

## **QUALITATIVE STUDY OF PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' VIEWS ON TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study examines how pre-service teachers in North Cotabato construct their understanding of teacher professionalism amid the growing realities of workload pressure, financial strain, and the prevalence of part-time employment among educators. Anchored in the Work-Life Balance Theory, Role Strain Theory, and Conservation of Resources Theory, the research explores how emerging teachers interpret professionalism by observing in-service teachers navigate multiple roles. Using a qualitative narrative design, the study gathered insights from 10 purposively selected pre-service teachers through in-depth interviews and narrative accounts, which were analyzed using Colaizzi's method. Findings reveal that professionalism is primarily defined by adequate time and role management, with precise scheduling, preparedness, and prioritization seen as essential for balancing teaching demands with personal and part-time responsibilities. Positive traits such as patience, adaptability, and self-discipline emerged as critical foundations of skilled teaching. Professionalism was also linked to teaching effectiveness and student success through communication, collaboration, and organizational efficiency. However, participants anticipate challenges—including workload, burnout, financial pressure, and health risks—that may hinder sustained professionalism. The study emphasizes the urgent need for institutional policies that strengthen teacher well-being, improve compensation, and integrate socio-emotional and professional behavior training into teacher education to ensure sustainable, high-quality teaching in DepEd schools.

**Keywords:** *Teacher Professionalism, Pre-service Teachers, Work-life Balance, Qualitative Narrative Analysis, DepEd-Cotabato Province*

## INTRODUCTION

In the classrooms of the Department of Education, teachers walk a tightrope, striving to meet the demands of full-time teaching while also grappling with the weight of part-time jobs. Similar to the trends observed in the UK, where secondary teachers are hesitant to request part-time work due to concerns about career progression and school support (Sharp *et al.*, 2019), teachers in the Philippines also encounter barriers to flexible working arrangements. Although the demand for part-time positions continues to rise, many teachers hesitate to request them, worried that school administrators might view it as a setback to their professional growth or teaching performance (Dempsey, 2024).

Furthermore, maintaining a healthy work-life balance is becoming increasingly important as educators juggle the responsibilities of their full-time teaching jobs with the need for additional part-time work to support their finances (Baluyos & Alvarico, 2024). In the Philippine setting, the challenges faced by Department of Education (DepEd) teachers in balancing full-time teaching with part-time employment reflect broader issues of undervaluation and limited support for part-time workers (Cabello & Bonotan, 2022). According to the Civil Service Commission (CSC) Memorandum Circular No. 19, s. In 2005, part-time employees under a contract of service were excluded from the benefits and job security granted to full-time employees, fostering uncertainty about their professional standing (Cabello, 2022). Like adjunct faculty, DepEd teachers who manage both roles must meet expectations for delivering high-quality education while juggling personal and professional demands, often leading to increased stress and difficulties maintaining a work-life balance (Musa, 2020). It was asserted by Viac and Fraser (2020) that understanding what teachers go through in their work, including their professional, personal, and daily challenges, is found to have significance for providing them with the support they need and enhancing their well-being, which in turn benefits students and the education system as a whole.

In the Department of Education (DepEd) in Cotabato, many pre-service teachers have a limited or unclear understanding of what true professionalism means in the teaching field (Guzman, 2023). For some, professionalism is simply about being punctual or wearing the correct uniform, without fully understanding the deeper responsibilities, such as maintaining ethical behavior, embracing lifelong learning, or adhering to professional boundaries (Agravat & Macwan, 2024). This confusion becomes more evident when they observe in-service teachers who are balancing full-time teaching duties with part-time jobs (Harano, 2022). While studies like Albert *et al.* (2024) have discussed part-time work among teachers in other contexts, the specific struggles faced by educators in Cotabato, particularly how they manage multiple jobs while maintaining professional teaching standards, remain underexplored.

The lack of understanding highlights a gap between the knowledge pre-service teachers currently possess and what they need to navigate their future careers effectively. This gap impacts their preparedness to face the realities of teaching, particularly in demanding environments. Addressing this gap is critical, as it affects not only teachers' performance but also the overall quality of education provided to students. Additionally, this issue is closely linked to the

United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, which focuses on ensuring quality education. Gaining a deeper insight into these experiences can enhance teacher training. At the same time, policies that support work-life balance contribute to long-term educational sustainability and teacher well-being, as reported in national and international journals.

## METHODS

### Research Design

In this study, the researcher employs a qualitative approach, using narrative analysis to explore pre-service teachers' views on teacher professionalism within the Department of Education (DepEd) in Cotabato. This design allows for in-depth exploration of pre-service teachers' personal experiences and perceptions as they prepare for their roles as educators (Bamberg, 2020). Through narrative analysis, the study examines how pre-service teachers construct, interpret, and express their understanding of professionalism (Sharp *et al.*, 2019), particularly in light of their limited or unclear conceptions of the term, which often focus on superficial aspects, such as punctuality or uniformity, rather than deeper professional responsibilities. The study will collect various perspectives through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and other personal accounts, providing the researcher with the opportunity to identify recurring themes and patterns (Josselson & Hammack, 2021).

### Procedure

The researcher personally conducted the data collection. The following steps were taken during the study: First, after the validation process, the researcher requested approval and endorsement from the Dean of the Graduate School. Next, the researcher asked for a letter to initiate the research in the selected DepEd schools within the North Cotabato division. Once approved, the researcher worked with the supervisor to schedule data collection so as not to interfere with regular work and to allow ample time to provide instructions for completing the questionnaire.

Before data collection began, the respondents were asked to voluntarily participate by signing an informed consent form included in the research instrument. Only those who signed the consent form were included in the study. Even with endorsements from higher authorities, participants were reminded of their right to decline or withdraw from the study at any time without facing any consequences, ensuring that participation remains voluntary. The researcher ensured that all responses were confidential, and no identifying information was included in any part of the study. The signed consent forms were securely stored before the data collection phase. The recruitment process aims to prevent coercion, undue influence, or inducement, ensuring that participants feel safe and are not under administrative pressure. After collecting the questionnaires, the data will be transcribed, coded, and analyzed. A screening process was conducted to identify and reduce potential outliers in the data.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents and discusses the findings on pre-service teachers' perceptions of professionalism, highlighting key themes, behaviors, traits, and challenges that influence effective teaching and student success.

### Teachers' Definition of Professionalism

Teacher professionalism generally adheres to a set of standards and ethics that guide teachers in their conduct with students, colleagues, and the community, encompassing qualities such as respect, integrity, and continuous development. Pursuant to RA 7836 or the Philippine Professionalism Act of 1994, the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers is expected to have dignity and reputation with high moral values and competence in the practice of the profession. Teachers should strictly observe and practice the set of ethics, values, and principles.

The set of ethics, moral standards, values, and principles becomes society's expectations of how teachers should behave in their role for the State, community, learners, and their profession. This is why teaching is considered a noble profession. The public's perception of teachers' behavior and actions is expected to reflect well on their students' character. This means that society primarily expects a teacher to be consistent with their role in managing teaching responsibilities and addressing student needs, serving as a parent not only to their children but also to their students.

It is also essential to understand that a teacher has the highest obligation to live with dignity at school, at work, or elsewhere. This means they have a personal life at home, and criticizing teachers' professionalism should not be treated as an individual matter. But a teacher must act with integrity, no matter how personal the issues are. Work-life is the foundation of how pre-service teachers defined professionalism in this study.

Table 1 shows how pre-service teachers defined professionalism. The themes focus on two concepts: Professionalism through Effective Role Management and Time Management as the Core of Professional Practice. The first definition explored professionalism with role management, and the second definition explained the importance of time management. These emphasize that the teaching profession has multiple roles to fulfill in society. Teachers today face various competing responsibilities, including work tasks, childcare, household chores, volunteer work, and caring for spouses or elderly relatives (Javier & Rosal, 2021).

**Table 1.**

*Teachers' Definition of Professionalism.*

**RQ1.** *How do pre-service teachers define and explain teacher professionalism?*

Themes	Codes & Categories	Interpretations
<b>Professionalism through Effective Role Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Time management and scheduling</li> <li>Balancing teaching and other responsibilities (part-time jobs)</li> <li>Professionalism as responsibility,</li> </ul>	Professionalism involves effective time management to balance teaching, personal life, and side jobs.

	dedication, consistency	and	
<b>Time Management as the Core of Professional Practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Organization</li> <li>▪ prioritization</li> <li>▪ Planning</li> <li>▪ preparedness</li> </ul>	and and	Setting clear schedules helps maintain focus and avoid stress.

### Professionalism through Effective Role Management

This definition of professionalism highlights that teachers possess multiple roles. A report by ABS-CBN pointed out that many Filipinos are increasingly taking on extra jobs and side hustles to cope with rising living costs (Cos, 2022). This means that teachers are engaged with other commitments, not just teaching. In the analysis of how pre-service teachers defined professionalism, it involves teachers effectively managing their time to balance teaching, personal, and side jobs. It emphasizes that being a professional teacher requires balancing education and other responsibilities.

A participant mentioned that:

*“Ang professionalism kay nag-pasabot nga kabalo ka mo-manage sa imong time para mabalance nimo ang pagtudlo, personal life, ug mga side jobs.”* This means that *Professionalism involves effective time management to balance teaching, personal life, and side jobs.* **IDI\_P2**

In the context of the pre-service definition, their experience with how teachers in public and private schools effectively manage their time to handle the schedules of their multiple roles. In addition to being teachers, they also engage in part-time work, such as tutoring or in business and entrepreneurial ventures. This is how pre-service teachers witnessed teachers effectively manage these roles without compromising their teaching jobs and developed their definition of professionalism. Previous studies have shown that a significant number of teachers have turned to entrepreneurship, often referred to as teacherpreneurs, by using their free time during breaks or after school hours (Manzanillo, 2024). Levinson (2023) further noted that academic coaching and tutoring are some of the most common side activities for teachers. With this information, effective role management is essential to maintain professionalism.

In addition, the definition and concept of effective role management are anchored with responsibility, dedication, and consistency. As a teacher, their primary job is to teach. In fact, CSC Memorandum Circular No. 21, series of 1991, emphasizes that if public service needs require extended working hours, the head of the agency may approve such extensions, with the duration depending on the specific work requirements. This means that teachers, especially in public schools, must fulfill their responsibilities as public servants.

The concepts of dedication and professionalism involve how teachers value their profession and strive to become more effective continually. When teachers manage their time effectively and fulfill their responsibilities, they can improve productivity and demonstrate greater resilience in the face of challenges (Rashid *et al.*, 2022). Ramos and Galleto (2020) suggest that

implementing a guidance and counseling program for faculty, like a work-life balance intervention, may improve these processes.

### **Time Management as the Core of Professional Practice**

Time management is essential in teaching professional practice. It embodies how teachers cope with multiple job responsibilities while staying true to the core of teaching. Jundran and Saleem (2021) state that effective time management offers distinct benefits, particularly in identifying peak productivity periods. From the perspective of pre-service teachers, effective time use in fulfilling their jobs helps teachers maintain professionalism. It highlights what teachers need to do to use their time effectively despite their responsibilities.

The participant asserted that:

*“Dapat magset ug schedule kay para dili ma-stress ang unya maka focus pa gyud ang teacher”*– This means that setting clear schedules helps maintain focus and avoid stress.” **IDI\_P4**

In regular teaching responsibilities alone, public school teachers need to work for eight (8) hours per day on weekdays. DepEd Order No. 5, series of 2024, aims to streamline teacher workloads, requiring teachers to perform 30 hours of classroom teaching and 10 hours of ancillary tasks. Additionally, the standard working hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. This means that the workload alone is heavy enough and very tight for the teachers to manage their time. The definition further emphasizes that to establish professionalism in teaching, organization, prioritization, planning, and preparedness are essential.

As participants shared, effective time management in the teaching profession can be achieved by organizing activities and setting priorities. This has established that, as teachers, the teaching role should be the priority, since it is the source of teachers' income. Adding side jobs becomes a strategy to meet financial needs. Teachers were found to be financially unstable, as their income was insufficient to cover their expenses. Most of these teachers relied solely on their salaries, with limited additional income due to a lack of time and resources (Antoninis et al., 2023). Although teachers are not banned from engaging in hustles or jobs to fulfill their needs, they should organize their roles and priorities. This may include setting clear schedules of activities other than teaching. The pre-service teachers observed that some teachers sell products during lunch breaks and recess, others do live selling at night, and some do part-time work on weekends, where they are not obliged to perform their teaching roles. The majority of the participants stated that setting schedules helps teachers to manage time effectively, which contributes to maintaining professionalism at school.

Additionally, since time management is the core of professionalism, teachers must know how to plan and prepare for their roles. To maintain professionalism as teachers, pre-service teachers expressed the need to prepare the necessary materials for teaching, such as lesson plans, activity materials, and effective teaching strategies, to encourage students' active participation and engagement. It is essential that planning and preparing for the lessons make the teacher professionally prepared.

Aquino *et al.* (2023) supported these findings, stating that educators should be trained in time management techniques, stay focused, and prioritize commitments to both their families and their work. Administrative changes and compliance with required processes are also essential considerations. Employees must manage their time by setting clear priorities, establishing boundaries for work-related communication outside working hours, and using strategies such as time blocking (Kim & Chon, 2022). These practices enable individuals to manage their time more effectively, reduce stress, and improve work-life balance (Marques & Berry, 2021).

Overall, the definitions provided by the pre-service teachers reflect the importance of time and role management for staying professional in the teaching profession. Managing time and roles promotes work-life balance for teachers, reducing stress and anxiety caused by role conflicts and workload. With efficient time management, individuals can streamline their daily routines, reduce stress, boost productivity, and create a more balanced life (Supervisor, 2023). Blonska (2023) expressed that prioritizing tasks effectively helps balance professional and personal obligations.

### **Essential Traits and Behaviors for Skilled Teaching**

Personal traits and professional behavior enable teachers to inspire and motivate students, build strong relationships, and deliver quality education, thereby becoming effective and skilled educators. Article 8, Sec 3, of the Code of Conduct of Professional Teachers emphasized that under no circumstances shall a teacher be prejudiced or discriminate against learners. This means that teachers need to maintain a positive attitude and show respect when dealing with students, parents, and the community. Also, a teacher's personality is vital in shaping how students respond to them. Teachers' behavior affects how students are encouraged or discouraged to talk about or discuss specific issues (Afzal *et al.*, 2021). This reflects how teachers could affect students' learning experience at school.

In this study, responses from pre-service teachers were analyzed to determine the essential traits and behaviors they consider necessary for becoming skilled teachers. The result generally focused on positive personal characteristics and discipline in becoming an experienced professional teacher. As cited by Ilgan *et al.* (2022), when teachers know how to motivate, encourage, be tolerant, and show care for students, students are more likely to have a positive educational experience. Teachers have the power to influence students, as they define what to learn and how to learn. This means that teachers should possess positive personal traits and self-discipline in fulfilling their roles as facilitators of learning.

Table 2 presents the essential traits and behaviors for skilled teaching. From the analysis of the pre-service teachers' interview responses, the following themes emerged: Positive Personal Traits as Foundations of Professional Behavior, Self-Discipline, and Task Prioritization.

**Table 2.****Essential Traits and Behaviors for Skilled Teaching.**

**RQ2.** *What personal traits and professional behaviors do pre-service teachers believe are important for becoming a skilled teacher?*

Themes	Codes & Categories	Interpretations
<b>Positive Personal Traits as Foundations of Professional Behavior</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Positive personal traits (patience, self-discipline, adaptability, positive attitude)</li> <li>▪ Professionalism as responsibility, dedication, and consistency</li> </ul>	Passion for teaching and patience are vital personal traits for professionalism.
<b>Self-Discipline and Task Prioritization</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Self-discipline and prioritization</li> </ul>	Self-discipline helps in prioritizing tasks and handling pressure.

### **Positive Personal Traits as Foundations of Professional Behavior**

Positive personal traits have been explored as key components of professional behaviors. Individual characteristics such as patience, self-discipline, adaptability, and a positive attitude shaped how teachers approached their teaching jobs. The pre-service teacher revealed that entering into a teaching job requires patience, especially when dealing with students with different behaviors. As a teacher, patience becomes a virtue as it promotes understanding and tolerance of students. Self-discipline has also been integrated into these personal traits. When a teacher possesses self-discipline, they can fulfill their teaching roles effectively through awareness and responsibility, such as preparing lesson plans and activities in advance. Also, adaptability is one of the foundations of professional behavior, especially in a diverse classroom and evolving education system. The participants of the study further emphasized that being experienced in the field means adapting to and coping with changes, such as classroom environment dynamics, school culture, technology integration in the classroom, and interactive activities that stimulate students' engagement and participation.

The participant stated that:

*“Ang passion sa pagtutulo ug ang pagkamapailubon kay importante kaayo nga personal traits para sa professionalism.”* – This interprets as the passion for teaching and patience are vital personal traits for professionalism. **IDI\_P5**

*“Ang self-discipline makatabang gyud sa pag-prioritize sa mga tasks ug pag-handle sa pressure.”* It states that self-discipline helps prioritize tasks and handle pressure. **IDI\_P7**

Additionally, the theme further explores the need for professionalism in the teaching profession, maintained through responsibility, dedication, and consistency. Responsibilities include being an educator and, when engaged in other jobs, being responsible and able to fulfill roles effectively, especially in teaching. Entering the education field requires dedication, as a teaching job is

not easy. A professional teacher shows up despite challenges with resources, the environment, finances, and personal issues. This implies that a teacher's professional behavior is not only about financial matters; passion and patience are also critical personal traits of professionalism.

The Asian Labor Review (2023) states that, despite financial challenges, teachers in public schools use their salaries to buy classroom materials and provide meals for underprivileged students. Most of these teachers relied solely on their wages, with limited additional income due to a lack of time and resources (Antoninis et al., 2023). This reflects commitment and dedication to teaching.

This is also why many teachers choose to have a part-time job alongside their teaching job to meet their personal and financial needs. Previous studies highlight that using an individual resource, which is already challenging to sustain family needs and is being used for teaching materials that are not their responsibility, indicates that teachers have consistently shown professionalism.

### **Self-Discipline and Task Prioritization**

Self-discipline and task prioritization are essential to becoming a professional teacher. The pre-service teachers shared that these traits and behaviors help teachers to maintain consistency, reliability, and professionalism in their roles. It enables teachers to adhere to schedules, meet deadlines, and uphold high standards of teaching quality. The participants further expressed that when teachers exercise self-control, they create a positive learning environment and serve as role models for their students. It demonstrates the importance of responsibility and dedication in their profession.

Task prioritization is equally essential for teachers to manage their diverse responsibilities effectively. When teachers identify and focus on the most critical tasks, they can allocate their time and resources efficiently and ensure that they address essential activities such as lesson planning, student assessment, and professional development proactively.

The result further indicates that when teachers have self-discipline, they can prioritize their tasks and handle pressure. Due to other teachers' jobs, self-discipline helps them manage their stress and pressure. DepEd teachers who manage both roles must meet expectations for delivering high-quality education while juggling personal and professional demands, often leading to increased stress and difficulties maintaining a work-life balance (Musa, 2020). This suggests that becoming a skilled teacher in the education field requires self-discipline and prioritization skills to be effective.

Self-discipline and task prioritization foster professional behavior by promoting accountability, time management, and ethical standards. Teachers who consistently demonstrate these qualities are better equipped to handle the demands of their profession, build trust with students and colleagues, and contribute positively to the education institution. Saner and Villena (2024) underscore that understanding how the demands of teaching and personal responsibilities intersect can help identify effective strategies schools can implement to support educators. Hall *et al.* (2024) added that once individuals identify their top priorities, they should schedule them as recurring events in their calendars and make an effort to stick to them. Thus, these traits support continuous growth and excellence in teaching practices.

### Perceived Link Between Professionalism, Teaching Effectiveness, and Student Success.

Professionalism in education encompasses qualities such as integrity, accountability, and a commitment to continuous improvement, which serve as the foundation for effective teaching. When teachers demonstrate professionalism, they create a respectful, organized, and appropriate learning environment that fosters trust and motivation among students. This professional demeanor often results in clear communication and well-prepared lessons, enhancing the learning experience. Students are more likely to engage actively, feel supported, and develop a deeper understanding of the subject matter, thereby improving overall teaching effectiveness. In a previous study, it was shown that students' success was greatly influenced by teacher professionalism (Zakaria *et al.*, 2021).

The result of this study generally indicates that collaborative support and organizational efficiency have a positive impact on professionalism, teaching effectiveness, and student success. The link between teaching effectiveness and students' success is direct and well-established (Ahmad *et al.*, 2024). The collective effect of professionalism and teaching effectiveness generally creates a conducive environment for student success, helping them to reach their professional and personal potential.

Shown in Table 3 is how pre-service teachers see the connection between teacher professionalism and practical teaching, as well as students' success. The analysis formed two themes: Collaborative Support for Sustaining Professionalism and Time Management and Organizational Efficiency in Professionalism.

**Table 3.**

*Perceived Link Between Professionalism, Teaching Effectiveness, and Student Success.*

**RQ3.** *How do pre-service teachers see the connection between teacher professionalism and effective teaching, as well as student success?*

Themes	Codes & Categories	Interpretations
<b>Collaborative Support for Sustaining Professionalism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Communication and collaboration</li> </ul>	Maintaining open communication with students, parents, and colleagues supports professionalism.
<b>Time Management and Organizational Efficiency in Professionalism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Punctuality and preparedness</li> <li>▪ Organization</li> </ul>	Being punctual, prepared, and organized demonstrates respect for students and commitment.

### Collaborative Support for Sustaining Professionalism

Collaboration fundamentally shapes professionalism by shifting the focus from individual autonomy to a collective responsibility, shared knowledge development, and a commitment to common goals. A survey suggests that how and where people work can shape how their professionalism in the workplace is perceived (Pollack, 2024). Among teachers, pre-service teachers perceived

that the school and stakeholders provide support to sustain professionalism through open communication.

It implies that the teacher needs to communicate with students, parents, and colleagues to gain support. Communication with students and parents allows teachers to address student needs and necessary interventions for learning. Healthy communication with colleagues enables effective teamwork and collaboration. Participants noted that teachers asked their co-teachers for support by sharing materials and resources. While teachers are juggling the individual demands of their work, they can extend help to their colleagues to be more effective; the collaborative support that sustains professionalism in the education institution. A supportive work environment is also essential for personal and professional growth. A healthy workplace involves positive interactions with colleagues, which enhance performance, well-being, work-life balance, and workplace spirituality (Patriarca, 2023).

The responses of the participants support this:

*“Ang pagiging punctual, prepared, ug organized kay nagpakita og respeto sa estudyante ug tinuod nga commitment sa pagtudlo.”* This means that being punctual, prepared, and organized demonstrates respect for students and commitment. **IDI\_4 & 5**

Stakeholder support is essential for sustaining professionalism. When communicating with them, teachers learn to adapt and employ innovative techniques to meet teaching loads and other work-related tasks. These efforts aimed to ensure that, while maintaining professionalism, teachers are effective in their teaching and that the quality of their teaching leads to better classroom instruction, stronger relationships, and improved student academic performance. In developing collaborative support for professionalism, open communication helps maintain mutual trust and respect. A professional teacher is willing to listen, provide constructive feedback, and communicate transparently, which can help in reducing conflicts and misunderstandings.

### **Time Management and Organizational Efficiency in Professionalism**

Time management and organizational efficiency are fundamental to teacher professionalism, according to pre-service teachers. Future educators recognized that punctuality and preparedness are not merely personal traits but are essential indicators of their commitment and respect for their students. When teachers arrive on time and are well-prepared, they set a positive tone in the classroom, encouraging a culture of discipline and reliability. This shows that teachers prioritize their students. Such behavior demonstrates to students that their learning is valued and that the teacher is dedicated to providing a structured and practical learning experience.

Based on the statements of the participants, it was mentioned that:

*“Ang pag-maintain og open communication sa students, parents, ug mga kauban sa trabaho makatabang kaayo sa professionalism.”* - Maintaining open communication with students, parents, and colleagues supports professionalism. **IDI\_P7**

Additionally, organization plays a vital role in the effectiveness of teaching. Pre-service teachers see organized lesson plans, timely grading, and systematic classroom management as signs of professional integrity. An organized approach enables teachers to deliver content smoothly and handle classroom activities efficiently, minimizing disruptions and maximizing instructional time. This level of professionalism not only benefits student learning outcomes but also models essential skills, such as discipline and responsibility, that students can emulate.

The study suggests that teacher training programs should place greater emphasis on developing teachers' time management and organizational skills. Cultivating these traits can lead to more competent and confident educators who are better able to handle classroom demands. Thus, fostering a professional mindset characterized by punctuality and preparedness can enhance the overall quality of education and improve the student-teacher relationship, leading to effective teaching practices and a positive learning environment.

Singh and Agarwal (2024) supported that adopting innovative strategies to enhance time management skills and create supportive frameworks is essential for achieving a lasting balance between personal and professional life in the educational sector. Work-life balance approaches should be adjusted to understand their impact on productivity. Implementing a guidance and counseling program for faculty, like a work-life balance intervention, may improve these processes (Ramos & Galleto, 2020).

### **Anticipated Challenges in Maintaining Professionalism**

Despite the growing importance of professionalism among teachers, challenges are expected to persist. Future educators anticipate that these challenges stem from the multiple roles teachers need to fulfill. Examining these employment dynamics can help identify the challenges of juggling multiple roles, which might influence teachers' job satisfaction and mental health (Demir, 2024).

In the context of this study, pre-service teachers have identified that teachers employed in educational institutions are not just doing a teaching job alone. Some teachers are engaged in business and part-time jobs to earn extra income, at the expense of role-conflict-related issues, where the effectiveness and professionalism of teaching are at stake. It has been recognized that these teachers have consistently shown professionalism by fulfilling their jobs, especially in teaching, with time management, role management, prioritization, self-discipline, and positive traits. This emphasized that work-life balance continuously becomes a problem. The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety highlights two key aspects of work-life balance: not having enough time and dealing with scheduling conflicts, and feeling stressed or overwhelmed by trying to manage multiple roles (Clarke et al., 2023).

Table 4 presents the anticipated challenges in maintaining professionalism among teachers. The theme focuses on the difficulties of balancing multiple roles.

**Table 4.**

*Anticipated Challenges in Maintaining Professionalism.*

**RQ4.** *What challenges do pre-service teachers expect to face in maintaining professionalism throughout their teaching careers?*

Theme	Codes & Categories	Interpretations
<b>Challenges and Coping in Maintaining Professionalism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Challenges (financial pressure, workload, burnout, health issues)</li> <li>▪ Stress management and coping mechanisms</li> </ul>	Balancing multiple roles requires dedication to avoid burnout.

### Challenges and Coping in Maintaining Professionalism

In fulfilling multiple roles like teaching, family, part-time jobs, and personal responsibilities, it becomes a challenge for teachers to balance as it constitutes financial pressure, workload, burnout, and health issues. These issues have been observed by the pre-service teachers, who note that their cooperating teachers have difficulty managing their different roles. Ross (2023) highlights that teaching is already demanding, but the challenge intensifies when teachers take on additional jobs after their full-time positions.

It was mentioned by the participant that:

*“Balancing multiple roles requires dedication to avoid burnout.”* - Ang pag-balance sa daghang roles kinahanglan gyud og dedication para malikayan ang burnout.” **IDI\_P6**

Financial pressure is the primary reason teachers opt for part-time jobs to meet their financial needs at home. Added to this burden is the fact that their income is also used to purchase classroom materials, making it more difficult for them to rely solely on teaching income. Casingal and Ancho (2022) agreed that many teachers in the country seek additional income due to financial difficulties. This added to their stress and further led to burnout.

Additionally, heavy workloads across these multiple roles are anticipated to affect teachers' effectiveness negatively, including insufficient time for preparation, missed deadlines, and the inability to fulfill some responsibilities due to scheduling conflicts. This underscores the challenge of balancing their time and roles without compromising effectiveness and performance. Previous studies consistently revealed that the biggest challenge of having a side job is divided focus. Employees often think about their side gigs while working at their primary job, which can negatively affect their performance. In extreme cases, they may use work hours to pursue side jobs without permission (Rose, 2024).

Health issues are a challenge when holding multiple roles. The participants noted that teachers are expected to have stress, anxiety, and burnout, which could lead to chronic health problems. This result contradicts

Borazon *et al.*'s (2024) study, which states that engaging in activities outside of the primary job, especially those pursued for enjoyment or extra income, can improve an employee's well-being and mental health. This means that holding multiple roles simultaneously harms teachers' health, potentially affecting their ability to work and overall well-being.

This study suggests the importance of work-life balance for teachers juggling multiple roles. Stress management and coping mechanisms are essential for fulfilling these roles. A study noted that when teachers engage in professional development during their vacation or leave periods, their opportunities for enjoyment and relaxation are compromised. Instead of moments for rest and rejuvenation, they must allocate their time to schooling, attending seminars, and training sessions (Manalo & Velasco, 2024). It indicates that work-life balance is not achieved.

Teachers must be given enough time to manage their personal and family issues, attend to teaching duties without additional burden or administrative work, and work a part-time job with a flexible schedule that does not compromise other roles. Teachers' work-life balance focuses on subjectively managing their teaching jobs and different roles (Johari *et al.*, 2018). However, work-life balance does not necessarily mean having equal time for each role. Achieving balance does not necessarily imply splitting time equally; it is about feeling fulfilled and satisfied in both work and personal life (Park *et al.*, 2023; Hosseini *et al.*, 2024).

Finally, the study found that personal or family matters and teaching jobs are the primary roles of a teacher. Once at home, they are a parent, a child, or an individual striving for survival. When at school, they are educators and facilitators of learning for the students. However, it is necessary to address teachers' financial needs by increasing their salaries and benefits so they do not take on any part-time jobs or ventures that compromise their primary roles. According to the Asian Labor Review in 2023, 93.3% of teachers in the Philippines' public schools are in positions that do not provide a sufficient wage, with an average net income of PHP23,465. The starting salary for new teachers in the public school is around PHP27,000 per month. This means that it is necessary for the Department of Education to focus on establishing more positive compensation benefits for teachers in public schools, and for the Department of Labor to continually assess the compensation of teachers in private schools who earn less than those in public schools.

## SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents a synthesis of the study's key findings, concludes with practical and theoretical implications, and offers long-term recommendations to enhance teacher professionalism and educational outcomes in DepEd Region XII.

### Summary of Findings

This section summarizes the study's essential findings on pre-service teachers' perceptions of teacher professionalism.

1. Pre-service teachers defined professionalism mainly through effective role management, emphasizing teachers' ability to balance teaching responsibilities with personal and part-time roles through dedication, commitment, and consistent adherence to ethical standards.
2. Time management emerged as the core foundation of professional practice, with organization, prioritization, preparedness, and setting clear schedules viewed as essential elements for maintaining professionalism.
3. Personal traits, such as patience, self-discipline, adaptability, and a positive attitude, were identified as critical foundations of skilled teaching, influencing teachers' ability to deliver quality instruction and build strong student relationships.
4. Professionalism was strongly linked to teaching effectiveness and student success, with collaborative support, communication, punctuality, preparedness, and organizational efficiency seen as key contributors to positive learning outcomes.

### Conclusions

*Based on the study's findings, the following conclusions and implications are presented, integrating both practical and theoretical perspectives.*

1. Teacher professionalism is primarily shaped by effective role management and strong time management, indicating that teachers must navigate multiple responsibilities: teaching, family roles, and part-time work, while upholding ethical standards and dedication. Schools and education systems must create structures that reduce excessive workload and allow teachers to balance their roles without compromising instructional quality.
2. Personal traits such as patience, adaptability, self-discipline, and a positive attitude play a significant role in effective teaching and student engagement. These traits support teachers' ability to motivate learners and create positive classroom environments. Teacher education institutions must emphasize socio-emotional skills, character development, and professional behavior training as core components of pre-service teacher preparation.
3. Professionalism directly strengthens teaching effectiveness and student success, with punctuality, preparedness, clear communication, and collaboration identified as essential behaviors that foster a conducive, respectful learning environment. Schools should foster collaborative cultures, strengthen communication channels, and ensure that systems encourage consistent professionalism in everyday teaching practices.
4. The challenges of workload pressure, financial strain, burnout, and health concerns reflect the theoretical foundations of *Work-Life Balance Theory*, *Role Strain Theory*, and *the Conservation of Resources Theory*. Teachers' limited time, energy, and financial resources influence how they experience and enact

professionalism. Policymakers must prioritize teacher well-being, compensation, and support systems to prevent resource depletion and role conflict, ensuring that teachers can maintain high professional standards throughout their careers.

### **Recommendations**

The following long-term, practical recommendations aim to strengthen teacher professionalism in DepEd Region XII, Cotabato Province, and to inform future research directions.

1. Establish structured Professionalism Enhancement Programs focusing on time management, stress management, ethical decision-making, and socio-emotional skills to strengthen teachers' ability to manage multiple roles without compromising effectiveness.
2. Integrate the Work-Life Balance and Role Management Modules into teacher education curricula, enabling pre-service teachers to develop coping strategies, prioritization skills, and realistic expectations for professional demands.
3. Develop a Workload Rationalization Framework in Region XII that minimizes unnecessary administrative tasks, ensures equitable distribution of duties, and provides teachers with adequate preparation time that supports sustained professionalism and teaching quality.
4. Conduct mixed-methods longitudinal studies in DepEd Cotabato Province to monitor how time management, financial pressure, and role conflicts evolve, generating data-driven policies related to teacher compensation, well-being, and professional development.

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