

## Professionalism, instructional practices, and work engagement among Chinese college teachers

Fan, Shuyan ✉

Graduate School, Lyceum of the Philippines University – Batangas, Philippines ([fanshuyan0906@gmail.com](mailto:fanshuyan0906@gmail.com))

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### *Abstract*

This descriptive research design paper described the profile, professionalism, instructional practices, and work engagement of college teachers in China. From a target population of 515, 425 teachers served as sample respondents of the study. Professional teachers show positive behaviors, such as putting students first and establishing friendly and collaborative relationships with school stakeholders. They continue to enhance their practice by keeping up with education trends and conducting self-reflection and analysis. Additionally, effective instructional practices include meeting curriculum standards, clear and effective communication, and clearly formulated evaluation criteria that reflect expected learning outcomes. Teachers who are engaged in their jobs come to work prepared for their daily tasks, enthusiastic about their subjects, show a deep commitment to helping students succeed, and are fully immersed in the teaching process. There is no difference in professional image across sex and age, but differences were found as to educational attainment and years of teaching. No difference in instructional practices were found in terms of age, but responses varied when grouped according to sex, educational attainment, and years of teaching. Lastly, responses to work engagement did not vary statistically, revealing that the responses are the same across profile. Meanwhile, teachers' instructional approaches are significantly influenced by their professional image. Conversely, no meaningful correlation was discovered between professional image and work engagement or instructional approaches and work engagement. This study recommends that Chinese universities tailor their professional development programs to meet the specific needs of different demographic groups. By analyzing the demographics, universities can gain valuable insights into the requirements and preferences of their faculty members. Teachers may embrace a growth mindset and recognize that teaching is a continuous learning process and be trained in effective lesson planning. The school administration should foster a positive culture by valuing teacher well-being, providing equal opportunities, and recognizing efforts and achievements. Future research on this topic may involve more male respondents, teachers from other age brackets, and individuals with different educational backgrounds. Also, it is recommended that other research design other

than the descriptive method can be explored in the future. Lastly, the proposed faculty development program for art design teaching may be implemented to enhance teaching and learning.

***Keywords:*** professional image, instructional practices, work engagement

## Professionalism, instructional practices, and work engagement among Chinese college teachers

### 1. Introduction

Professionalism is essential in the field of education as it has a crucial impact on the role of a teacher, which then affects the way students learn successfully. Professionalism is a regular pattern of behavior observed by teachers in education. For classroom teachers, this means maintaining topic knowledge and instructing pupils at age-appropriate levels while cooperating with other educators to develop instructional approaches. Professionalism in education includes personal development, collaboration, instruction, and communication, resulting in a complex collection of characteristics unique to the profession. According to Meador (2019), professionalism is something that every educator and school employee should have. Administrators and teachers embody their school district and should always do so professionally. All school employees should also be aware that students and other group members are almost always watching them. Professionalism includes several aspects. For example, developing and maintaining polite and constructive relationships with key stakeholders is an essential component of professionalism. This includes relationships with kids, parents, other teachers, administrators, and support staff. Professionalism also entails maintaining a proper personal appearance. It encompasses how instructors communicate and behave both inside and outside of school. In many communities, it concerns what kids do outside of school and with whom they have contact (Laff et al., 2023).

Professional development and education for 21st-century skills are interconnected concepts. This means that professional development programs play an immense part in ensuring teachers have the appropriate 21st-century skills. Education for the 21st century aims to ensure teachers become more skilled in social, political, cultural, and economic aspects (Tan et al., 2017). The substantial incorporation of people influences this due to globalization. Globalization has made the world a solitary village via technological advancement. Therefore, this demands that teachers improve their professional skills to handle the global society and improve their classroom instruction. China values teacher ethics and sees teachers as "moral guardians." Chinese culture has high standards for teachers' character and conduct. A person's character and behavior were considered as intricately related to their ideals, and these desired values could only be conveyed effectively by those who held and embodied them. Thus, teachers face excessive expectations concerning their manner, forms of expression, attitudes, and appearance (Ye, 2022).

One of the key aspects of professionalism is the character of the teacher. According to Aktan et al. (2020), a teacher should possess a positive attitude, which may impact the quality of education. Teachers with positive attitudes contribute more effectively to children's education. Some attitudinal characteristics of teachers include positive thinking, belief in service, self-regulation, dedication, autonomy, and mentoring of others. In addition, teachers are expected to be caring, kind, and respectful. Furthermore, teachers are usually held to high standards since they have a daily influence on children's lives. Amid all their responsibilities, they must be strong role models and demonstrate (Zeiger, 2018; Meador, 2019; Miller, 2023). Day et al. (2023) investigated the associations between the organizational and cultural contexts in which Chinese teachers work, their impact on their perceptions of professionalism, and the relationships between these and their perceived willingness and commitment to be effective in teaching to the best of their abilities. They discovered that professors stressed their moral goals and dedication to doing their best in class despite many hurdles. However, they also found that Chinese teachers lack autonomy and agency. The study investigated a small number of respondents; thus, this research may be a basis to further explore teacher professionalism in China.

Teachers must also be committed to change. As teachers grow, they should continuously upgrade their teaching strategies and adopt innovative ways. According to Zeiger (2018), instructors who are committed to professionalism actively participate in training to keep up with technological breakthroughs and evolving

educational trends. They seek knowledge on best practices and instructional tactics for all students. Teachers may engage in workshops, webinars, and conferences to learn about the latest trends, innovative teaching methods, and best practices. Teachers may also attend educational conferences and events – locally, nationally, or internationally (Ascione, 2023). Furthermore, teachers have an important role in empowering kids. As a result, they must have qualities and talents that allow them to relate to pupils and encourage the development of social and technical skills among them.

The study by Alashwal (2019) found that pedagogical knowledge, as well as a teacher's personal characters and opinions, are the critical factors to consider when identifying a model teacher. Apart from pedagogical knowledge, teachers also need to conduct self-reflection and self-evaluation. Self-reflection is one of the most efficient ways to realize that teaching strategies can be enhanced (Davies, 2024). As teachers' roles evolve, they will be increasingly asked to reflect on their underlying pedagogical ideals and beliefs. Professional instructors seek to communicate well with one another. Furthermore, instructors who prioritize professionalism are concerned with the school community and how they may collaborate with their colleagues to create an environment that improves learning and boosts achievement (Zeiger, 2018). Lastly, teachers should be involved in curriculum development. Teacher involvement is vital for successful and effective curriculum development. Furthermore, the most applicable forms of professional development focus on refining what teachers do in classrooms – their daily practice or instructional practices. For a teacher to continually improve professionally, it must show in their performance in the classroom. It also has a part of responsibility involved, so teachers should be driven to change and improve. According to a study by the Research Partnership for Professional Learning written by researchers at Harvard Graduate School of Education and Brown University, teachers must focus on instructional practices rather than content knowledge as they grow professionally. The key is to recognizing key strategies and offering support for implementing modifications in the classroom (Will, 2022).

Aligning instructional methods with educational quality standards is critical for ensuring that students receive a high-quality education and achieve optimal learning outcomes. Effective instructional approaches have a direct impact on student engagement, motivation, and achievement. Another essential teacher skill is organization. Organizational skills help teachers maintain order in the classroom, facilitate projects, follow deadlines, and address problems. Teachers who wish to expand their skill set and progress their careers may want to explore how organizations might assist them reach their short- and long-term goals (Radojicic, 2023). Furthermore, student engagement should be one of the most critical considerations in instructional delivery. In return, student engagement signifies the success of instructional delivery. Student engagement is a requirement for student learning, and for learning to be meaningful, students have to be cognitively engaged. Teachers should use different strategies such as hands-on learning and question-answer method. These strategies foster active engagement among students and allows them to enhance critical thinking skills, problem-solving abilities, and a more in-depth understanding of the topic (Main, 2023). Student presentations are stressful yet valuable learning experiences; thus, lecturers and tutors can assist students prepare for their presentations and enhance their oral presentation abilities by giving materials on making an oral presentation for an academic audience, selecting and organizing content (Anggita et al.,2020).

Finally, teacher professionalism may also be related to work engagement. Engaged employees identify with the organization's goals and align them with the organization's goals. Employees who feel cared for by their employer are more loyal, productive, and engaged with their firm. Development opportunities are an important aspect of making employees feel valued. Studies such as those by Wei (2023) and Ji (2023) investigated teacher engagement as a part of continuous professional engagement. Siddique et al. (2022), they found that work engagement had a favorable effect on teachers' ability to do their jobs. They recommend that teachers engage in their work to effectively carry out their responsibilities in a classroom setting. Another study by Biradar et al.,(2019) found that teachers' psychological well-being is significantly related to work engagement. In addition, Lu et al. (2022) found that employee mental health improves job performance, and this relationship is mediated by innovative behavior and work engagement. Meanwhile, Yu (2021) investigated the relationship between work motivation and engagement. Results show that the work motivation of skilled Chinese personnel is positively

associated with work engagement.

According to Gallagher (2017), there are conflicting research conclusions that while teacher professional development can have positive impacts on teachers, it is not often effective at improving instructional practice and student outcomes. A fundamental concept in understanding the relationship between professional development and changes in teacher knowledge, abilities, and practice is that teachers (like all learners) are not the metaphorical empty vessel into which professional development pours new knowledge. Instead, teachers must create their own interpretations of the new concepts provided during professional development. Multiple approaches to professional development can help teachers envisage innovative instructional techniques. Among the most frequent include having teachers experience new practices as students (e.g., role-playing new practices), coaching, and employing instructional videos in professional development. Furthermore, the study by Fang et al. (2021) explored teachers' needs, provision, and obstacles in their professional development. The study found that Shanghai teachers necessitated assistance to placate students' individual learning and pedagogical capabilities. It was also found that working schedule and lack of motivations are two (2) significant barriers that disagreed with participation in professional development. This study implies that there is a need for a more efficient professional development program for teachers. A significant number of studies have been shown on the work engagement of teachers.

This concept has been related to different ideas such as job performance, well-being, and motivation. It has also been investigated with regards to continuous professional development. Many of the studies that have been conducted show positive correlations. However, as Gallagher (2017) mentioned above, teacher professional development is not often active at cultivating instructional practice and student results. This observation is worth investigating. While it is important that teachers continuously develop, it is also crucial that their classroom teaching and student outputs improve as well. More so, it is also worth investigating whether a teacher's level of professionalism equates to his or her work engagement.

With the information above, the researcher conceptualized this study. This endeavor focuses on describing professionalism among college teachers in China. Furthermore, the study seeks to determine how professionalism is related to instructional practices and work engagement. With the information gathered in the study, the researcher aims to propose a faculty development program to improve teacher professionalism further.

**Objectives of the Study** - The purpose of this study was to determine professionalism, instructional practices, and work engagement among Chinese college teachers to propose a faculty development program to enhance teacher professionalism. Specifically, this study aimed to determine the respondents' professionalism in terms of teachers' characters, commitment to change and continual improvement, subject and pedagogical knowledge, and obligations and working relationships beyond the classroom; identify the respondents' instructional practices as to planning and preparation, instructional delivery, and assessment of student learning; assess the respondents' work engagement in terms of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive factors; test the significant relationships among professionalism, instructional practices, and work engagement; and propose a faculty development program to enhance teacher professionalism.

## 2. Methods

**Research Design** - This study utilized the descriptive research design. A descriptive study is designed to systematically obtain information to describe a phenomenon, situation, or population. More specifically, it helps answer the what, when, where, and how questions regarding the research problem rather than the why (Heath, 2023). Furthermore, this form of study paints a thorough and accurate picture of the traits and behaviors of a specific community or subject. Descriptive research assists researchers in gaining a deeper understanding of a certain subject by watching and collecting data on it, as well as providing significant insights that might inform future studies (Sirisilla et al., 2023). The descriptive research design was used in this study to try and determine the demographic characteristics of the college teachers and their level of professionalism, their instructional practice,

and their work engagement. Using descriptive research, this study aimed to identify patterns in the characteristics of the college teachers to essentially establish the abovementioned variables. Also through descriptive analysis, data gathered was summarized to identify patterns that satisfy the research objectives. Data were collected using quantitative approaches. Specifically, the survey technique was used. The survey technique entails gathering primary data on participants, typically by selecting a representative sample of the population or universe under study using a questionnaire. In addition, the survey method is a research approach where subjective opinions are collected from a sample of subjects and analyzed for some aspects of the study population they represent (Lau, 2017).

**Participants of the Study** - The participants of the study were college teachers. Using the *Raosoft* sample size calculator and a 98% level of confidence, 425 teachers were involved as the sample out of the total population of 515. The teacher respondents were selected using the simple random sampling technique.

**Instrument of the Study** - The survey questionnaire contained four parts. The first part determined the respondents' profile, such as sex, age, highest educational attainment, and years of teaching. The second part focused on the respondents' level of professionalism as to teachers' characters, commitment to change and continual improvement, subject and pedagogical knowledge, and obligations and working relationships beyond the classroom. This was modified Mohd (2020) *Teacher Professionalism: The Reliability of the Questionnaire* Faculty of Management and Economics, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris. The third part determined the respondents' instructional practices in terms of planning and preparation, instructional delivery, and assessment of student learning. This was modified from the development and application of teacher teaching practice evaluation scale (2016). Meanwhile, part IV focused on the respondents' work engagement as to behavioral, emotional, and cognitive aspects. This was modified from *The Development and Investigation of Work Engagement Questionnaire for Enterprise Employees (2005)* and *Work Engagement Scale: Construct Validity and Reliability in the Colombian Organizational Context (2022)*. The constructed questionnaire was submitted to a panel of experts in the field for validation. Through the validation of the instrument, the researcher can ensure that the identified variables are adequately measured. The comments and suggestions from the experts were integrated to the questionnaire draft before it was finalized.

**Data Gathering Procedure** - The study was originally conceived based on the researcher's observations on the existing scenario regarding the predominance of digital reading among students. To select the variables for the study, the researcher obtained firsthand information on the topic. The variables were finalized following a review of the literature. The researcher chose a research design and data gathering strategy based on available literature. The data collecting procedure for this study included acquiring information from participants through validated survey questionnaire with rating scales. A review of relevant literature provided insights that informed the development of the questionnaire. The study supervisor and experts evaluated the original questionnaire draft for content validity. Several professionals in the field evaluated the tool's content and grammar. Their comments and recommendations were included into the document, which was then resubmitted for additional review. After the questionnaire was validated and polished, pilot testing was performed to determine its reliability. After the research instrument was authorized, the necessary letters were written for the study's administration. Following permission from the school leaders, the surveys were personally presented to the chosen respondents. The data gathering procedure in this study involved the collection of data from the respondents using a validated survey questionnaire with rating scales. The questionnaires were distributed to teachers at Chinese universities and colleges, including Beijing Normal University, Zhejiang University, Taizhou Institute of Vocational Technology and Taizhou Open University. After the data was evaluated, the findings were debated, interpreted, and validated by previous research. Conclusions were reached after discussing and interpreting the findings. In addition, recommendations were made based on the findings and potential future studies.

**Data Analysis** - Weighted mean and ranking was used to determine the respondents' professionalism in terms of teachers' characters, commitment to change and continual improvement, subject and pedagogical knowledge, and obligations and working relationships beyond the classroom; identify the respondents'

instructional practices as to planning and preparation, instructional delivery, and assessment of student learning; and assess the respondents' work engagement in terms of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive factors. Pearson's *r* correlation was used to test the significant relationships among professionalism, instructional practices, and work engagement. All statistical analyses and data processing were conducted using SPSS version 26, a widely used statistical software package.

**Ethical Considerations** - The researcher did not disclose the identities or personal information of the respondents to ensure their privacy. The researcher observed utmost respect and confidentiality in data collection and obtain consent before accessing sensitive information. During the analysis, the researcher prioritized the participants' well-being and ensure that all data will be accurately represented in the study. The researchers refrained from providing personal opinions about the findings from the collected data. Respondents were assured that the information gathered will solely serve the purpose of this study. Furthermore, the study was subjected to an ethics review process before its conduct.

## 1. Results and discussion

**Table 1**

*Summary Table on Respondents' Professional Image*

| Indicators   | WM   | VI    | Rank |
|--|------|-------|------|
| Teachers' Characters                                       | 2.73 | Agree | 3    |
| Commitment to change and continual improvement             | 2.70 | Agree | 4    |
| Subject and pedagogical knowledge                          | 2.79 | Agree | 2    |
| Obligations and working relationships beyond the classroom | 2.82 | Agree | 1    |
| Composite Mean   | 2.76 | Agree |      |

*Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 - 1.49 = Strongly Disagree*

Table 1 shows the summary of the respondents' professional image. The composite mean of 2.76 shows that the respondents generally agreed. Among the variables, obligations and working relationships beyond the classroom gained the highest mean which is 2.82. This was followed by subject and pedagogical knowledge, teachers' characters, and commitment to change and continual improvement, respectively.

As for the overall results, the variable obligations and working relationships ranked the highest. Teachers are expected to get along well with everyone they contact with in addition to their many other obligations. According to Hana-Meksem (2018), teachers serve as role models, inspirations, and souls of the classroom, providing academic and social learning beyond the official syllabus, making them essential in fostering a positive learning environment. Additionally, Zeiger (2018) highlighted the need for instructors to work in coordination with administrators, other educators, and school personnel to give children a secure and productive learning environment. To maintain the authority of administrators and provide a good example for pupils, teachers must obey their directives, even if they appear unreasonable in terms of regulations or expectations.

Next in rank is subject and pedagogical knowledge. Teachers should have a deep understanding of the subjects they teach. This includes knowing the content and understanding its underlying principles and connections to other topics. In addition, teachers must be well-versed in various teaching methods, instructional strategies, and classroom management techniques. Alashwal (2019) highlighted in her study the important role instructors have in empowering pupils. They should thus have traits and abilities that will allow them to connect with the students and encourage the growth of their social and technical skills. The study discovered that the most important things to consider when defining the ideal teacher are pedagogical expertise alongside a teacher's character attributes and worldview.

Teachers' character ranked third for professional image. A positive character is essential for teachers as it sets the tone for the classroom environment and influences students' attitudes towards learning. Teachers with a positive character serve as role models for their students, demonstrating important values such as kindness, patience, and empathy. According to Aktan et al. (2020), a teacher's character may significantly impact the

quality of education. Meanwhile, Ahmad et al. (2013) stated that the boundaries of teaching and learning are determined by teachers' positive attitudes toward their work. As a result, an educator's interests and sentiments influence their work. Teachers bear a big responsibility as they need to portray positive thinking, belief in service, self-regulation, dedication, autonomy, guidance of others, care, kindness, respect, accepting diversity, and sharing responsibility.

Commitment to change comes last among the factors that compose up professional image. Despite having the lowest overall ranking, this variable was nonetheless considered to agree. However, it is important to remember that educators should concentrate on strengthening their dedication to making changes in their careers. Teachers should maintain best practices and other appropriate teaching strategies to enhance their professionalism continuously. Zeiger (2018) also stated that teachers who are committed to professionalism participate in training, reading journals, joining online communities, and attending conferences to stay abreast of advances in technology and emerging trends in education. This indicator may have ranked least due to several reasons. Adarkwah et al., (2021) found that teachers face inadequate resources, time conflict, and lousy organization as challenges in professional development.

**Table 2**

*Summary Table on Instructional Practices*

| Indicators                     | WN   | VI    | Rank |
|--------------------------------|------|-------|------|
| Planning and Preparation       | 2.66 | Agree | 3    |
| Instructional Delivery         | 2.85 | Agree | 2    |
| Assessment of Student Learning | 2.90 | Agree | 1    |
| Composite Mean                 | 2.80 | Agree |      |

*Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 - 1.49 = Strongly Disagree*

Table 2 shows the summary table on instructional practices. The composite mean of 2.80 signifies that the respondents generally agreed. Among all the variables, assessment of student learning ranked first with the weighted mean of 2.90, followed by instructional delivery and planning and preparation.

Among the variables under instructional practices, assessment of student learning ranked first. Assessment is a crucial component of teaching. While education guarantees that students learn what is intended, assessments should show how well they have learned it. Assessments, learning goals, and instructional techniques must be strongly matched to support one another in order for this to happen (Gordon, 2022). Teachers can determine or measure the success of their strategies and techniques based on the results of assessment. The findings signify that teachers practice appropriate assessment strategies as seen in the mean scores gained.

Next is instructional delivery. According to Grove (2019), in order for every student to learn, teachers need to modify their expectations and methods of education. Establishing routines, getting to know their students, holding each student to a high standard, and encouraging them to take chances are all important steps in helping teachers create the ideal learning environment in the classroom. The study came to the conclusion that instructors need to have affective qualities that enhance their capacity to create engaging lessons in order to motivate and engage students. These qualities go beyond just subject-matter expertise. This means that it is not enough for teachers to have content knowledge; they need to be able to deliver lessons effectively. Teachers should use a variety of methods and strategies such as hands on activities, question and answer method, and student presentations. Meanwhile, planning and preparation ranked last under instructional practices. Effective teaching relies heavily on planning and preparation as part of instructional techniques. Failure is the result of inadequate preparedness. Teachers should continuously assess and improve their methods of education based on feedback and statistics on student performance. This process can help to continuously increase the efficacy of instruction and learning. As a result, educators should work hard in every facet of instruction, from preparation to delivery to assessment.



**Table 3***Summary Table on Work Engagement*

| Indicators     | Weighted Mean | Verbal Interpretation | Rank |
|----------------|---------------|-----------------------|------|
| 1. Behavioral  | 2.96          | Agree                 | 2.5  |
| 2. Emotional   | 2.99          | Agree                 | 1    |
| 3. Cognitive   | 2.96          | Agree                 | 2.5  |
| Composite Mean | 2.97          | Agree                 |      |

*Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 - 1.49 = Strongly Disagree*

Table 3 shows the summary on respondents' work engagement. The composite mean of 2.97 indicates that the respondents generally agreed. Among the variables, emotional engagement ranked highest with the weighted mean of 2.99; this was followed by behavioral and cognitive engagement.

Among the variables of work engagement, emotional engagement ranked the highest. Employee mental health has been one of the most important topics at present. According to Lu et al. (2022), mental health positively impacts job performance, and is mediated by work engagement. Heinz (2023) also stated that when employees are highly engaged, they put passion and energy in their duties and responsibilities. However, when employees are unhappy, their job performance will be negatively affected. Thus, one's emotional and mental being highly influences their work engagement. These findings corroborate Sudibjo et al.,(2022) found that excitement at work, dedication to work, showing fun in work until dissolved in work and attaching importance to work all affect work engagement. Lastly, Macuka (2018) reported that teachers who reported higher levels of positive emotions of joy, pride, and love at the first time point tended to be more engaged in their work. Thus, school administrators should continuously strive to enhance and focus on the emotional well-being of teachers. Next is behavioral engagement. When employees are engaged in terms of behavior, productivity improves.

People who are engaged and satisfied with their jobs are likelier to show up to work every day. Siddique et al. (2022) found that work engagement had a favorable effect on teachers' ability to do their jobs. Work engagement, defined as the level of vigour, dedication, and absorption that an individual experiences in their work, was shown to have a significant positive impact on teachers' ability to effectively carry out their professional responsibilities. The findings underscore the importance of fostering a work environment that promotes and sustains high levels of engagement among educators. Thus, when teachers are engaged in their work, they are most likely to perform their duties to the best of their abilities. Last is the respondents' cognitive work engagement. According to Tenney (2023), cognitive engagement refers to how much attention employees devote to their tasks. Cognitively engaged employees are better able to focus on their work, even when distracted or interrupted. This form of engagement refers to how an employee perceives and thinks about their job and the organization. It could be the most important sort of employee engagement because it is related to the employee's sense of the organization's values. Since this variable ranked last overall, more program and policies should be developed to enhance teachers' behavioral engagement.

**Table 5***Relationship Between Professional Image and Instructional Practices*

| Teachers' Characters                           | r-value | p-value | Interpretation |
|--|---------|---------|----------------|
| Planning and Preparation                       | .628    | .000    | Significant    |
| Instructional Delivery                         | .735    | .000    | Significant    |
| Assessment of Student Learning                 | .800    | .000    | Significant    |
| Commitment to change and continual improvement |         |         |                |
| Planning and Preparation                       | .620    | .000    | Significant    |
| Instructional Delivery                         | .692    | .000    | Significant    |
| Assessment of Student Learning                 | .749    | .000    | Significant    |
| Subject and pedagogical knowledge              |         |         |                |
| Planning and Preparation                       | .562    | .000    | Significant    |
| Instructional Delivery                         | .775    | .000    | Significant    |
| Assessment of Student Learning                 | .837    | .000    | Significant    |

| Obligations and working relationships beyond the classroom |      |      |             |
|--|------|------|-------------|
| Planning and Preparation                                   | .662 | .000 | Significant |
| Instructional Delivery                                     | .803 | .000 | Significant |
| Assessment of Student Learning                             | .829 | .000 | Significant |

Legend: Significant at  $p$ -value < 0.01

Table 5 displays the association between the respondents' professional image and instructional practices. The computed R-values indicate a moderate direct correlation; the resulting p-values were less than the alpha level. This result means that a significant relationship exists, implying that the better the professional image, the better the instructional practices. The findings above show that teachers' professional image or professionalism affects instructional practices. The professionalism of a teacher plays a crucial role in shaping the instructional practices within the classroom. This encompasses various aspects, including ethical conduct, continuous learning, communication, adaptability, and working relationships. These findings corroborate the study of Mahulae et al. (2020) who revealed that professionalism has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance. They also emphasized that teachers are expected to pay attention and assess each student's progress that occurs every day. From these results, it can be a measure of whether a teacher is professional in educating these students.

**Table 6**

*Relationship Between Professional Image and Work Engagement*

| Teachers' Characters                                       | r-value | p-value | Interpretation  |
|--|---------|---------|-----------------|
| Behavioral   | .045    | .351    | Not Significant |
| Emotional  | .069    | .157    | Not Significant |
| Cognitive  | .045    | .352    | Not Significant |
| Commitment to change and continual improvement             |         |         |                 |
| Behavioral   | .073    | .134    | Not Significant |
| Emotional  | .074    | .129    | Not Significant |
| Cognitive  | .040    | .416    | Not Significant |
| Subject and pedagogical knowledge                          |         |         |                 |
| Behavioral   | .022    | .648    | Not Significant |
| Emotional  | .086    | .078    | Not Significant |
| Cognitive  | .053    | .272    | Not Significant |
| Obligations and working relationships beyond the classroom |         |         |                 |
| Behavioral   | .039    | .427    | Not Significant |
| Emotional  | .073    | .135    | Not Significant |
| Cognitive  | .064    | .185    | Not Significant |

Legend: Significant at  $p$ -value < 0.01

Table 6 presents the association between the respondents' professional image and work engagement. The computed R-values indicate a moderate direct correlation; the resulting p-values were less than the alpha level. This result means that no significant relationship exists between professional image and work engagement.

The findings above show that work engagement is not associated with teacher professionalism. Possibly, teacher professionalism values qualifications and adherence to standards over emotional engagement. These findings challenge previous assumptions about the relationship between a teacher's level of commitment to their work and how they are perceived professionally. Professional development opportunities are a critical part of making employees feel cared for. Studies such as those by Wei (2023) and Ji (2023) investigated teacher engagement as a part of continuous professional engagement. These studies shed light on the complex dynamics of teacher engagement, providing valuable insights for education policymakers and school administrators aiming to develop a more engaged workforce.

Meanwhile, Siddique et al. (2022) found that work engagement had a favorable effect on teachers' ability to do their jobs. When teachers are fully engaged in their work, it positively impacts their ability to perform their jobs. These conflicting results indicate that further research on the relationship between professionalism and engagement is still needed. It is critical for educational leaders to identify this discrepancy so that they may create cultures that encourage both high levels of work engagement and great teacher professionalism. Schools

can improve their instructional processes by addressing each area independently while also finding methods to integrate them.

Table 7 presents the association between the respondents' instructional practices and work engagement. The computed R-values indicate a moderate direct correlation; the resulting p-values were less than the alpha level. This result means that no significant relationship exists between instructional practices and work engagement.

**Table 7**

*Relationship Between Instructional Practices and Work Engagement*

| Planning and Preparation       | r-value | p-value | Interpretation  |
|--------------------------------|---------|---------|-----------------|
| Behavioral                     | .064    | .186    | Not Significant |
| Emotional                      | .089    | .066    | Not Significant |
| Cognitive                      | .067    | .168    | Not Significant |
| Instructional Delivery         |         |         |                 |
| Behavioral                     | .003    | .959    | Not Significant |
| Emotional                      | .075    | .122    | Not Significant |
| Cognitive                      | .052    | .289    | Not Significant |
| Assessment of Student Learning |         |         |                 |
| Behavioral                     | .053    | .276    | Not Significant |
| Emotional                      | .045    | .352    | Not Significant |
| Cognitive                      | .041    | .400    | Not Significant |

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.01

The findings above show that work engagement is not associated with instructional practices. Each employee brings a unique set of motivations, abilities, and personal situations to the workplace. Factors like as personality traits and intrinsic drive can have a major impact on engagement levels regardless of teaching approaches. These findings contradict several existing studies. For instance, the study by Dávila-Ramírez et al. (2018) found that work engagement of teachers was positively and significantly correlated with teaching practices. Addimando (2019) also revealed that there is a positive association between psychological resources and teaching classroom practice. Additionally, the research highlighted the importance of educators' mental and emotional well-being in shaping the quality of their instructional methods and interactions with students. This finding suggests that factors other than instructional methods may influence employee engagement in the workplace. Further investigation into these alternative influences could provide valuable insights for improving overall employee satisfaction and productivity.

**Table 8**

*Proposed Faculty Development Program to Enhance Teacher Professionalism*

| Key Result Area   | Objectives                                  | Program/<br>Projects  | Success Indicators  | Persons<br>involved       |
|---|---|---|---|---------------------------|
| Professional Image in terms of Commitment to Change and Continual Improvement | To encourage peer observations              | It's a T-I-E: Teacher Insight Exchange<br>1. Enhancing teaching practices through constructive feedback from peers<br>2. Fostering a culture of collaboration and professional development among teachers<br>3. Building a supportive community where teachers can share knowledge and expertise            | 1. 90% of teachers participate in peer observation<br>2. 90% of teachers participate in and value a culture of collaboration<br>3. 90% of teachers share their knowledge and expertise with each other                | Teachers and School Heads |
|   | To promote a culture of innovation          | That's IT: Innovate Together<br>1. Encouraging teachers to experiment with new methods, strategies, and approaches in the classroom<br>2. Facilitating collaborative activities where teachers can share best practices and create innovative solutions<br>3. Encouraging teachers to have a growth mindset | 1. 90% of teachers adopt and implement new methods and strategies in the classroom<br>2. 90% of teachers participate in collaborative activities with their colleagues<br>3. 90% of teachers develop a growth mindset | Teachers and School Heads |
|   | To create a learning culture among teachers | EmpowerED<br>1. Empowering teachers to enhance their craft through continuous education<br>2. Organizing workshops, seminars, and training sessions to provide teachers with  | 1. 90% of teachers pursue further education<br>2. 90% of teachers attend workshops, seminars, and training sessions   |                           |

|  |  |  |  |                           |
|--|--|--|--|---------------------------|
|  |  | relevant and engaging professional development opportunities<br>3. Encouraging teachers to reflect on their teaching practice and identify areas for improvement   | 3. 90% of teachers identify their strengthes and weaknesses and possible improvements in their practice  |                           |
| Instructional Practices in terms of Planning and Preparation | To introduce innovative teaching methods                       | Teaching 2.0<br>1. Updating and enhancing traditional teaching methods with technology<br>2. Enhancing lesson planning and delivery using digital tools and resources  | 1. 90% of teachers are updated on new technologies and pedagogies<br>2. 90% of teachers use digital tools and resources in lesson planning and preparation   | Teachers and School Heads |
|  | To train teachers on the appropriate use of teaching resources | Toolbox for Teachers<br>1. Providing teachers with knowlede and skills to create engaging plans using different teaching resources<br>2. Developing lesson plans that integrate a variety of teching resources<br>3. Evaluating the effectiveness of teaching resources using various assessment methods | 1. 90% of teachers gain knowledge and skills in designing lesson plans<br>2. 90% of teachers are able to integrate different teaching resources in their lesson<br>3. 90% of teachers understand the effectiveness of the resources they use                           | Teachers and School Heads |
| Work Engagement in terms of Cognitive                        | To enhance enjoyment in teaching-related activities            | TeachJoy<br>1. Developing strategies to reignite passion in teaching<br>2. Encouraging teachers to prioritize self-care and well-being<br>3. Providing a platform for teachers to share their accomplishments<br>4. Giving recognition and rewards for teaching practices                                | 1. 90% of teachers rekindle their passion for teaching<br>2. 90% of teachers understand the importance of and prioritize self-care<br>3. 90% of teachers are able to share their accomplishments<br>4. 90% of teachers are recognized and rewarded for their practices | Teachers and School Heads |
|  | To improve teacher concentration and focus                     | FocusED<br>1. Organizing workshops and seminars on stress reduction, time management, and concentration techniques<br>2. Promoting practices that support the well-being of teachers<br>3. Providing resources that help in relaxation and stress relief   | 1. 90% of teachers attend activities aimed at improving concentration and focus<br>2. 90% of teachers experience improved overall well-being<br>3. 90% of teachers have access to resources that help in relaxation  | Teachers and School Heads |
| Work Engagement in terms of Behavioral                       | To strengthen teachers' mental fortitude                       | MindStrong, TeachStrong<br>1. Developing effective coping strategies<br>2. Providing activities that reduce stress and burnout<br>3. Fostering a sense of community  | 1. 90% of teachers develop coping strategies for managing stress and challenges<br>2. 90% of teachers will report a decrease in stress levels<br>3. 90% of teachers feel a sense of belonging with their colleagues  | Teachers and School Heads |
|  | To promote persistence amidst obstacles                        | TeachON<br>1. Developing problem-solving skills<br>2. Enhancing emotional intelligence such as self-awareness and self-regulation<br>3. Integrating persistence in the school culture and policy   | 1. 90% of teachers develop problem-solving skills and ability to adapt to different situations<br>2. 90% of teachers will show improved emotional intelligence<br>3. 90% of teachers develop and maintain the value of persistence through obstacles                   | Teachers and School Heads |
|  | To promote excellence among teachers                           | TeachBest<br>1. Providing teachers with opportunities for ongoing professional growth and development<br>2. Increasing teacher confidence in their subject area<br>3. Fostering a school culture of excellence   | 1. 90% of teachers participate in different activities for growth and development<br>2. 90% of teachers have increased confidence in their competence<br>3. 90% of teachers maintaint excellence in their daily tasks  | Teachers and School Heads |

### 3. Conclusions and recommendations

As to teachers' character, it is important to put students' welfare first. Teachers should continuously commit themselves to improvement through keeping with current social and political trends. Regarding pedagogical knowledge, self-reflection and analysis of own teaching are crucial teacher activities. Teachers are also obligated to have positive and collaborative relationships with colleagues and parents. Effective instructional practices include meeting curriculum standards in terms of planning and preparation. As to instructional delivery, it is important for teachers to practice clear and effective communication. When it comes to assessment of student

learning, it is crucial to have clearly formulated evaluation criteria that reflect expected learning outcomes. When it comes to behavioral work engagement, teachers who are engaged in their jobs come to work prepared for their daily tasks. As to emotional work engagement, teachers need to be passionate about their work. Meanwhile, part of a teacher's cognitive engagement is being fully immersed in the teaching process. Teachers' instructional approaches are significantly influenced by their professional image. Conversely, no meaningful correlation was discovered between professional image and work engagement or instructional approaches and work engagement. The researcher proposed a faculty development program to enhance teacher professionalism.

Chinese universities may tailor their professional development programs to meet the specific needs of different demographic groups. By analyzing the demographics, universities can gain valuable insights into the requirements and preferences of their faculty members. Teachers may embrace a growth mindset and recognize that teaching is a continuous learning process. They must be supported in terms of encouragement to innovate and provision of resources to experiment with new approaches to teaching. Teachers may be trained in effective lesson planning, which is characterized by alignment of learning objectives and approaches, use of different teaching strategies, appropriate materials and resources, and student needs assessment. The school administration may foster a positive culture by valuing teacher well-being, providing equal opportunities, and recognizing efforts and achievements. Future research on this topic may involve more male respondents, teachers from other age brackets, and individuals with different educational backgrounds. Also, it is recommended that other research design other than the descriptive method can be explored in the future. The proposed faculty development program to enhance teacher professionalism may be implemented to improve the teaching and learning process.

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