

ANALYSIS OF THE PROFESSIONALIZATION OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC THROUGH THEIR TRAINING AND COMPETENCY PERFORMANCE.
ANÁLISIS DE LA PROFESIONALIZACIÓN DE LOS DOCENTES DEL NIVEL PRIMARIO Y SECUNDARIO EN REPÚBLICA DOMINICANA A TRAVÉS DE SU FORMACIÓN Y EL DESEMPEÑO COMPETENCIAL.

Yudelquis Hernández Mejía

Universidad Internacional Iberoamericana, Dominican Republic

[yudelquis0309@gmail.com] [<https://orcid.org/0009-0008-5489-6056>]

Manuscript information:

Recibido/Received: 05/05/2025

Revisado/Reviewed: 26/11/2025

Aceptado/Accepted: 03/03/2026

ABSTRACT

Keywords:

teacher professionalization, training, competencies, professional performance, school improvement.

The teaching profession is essential to student learning. Studying the characteristics of a competent teacher is very important to promote effective educational processes. The general objective of this research is to analyze teacher professionalization through their training and competency performance. This is a correlational and cross-sectional study, with a non-experimental design, quantitative approach, carried out with a significant sample of 369 Primary Level teachers and 309 Secondary Level teachers of the Dominican educational system. The instrument used in data collection was the questionnaire designed to evaluate teachers' academic profiles, engagement in professional development, and competency levels. The findings reveal that the academic profile of the teachers falls below the standards established by the Dominican educational curriculum. Teachers claim to have the professional skills demanded by today's society, but only a minimal percentage of those consulted are actively involved in professionalization and professional development programs. Some teachers express satisfaction with their current skills, believing they are sufficient to address system challenges. In the same way, teachers claim to have no need for continuous training because they understand that they have sufficient preparation and skills to face the challenges of the current educational system. However, they confirm the value of teacher professionalization as an essential pillar to enhance the quality of their work, their skills and abilities for excellent competency performance.

RESUMEN

Palabras clave:

profesionalización docente, capacitación, competencias,

El trabajo docente es esencial en el aprendizaje del alumnado. Estudiar las características del profesor competente, es muy importante para propiciar procesos educativos eficaces. El objetivo general de esta investigación es analizar la profesionalización docente a través de su formación y desempeño competencial. Se

desempeño profesional, mejora escolar.

trata de un estudio de tipo correlacional y transversal, con diseño no experimental, enfoque cuantitativo, realizada con una muestra significativa de 369 docentes pertenecientes al Nivel Primario y 309 docentes del Nivel Secundario del sistema educativo dominicano. El instrumento utilizado en la recolección de datos fue el cuestionario. De manera general, se concluye que el perfil académico de los docentes está por debajo de los estándares establecidos por el currículo educativo dominicano; Los docentes manifiestan tener las competencias profesionales que demanda la sociedad actual, pero solo un porcentaje mínimo de los consultados se involucra de manera activa en programas de profesionalización y desarrollo profesional. Del mismo modo, los docentes entienden que cuentan con la preparación y las competencias suficientes para hacer frente a los desafíos del sistema educativo actual, reconocen el valor de la profesionalización docente como un pilar esencial para potenciar la calidad de su trabajo, de sus habilidades, conocimientos y destrezas para un excelente desempeño competencial.

Introduction

It is possible for students to develop the expected competencies and achieve effective educational outcomes if educators have an adequate level of professional development.

According to Ramírez (2020), the educational curriculum should ensure that teachers are trained and specialized in the organization and implementation of authentic learning situations, effective pedagogical management, the advancement of learning, and the strengthening of collaborative work, which must be grounded in openness, ethics, tolerance, and respect for the integrity of their peers.

Teacher professional development is a key component that fosters dynamism, innovation, and the design of appropriate classroom activities. In turn, it allows students to learn and develop a variety of skills.

When it comes to teaching skills, teachers draw on their knowledge and experience, as well as the strategies they use to ensure that students remain diligent, engaged, and motivated to continue achieving significant learning outcomes. Possessing these skills makes it easier for them to design effective teaching processes, analyze content, and provide meaningful information so that students can continue the learning process (García et al., 2021).

In the Dominican Republic, the findings derived from analyses of student performance on the tests they take indicate that an in-depth analysis of programs aimed at the ongoing education and training of teaching staff is necessary.

Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the professional development of elementary and secondary school teachers in the Dominican Republic through their training and competency-based performance, as well as their influence on improving the educational process.

Teacher Training

Teacher training is conceived as a process designed to develop teachers' ability to address the challenges that arise as a result of the changes and transformations taking place in society, science, and cultures.

Teacher training is also an essential component that contributes to the process of developing a teacher's professional profile, as well as their identity as an educator. This process unfolds continuously, consistently, systematically, in a planned manner, and either collectively or individually. Furthermore, it is defined as the first stage established to socially shape one's career (Cervantes and Vargas, 2019).

In accordance with the findings of Anijovich et al. (2021), topics related to the theoretical and practical components and the path followed in the training activities of education professionals have been the focus of particular interest in the field of pedagogy due to their importance, since the effectiveness of teacher training has a significant impact on the knowledge students acquire.

As defined by the European University (2023), teacher education encompasses the policies and practices aimed at preparing teachers so that they acquire the necessary skills and develop the essential qualities to perform effectively in their teaching practices both in the classroom and beyond the school setting.

Competency-Based Teacher Training

Competency-based training is defined as “a people-centered teaching and learning process aimed at helping individuals acquire the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for optimal performance” (Cayo et al. 2018, p. 1).

Training teachers using a competency-based approach means enabling them to develop holistically, demonstrating educational excellence, and linking what they have learned and the competencies they have acquired to their level of performance in their respective roles.

Competencies include knowledge, skills, and abilities, as well as behaviors associated with practical application. These three essential aspects are key to addressing the challenges teachers face and resolving complex and inconsistent situations (Fondo, 2019).

According to Balbo (2019), competency-based teacher training emphasizes that teaching is progressive, systematic, and grounded in reflection; it is a lifelong process that fosters the integration of knowledge, with the aim of enabling teachers to acquire the skills needed to successfully address the challenges inherent in the educational process.

Continuing Education for Teachers. Importance

Continuing education can be viewed as an ordered sequence of actions that involve systemic reflection and the renewal of knowledge—including both concepts and the strategies and methods that enable teachers to grow personally and professionally. It is, at the same time, an extremely useful tool for addressing the need for professional development and for countering outdated academic practices in an interconnected world where science and technology are evolving at a rapid pace (Flores, 2023).

Continuing education is education that takes place after college. As Riesco (2018) points out, continuing education for teachers provides them with new experiences that help revitalize instructional intervention processes.

According to Escribano (2018), the procedures used to carry out ongoing teacher training will be determined by the educational philosophy on which they are socially grounded, which requires a clear vision of the model of citizenship and the kind of country we aim to have in the coming decades.

It is essential to recognize the teaching profession and the work of teachers as one of a country’s most significant commitments; therefore, the education system must be managed by well-trained staff who are highly motivated and fully aware of the scope and importance of their work.

Teacher Professional Development. Concept and Importance

There are various approaches to the concept of teacher professionalization. Regarding this, Betancourt et al. (2020) argue that professionalization has become a fundamental principle for teachers’ acquisition of teaching competencies.

As González (2019) points out, the professionalization of teaching is related to a set of factors that can be addressed in three dimensions: a) basic or undergraduate academic education, continuing education, and graduate-level training; b) the teaching profession, including its regulations, statutes, and performance evaluations; c) teachers’ working conditions.

Meanwhile, García et al. (2021) argue that the professionalization of teaching entails educators taking responsibility for improving instruction through reflection, analysis, and the integration of pedagogical and academic aspects, in accordance with the guidelines and regulations of the education system and, more specifically, of the school.

Method

To conduct this research, a quantitative approach and a non-experimental design were chosen. Similarly, this study employs a descriptive methodology, as it analyzes and examines the causes of the selected social phenomenon.

Some of the questions guiding this research include:

1- What is the academic profile of elementary and secondary school teachers as described in the Dominican educational curriculum?

2- How does teacher training contribute to improving the educational process?

Researching this topic is interesting because of the importance of encouraging analysis and reflection on the educational practices of teaching staff, as well as the importance of providing them with ongoing training in programs that support their professional development in various areas of their work and help them refine their teaching methods, with the goal of bringing about significant improvements in students' academic success.

Population and Sample

The study population consists of 831 participants: 460 elementary school teachers and 371 secondary school teachers in the Dominican education system. The sample consisted of 368 elementary school teachers and 309 secondary school teachers.

The tool used to collect data and information in this study is a questionnaire, which was systematically designed based on the objectives and variables outlined in this research. The instrument was developed using a Likert scale consisting of five possible responses ranging from the lowest to the highest level: 1) Strongly agree, 2) Agree, 3) Neutral, 4) Disagree, and 5) Strongly disagree.

Reliability was established by processing and analyzing the data using Cronbach's alpha coefficient with SPSS version 25 software. The analysis process was carried out in a series of steps: identification of variables, systematization of information, statistical processing, and tabulation.

In light of the foregoing, the overall objective of this study is to analyze the professionalization of elementary and secondary school teachers in the Dominican Republic through their training and competency-based performance.

The following specific objectives stem from the general objective:

1- Analyze the academic profile of elementary and secondary school teachers as described in the Dominican educational curriculum.

2- Analyze the impact of teacher training on improving the educational process.

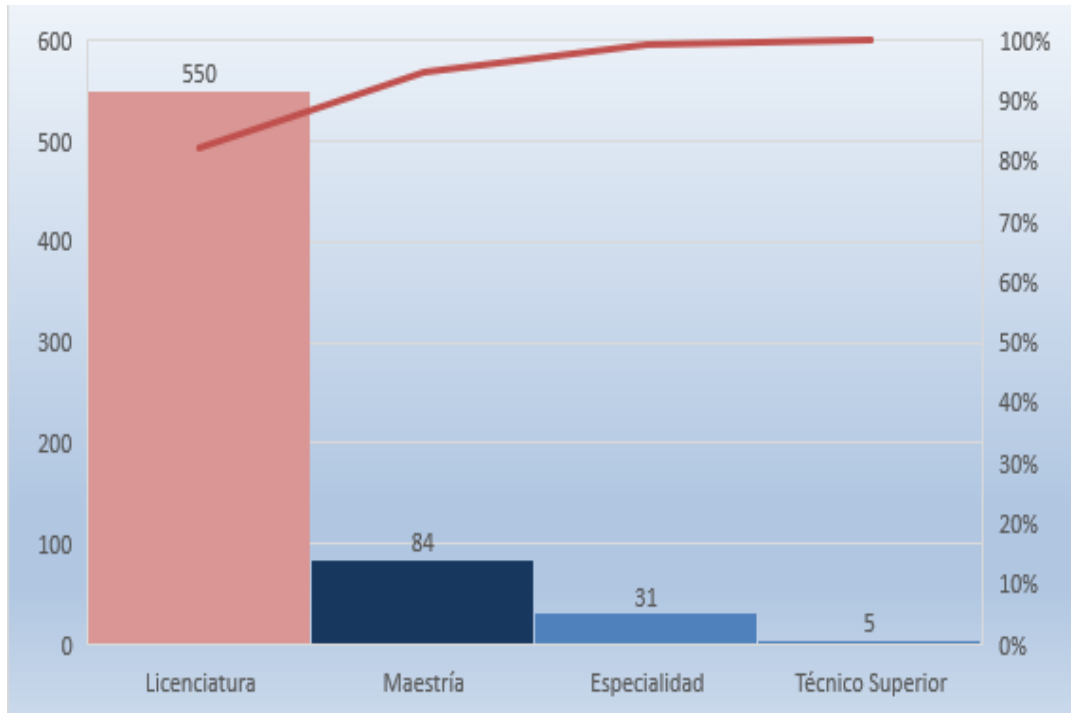
In accordance with the proposed objectives, the study aims to analyze whether there is a correlation between educators' characteristics, their professional performance, the learning effectiveness index, and teaching productivity, as well as to determine the impact of teachers' competencies and training on student learning, among other objectives.

Similarly, this study employs a descriptive methodology, as it analyzes and examines the causes of the selected social phenomenon. This design is based on the theory derived from the compilation, analysis, and presentation of the data obtained.

Results

Under the first specific objective, data were collected on the academic profile of primary and secondary school teachers as described in the Dominican educational curriculum.

Figure 1
Teachers' Academic Level



According to the results, 81% of teachers hold a bachelor's degree, 12.4% hold a master's degree, and 4.6% hold a specialized degree. None of the teachers have earned a doctorate.

These percentages show that the majority of teachers have earned a college degree, which is a basic requirement for working as a teacher.

The second specific objective refers to the impact of teacher training on the optimization of the pedagogical process.

Table 1

The Contribution of Continuing Education Programs Offered by the Ministry of Education of the Dominican Republic (MINERD) to Improving the Quality of Teacher Performance

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	He didn't answer	1	0.1	0.1	0.1
	I completely agree	335	49.3	49.3	49.5
	Okay	294	43.3	43.3	92.8
	Neutral	23	3.4	3.4	96.2
	Disagree	17	2.5	2.5	98.7
	Strongly disagree	9	1.3	1.3	100.0
	Total	679	100.0	100.0	

According to the data presented in Table 1, 49.3% of the teachers surveyed indicated that they strongly agree that the continuing education programs offered by MINERD support the optimization of educators' performance; 43.3% stated that they agree, 3.4% were neutral, 2.5% disagreed, 1.3% strongly disagreed, and 1% did not respond.

The results presented show that the majority of teachers view the effectiveness of the training programs offered by MINERD—which are designed to strengthen their teaching practices—in a positive light, although there are some unfavorable opinions regarding the quality of these programs and their impact on improving teacher performance.

Table 2
The Relationship Between Teacher Training and Student Learning

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	He didn't answer	3	0.4	0.4	0.4
	I completely agree	260	38.3	38.3	38.7
	Okay	323	47.6	47.6	86.3
	Neutral	47	6.9	6.9	93.2
	Disagree	35	5.2	5.2	98.4
	Strongly disagree	11	1.6	1.6	100.0
	Total	679	100.0	100.0	

As shown in Table 2, 47.6% of the teachers surveyed indicated that they agree that their students' learning reflects what they learn in the training courses they attend, while 38.3% said they strongly agree with this statement.

Based on these data, it is evident that the majority of teachers believe that continuing education has a positive impact on student learning. In this regard, different viewpoints were also expressed regarding the correlation between the two elements, as 6.9% of teachers remained neutral on this issue, 5.2% indicated they disagreed, 1.6% strongly disagreed, and 0.4% did not respond to this question.

These findings reveal that a smaller percentage of teachers believe that the training they receive does not impact students' learning; these factors can lead to discouragement among teachers, reducing the percentage of participants in training programs and negatively affecting teachers' perception of the value of ongoing professional development, thereby minimizing the chances of improving the quality of the national education system.

Table 3

The Contribution of Teacher Training Programs to Improving Teachers' Skills

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	He didn't answer	2	0.3	0.3	0.3
	I completely agree	400	58.9	58.9	59.2
	Okay	258	38.0	38.0	97.2
	Neutral	16	2.4	2.4	99.6
	Disagree	2	0.3	0.3	99.9
	Strongly disagree	1	0.1	0.1	100.0
	Total	679	100.0	100.0	

According to the data presented in Table 3, 58.9% of the teachers surveyed indicated that they strongly agree that what they learned in the training courses helps improve their skills and abilities for their professional performance, 38% said they agree, 2.4% were neutral, 0.3% disagreed, and 0.1% strongly disagreed. Finally, 0.3% did not respond.

As evidenced by the data presented, a majority of teachers view the positive impact of professional development courses as a key factor in developing the competencies and skills needed to perform better in the classroom.

Discussion of the Results

With regard to the academic profile of teachers, the Dominican Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education (2016) states that the teacher's profile is classified into components that encompass various perspectives on their role as educators. These components focus on the student and their learning, on the curriculum, and on their commitment as a person and as a professional.

From that same perspective, the Dominican Republic's curriculum guidelines specify that among the qualities a competent educator with a solid academic background must possess are a willingness to collaborate, knowledge of and proficiency in the curriculum and inquiry-based techniques, along with ethical principles in the disciplines they are assigned to teach, and the ability to create contexts that foster the construction of meaningful knowledge, and the acquisition of skills and abilities by students. At the same time, they must be skilled at coordinating across curricular areas and have the ability to plan instruction using a variety of methodologies, materials, and techniques to measure, evaluate, monitor, and provide feedback on students' educational progress, as well as to make decisions regarding their interventions and students' levels of progress.

In this regard, the findings of this study reveal that the highest percentage of the teachers surveyed hold a bachelor's degree, followed by those with a specialization and a master's degree. None of the teachers surveyed have earned a doctorate, and only a small percentage are fluent in a language other than Spanish.

According to these results, the academic profile of these teachers falls short of the requirements of the Dominican educational curriculum, which demands that teachers

demonstrate a high level of commitment to continuously participating in learning experiences and training programs that contribute to enhancing their professional development in order to meet the needs of each student. The majority of teachers complete their bachelor's degree and do not continue their professional development by pursuing master's degrees, doctorates, or other studies related to the subject they teach, which is detrimental to their professional development and their ability to meet the professional standards required by the education system.

When considering the profile and academic competencies that educators must possess in the current context, Salazar and Tobón (2018) argue that educators must demonstrate a wide range of competencies, talents, abilities, and skills that enable them to support their students' holistic development.

The qualities that teachers need to possess—and that should define their professional profile—can only be developed through a process of professional development; initial training alone is not enough. It is necessary to continue participating in training courses and graduate-level studies. Although the majority of the teachers surveyed say they are willing and open to continuous and ongoing professional development, their statements contrast with their academic profiles.

In this regard, Aguerrondo (2022) argues that defining a new teaching profile requires the integration of pillars that serve as a foundation for a new personal experience for teachers. These pillars are related to the teacher's experiences in laying the groundwork for building knowledge; the teacher is an expert in learning, not in teaching; they reflect on their practice and on the professional competencies they possess; and they are educators with a high level of professionalism who embrace a different philosophy of knowledge and learning—one that is holistic—seeking to overcome the historical limitations of teaching, which was originally viewed as a form of knowledge not based on evidence or science.

If a teacher has a weak academic background, it is possible that their knowledge is not sufficiently solid, that it is not up to date, and that their teaching methods are not very motivating or innovative, making their lessons uninteresting to students. Similarly, a poor academic profile can affect the quality of teaching, thereby negatively impacting educational outcomes.

Finally, when analyzing how teacher training impacts the improvement of the educational process, teachers' opinions center on their recognition that the continuing professional development initiatives offered by MINERD help enrich their work, skills, and abilities; contribute to strengthening their strategic understanding of teaching approaches for curriculum implementation; improve classroom discipline and behavior; and also promote better implementation of lesson planning and development techniques.

These observations by the teachers consulted are consistent with the views of García and Tocora (2018), who argue that the professionalization of teachers is the most decisive factor in students' progress and cognitive performance.

Similarly, teachers believe that continuing education programs take into account diversity, context, and their professional development needs; furthermore, these programs allow them to make better use of their teaching time so that students can develop the necessary competencies and achieve educational goals, and to implement new strategies for assessing student learning.

These results are consistent with the conclusions of the study conducted by De León et al. (2021). The study cited above found that, in order to achieve effectiveness and quality in education, as well as to create opportunities for students to build knowledge and develop skills throughout their lives, it is necessary to transform the training and professional development of teaching staff.

Alvarado (2022) believes that current teacher training requirements include: training in effective and respectful communication, competent classroom management, in-depth knowledge of the subjects they teach, the development of creative skills, and an emotional connection with students.

From this perspective, Nova and Palacios (2023) state that today's educators need to be trained to acquire pedagogical competencies, understand curriculum guidelines, develop an excellent attitude toward teaching, and acquire the basic skills to organize appropriate and effective learning environments that keep students motivated and enable them to achieve their full potential.

Along the same lines, López (2023) outlines a set of areas on which the professional development of teachers should focus today. These aspects are:

- Building the capacity to recognize the diversity of their students, their unique characteristics, the ways in which these characteristics can affect learning, and how to incorporate them into classroom activities.

- Skills for making adaptations or adjustments to the curriculum, teaching strategies, assessment methods, and educational resources in order to effectively address the specific needs of students.

- Developing skills so that educators can incorporate technological tools into their teaching practices, thereby improving instruction and increasing the inclusion and participation of all students in the learning process.

- Skills that enable teachers to effectively manage a classroom where inclusion, integration, collaboration, and mutual respect are practiced, as well as to foster a student culture with clear rules and positive conflict resolution.

- Developing skills for implementing collaborative work in the classroom. Educators must possess the necessary competencies to encourage their students to engage in collaborative activities with peers or colleagues. In this way, a bond of camaraderie is forged, creating a learning community committed to the academic success of all students.

Every educational system must ensure that its citizens graduate from educational institutions with optimal levels of education and that educators, through their participation in and involvement with ongoing training programs, strengthen their teaching effectiveness; based on their experiences, make valuable contributions to education; are competent in the art of teaching; and possess a high level of qualification.

Conclusions

The objective of this study was to analyze the professional development of elementary and secondary school teachers in the Dominican Republic through their training and competency-based performance. Based on the data collected, it has been found that the highest percentage of teachers hold a bachelor's degree, followed by a specialized degree or a master's degree, and none of the teachers surveyed have earned a doctoral degree. The majority of teachers complete their bachelor's degree but do not continue their professional development by pursuing a specialization, master's degree, doctorate, or other studies related to the subject area they teach, which is detrimental to their professional development and their ability to meet the characteristics of an education professional as stipulated in the country's educational model.

Although a bachelor's degree is considered an essential requirement for teaching, and a high percentage of teachers hold this academic degree, the findings according to the

findings, that in the Dominican Republic, it is necessary to encourage teachers working at the primary and secondary levels to pursue postgraduate studies that will help them continue acquiring the competencies, skills, and up-to-date knowledge needed to meet the demands related to their professional profile and job performance.

As for the key qualities that teachers reported possessing to develop a competency-based teaching process, these include: a willingness to stay current and pursue professional development—an attitude that is very important in a dynamic, evolving educational context where it is essential to continually adjust teaching techniques and approaches—as it demonstrates a high degree of commitment to their professional growth, as well as to the constant improvement of their teaching practice.

At the same time, the teachers stated that they are willing to incorporate innovative elements into their teaching practices, to be empathetic and collaborative, and to promote values—especially respect and honesty. They also stated that they see themselves as guides and facilitators for their students in the process of learning. These characteristics equip them with the ability to embrace current educational innovations and demands. To a lesser extent, teachers are seen as role models for their students and as creative educators.

It is concluded, however, that although the teachers surveyed state that they possess the aforementioned characteristics, their academic profile falls short of the requirements of the Dominican educational curriculum, which demands that teachers have a strong sense of responsibility to continuously participate in learning experiences and training programs that contribute to enhancing their growth as educators and supporting the individual progress of each student. This conclusion is based on the contrast between the teachers' statements and the actual situation. Only a small percentage of teachers commit to continuing their professional development by enrolling in certificate programs, master's programs, or doctoral programs that enable them to advance their professional development, become familiar with emerging educational strategies, and improve their skills as educators.

It is not enough to simply be willing to innovate and pursue professional development; this willingness must be linked to a genuine commitment to the process of professional development. It is certainly necessary to develop initiatives that help bridge the existing gap between expressing a willingness to pursue teacher professionalization and actually putting it into practice.

With regard to the objective of analyzing the impact of teacher training on improving the educational process, it is concluded—in line with the study's findings—that teachers rate the ongoing training provided by MINERD as having a high impact on strengthening the effectiveness of their work and their professional skills and competencies. In addition, they help strengthen strategic understanding of teaching methodologies to ensure proper implementation of the curriculum and adherence to classroom rules, fostering a harmonious school environment that is ideal for building knowledge. At the same time, they support lesson planning and development, as well as the successful educational management of school spaces.

It is reasonable to conclude that teachers' participation in professional development activities helps them enhance their interpretive skills, foster independent thinking, develop critical thinking skills regarding various topics and content, value collaboration with peers to share enriching experiences, and acquire new knowledge.

It is concluded that there is a close link between professionalization, improved teaching performance, and professional development. A school that provides a high-quality education is one that has a faculty with strong academic backgrounds—teachers

who are well-trained, qualified, committed to their professional growth, and willing to become agents of change.

A student with a solid academic education, in line with the demands of his or her environment, is the result of an educational process led by an educator who not only possesses a solid academic background but also consistently participates in continuing education programs that strengthen his or her professional development.

Based on the above, it can be concluded that the Dominican educational system must continue to encourage teachers' participation in programs and projects that promote their professional development and enhance their professional competencies, with the aim of shaping their professional profile in accordance with current circumstances and realities—in which educators need to develop critical thinking skills and reflect on their everyday practices.

Teaching is a profession that requires teachers to learn continuously, because every day brings new challenges and skills to master. As a new school year begins, new students join the class, each with specific educational needs that teachers must address by designing creative and meaningful activities for them. Professional development is the tool that equips them with the skills they need to bring about the changes in the classroom necessary to make education a dynamic and high-quality process.

Overall, it is concluded that teachers' academic profiles fall short of the requirements of the Dominican educational curriculum. Teachers report having the professional competencies required by today's society; however, only a small percentage of those surveyed actively participate in professional development and training programs. Similarly, most of them feel prepared to effectively manage their classroom environments and resolve the problems and challenges that education brings. In conclusion, it was determined that teachers emphasize the importance of their professional development for the adoption of promising practices that will lead to their students' academic success.

Limitations of the Study

This study analyzed the professional development of elementary and secondary school teachers in the Dominican Republic, focusing on their training and competency-based performance.

This study has provided highly relevant information. However, several limitations arose during the course of the study, including the following:

1- Some teachers were reluctant or unwilling to complete the questionnaire used to collect information, which affected the time allotted for its administration.

2- There has been little previous research on the subject. This made it difficult to develop the background information, the theoretical framework, and the comparative analysis of the results.

3- The subjective nature of certain components of the study, the results of which depend on the participants' personal judgment and interpretation, which could affect the accuracy and precision of some data.

Identifying these limitations allows the research to be conducted with a high degree of transparency and helps identify opportunities for improvement in future studies.

Future Courses of Action

Based on the conclusions and final implications, it can be argued that teachers' academic profiles play a decisive role in the effective implementation of the curriculum.

The academic profile encompasses teachers' abilities to address the competencies outlined in the curriculum and ensure that their students develop them.

An academic profile aligned with the curriculum's requirements provides teachers with the foundation to adjust their teaching methods so that they are geared toward meeting their students' learning expectations.

It is clear that there is an urgent need for the officials in charge of the MINERD to define and implement crucial initiatives focused on promoting educators' participation in specialization programs, master's and doctoral degrees, and advanced courses in their fields of academic training, which will contribute to the enrichment of their academic résumés.

The professional development of teachers is key to advancing toward excellence in teaching; consequently, its implications for the establishment of high-quality education systems and for academic success are crucial. In this regard, it is essential that the MINERD, through INAFOCAM, evaluate and implement the necessary reforms to the established policies for the training and ongoing professional development of educators, so that they can carry out their core mission, which is to provide support to teachers so they can grow in terms of their competencies, thereby leading to improved student academic performance.

Similarly, it is necessary to develop action plans to encourage the implementation of professional development strategies within schools, so that school leaders play an active role in training the teachers under their supervision, thereby fostering institutional practices of excellence. Likewise, it is essential that teacher training programs be accessible and tailored to the areas where teachers need improvement and to their specific circumstances.

Training programs must take into account the scheduled times for their implementation in order to ensure the participation of all teachers who request them, thereby overcoming the barrier of lack of time, since these teachers are generally very busy. By designing and offering online training programs and self-paced learning guides, we achieve a higher level of faculty engagement and, consequently, a higher academic standing.

Incorporate and schedule time in the school calendar for teachers to reflect on their practices and performance as guides and facilitators of learning, as this will enable them to identify areas where changes are needed and design improvement strategies to make their work more efficient.

The MINERD and INAFOCAM should encourage educators to participate in research projects in the field of education, given that such participation contributes to the achievement of educational quality. A research teacher has the opportunity to analyze, discover modern teaching techniques, continually update their knowledge, and contribute to the country's educational development.

Establishing a culture of collaborative learning in pairs is an effective strategy for sharing best practices and providing mutual support, which enables teachers to grow and develop professionally. This strategy can be implemented by creating learning networks in which teachers participate by level, subject area, and grade level. They can be conducted in person or online, under the supervision of an education specialist, who may be a district technician.

Training programs must be supervised and monitored by educational authorities, while also being evaluated to determine their level of effectiveness and the results achieved, and to implement any necessary improvements to optimize their quality.

In addition to monitoring and evaluating teacher training projects and initiatives, it is of great importance to evaluate the effectiveness of the work carried out by the

institutions of higher education responsible for training educators—including their coordinators and instructors—as well as the methods, modalities, and resources used in each phase of training. This is because the quality of the practical experiences in which participants will be immersed and the learning outcomes they achieve depend primarily on these aspects.

Achieving a high level of professionalism among teaching staff is a challenging process that requires intensive work on designing and offering enriching, up-to-date training opportunities, as well as constant support from educational authorities and a systematic process of monitoring, evaluation, and feedback. This will lay the groundwork not only for the genuine professionalization of teachers, but also for improving the quality of the education system and developing students' curricular competencies.

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