

Social Capital Perspective of English Teachers' Professional Identity in an Online Community

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ABSTRACT A considerable amount of research explores social capital and teacher professional identity, and yet little research has been conducted to examine the relationships between these two concepts in an online community. This research study determined the kind of English teachers the participants aspire to become in an online course, how the online community performs as its social capital among teachers, and recognised participants' engagement to establish professional identity. The researcher used the narrative inquiry in presenting the lived experiences of the participants. Results revealed that teachers remain true to the school's mission-vision and teaching philosophy despite pandemic and they believe that social capital can be strengthened if all members of the online community will value the communal familial where everyone is given a chance to be heard, participate and collaborate.

INTRODUCTION

One of the unprecedented challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic was the disruption of the educational system. Learning spaces have taken a huge leap from face-to-face interactions to online distance learning. Choudhury and Pattnaik (2020) denotes that e-learning has evolved from Web 0 to 4.0 that allows real-time interaction between teachers and students. It has also pushed the educators to identify teaching methods and strategies that are suited for 21st century learners in an interactive learning environment (Raes et al. 2020).

Harris and Jones (2020) presume that the lack of empirical studies on how educators should respond to pandemic lead the scholars to offer insights about leadership in a COVID-19 educational landscapes. Each member of the school community contributes to additional expertise, ideas, and services. Academic administrators continued to design and plan the curriculum, teachers resorted to online platforms, parents are expected to support in their child's online engagement, and students have a very limited way to interact and collaborate with peers in their academic journey. This scenario is not new among others, as some schools have already introduced this type of modality even before the pandemic hit, while the majority are still planning and analysing where to begin their single step.

During these trying times, teachers have been so adaptive, patient, and resilient to learn, re-

learn, and unlearn from the typical setup that they are used to. Teachers continuously implement interventions to address the needs of their learners (Pontillas 2020). Most have allotted times for webinars, online conferences, tutorials, and the likes, though at times, takeaways will require self-paced learning and application. Given the need to accustom oneself to online teaching, teachers started to do the necessary preparation while accommodating the demands of a fast-paced and global society amid a pandemic. Indeed, the need to integrate and collaborate with others is necessary to establish a community that is ready to adapt and transform the lives of the students during this pandemic.

Hsieh and Freedman (2010) defined teachers' professional identity as the beliefs, values and commitments that allow a teacher to identify both as a teacher (distinct from other professions) and as being a particular type of teacher (that is, public or private school teacher, part-time, full time, Science teacher, English teacher, etc.). The process co-constructs in nature as the teachers perform and create networks in a community of practice, whereas the school creates a community of practice where teachers can develop their professional identity.

Literature Review

No one expected this pandemic to last this long. Everyone tried to discipline oneself so as not to contribute to the increasing cases of COVID-19 in the country. Teachers being one of the

front liners in these difficult times are confined in a room, facing a laptop, planning, preparing, and most of the time struggling. Their battle nowadays is different as to what they were fighting for months or years in the past. Before some would protest for their salaries, wages, and budget cuts, however, this unprecedented school year has brought them to an entirely new challenge caused by the pandemic. It is now a battle between and against the scenario and oneself.

To better comprehend how social capital, professional development, and teacher identity have been presented in literature and related studies to date, the structure of this paper will be as follows. First, the study presents how each concept/variable is interrelated. Second, it describes how these concepts play their role in the use of hash tags in the online community in times of the pandemic.

There were several notions of social capital in the past when J.L. Hanifan discussed goodwill, fellowship, sympathy, and social relations among those that make up a social unit. Significant contributions were also highlighted such as Bourdieu (1986) concerning social theory, Coleman (1988) in his discussions of the social context of education, and Putnam (1995) who studied the connections among individuals. Recently, digital social capital has been introduced. It is a fairly new concept within teacher professional development (TPD) but researchers continue to investigate its role.

Social capital constitutes network conditions such as the trust and reciprocity of their members. Zakharov (2018) defined teacher social capital as a product of collaboration that improves teaching and learning. Fukuyama (2000) stated that social capital only exists among built relationships. Bolin et al. (2003) stated that it is only featured in a social context, not unlike human capital that focuses on the individual attributes. On the other hand, Bourdieu (1986) emphasised conflicts and power functions, which can happen in a network. In a Bourdieuan perspective, social capital is a source of a problem in trust, which is carried out in different social arenas and fields.

The online community consists of a group of people who exchange words and ideas through a technology medium (Rheingold 1994). Scott and Johnsons (2009) presented and ex-

plored the implications of online or e-communities. Ridings et al. (2002) referred to online communities as a group who communicate regularly in an organised way.

During this pandemic when most are advised to work from home, more professionals perform their duties in an online community. Parks (2020) stated that social capital is beneficial after disasters, as it connects people with the resources and support they need to recover. Johnson et al. (2011) viewed professional development as a method of providing expertise among teachers during difficult times. Through professional development, the teachers' community is strengthened.

Rawat and Wu (2020) explained that it is difficult to measure social capital. Typically, it is being measured by levels of trust, connectedness, and strength of norms. Networking truly mitigates the threat, as several persons will be involved. This further explains that when social capital is higher, enforcing useful norms is easier. Seale (2013) introduced the digital capital framework, which was rooted in Bourdieu (1986) and Putnam (1995). This is evident in individuals or groups who are investing their time and effort in enhancing their technical knowledge and skills. Philipsen (2019) elaborated Seale's study by introducing digital social capital into teacher education specifically on teachers' professional development. Moreover, he believed that if a teacher has inadequate skills in digital capital, it might affect the teacher's engagement in technology.

Unlike traditional teaching, many teachers do not have rich personal experiences with online learning. Due to the pandemic, teachers are now using Zoom, Google Classroom, Canvas, Messenger, and others to serve as their digital space platform. These meeting rooms replaced their typical classrooms that served as their stage for several decades. With the growth of online education, it is imperative that higher education institutions provide high-quality teacher preparation programs for online teachers compared to the traditional set up (Sprague 2006). However, this scenario does not begin and end in using meeting rooms. Teachers initially should have their gadgets to effectively execute what is required of them notwithstanding the Internet connectivity, which is also very important.

Thanaraj (2016) emphasised that online teaching is much more beyond the technical capabilities. Teachers have to familiarise themselves with the nature and utilisation of online platforms. Several studies discussed the factors that motivate teachers to use technologies such as pedagogical orientation (Leach and Moon 2000; Banks et al. 2005), curricular requirements (Conole and Fill 2005), learner-centred factors (Beetham and Sharpe 2007; Shearer 2007), and the availability of administrative and technical support (Becker 2000; Masterman and Vogel 2007). Professional teacher identity denotes how a teacher perceives oneself and how others perceive it in terms of the professional role a teacher assumes (Antonek et al. 1997).

With all the expectations and demands of teachers such as professionalism and professional identity, on-going and real-time feedback to administrators, parents, students, commitment to the mission-vision of the school, indeed teachers' professional identity was not honed overnight. It was developed through experience and commitment in an iterative process of social context. This has gained interest among other scholars over the past decades (Beauchamp and Thomas 2009).

Hsieh and Freedman (2010) defined teachers' professional identity as the beliefs, values, and commitments that allow a teacher to identify both as a teacher (distinct from other professions) and as being a particular type of teacher. Specifically, the researcher sought to understand what kept an English teacher to go on with her professional identity despite the pandemic that is happening.

This study is anchored on the following concepts of social capital, which is rooted to Bourdieu and Putman, teachers' professional identity (Hsieh and Freedman, 2010), which has been governed by beliefs, values, and commitments framed after the hash tags (#SOFT and #TOUCH), which were the directives given by the Daffodil Integrated School's academic online community during this pandemic. The hash tag #SOFT stands for Sensitive, Open, Flexible, Teachers, while #TOUCH refers to Teach, Observe, Understand, Care, Help. Hash tags were explained and how these are being applied in the professional aspects of teachers.

These further describe that each one is a teacher-leader who needs to be open to more

challenges ahead and need to meet them head-on, true to the commitment of the mission. Each one has to be imbued with the sense of commitment and responsibility not only for the learners but also to other faculty who need most help and guidance, especially in technological aspects. One should accept that not all are in the full state of adapting the changes so as one community, teachers need to support and uplift one another. Everyone needs to observe where the students, parents, and faculty are. Having this baseline data will help them gear and plan for the upcoming days and months of this modality. Further, these would not be enough without understanding and caring for oneself and others. Lastly, all should extend help in any way possible since all the undertakings and decisions made by the academic community is anchored from the institutional core values.

Objectives of the Study

The goal of this study is to determine how English teachers perceive themselves professionally in an online community. This is deemed necessary to investigate especially that most of the educators are now in the actual implementation of an online modality amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Besides, this trying scenario to prepare as well as to facilitate quality online learning designs may or may contribute to self-efficacy, confidence, and teachers' professional identity.

Although several studies have already been conducted about teachers' identity, research that focuses on online teachers' professional development in times of pandemic is very limited.

Research Questions

To address this, it is hoped that the researcher would be able to identify what kind of English teachers' do the participants aspire to be and analyse how social capital in an online community has moulded them to be.

The researcher seeks the answer to the following research questions:

1. What kind of English teachers do the participants aspire to become before, during, and towards the end of the first quarter online course?
2. How does the online community perform its social capital among teachers?

3. How do the participants engage themselves to establish a professional identity?

METHODOLOGY

Participants

Three English teachers (pseudonyms: Daisy, Dahlia and Daphne) from a private school served as participants in the study. They were notified through an email after the school (pseudonym: Daffodil Integrated School) has approved to conduct the study among its employees. Written consent to participate in the study will be collected from each teacher.

All of them are female, as there is no male faculty from the English Department. These participants also vary in years of service but belong to one community (Basic Education). A small sample size was chosen to delve into their lived experiences in an online community before, during, and after the first quarter implementation of the online course. It was part of the plan to consider the English teachers from the public sector but due to the adjustments made in the school opening, only private school English teachers became participants. The knowledge and the findings of the study will be presented based on their stories of experiences. The detailed descriptions of the participants include their pseudonyms and academic qualifications. It is followed by a brief narrative description from participants' interviews.

Daisy is in her mid-twenties and just received her permanency as Full Time Faculty three years ago. She has been in the Elementary Department for six years and is currently on her last term for her masters' degree. She was very fortunate, as she was granted a study-aid from the school during her degree. Daisy emphasised how she values classroom management. She is a firm but loving and approachable teacher. Her growth as a professional noted her ability to adapt her teaching to her students' needs had grown over her time in practice. Daisy taught 1st and 3rd grade English at Daffodil Integrated School.

Dahlia is in her late thirties. She has a positive attitude towards further studies as a few years later after finishing her master's degree she enrolled in a doctorate. She is also financially supported by the school in her academic en-

deavour. She had presented several types of research in national and international forums. Dahlia emphasised the importance of readiness before facing a class. She values a good class interaction when everyone contributes or analyses a topic being discussed. Being an English teacher for almost two decades she believes that there is still more to learn and discover about the subject she taught. This school year she was transferred to the High School Department after being with the Elementary Department for seventeen years. Aside from handling 7th Grade English, she is also a Discipline Officer who investigates cases that are related to Grade 7's behaviour.

Daphne is in her early forties and has been teaching English for 23 years. Among English learning competencies, she highlighted her grasp of content especially on reading and learning competencies. She also described herself as reflective. Although she has been in the field for two decades, she believes that she has something more to contribute as a Subject Coordinator (handling Elementary English and Filipino Teachers), school paper adviser, as well as being a 3rd Grade English Teacher. She handled English classes for Kindergarten, Grade 3, Grade 4, and Grade 6.

Instruments

Data were obtained through a survey checklist via Google Forms, online interviews via Microsoft Teams, and English teachers' reflective journals before, during, and after implementing the first quarter online course, which were sent through e-mails. The triangulation of three methods of data was done to gather varied and rich data/evidence.

The survey checklist via Google Forms contains ten descriptors about the kind of English teacher they aspire to be in an online community. These statements were drafted based on the hash tag acronyms (#SOFT, #TOUCH) that Daffodil's academic community created. This serves as the directives for SY 2020-2021. It envisions the kind of online teacher the school wanted to promote. The participants had to rate those on a scale of 1-5 with 1 as never and 5 as always. An open statement is also provided for the English teachers to write the kind of online teacher they want to be.

The online interview via Microsoft Teams contains open-ended questions that explored participants' experience and situations in detail as well as how digital social capital is being experienced in their online community. This was conducted through a one-on-one interview to consider the participant's privacy. A Microsoft Team Private Channel for Daisy, Dahlia, and Daphne was created. A schedule based on their preference after official time was created for each of them. The interview was recorded, then the researcher shared a brief background of her study. Each conversation lasted for almost an hour but most of these were sharing and expounding their experiences. Each participant was very cooperative and accommodating. They also thanked the researcher for allowing them to become the participants, as they were able to find someone whom they can confess anything about their feelings, emotions, and experiences.

The reflective journals via Google Forms were accomplished before, during, and towards the end of the implementation of the first quarter online course. It is a free write space where teachers are merely asked to reflect on their experiences, practice in ways that are meaningful to them, and their assessment about the online community during the quarter. Dahlia and Daphne preferred to answer through Google Forms while Daisy opted to use Microsoft Word and sent the file through Messenger to narrate her experiences well.

Procedure

The following procedures guided the researcher in the conduct of the study. First, the researcher sought permission from the assistant principal who oversees the curriculum of Daffodil Integrated School, and to the principal about the intention to conduct a study through email.

The latter recommended to coordinate with the Office of Research and Publication who requested to accomplish forms such as the Application for Research Ethics Review, Research Ethics Review Clearance Form, Letter of Consent for the Participants to be stamped by ORP, Permission Letter to Research Integrity, and Compliance Officer, and to provide the copy of the Concept Paper.

After a thorough review and approval, the researcher sent an email to the participants. In the letter, it was explained what the objectives and procedures of the study are. Afterward, the researcher asked for some professional information about them. The link for the reflective journal was also sent via Google Forms. It was explained to the participants that the reflective journals would be answered at a certain schedule. This was followed by the survey checklist, which was also via Google Forms after they have submitted their first entry in the reflective journal. The researcher asked for the participants' most convenient schedule for the online interview. A private channel was created at Microsoft Teams for this purpose.

Data Analysis

After the data were gathered, all entries were read and analysed. Data were coded and the common themes were identified. These might indicate patterns related to teacher professional identity in an online community.

The main source of data for this study was the online interview, as the participants were able to explain more of themselves and their lived experiences, which were mentioned in the reflective journal. The scheduled online interview also gave them enough time to reflect among themselves and observe what happened, still happening, and will still happen. The other two data, which are the survey checklist and reflective journal, served as sources for supporting evidence.

Conducting an online interview through MS Team (Private Channel) took an average time of one hour per participant. The data from the online interview were transcribed. Then, Microsoft Word was used for the initial coding and thematic analysis. During the process of analysis, rereading continues to further narrow the themes that would likely emerge from the study. An inter-coder from the Daffodil College Department who has several experiences on coding data was requested to code and identify themes.

These themes together with the given metaphors were then used as frameworks in creating a narrative in a form of a story. Each participant has shared how a metaphor had been so significant to their experiences, as they share about

their professional teacher identity amidst the pandemic.

The study used a narrative inquiry method in which knowledge is built from individual lived experiences and social interactions (Martin et al. 2018). The narrative analysis (writing story based on data) and analysis of narratives (reaping the stories apart into themes then group together) were used. The findings were presented through a story backed with rich descriptions. After writing the story, it was given back to the participants for their acknowledgement and approval.

RESULTS

The story below represents the lived experiences of the participants including personal, professional, and social aspects. Themes, together with metaphors from the participants were used as bases for the storyline. These themes include daily challenges of an English teacher, passion and commitment to the profession, and building networks through collaborations. The metaphors given by the participants were laptop, puzzle, and traveling. Each was associated on how they have built and changed their professional identity as a teacher within the digital social capital that they are in.

“Teaching is a continuous voyage. Even without our home, my imagination will always let me travel. Despite my anxieties, I still managed to stare at my old black laptop for I know that there will be lots of memories to be saved, apprehensions to be deleted and experiences to be shared. I was in the same scenario in the comfort of my bed when suddenly my phone alarmed. “For all that has been thanked you, Lord. For all that will be, Yes Lord! Rise and shine Teacher!”, this statement lingers in my mind; only in a few seconds did I realise that it was not the same typical day that I used to witness. Now, is a different one!

While I was eating my breakfast and preparing myself, my phone continuously alerted me with unending messages and floods of emails. Was I gone that long? I just slept for I think less than four hours, but it seemed I had not held my phone for a week. Tones hurriedly told me that there were still lots to accomplish. I thought our one-month break just started.

No matter what circumstances may happen be it good or bad, I remain true to my teaching philosophy. It would always be for my students. Having that in mind I started to prepare my luggage full of learning materials, syllabus, curriculum guides, personal and professional issues. I do not know where it will take me, how bumpy the road will be, who are the people I will meet, and what challenges will surprise me along the way. I was just gazing at my destination and to my mission of reaching my learners.

Planning has never been so easy. Each day has given me sleepless nights, worried about my students’ and parents’ concerns, extracted my creative juices in the preparation of my learning modules and materials. It was never so easy. I don’t know until when it will be.

But because of the love and faith in the school’s mission-vision, I stopped and looked up. I started to contact my Internet service provider and applied for a better Wi-Fi connection to better perform my deliverables. Several committees took charge of different areas in preparation for the school year. I had to prepare and adjust the curriculum guide to the Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELC) after such skills were clustered. I have to endure this entire task while also checking the codes, suitable activities, time frames, assessments, and even appropriate references for our synchronous and asynchronous meetings. I also need to check whether possible subject integration would be possible vis-à-vis with values, social awareness, sustainable development goals, life skills, 21st century skills, and social innovation fundamentals. Further, I should not only align the content with the national policy, but I also have to learn and familiarise myself with the learning management system, which I will fully utilise compared to others who have been using it for a couple of years. Professional online courses and modules have to be accomplished. Time management has its value, as I also have to juggle with the requirements in my graduate studies. Are all of these necessary? Are these my tickets on my travel? I have to say, yes!

Finally, the academic year opens! Despite and in spite of I have to be enthusiastic, positive, composed, and prepared for the learners. As a professional teacher, I always try to manage what is expected of me and what still needs

to be done. I also continuously provide feedback for my students so that they would feel my presence and how I appreciate their efforts in every activity that I have prepared. Along with these, there are still a lot of documents to submit. All I remember was I felt uncertain and mixed emotions of fear, anxiety, and frustration. I was tired of everything. I was also in guilt that I am at home but couldn't spend quality time with my kids and couldn't attend to their needs during the opening of classes. I felt that my responsibilities and obligations were doubled. I needed to extend my work hours and exert extra effort to thrive harder for the new academic adjustments of online learning. Sadly, I could not feel that much support from everyone in our community.

It's past eight o'clock in the evening, I guess I have to shut down my laptop. It has served its purpose for the day. It needs to rest too just like me since I also need time to rest or else I might not continue and be efficient in the next days to come. There are bits and pieces of puzzles that I need to collect and form as I go on with this journey. Some pieces may be easy to find, some would take time. It is always a trial and error of which one will fit and will work out. However, as long as I am guided with the hash tags and with the continuous support I am getting from my fellow teachers, I think and I want to be optimistic that I will finally see the clear beauty of my masterpiece. I always have to look at it as an opportunity and as a memorable experience in the context of the school's mission-vision. Once, I formed it I think I am a better individual, teacher, subordinate, and employee as I continue my never-ending travel.

In the story presented, it was clear that Daisy, Dahlia and Daphne went through a lot before the classes started. Although every teacher's identity varies greatly, their lived experiences would tell their similarities as regards to structural, pedagogical, and behavioural changes. These English teachers did their best to better adapt to changes. This was noted from the preparations and updating of the curriculum guides, modules, and posting them in the learning management system used in Daffodil Integrated School.

Daisy, being the youngest among the participants had also shared how the supposed to be

school break became an extremely exhausting day. However, she always instills in her mind that,

"Though I was extremely exhausted with everything, my conscience was speaking and reminding me that I couldn't sacrifice their learning. I still prepared everything that I know would be best for them. They are in their formative years wherein the important basic skills in English such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening need to be developed."

Further, despite a tiresome week, she would always reflect and adhere to her teaching principle. Goffman (1959) as cited in Hsieh and Freedman (2010), explained the importance of self on the presentation and representation of a performance in a social situation. Teachers need to be trained and to be exposed in an online environment to further enhance their skills (Tschida et al. 2016). Having a good self-presentation would lead educators to achieve their personal goals and conform to social norms.

"I have promised myself to adhere to my teaching principles, to always be intentional, to let my students see the value and connection of what they are learning in their own daily lives, and to still foster a sense of belongingness or relatedness through virtually."

Dahlia cited that aside from the deliverables that she needed to be accomplished, she still thought of ways on how to improve her craft. The teaching role encapsulates other tasks being performed outside the four corners of the classroom (Walkington 2005 based on Mayer 1999). These preparations are also important, as they not only organise their materials but it also gives them a sense of satisfaction, as they can respond to the demand for their work.

"I got a lot of preparations like making and updating the curriculum guides, making modules and posting them on canvas, doing researches on how I can better improve my craft, upgrading our internet connection at home, and a lot more. My colleagues in Daffodil IS have helped me in coming up with relevant learning materials for the students."

Daphne shared that aside from attending to various preparations about online classes and distance learning, she also joined the professional collaboration, online courses, and webinars. Professional learning communities provide venues for groups of educators to dis-

cuss, collaborate, and decide about the shared goal (Toole and Louis 2002). DuFour (2004) described PLCs as a commitment to meet regularly to achieve a common purpose. This creates a setting where teachers can share and set goals for their professional growth and matters that will benefit their subjects and students.

“Professional collaboration such as the professional learning community (PLC) where we shared best practices was also conducted among teachers who will be teaching in the same grade level. Daffodil IS has done its part to prepare us by offering online course programs and other relevant webinars. An emotional and psychological webinar was also conducted and facilitated by the Guidance Counsellors.”

After all the preparations, the much-awaited opening of classes was witnessed. Teachers felt mixed emotions during the first week of online classes. Dahlia shared that it was a mixture of excitement and nervousness. Excited because it was her first time in the High School Department and a bit nervous since this would be a completely different set-up. Lots of apprehensions were also felt like poor or slow Internet connections, power interruptions, and the like. Daisy affirmed that there were lots of “What ifs?” in her mind. Just like any activity that is about to begin, teachers even know how they prepared for the big day still experience doubts about their capabilities and to the external factors, which might hinder or affect their performance. Daphne also realised that,

“...There’s a big difference. The impact of the new normal in education was felt not only by teachers but also by learners and parents.”

Each of the participants also gave their self-evaluation and insights for what have they gone through in the first few months. In general, they still hope that with the demands of online classes, teachers will receive unselfish support from the other offices especially the non-academic units where technical expertise will be needed. Attending students’ and parents’ concerns should not be the sole responsibility of the teachers. These English teachers also believe that they have done their part to sustain their teaching philosophy and adhere to professionalism. It also made them realise that every scheduled synchronous ses-

sion is a discovery of new learning for them and their learners. Indeed, online teaching is continuous learning.

The learning management system has already been in place for the past three years at Daffodil Integrated School. Teachers and students take advantage of this platform through learning anytime, anywhere with a desktop and mobile app ready for downloading, peer and teacher collaboration through discussion boards, peer review features, and inbox open with parents to keep track of their children’s learning, facilities for automated feedback and grading, video conferencing tool, integration with other interactive learning tools and more.

Although it has been used for those number of years, not all faculty were able to apply and maximise its full use since, in the past, face-to-face interaction was still possible. Most of the faculty adjusted and utilised the LMS in full this academic year. Along with these adjustments, the assistance and collaborations from one another were extended as much as possible. Varied committees were created to further study, propose a design and guidelines, and disseminate these changes among faculty. With the demands of each group, teachers were bombarded with sudden and abrupt changes. Some employees were also offered early retirement thus, resulting in some teaching loads to be changed. Webinars, online courses, and conferences were also initiated to further prepare them for the upcoming academic year.

In spite of these moves to provide everything, teachers felt that they were not considered in every change. The latter worried, as they might not be able to give their best when they faced their students because there are a lot of things they need to perform and comply with.

Professional identity remained among the participants, however as they try their best to sustain or ignite this in them, external factors hinder them from doing so.

The academic directives of using #SOFT and #TOUCH have helped them to always reflect and realise their mission as a teacher. The inclusion of such in a meeting, assembly, announcement, and memos made it visually and psychologically present and felt in each of them. No matter what kind of challenges they faced because they were always reminded by these hash

tags it creates positivity and an act of resilience among teachers.

Their passion and faith in the mission always leads them to their teaching philosophy, that is, everything is happening because these are the ways administrators and teachers believe will benefit best their students.

Regarding the hash tags (#SOFT and #TOUCH), which were explained before the opening of classes, these English teachers were reminded to be sensitive, open, and flexible teachers as well as to teach, observe, understand, care and help those members in the community who need help. This can be extended in any way possible. For instance, as members of the online community where most are new to all, teachers are expected to be #SOFT and #TEACH among their students, parents, fellow teachers, and other stakeholders.

This was also revealed in the survey checklist that they answered where all of them agreed that they collaborate with colleagues to design quality instructions. Conrady (2013) stated that social capital acts as a resource that people can then draw on to achieve their goals.

Surprisingly, each of them has a different stance in practicing leadership as needs arise. This can be linked to the number of services they have rendered in school, as the longer you have stayed here the more at ease for a teacher to stand as a leader since you know how to approach people. Another factor is the teachers' personality and the post they are holding since two from the three participants hold other tasks aside from being an English Teacher.

Further, they believed to exemplify engagement and commitment to the hashtags by being open to changes, optimistic despite and despite the situation, compassionate to the needs of others in terms of online deliverables, and creates and curates great online materials for students that got 66.7. On the other hand, they only viewed the following, that is, flexible to the demands of the online community, enthusiastic with the task being given, create positive relationships, clearly communicates with others, in terms of the hash tags presented as 33.3.

DISCUSSION

The findings have shown how the three concepts of social capital, teachers' professional

identity, and online community are related to one another. The analysis and interpretation of the data have led to the following findings. These findings are presented below in light of the lived experiences of the English teachers complemented and linked to other related studies to further interpret the analysis of the data. These also yields in realising the implications and relevance of the findings in the academic field.

Finding 1

No matter what academic directives will be implemented, teachers remain true to the school's mission-vision and teaching philosophy.

Every educator has his/her own beliefs towards the profession (Philip et al. 2019). These beliefs guide him to better realise his/her purpose in the academic field. The participants of this study understand the sacrifice and dedication one must take. These teachers perceive the importance of the knowledge they will impart to their learners. The hash tags (#SOFT and #TOUCH) greatly help the English teachers to be reminded that their mission is anchored to the core values of the institution. Based on the given academic directives, teachers are reminded to perform with a purpose and to become more focused, rejuvenated and excited. Through the various highs and lows, a teaching philosophy or "mission statement" helps an educator stay true to one's core beliefs.

Finding 2

Despite the work overload, outpouring deliverables, and demands, teachers continue to learn, relearn, and unlearn.

Teaching is rewarding, exciting, and ever-changing. Most will not consider it as a perfect career but it is noble seeing your students learn from you. Because of this compassion and dedication, teachers will also be exhausted at times. Many educators feel undervalued and overworked but because of the passion, teachers are optimistic to continue to learn new things that will make a significant contribution in their institution, relearn ways on how to cope with the demands of online learning and this even entails self-discovery most of the time, and unlearning some teaching practices that they have

used but will not be feasible this pandemic. Having the attitude as incorporated in the hash tags will help them to continue forward. Teachers continue to spend time on online courses, attend webinars and conferences that will make them grow in the teaching profession. Ally (2004) shared that continuous designing, learning, and creating online course orientation to discuss competencies and probably the course objectives are very significant. Further, it shows engagement among learners through activities that facilitate the learning process. Teachers' professionalism can be perceived because of the dedication not only for one's growth but also for the learning that will be imparted among learners (Kosunen and Mikkola 2002).

Finding 3

In the implementation of academic guidelines and policy, teachers should have a voice and be involved to have a sense of project ownership on what needs to be implemented.

In general, educators have accepted that distance learning is a necessity and a significant factor for the advancement of education system and the achievement of learning outcomes (Al Salman et al. 2021). However, teachers are often surprised by guidelines and policies. Most of the time they only act as implementers of programs. The findings of the study revealed that it would be more meaningful if, despite the complexity and perplexity of the situation, teachers are given a democratic, just and consultative platform where they have the opportunities to be heard and contribute to the program policy. That way they will not be surprised that they only need to implement right away. Being involved in the policymaking will give them more heart and opportunities in their landscape as their lived experiences are respectfully and recognisably heard.

Finding 4

Being in an online community is a communal familial endeavour where everyone is given a chance to be heard, participate and collaborate.

Social capital plays a significant part in an online community. Bourdieu (1986) described social spaces as multidimensional where teach-

ers can connect with their peers. Rehm and Notten (2016) shared that teachers must also be open to having networks where they can collaborate with their ideas and reflect on their practice. Being in an online community is something new to the majority. Gearing towards a communal familial endeavour will make educators realise that one will not be able to survive this modality without the help coming from other members of the online community. It is one's commitment to live with the hash tags along with their teaching philosophies to cope with the challenges brought by the pandemic.

Finding 5

Students are important in an education setup but it is the teachers who are considered to be the most important of all.

Teachers are the heart of the educational mission. In as much as one values the learners, one must keep in mind the importance of the teachers. Nowadays, they act as front liners as they face the students and parents in a virtual landscape. There might be hindrances such as Internet bandwidth, reliable gadgets, mental health concerns among others, but as long as everyone is seeing the value of social capital all can be possibly surpassed. All are new and everyone is adjusting. Each one should be a sensitive, open, and flexible teacher who can teach, observe, understand, care, and help. Mpungose (2020) highlights the many challenges that educators as well as students might face in realising the full potential of e-learning. In the context of COVID-19 pandemic he also suggests to have concrete plans and alternative ways on how to cope during this trying time. The online community does not promise a relaxing landscape even from the start, and may be ones should look at it as an opportunity to further improve the craft and gather baseline data. As much as one trusts the fellow teachers, one may also find the trust in the administrators who are also seeing the broader perspectives and believe that these sudden changes are products of discernment, dialogues, and prayers for the common good of all.

CONCLUSION

The participants of this study were English teachers who only represent the majority of the

members in the online community. Secondly, the hash tags (#SOFT and #TOUCH) were the ones analysed as to how they affect teachers' professional identity. It is based on the context of an institution that might also represent and might be useful to significant others.

Overall, the narratives of lived experiences of these teachers showed clearly the role that social capital plays in their academics. In particular, the themes such as the awareness and general assumptions about hash tags, facilitating factors, and hindering factors in teachers' professional identity, all contribute to the success of an online community, as they share common beliefs, values, and commitments. The study also found that the low social capital from other members of the online community has led English teachers to proactively seek and create their networking opportunities outside of their workplaces to find the social connections they need. Findings also revealed that participants were able to develop their professional social capital and identity, as a result of their willingness to be true to the mission and academic directives.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Moving forward, other researchers may validate the claims made in this study, choose a different set of participants, and identify their lived experiences, it will be interesting to find out other institutions' academic directives in promoting the social capital and teachers' professional identity. Future researchers may also examine the discourse and speech act patterns in achieving and strengthening the social capital among teachers.

Some say teachers are building the plane while flying it, while others are fixing the tires while inside the car. Thus, an online community must have a strong capital to further improve and maximise their professional identity. Pivot is necessary and constant nowadays. As long as the online community is gearing towards the common goal, the researcher believes that teachers will remain to the mission.

LIMITATIONS

This study focused on the lived experiences of the participants, which may be different from other private and public school teachers. The program applies with the school and is found

helpful during the current learning modality when this study was conducted.

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