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# Professional Standards for Teachers Landscape in the Standpoint of Teaching Profession: Insight from Higher Education Institution (HEI) Instructors

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**Abstract.** This descriptive research explores the insights of the instructors in the Higher Education Institution (HEI) about the professional standards for teachers along with the domains to identify the level of their proficiency. There were eighty-four instructors who served as participants in College of Education of Ifugao State University. Survey questionnaire and interview guide questions were utilized in this study to determine the proficiency level and challenges in the implementation of professional standards for teachers. Mean was used in the descriptive statistics while thematic analysis was utilized in the qualitative part. Relevant findings stressed the importance of customized professional development, long-term faculty evaluation, cultural sensitivity, and community and personal involvement. Effective and engaging training methods, feedback, and efficient resource allocation are vital for faculty development. As to the challenges, three distinct themes were derived as to the following: failure to adhere to guidelines, poor administrative supervision; and lack of training and technical assistance. The research output aimed to intensify instructors' delivery of quality instruction and governance, to provide valuable guidance to improve faculty performance, and to cater to instructors' diverse needs along with professional standards.

**Keywords:** domains; faculty development; professional standards; proficiency

## 1. Background of the Study

The Higher Education Institution (HEI) acknowledges the significance of professional standards in teachers' advancement and ongoing professional development to ensure the idea of lifelong learning. It is dedicated to helping educators and acknowledging the clear evidence that high-achieving students benefit greatly from having excellent teachers (Sung et al., 2022). Excellent

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instruction is a prerequisite for excellent learning. Therefore, improving the quality of teachers becomes crucial for long-term and sustainable nation-building (Kim et al., 2019).

On behalf of the Department of Education (DepEd), the Teacher Education Council (TEC) released a DepEd Order regarding the implementation of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), which aligns with the new professional standards for teachers. Professional standards for teachers establish clear expectations for them across clearly defined career stages of professional development, from beginning to distinguished practice, and encourage them to actively pursue a continuous effort to achieve proficiency (Lauder, 2020). In addition, it applies a uniform measure to assess teachers' performance, identify needs, and provide support for professional development. Furthermore, Hong et al (2021) pointed out that the professional standards for teachers serves as the foundation for all professional development and learning initiatives for educators, guaranteeing that they have the tools necessary to carry out the curriculum with efficiency. In addition, it should also be adjusted and brought in line with professional standards because it is required that performance reviews and these standards be the basis for the selection and advancement of teachers (Ahwin, 2021).

In addition, quality instruction along with different domains in PST provide measures of professional learning, competent practice, and effective engagement in the context of HEIs (Park et al, 2019). Besides, a set of standards in the teaching profession would lead to making the instructors more capable, and eventually achieving quality education. However, the classroom setup must be student-centred and must apply the principles of inclusivity [Republic Act 10533, series 2013]. The professional standards, therefore, become a public statement of professional accountability that can help teachers reflect on and assess their own practices as they aspire for personal growth and professional development [PPST, 2022].

According to Coates (2020), academic models have been rocked by the 2020 pandemic and now is the perfect moment to innovate in global online education, shift focus to Asia and lifelong learning, and invest in 21<sup>st</sup>-century institutions and partnerships. This indicates that competent instructors must be employed in HEIs in order to be effective teachers in the twenty-first century. Effective educators in higher education must have the necessary qualities. After the pandemic, we'll probably be eager to re-establish in-person contact, whether it be hybrid or remote, presenters, teachers, and audience members' involvement will probably be the contemporary norm to cope with the quality standards for teachers (Blanco & de Wit, 2020).

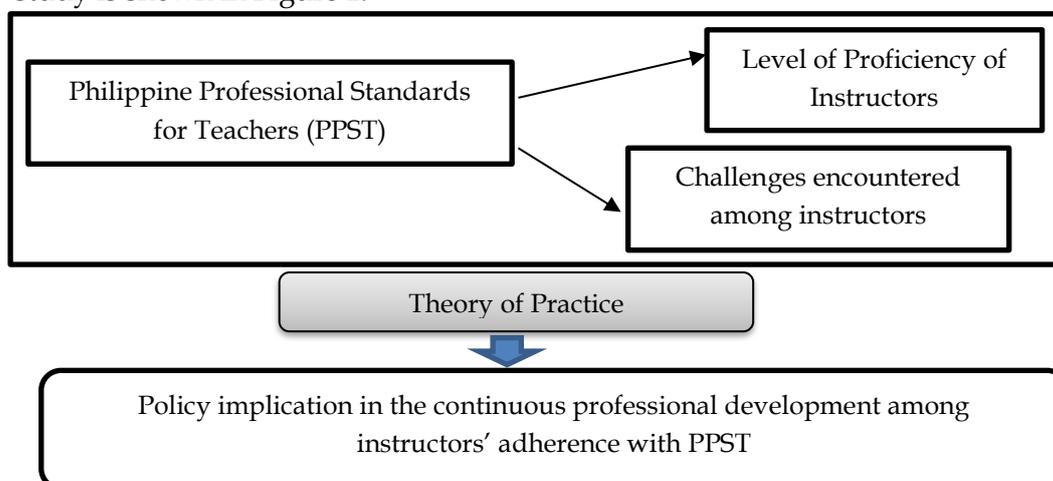
Lina et al., (2023), pointed out that the integration of high-order thinking skills from pedagogical perspective with full mastery of the subject matter is pivotal in the curriculum. In addition, initiating varied teaching theories and principles promotes a positive learning atmosphere. Thus, competent instructors must apply developmentally appropriate and meaningful pedagogy grounded on content

knowledge and current research. They are expected to possess excellent communication skills to aid the teaching and learning process, as well as exhibit the needed skills in the utilization of technologies to promote high-quality learning outcomes (Roallos, 2022).

Encouraging student responsibility and accomplishment, safe, secure, equitable, and conducive learning environments are also necessary. The learning environment should be centered on learning and effective control of student behavior in both real and virtual spaces, and must consider the lifelong learners in this generation (Askling & Foss-Fridlitzius, 2000). This suggests that in order to promote positive classroom interactions and the achievement of high standards of learning toward lifelong learning, teachers should offer logically demanding and stimulating activities (Daflizar, 2023).

Sande and Burnett (2023) stressed the significance of developing learning environments that take into account the diversity of learners recognizing and appreciating the range of characteristics and experiences that learners bring to the development and creation of learning opportunities. Educators ought to advocate for both diversities in the classroom and differentiated learning as essential components of preparing all students for success as global and local citizens.

Wade et al. (2008) pointed out that instructors must engage with both local and national curriculum requirements. Transforming course content into learning activities that are appropriate for the learner and follow the guidelines for effective instruction is highly encouraged. In addition, either alone or in collaboration with colleagues, instructors should use their expertise to plan and create well-structured, sequential lessons that are contextually relevant, responsive to the needs of the learners, and incorporate a variety of teaching and learning resources. They convey learning objectives to encourage student engagement, comprehension, and success in the context of higher education (Salvo et al., 2019). Moreover, researchers opted to explore the level of proficiency of the instructors and the challenges in teaching-learning process. In addition, this study is anchored on the theory of practice. The schematic diagram of the study is shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1. Schematic Diagram of the study showing the interrelated variables**

Previous researches focused only on the different attributes of being a teacher and related teaching methodologies in the teaching-learning process. As shown in the schematic diagram, it is very indispensable to consider the theory of practice in the setting of teaching profession. Researchers failed to explore the different domains of professional teachers. From the perspective of the study, the Theory of Practice has been used. The study banks on the said theory in order to determine the level of practice in terms of the principles of professional standards (Pope et al, 2023).

In the study of Maloloy-on and Arnado (2023), they emphasized the importance of the varied domains in the PPST. Thus, the substantial contribution of instructors' personal and professional development to their teaching performance shows how continuing professional development (CPD) can increase teachers' efficacy in the classroom. On the other hand, the beginning teachers shall be properly monitored and initiated curriculum moored with PPST in Teacher Education. As such, forging linkages between and among teacher education institutions through curriculum quality audits may be considered (Bacus & Tagalog, 2023).

Given the evidence above, previous studies focused more on the importance of the domains of PPST and the enhancement of curriculum in Teacher Education institutions. In contrast, this current study zeroed in on the level of know-how of the instructors in terms of the domains and the challenges in the implementation of PPST in the academe.

Since Ifugao State University Potia Campus is an academic institution it is in dire need to determine the insights of the instructors in the salient features of professional standards to be cascaded among the students of the College of Education. Hence, it is vital to identify the insights of the instructors in HEIs about the domains of professional teachers. So, the goal of this study is to explore the insights of the instructors into the professional standards for teachers and the challenges encountered in the context of the teaching profession along with the standards set by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and the DepEd. The process of the study was primarily driven by the following research questions: i) What is the insights of the instructors about the domains of professional standards for teachers? ii) What are the challenges encountered among the instructors as to standards of being professional along with the different domains? and iii) What policy implications are to be noted to reinforce the professional standards for teachers in the context of Higher Education Institution?

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1. Research Design**

Mixed Methods of Research (MMR) was utilized in this study. An explanatory sequential design was employed to determine the insights of the instructors of the College of Education of Ifugao State University along with the professional standards for instructors with the different domains using survey and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) to determine their proficiency and the challenges they encountered as to the different domains respectively. Moreover, this design

was used to explore and interpret the phenomenon of the existing practices of the instructors in terms of professional standards.

## **2.2. Research Participants**

All instructors and program supervisors of the College of Education served as the participants of the study. Selected eighty-four (84) instructors from the College of Education were chosen to be the participants in the survey while selected thirteen (13) and five (5) immediate supervisors were chosen to participate in the FGD based on specific criteria such as the length of service in teaching, teaching position and administrative position among the immediate supervisors to explore the challenges along with the domains of professional standards for instructors.

## **2.3. Research Instrument**

To gather the data for this study, survey test questionnaires and interview guide questions were used. The questionnaires are patterned from the Result-Based Performance Management Systems (RPMS) tool and the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) with simple modifications. There are two parts of the instruments. The first part delved on the level of proficiency of the instructors based on the seven domains. The pilot testing was done before the administration of survey questionnaire. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient was found with 0.947 which indicates that the instrument is reliable to determine the insights of the instructors about their proficiency in the standards for professional teachers. On the other hand, the second part includes the interview guide questions to explore the different challenges in the implementation of professional standards for teachers. Experts were invited to validate the instruments based on the purpose of the study. Recommendations and suggestions from the validators were incorporated before the finalization of the instrument.

## **2.4. Data Collection**

There were certain ethical concerns considered in the study. The head of the unit where the study was conducted received a letter of request prior to the study's conduct. The goals of the study were explained to the participants, who also received guarantees that their identity would be kept private and that the results would only be used for academic research. Most importantly, each participant gave their informed consent; this is only intended for use in clinical studies. Following clearance, the participants were given the questionnaire by the researcher in person. Social media platforms were used for the purpose of gathering data. Google Forms was used to distribute the survey questionnaire and make it easier to gather the information needed for the study. Participants were given at least a 5-day answer period, after which retrieval was undertaken.

Moreover, interviews were done to validate and cross-check the responses of the participants of the study. The selected participants in the FGD were invited to attend the virtual conference to solicit ideas to explore the challenges along with the domains in the professional standards for teachers as a basis to craft the intervention to improve the professional standards for instructors in the

context of Higher Education Institution along with formulation of the policy to be included in the university manual. Responses of the participants were listed in a verbatim way. Then, the researcher properly transcribed the responses during the FGD.

### **2.5. Data Analysis**

After data collection, the researcher tallied, computed, and analyzed the data for both the quantitative and qualitative data. For the quantitative part of the study, the 4-point Likert-type rating scale with options ranging from Beginning (B) to Distinguished (D). Beginning (B) corresponds to a score of '1', Proficient (P) equals '2', Highly Proficient (HP) assigns '3', and Distinguished (D) assigns '4'. As to statistical tools used to analyze quantitative data, mean was used to determine the insights of the instructors and program supervisors about their proficiency in the professional standards for teachers. On the other hand, thematic analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data to disclose the challenges encountered by the participants along with the different domains. The process of thematic analysis was done to systematically arrange the themes revealed during the FGD.

### **2.6. Ethical Considerations**

The study adhered to ethical principles. Consent was obtained from the participating instructors before data collection. The study's objectives were transparently communicated to the relevant authorities, and ethical approval was obtained from the appropriate institutional review board. Data confidentiality and anonymity were ensured to protect the privacy of the participants. The researcher handled the data with discretion, and the results were presented in an aggregated and anonymous format to further safeguard participants' identities.

## **3. Results and Discussion**

The findings of the study primarily based from the research questions as to the insights of both the instructors and program supervisors about the proficiency of the instructors in terms of content and pedagogy, learning environment, diversity of learners, curriculum and planning, assessment and reporting, community linkages and professional engagement, personal growth and professional development. In addition, the challenges along with these domains were disclosed.

### **3.1. Insights of the instructors' proficiency level in the domains of professional standards for teachers**

As shown in Table 1, most of the instructors considered themselves as highly proficient in terms of content knowledge and pedagogy. In general, the average mean was 2.67 described as Highly Proficient (HP). Similarly, most of the supervisors considered the instructors as Highly Proficient (HP) with an overall mean of 2.58. This means that little lower than the rating of instructors but still described as highly proficient.

The results of this study brought to light the typical circumstances faced by academic instructors who fall into one of two categories: either too high to be

considered distinguished teachers, or too low to be considered proficient or beginning teachers. Being highly proficient indicates that the teacher has continuously performed at a high level during their teaching practice. Additionally, they exhibit a thorough and sophisticated comprehension of the pedagogical procedures and approaches. It implies that these instructors were trained and practiced the profession along with mastery of the content knowledge and pedagogy. In the interview, one of the participants disclosed that, Instructor 8: *“As an instructor, we need to become a fountain of knowledge. We should master our subject matter to be taught very class session. We make it sure to deliver the lesson with high mastery level.”*

The preceding statement pointed out that the question of whether instructors possess the necessary knowledge and skills in content and pedagogy is no doubt highly proficient as perceived by themselves and affirmed by their supervisors. Nonetheless, in both the assessment of participants and their supervisors, they are challenged with research-based knowledge and principles of teaching and learning as evidenced by the proficient level that they got. In relation to the abovementioned statements, one of the supervisors uttered during the interview that,

Supervisor 3: *“The instructors shall consider the content knowledge and different approaches in teaching. They need to employ variety of strategies to fit the students’ interest. Differentiated instructions must be initiated in the class. Thus, contextualized learning instructions must be utilized, too.”*

Based on the foregoing statement, this relates that neither they do not utilize contents from empirical researches to augment their discussions nor simply they do not have readily available researches because of their geographic location. This condition, however, does not mean that they lag behind compared to other universities but this just shows their priorities and that research was not being greatly considered over other pressing concerns. Adoniou and Gallagher (2017) emphasized that teachers in rural areas are more concerned with preparing their lessons, visual aids and instructional materials, remedial classes, and strategies on how to get the attention and active participation of their students particularly those who have to work in their fields or farms while studying. More so, teaching professionalism has become the focus of education reform in the context of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This indicates that instructors should master the content of the different courses (Macam, 2022).

The results under this domain are consistent with those of Solórzano and Yosso (2002), who also examined teachers' assessments of their proficiency in these domains, finding that teachers thought they were highly proficient in most areas of pedagogy and content knowledge, but only in terms of their involvement in research. Conversely, in the context of basic education, there was a lower level of assessment regarding pedagogy and content knowledge for both the surveyed supervisors and instructors. This indicates that the instructors apply skills essential to the teaching and learning process in a professionally independent manner.

**Table 1. The participants' level of proficiency in terms of content knowledge and pedagogy**

Content knowledge and pedagogy	Instructors		Supervisors	
	Mean	QI	Mean	QI
1. Content knowledge and its application within and across curriculum.	2.77	HP	2.69	HP
2. Research-based knowledge and principles of teaching and learning	2.50	P	2.50	P
3. Positive use of ICT	2.64	HP	2.55	HP
4. Strategies for promoting literacy and numeracy	2.75	HP	2.60	HP
5. Strategies for developing critical and creative thinking, as well as other higher-order thinking skills	2.66	HP	2.54	HP
6. Mother Tongue, Filipino and English in teaching and learning	2.67	HP	2.66	HP
7. Classroom communication strategies	2.68	HP	2.51	HP
<b>Average Mean</b>	<b>2.67</b>	<b>HP</b>	<b>2.58</b>	<b>HP</b>

*Legend: 1.00 – 1.75: (B); 1.76 – 2.50: (P); 2.51 – 3.25: (HP); 3.26 – 4.00: (D)*

Table 2 shows that, with an average mean score of 2.79, the instructors considered themselves to be highly proficient in fostering a fair learning environment. The supervisors also thought that the instructors were very good at creating a safe and secure learning environment, encouraging purposeful learning, encouraging student participation, managing the classroom's structure, and leading activities aimed at managing students' behavior – all of which had an average mean score of 2.67. This suggests that university instructors are very skilled at creating a conducive learning environment.

The results under this domain may suggest that the instructors have a favorable and significant extent of control over the learning environment, which may aid them in achieving the goals of their lessons. Although the supervisors' and instructors' ratings varied in some instances, all of these are at the extremely proficient level. This high level of proficiency could be explained by the notion that one of the important factors that instructors give careful consideration to is the learning environment. Graduates of teacher education programs study the field of learning environments in order to gain a profound and moral understanding of the significance of creating a physical and social environment in which all students can participate equally and actively (Torres Martin et al., 2021). As a result, the survey participants' knowledge of the learning environment was solidly established.

**Table 2. The participants' level of proficiency in terms of learning environment**

Learning Environment	Instructor		Supervisor	
	Mean	QI	Mean	QI
1. Learner's safety and security	2.81	HP	2.76	HP
2. Fair learning environment	2.86	HP	2.72	HP
3. Management of classroom structure and activities	2.75	HP	2.60	HP
4. Support for learner participation	2.81	HP	2.67	HP
5. Promotion of purposive learning	2.82	HP	2.71	HP
6. Management of learner behaviour	2.72	HP	2.59	HP
<b>Average Mean</b>	<b>2.79</b>	<b>HP</b>	<b>2.67</b>	<b>HP</b>

*Legend: 1.00 – 1.75: (B); 1.76 – 2.50: (P); 2.51 – 3.25: (HP); 3.26 – 4.00: (D)*

Since this area received the lowest mean rating in the evaluation of supervisors and instructors, the management of student behavior was identified as the area of greatest weakness. Villegas and Lucas (2002), who found that learner behavior management received ratings higher, are uncorroborated by this. In addition, one of the instructors testified that, Instructor 6: *"We are highly proficient in promoting a fair learning environment but our supervisors gave us a proficient level of evaluation."* This means that in order to provide a meaningful evaluation, it is imperative that the instructor's ratings be taken into account. This shows, among other things, that instructors think that creating a respectful environment for students in the classroom encourages them to perform better, that gender-neutral learning opportunities should be given to all students, and that a conducive learning environment aids in the teaching and learning process (Zamora & Zamora, 2022).

With an average rating of 2.58, the participants thought they were extremely skilled at managing the diversity of learners, as evidenced by Table 3's representation of that diversity. Conversely, the supervisors gave the instructors an average rating of 2.46, indicating that they were proficient. Supervisors observed that instructors evaluated themselves similarly when it came to managing the gender, needs, strengths, interests, and experiences of their students. However, the supervisors evaluated every other item under the diversity of learners' category under the proficient level.

The key finding in this area was the distinction between instructors' evaluations by their supervisors and by themselves. The instructors surveyed felt they are highly proficient with regard to all the items under the diversity of learners, with the exception of the diversity of learners' gender, needs, strengths, interests, and experiences, as well as learners in difficult circumstances. However, the supervisor felt they are only proficient. Based on the results of the interview, Supervisor 3 pointed out that, *"Naturally, instructors would play up their ratings of themselves which may either be the actual condition or was exaggerated. The supervisors may not also be absolutely certain as they may have observed their instructors only twice, once or none at all. Their references must be on papers and not on actual classroom visit."* Because of the supervisors' attitudes, this creates a problem. Since this item received the lowest rating, instructors and supervisors felt that there was a lack of understanding on the part of learners in challenging circumstances. In relation to the principles of teaching and the vision of DepEd on the Education for All (EFA),

this is a dismal condition as this may discriminate or disengage students. The prescribed action is that those who are in difficult circumstances should all the more be attended to as they are the ones who need the most attention and understanding.

**Table 3. The participants' level of proficiency in terms of diversity of learners**

Diversity of Learners	Instructor		Supervisor	
	Mean	QI	Mean	QI
1. Learners' gender, needs, strengths, interests and experiences	2.70	HP	2.53	HP
2. Learners' linguistic, cultural, socio-economic and religious backgrounds	2.64	HP	2.46	P
3. Learners with disabilities, giftedness and talents	2.52	HP	2.42	P
4. Learners in difficult circumstances	2.49	P	2.42	P
5. Learners from indigenous groups	2.55	HP	2.46	P
<b>Average Mean</b>	<b>2.58</b>	<b>HP</b>	<b>2.46</b>	<b>P</b>

*Legend: 1.00 – 1.75: (BT); 1.76 – 2.50: (PT); 2.51 – 3.25: (HP); 3.26 – 4.00: (D)*

It is apparent on Table 4 that the participants believed that they are highly proficient in terms of managing curriculum and planning with an average rating of 2.60. Interestingly, the supervisors, evaluated the instructors in this domain with a higher rating, an average mean of 2.70, though still under the level of highly proficient. The findings imply that instructors are highly proficient in how to manage classes and knowledgeable in terms of planning in the teaching-learning process.

The results for this domain show that the instructors perform at a high standard and actively participate in the planning and curriculum. Being highly proficient would also imply that they have a high level of situation cognition focused on education, are more skilled at solving problems, and maximize the opportunities that come with experience (Hubbad, 2023). It is, in fact, crucial to take each instructor's shortcomings and strengths into account. This was supported by one of the participants who shared that,

*Instructor 4: "We the instructors provide support and work closely with our supervisors to enhance the contents of their curriculum and collaboratively plan with our colleagues for the activities of the school." Furthermore, the study's findings might suggest that the instructors are eager to help students get the most out of their assignments. The fact that the supervisors rated themselves higher than they did is remarkable.*

In addition, some of the participants are very responsive in terms of learning program and inclusion of the learning resources by utilizing ICT. This was testified by, Instructor 5:

*"In teaching nowadays, utilizing the social media and multimedia in teaching play a vital role to facilitate learning. We in the academe, we need to expose our students in utilizing other means of instruction to master the competencies. "*

The aforementioned statement corroborated the results of the Iqbal et al. (2023) study, which showed that mastering the necessary skills and competencies requires consideration of and use of technology. Curriculum and planning also

need to work together and stress the significance of each in the teaching-learning process.

**Table 4. The participants' level of proficiency in terms of curriculum and planning**

Curriculum and Planning	Instructor		Supervisor	
	Mean	QI	Mean	QI
1. Planning and management of teaching and learning process	2.69	HP	2.75	HP
2. Learning outcomes aligned with learning competencies	2.69	HP	2.76	HP
3. Relevance and responsiveness of learning programs	2.54	HP	2.67	HP
4. Professional collaboration to enrich teaching practice	2.52	HP	2.70	HP
5. Teaching and learning resources including ICT	2.57	HP	2.63	HP
<b>Average Mean</b>	<b>2.60</b>	<b>HP</b>	<b>2.70</b>	<b>HP</b>

Legend: 1.00 – 1.75: (B); 1.76 – 2.50: (P); 2.51 – 3.25: (HP); 3.26 – 4.00: (D)

According to Table 5, the majority of participants gave themselves an average rating of 2.73, indicating that they believe they are highly proficient when it comes to appropriate assessment and reporting. The instructors thought they are good at tracking and assessing the progress and accomplishment of their students, creating, selecting, organizing, and applying assessment strategies, providing feedback to help students learn, communicating the needs, progress, and accomplishment of students to important individuals, and utilizing assessment results to improve programs and practices for teaching and learning. With an average rating of 2.64, the supervisors observed the instructors as being equally highly skilled in assessment and reporting. This suggests that supervisors and instructors thought instructors were very skilled at utilizing reporting and assessment.

This result under the domain of assessment and reporting showed that the instructors know one of the most important responsibilities of instructors as these are needed in processing most of their papers in schools and even in the assessment process (Cheong et al, 2023). Since both the instructors themselves and the supervisors had an average rating equivalent to highly proficient, this indicates that the instructors are consistently providing the needed information to the learners, their colleagues, and their supervisors. Thus, assessment and reporting are intertwined. This was elaborated by one of the supervisors who shared that,

Supervisor 2: *“There should be transparency and honesty in administering assessment and reporting. The instructors must be very careful in administering tests, assessment and evaluation among the students. Appropriate learning assessment and evaluation need to scrutinize to measure the learning outcomes.”*

The statement is attuned with the research by Black and William (1998), which shows that students and the school find it extremely admirable that instructors with high performance levels handle everything from feedback delivery to appropriate assessment strategy design, selection, and organization.

**Table 5. The participants' level of proficiency in terms of assessment and reporting**

Assessment and Reporting	Instructor		Supervisor	
	Mean	QI	Mean	QI
1. Design, selection, organization and utilization of assessment strategies	2.75	HP	2.72	HP
2. Monitoring and evaluation of learner progress and achievement	2.77	HP	2.69	HP
3. Feedback to improve learning	2.75	HP	2.64	HP
4. Communication of learner needs, progress and achievement to key stakeholders	2.71	HP	2.58	HP
5. Use of assessment data to enhance teaching and learning practices and programs	2.67	HP	2.56	HP
<b>Average Mean</b>	<b>2.73</b>	<b>HP</b>	<b>2.64</b>	<b>HP</b>

Legend: 1.00 – 1.75: (B); 1.76 – 2.50: (P); 2.51 – 3.25: (HP); 3.26 – 4.00: (D)

With an average rating of 2.73, Table 6 demonstrates the instructors' high level of proficiency in terms of professional engagement and community relations. Additionally, it is noted that instructors were competent in creating learning environments that are mindful of community contexts, school policies, and procedures, as well as in involving parents and the larger school community in the educational process while upholding professional ethics. With an average rating of 2.56, the supervisors also thought the instructors were very good at connecting with the community and engaging in professional activities. This suggests that instructors are extremely adept at connecting with the community. This was revealed by the one of the participants that, Instructor 6; *"In the College of Education, we are very active in the extension programs and conducting different outreach program and activities related with literacy and numeracy skills. Besides, all instructors are required to initiate community partnership to augment the strong partnership in the community."*

The aforementioned claim corroborated Castillo's (2023) findings, which indicated that establishing community partnerships with educational institutions aided in the achievement of the organization's main goal. According to their supervisors' evaluations and their personal assessments, the instructors in this study viewed themselves as exceptionally skilled. This may suggest that the instructors understand the value of professional involvement and connections to the community. To support their students' parents in the learning processes related to their domain, instructors must create a positive learning environment that is appropriate for the community they serve (Yoon et al., 2007).

**Table 6. The participants' level of proficiency in terms of community linkages and professional engagement**

Community linkages and professional engagement	Instructor		Supervisor	
	Mean	QI	Mean	QI
1. Establishment of learning environments that are responsive to community contexts	2.74	HP	2.57	HP
2. Engagement of parents and the wider school community in the educative process	2.76	HP	2.60	HP
3. Professional ethics	2.75	HP	2.54	HP
4. School policies and procedures	2.66	HP	2.52	HP
<b>Average Mean</b>	<b>2.73</b>	<b>HP</b>	<b>2.56</b>	<b>HP</b>

Legend: 1.00 – 1.75: (B); 1.76 – 2.50: (P); 2.51 – 3.25: (HP); 3.26 – 4.00: (D)

Table 7 shows that, with an average rating of 2.81 for both personal and professional growth, the participants perceived themselves as highly proficient. The participants held the view that they were exceptionally knowledgeable in areas such as professional development aims, professional reflection and learning to enhance practice, teaching philosophy, professional relationships with colleagues, and the dignity of teaching as a profession. With an average mean rating of 2.58, the supervisors also considered the instructors to be highly proficient. This suggests that in order to be considered professional, one should always take high moral standards and professionalism into consideration. This is in line with a study by Nichols et al. (2023), which found that professionalism is a crucial component of earning respect from the community.

Although their supervisors' perception of them was less favorable, this domain currently has the highest computed average mean from the instructors' assessments, even though these are still below the highly proficient level. This suggests that instructors have maintained the teaching philosophy and the belief that teaching is a respectable career in their time at university. They have also developed professional relationships with their colleagues and engaged in introspection to enhance their teaching methods. In this domain, their failure was attributed to the professional development objective, which received the lowest ratings from supervisors and instructors as well.

Similarly, this study is associated with the study of Salazar (2020). Salazar (2020) concluded that the instructors considered themselves highly proficient in upholding the dignity and integrity of the teaching profession and articulating appropriate philosophy of teaching. However, the instructors in this study also had the professional development goals as their weakness since this was only rated at the proficient level.

**Table 7. The participants' level of proficiency in terms of personal growth and professional development**

Personal growth and professional development	Instructors		Supervisors	
	Mean	QI	Mean	QI
1. Philosophy of teaching	2.82	HP	2.64	HP
2. Dignity of teaching as a profession	2.86	HP	2.61	HP
3. Professional links with colleagues	2.81	HP	2.58	HP
4. Professional reflection and learning to improve practice	2.82	HP	2.57	HP
5. Professional development goals	2.77	HP	2.52	HP
<b>Average Mean</b>	<b>2.81</b>	<b>HP</b>	<b>2.58</b>	<b>HP</b>

*Legend: 1.00 – 1.75 (B); 1.76 – 2.50: (P); 2.51 – 3.25: (HP); 3.26 – 4.00: (D)*

Table 8 presents the mean ratings of all the participants' level of domains. In general, the instructors rated themselves as highly proficient with an average mean of 2.70. The highest rating was on personal growth and professional development (2.81) followed by learning environment (2.79); assessment and reporting (2.73); community linkages and professional engagement (2.73); content knowledge and pedagogy (2.67); curriculum and planning (2.60) and the lowest was on the diversity of learners (2.58).

Similarly, the supervisors assessed the instructors in general as highly proficient with an average mean of 2.60. However, the highest was on curriculum and planning (2.70) followed by learning environment (2.67); assessment and reporting (2.64); curriculum and planning (2.70); personal growth and professional development (2.58); content knowledge and pedagogy (2.58); community linkages and professional engagement (2.56); and the lowest on diversity of learners (2.46).

In summary, both the instructors and the supervisors indicated a high level of proficiency, with average means of 2.70 and 2.60, respectively. All of the domains were also at a high proficiency level, with the exception of learner diversity, which was rated at the proficiency level by supervisors. From DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2017, this high proficiency means that the instructors: consistently display a high level of performance in their teaching practice; manifest an in-depth and sophisticated understanding of the teaching and learning process; have high education-focused situation cognition, are more adept in problem solving and maximizing opportunities gained from experience; provide support and mentoring to colleagues in their professional development, as well as collaborate with potential colleagues. By reflecting on their own needs to those of their colleagues and students, they strive to continually enhance their professional knowledge and practice (Darling-Hammond, 2017).

**Table 8. Summary of mean of participants' level of proficiency across all the domains**

Domains	Instructors		Supervisors	
	Mean	QI	Mean	QI
Content Knowledge and Pedagogy	2.67	HP	2.58	HP
Learning Environment	2.79	HP	2.67	HP
Diversity of Learners	2.58	HP	2.46	P
Curriculum and Planning	2.60	HP	2.70	HP
Assessment and Reporting	2.73	HP	2.64	HP
Community Linkages and Professional Engagement	2.73	HP	2.56	HP
Personal Growth and Professional Development	2.81	HP	2.58	HP
<b>Average Mean</b>	<b>2.70</b>	<b>HP</b>	<b>2.60</b>	<b>HP</b>

*Legend: 1.00 – 1.75: (B); 1.76 – 2.50: (P); 2.51 – 3.25: (HP); 3.26 – 4.00: (D)*

### **3.2. Challenges encountered by the instructors in the domains in professional standards for teachers**

Based on the results of the interview with the selected key informants, themes were discovered based on the responses of the instructors and supervisors about the challenges encountered in the different domains of professional standards for teachers. The following themes are as follows: i) failure to adhere to guidelines, ii) poor administrative supervision; and iii) lack of training and technical assistance.

#### **Theme 1: Failure to Adhere to Guidelines**

Adherence to the professional standards for teachers is crucial for instructors to enhance their professional competence and contribute to the overall improvement of the education system. It encourages continuous improvement and provides a unified framework for teacher evaluation, development, and recognition. Moreover, the professional standards for teachers served as a foundation for the professionalization of teaching, ensuring that educators in the HEIs met the highest standards of professional practice. Notably, some of the key informants mentioned that,

*Instructor 3: "There is no specific guidelines in the university in the implementation of professional standards for teachers. I have encountered difficulties on how to study the issuances related with the domains of professional standards for teachers."*

In addition, Instructor 5 pointed out that, *"It is very crucial to strictly adhere with the guidelines in the implementation of professional standards for teachers. This could probably help us to facilitate the implementation of Professional Standards for Teachers (PST) in the context of HEIs."*

It is very clear that specific guidelines must be cascaded to the instructors about the importance of professional standards for teachers in the academe specifically in Teacher Education. Guidelines must be clear and evidently stated in order to have a smooth sailing process in adhering to the professional standards for teachers to improve the quality of the services. Thus, instructors must stringently adhere to the guidelines. It is prominent since the Professional Standards for Teachers is designed to ensure that instructors possess the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes to deliver quality education and make a positive impact on student learning which comprises different domains.

In addition, some of the instructors provided needed information about the significant contribution of the clear guidelines on how to implement the professional standards for teachers in the academe since this is more applicable in the context of basic education. Thus, setting guidelines must be considered. These statements testified from other instructors in the college that,

Supervisor 4: *“... by following the guidelines by the Professional Standard for Teacher, it aims for the best and generate students who are globally competitive. This emphasizes the idea that teachers can support students’ learning more successfully by recognizing and appreciating their unique qualities. This also clarifies how education is rooted in philosophical, socio-cultural, and historical perspective. The results for teacher education are in line with the professional standards for teachers. That’s why teachers must have a better awareness of the job expected to them as a result of effective Result-based Performance Management System implication. This gave a clear image of their positions within the educational system if guidelines would be properly cascaded and disseminated in the university.”*

Besides, Instructor 6 and Instructor 3 posited that, *“Guidelines in the implementation of professional standards for teachers is a great help for teacher and also for the learners. It is a guide to help the teachers to perform better, enhance their skills and knowledge that they are going to share into their students. In this way teachers can fulfil the goal to produce future generation, that are globally competitive and upholding excellence amidst rich cultural heritage.”* This means that establishing unblemished guidelines should be done in order to have a track and direction.

Moreover, adherence to the guidelines plays an important role in the implementation of professional standards for teachers. Instructor 1 supported this statement: *“The lack of clear guidelines and the rushed timeline for implementation are making it incredibly tough for us, teachers to integrate these standards into our teaching practices. The absence of proper training and resources only adds to the pressure and feeling of being overwhelmed.”* This implies that as an instructor of the university, we need to have a clear guideline in the implementation of professional standards for teachers.

### **Theme 2: Poor Administrative Supervision**

In essence, the professional standards for teachers seems to have unintentionally created more confusion and burdens for us educators instead of facilitating growth and improvement. According to Setyaningsih and Suchyadi (2021), there’s a strong need for the department to reevaluate and restructure the framework, making it more adaptable, supportive, and considerate of the diverse teaching scenarios, aiming to empower teachers rather than constrain them with intricate and burdensome standards. But, based on the experiences of the instructors, administrative supervision is limited and found to be poor. This was testified by one of the instructors that, *“In the college, we have limited administrative supervision about the implementation of professional standards for teachers. The administrators focused only on other administrative tasks and more on the related activities in governance.”* This implies that the supervisor in the college considered only the other aspects of management.

In addition, Instructor 4 stressed that, *“Professional standards for teachers also serve as a tool to measure whether a teacher is still performing or already declining in terms of teaching delivery. Hence, their performance is a living validation of their performance in teaching. Further, it can be a great support for the conduct of studies whether teachers need to undergo further seminars and trainings or they should just develop particular area.”* On the contrary, administrative support has been neglected and applied to further enhance the implementation of professional standards for teachers along with the different domains. Thus, commitment and strong support from the administration are needed to intensify the implementation of professional standards for teachers.

Likewise, Instructor 6 testified that, *“The administrator should support the implementation of the professional standards for teachers. Their time to manage and extend extra effort to support the implementation may contribute a smooth sailing implementation of PPST.”* This implicates that there is a limited time for the administrative officers to supervise the instructors to improve their performance in the instruction.

### **Theme 3: Lack of training and technical assistance**

Without sufficient training, employees may struggle to perform tasks competently, foremost to a decrease in overall productivity. They might take longer to complete assignments or make errors due to a lack of proficiency in using tools or understanding procedures. In addition, instructors need training and technical assistance in order to be aware of the trends in professional standards for teachers. This was testified by one of the instructors that, Instructor 13: *“In the academe, it is necessary to be trained along with the different domains of professional standards for teachers. It is in dire need for us to be properly monitored with our supervisors, the knowledge and skills must be one of the foci in terms of technical assistance.”* This means that the instructors must receive quality training and technical assistance to be administered to the supervisors. In addition, if the instructors receive limited technical assistance, instructors might feel frustrated if they're not equipped with the indispensable skills to perform their duties commendably. Aside from that, the other challenges in terms of different domains of professional standards is shown in Table 9.

**Table 9. Other challenges encountered among the participants in the domains of professional standards for teachers**

	Statements	Rank
1.	Integration of localization and contextualization in lesson plans	4
2.	Management of classroom and learners' behaviour	5
3.	Varied types of learners	3
4.	Utilization of Information and Communication Technology (ICT)	2
5.	Continuing graduate studies	1
6.	Application of content knowledge within and across curriculum	6
7.	Engagement of parents and other stakeholders in educative process	7
8.	Monitoring and evaluation of learner progress and achievement	9
9.	Using of teaching strategies that promote literacy and numeracy skills	8
10.	Timeliness in accomplishing mode of verifications (MOVs)	10

Table 9 provides the ranking of the problems encountered by the instructors along with the domains of professional standards for teachers in the HEI. A number of reasons could be inferred to explain the findings of this study on the problems encountered. Initially, at the least problematic items, the monitoring and evaluation of learner progress and achievement; using of teaching strategies that promote literacy and numeracy skills and timeliness in accomplishing mode of verifications (MOVs) opine that the teachers are armed with the necessary knowledge and skills in their field of discipline. They do not perceive accomplishing MOVs as well as the use of strategies that promote literacy and numeracy and the monitoring tasks as problems since this could be learned and they could easily adjust considering the nature of the favorable schedule that they have in their workplace.

Moreover, those items in the middle such as engagement of parents and other stakeholders in the educative process, application of content knowledge within and across the curriculum, management of classroom and learners' behaviour, and integration of localization and contextualization in lesson plans are tasks where they needed to exert more efforts since these also entail time and space for their accomplishments. Some may have difficulties in these aspects, but many have already integrated these as part of their routine and accepted these as part of their job aside from teaching. Finally, the top three problems, namely: varied types of learners; utilization of Information and Communication Technology (ICT); and the most problematic aspect is related to their continuing graduate studies. The problem on the varied types of learners could be triangulated in the domain of diversity of learners where the teachers themselves and the school heads had low mean ratings particularly on learners in difficult circumstances which was assessed to be only at the proficient level.

The findings thwarting can lead to extrication, diminished self-esteem, and a higher possibility of turnover. Thus, it is very imperative to consider technical

assistance to let the instructors perform well in their duties. This was stressed out by Instructor 9 that,

*Instructor 9: "If we often neglected by our supervisors with technical assistance, it is expected that we have poor performance and often committed failures along with the standards for professional teachers."*

The finding implies that inadequate training may aggravate educational inequalities. According to Skinner et al (2021), teachers who lack training in varied teaching strategies for dealing with learners from wide-ranging circumstances might unintentionally contribute to gaps in educational outcomes among different groups of students. Further, inadequate technical assistance may lead to imperfections and difficulties in enhancing the skills of the instructors along with the professional standards for teachers. This statement was underscored by one of the participants that,

*Instructor 12: "I am not confident to perform well in my duties as instructors, I have encountered difficulties and issues along with the domains in the professional standards for teachers."*

The abovementioned statement implies that technical assistance plays a vital role in order to help instructors develop their professional skills and standards. These findings supported the study of Kareem (2022) that technical assistance among the personnel should be done in a regular mode and form of mechanism for improvement and development among the personnel.

It could also be natural for instructors in the university to have problems with the utilization of ICT materials perhaps not because they do not know how to use these high-end technology materials but due to poor connectivity. Moreover, most of the students themselves have also problems with internet connection and possession of laptops or desktops to be used in learning. In fact, as this COVID - 19 pandemic ensues, the HEIs continue its distant modality of learning where students are provided with hard copies of learning modules. Foremost of the problems as shown in Table 9 is the continuation of higher studies for the instructors. The instructors could attend one, two or even a week of seminars, training and workshops but they really have hard time pursuing their graduate studies degree. This problem could be related to the distance of their workplace to colleges and universities where they could continue their studies. Another is that, continuing their studies becomes a personal choice and not as a school's undertaking or program. Thus, those who go for higher studies have to invest time, effort and money. The third could be due to the fact that graduate studies may not be the priority that they have at the moment. They are more concerned fulfilling their duties and responsibilities as teachers like preparing their instructional materials, remedial activities for failing students, reporting and accomplishing MOVs, among others.

### **3.3. Policy Implications**

The outcomes of the study on the professional standards for teachers at Ifugao State University - Potia Campus hold considerable implications for educational policy, particularly in the realm of instruction, curriculum, and pedagogy. The inclusion of ICT and other technology platform in the curriculum should be noted.

It is very important to include intensive training and continuing professional development in the policy of the university to be included in the faculty manual. These implications offer valuable insights for policymakers, directors, deans and academic units, and the Human Resource Management seeking to enhance the efficacy and impact of standards of professional teachers in the HEIs to improve the teaching-learning process.

#### 4. Conclusion

The research conducted at Ifugao State University's Potia Campus provides profound insights into professional standards for teachers. It is worth noting that the majority of the instructors have extensive experience in various domains. This implies that they are capable of carrying out their duties and responsibilities effectively. Central to the findings is the recognition that professional standards for teachers, when effectively implemented, are powerful tools for closing educational gaps in the poor teaching-learning process. The positive impact on participants' skills, knowledge, self-discipline, and confidence demonstrates the transformative power of these standards. The study's theoretical implications contribute to our grasp of how universities can serve as powerful catalysts for instructional transformation. These institutions are vital to the preservation of excellent teachers because they integrate faculty needs into the framework for learning.

Furthermore, this study not only ascertains the various areas in which teachers must adhere to professional standards, but it also emphasizes the noteworthy qualifications of the faculty members. The results of this study lay the groundwork for improving governance, quality and effectiveness of instruction, and a deeper understanding of the role of higher education institutions in faculty development. As a result, they make a significant contribution to the continuous initiatives to use high standards and education as a means of promoting social change and community development. Thus, for further study, it is indispensable to include the support of the administration to amplify the implementation of the Professional Standards for Teachers.

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