TUEBA Teachers' Perceptions of Teacher Professionalism in Thai Nguyen

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore the central phenomenon of teacher professionalism, to identify perceptions of teacher professionalism and what factors contribute to or inhibit teacher professionalism. The main research question of this study is how do TUEBA teachers perceive teacher professionalism in the school? Subsidiary research questions were addressed in order to reach the purpose of the study: what are the teachers' perceptions of the factors that contribute to teacher professionalism at school? What are their perceptions of the factors that inhibit teacher professionalism? Semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten participants and analyzed with the help of topic-based coding and interpretation. The researcher used purposeful sampling. This study is significant because it shows teachers' perceptions of how professionalism is determined in the Vietnamese education system. Research shows that professionalism of teachers in Vietnam is a complex concept that encompasses many different aspects of teaching and learning including career commitment, school courses, and learning communities. Professional and supportive work environment. There are also several factors that limit professionalism including lack of time management skills, lack of motivation, exhaustion, and paperwork. The limited study was that only ten participants shared their views on teacher professionalism. Future studies may extend research by doing a similar study in other University or other Vietnamese contexts, to explore other teachers' perceptions of professionalism. involves teachers who teach different subjects in rural and urban areas.

Keywords: TUEBA, Vietnam, perception, teacher professionalism

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The professionalism of the teachers was explored in many countries at different times. However, there are no empirical studies on teacher professionalism in TUEBA (Thai Nguyen University of Economics and Business Administration). To address this vulnerability, the following research was conducted at the TUEBA site. TUEBA students have an extensive curriculum at the school that allows them to think critically and creatively as they engage in various project work and competitions. School educators prepare cross-platform lessons, use criteria-based assessment methods to gauge student progress and focus on their career development through Join professional learning communities. Current research aims to voice teachers 'perceptions of teachers' professionalism, as well as to identify factors that contribute to or inhibit professionalism in schools.

The main purpose of this qualitative study is to investigate in-depth the perceptions of teacher professionalism by TUEBA teachers, concerning the factors that inhibit or contribute to teacher professionalism at school. The main research question of this study is: How do TUEBA teachers perceive teacher professionalism in the school? The following subsidiary research questions will also be addressed: 1. What are the TUEBA teachers' perceptions of the factors that contribute to teacher professionalism at school? 2.What are the TUEBA teachers' perceptions of the factors that inhibit teacher professionalism at school? In view of the above research questions, a qualitative research design was employed for the study.

Literature Review

The concept of professionalism in teaching is mostly discussed in the sociological, educational and ideological contexts in the literature. It is important to identify teacher professionalism in relation to changing political, historical and social contexts, as the concept of teacher professionalism is influenced by context and time. designation (Demirkasimoglu, 2010; Hargreaves, 2000; Mockler, 2005). Researchers have identified various definitions of teacher professionalism over the past two decades. Analysis of some of the definitions found in the study is shown below.

Helsby and McCulloch (1996) define the concept of professionalism as "the responsibility of teachers in controlling and developing their own knowledge and acting for the benefit of the client" (as cited in Webb et al. the, 2004, p.83). Under this definition, children or "clients" as researchers name them and their progress in learning should be an important part of teaching. The student-centered or student-

oriented teaching approach has become dominant in modern pedagogy and it allows learners to develop their potential, collaborate with others, and close contribute to class discussions and projects.

Torres and Weiner (2018) emphasize the importance of knowledge when determining the professionalism of teachers. Researchers point out that professional institutions (colleges and universities) and key stakeholders (practitioners, academics) determine what is considered "knowledge" that is primarily acquired through through formal education.

Hanlon (1998) argues that "professionalism is a shifting rather than a concrete phenomenon" and states:

…when I discuss professionals, I am talking about groups such as doctors, academics, teachers, accountants, lawyers, engineers, civil servants, etc., that is those groups commonly thought of as professional by the lay public, academics, the professionals themselves and so on. (as cited in Whitty, 2000, p. 282).

A study by Wardoyo et al. (2017) emphasized that government plays an important role in determining the professionalism of teachers. As the researcher pointed out, professionalism is defined as the four main competencies that a qualified teacher is expected to have. It is "pedagogical, personal, social and professional capacity" (p. 90). The stated competencies are linked to teachers' performance in the workplace, their effectiveness as educators and leaders through teaching and interacting with other colleagues.

Webb et al. (2004), in their comparative analysis of teacher professionalism, argues that modern education reform becomes a reason to transform the roles and responsibilities of school staff, and the changing nature This teacher's job has influenced perceptions of the teacher's professional role. These researchers emphasize that the concept of teacher professionalism is defined by two opposing notions. According to the first, there is a "traditional" view of professionalism "while the second one emphasizes the" commercialization "view of professionalism, with emphasis on financial and management skills" (p. 83) Many researchers discuss two common discourse in determining teacher professionalism, which may be viewed in a different way.

Evans (2008) defines professionalism as "new" or "modified" professionalism. This author explains that new professionalism can be analyzed against the reform agenda and standards (pages 20–29). The "new" professionalism, as Evans says, has three concepts: required, regulated, and enacted. The required or required professionalism is connected with certain needs or requirements that employers expect. Regulatory professionalism reflects the performance measures suggested by analysts. Enhanced professionalism means that your professional practice is observed and analyzed by an expert from the relevant field. Current researchers recognize that the latter can only be regarded as "the only meaningful concept of professionalism" (Evans, 2008, p. 29), as it reflects the "reality of business activities. days" (page 29). The researcher concludes with the following definition of professionalism:

Occupational-influenced practices consistent with generally organized consensus discernment about a particular profession and both contribute to and reflect an awareness of the profession's purpose and status as well as the nature, the specific scope and level of service provided by and the common expertise in the profession, as well as the general code of ethics underpinning this practice (Evans, 2008, p. 29).

Factors Contributing to Teacher Professionalism

Many researchers agree that continuing career development helps teachers maintain expertise in their field, stressing that career development is closely related to teacher professionalism (Ifanti & Fotopoulopou, 2011; Sachs, 1997; Swann et al., 2010; Webb et al., 2004). Researchers have similar views on the relationship between professional and professional development, emphasizing the importance of continuing career development for teachers (Evans, 2008; Ifanti & Fotopoulopou, 2011; Mockler, 2005; Wardoyo et al., 2017). The findings of these researchers show that students in the school are interested in being informed about current educational research results. International research trends and teaching experience contribute to the career development of school educators. Finally, many researchers point out that career development opportunities allow teachers to remain in the profession (Day & Smethem, 2009).

In other studies, lifelong learning has also been mentioned as an important factor contributing to the professionalism of teachers (Ifanti & Fotopoulopou, 2011; Webb et al, 2004). These studies show that educators are enthusiastic about learning and improving their skills because teachers see continuous learning as one of the key characteristics of teacher professionalism. Other researchers, while discussing the professionalism of teachers, were interested in developing research skills, as they considered this skill as essential for their own development as well as for their development. student learning (Davies & Ferguson, 2010).

Another factor that contributes to teachers' professionalism is collaboration with peers. There are many studies emphasizing that collaboration with colleagues plays an important role in determining professionalism at school sites (Hargreaves, 2000; Ifanti & Fotopoulopou, 2011; Kennedy, 1997; Sachs, 1997; Tschannen -Moran, 2009; Webb et al., 2004). This research shows that this collaborative atmosphere in schools allows teachers to join forces with the aim of negotiating, reflecting, and addressing the challenges of teaching practice. Working in a supportive environment enhances teachers' morale, confidence, and emotional well-being (Day, 2002; Webb et al, 2004).

Instructional commitment has also been identified as a contributing factor to teacher professionalism in schools (Day, 2002; Ifanti & Fotopoulopou, 2011; Locke et al., 2005; Okas et al., 2014; Webb et al. partner,

2004;). These studies reveal that intrinsic factors such as commitment and motivation also determine the professional identity of teachers. Despite the fact that accountability and control dominate the educational systems of many countries, commitment to teaching is seen by many teachers as the cornerstone of modern teaching methods. Making a difference in students' lives has always been a core element of the teaching profession, and a commitment to better teaching and learning has been identified as an important part of teacher professionalism.

Factors Inhibiting Teacher Professionalism

Ifanti and Fotopoulopou (2011) show that bureaucracy reduces teachers' motivation to work. In this respect, current study participants expressed concern about the paperwork, leading to a manifestation of dissatisfaction with this. Unnecessary paperwork was also mentioned by British and Finnish researchers as a factor hindering teacher professionalism in transnational research (Webb et al., 2004) and in other Other studies are placed in different contexts (Day & Smethem, 2009; Locke et al., 2005). Later research mentioned that too often paperwork stems from accountability, leaving teachers accountable for students' test scores and test results. Indeed, the age of accountability has exerted a lot of pressure and increased work on teacher practice around the world (Day & Smethem, 2009; Hargreaves, 2000; Locke et al., 2005). Another issue that concerns many teachers is the fact that they have become technicians rather than educators. Such a transformation stems from national test systems, tournament tables and school monitoring systems (Locke et al., 2005; Webb et al., 2004). Recently there is a growing trend in the education systems of many countries that teachers teach to test, forcing students to memorize instead of developing skills such as critical thinking and problem solving.

Lack of autonomy has also been identified as a factor that negatively affects teacher professionalism (Pearson & Moomaw, 2005; Swann et al., 2010; Torres & Weiner, 2018; Webb et al., 2004). These researchers say that a regulated curriculum is considered by many teachers to be a negative aspect of current instruction (Swann et al., 2010; Webb et al., 2004). The results of their research indicate that teachers lack flexibility and autonomy in their workplace, which often leads to job dissatisfaction (Pearson & Moomaw, 2005), loss of spontaneity in teaching (Webb et al., 2004) and under pressure (Locke et al., 2005).

So far, with the increase in workloads, accountability and government intervention, teachers in many countries have felt overwhelmed, pressured and distrusted (Day & Smethem). , 2009; Locke et al., 2005; Webb et al., 2004). There is ample evidence that most educational reforms have resulted in more paperwork, increased challenges in daily teaching practice and temporary uncertainty in their work (Day, 2002). . Teachers often feel overwhelmed in workloads that prevent them from teaching, leading to guilt (Hargreaves, 1994), loss of expertise (Webb et al., 2004), exhaustion (Mustafa, 2013; Pearson & Moomaw, 2005) and stress (Day & Smethem, 2009). Such negative consequences lead to teachers' lack of motivation for their work, confusing school educators about their roles (Mustafa, 2013).

Methods

A qualitative research method has been used to gain insight into the nature of teacher professionalism. Teachers' perception of professionalism is seen as a central phenomenon of research, exploring the main research question: How do TUEBA teachers perceive professionalism of teachers in schools? Direct interviews to collect data were conducted. For the research, we are interested in collecting additional data from interviews for further analysis and interpretation of teacher professionalism. The qualitative design allowed us to interview study participants and explore their perceptions of teacher professionalism. At the same time, we can also find the factors that induce and limit teacher professionalism in each school setting. Thus, a qualitative research design has helped enable teachers to share their experiences and reflect on their professionalism.

Research Sampling and Participants

Intentional sampling was used for this study. This type of sampling allows us to select participants in the study and learn in depth about the phenomenon of the study. The main sampling criterion is to teach a variety of subjects and have many years of experience in modeling. "To develop more perspectives" in our research, (Creswell, 2002, p. 207), we used a maximum variable sampling method to better understand the perception of professionalism. with TUEBA teachers. Creswell (2002) states that "qualitative research is based more on the participants' views and less on the direction identified by the researcher in the literature" (p. 17). Therefore, it is important to collect data from different

perspectives. We want to understand how TUEBA teachers from different subjects and educational backgrounds see professionalism.

Before conducting the research, we asked permission from the school principal of TUEBA. The purpose of the study was explained and we received permission for further research work in the field.

Three TUEBA teachers from foreign disciplines were selected with the help of a purposeful sampling strategy. Limited by time range and availability of participants, only three participants were selected for the study. Participants of different ages, nationalities and qualifications. The interview candidates are selected as English teachers. We spoke privately with each interviewee to arrange a suitable time and location for the interview. Summaries of the study participants are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of the research participants

Participant	Subject	Teaching experience		Gender
P1	English	8 years		Female
P2	English	16 years		Female
P3	English	13 years		Female

Data Collection-Interviews

One-on-one interviews with open-ended questions were chosen as the main tool for data collection. As Creswell (2002) states, one-on-one interviews are a good tool for interviewing participants who are open to speak and who can "share ideas clearly". Although such interviews are a "time-consuming and costly approach" (p. 218), they also provide an opportunity for the participants to reflect, analyze and delve into the issue of the research.

Semi-structured interviews provide greater flexibility and accuracy for the study, while interviewing participants using this type of interview also provides the ability to change the speed of the interviewing process as needed. add additional questions to clarify or skip some questions if any answers have resolved the issue. Another advantage of these semi-structured interviews is that respondents are allowed to reflect and mull over ideas before responding, delving into the topics they are discussing. It is important to encourage interviewees to voice their opinions and perceptions.

Therefore, using a semi-structured interview seems relevant to current research, as it gives the participants the opportunity to express their opinion on the professional concept of a teacher in a school. open way. Questioning open-ended in qualitative research allows participants to "make the most of their experience without being limited by any researcher opinion or past research results" (Creswell, 2002, page 218).

Ethical Considerations

At the beginning of the interview, all participants signed an informed consent form. In the informed consent form, we stated that the participant's name, occupation and other information pertaining to the participant will be anonymous. We also mentioned that the participants' responses were recorded for further analysis. The data will be kept in a password-protected computer that has limited access rights. Each participant was shown that only the researcher had access to the data and may be required to submit a portion of the data to the study supervisor for instructions on data collection and analysis. When the data analysis is complete and the final paper is approved, all data will be destroyed. Participants were told about the purpose of the study, their rights and interests in the study. Since many of the participants were interviewed for research purposes for the first time, some of them asked questions regarding the nature of the study and all of their questions were asked. reply. All participants agreed to participate in the study and no one declined to be interviewed.

Data Analysis and Findings

As interviews have revealed, the professionalism of the teachers cannot be seen as something rigid and static; on the contrary, professionalism is a rather dynamic and flexible phenomenon. Much of the literature in this field considers that professionalism is a changing concept that teachers should be aware of.

Teachers see professionalism as a dynamic phenomenon, allowing teachers to modify and improve both teaching and learning. Professional teachers are always focused on recent innovations and changes in education, as they realize that no way of teaching works without continual development and improvement.

Another defining feature of teacher professionalism is continued professional development. The vast

majority, nine out of ten interviewed, believe professional development plays an integral role in becoming a professional teacher. As one of the participants acknowledged:

Teacher professionalism is highly competitive today and to stay afloat in the profession, modern teachers have to improve their practice through reading about teaching methods and recent educational research areas. Teachers should know their subjects efficiently as well as take part in various local, republic and international events, like workshops or conferences.

Interview participants stated a conviction that professional development is a significant part of teacher professionalism that enriches teaching and learning in school. These teachers agreed that professional development is an ongoing process that improves teaching practice and their skills for the better.

Respondents mention meeting learners' needs as a key characteristic of teacher professionalism. During interviews, these teachers pointed out that they spend much time preparing for the lessons and finding the relevant materials for learners' needs. A teacher talks about her preparation for the lessons:

To prepare good lessons, I spend much time looking for appropriate class materials. It is really time-consuming as the learners have different language abilities but it is really rewarding. For me, it is important to make my lessons useful for each learner.

Among the study participants were teachers with eight years of teaching experience, as well as teachers with nearly 20 years in the profession. However, despite the level of experience, both young and mature teachers believe that professionalism is determined by an educator's deep knowledge of the subject matter, and the degree of success of the teacher. A teacher can motivate students to learn intensively. Interviewees explained that it is important for professional teachers to know their subject well.

For example, A teacher voices her opinion about the significance of deep subject knowledge for teachers:

It is important for teachers to know their subject well: how to teach it in an effective way, how to motivate students for their class engagement and contribution. Every teacher chooses his way to students' hearts and with in- depth knowledge (of their subject matter) the way is much easier.

Participants noted that ICT skills have become an important "must-have" for contemporary teachers. Teachers should be confident IT users to lead a 21st century lesson. A math teacher emphasizes the changing needs of skills in the teaching profession:

Nowadays teachers are not only expected to teach but to do many other things as well. One of them is to use IT very well: teachers create presentations, tables, create online documents, use Edmodo for learning and do many other tasks or projects that require sufficient ICT skill. Teachers with good ICT skills are considered to be leading professionals now.

Factors Contributing to Teacher Professionalism

Respondents mention that commitment to the teaching profession and strive for professional development play a crucial role in becoming a professional teacher. A teacher believes that commitment to the profession is significant saying that:

I think, it is important for teachers to have that inner desire to be a professional educator since our job requires constant development and learning. We cannot just stop and teach the same things for years. Our knowledge and teaching approaches should be revised and improved. If a teacher does not have a desire to learn, he or she cannot be considered as a teacher anymore.

This quote reveals that professional commitment is an essential quality for school teachers. Teachers agree that commitment and motivation to the profession contribute to professionalism; it is a driving force for school improvement, especially in terms of career development for teachers.

All participants believed there were many career development opportunities that would maintain the professionalism of teachers at school. A fitness teacher describes how developmental opportunities improve her teaching:

For me, it does not matter if it is an online course or a course at the school site. I always try to take more from my participation. For example, I attended a course dedicated to develop critical thinking skill. I found it very useful as I learnt some techniques and tasks that will help me to develop students' critical thinking ability. Such courses make me more professional in my subject, I feel more confident during the lessons.

This teacher's response shows that professional development opportunities help teachers improve their teaching methods, which seem to help students learn more effectively (Ifanti & Fotopoulopou, 2011; Webb et al. the, 2004). There is a common pattern of attitudes towards multiple career development opportunities, in which most interviewees feel motivated and enthusiastic to gain more knowledge and methodological support from the the opportunities that the school provides.

The participants said that the college mentoring program contributes to the professionalism of teachers. One in three people interviewed was a beginner teacher. According to participants with nearly eight years of teaching experience, the university offers excellent opportunities to enhance teaching practice through a mentoring program. The mentoring program facilitates professional collaboration between beginner teachers and teachers with rich teaching practice, in which teachers work together to plan lessons, observe each other's lessons, and provide constructive feedback on teaching and learning. Young teachers report that this program contributes to their professional development and accumulates useful teaching experience.

This response revealed that the mentoring program fosters teaching practice, especially for beginner teachers. According to young teachers, this program is an important initiative to become a professional teacher.

The last factor mentioned in the interviews is the work environment. Respondents considered a friendly and reliable school environment as one of the most important factors contributing to the professionalism of teachers. Teacher feedback shows that working in a friendly place makes them feel safe and confident. One teacher explains how a friendly school environment keeps her energetic throughout the day:

This is my third year in this school and I have found some good friends here. I realize I work more efficiently if I have breakfast or lunch with school colleagues whom I can trust and talk openly. In general, I don't want to say that everyone on board is friendly and nice as I do not know some of the teachers, especially who came last year. Anyway, there are some teachers, who can make my working day brighter even when I have so many things to do at work.

According to the majority of participants, a supportive work environment fosters collaboration and trust among university faculty. Participants imply that in such a work environment, they are very open to building relationships and feel motivated to work and collaborate by learning and sharing with other teachers. Therefore, it is important to create a supportive work environment where teachers will feel comfortable to teach and collaborate.

Factors Inhibiting Teacher Professionalism

All participants believed that if teachers were not motivated for professional development, such an attitude could be a hindrance to better teaching and learning. Furthermore, more than half of the participants believed that lack of motivation could prevent school improvement. One teacher described how a lack of teacher motivation can affect college improvement:

If the teachers lack motivation to increase their professional potential, the students' academic achievement will decrease and the school will not be able to develop in a sustainable way.

Lack of time management skills were all considered by all respondents to be another important factor hindering the professionalism of teachers. According to participants, this factor can prevent them from effectively planning and prioritizing tasks. An English teacher shared her opinion about poor time management skills:

In this rapid pace of life and constant flow of information, it is quite challenging to organize your day and stick to the things that you have planned. I want to do certain things during the day, like checking and marking the students' assignments, attend the meeting, plan the lessons and go to school courses but the plans turn out to be half done at the end of the working day. This makes me even more stressful. I even don't have time to read and learn something new for myself.

Participants mentioned exhaustion as a factor holding back professionalism in college. In most cases, exhaustion is linked to exhaustion, stress, and emotional decline. This is a fairly common phenomenon for many professions, including teachers. One teacher explains how exhaustion sometimes affects her:

I teach five or six lessons a day and I also have extra lessons for weaker students. My schedule is pretty tough as I spend most of my time teaching the class or grading the students' work. I feel so tired at the end of the day that at home I just relax. I do not read or learn something and that is very frustrating for me. There are days when I have not so many lessons and it is when I can learn and reflect my own practice.

It may be noticed that work exhaustion does not allow teachers to have free time to read or study, as they have to prepare for classes. If teachers feel too stressed or too tired, they will not be able to take the time to increase their teaching potential by reading research or learning more about recent innovations in education. Hence, exhaustion restrains the professionalism of the teachers in the school.

Respondents complained that too much paperwork is a hindrance to their teaching practice and career development. Participants believed that teaching had become a more bureaucracy: new reports and forms needed to be completed on a regular basis. A TUEBA teacher shared the following view of the school's paperwork:

About fifteen years ago, I did not have so much paperwork. Basically, I was checking and grading students' work; you know, a normal routine for teachers. I would say that in the last five-six years teaching has transformed in a significant way and for me, this change is not for the better. Teaching has become more of clerical work than a learning process. Writing reports, letters and different forms takes most of my time. After that, I feel uninspired…and do not want to do anything, just want to rest for some time.

The last factor holding back professionalism was the lack of teacher autonomy, the interviewees pointed out. Seven out of ten participants reported that they had few opportunities for flexibility training in college. One language teacher shared her views on the teacher's limited opportunities for autonomy during class hours as follows:

I like our university program as it develops all four main skills of our students: they listen, read, write and speak in English during the lessons. However, I have some concerns. The problem I have is that my lessons are focused more on doing the tasks to achieve learning objectives rather than practicing language skills. For example, there are about seventeen learning objectives in the term. Since the terms are not long, that means we are short of time. The students have to achieve all the objectives, and there is not enough time for doing some extra activities that I would like to do with the students. We just stick to the learning objectives.

Conclusion and Discussion

The results of these interviews show that teachers see professionalism as a dynamic and flexible phenomenon. Both young and adult teachers acknowledge that professionalism is a changing concept that allows teachers to focus on their practice.

During interviews, nine teachers emphasized that professionalism is closely connected with career development explaining the importance of continuous learning and development for professional teachers. Hargreaves & Cunningham (2010) as well as other researchers (Ifanti & Fotopoulopou, 2011; Sachs, 1997; Wardoyo et al, 2017; Webb et al., 2004;) also find that teachers point to professional development. Subject is one of the most important factors of professionalism.

We recognize that it is important for teachers to meet the needs of their learners and make lessons encouraging and supportive for all learners. Most teachers consider providing learners with the best education and making a difference in students' lives as the core elements of teaching and learning. Webb et al. (2004) also identified a similar finding in their study, stating that children and their learning always take precedence over teachers from different backgrounds.

Furthermore, these teachers consider professionalism as profound subject knowledge that helps teachers motivate students to learn better. This finding was worth noting that all ten participants believed that adequate subject knowledge was an essential part of teacher professionalism. This finding is also consistent with Locke et al. (2005), who found that teachers consider the knowledge and skills required for a teaching career to be very important in identifying professional school educators.

In general, the teacher's answers were consistent with the results of other studies. These similarities indicate that teachers share common knowledge and perceptions about careers. TUEBA educators also share a similar perception of the factors that contribute to and inhibit a teacher's professionalism.

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