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Learning Advancement and Ethical Practices of Teachers: Basis for a Proposed Support Program

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Abstract

Although professional learning and ethical practice are both essential to effective teaching, researchers often examine these dimensions separately, leaving limited context-specific evidence on how they relate in actual basic education settings. This study determined the learning advancement and professional practices of elementary teachers the development of a responsive support program. The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design among 94 public elementary teachers from ten schools in Bayugan South District, Division of Bayugan City, Agusan del Sur, selected through proportionate stratified random sampling. The researchers gathered data using a researcher-made, validated questionnaire and analyzed it using weighted mean, standard deviation, and Spearman's rank-order correlation coefficient. Results showed that teachers demonstrated very high levels of learning advancement in terms of engagement in continuing education, use of reflective practices, and application of pedagogical innovations. They also showed very high levels of professional ethics, including commitment to ethical practices, fostering student well-being and engagement, and engaging stakeholders in student development. Inferential analysis revealed significant positive relationships between all dimensions of learning advancement and professional ethics, with the strongest association observed between reflective practices and fostering student well-being and engagement. The findings underscore the value of connecting continuing professional learning with reflective, ethical, learner-responsive, and collaborative practice. It is recommended that the proposed Project LEAP-ETHICS: Learning Enhancement and Advancement Program for Ethical Teaching through Holistic Innovation, Collaboration, and Support be considered for pilot implementation as a support program to sustain existing strengths and further enhance priority areas in teachers' professional learning and ethical practice, subject to appropriate monitoring and evaluation.

Keywords: Elementary Teachers, Learning Advancement, Professional Ethics, Reflective Practices, Support Program

Introduction

Educational institutions continue to face challenges in designing and implementing professional learning initiatives that respond to teachers' developmental needs and align with the profession's ethical

standards. Although education systems have invested in teacher development, many schools still struggle to provide learning opportunities that lead to meaningful improvements in classroom practice and learner outcomes (Ventista & Brown, 2023). Similarly, DepEd Order No. 001, s. 2020, emphasizes the need to align teachers' professional development with professional standards and identified needs to strengthen their competencies and improve classroom practices.

Ethical accountability is also a formal expectation of public-school teachers under Republic Act No. 6713, or the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees, which requires public servants to uphold responsibility, integrity, competence, and accountability in discharging their duties. These policy and legal foundations recognize that teacher development must encompass not only competence and skills but also ethical practices; however, in practice, these dimensions are often treated separately, creating a gap in understanding teachers' learning advancement and ethical practices in an integrated manner.

In Singapore, Lee et al. (2025) explained that teacher professional learning is sustained through coherent partnerships among the Ministry of Education, teacher education institutions, and schools, allowing teachers to experience professional learning as a career-long process; however, the development of ethical practices alongside learning advancement across varied school contexts remains unclear. In Japan, Yoshida and Narumi (2024) described how reflective practice is systematically embedded in graduate teacher education to help teachers connect theory, self-assessment, and classroom practice in their continuing development; yet, the manifestation of ethical standards in teachers' everyday professional practice remains insufficiently addressed. In Canada, the Ontario College of Teachers (2026) explicitly framed ethical standards, standards of practice, and professional learning as interrelated foundations of professional practice; nevertheless, empirical evidence on how learning advancement and ethical standards interact in actual school settings remains limited. These perspectives suggest that although learning advancement and ethical standards are recognized as important dimensions of teacher professionalism, their convergence in practice remains underexamined, making it difficult to design support programs that are fully responsive to teachers' professional and ethical needs.

In the Philippines, studies also point to the continuing importance of strengthening both teacher development and ethical practice. Prudente et al. (2024) identified 22 professional development programs implemented in the country from 2013 to 2023, showing that teacher learning initiatives varied in scope, delivery, and focus across contexts; however, their connection to teachers' ethical standards remains unclear.

In the DepEd Caraga Region, teacher development remains a continuing priority, with professional development initiatives being implemented to strengthen teachers' instructional competence and professional capacities (DepEd Caraga, 2025). These initiatives provide opportunities for teachers to enhance their knowledge, improve their teaching practices, and develop the professional skills needed to address the diverse needs of learners. However, despite these efforts, limited evidence is available on how teachers' learning advancement relates to their ethical practices in their daily duties.

In a study conducted among teachers in Bayugan City, Gabor (2026) found that capacity-building activities, mentoring, and professional development contributed to improved teacher performance. However, administrative workload, limited training opportunities, and insufficient instructional feedback remained evident. Similarly, Arombo and Villocino (2024) found that remote-school teachers faced heavy workloads, limited resources, inadequate guidance, learner-engagement challenges, and career barriers, while training improved performance, underscoring the need for sustained, context-based professional support.

Despite the growing body of literature, several gaps remain, particularly the limited integrated and context-specific evidence on how teachers' learning advancement and ethical practices converge in practice. These areas are often treated separately, resulting in insufficient understanding of how professional growth aligns with ethical practice. This gap underscores the need for a more contextualized examination of the

relationship between teachers' professional learning and adherence to ethical standards in basic education settings.

Given these limitations in the existing literature, this study examined how teachers' learning advancement relates to their ethical standards in basic education schools in the locale. This relationship was examined to address the limited local evidence on how professional learning influences teachers' ethical practices. The findings provided a basis for a support program. They contributed to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 through teacher development for quality education, SDG 3 through responsive support for teacher well-being, and SDG 16 through promoting ethical practice, accountability, and professionalism in schools.

Review of Related Studies

This section presents a comprehensive review of literature and studies that inform the investigation of teachers' professional learning and professional ethics. It synthesizes theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and current trends to establish the scholarly foundation anchoring the study.

Learning advancement is a critical dimension of teacher development because it strengthens teachers' capacity to improve instruction and respond to changing classroom demands. In their systematic review of 125 studies on teacher professional learning and student outcomes, Ventista and Brown (2023) found that training, ongoing coaching, and collaborative continuing professional development were the forms of professional learning most consistently associated with positive student learning outcomes. Their review also showed that professional learning was more beneficial when sustained over time rather than delivered as isolated activities.

Continuing education is an important component of professional growth because it provides teachers with formal, non-formal, and informal opportunities to strengthen knowledge and practice. In Ghana, Abakah (2023) examined teachers' participation in continuing professional development in the Central Region and found that teacher learning occurred through formal continuing education, non-formal activities such as workshops and in-service training, and self-initiated informal learning. The study further revealed that teachers' learning from these experiences was shaped by reflection, agency, and social interaction as they contextualized new knowledge in actual classroom situations.

Reflective practice also contributes significantly to learning advancement because it enables teachers to examine their experiences and improve their instructional decisions. In their single-case study of one English for Specific Purposes teacher, Alkandari and Alfaraj (2025) found that reflective journaling helped the teacher become more aware of beliefs, emotions, and classroom challenges, which in turn improved course-related decisions and instructional responses. Similarly, Burhan-Horasanlı and Ortaçtepe Hart (2024), in a longitudinal case study of five in-service English as a Foreign Language teachers in Türkiye, found that reflection-for-action functioned as an individual, collaborative, and collective practice that helped teachers identify strengths and weaknesses and develop more creative and innovative teaching strategies.

Pedagogical innovation is likewise part of learning advancement, particularly in contexts where teachers are expected to integrate new methods and technologies into instruction. Santagata et al. (2024), in a study of 276 elementary school teachers from two school districts in California, found that teachers viewed the shift to online instruction during the pandemic as an opportunity for professional growth and innovation, especially in technology use, student engagement, and family connection. The study also found that collaboration with colleagues, support from schools and districts, and teachers' self-efficacy in using technology helped explain differences in perceived growth. In a related study, Stumbrienė et al. (2024) examined primary school teachers in Lithuania. They found that teachers' motivation to transfer technology-

enabled educational innovation was influenced by perceived value, personal characteristics, social practices, organizational conditions, and their digital technology integration skills.

Continuing education is a major component of teachers' learning advancement because it provides sustained opportunities to update knowledge, strengthen pedagogy, and respond to changing instructional demands. In Ghana, Abakah (2023) examined how 16 junior high school teachers in the Central Region learned through continuing professional development and found that teacher learning occurred through three pathways: formal continuing education, non-formal activities such as workshops and in-service training, and self-initiated informal learning. The study also found that reflection, agency, and social interaction shaped what teachers gained from these experiences, suggesting that continuing education becomes more meaningful when teachers can connect new learning to their classroom practice.

Continuing education also supports teachers' professional growth when learning opportunities are structured in ways that are relevant and applicable to their needs. In another study in Ghana, Abakah et al. (2023) investigated the experiences of 32 teachers who relied on distance education upgrading programs as a form of continuing professional development and found that, although these programs helped teachers update their professional knowledge, rigid program structures and content that did not reflect current educational concerns limited their usefulness for improving classroom practice. Similarly, Meyer et al. (2023), in a study of 387 teachers who participated in formal online professional development, found that teachers reported higher satisfaction and greater changes in professional practice when programs demonstrated clarity, structure, cognitive activation, and collaboration.

Furthermore, teachers are more likely to benefit from continuing education when participation is sustained over time and supported by collaboration. In their systematic review of 125 studies on teacher professional learning and student outcomes, Ventista and Brown (2023) found that training, ongoing coaching, and collaborative continuing professional development were most consistently associated with positive student outcomes, especially when participation was frequent and sustained. In a 2025 review of 81 studies on continuing professional development in scientific education, Merino et al. (2025) likewise found that effective continuing education supports teacher confidence, collaborative learning, and reflective practice. However, workload, limited incentives, and misalignment between program content and teachers' actual learning needs often constrain its success.

School conditions also influence teachers' engagement in continuing education. In Ireland, Lafferty et al. (2024) examined school leaders' perspectives on teachers' continuous professional development. They found that time and financial constraints, along with the difficulty of balancing student needs with staff development, often limited participation. Similarly, Fütterer et al. (2024), using data from 593 teachers who participated in 61 online professional development courses, found that teachers' engagement in continuing education was associated with both the quality of the professional development offered and their motivation to learn.

Reflective practices are an important part of teachers' learning advancement because they help teachers examine assumptions, evaluate instructional decisions, and refine classroom strategies based on actual teaching experiences. In a single-case study of one ESP teacher's reflective practices, Alkandari and Alfara (2025) found that reflective journaling before and after lessons broadened the teacher's cognitive and practical awareness, enabling the teacher to examine beliefs, question decisions, and identify workable responses to instructional challenges. Similarly, Burhan-Horasanlı and Ortaçtepe Hart (2024), in a longitudinal case study of five in-service EFL teachers in Türkiye, found that reflection-for-action functioned as an individual, collaborative, and collective practice shaped by teachers' beliefs and autonomy.

Reflective practices also strengthen teachers' confidence and reflective competence when they are carried out in structured ways. In Germany, Hußner et al. (2023) conducted a longitudinal intervention study with 600 student teachers. They found that self-efficacy for reflection increased significantly among those who

systematically reflected on teaching situations in micro-teaching. Meanwhile, the control group showed no similar increase. In another study, Hummes and Seckel (2024) examined six teachers in an Argentine training program spanning 15 virtual sessions over five months. They found that combining Lesson Study with Didactic Suitability Criteria significantly improved teachers' reflective abilities, especially during lesson analysis.

In addition, reflective practice becomes more meaningful when it is collaborative and embedded in the school context. Rozimela et al. (2025), in a study conducted in six junior high schools in Indonesia, examined the implementation of a contextualized reflective practice model with six EFL model teachers, other teacher observers, and six school principals. They found that teachers reflected before, during, and after lessons, with after-lesson reflection showing the strongest evidence, and that participants recognized reflection as important for improving teaching practices and student learning. The study also found that collaborative reflection helped teachers become less anxious and more supportive of sustaining reflective practice in schools. Moreover, recent evidence suggests that reflective practice contributes to teacher growth when it is purposeful, collaborative, and supported by clear processes.

In their qualitative evidence synthesis of 13 studies on teacher critical reflection in early childhood and primary school settings, Philp-Clark and Grieshaber (2024) found that effective reflection requires clear objectives, teacher agency, collaboration, and flexible tools that help teachers connect reflection to professional goals and classroom improvement. They also found that reflective practice is not merely an individual habit, but a professional process that can strengthen teachers' judgment, instructional responsiveness, and ongoing learning when supported by appropriate structures and contexts.

Applying pedagogical innovations is an important dimension of teachers' learning advancement because it reflects how teachers translate new knowledge, tools, and strategies into classroom practice. In California, Santagata et al. (2024) examined the experiences of 276 elementary school teachers from two school districts during the shift to online instruction. They found that teachers overwhelmingly viewed the transition as an opportunity to innovate, particularly by trying new technologies, developing new ways to connect with students and families, and adopting practices that could continue beyond remote learning.

Adding on, that the successful application of pedagogical innovations depends on teachers' readiness, perceived competence, and motivation to transfer what they learn into practice. In Lithuania, Stumbrienė et al. (2024) investigated the factors influencing teachers' motivation to transfer technology-enabled educational innovation in primary education. They found that perceived value, personal characteristics, social practices, organizational factors, and technology-enabled innovation factors shaped motivation. The study also found that teachers' motivation to transfer innovation varied with their perceived digital technology integration skills.

School conditions likewise play a major role in whether pedagogical innovations are sustained in classroom practice. In Germany, Pappa et al. (2024) explored primary school teachers' perceptions, barriers, and support needs related to technology education. They found that content knowledge, proper training, professional development, and clear curriculum standards were all seen as important for integrating technology-related teaching in primary classrooms. The study also found that teachers valued teaching communities where they could learn from one another. In a related qualitative case study in Spain, Amenabarro Iraola et al. (2024) found that the successful implementation of cooperative learning depended heavily on sustained dialogue, constant communication, and collaboration among educators, allowing innovation to become a school-wide rather than an individual effort.

Broader research further reinforces the value of sustained professional support in helping teachers apply pedagogical innovations effectively. In their systematic review of 125 studies on teacher professional learning and student outcomes, Ventista and Brown (2023) found that training, ongoing coaching, and collaborative continuing professional development were most consistently associated with positive student outcomes, particularly when participation was frequent and sustained over time. Similarly, Huang et al.

(2024), in their systematic review of 37 technology-enabled teacher professional development programs, found that these programs developed teachers' knowledge and skills and created environments that fostered active learning and collaboration. However, they still needed stronger expert support, feedback, and reflection.

Teachers' ethical practices are essential to professionalism, as they guide fairness, care, responsibility, and sound judgment in daily interactions with learners and school communities. In the Philippine basic education context, the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) reinforce these expectations by providing a national framework for teachers' professional conduct, learner-centered practice, community engagement, and continuing professional growth (Department of Education, 2017). In a PRISMA-based systematic review of 15 empirical studies on K–12 teachers' values and professional outcomes, Al-Thani et al. (2025) found that teachers' values were linked to teaching effectiveness, classroom management, work engagement, job satisfaction, and attitudes toward inclusive education. Similarly, Döring et al. (2024) found that values related to understanding, tolerance, and care for others were strongly reflected in teachers' accounts and were enacted through modeling, discussion, and the wider ethos of the school.

Commitment to teaching ethics is especially evident in how teachers navigate fairness, competing responsibilities, and value-laden decisions in school practice. This dimension aligns with PPST Domain 6, particularly Strand 6.3 on Professional Ethics, which emphasizes teachers' adherence to laws, regulations, and the *Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers* in carrying out their professional responsibilities (Department of Education, 2017). Ta et al. (2023), in a study of 58 educators in a large American school district, found that teachers routinely encountered ethical dilemmas but seldom had structured opportunities to discuss them with colleagues, while facilitated ethical discussions supported perspective-sharing and reflection on professional judgment. In a separate study, Heikkilä et al. (2023) identified rare, occasional, and frequent ethical-dilemma groups and found that teachers who frequently encountered ethical dilemmas experienced the highest levels of burnout.

Teachers' ethical standards also reflect their responsibility to foster learner well-being and engagement. This responsibility corresponds with PPST Domain 2 on Learning Environment, which emphasizes learner safety and security, fairness and respect, supportive learning environments, and opportunities for meaningful learner participation (Department of Education, 2017). Using PISA 2018 data from 89,614 teachers and 93,555 students across 19 countries and regions, Nalipay et al. (2024) found that teacher satisfaction with the profession was positively associated with students' life satisfaction and positive affect and negatively associated with negative affect. Similarly, Zhou et al. (2023), in a large-scale study involving 19,845 fourth graders and 11,691 eighth graders from central China, found that positive teacher–student relationships promoted academic achievement both directly and indirectly through students' subjective well-being. Gebre et al. (2025), in a meta-analysis of 21 quantitative studies, further found a significant positive relationship between teachers' socio-emotional competence and student engagement.

Another important expression of teachers' ethical practices is engaging stakeholders in learner development. This dimension aligns with PPST Strand 6.2, Engagement of Parents and the Wider School Community in the Educative Process, which recognizes teachers' responsibility to build meaningful relationships with families and community partners to support learners' development (Department of Education, 2017). Yotyodying et al. (2024), in a study of 190 teachers in Germany, found that teachers' prosociality was positively associated with engagement in family–school partnerships and work well-being, with effective communication and educational cooperation partially explaining this relationship. Pennington et al. (2024) likewise found that intentional and structured communication helped bridge differences between parents' and teachers' perceptions of school environments. Similarly, Hepburn et al. (2025), in a scoping review of 30 studies, reported that effective professional learning for home–school partnerships promoted genuine stakeholder collaboration and a shared understanding of partnership work.

Beyond individual professional conduct, the broader school and community context also influences teachers' ethical standards. This perspective aligns with PPST Strand 6.1 on establishing learning environments responsive to community contexts and Strand 6.4 on teachers' compliance with school policies and procedures (Department of Education, 2017). In Switzerland, Oeschger et al. (2024) found through a 15-month longitudinal study of 118 primary school teachers that value-related school climate predicted teachers' value-related educational goals over time, particularly in innovation and stability. In western Canada, Haight et al. (2024) identified value-based training, recognition of professional expertise, supportive school leadership, flexible communication, and adequate staff resources as essential conditions for effective school-community collaboration.

Commitment to teaching ethics is essential to professional practice, as it reflects teachers' consistent demonstration of fairness, respect, responsibility, and accountability. In the Philippine public education context, this commitment is reinforced by Republic Act No. 6713, or the *Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees*, which requires public servants to uphold public interest and demonstrate professionalism, justness and sincerity, accountability, and responsiveness in the performance of their duties (Republic Act No. 6713, 1989). In a descriptive phenomenological study involving nine teachers in Sweden who taught children aged 1 to 16, Cronqvist (2024) found that teachers understood their ethical responsibility primarily as guiding children about right and wrong, while also creating safe learning environments and building sound relationships with and among learners. Similarly, Döring et al. (2024), through interviews with 10 UK primary school teachers, found that teachers enacted values through modeling, discussion, and the wider ethos of the school. These findings show that commitment to ethical standards extends beyond compliance with formal requirements and is demonstrated through teachers' daily professional and moral conduct.

Commitment to teaching ethics becomes more evident when teachers face ethical dilemmas that require principled decisions amid competing demands. In a large American school district, Ta et al. (2023) examined 58 educators who participated in professional development using normative case studies and found that facilitated discussions helped teachers engage in perspective-sharing and internal reflection about ethical dilemmas in teaching. Likewise, Heikkilä et al. (2023), in a three-wave, two-year longitudinal study of 310 Finnish teachers, identified rare, occasional, and frequent ethical-dilemma groups and found that teachers in the frequent-dilemma group reported the highest burnout. Their findings indicate that commitment to ethical standards involves more than knowing what is right; it also requires reflective judgment and professional support in handling morally complex situations.

Moreover, teachers' commitment to ethical practices is shaped by the school context in which they work. Oeschger et al. (2024), in a 15-month longitudinal study of 118 primary school teachers in Switzerland, found that aspects of value-related school climate predicted teachers' value-related educational goals over time, particularly in innovation and openness to change, and later in stability and conservation. At the review level, Al-Thani et al. (2025) synthesized 15 empirical studies on K-12 teachers' values. They found that teachers' values were associated with outcomes such as work engagement, classroom management, inclusive education, and well-being.

Fostering learner well-being and engagement is an important component of teachers' ethical standards because it reflects teachers' responsibility to create learning environments where learners feel safe, supported, and valued. In their study using PISA 2018 data from 89,614 teachers and 93,555 students across 19 countries and regions, Nalipay et al. (2024) found that teacher satisfaction with the profession was positively associated with students' life satisfaction and positive affect and negatively associated with students' negative affect. They also found that teacher satisfaction with the work environment was positively related to student positive affect.

Teacher-student relationships also play a crucial role in fostering student well-being and engagement. In their study involving 19,845 fourth graders and 11,691 eighth graders from a city in central China, Zhou et al. (2023) examined the association among teacher-student relationship, subjective well-being, and academic achievement. They found that a positive teacher-student relationship promoted academic achievement both directly and indirectly through subjective well-being across both grade levels.

Furthermore, teachers' socio-emotional competence contributes significantly to student engagement. In their meta-analysis of studies published from 2018 to 2023, Gebre et al. (2025) examined the impact of teachers' socio-emotional competence on student engagement. They found a significant positive relationship between the two variables, without evidence of publication bias. The study found that teachers' socio-emotional competence is a critical factor in fostering student engagement and promoting healthy, resilient student development. The result also highlights that when teachers are emotionally aware, empathetic, and relationally skilled, they can better sustain students' active involvement in learning.

Moreover, the support available within the school context influences student well-being and engagement. In their study of 726 teachers in Chile, Rojas-Andrade et al. (2024) examined the mental health actions teachers took in schools and found that 90% of respondents had supported students with mental health concerns. However, they also found major challenges, including a lack of training and resources, time constraints, and limited communication and collaboration with mental health professionals. Their findings also suggest that teachers may be more effective in promoting student well-being and engagement when schools provide adequate training, resources, and collaborative support systems.

Engaging Stakeholders in Learner Development

Engaging stakeholders in learner development is an important component of teachers' ethical standards because it reflects teachers' recognition that learners' academic, social, and emotional growth is strengthened when families, schools, and community partners work together. In their meta-analysis of 77 family-school partnership intervention studies with 438 effect sizes, Smith et al. (2020) found that family-school partnership interventions had significant positive effects on children's academic achievement, behavior, social-behavioral competence, and mental health. The same study further found that relational components such as school-to-home communication, collaboration, and bi-directional communication significantly contributed to these positive effects.

Teacher practices also play a crucial role in strengthening stakeholder engagement, particularly through communication and collaboration with families. In their scoping review of 14 peer-reviewed studies on parent interactions with teachers and school environments at the middle level, Pennington et al. (2024) found a common disconnect between how parents and teachers viewed school environments, but also found that intentional, structured communication helped bridge these gaps. Similarly, Yotyodying et al. (2024), in an online survey of 190 teachers in Germany, found that teacher engagement in family-school partnerships, particularly through respectful communication and educational cooperation, was positively associated with teacher well-being at work and partially explained the link between teachers' prosociality and well-being.

In addition, that stakeholder engagement is more effective when schools provide structures that support collaboration beyond the classroom. In Western Canada, Haight et al. (2024) examined partnership collaboration within a school-community wraparound support model through focus groups with 79 school-community partners across eight schools. They found five essential conditions for effective collaboration: value-based training, mutual recognition of expertise, school leadership, flexible communication channels, and appropriate staff resources. In a scoping review of international literature on teachers' professional learning for home-school partnerships, Hepburn et al. (2025) found that, after screening 2,044 records, 30 studies met the inclusion criteria, and successful programs were those that supported genuine stakeholder collaboration and created a shared understanding of home-school partnership roles.

Literature suggests that teachers' learning advancement and ethical practices are closely related, particularly when professional growth is sustained, collaborative, and connected to classroom realities. In their systematic review of 125 studies, Ventista and Brown (2023) found that training, ongoing coaching, and collaborative continuing professional development were the forms of professional learning most consistently linked to positive student outcomes, especially when participation was frequent and sustained. In a cross-national analysis using TALIS 2018 data from 127,339 teachers across 40 countries, Christensen and Jerrim (2025) likewise found that professional learning communities were positively related to teachers' job satisfaction in most countries. Their study suggests that teachers' engagement in continuing education and collaborative learning may help sustain the professional dispositions and work conditions that support ethical standards in practice.

The relationship also becomes evident in reflective practice, which helps teachers connect professional learning with principled action. In their longitudinal case study of five in-service EFL teachers in Türkiye, Burhan-Horasanlı and Ortaçtepe Hart (2024) found that reflection-for-action helped teachers identify strengths and weaknesses and develop more creative, context-responsive pedagogical strategies. In a separate study of 58 educators in a large American school district, Ta et al. (2023) found that professional development using normative case studies supported perspective-sharing and internal reflection on ethical dilemmas in teaching. Their study suggests that reflective practice may bridge learning advancement and ethical standards by helping teachers examine their decisions, respond thoughtfully to classroom challenges, and align their actions with ethical principles and learner needs.

Pedagogical innovations also appear linked to ethical standards, particularly in fostering student well-being and engagement and in engaging stakeholders in student development. In their study of 276 elementary school teachers in two California school districts, Santagata et al. (2024) found that teachers viewed the shift to online instruction as an opportunity for professional growth and innovation, including new ways to connect with students and families and integrate technology into classroom practice. Similarly, Hepburn et al. (2025), in a scoping review that screened 2,044 records and included 30 studies, found that professional learning for home-school partnerships was most effective when it supported genuine stakeholder collaboration and a shared understanding of partnership roles. They also found that when teachers advance their learning through innovative, context-responsive practices, they may better promote learner engagement and sustain meaningful collaboration with families and other stakeholders.

A values-focused line of research further explains why this relationship matters. In their systematic review of 15 empirical studies on K–12 teachers' values, Al-Thani et al. (2025) found that teachers' values were associated with teaching effectiveness, classroom management, work engagement, job satisfaction, and self-efficacy. In a three-wave, two-year longitudinal study of 310 Finnish teachers, Heikkilä et al. (2023) found that teachers who frequently experienced ethical dilemmas reported the highest burnout. Their study also emphasized that ethical standards are not separate from professional growth; rather, they are intertwined with teachers' beliefs, well-being, and professional functioning.

Overall, the reviewed literature shows that learning advancement and ethical standards are closely linked dimensions of teachers' professional work. The literature consistently indicates that teachers' learning advancement is strengthened through engagement in continuing education, reflective practice, and the application of pedagogical innovations. In contrast, teachers' ethical standards in practice are reflected in their commitment to ethical principles, fostering student well-being and engagement, and engaging stakeholders in student development. The studies also suggest that school context shapes both variables, particularly leadership support, collaborative structures, and professional norms. In this sense, teacher development is viewed not only as acquiring knowledge and skills, but also as strengthening professional responsibility, ethical commitment, and learner-centered practice.

However, the literature also reveals a gap. While many studies have examined learning advancement and ethical standards as separate aspects of teacher development, and some have discussed their connection indirectly, few studies have directly examined the relationship between these two variables using the specific indicators used in this study. This gap is especially evident among basic education teachers and in the study locale. Thus, the reviewed literature provides a clear basis for examining how learning advancement relates to ethical practices among basic education teachers. It also helps establish the study variables, supports the conceptual and theoretical framing, and justifies the need to generate evidence that could served as a basis for a proposed support program.

Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

This study was anchored in (1985) Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory and (1986) Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory. Bandura's theory emphasized the interaction of personal factors, behavior, and environmental influences. Meanwhile, Deci and Ryan's theory focused on motivation and the fulfillment of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. These theories were relevant to the study because they offered complementary perspectives on teachers' learning advancement and ethical practices.

Social Cognitive Theory explained human functioning through the reciprocal interaction of personal factors, behavior, and environmental influences. Bandura emphasized that individuals were not merely shaped by their surroundings; they also exercised agency through thought, choice, and action. In this theory, learning occurred in a social context and was mediated by cognitive processes such as attention, interpretation, and reflection. Thus, behavior resulted from the ongoing interaction between what individuals believed, how they acted, and the conditions in which they performed.

A central idea in Social Cognitive Theory was reciprocal determinism, which held that personal factors, behavior, and environment continuously influenced one another. Bandura also identified self-efficacy, observational learning, and self-regulation as important processes in human action and learning. Self-efficacy referred to a person's belief in one's capability to perform a task successfully. Observational learning occurred when individuals acquired knowledge and skills by watching others and interpreting the outcomes of their actions. Self-regulation referred to the ability to set goals, monitor one's behavior, and adjust actions based on feedback and expected results. These concepts made the theory well-suited to understanding how teachers developed and applied competencies in practice.

In this study, Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory was used as the theoretical lens for explaining the relationship between teachers' learning advancement and their ethical practices. The theory guided the study in viewing learning advancement as a personal factor reflected in teachers' engagement in continuing education, use of reflective practice, and application of pedagogical innovations. Ethical standards served as the behavioral component, as these were manifested in teachers' commitment to ethical standards, promotion of student well-being and engagement, and involvement of stakeholders in student development. School-related conditions, such as leadership support, collegial interaction, and professional learning opportunities, represented the environmental factors that could influence both teachers' learning advancement and their ethical standards in practice. Using this framework, the study examined how personal, behavioral, and environmental factors interacted to shape teachers' professional growth and ethical practice.

This study was also anchored in Deci and Ryan's (1985) Self-Determination Theory. Self-Determination Theory explained human motivation by focusing on the extent to which behavior is self-directed and internally regulated. Deci and Ryan proposed that individuals are more likely to engage meaningfully and persist in tasks when their actions are driven by intrinsic motivation or by internalized forms of extrinsic motivation. The theory emphasized that motivation is not simply a matter of having or lacking drive; rather, it varies in quality depending on whether people experienced their behavior as chosen, valued,

and personally meaningful. In this sense, human behavior was strengthened when individuals felt that they were acting with willingness and purpose.

A central principle of Self-Determination Theory is that motivation is supported when three basic psychological needs are satisfied: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Autonomy refers to feeling a sense of choice and control over one's actions. Competence refers to feeling capable and effective in performing tasks. Relatedness refers to feeling connected to and supported by others. According to Deci and Ryan, when these needs were fulfilled, individuals were more likely to develop stronger motivation, greater engagement, and sustained performance. When these needs were not adequately supported, motivation could weaken, and participation could become limited or dependent only on external pressure. These principles made the theory useful for understanding why individuals adopted, sustained, or resisted certain practices in professional settings.

In this study, Self-Determination Theory explained teachers' learning advancement and ethical standards in practice in relation to their motivation and school conditions. The theory guided the study in examining how teachers' engagement in continuing education, use of reflective practice, and application of pedagogical innovations could be influenced by their sense of competence, autonomy, and relatedness. Competence was reflected in teachers' confidence and capability to grow professionally and apply what they learned in practice. Autonomy was reflected in their ability to make purposeful professional decisions and carry out their roles in ways that were aligned with ethical standards. Relatedness was reflected in the support, collaboration, and encouragement they received from colleagues, school heads, and the wider school community. Through this lens, the study interpreted learning advancement and ethical standards not only as matters of professional responsibility but also as expressions of motivation shaped by supportive conditions.

The study's conceptual framework integrated Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory and Deci and Ryan's (1985) Self-Determination Theory to offer complementary perspectives on teachers' professional growth and ethical practice. Together, these theories offered a broader explanation of how teachers' professional learning could be linked to the ethical standards demonstrated in their practice.

Social Cognitive Theory explained how personal factors, professional behaviors, and environmental conditions interacted in shaping teachers' practices. Meanwhile, Self-Determination Theory explained how autonomy, competence, and relatedness supported teachers' motivation to engage in and sustain professional responsibilities. These theoretical perspectives framed learning advancement as the independent variable, ethical standards as the dependent variable, and the proposed support program as the study's intended output.

Within this framework, learning advancement referred to the continuous process through which teachers improved their knowledge, skills, and instructional competence. It was examined through three indicators. Engagement in continuing education involved participation in seminars, training, graduate studies, and other professional learning activities. Use of reflective practices involved examining teaching experiences through self-assessment, feedback, and reflection to improve professional practice. Application of pedagogical innovations involved adopting learner-centered and technology-supported approaches to improve teaching and learning outcomes.

Meanwhile, ethical practices referred to the professional principles and moral responsibilities guiding teachers' decisions, conduct, and interactions. These were examined through three indicators. Commitment to ethical standards involved demonstrating professionalism, integrity, fairness, and accountability. Fostering student well-being and engagement involved creating supportive and inclusive learning environments. Engaging stakeholders in student development involved collaborating with parents, communities, and education partners to support students' holistic development.

Finally, the proposed support program, as the framework's output variable, referred to responsive strategies and interventions developed from the study findings to address teachers' identified needs in professional learning and ethical practices.

Figure 1 presents the study's research paradigm and illustrates the relationship between learning advancement and ethical practices. The framework posited that differences in teachers' learning advancement could be associated with differences in the ethical practices demonstrated in professional practice. Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory supported this relationship by explaining how self-efficacy, self-regulation, observational learning, and environmental influences could shape both professional learning and its translation into practice. Complementing this perspective, Deci and Ryan's (1985) Self-Determination Theory explained how teachers' experiences of competence, autonomy, and relatedness could sustain their motivation to pursue professional growth and carry out their responsibilities in ways consistent with professional and ethical expectations. Together, the two theories explained the relationship between the independent and dependent variables by showing how professional learning, motivation, behavior, and contextual conditions interacted in teachers' practice. The findings then served as the basis for the proposed support program to strengthen teachers' learning advancement and ethical practice.

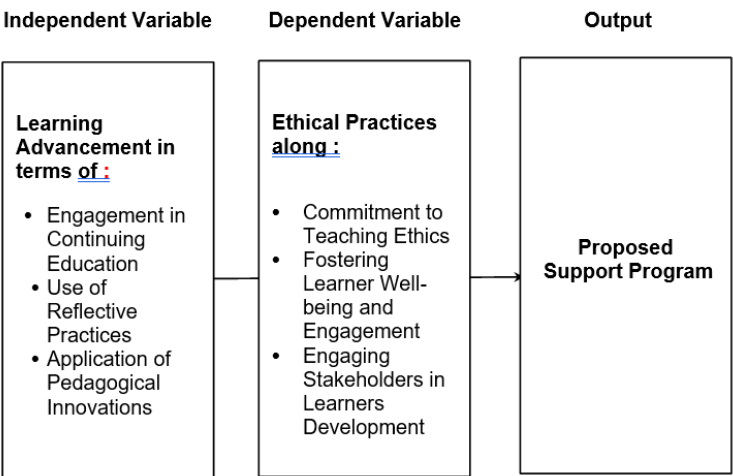


Figure 1. The Research Paradigm Showing the Relationship of the Variables of the Study

Objectives of the Study

This study explored the relationship between learning advancement and ethical standards among teachers in basic education schools in the Division of Bayugan City, Province of Agusan del Sur, Region XIII, Philippines. Specifically, it sought to: (1) determine the level of teachers' learning advancement in terms of engagement in continuing education, use of reflective practices, and application of pedagogical innovations; (2) determine the level of teachers' ethical practices in terms of commitment to teaching ethics, fostering learner well-being and engagement, and engaging stakeholders in learner development; (3) determine whether a significant relationship exists between teachers' learning advancement and ethical practices; and (4) develop a program based on the results of the study to further enhance teachers' learning advancement and ethical standards.

Methodology

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to determine the levels of teachers' learning advancement and ethical practices and examine the relationship between these variables among public elementary school teachers in Bayugan South District, Division of Bayugan City, Agusan del Sur. The study involved 94 teacher-respondents selected through cluster sampling from a population of 124 teachers across ten public elementary schools. Data were gathered using a researcher-developed questionnaire consisting of two parts measuring teachers' learning advancement and ethical practices. The instrument underwent expert validation and pilot testing, yielding Cronbach's alpha coefficients that indicated high internal consistency. Following the necessary approvals and observance of ethical protocols, including informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation, the questionnaires were administered to the respondents. Data were analyzed using weighted mean and standard deviation to determine the levels of the variables and Spearman's rank-order correlation coefficient (ρ) to determine the significant relationship between teachers' learning advancement and ethical practices. The findings served as the basis for developing a proposed support program for teachers.

Results and Discussion

Problem 1. What is the level of teachers' learning advancement in terms of engagement in continuing education, use of reflective practices, and application of pedagogical innovations?

Table 1. Level of Teachers' Learning Advancement

Dimension	Overall Weighted Mean	SD	Verbal Description	Interpretation
Engagement in Continuing Education	3.50	0.538	Always	Very High
Use of Reflective Practices	3.58	0.512	Always	Very High
Application of Pedagogical Innovations	3.57	0.519	Always	Very High
Overall Mean	3.55	0.523	Always	Very High

Table 1 presents the level of teachers' learning advancement in terms of engagement in continuing education, use of reflective practices, and application of pedagogical innovations. The overall weighted mean of 3.55 (SD = 0.523) was verbally described as *Always* and interpreted as *Very High*. This indicates that the respondents consistently manifested behaviors and practices associated with professional learning, instructional improvement, and continuous development. The finding suggests that learning advancement is strongly evident among the teachers, demonstrating their commitment to enhancing their competencies and effectiveness in the teaching profession.

Among the three dimensions, use of reflective practices obtained the highest weighted mean of 3.58 (SD = 0.512), which was verbally described as *Always* and interpreted as *Very High*. This finding indicates that teachers regularly evaluate their instructional practices, examine learner outcomes, seek feedback, and make adjustments to improve classroom instruction. The result suggests that reflection plays an important role in teachers' professional growth and instructional decision-making. Teachers appear to value the use of learner performance data, classroom experiences, and feedback as bases for improving teaching practices and addressing classroom challenges.

The finding is consistent with the study of Cabeltis and Espinosa (2026), who found that learner assessment results served as an important foundation for teacher reflection and instructional improvement. Similarly, Delos Reyes et al. (2026) reported a very high level of reflective practice orientation and pedagogical adaptability among teachers, indicating that reflection is closely associated with effective instructional decision-making. The result implies that teachers recognize the importance of continuously examining and refining their practices to meet learners' needs and improve educational outcomes.

The second-ranked dimension was the application of pedagogical innovations, which obtained a weighted mean of 3.57 (SD = 0.519), verbally described as *Always* and interpreted as *Very High*. This indicates that teachers consistently employ learner-centered strategies, differentiated activities, collaborative learning experiences, and technology-supported instructional approaches in their teaching. The finding suggests that teachers are receptive to adopting innovative practices that enhance learner engagement, participation, and understanding.

The result supports the findings of Briñosa and Collina (2025), who reported a high degree of utilization of innovative teaching strategies that created stimulating and engaging learning experiences among learners. Likewise, Centino and Clarin (2026) found a very great extent of technology integration among basic education teachers, highlighting the value of interactive and learner-centered approaches in classroom instruction. Turbanada et al. (2025) similarly reported a high degree of technology integration among public school teachers. These studies collectively support the present finding that teachers demonstrate a strong tendency to incorporate innovative and contemporary instructional practices into classroom teaching.

Engagement in continuing education obtained the lowest weighted mean among the three dimensions at 3.50 (SD = 0.538). Nevertheless, it remained within the *Very High* level, indicating that teachers consistently participate in professional development opportunities such as School Learning Action Cell (SLAC) sessions, seminars, workshops, trainings, and other professional learning activities. The finding suggests that teachers recognize the importance of continuous learning in strengthening their instructional competence and professional effectiveness.

This result is supported by Eborde and Escote (2024), who found a very great extent of SLAC implementation, particularly in the areas of facilitation and resource support. Similarly, Alog and Oco (2025) reported a very high level of teachers' professional development characterized by active participation in School Learning Action Cell activities and in-service training programs. These findings reinforce the present result that teachers are highly engaged in professional learning opportunities that contribute to their growth and development.

However, the relatively lower score for continuing education compared to the other dimensions may indicate challenges related to access to specialized training and current educational research. This observation is supported by Rey and Dedace (2025), who reported that research and innovation were among the less evident areas of teachers' professional development. Furthermore, Orias and Paragas (2024) found varying levels of implementation across professional learning activities, suggesting that participation in development opportunities may depend on factors such as availability, accessibility, and relevance to teachers' professional responsibilities.

The narrow range among the weighted means of the three dimensions demonstrates a balanced manifestation of learning advancement. The findings suggest that teachers do not merely participate in professional development activities but also engage in reflective practices and apply innovative instructional approaches in their daily teaching. This pattern reflects a holistic approach to professional growth in which continuous learning, reflection, and innovation complement one another in enhancing teaching effectiveness.

Overall, the findings reveal that teachers possess a very high level of learning advancement. The results indicate that they consistently participate in professional development activities, engage in reflective practices, and apply innovative teaching approaches to improve classroom instruction. Supported by the

findings of Eborde and Escote (2024), Alog and Oco (2025), Cabeltis and Espinosa (2026), Delos Reyes et al. (2026), Briñosa and Collina (2025), Centino and Clarin (2026), Turbanada et al. (2025), Rey and Dedace (2025), and Orias and Paragas (2024), the present study demonstrates that teachers actively pursue opportunities for professional growth and instructional improvement. Consequently, sustaining professional development programs, reflective learning activities, and opportunities for instructional innovation may further strengthen teachers' learning advancement and overall teaching effectiveness.

Problem 2. What is the level of teachers' ethical practices in terms of commitment to teaching ethics, fostering learner well-being and engagement, and engaging stakeholders in learner development?

Table 2. Level of Teachers' Ethical Practices

Dimension	Weighted Mean	SD	Verbal Description	Interpretation
Commitment to Teaching Ethics	3.84	0.371	Always	Very High
Fostering Learner Well-Being and Engagement	3.78	0.425	Always	Very High
Engaging Stakeholders in Learner Development	3.76	0.434	Always	Very High
Overall Mean	3.79	0.410	Always	Very High

Table 2 presents the level of teachers' ethical practices in terms of commitment to teaching ethics, fostering learner well-being and engagement, and engaging stakeholders in learner development. The overall weighted mean of 3.79 (SD = 0.410) was verbally described as *Always* and interpreted as *Very High*. This indicates that the respondents consistently demonstrated ethical conduct in carrying out their professional responsibilities and interactions with learners, parents, colleagues, and other stakeholders.

Among the three dimensions, commitment to teaching ethics obtained the highest weighted mean of 3.84 (SD = 0.371), indicating that teachers consistently practiced fairness, integrity, confidentiality, objectivity, and professionalism in their work. The finding suggests that ethical principles are strongly embedded in teachers' professional conduct and decision-making. This result supports the findings of Libo-on and Eslabon (2025), who reported very high levels of awareness, practice, and compliance with the Code of Ethics among public elementary teachers. Similarly, Alaba (2025) found that teachers consistently demonstrated strong professional ethics, particularly in accountability and respect for diversity. These findings indicate that teachers place high value on ethical responsibility and professional integrity in serving learners.

Fostering learner well-being and engagement ranked second with a weighted mean of 3.78 (SD = 0.425), also interpreted as *Very High*. This finding indicates that teachers consistently create supportive, inclusive, and learner-centered classroom environments that encourage participation, emotional well-being, and positive relationships. The result suggests that teachers recognize the importance of promoting learners' academic, social, and emotional development. The finding is consistent with Villarias and Allaba (2025), who reported very high levels of teacher-student relationships characterized by empathy, positive reinforcement, and supportive classroom interactions. Likewise, Dubalan and Quines (2025) found very high levels of teacher connectedness, availability, and communication skills, reinforcing the strong learner-centered practices observed in the present study.

Engaging stakeholders in learner development obtained the lowest weighted mean among the three dimensions (WM = 3.76, SD = 0.434), although it remained within the *Very High* category. This indicates that teachers actively communicate and collaborate with parents, school personnel, colleagues, and community partners to support learners' development. The finding suggests that teachers view learner success as a shared responsibility among various stakeholders. This result aligns with the studies of Garcia and Cerado (2025) and

Josol et al. (2025), who both reported very high levels of stakeholder engagement and collaboration in supporting school programs and learner development. However, the relatively lower rating may indicate that collaborative activities sometimes occur more frequently in response to specific learner concerns rather than as part of regular support mechanisms, consistent with the observations of Maldia (2024) and Mediano and Baguio (2025).

The narrow range of weighted means, from 3.76 to 3.84, demonstrates a consistently strong manifestation of ethical practices across all dimensions. This finding suggests that teachers not only adhere to professional ethical standards but also translate these standards into actions that promote learner welfare and stakeholder collaboration.

Overall, the findings reveal that teachers possess a very high level of ethical practice. Supported by the studies of Libo-on and Eslabon (2025), Alaba (2025), Villarias and Allaba (2025), Dubalan and Quines (2025), Garcia and Cerado (2025), and Josol et al. (2025), the results indicate that teachers consistently uphold ethical principles, foster learner well-being, and collaborate with stakeholders to support holistic learner development. These practices contribute to a school environment characterized by fairness, trust, inclusivity, and shared responsibility for learner success.

Problem 3. Is there a significant relationship between teachers' learning advancement and ethical practices?

Table 3 presents the correlation analysis between teachers' learning advancement and professional ethics using Spearman's rho. The analysis examines the degree and direction of association between the dimensions of learning advancement and the different aspects of teachers' professional ethics.

The results revealed significant positive relationships across all indicators. Engagement in continuing education showed weak to moderate positive correlations with commitment to teaching ethics, fostering learner well-being and engagement, and engaging stakeholders in learner development. Meanwhile, use of reflective practices demonstrated moderate positive correlations with all three indicators of teaching ethics, with the strongest relationship observed in fostering learner well-being and engagement. Similarly, application of pedagogical innovations exhibited moderate positive correlations across the three indicators, particularly in fostering learner well-being and engagement.

Table 4. Correlation Analysis between Teachers' Learning Advancement and Ethical Practices

Indicators		Commitment to teaching ethics	Fostering learner well-being and engagement	Engaging stakeholders for learner development
Engagement in continuing education	Correlation Coefficient	.356**	.452**	.472**
	p-value	.000	.000	.000
	Decision on H0	Reject H ₀	Reject H ₀	Reject H ₀
	Interpretation/Remarks	Significant	Significant	Significant
Use of reflective practices	Correlation Coefficient	.541**	.644**	.589**
	p-value	.000	.000	.000
	Decision on H0	Reject H ₀	Reject H ₀	Reject H ₀
	Interpretation/Remarks	Significant	Significant	Significant
Application of pedagogical innovations	Correlation Coefficient	.530**	.565**	.552**
	p-value	.000	.000	.000
	Decision on H0	Reject H ₀	Reject H ₀	Reject H ₀
	Interpretation/Remarks	Significant	Significant	Significant

The findings show that all dimensions of teachers' learning advancement are statistically significantly and positively related to the three dimensions of ethical practices, as evidenced by p-values less than .001. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected in all instances, indicating that higher levels of learning advancement are associated with stronger professional ethical practices among teachers.

Among the dimensions of learning advancement, engagement in continuing education demonstrated low to moderate positive correlations with commitment to teaching ethics ($\rho = .356$), fostering learner well-being and engagement ($\rho = .452$), and engaging stakeholders for learner development ($\rho = .472$). These findings suggest that teachers who actively participate in seminars, graduate studies, professional training, and other continuing education opportunities tend to demonstrate stronger adherence to ethical standards and greater commitment to student welfare and community engagement. However, the relatively lower correlation coefficients indicate that while continuing education contributes to professional ethics, it may not be the strongest determinant of ethical practice. Ethical behavior appears to be influenced not only by formal professional development but also by daily experiences, personal values, and reflective professional practice.

A stronger pattern emerged in the use of reflective practices, which showed moderate positive correlations with commitment to teaching ethics ($\rho = .541$), fostering learner well-being and engagement ($\rho = .644$), and engaging stakeholders for learner development ($\rho = .589$). Notably, the strongest relationship in the entire table was observed between reflective practices and fostering student well-being and engagement. This finding suggests that teachers who consistently evaluate their instructional decisions, examine classroom experiences, and reflect on professional responsibilities are more likely to demonstrate ethical behaviors that directly benefit learners. Reflection helps teachers recognize learners' needs, improve instructional responsiveness, and make ethically informed decisions that support student development.

Similarly, the application of pedagogical innovations exhibited moderate positive relationships with all dimensions of professional ethics, with correlation coefficients ranging from .530 to .565. These findings indicate that teachers who continuously adopt innovative teaching approaches also tend to demonstrate stronger ethical commitment, prioritize student welfare, and collaborate more effectively with stakeholders. Educational innovation requires teachers to remain learner-centered, adaptable, and professionally responsible, qualities that naturally reinforce ethical practice within the teaching profession.

Taken collectively, the findings suggest that teachers' professional ethics are strengthened not merely through participation in formal professional development activities but, more importantly, through reflective practice and the meaningful application of new pedagogical knowledge in the classroom. This suggests that learning advances most when teachers actively integrate new knowledge into their daily professional responsibilities.

Consistent with the present findings, Quines and Tubo (2023) reported significant relationships among teachers' transformative learning, professional development, and work ethics, indicating that professional learning and ethical practice tend to occur alongside one another. Similarly, Marquita (2025) found a significant positive relationship between professional development and teachers' work ethics ($r = .520$), showing that teachers with higher levels of professional development also tended to exhibit stronger work ethics. These studies reinforce the present finding that teachers' continuing learning, reflection, and professional development are positively associated with ethical practices in the teaching profession.

In contrast, Tagaloguin (2025) reported no significant relationship between teachers' work values and professional growth, indicating that greater professional growth was not necessarily associated with corresponding differences in work values among respondents. Ingaran et al. (2025) reported a comparable pattern, finding no significant differences in teachers' professionalism when grouped by the number of training programs attended, suggesting that greater exposure to formal training alone may not translate into differences in professional practice. These findings differ from the significant positive relationships obtained in the present study and suggest that the association between learning advancement and professional ethics

may depend not simply on the amount of professional development undertaken, but also on how teachers engage with, reflect on, and apply their professional learning.

Problem 4. What program may be developed based on the results of the study?

Drawing on the study's results, teachers demonstrated very high levels of learning advancement and professional ethics, while several specific practices emerged as areas that could benefit from further strengthening. These findings provided the empirical basis for developing a support program designed not to remediate deficiencies, but to sustain existing strengths while addressing comparatively less-practiced areas in continuing education, reflective practice, pedagogical innovation, learner support, and stakeholder collaboration. Accordingly, the proposed Project LEAP-ETHICS was developed as a responsive, evidence-based initiative further to enhance teachers' professional growth and ethical practice.

Program Title. Project **LEAP-ETHICS: Learning Enhancement and Advancement Program for Ethical Teaching through Holistic Innovation, Collaboration, and Support**

Rationale

Project **LEAP-ETHICS** is grounded in the Department of Education's mandate to provide evidence-based, needs-responsive interventions that promote teacher development and improved educational practice. DepEd Order No. 44, s. 2015 emphasizes using school evidence to identify priority needs and design appropriate interventions under the SIP and AIP, while DepEd Order No. 35, s. 2016 recognizes the Learning Action Cell as a school-based continuing professional development strategy. Furthermore, DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2017 provides that the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers shall serve as a basis for teachers' learning and development programs. These policies provide a clear foundation for a support program that responds directly to the professional learning needs identified in the present study.

The findings revealed very high levels of teachers' learning advancement in terms of engagement in continuing education ($M = 3.50$), use of reflective practices ($M = 3.58$), and application of pedagogical innovations ($M = 3.57$). Teachers likewise demonstrated very high levels of professional ethics in terms of commitment to ethical standards ($M = 3.84$), fostering student well-being and engagement ($M = 3.78$), and engaging stakeholders in student development ($M = 3.76$). Hence, the proposed program is intended primarily to sustain and further enhance, rather than remediate, the strong professional practices already demonstrated by the teachers.

Nevertheless, the results identified specific practices that may benefit from additional support. These include keeping abreast of current educational research and participating in subject- or grade-level-specific training ($M = 3.29$), maintaining a teaching journal ($M = 3.30$), experimenting with new instructional technologies ($M = 3.39$), checking on learners showing disengagement or emotional difficulty ($M = 3.72$), and coordinating with school leaders, counselors, and fellow educators in addressing students' needs ($M = 3.67$). These comparatively lower-rated indicators provide specific areas where focused professional learning and institutional support may be directed.

The correlation analysis also found significant positive relationships between all dimensions of teachers' learning advancement and professional ethics ($p = .000$). Of particular relevance was the strongest association between reflective practices and fostering student well-being and engagement ($p = .644$). Thus, Project **LEAP-ETHICS** focuses on reflective professional practice while integrating continuing education, pedagogical innovation, ethical decision-making, learner support, and stakeholder engagement. Consistent with the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers and the DepEd Child Protection Policy, the program also

emphasizes that teachers' professional growth should remain responsive to learners' best interests, dignity, safety, and overall development.

Objectives

General Objective

To sustain and further enhance teachers' learning advancement and professional ethics through evidence-based continuing professional development, reflective practice, pedagogical innovation, ethical professional practice, learner support, and stakeholder collaboration.

Specific Objectives

The program aims to:

1. Strengthen teachers' access to current educational research and relevant subject- or grade-level professional development opportunities;
2. Institutionalize practical and manageable reflective practices as part of teachers' continuing professional learning;
3. Enhance teachers' competence and confidence in exploring appropriate instructional technologies and pedagogical innovations;
4. Sustain ethical standards in assessment, professional decision-making, confidentiality, fairness, and learner-centered practice;
5. Strengthen teachers' capacity to recognize and appropriately respond to learners showing disengagement or social-emotional concerns;
6. Improve coordination among teachers, parents, school leaders, guidance personnel, and other stakeholders in supporting student development; and
7. Establish a systematic monitoring and evaluation mechanism for sustaining effective professional learning and ethical practices.

Program Implementation Matrix

Priority Area	Findings	Specific Objective	Programs, Projects and Activities (PPAs)	Expected Output / Success Indicator	Persons Involved	Duration	Resources / Budget and Source	Means of Verification
Engagement in Continuing Education	Continuing Education Overall M = 3.50, very high. Lowest: research updates and aligned training, M = 3.29.	Strengthen teachers' access to current educational research and relevant subject- or grade-level professional	Research-to-Practice LAC • Monthly research/article sharing • Digital repository of research, DepEd issuances, webinars, and training	At least 90% of teachers participate in scheduled professional learning activities and contribute to and access relevant research-based materials.	School Head; Master Teachers; LAC Coordinator; Teachers	Monthly	School MOOE/LAC resources; existing ICT resources; available learning resources, subject to applicable accounting and auditing rules	LAC plan; attendance sheets; minutes; research briefs; digital repository; accomplishment report

		development.	opportunities • Dissemination of subject/grade-level training opportunities					
Use of Reflective Practices	Reflective Practices Overall M = 3.58, very high. Lowest: teaching journal M = 3.30. Strongest correlation with student well-being: $\rho = .644$, $p = .001$.	Institutionalize practical, evidence-based, and manageable reflective practices among teachers.	Reflect-Respond-Refine • One-page reflective teaching log • Learner-performance review • Peer reflection during LAC • Documentation of instructional adjustments	At least 90% of teachers complete scheduled reflection logs and document an appropriate instructional response or adjustment.	School Head; Master Teachers; LAC Facilitators; Teachers	Monthly	Existing school/LAC resources; learner-performance data; reflection templates	Reflective logs; teacher portfolios; LAC minutes; sample instructional adjustments
Application of Pedagogical Innovations	Pedagogical Innovations Overall M = 3.57 Very high. Lowest: experimenting with new instructional technologies, M = 3.39.	Enhance teachers' confidence and competence in using appropriate instructional technologies and innovative teaching approaches.	Innovation Demo and Classroom Try-Out • Demonstration of accessible digital tools • Learner-centered/differentiated strategies • Peer coaching • Classroom innovation try-outs	Each participating teacher applies and documents at least one appropriate pedagogical innovation during the implementation period.	ICT Coordinator; Master Teachers; Teachers; School Head	Quarterly	Available ICT equipment; school learning resources; LAC/INSET materials	Lesson plans; classroom observation notes; innovation outputs; teacher portfolios
Commitment to Teaching Ethics	Commitment to Ethical Practices Overall M = 3.84 Very high. Comparatively lower: integrity in assessment and bias-free	Sustain fair, transparent, ethical, and learner-centered professional practices.	Ethics in Practice LAC • Case-based discussions on assessment integrity, confidentiality, fairness, impartiality, professional boundaries, and ethical decision-	100% of participating teachers complete ethics sessions and demonstrate appropriate responses to professional case scenarios.	School Head; Master Teachers; Guidance Personnel; Teachers	Quarterly	Code of Ethics; relevant DepEd issuances; LAC materials; case scenarios	Attendance sheets; case-analysis outputs; LAC minutes; assessment monitoring records

	decision-making M = 3.81.		making • Review of relevant DepEd/PRC policies					
Fostering Learner Well-Being and Engagement	Student Well-Being and Engagement Overall M = 3.78, very high. Lowest: checking on disengaged /emotionally challenged learners, M = 3.72.	Strengthen teachers' capacity to recognize and appropriately respond to learners who need additional support.	Learner Check-In and Referral Mechanism • Classroom check-in guide • Orientation on warning signs of disengagement/emotional difficulty • Referral, parent communication, and follow-up procedures	Teachers regularly document appropriate identification, referral, communication, and follow-up for learners requiring additional support.	Teachers; Guidance Counselor/Designate; School Head; Parents/Guardians	Continuous / as needed	Existing learner-support resources; monitoring and referral forms	Check-in forms; referral records; parent conference records; follow-up documentation
Engaging Stakeholders in Learner Development	Stakeholder Engagement Overall M = 3.76, very high. Lowest: coordination with school leaders/counselors and other educators M = 3.67.	Strengthen coordinated stakeholder support for learners' academic, behavioral, and emotional needs.	Student Support Team Conferences • Parent-teacher consultations • Case conferences • Coordination with school leaders, guidance personnel, teachers, and relevant community partners	Provide documented, timely collaborative support for identified learners requiring additional assistance.	School Head; Teachers; Guidance Personnel; Parents; Relevant Stakeholders	Monthly / as needed	Existing school resources; communication platforms; available partnership support	Conference minutes; communication logs; referral forms; intervention records

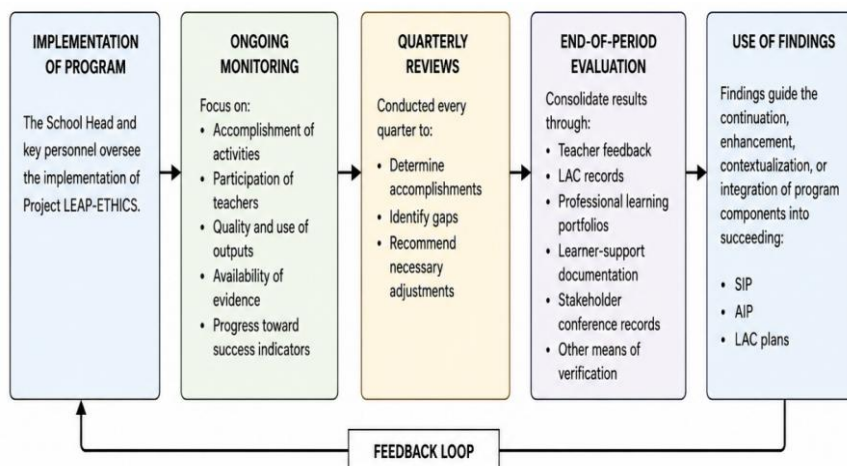
Integration of Learning Advancement and Teaching Ethics	Relationships between Learning Advancement and Ethical Practices All relationships were positive and significant ($p = .001$).	Connect professional learning with reflective, ethical, learner-responsive, and collaborative classroom practice.	Learning-to-Practice Portfolio Professional learning → reflection → classroom application → ethical consideration → evidence of learner/stakeholder response	At least 90% of participating teachers complete a portfolio containing all required components.	Teachers; Master Teachers; School Head	End of each term	Portfolio templates; existing school/ LAC resources	Teacher portfolios; reflection sheets; classroom artifacts; LAC presentation records
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Proposed Support Program

Monitoring and Evaluation

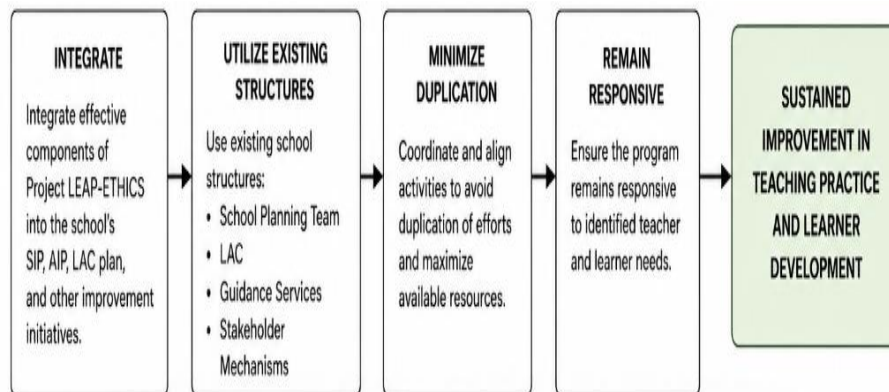
The School Head, in coordination with the School Planning Team, program coordinator, Master Teachers, LAC coordinator, and other concerned personnel, shall oversee the implementation of Project LEAP-ETHICS. Monitoring shall focus on the accomplishment of planned activities, teacher participation, the quality and utilization of outputs, the availability of documentary evidence, and progress toward the identified success indicators.

Quarterly implementation reviews shall determine accomplishments, implementation gaps, and necessary adjustments. At the end of the implementation period, program results shall be consolidated through teacher feedback, LAC records, professional learning portfolios, learner-support documentation, stakeholder conference records, and other identified means of verification. Findings from the monitoring and evaluation shall inform the continuation, enhancement, contextualization, or integration of appropriate program components into succeeding SIP, AIP, and LAC plans.



Sustainability Mechanism

To promote sustainability, effective components of Project LEAP-ETHICS shall be integrated, when appropriate, into the school's SIP, AIP, LAC plan, and other relevant school improvement initiatives. Existing school structures, including the School Planning Team, LAC, guidance services, and appropriate stakeholder mechanisms, shall be utilized to minimize duplication of activities and ensure that the program remains responsive to identified teacher and learner needs.



Conclusions

From the findings generated in the study, the following conclusions were established:

1. The basic education teachers demonstrate a strong orientation toward continuous professional growth, characterized by regular engagement in professional learning, reflective examination of teaching practices, and the application of innovative and learner-centered approaches. Professional practices are strongly embedded in the teachers' ethical practices, as reflected in their commitment to fairness, integrity, learner welfare, respectful classroom interactions, and collaboration with stakeholders.
2. Teachers who actively engaged in continuous learning, reflection, and pedagogical innovation demonstrated stronger ethical practices. Reflective practices were particularly associated with promoting learner well-being and engagement, highlighting the connection between professional growth and ethical responsibility. Continuous professional learning plays an important role in strengthening teachers' ethical commitment, responsiveness to learners' needs, and fulfillment of their daily professional responsibilities.
3. A structured support mechanism is needed to sustain teachers' strengths and address areas needing improvement. Project LEAP-ETHICS provides a framework that integrates continuous professional learning, reflective practice, pedagogical innovation, ethical decision-making, learner support, and stakeholder collaboration into existing school programs and improvement initiatives.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions drawn from the findings of the study, the following recommendations are presented to further strengthen teachers' learning advancement and ethical practices.

School heads and instructional leaders may sustain and further enrich teachers' learning advancement by providing accessible, needs-based, and context-responsive professional learning opportunities through existing school mechanisms such as the Learning Action Cell (LAC), INSET, coaching, mentoring, and peer learning. Particular attention may be given to strengthening teachers' engagement with current educational research, providing subject- and grade-level-specific learning opportunities, encouraging manageable forms of reflective documentation, and supporting the appropriate exploration of emerging instructional technologies. Professional learning activities may also be designed to give teachers opportunities to translate acquired knowledge into classroom practice, rather than limiting professional development to attendance or participation alone.

Schools may continue to strengthen a culture of ethical, learner-centered, and collaborative professional practice by integrating relevant discussions on professional ethics, fair and transparent assessment, learner protection, student well-being, and responsible decision-making into regular LAC sessions and other professional learning activities. Teachers may also receive practical mechanisms to identify and respond to learners showing signs of disengagement or emotional difficulty, supported by clear communication, referral, and follow-up procedures involving advisers, guidance personnel, school heads, parents, and other appropriate stakeholders. Schools should sustain strong parent communication and learner support practices while developing more opportunities for coordinated, holistic student support.

Schools may strengthen professional development initiatives by integrating reflective practices and ethical decision-making into continuing education, pedagogical innovations, and classroom instruction. Structured opportunities for reflection may be incorporated into LAC sessions, coaching, classroom observations, and portfolio development to help teachers apply professional learning, respond to learners' needs, and uphold ethical responsibilities in their daily teaching practices.

Project LEAP-ETHICS may be considered for pilot implementation, monitoring, and subsequent enhancement as a support program for sustaining teachers' learning advancement and professional ethics. The program may be integrated, where appropriate, into existing SIP, AIP, LAC, and other school improvement initiatives to avoid duplication and maximize available structures and resources. Its components—Research-to-Practice LAC, Reflect-Respond-Refine, Innovation Demo and Classroom Try-Out, Ethics in Practice LAC, Learner Check-In and Referral Mechanism, Student Support Team Conferences, and the Learning-to-Practice Portfolio—may be implemented according to identified school needs, with regular monitoring, quarterly review, and end-of-term evaluation. The pilot results may then be used to retain effective components, improve areas needing adjustment, and determine the feasibility of expanding or contextualizing the program in other schools and districts within the Division of Bayugan City.

Future researchers may extend the study to other districts, school divisions, and educational levels using larger samples and qualitative, mixed-methods, or longitudinal designs. They may also examine factors influencing teachers' learning advancement and teaching ethics, such as school leadership, organizational support, workload, school climate, motivation, professional development opportunities, and instructional resources. Furthermore, Project LEAP-ETHICS may be evaluated to determine its feasibility, acceptability, effectiveness, and areas for improvement in actual school settings.

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