, difficulties, and possibilities encountered by teachers during their professional growth. Its objective is to offer guidance for policy and practice, and to contribute to the continuous efforts to improve the quality of education in Labason District and beyond.

Objectives

1. To identify the specific types of professional development activities or programs.
2. To explore the mechanisms through which professional development influences teacher self-efficacy perceptions, including the role of mentorship, peer collaboration, and reflective practices.
3. To investigate the long-term effects of professional development on teacher self-efficacy, including any sustained changes in teaching practices and classroom dynamics.
4. To examine potential differences in the effects of professional development on teacher self-efficacy based on factors such as sex, age, teaching experience, subject area, and school context.
5. To gain insights into the strategies and approaches used by teachers to integrate newfound confidence and skills acquired through professional development into their daily teaching practices.
6. To identify and analyze insights and recommendations for enhancing professional development programs in order to increase teacher self-efficacy based on respondents' experiences and perspectives.

2. Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research design, specifically a phenomenological approach, to explore the impact of professional development (PD) on teacher self-efficacy within the Labason District. This method is suitable for capturing the lived experiences and perceptions of teachers, allowing for an in-depth understanding of how PD activities influence their self-efficacy beliefs and instructional practices.

Research Locale

The research is conducted in Labason District, located in Zamboanga del Norte, Philippines. This locale includes various schools and educational institutions, providing a diverse context for examining the effects of PD on teacher self-efficacy.

Population Design

The study targets a specific population of teachers within the Labason District. Eight teachers from different schools, with varying levels of teaching experience and subject specializations, were selected through purposive sampling. This approach ensures a diverse representation of perspectives on PD and its impact on self-efficacy. According to Creswell (2013), a smaller, focused sample size is appropriate for phenomenological research as it allows for an in-depth exploration of participants' lived experiences.

Sampling Design

Purposive sampling was utilized to select participants who have actively engaged in PD activities during the academic year 2023-2024. The criteria for selection included diversity in teaching experience, subject areas, and school settings. Teachers who did not participate in PD during this period were excluded from the study.

Procedures

The primary method of data collection is semi-structured interviews. These interviews are designed to elicit detailed narratives from teachers about their PD experiences and their effects on self-efficacy. Field notes and audio recordings will complement the interview data to ensure accuracy and depth in the analysis.

The data gathering process involves inviting participants for one-on-one semi-structured interviews conducted in a confidential setting within the Labason District. Participants will be provided with informed consent forms outlining the study's purpose, confidentiality measures, and their rights. An interview guide with open-ended questions will facilitate the discussions.

To ensure the credibility and validity of the findings, the study employs techniques such as prolonged engagement, triangulation, peer review, and member checks. These methods enhance the reliability and transferability of the research outcomes.

The research adheres to strict ethical guidelines, including obtaining informed consent from participants, ensuring their anonymity and confidentiality, and providing them with the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Ethical approval will be sought from relevant institutional review boards before commencing data collection.

3. Results and Discussions

This study involved the eight participants who are teachers from Malintubonan National High School and Ubay National High School. All these participants were selected to share their stories regarding to their perceptions on professional development and teacher efficacy. Each participant would be introduced with pseudonyms to assure the confidentiality.

Table 1. Teacher Pseudonym and Justification

TEACHER NO.	PSEUDONYM	JUSTIFICATION
1	Innovative Teacher	The pseudonym "Innovative" aptly captures the teacher-participant's commitment to embracing and applying cutting-edge teaching methodologies and classroom management strategies. Throughout her career, she has actively engaged in diverse professional development activities, including workshops, conferences, and online courses, demonstrating a consistent drive for continuous improvement. Her efforts to integrate new knowledge into her daily teaching practices reflect her forward-thinking approach and dedication to enhancing her self-efficacy, classroom dynamics, and student outcomes. This pseudonym highlights her proactive and dynamic nature in the field of education.
2	Reflective Teacher	The pseudonym "Reflective" captures the essence of the teacher-participant's approach to professional development and teaching. As a seasoned English educator, she actively engages in professional development activities, especially those tailored to her subject through INSET sessions. Her participation is not merely passive; she thoughtfully integrates the diverse insights and methodologies gained from these sessions into her teaching practice. This reflective approach enhances her self-efficacy, teaching strategies, and classroom dynamics. She values mentorship, peer collaboration, and continuous learning, all of which contribute to her ability to adapt and grow as an educator. This pseudonym highlights her commitment to thoughtful self-improvement and the ongoing refinement of her instructional techniques.
3	Aspiring Teacher	The pseudonym "Aspiring" captures the teacher-participant's continuous pursuit of professional and academic growth. With multiple graduate degrees and ongoing doctoral studies, she is committed to lifelong learning and professional development. This dedication is evident in her active participation in seminars, workshops, and peer collaboration, all aimed at enhancing her teaching practice and self-efficacy. Her proactive approach to professional growth, integrating new strategies into her daily teaching, and embracing mentorship and feedback, underscores her aspiration to continually improve and stay current in the field of education.
4	Dynamic Teacher	The pseudonym "Dynamic" aptly reflects the teacher-participant's active engagement in various professional development activities and their proactive approach to enhancing teaching practices. With a focus on mathematics education, they demonstrate adaptability and energy in seeking out opportunities for growth, embracing collaboration, and integrating new strategies into their teaching. The term "Dynamic" captures their vibrant and evolving approach to professional development, which continuously enriches their instructional skills and self-efficacy as a teacher.
5	Adaptive Teacher	The pseudonym "Adaptive" suits this teacher-participant because they demonstrate a capacity to adjust and evolve their teaching methods through active engagement in professional development activities. Their involvement in seminars, workshops, and training sessions reflects a willingness to adapt to new methodologies, technologies, and collaborative approaches in education. The adjective "adaptive" captures their proactive approach to professional growth, highlighting their ability to embrace change and incorporate innovative strategies into their teaching practice.
6	Empowered Teacher	The pseudonym "Empowered" suits this teacher-participant because they demonstrate a strong sense of empowerment through their active engagement in professional development activities supported by the Department of Education (DepEd). Their experiences highlight how these initiatives have significantly impacted their teaching practices and self-efficacy, empowering them to cultivate their skills, develop leadership abilities, and navigate challenges effectively. The adjective "empowered" reflects their sense of confidence, agency, and capability as a

		result of their involvement in targeted professional development activities, aligning with Bandura's concept of self-efficacy and the transformative nature of effective professional development.
7	Versatile Teacher	The pseudonym "Versatile" is fitting for this teacher-participant because they demonstrate adaptability and flexibility in their approach to professional development. With a rich academic background and diverse engagement in various learning activities, they exhibit versatility in navigating different educational contexts and subject areas. Their involvement in seminars, workshops, in-service training, and collaborative learning communities underscores their ability to thrive in diverse learning environments and integrate multiple perspectives into their teaching practice. The adjective "versatile" encapsulates their capacity to excel across different domains of professional development, reflecting their multidimensional approach to enhancing their teaching skills and self-efficacy.
8	Resilient Teacher	The pseudonym "Resilient" fits this teacher-participant because they demonstrate resilience in their commitment to professional development despite challenges and varying circumstances. Engaging in diverse activities such as workshops, seminars, in-service training sessions, and collaborative learning communities showcases their resilience in seeking opportunities for growth. Their acknowledgment of the multifaceted impact of professional development on their self-efficacy, particularly through mentorship, peer collaboration, and reflective practices, highlights their ability to adapt and learn from various experiences. Furthermore, their recognition of the long-term effects of professional development on their teaching practices and classroom dynamics reflects resilience in continuously striving for improvement. Additionally, they advocate for tailored and practical professional development programs, indicating resilience in their efforts to overcome obstacles and maximize their learning outcomes. Overall, the adjective "Resilient" captures their determination to thrive and succeed in their teaching journey despite challenges along the way.

The study identified several key themes related to the impact of professional development (PD) on teacher self-efficacy in the Labason District:

Table 2. Teacher Profile and Key Insights

Teacher No. & Pseudonym	Profile	Key Insights
Teacher 1 – Passionate Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ A dedicated educator with a strong commitment to teaching and professional growth. □ Actively participates in various professional development activities, including workshops, seminars, and collaborative learning experiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Deep Commitment: Shows a strong passion for teaching and a continuous drive for professional improvement. □ Impact of Professional Development: Finds that engaging in professional development activities significantly enhances teaching skills and classroom effectiveness. □ Mentorship and Collaboration: Values the role of mentorship and collaboration with peers in professional development, recognizing their impact on self-efficacy and teaching practices. □ Reflective Practice: Emphasizes the importance of reflective practice in professional growth, using insights gained from professional development to improve teaching methods and student outcomes.
Teacher 2 – Reflective Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ A seasoned educator specializing in English instruction. □ Actively participates in professional development activities, particularly INSET (In-Service Education and Training) sessions tailored to English teaching. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Proactive Engagement: Participates in INSET and trainings specifically related to teaching English, emphasizing the importance of subject-specific professional development. □ Impact on Professional Growth: Finds English content-focused training most beneficial for professional growth, recognizing that such targeted professional development enhances content knowledge and instructional strategies. □ Self-Efficacy: Attributes a significant boost in teaching confidence and efficacy to exposure to diverse teaching methods through professional development. □ Mentorship and Collaboration: Highlights mentorship, peer collaboration, and reflective practice as crucial components of professional development that positively influence self-efficacy and teaching practices.
Teacher 3 – Aspiring Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ An educator with a keen interest in ongoing professional development to enhance teaching effectiveness. □ Actively participates in various professional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Commitment to Learning: Engages in professional development activities such as workshops, seminars, and collaborative learning communities. □ Value of Collaboration: Finds collaborative learning experiences particularly beneficial for professional growth, enhancing confidence and teaching practices through peer support and shared learning.

	development activities, focusing on gaining new knowledge and skills.	
Teacher 4 – Dynamic Teacher	<p>□Dedicated educator with a strong focus on mathematics education.</p> <p>□Actively engages in diverse professional development activities, including conferences, workshops, seminars, online courses, and collaborative learning experiences.</p>	<p>□Continuous Engagement: Maintains a proactive approach to professional growth, emphasizing the importance of lifelong learning.</p> <p>□Collaborative Learning: Values collaborative learning experiences for gaining new perspectives and insights from fellow educators.</p> <p>□Mentorship and Peer Collaboration: Recognizes mentorship and peer collaboration as significant factors in enhancing self-efficacy, contributing to long-term improvements in teaching practices and classroom dynamics</p>
Teacher 5 – Adaptive Teacher	<p>□An educator who adapts teaching strategies based on continuous professional development.</p> <p>□Participates in professional development activities that focus on practical and innovative teaching strategies.</p>	<p>□Adaptation and Innovation: Engages in professional development activities that emphasize practical techniques and innovative methodologies.</p> <p>□Self-Efficacy: Reports that professional development activities significantly boost teaching confidence by providing updated knowledge and practical techniques.</p> <p>□Reflective Practices: Highlights the importance of reflective practices, mentorship, and peer collaboration in shaping teaching approaches and self-efficacy</p>
Teacher 6 – Empowered Teacher	<p>□Experienced educator actively involved in various professional development activities throughout their career.</p> <p>□Engages in workshops, seminars, in-service training sessions, and collaborative learning communities.</p>	<p>□Diverse Engagement: Participates in a variety of professional development activities covering topics such as educational psychology, counseling techniques, and classroom management.</p> <p>□Impact on Self-Efficacy: Recognizes the crucial role of professional development in shaping self-efficacy through mentorship, peer collaboration, and reflective practices.</p> <p>□Long-Term Effects: Notes sustained improvements in self-efficacy, teaching practices, and classroom dynamics as a result of ongoing professional development</p>
Teacher 7 – Versatile Teacher	<p>□Exhibits versatility in navigating different educational contexts and subject areas.</p> <p>□Actively participates in seminars, workshops, in-service training, and collaborative learning communities.</p>	<p>□Multidimensional Approach: Thrives in diverse learning environments, integrating multiple perspectives into teaching practice.</p> <p>□Versatility and Adaptation: Demonstrates the ability to excel across different domains of professional development, enhancing teaching skills and self-efficacy through varied professional growth activities</p>
Teacher 8 – Resilient Teacher	<p>□Experienced educator committed to professional development despite challenges.</p> <p>□Engages in workshops, seminars, in-service training sessions, and collaborative learning communities.</p>	<p>□Commitment and Resilience: Demonstrates resilience in seeking opportunities for growth despite challenges and varying circumstances.</p> <p>□Mentorship and Collaboration: Acknowledges the multifaceted impact of professional development on self-efficacy through mentorship, peer collaboration, and reflective practices.</p> <p>□Long-Term Improvement: Recognizes the long-term effects of professional development on teaching practices and classroom dynamics, continuously striving for improvement</p>

Table 3. Summary of PD Activities and Their Impact on Teacher Self-Efficacy

Teacher No. & Pseudonym	PD Activities	Impact on Self-Efficacy
Teacher 1 – Passionate Teacher	Diverse professional development formats, technology integration	Enhanced teaching practices, improved student-centered approaches
Teacher 2 – Reflective Teacher	Subject-specific professional development, mentorship, peer collaboration	Improved reflective practices, better integration of new methodologies
Teacher 3 – Aspiring Teacher	Seminars, workshops, peer collaboration, mentorship	Continuous professional growth, effective integration of new strategies

Teacher 4 – Dynamic Teacher	Various professional development activities, collaboration	Enhanced adaptability, improved teaching practices in mathematics education
Teacher 5 – Adaptive Teacher	Professional development, new methodologies and technologies	Improved adaptability and evolution of teaching methods
Teacher 6 – Empowered Teacher	Professional development initiatives	Increased empowerment and improved teaching practices
Teacher 7 – Versatile Teacher	Diverse learning activities, multiple perspectives	Enhanced flexibility and integration of diverse perspectives
Teacher 8 – Resilient Teacher	Various professional development activities	Increased resilience and advocacy for practical programs

In summary:

1. Enhanced Teaching Skills through Diverse PD Activities:

- Teachers participated in a variety of PD activities such as workshops, seminars, in-service training, and collaborative learning communities.

- These activities helped teachers address different educational needs and enhance their teaching practices comprehensively.

2. Mentorship and Peer Collaboration:

- Programs that included mentorship and peer collaboration significantly boosted teacher self-efficacy.

- These elements provided essential guidance, feedback, and opportunities for continuous improvement.

3. Long-term Engagement in PD:

- Continuous participation in PD activities led to sustained improvements in teaching methods and classroom interactions.

- Teachers reported long-term positive changes in their practices, emphasizing the importance of ongoing professional growth.

4. Effectiveness of PD Varies by Demographics:

- The impact of PD on self-efficacy varied based on factors such as sex, age, teaching experience, subject area, and school context.

- Understanding these variations is crucial for designing effective, tailored PD programs.

5. Integration of New Skills:

- Teachers actively incorporated new strategies from PD into their daily practices, facilitated by mentorship and peer collaboration.

6. Challenges and Recommendations:

- Despite the benefits, challenges such as limited resources and varying access to quality PD were noted.

- Teachers recommended hands-on learning, practical application, personalized training, and sustained support.

The findings from this study highlight the significant role that well-designed PD programs play in enhancing teacher self-efficacy. The diversity of PD activities ensures that teachers can address various educational challenges and continuously improve their instructional practices. Mentorship and peer collaboration emerged as critical components, providing ongoing support and fostering an environment conducive to professional growth.

The study also underscores the importance of long-term engagement in PD activities, which leads to sustained improvements in teaching practices. However, it is crucial to recognize that the effectiveness of PD varies among teachers based on demographic factors. Tailoring PD programs to meet the specific needs of different teacher groups can maximize their impact.

The integration of new skills into daily teaching practices, facilitated by supportive mentorship and collaboration, is essential for the practical application of PD learnings. Despite the challenges such as limited resources, the study's recommendations for hands-on, practical, and personalized PD initiatives offer valuable insights for policymakers and educational leaders.

By addressing these findings and recommendations, educational institutions in the Labason District and similar contexts can enhance the effectiveness of their PD programs, ultimately leading to improved teaching practices and better student outcomes.

Conclusions

The study concluded that teachers in the Labason District benefit from diverse professional development activities, such as workshops, seminars, and collaborative learning, which enhance their teaching skills across various areas. Programs that include mentorship, peer collaboration, and reflective practices significantly boost teacher self-efficacy by providing essential guidance and opportunities for continuous improvement. Long-term engagement in professional development leads to sustained positive changes in teaching practices and classroom dynamics, with the effectiveness of these programs varying based on factors like sex, age, experience, and subject area. Active integration of new skills into daily practice, supported by mentorship and peer collaboration, is crucial for improving teaching effectiveness and student engagement. Teachers also

recommend enhancing professional development by incorporating more hands-on learning, personalized training, and offering flexible formats such as online, in-person, and hybrid models to ensure greater accessibility and impact.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, several recommendations are proposed for different stakeholders. Curriculum makers should design professional development (PD) programs that offer a variety of activities, such as workshops, seminars, and hands-on training, focusing on both pedagogical strategies and subject-specific methodologies. Education program supervisors are encouraged to implement structured mentorship programs and foster peer collaboration, tailoring PD initiatives to meet the diverse needs of teachers based on factors like experience and school context. School administrators should promote a culture of continuous professional growth by providing teachers with the necessary resources and time for PD, while supporting the practical application of new strategies in the classroom. Teachers are advised to actively participate in PD opportunities, seeking mentorship and collaboration to refine their practices and integrate new skills into their teaching. Future researchers should conduct longitudinal studies to assess the long-term impacts of PD on teacher self-efficacy and explore how different contexts and demographics influence its effectiveness, providing insights for designing more targeted programs and improving the application of PD learnings in daily practice.

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