# What's behind a policy?
# Examining the ideological intents of teacher professional standards in the Philippines

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*Teacher professionalism has been a long-standing discussion in education. Education scholars often refer to teacher professionalism as the improvement in the quality and standards of teachers and their practices and the enhancement of the teaching profession. In the Philippines, teacher professionalism has become a focus of education reform upon the introduction of a new policy in 2017 entitled the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) policy. Government leaders and education officials claim that the PPST would help teachers achieve personal growth and professional development. However, the government introduced the policy without a transparent discussion of its ideological intent. This article examines this gap by analysing the ideologies that underpin the PPST policy and comparing and contrasting these to the ideologies emphasised in the policy it replaced, the National Competency-based Teacher Standards (NCBTS) policy. Using thematic analysis, the findings suggest that the change of policies reflects a shift from collectivism to a more individualistic orientation. This is manifested in the shift in focus from teaching practices to teachers themselves, from emphasising teachers' contribution to student learning outcomes to broader national goals, from the promotion of mutually obligated individuals' goals to personal aspirations, and from improving practice for students to improving practice for standards. This article contributes to the discussion on the influence of professional standards on teacher professionalism and how it becomes a mechanism for perpetuating a neoliberal agenda through policy.*

*Keywords: teacher professionalism; professional standards for teachers; education policy*

## INTRODUCTION

The concept of teacher professionalism has been a long-standing topic for discussion among educational theorists and scholars (Demirkasımoğlu, 2010; Evetts, 2008; Hargreaves, 2000). Teacher professionalism refers to improving the quality and standards of teachers' practices and enhancing the teaching profession (Hoyle, 2001). It is a social construct that is continuously being re-defined through educational policies and practices (Hilferty, 2008). The vast literature on teacher professionalism shows how complex the concept is and how its definition can vary according to changing historical, political, and social contexts (Demirkasımoğlu, 2010). In the Philippines, current understandings of teacher professionalism are considered to have been shaped by the biggest recent policy reform in teachers' practices and the teaching profession, the *Philippines Professional Standard for Teachers* (PPST) policy implemented in 2017 (Department of Education, 2017).

The PPST policy was institutionalised by the Philippine Department of Education (DepEd) to articulate what constitutes teacher quality in the country. As stated in the Department Order No.42, s. 2017, the policy sets out expectations for teachers' practice, professional development and assessment of teacher performance. Specifically, the policy articulates four main aims:

- set out clear expectations of teachers' status and practices along well-defined career stages of professional development from beginning to distinguished practice

- engage teachers to embrace a continuing effort to attain proficiency actively

- apply a uniform measure to assess teacher performance

- identify professional development needs and provide support for professional development

DepEd developed the PPST policy with Australian funding and technical assistance, including through the Australian Embassy, the Australian-funded Basic Education Sector Transformation Program (BEST), and the University of New England and its SiMERR National Research Centre based in Australia. The DepEd also worked closely with the locally based organisation, the Research Center for Teacher Quality (RCTQ), which aims to conduct research to strengthen and improve teacher practices, to develop the policy with support from the Australian Government (Philippine National Research Center for Teacher Quality, n.d.). Other local organisations which contributed to the development of the policy were the Teacher Education Council (TEC), Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and the Philippine Normal University (PNU) (DepEd, 2017).

The development of the PPST policy responded to and was influenced by reform agendas and contextual changes at the national and global levels. The national-level agendas included reform of K-12 education and the changing characteristics of learners within the changing social and economic context of the Philippines. At regional and global levels, the Philippines' integration with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) frameworks and the establishment of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Education 2030 Framework also influenced the development of the policy.

In terms of national-level influences, the ideation and development of the PPST policy was a part of a major overhaul of the education sector in the Philippines in 2012. The DepEd embarked on the biggest education reform in the country's education, shifting to a K-12 system from a century-old, ten-year level education system (SEAMEO INNOTECH, 2020). This move changed the landscape of teacher quality requirements in the Philippines and called for a rethinking of the National Competency-based Teacher Standards (NCBTS) policy DepEd, 2017). From this perspective, the PPST policy is an evolution of the NCBTS policy, which was a long-standing policy on teacher professionalism implemented from 2009 until 2017. Encapsulated in the DepEd Order No. 32 s. 2009, the NCBTS policy is an integrated framework that defines effective teaching across aspects of teachers' professional life and development. This competency-based framework guides teachers to critically reflect on their practices, identify areas to be strengthened, and develop new teaching practices. The NCBTS articulates a view of ideal teaching characterised by a knowledgeable and skilled professional facilitating effective learning in different learning environments. Moreover, it advocates the active reflection of teachers about their practices and involvement in designing and evaluating student learning experiences. Thus, the image of a competent professional, as reflected in NCBTS, is someone who constantly reflects and strives for better facilitation of learning experiences for all types of students DepEd, 2009).

Before the development of the PPST policy, the RCTQ embarked on a series of consultations and research activities to address issues and considerations identified in NCBTS. They also aimed to develop a new framework for teacher professionalism with the demands of the newly implemented K-12 education system and the evolving expectations from teachers. The recommendations from the research included (1) incorporation of career stages; (2) more focused expectations on knowledge and pedagogies; (3) integration of new ideas from the newly enacted K-12 law; (4) development of standards to serve as a guide for Teacher Education Institution (TEIs), teachers, and school heads, and (5) creation of an internationally acceptable quality assurance framework (RCTQ, 2015). These action plans were the catalyst for the development of the PPST policy.

As noted above, there were also regional and global influences on the development of the PPST. The introduction of professional standards in the Philippines is not in isolation from what is happening at the international level. The late 1980s marked the onset of education sector reforms. These reforms generally changed how professionals carried out their work through the birth of the standards agenda, which was first conceptualised in Western countries (Adoniou & Gallagher, 2017; Evans, 2011; Johnston, 2015) and later on became prevalent in countries outside Europe and America (Forde & Torrance, 2017). In most cases, the development of standards for teaching has become one of the major responses of multilateral organisations and national governments to improve the quality of teaching and enhance the status of the teaching profession (Bell et al., 2005). The Philippines followed this trend, albeit relatively later than most countries. Similar to the global movement, the Philippines enforced a revised mechanism to improve teacher performance: the PPST policy.

Despite the justifications of the policymakers and the growing acceptance at the international level of the professional standards, some Filipino teachers, labour unions and civic groups argue that the recent policy worsens the working conditions in teaching and de-professionalises teachers (Malipot, 2019). There has also been widespread criticism of the introduction of professional standards in the international research literature, including that such introductions are a regulatory framework imposed by the government to control teachers' works (Sachs, 2003), a tool that reduces the complexity of teaching to auditable competencies (Clarke & Moore, 2013), and a mechanism to advance managerialism and performativity in education (Mockler, 2013), to name a few. This article aims to explore these tensions by critically analysing the two recent policies on teacher professionalism in the Philippines, that is, the NCBTS implemented from 2009 until 2017 and its evolution, the PPST policy, which is currently being implemented. Specifically, this article compares and contrasts the ideologies that have shaped the development of the two policies, which consequently influence teacher professionalism in the country.

The next section presents an overview of the Philippine context and a more detailed discussion of the conception of teacher professionalism and the ideologies surrounding institutionalising teacher professional standards.

## THE PHILIPPINE CONTEXT AND TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM

The Philippine education system has evolved over the past 400 years under foreign colonisers. Following independence in 1946, the system experienced major reforms. These reforms in education mirrored the challenges of the times, the interests of the country leaders, and global forces (Oxford Business Group, 2017). Challenges and interests include the 1991 Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM), the 2000 Presidential Commission on

Education Reform, and the 2006 National Action Plan for Education for All (Bautista et al., 2009). In recent decades, one of the most critical reforms implemented was the *Basic Education Governance Act 2001* (Philippines), which changed the framework of governance in education to a decentralised approach (Congress of the Philippines, 2001). Another significant reform was the shift to the K-12 education system with the addition of two years in high school, altering the long-standing K-10 educational system (SEAMEO INNOTECH, 2020).

Despite all these reforms, the quality of education provided in the Philippines has remained questionable. The enrolment rate at the elementary level decreased from 95.9% in 2010 to 91.05% in 2015, and the completion rate remained poor, with 22% of enrolled students not completing their elementary years (Coram International, 2018). The drop-out rate has declined in the last decade, but there were still 2.7% or around 2.85 million Filipino school-aged children out of school in 2015 (Coram International, 2018). In terms of government funding, there has been an incremental increase since 2012 through the allotment of 2.1% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to education, reaching 2.3% in 2013 and, finally, 2.6% in 2015 (Coram International, 2018). However, this percentage remains low compared to other middle-income countries, which allocate almost 5% of their GDP. In the DepEd National Achievement Test, the country's national examination to measure the general achievement of Filipino students, the 75% mean percentage score has not been achieved, with only a 69.1% achievement rate for Grades 3 and 6 in 2014 (Coram International, 2018).

Teachers are at the heart of the problems and the solutions to problems with education in the country. Teachers are key to the success of educational reforms. However, DepEd has not focused on providing sufficient resources to support their development (Bongco & David, 2020). In 2014, the average primary school teacher could correctly answer only half of the questions on subject-content tests, leading to questions about the level of their technical knowledge and capability to provide children with quality education (SEAMEO INNOTECH, 2020). Furthermore, in the most recent K-12 reforms, some of the challenges that confront teachers include: (1) the evolving role of the teachers in the reforms, (2) the mismatch between the goals of the curriculum and the roles that the teachers play versus the realities on the ground, and (3) professional engagement (Bongco & David, 2020). Philippine education issues remain unresolved despite several reforms, emphasising the need to support teachers in their roles.

Globally, during the last decade, teacher professionalism has become one of the targets of different governments' reforms to improve the quality of education (Demirkasımoğlu, 2010). Professional standards for teachers have been promoted as a major means of improving teacher professionalism (Johnston, 2015). The concept of professionalism, mostly taken from a Western perspective and literature, has undergone its own evolution of definition in response to the changing political, social, and economic terrains in different periods (Hilferty, 2008). During the 1920s, professionalism was widely regarded as an occupational value and was considered to be based on trust, competence, identity and cooperation (Evans, 2008). During this period, professionalism was closely linked to and defined within the prevailing social context of stability and civility (Evans, 2008). Around the 1970s, a more pessimistic view of professionalism emerged as a result of more critical literature (Evetts, 2003; Hargreaves, 2000). Professionalism was dismissed as a significant concern, and efforts were focused instead on improving practitioners' status in terms of salary and conditions (Evans, 2008; Evetts, 2003), resulting in a stronger avenue for managerial control of practitioners' status. A more recent discussion focused on professionalism as a discourse of occupational change and managerial control (Evetts, 2003). Hoyle (2001) further highlighted that this view of professionalism was more of an 'improvement in the quality of service rather than the enhancement of the status of the profession' (p. 148). From this brief discussion of the literature, it can be inferred that

professionalism is a dynamic concept commonly associated with enhancing a profession as influenced by internal factors (practitioners' drive to improve their conditions) and external forces (managerial control).

The evolution of the definition of professionalism presented above is closely linked to the conception of teacher professionalism. Similar to Hoyle's (2001) definition, some educational theorists define teacher professionalism as the improvement of quality and standards in teachers' practices (Hargreaves, 2000), qualifications, competence and capacities required for the excellent exercise of the occupation (Demirkasımoğlu, 2010); Hargreaves (2000) describes teacher professionalism in the 2000s as characterised by differing directions. In one direction, professionalism was characterised by social movements that promoted learning to work effectively and efficiently under stricter accountability mechanisms. In the other direction, professionalism was understood to be promoted by mechanisms such as increased performativity, surveillance, and intensified work demands. He added that market-oriented approaches influence the shaping of the characteristics of the new professionalism and that education is subjected to corporate systems characterised by competition, managerialism, and performance-based system. One of the consequences of this phase was the assault on teacher professionalism (Evans, 2008). Demirkasımoğlu (2010) argues that the market-oriented practices implemented by nations have resulted in decreased spending, decentralisation and competition between schools, and teachers have been subjected to restricted participation in decision-making, centralised curricula and increased control mechanisms.

The discussion in the previous two sections has raised the issues of how teacher professionalism has been the subject of major educational reforms advocated by international organisations and how the Philippines eventually adopted it. In the next section, the issue of how these professional standards embody neoliberal principles will be discussed. In doing so, I will argue that this can negatively affect and de-professionalise teachers.

**IDEOLOGIES UNDERPINNING PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR TEACHERS**

The introduction of professional standards has been linked to a broader discourse of a neoliberal or market-oriented educational agenda (Liew, 2012). Underpinning a neo-liberal agenda in education is human capital theory, which promotes that the key role of schools is to produce workers who will be assets for the nation-state in the growing global economic competition (Adoniou & Gallagher, 2017). Within the discourse of neo-liberalism, professional standards are used to advance the notion that high-performing teachers produce high-performing students who will contribute to an economically competitive nation (Adoniou & Gallagher, 2017). Another illustration of the market-oriented paradigm underpinning professional standards is the notion of the knowledge economy. The knowledge economy refers to an ideology in which knowledge is recognised as capital and as instrumental to national economic growth (Peters & Humes, 2003). Professional standards for teachers are reflected in the requirement to develop appropriate knowledge and continuously learn by upgrading and acquiring new skills.

Under these market-oriented, neoliberal paradigms lie ideologies that provide insight into the underlying intentions of education policies. Zajda (2018) provides a useful framework for a range of opposing sets of ideologies dominant within education policy, specifically: purposive rationality versus value rationality, self-orientation versus other-orientation, individualism versus collectivism, autonomy versus equality, and universalism versus particularism. For this study, the contrasting ideologies of individualism and collectivism are explored in relation to the neoliberal agenda advanced in the PPST policy and how these ideologies impact values and

practices in a collectivist society like the Philippines (Evans, 2016). The individualist and collectivist ideologies are presented before being used to comparatively analyse the NCBTS and PPST policies.

Individualism is defined as a focus on oneself, emphasising the values of personal autonomy, accountability and self-fulfilment based on one's accomplishment (Hofstede, 1984). It is an ideology that promotes self-reliance and the pursuit of personal interests (Coon et al., 2002), an ideology that is embodied in the neoliberal agenda for education (Hargreaves, 1980). Under this view, humans need constant management, and the state should create controlling and management measures to create a free market characterised by competition and choice (Cleary, 2017). In education systems, these practices are reflected in corporate strategies such as efficiency, autonomy, competition, decentralisation, accountability and consumer choice. A common critique of this approach focuses on the emphasis on objectivity, accountability and meritocracy to achieve efficiency (Liew, 2012).

Collectivism is an ideology that advances treating groups to which one belongs as the most significant unit for social practices, highlighting the importance of the subordination of individual ambitions and the group's priorities (Boreham, 2004). Collectivism assumes people to be collectively bound and mutually obligated to one another and fosters interdependence and shared success (Hargreaves, 1980). Contrary to personal interests, a collectivist ideology promotes permanent and hierarchical relationships (Coon et al., 2002). Under this view, individuals gravitate towards being identified as a part of a group and place more importance on the collective and shared views, principles, practices and interests over his/her own (Boreham, 2004).

Using the lenses of individualism and collectivism, four dimensions of the PPST policy compared to its predecessor, the NCBTS policy, are analysed. These four dimensions are the shift of focus from teaching practices to teachers themselves, student learning outcomes to wider national goals, promotion of mutually obligated individuals' goals to personal aspirations, and improving practice for students to improving practice for standards.

## METHODOLOGY

To investigate the ideologies underpinning the PPST policy, this research adopted a critical approach to policy analysis, which aims to identify hegemonic principles underpinning education policies (Portnoi, 2016). The primary method of this study is document analysis, which involves identifying and critically analysing documents that can provide contexts and meanings to social practices, such as teacher professionalism. The documents analysed in this study are the NCBTS framework and the PPST policy. Thematic analysis was used to identify themes within a qualitative data set (Moules et al., 2017; Stainton & Willig, 2017). This method is useful for examining different perspectives within textual data and for summarising large sets of qualitative data. The different phases of thematic analysis include familiarisation with the research data, generating initial codes, identifying themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the analysis report (Moules et al., 2017).

Following Moules and colleagues' (2017) approach, descriptive coding was the first layer of analysis. A code is often a word or a short phrase that assigns a meaning to a portion of language-based data (Saldaña, 2016). In descriptive coding, a word or a short phrase summarises the basic topic of a passage. The categorised inventory of codes produced from this first layer of analysis became the essential groundwork for the second cycle of coding, that is, pattern coding. Pattern codes are inferential codes that identify emergent themes and

configurations. This method condensed large amounts of data into smaller analytic units, revealing explanations in the data. Lastly, themes were derived from coding, which brought meaning and identity to recurrent concepts and ideas and unified the data and codes into a meaningful whole (DeSantis & Ugarriza, 2000). Thus, for this study, the policy text documents were analysed, words and phrases were coded, and similar codes were merged to develop encompassing themes. The processes of coding the data and identifying the themes were guided by the review of the literature presented earlier in this article, in particular, the literature on individualistic and collectivist ideologies. The two policy texts (PPST and NCBST) were analysed separately and the themes were then compared to identify the similarities and differences between the ideologies underpinning these policies.

It is important to note that the policy analysis presented in this article focuses on the policy texts alone and does not include broader influences of the policy, such as economic, political and socio-cultural contexts of policy production.

## FINDINGS

This section presents the findings of the analysis, identifying the themes that emerged from the policy document analysis on the ideologies underpinning the NCBTS and the PPST policies.

### Quality of teaching or quality of teachers

A notable difference between the two policies is the shift in focus in terms of how each policy advocates for the advancement of teachers. While the NCBTS prioritises teaching quality, the PPST policy underscores the importance of the qualities of teachers as individuals.

In NCBTS, the focus on teaching quality is evident in the goal of the policy:

> The NCBTS provides a single framework that shall define effective teaching in all aspects of a teacher's professional life and in all phases of teacher development. (DepEd, 2009, p. 3).

> In the NCBTS, good teaching is being defined in terms of those practices that help students learn better. So the NCBTS is concerned with whether teachers are competent in helping students learn. (DepEd, 2009, p. 7).

The focus of this framework is for teachers to qualify their practices and help them critically evaluate if these contribute to helping students attain the learning goals in the curriculum. To do this, the competency framework is organised hierarchically: domains which are well-defined areas for demonstrating teacher practices; under each domain are strands, which are more specific dimensions of teacher practices; and under these strands are indicators which are concrete actions and observable practices of teachers that support student learning (DepEd, 2009). Teachers are evaluated based on the quality of their practices, the frequency, consistency, and appropriateness of these positive competencies and their self-awareness of the premises, rationale and nature of the teacher-learning process (DepEd, 2009). From here, the focus on teaching practices is evident as the policy takes on a developmental approach to evaluating these practices against student learning outcomes and learning goals in the curriculum.

By contrast, the PPST policy states its explicit purpose as standardising what a quality teacher is:

The Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers defines teacher quality in the Philippines. (DepEd, 2017, p. 4).

It articulates what constitutes teacher quality in the K to 12 Reform through well-defined domains, strands, and indicators that provide measures of professional learning, competent practice, and effective engagement. (DepEd, 2017, p. 4).

Evolving from the NCBTS policy, the PPST policy retains the structure for evaluating teacher practices with the domain-strand-indicator framework. It then introduces an approach to evaluating teachers through career stages: beginning, proficient, highly proficient and distinguished. This becomes a standards framework that details the expected developmental progression of teachers as they develop, refine their practices and respond to the complexities of education reforms (DepEd, 2017). Career Stage 1 or Beginning Teachers are those who have just gained the qualifications of the teaching profession. Career Stage 2 or Proficient Teachers can independently apply vital skills to teaching. Career Stage 3 or Highly Proficient Teachers consistently exhibit a high level of performance in their practices. Career Stage 4 or Distinguished Teachers embody the country's highest standards for teaching practices (DepEd, 2017).

These demonstrate that the earlier NCBTS policy is a guide for effective, quality teaching in the Philippines, while the PPST is a framework for affecting the quality of teachers across the country. It further shows that there has been a shift from focusing on teachers' practices to teachers themselves.

### Focus on student learning outcomes or focus on national development goals

As a competency-based framework, the NCBTS's end goal is to ensure that teachers' improvements are seen and reflected in students' improved learning outcomes. The policy's goal is 'effective teaching' which means that teachers successfully ensure that learning happens for all types of students under different circumstances (DepEd, 2009).

The NCBTS is an integrated theoretical framework that defines the different dimensions of effective teaching, where effective teaching means being able to help all types of students learn the different learning goals in the curriculum. (DepEd, 2009, p. 3)

Therefore, teachers' knowledge and skills are meaningful, useful, and effective only if they help students learn within their learning environment. (DepEd, 2009, p. 8)

Aside from this, the idea of the development continuum of practice stated in the policy centres on students' feelings and appreciation towards teachers' practices. With the following statements, there is a clear indication that teachers' practices are evaluated against how the students learn in class. Below are some strands and indicators that reflect this.

Strand 2.1: Creates an environment that promotes fairness:

All my students always feel respected and appreciated in class, and that they all have an equal opportunity to learning and to achieve. (DepEd, 2009, p. 20)

Strand 3.2: Demonstrates concern for the holistic development of learners:

I create different learning activities to allow all my diverse students to grow and develop in many different aspects. (DepEd, 2009, p. 26)

In the PPST, improved student learning outcomes are also important, but the policy's aspirations extend to and emphasise the wider national development goals. Under this policy,

teachers' continuous improvements are needed to deliver the new curriculum under the K to 12 and contribute to sustainable nation building and internationalisation:

> The K to 12 Reform (R.A. 10533) in 2013 has changed the landscape of teacher quality requirements in the Philippines. The reform process warrants an equivalent supportive focus on teacher quality – high-quality teachers who are properly equipped and prepared to assume the roles and functions of a K to 12 teacher. (DepEd, 2017, p. 3)

> Evidences show unequivocally that good teachers are vital to raising student achievement, i.e., quality learning is contingent upon quality teaching. Hence, enhancing teacher quality becomes of utmost importance for long-term and sustainable nation building. (DepEd, 2017, p. 3)

These quotes depict the emphasis on student learning outcomes in the earlier NCBTS policy and wider national development goals in the PPST policy. This shift also amplifies the expectations on teachers to not only teach for individual student outcomes but also help the country achieve wider national goals.

## Collective goals or individual goals

Another difference between the two policies is the shift from emphasising the collective and collaborative professional growth of teachers in the NCBTS policy to stressing individual goals in the PPST policy.

The NCBTS policy emphasises the collaborative and collegial relationships between teachers for their collective improvement as a profession. One key goal of this policy is to ensure that teachers discuss and collaboratively identify how their practices can still be improved:

> Thus, the NCBTS can help each Filipino teacher become a better teacher, and assist each teacher to continuously think about improving professionalism to become even better and better as facilitators of student learning. (DepEd, 2009, p. 6)

> With the NCBTS, all Filipino teachers also share a common vocabulary for discussing their teaching practice, for defining their ideals as teachers, for negotiating and creating strategies to improve their practice, and for addressing their various stakeholders regarding the improvement of the teaching profession. (DepEd, 2009, p. 6)

By contrast, the PPST policy advances a premium on individual teachers' personal and professional growth, as detailed in the career stages. The standards make explicit what each teacher should be able to do in each career stage and detail the skills and knowledge they need to possess and demonstrate to achieve the next higher level. There is no mention of student learning:

> The standards describe the expectations of teachers' increasing levels of knowledge, practice and professional engagement. (DepEd, 2017, p. 4)

> Anchored on the principle of lifelong learning, the set of professional standards for teachers recognizes the significance of a standards framework that articulates developmental progression as teachers develop, refine their practice and respond to the complexities of educational reforms. (DepEd, 2017, p. 7)

This shift emphasises the collaborative and collective growth of teachers in the NCBTS policy and the focus on individual professional and personal development in the PPST policy.

**Improving practice for students or improving practice for standards**

Lastly, the document analysis indicates a move from improving practice for students in NCBTS to improving practice for meeting standards in the PPST policy.

The NCBTS is designed to be used by teachers to reflect on their practices, identify how less ideal practices can be improved and determine ways to enhance their practices. The passage below emphasises how the NCBTS policy can be used as a self-reflection tool and how teachers can best ensure that the students are learning through effective teaching:

> Therefore, good teaching requires the teacher's active involvement in designing, redesigning, and evaluation of the learning experiences of students. Thus, the image of the good teacher is one who is constantly reflecting about how best to help different types of learners learn. The teacher is not a mere implementer of pre-defined or prescribed sets of actions. Instead, the teacher is an active agent engaged in higher level thinking about how to help the students learn. (DepEd, 2009, p. 9).

In the PPST policy, teacher innovation and improvement are advanced through increasing accountability measures linked to standards, contrasting with the NCBTS's focus on teachers reflecting on how their practice impacts student learning. Through the domains, strands and indicators, the expectations in terms of the teachers' practices and values are well-defined and delineated. The achievement of these targets is underscored as necessary for teachers to develop professionally. This is evident in how the framework defines what teachers should be able to do and know:

> The professional standards, therefore, become a public statement of professional accountability that can help teachers reflect on and assess their own practices as they aspire for personal growth and professional development. (DepEd, 2017, p. 4)

> The following statements, which define the work of teachers at different career stages, make explicit the elements of high-quality teaching for the 21st century. They comprise descriptors that have been informed by teachers' understandings of what is required at each of the four Career Stages. (DepEd, 2017, p. 7)

These passages indicate differences, including how some of the provisions in the NCBTS highlight the need to look at teachers' practices and reflect on those needing improvement. It also emphasises innovation by encouraging teachers and their colleagues to proactively design the teaching and learning process based on their students' contexts and needs. By contrast with PPST, there seems to be a shift of the lens to focus on teachers improving their practice to achieve professional standards and progress their own professional standing. The PPST emphasises individual goals and professional accountability as the focus for improving teacher practice linked to teachers' career progression rather than student outcomes.

## DISCUSSION

In the previous section, the findings of the policy document analysis, which highlighted significant differences in the ideologies underpinning the NCBTS and the PPST policies, were presented. In summary, the NCBTS advocated for a focus on teaching practices, student learning outcomes, teachers' collective growth and improving student practice. By contrast, the PPST moves away from these and turns the lens to the teachers themselves, their contribution to wider national goals, their individual goals and improving practice to meet set standards. The analysis shows that the shift in teacher professionalism policy represented in the PPST policy is a shift from the ideology of collectivism to individualism. This section discusses the potential broader implications of this shift in ideology.

The shift to an individualistic ideology in the PPST policy constrain teachers' innovation and reduced autonomy in their professional practice. This is noticeable in the expanded demands of the teachers in the most recent policy. Teachers' goals are no longer only ensuring student learning outcomes but now extend to contributing to the wider goals of the country, such as internationalisation and sustainable nation building. Because of the regulatory nature of the PPST standards, it can prompt teachers to focus less on innovating in their practice for the benefit of student learning and more on meeting the requirements of the standards (Liew, 2012).

The biggest shift from the NCBTS to the PPST policy is the change in focus from teaching practices to the teachers themselves. Arguably, this reflects how the current government prioritises the individual achievement of teachers, relying on their motivation and skills to help improve themselves to achieve government aims. With this comes the assumption that the traditional perception of teachers as citizens of the country, with mutual obligations to the collective good, has been replaced by a premium on the importance of teachers' individual choices, which are believed to dictate his/her destiny (Telhaug et al., 2004). Indeed, with the institutionalisation of the PPST policy, these values will perpetuate within the education system. The central government sets national professional standards for teachers, which detail the expectations and requirements of teachers. While these accountability measures have been imposed in a 'top-down', system-wide way, it is left up to individual teachers to find ways to achieve these goals. This further strengthens the ideology of advocating for teachers' individual choices. Overall, this indicates that the Philippine government believes that teachers can be 'steered' from a distance.

The individualistic ideology also orients professional accountability with a perspective on a measurement of performance coupled with a system of rewards and punishment. The PPST policy serves not just as a professional guide that teachers can use to improve themselves and their practice but also as the credo which others can use to assess them. The policy's focus on assessing and evaluating teachers themselves sets meaningful and defensible standards for what school stakeholders (students, parents, community) can expect from the teachers. Furthermore, the policy encourages reasonable and feasible ways teachers can implement these measures. Finally, these standards provide a mechanism for corrections in practice when the teachers fall short of their expectations. All these aspects demonstrate that PPST serves as a public statement of professional accountability.

The individualistic ideology underpinning the PPST policy contributes to the neoliberal agenda entering the Philippine education system. The policy perpetuates the view of Filipino teachers as professionals valuing personal autonomy, accountability and self-fulfilment based on one's accomplishments. With the requirement to meet the standards, Filipino teachers allow themselves to be regulated with the belief that this mechanism will lead to improved teaching and, consequently, student learning outcomes. The PPST policy perpetuates a 'new managerialism' in education that emphasises efficiency and effectiveness (Tuinamuana, 2011).

As the major policy guiding teacher professionalism, the PPST policy influences how teachers are expected to grow into their profession and improve their practice, as well as collectively enhance the teaching profession. Hilferty (2008) affirmed that teacher professionalism is a social construct and that the changing political landscape defines what it means in a country. With the PPST policy and its prioritisation of an individualistic approach, teachers will be influenced by how they execute their roles and place importance on the values emphasised to survive and thrive in the current educational reform. With the PPST policy promoting the

neoliberal agenda, teacher professionalism in the Philippines might also be based on principles such as accountability, managerialism, efficiency and performativity.

## CONCLUSION

The analysis of the differences in the ideological underpinning of the NCBTS and the PPST policies reveals the shift from a collective orientation to an individualistic orientation regarding teacher professionalism and how it can be improved. With this shift comes the emphasis on evaluating teachers' individual qualities, a focus on their contribution to wider national development goals, an emphasis on their individual goals and the prominence of improving standards. This individualistic orientation is enveloped within a broader global movement that is neoliberalism, an ideology that gives the individual the responsibility to achieve their maximum potential through mechanisms such as competition and accountability. With the PPST policy underpinning these elements, teacher professionalism as shaped by this policy may result in teachers emphasising meeting the standards and exercising their professional practices with reduced professional autonomy. In conclusion, the analysis reveals that the PPST policy orients teacher professionalism towards a neoliberal ideology.

The findings in this article raise questions about the ideation, development and enactment of the PPST policy, which are worthy of further research. A notable feature of the PPST policy is that it has been developed with significant support from foreign aid from the Australian Government. The strong presence of the Australian Government's technical expertise and financial resources in the policymaking is notable and should not be overlooked. Exploring the degree to which Filipino policymakers have been susceptible to or have resisted foreign aid donor countries' influences is an area for future research. This research suggests a need to examine how the PPST policy was developed and influenced by broader international policy networks, the role of international experts and the influence of global ideas and frameworks. Finally, due to varying social, geographical and cultural conditions in different parts of the Philippines, future research into the enactment of the policy within diverse local contexts would be valuable. Building on the initial findings as presented in this article, these avenues for future research will enable deeper exploration of the different ways that the PPST policy perpetuates the neoliberal agenda in public education, as well as how this may be resisted by local actors.

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