

Epistemic Emotions and Self-Esteem of Public Secondary School Teachers Towards DepEd Program Implementation

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Abstract—Educational reforms require teachers to adapt cognitively and emotionally to evolving program demands. This study determined the epistemic emotions and self-esteem of public secondary school teachers toward DepEd program implementation in Sto. Niño District, Schools Division of Samar, for School Year 2025–2026. Using a descriptive-comparative correlational design, data were collected from 78 public junior high school teachers through a validated survey questionnaire. Findings revealed that teachers are generally middle-aged, early to mid-career stage, predominantly female, mostly married, with many pursuing master's program, handling varied grade levels, and performing multiple ancillary roles. Moreover, teachers exhibited a high level of epistemic emotions in terms of curiosity, surprise, and confusion, indicating active engagement with program implementation. Similarly, a high level of self-esteem was observed across perceived competence, sense of accomplishment, workload management, and resilience and adaptability. However, no significant differences were found in epistemic emotions when grouped according to profile variables. In contrast, self-esteem showed significant differences in terms of age and highest educational attainment, particularly in sense of accomplishment and workload management, with post-hoc results identifying specific group differences. Furthermore, the relationship between epistemic emotions and self-esteem was generally not significant, except for a minimal association between confusion and perceived competence. The study concluded that while teachers are emotionally engaged and maintain strong self-esteem, these constructs operate largely independently. It is therefore recommended that targeted psychosocial and professional support interventions be implemented to enhance teachers' adaptability, clarify program expectations, and strengthen workload management capacities.

Index Terms—Teacher Well-Being, Program Implementation, Professional Resilience, Instructional Adaptation, Workload Balance.

1. The Problem and its Background

A. Introduction

In educational contexts, two psychological constructs, epistemic emotions and self-esteem, play a vital role in shaping professional effectiveness. Epistemic emotions such as curiosity, surprise, confusion, and wonder are defined as affective states that directly orient individuals toward

knowledge acquisition, motivating inquiry, guiding attention, and fostering problem-solving (Candiotta, 2019; Deigan & Piñeros Glasscock, 2021). These emotions emerge when expectations are challenged or uncertainty is encountered, serving as triggers for deeper exploration and adaptive learning strategies (Cai, 2022). On the other hand, self-esteem refers to individuals' evaluative judgments of their own worth and competence, encompassing dimensions such as perceived accomplishment, workload management, and resilience in the face of challenges (Camel, 2020; Hepper, 2016). Research underscores that self-esteem influences not only confidence but also persistence, adaptability, and openness to new experiences, which are essential qualities for teachers as they navigate policy reforms and curricular innovations (Ferkany, 2018).

Globally, a growing body of research underscores the central role of epistemic emotions in fostering knowledge acquisition, problem-solving, and adaptive learning. For instance, Vilhunen et al. (2022) found that curiosity and enjoyment positively correlated with science learning outcomes, whereas boredom and frustration impaired performance, highlighting the complex interplay of emotions in authentic classroom settings. Similarly, Hernández del Barco et al. (2022) reported that inquiry-based, hands-on science activities for pre-service teachers reduced negative emotions like insecurity and increased positive states such as trust, thereby enhancing engagement and critical thinking. Beyond students, international research also highlights teacher resilience and self-esteem as crucial for navigating policy reforms and workload pressures. A global review of resilience studies shows that teachers' adaptability, self-efficacy, and coping strategies are critical protective factors in contexts of educational change, helping them manage stress and maintain professional identity (Amoroso, 2025).

B. Background to the Study

The implementation of Department of Education (DepEd) programs such as the K–12 reforms, curriculum guides, and teacher professional development has been central to shaping the professional identity, workload experiences, and self-esteem of Filipino teachers. Research has shown that self-esteem is a critical factor in teachers' decision-making,

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influencing their confidence and classroom practices (Çoruh & Vural, 2019). In the Philippine context, studies highlight how professional identity and commitment are strongly associated with teaching performance and effectiveness (Delima, 2015; Sudario, 2024). Local studies further reveal that Filipino teachers' self-esteem is closely tied to their sense of professional competence, administrative support, and recognition. For instance, Ancho and Bongco (2019) found that teachers' sense of worth and professional identity are shaped by institutional expectations and role overload, which may either enhance or diminish self-esteem depending on support structures. Similarly, Labrague *et al.* (2020) emphasized that occupational stress and workload demands significantly influence teachers' psychological well-being, including their self-perception and confidence.

At the same time, workload policies and the increasing ancillary functions imposed on teachers have been found to affect their well-being, causing stress and burnout while still demonstrating resilience and commitment to learners (Tarraya, 2023; Bongco & Ancho, 2019). Moreover, as frontline curriculum implementers, teachers' experiences under the K–12 reforms reflect both tensions and adaptability, as they navigate confusion, flexibility, and feelings of powerlessness while remaining vital to policy success (Bongco & David, 2020). Compared with the systemic constraints highlighted by Tabuga and Cabaero (2019), which show that teachers often work within environments that limit their capacity to respond to reforms, Dizon and Guyong (2025) found that teachers reported high mental wellness and very satisfactory teaching practices, even though the link between the two was weak. These findings affirm that both adequate professional development and supportive conditions are necessary for teachers to effectively carry out educational reforms.

However, while epistemic emotions have been extensively examined among learners, their measurement among teachers, particularly in relation to program implementation and reform, remains limited. Furthermore, despite evidence that DepEd programs influence teachers' workload, stress, self-esteem, and professional identity, there is a lack of localized empirical studies that directly examine the relationship between epistemic emotions and teachers' self-esteem. This gap is particularly evident in district-level contexts where implementation realities may differ significantly. To address this deficiency, the present study determined the epistemic emotions and self-esteem of public junior high school teachers towards the implementation of DepEd programs in Sto. Niño District for School Year 2025–2026. Based on the findings, the study proposed a psychosocial intervention program designed to strengthen teachers' emotional resilience and professional self-esteem, thereby supporting more effective and sustainable implementation of educational reforms in the district.

C. Theoretical Underpinnings

This study was primarily anchored on Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), which posits that human behavior is the result of reciprocal interactions among personal, behavioral, and environmental factors (Bandura, 1986). Within this

framework, self-efficacy—the belief in one's capacity to execute tasks successfully—plays a central role in shaping both motivation and emotional responses. Applied to the present study, teachers' self-esteem dimensions such as perceived competence, sense of accomplishment, workload management, and resilience and adaptability are manifestations of their self-efficacy beliefs. Teachers with high self-esteem are more likely to approach DepEd program implementation with confidence and persistence, while those with lower self-beliefs may experience heightened uncertainty or difficulty. Thus, SCT provides a theoretical basis for understanding how teachers' self-perceptions influence their emotional experiences and performance in implementing educational programs.

To complement SCT, this study also drew from Pekrun's Control-Value Theory (CVT) of Achievement Emotions, which explains how emotions are elicited in achievement and learning contexts based on individuals' appraisals of control and value (Pekrun, 2018). Specifically, epistemic emotions such as curiosity, surprise, and confusion emerge when individuals encounter new, unexpected, or complex information, and their intensity depends on how controllable and valuable the situation is perceived to be. In the context of DepEd program implementation, teachers who see the initiatives as valuable and manageable may experience curiosity and positive engagement, whereas those who perceive ambiguity or limited control may feel surprise or confusion. CVT therefore provides the theoretical grounding for understanding the emotional dimension of teachers' responses to program implementation, explaining how these emotional responses may vary across profiles and relate to their self-esteem.

D. Conceptual Framework

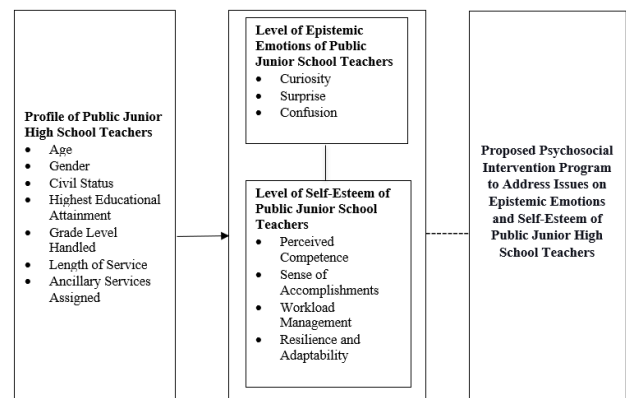


Fig. 1. Conceptual framework

Figure 1 presents the conceptual paradigm of the study, which adopts an independent variable–dependent variable (IV–DV) model to determine the relationships among teachers' profile, epistemic emotions, and self-esteem in the context of DepEd program implementation.

The first major box represents the independent variables, outlining the profile of the public junior high school teachers in terms of age, gender, civil status, highest educational attainment, grade level handled, length of service, and ancillary services assigned. These demographic and professional characteristics are treated as antecedent variables that account

for differences in how teachers respond to and manage the demands of DepEd programs. The second major box represents the dependent variables and consists of two sub-boxes: the level of epistemic emotions (curiosity, surprise, and confusion) and the level of self-esteem (perceived competence, sense of accomplishment, workload management, and resilience and adaptability). Directional arrows from the first box to the second indicate that the independent variables lead to significant differences in the levels of these dependent variables, while a connecting line between the two dependent variables signifies their correlation. Finally, the third major box represents the output of the study: a proposed psychosocial intervention program aimed at addressing issues on epistemic emotions and self-esteem to support more effective implementation of DepEd programs in the Sto. Niño District.

E. Statement of the Problem

This study determined the epistemic emotions and self-esteem of public secondary school teachers towards DepEd programs implementation in Sto. Niño District, Schools Division of Samar for the School Year 2025-2026. Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the profile of public secondary school teachers in terms of:
 - 1.1. age;
 - 1.2. gender;
 - 1.3. civil status;
 - 1.4. highest educational attainment;
 - 1.5. grade level handled;
 - 1.6. length of service; and
 - 1.7. ancillary services assigned?
2. What is the level of epistemic emotions of public secondary school teachers towards DepEd programs implementation in terms of:
 - 2.1. curiosity;
 - 2.2. surprise; and
 - 2.3. confusion?
3. What is the level of self-esteem of public secondary school teachers towards DepEd programs implementation in terms of:
 - 3.1. perceived competence;
 - 3.2. sense of accomplishments;
 - 3.3. workload management; and
 - 3.4. resilience and adaptability?
4. Is there a significant difference in the level of epistemic emotions of public secondary school teachers towards DepEd programs implementation when grouped according to their profile?
5. Is there a significant difference in the level of self-esteem of public secondary school teachers towards DepEd programs implementation when grouped according to their profile?
6. Is there a significant relationship between the level of epistemic emotions and self-esteem of public secondary school teachers towards DepEd programs implementation?
7. Based on the findings of the study, what psychosocial

intervention program can be proposed to address issues on epistemic emotions and self-esteem of public secondary school teachers toward DepEd programs implementations?

F. Hypothesis/Assumption of the Study

The researcher used the following null hypotheses to guide the analysis of the problem:

HO₁. There is no significant difference in the level of epistemic emotions of public secondary school teachers towards DepEd programs implementation when grouped according to their profile.

HO₂. There is no significant difference in the level of self-esteem of public secondary school teachers towards DepEd programs implementation when grouped according to their profile.

HO₃. There is no significant relationship between the level of epistemic emotions and self-esteem of public secondary school teachers towards DepEd programs implementation.

G. Scope and Limitations

This study determined the epistemic emotions and self-esteem of public junior high school teachers toward DepEd program implementation in Sto. Niño District, Schools Division of Samar, for the School Year 2025–2026. Specifically, it described the profile of public secondary school teachers, their level of epistemic emotions (curiosity, surprise, and confusion), and their level of self-esteem (perceived competence, sense of accomplishment, workload management, and resilience and adaptability).

The study also determined whether there were significant differences in these variables when grouped according to profile, as well as the significant relationship between epistemic emotions and self-esteem, which served as the basis for proposing a psychosocial intervention program. In terms of delimitation, the study was confined to public junior high school teachers, excluding elementary school teachers to maintain consistency in organizational structure and program implementation. The data were delimited to self-reported responses gathered during the School Year 2025–2026. Moreover, the findings are context-specific and may not be generalizable to other districts or divisions with different demographic and institutional conditions.

H. Significance of the Study

This study is socially relevant because it recognizes that teachers' emotional and psychological well-being is essential to effective program implementation, promoting empathy, integrity, and a supportive school culture that values curiosity, confidence, and resilience among educators. It contributes to nation-building by strengthening teachers' capacity to implement reforms such as the MATATAG Curriculum with competence and adaptability, which in turn nurtures students who are critical thinkers and active contributors to national development. It also advances the existing body of knowledge by generating empirical insights on the relationship between epistemic emotions and self-esteem in the Philippine educational setting, an area with limited local research, and

offers evidence that future scholars can use in developing context-responsive frameworks. Finally, the study enhances the continuous improvement of the teaching-learning process by providing school leaders with data that can guide the design of psychosocial and professional development interventions, leading to more resilient teachers, stronger instructional practices, and improved learning environments for students.

2. Related Literature and Studies

The functionality of educational facilities, encompassing physical, instructional, and environmental resources, is widely recognized as a critical determinant of student learning outcomes. Grounded in frameworks such as the Educational Production Function, facilities are viewed as foundational inputs that directly affect student behavior, discipline, and multidimensional achievement (Olugbenga, 2019; Owan *et al.*, 2023). Global empirical evidence consistently demonstrates a strong correlation between facility functionality and academic success; for instance, adequate infrastructure has been shown to boost learning equity and explain significant variances in student performance across diverse contexts (Ramli & Mohd Zain, 2019; World Bank, 2019). These findings are reinforced by global policy commitments, such as UNESCO's Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which foregrounds infrastructure as a cornerstone of quality education.

In the Philippine context, despite institutionalized efforts like the Basic Education Facilities Fund (BEFF), national reports reveal that equitable infrastructure distribution remains a persistent challenge (DepEd, 2017; Navarro, 2024). Empirical studies locally and internationally highlight how deficits in specific facility domains critically impair learning. Inadequate WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) access and poor food safety compliance are directly linked to illness, absenteeism, and diminished classroom concentration (Egbuche *et al.*, 2025; Ramos & Despojo, 2025). Similarly, while science and ICT/TLE laboratories are essential for inquiry-based learning and 21st-century skill development, their academic benefits in public schools are frequently limited by systemic inequities, poor maintenance, and a lack of advanced equipment (Bandico-Brasileño & Bidad, 2021; Cabusor & Antonio, 2025). Conversely, emerging research into academic parks and green educational spaces illustrates that outdoor learning environments can positively influence test scores, ecological literacy, and collaborative learning (Browning & Rigolon, 2019; Entapa *et al.*, 2023).

This body of research underscores the critical role of multidimensional facilities in shaping student outcomes. However, significant gaps remain regarding how these facilities function and impact learning in highly constrained, rural settings. Public high schools in Samar operate within distinct

geographic and socio-economic realities, contending with limited fiscal resources, high poverty rates, and frequent natural disasters that accelerate infrastructure deterioration (Añano *et al.*, 2023). Because most existing studies focus broadly on student satisfaction or analyze only a single facility type in isolation, there is a distinct lack of holistic, localized analysis. The present study is therefore warranted to generate context-specific evidence on the functionality of diverse educational facilities and their perceived influence on academic performance in Sto. Niño District, thereby informing targeted and equitable educational planning.

3. Methodology

A. Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-comparative-correlational research design. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), this approach is used to systematically describe population characteristics, determine differences between groups, and assess the degree of association between variables. This non-experimental design was appropriate as it allowed for the description of teachers' epistemic emotions and self-esteem, the comparison of these variables across profile groups, and the examination of their relationship within existing conditions.

B. Respondents and Sampling Procedure

The respondents consisted of 78 public junior high school teachers from five (5) public secondary schools in Sto. Niño District, Schools Division of Samar, for the School Year 2025–2026. To completely eliminate sampling error and increase findings' reliability, the study employed total enumeration, including all 78 teachers in the population. Table 1 presents the distribution of the respondents, reflecting the actual composition of the district's secondary teaching force.

C. Research Locale

The study was conducted in Sto. Niño District, comprising five public secondary schools with a combined enrolment of 1,173 learners. The district's academic landscape features varying literacy levels and fluctuating performance in text-intensive subjects, alongside adequate but unevenly distributed physical and instructional facilities. These variations reflect the contextual realities that teachers navigate daily, directly shaping their emotional engagement and adaptability when implementing educational reforms.

D. Research Instrumentation

A three-part adapted survey questionnaire was utilized. Part I gathered the respondents' demographic and professional profiles. Part II measured epistemic emotions (curiosity, surprise, confusion) using an adaptation of Pekrun *et al.*'s (2017) Epistemically-Related Emotion Scales and Litman's

Table 1

Schools	Population (N)	Sample (n)	Percentage (%)
Baras National High School	170	42	14.49
Cabunga-an Integrated School	128	32	11.03
Sto. Niño National High School	548	135	46.55
Sevilla Integrated School	197	49	16.90
Villahermosa National High School	130	32	11.03
Total	1,173	290	100.00

Table 2

Dimensions and its Indicators	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items	Description
Level of Epistemic Emotions			
A. Curiosity	0.908	4	Excellent
B. Surprise	0.891	3	Good
C. Confusion	0.799	3	Acceptable
Total/Average	0.866	10	Good
Level of Self-Esteem			
A. Perceived Competence	0.879	3	Good
B. Sense of Accomplishment	0.730	3	Acceptable
C. Workload Management	0.879	3	Good
D. Resilience and Adaptability	0.798	4	Acceptable

(2008) Epistemic Curiosity Scale. Part III assessed self-esteem across four subscales (perceived competence, sense of accomplishment, workload management, resilience and adaptability) adapted from Arıcak (1999) and Tschannen-Moran & Hoy (2001). Both Parts II and III utilized a 5-point Likert scale.

E. Validation and Reliability of Instrument

Content and face validation were established by a panel of six (6) subject matter experts (school heads with at least five years of service). A pilot test among 30 non-participating teachers confirmed reliability; Cronbach's alpha coefficients yielded overall values of 0.866 for epistemic emotions and 0.822 for self-esteem, indicating good internal consistency (Table 2).

F. Data Gathering Procedure

Formal administrative protocols were strictly observed. Endorsement and approval were sequentially secured from the Schools Division Superintendent and respective school heads. The researcher personally administered the survey questionnaires, orienting the respondents on the study's purpose, ensuring voluntary participation and confidentiality, and retrieving the completed forms on agreed dates to maintain data integrity before statistical encoding.

G. Data Analysis

Table 3

Dimensions and its Indicators	Shapiro-Wilk	df	Sig.
Level of Epistemic Emotions			
A. Curiosity	0.924**	78	<0.001
B. Surprise	0.865**	78	<0.001
C. Confusion	0.915**	78	<0.001
Level of Self-Esteem			
A. Perceived Competence			
B. Sense of Accomplishment	0.909**	78	<0.001
C. Workload Management	0.917**	78	<0.001
D. Resilience and Adaptability	0.936**	78	0.001

Before inferential testing, a Shapiro-Wilk normality test was performed. As detailed in Table 3, all dimensions yielded significance values below 0.05, indicating a deviation from a normal distribution and justifying the use of non-parametric tests. Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation) summarized profiles and variable levels. The Kruskal-Wallis H test, followed by post-hoc pairwise comparisons, determined significant differences across profile groups. Lastly, Spearman's rank-order correlation coefficient (ρ) was employed to assess the degree and direction of association between epistemic emotions and self-esteem. All tests utilized a 0.05 level of significance.

4. Presentation, Interpretation, Analysis of Data

A. Profile of Public Junior High School Teachers

Table 4

Frequency and percentage distribution of the profile of public junior high school teachers

Profile	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Age (Mean = 40.60; SD = 9.92)		
25-34 years old	27	34.60
35-44 years old	21	26.90
45-54 years old	20	25.60
55-64 years old	10	12.80
Gender		
Male	27	34.60
Female	51	65.40
Civil Status		
Single	25	32.10
Married	53	67.90
Highest Educational Attainment		
Bachelor's Degree	26	33.30
With Master's Units	42	53.80
Master's Degree Holder	10	12.80
Grade Level Handled		
Grade 7	11	14.10
Grade 8	16	20.50
Grade 9	18	23.10
Grade 10	13	16.70
Multiple grade level	20	25.60
Length of Service (Mean = 10.50; SD = 8.04)		
0-5 years	22	28.20
6-10 years	30	38.50
11-15 years	9	11.50
16-20 years	4	5.10
21-25 years	5	6.40
More than 25 years	8	10.30
Ancillary Services Assigned		
School Paper Adviser	1	1.30
Sports/Coach/Trainer	14	17.90
Club/Organization Adviser	56	71.80
Guidance/Student Welfare Services	4	5.10
Records/ICT Coordinator	3	3.80

Table 4 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of the profile of public junior high school teachers.

The data reveals a workforce that is predominantly middle-aged, female (65.40%), married (67.90%), and in the early to mid-career stage (Mean Length of Service = 10.50 years). Many are pursuing graduate studies, with 53.80% having Master's units. Furthermore, a significant number of teachers manage varied teaching assignments across grade levels (25.60%) and are heavily engaged in co-curricular responsibilities, particularly as club or organization advisers (71.80%). This profile reflects a relatively stable and experienced teaching population that is actively engaged in professional growth but simultaneously managing increasing responsibilities. Such conditions may influence teachers' capacity to respond to

program implementation, as balancing teaching, professional development, and ancillary tasks requires adaptability and sustained effort. These findings are consistent with Bongco and Ancho (2019) and Tarraya (2023), who highlighted that Filipino teachers' expanding responsibilities greatly affect their workload and professional functioning.

B. Level of Epistemic Emotions of Public Junior High School Teachers

Table 5
Summary of the level of epistemic emotions of public junior high school teachers

Dimensions	Mean	SD	Interpretation
A. Curiosity	4.07	0.08	High
B. Surprise	3.93	0.07	High
C. Confusion	3.95	0.12	High
Overall	3.98	0.08	High

Table 5 presents the summary of the level of epistemic emotions of public junior high school teachers.

The results show that public secondary school teachers exhibit a high level of epistemic emotions across all dimensions toward DepEd programs implementation (Overall Mean = 3.98). Curiosity obtained the highest mean (4.07), indicating a strong interest and openness to exploring new program initiatives. Surprise (3.93) and Confusion (3.95) also rated high, suggesting that teachers frequently encounter unexpected elements and navigate ambiguity during policy rollouts. This combination of positive and challenging epistemic emotions implies that teachers are actively processing new information rather than passively complying with directives. However, it also points to the need for clearer communication and continuous professional guidance to help manage uncertainty. These patterns align with Muis et al. (2018) and Schutz et al. (2020), who demonstrated that epistemic emotions like curiosity and confusion are integral to knowledge construction and significantly influence how educators interpret and adapt to complex educational reforms.

C. Level of Self-Esteem of Public Junior High School Teachers

Table 6
Summary of the level of self-esteem of public junior high school teachers

Dimensions	Mean	SD	Interpretation
A. Perceived Competence	4.02	0.02	High
B. Sense of Accomplishment	4.04	0.09	High
C. Workload Management	3.97	0.03	High
D. Resilience and Adaptability	3.92	0.07	High
Overall	3.99	0.05	High

Table 6 presents the summary of the level of self-esteem of public junior high school teachers.

Teachers demonstrate a consistently high level of self-esteem across all dimensions (Overall Mean = 3.99). Sense of accomplishment obtained the highest mean (4.04), followed closely by perceived competence (4.02). This indicates that teachers generally feel confident in their instructional skills and derive strong fulfillment from successfully implementing educational initiatives. While workload management (3.97) and resilience and adaptability (3.92) were also high, their slightly lower means suggest that coping with increasing demands and policy changes may still present ongoing challenges requiring institutional support. This interpretation is supported by Collie et al. (2020) and Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2021), who found that while strong self-perceptions sustain motivation, workload pressures in reform-driven contexts necessitate continuous support to maintain teacher well-being and adaptability.

D. Test of Difference in the Level of Epistemic Emotions

Table 7 presents the results of the Kruskal-Wallis test on the difference in the level of epistemic emotions.

There are no significant differences in the level of epistemic emotions when teachers are grouped according to any of their profile variables (all p-values > 0.05). This suggests that experiences of curiosity, surprise, and confusion in the context of DepEd program implementation are not shaped by demographic characteristics; rather, they are shared professional experiences across the district. The absence of differences implies that epistemic emotions are more situationally driven by the complex demands of policy implementation. This is corroborated by Frenzel et al. (2021) and Burić et al. (2022), who argued that teachers' emotional responses, especially uncertainty or confusion, are largely collective reactions shaped by shared situational environments and institutional expectations.

E. Test of Difference in the Level of Self-Esteem

Table 8 presents the results of the Kruskal-Wallis test on the difference in the level of self-esteem.

Significant differences emerged in specific areas: age significantly influenced sense of accomplishment ($p=0.012$) and workload management ($p=0.044$), while highest educational attainment highly influenced workload management ($p=0.002$).

Post-hoc analyses revealed that older teachers (55-64) differ significantly from younger teachers (25-34) in their perceived sense of achievement, and teachers aged 25-34 differ from those aged 35-44 in handling workload. Furthermore, teachers

Table 7
Results of the Kruskal-Wallis test on the difference in the level of epistemic emotions

Profile	Dimensions					
	Curiosity		Surprise		Confusion	
	H	Sig.	H	Sig.	H	Sig.
Age	0.419 ^{ns}	0.936	3.681 ^{ns}	0.298	4.061 ^{ns}	0.255
Gender	698.000 ^{ns}	0.919	856.000 ^{ns}	0.055	675.500 ^{ns}	0.885
Civil Status	744.000 ^{ns}	0.372	579.500 ^{ns}	0.332	690.500 ^{ns}	0.751
Highest Educational Attainment	1.514 ^{ns}	0.469	1.432 ^{ns}	0.489	0.282 ^{ns}	0.869
Grade Level Handled	8.489 ^{ns}	0.131	4.414 ^{ns}	0.492	1.412 ^{ns}	0.923
Length of Service	3.589 ^{ns}	0.610	6.510 ^{ns}	0.260	7.134 ^{ns}	0.211
Ancillary Services Assigned	4.491 ^{ns}	0.344	2.918 ^{ns}	0.572	2.863 ^{ns}	0.581

Level of significance at 0.05; ns-not significant; *-significant; **- highly significant

Table 8
Results of the Kruskal-Wallis test on the difference in the level of self-esteem.

Profile	Dimensions							
	Perceived Competence		Sense of Accomplishment		Workload Management		Resilience and Adaptability	
	H	Sig.	H	Sig.	H	Sig.	H	Sig.
Age	1.960 ^{ns}	0.581	10.897*	0.012	8.109*	0.044	4.511 ^{ns}	0.211
Gender	646.000 ^{ns}	0.631	781.000 ^{ns}	0.305	865.500 ^{ns}	0.051	826.000 ^{ns}	0.135
Civil Status	681.500 ^{ns}	0.827	545.000 ^{ns}	0.184	784.500 ^{ns}	0.171	611.000 ^{ns}	0.568
Highest Educational Attainment	1.416 ^{ns}	0.493	4.993 ^{ns}	0.082	12.699**	0.002	1.893 ^{ns}	0.388
Grade Level Handled	4.494 ^{ns}	0.481	2.258 ^{ns}	0.812	3.219 ^{ns}	0.666	2.652 ^{ns}	0.753
Length of Service	7.488 ^{ns}	0.187	5.789 ^{ns}	0.327	5.955 ^{ns}	0.305	2.493 ^{ns}	0.778
Ancillary Services Assigned	3.232 ^{ns}	0.520	2.884 ^{ns}	0.577	5.785 ^{ns}	0.218	0.557 ^{ns}	0.968

Level of significance at 0.05; ns-not significant; *-significant; **- highly significant

Table 9

Post-hoc test of significant difference on the level of self-esteem (Sense of Accomplishment and Workload Management) when grouped according to age

Dimensions	Age	Test Statistic	Sig.
Sense of Accomplishment	35-44 years old vs 25-34 years old	2.570 ^{ns}	0.264
	45-54 years old vs 25-34 years old	1.410 ^{ns}	0.753
	55-64 years old vs 25-34 years old	3.670*	0.047
	45-54 years old vs 35-44 years old	2.860 ^{ns}	0.180
	55-64 years old vs 35-44 years old	2.260 ^{ns}	0.380
	55-64 years old vs 45-54 years old	3.310 ^{ns}	0.088
Workload Management	25-34 years old vs 35-44 years old	3.694*	0.045
	25-34 years old vs 45-54 years old	3.096 ^{ns}	0.126
	25-34 years old vs 55-64 years old	1.478 ^{ns}	0.723
	35-44 years old vs 45-54 years old	0.561 ^{ns}	0.979
	35-44 years old vs 55-64 years old	1.203 ^{ns}	0.830
	45-54 years old vs 55-64 years old	1.147 ^{ns}	0.849

Level of significance at 0.05; ns-not significant; *-significant; **- highly significant

Table 10

Post-Hoc test of significant difference on the level of self-esteem (Workload Management) when grouped according to highest educational attainment

Dimension	Highest Educational Attainment	Test Statistic	Sig.
Workload Management	Bachelor's Degree vs With Master's Units	4.761**	0.002
	Bachelor's Degree vs Master's Degree	3.454*	0.039
	With Master's Units vs Master's Degree	-0.173 ^{ns}	0.992

Level of significance at 0.05; ns-not significant; *-significant; **- highly significant

Table 11

The Pearson correlation test on the relationship between epistemic emotions and self-esteem

Profile	Dimensions					
	Curiosity		Surprise		Confusion	
	r	Sig.	r	Sig.	r	Sig.
Perceived Competence	0.167 ^{ns}	0.143	-0.174 ^{ns}	0.128	0.224*	0.048
Sense of Accomplishment	0.137 ^{ns}	0.231	-0.024 ^{ns}	0.835	0.121 ^{ns}	0.293
Workload Management	0.067 ^{ns}	0.560	-0.109 ^{ns}	0.342	0.161 ^{ns}	0.159
Resilience and Adaptability	0.043 ^{ns}	0.704	0.099 ^{ns}	0.387	0.029 ^{ns}	0.802

Level of significance at 0.05; ns-not significant; *-significant; **- highly significant

with advanced academic preparation (Master's units or degrees) manage professional workloads significantly differently than those with only a Bachelor's degree. These findings align with Klassen and Tze (2018) and Opfer and Pedder (2019), who noted that professional experience, career stage, and advanced studies contribute heavily to greater competence in managing complex educational tasks.

F. Test of Relationship Between Epistemic Emotions and Self-Esteem

Table 12 presents the Pearson correlation test on the relationship between epistemic emotions and self-esteem.

The results reveal a generally weak connection between epistemic emotions and self-esteem, indicating these operate largely independently. However, a significant positive relationship exists between confusion and perceived competence ($r=0.224$, $p=0.048$). This implies that moments of uncertainty may actually prompt teachers to reflect and assert their capabilities rather than diminish their confidence, turning

confusion into a catalyst for professional growth. This supports D'Mello (2019) and Harley et al. (2019), who found that when sustained at manageable levels, confusion promotes strategic thinking and cognitive engagement, rather than disengagement.

5. Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

A. Summary

Based on the findings, the study concluded that the junior high school teachers' population is generally composed. This study determined the epistemic emotions and self-esteem of public secondary school teachers toward DepEd program implementation in Sto. Niño District, Schools Division of Samar, for School Year 2025–2026. Using a descriptive-comparative-correlational design, data were collected from 78 public junior high school teachers via total enumeration. The findings revealed that teachers are predominantly middle-aged, female, married, in their early to mid-career stage, pursuing graduate studies, and performing multiple ancillary roles.

Teachers exhibited high levels of epistemic emotions (curiosity, surprise, confusion) and high self-esteem (perceived competence, sense of accomplishment, workload management, resilience and adaptability). While no significant differences were found in epistemic emotions across profile variables, self-esteem showed significant differences based on age and educational attainment, particularly in sense of accomplishment and workload management. Finally, the relationship between epistemic emotions and self-esteem was generally not significant, except for a minimal positive association between confusion and perceived competence.

B. Conclusions

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The junior high school teaching force operates in a stable yet workload-intensive environment, characterized by varied grade level assignments and multiple ancillary roles.
2. Teachers are actively and cognitively engaged in understanding DepEd program implementation, as evidenced by high levels of curiosity, surprise, and confusion, though they simultaneously navigate significant uncertainties.
3. Teachers are psychologically equipped to implement educational reforms, demonstrating strong confidence in their professional abilities, high resilience, and a sustained sense of fulfillment despite workload demands.
4. Emotional experiences during program implementation are universally shared across the teaching workforce, regardless of demographic or professional characteristics.
5. Self-perception is influenced by career stage and professional development; specifically, sense of accomplishment and workload management differ based on a teacher's age and educational attainment.
6. Epistemic emotions and self-esteem operate as largely independent constructs, highlighting the need for targeted interventions that address both the emotional and professional dimensions of teaching separately.

C. Recommendations

Considering the conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. School heads should strengthen advance communication and orientation mechanisms (e.g., pre-implementation workshops and accessible policy summaries) to help teachers anticipate program changes and reduce unexpected reactions.
2. Schools should implement structured support systems, such as mentoring, coaching sessions, and Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions, to clarify program guidelines and allow teachers to collectively resolve areas of confusion.
3. Schools should design interventions that differentiate support across career stages, offering recognition systems for younger teachers and leadership/mentoring opportunities for older teachers to reinforce professional fulfillment.
4. School heads should adopt age-responsive workload

distribution strategies, providing workload scaffolding for younger teachers and flexible task assignments that match the expertise of experienced educators.

5. Schools Division Offices should provide capacity-building programs focused on task prioritization and workload management, particularly for teachers with lower educational attainment, while actively supporting their pursuit of graduate studies.

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