



# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND AVAILABILITY OF RESOURCES AS PREDICTORS OF TEACHER COMPETENCE IN HANDLING LEARNERS WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTY

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## ABSTRACT

Poor competence in teaching learners with learning difficulties is worrying. The significance of the strength of professional development and the availability of resources in predicting teacher competence was determined. Using a predictive design, involving 119 survey samples selected through stratified random sampling, and analyzing data using multiple linear regression, the findings moderately support (43.4%) teacher competence prediction and fully affirm Social Cognitive Theory. Further research is recommended to trace the 56.6% variance in the criterion and to improve school program implementation to enhance teacher competence.

**KEY TERMS:** Professional Development, Availability of Resources, Predictors of Teacher Competence, Learners with Learning Difficulty

## INTRODUCTION

### *The Problem and its Scope*

Studies indicate that many educators demonstrate insufficient competence in identifying and addressing the needs of learners with learning difficulties. This competence gap is evident in teachers' limited skills to recognize specific learning disabilities, implement appropriate instructional adaptations, and provide individualized support to struggling learners (Efondo, 2025). Teacher competence in working with learners with difficulties remains a major concern in many education systems. As inclusive education continues to expand worldwide, the challenge of insufficient teacher competence in addressing learning difficulties has become a significant issue (Vantieghem et al., 2023); (Kebede & Phasha, 2024).

In Spain, research revealed concerns about teacher competence, highlighting the adequacy of teachers' ability to deliver effective education (Legorburu-Fernandez et al., 2023). Similarly, in Ethiopia, studies indicated that teachers demonstrate low teacher competence (Kebede & Phasha, 2024). In Australia, research also reported concerns regarding the level of teacher competence in addressing complex educational demands, emphasizing the need to strengthen teachers' competence in classroom practice (Sharma et al., 2023).

In the Philippine context, research among secondary school teachers revealed gaps in their competence in inclusive education, despite their positive attitudes toward supporting learners with diverse needs (De Los Reyes et al., 2025). Low competence of teachers managing the traits of students with learning difficulties within inclusive education programs was also noted in other research involving primary school teachers. (Efondo, 2025)

When teachers lack the necessary competence to support struggling learners, students with learning difficulties may

experience persistent academic challenges, limited engagement in classroom activities, and reduced opportunities for meaningful learning. Furthermore, low teacher competency may make it more difficult for inclusive education policies to be implemented successfully, which could have an impact on the standard and equity of education provided in schools. Research has shown that teachers' low competence can have a detrimental impact on students' learning outcomes and reduce the overall efficacy of inclusive classroom settings. ((Eyo et al., 2025); De Los Reyes et al., 2025). This study was conducted because of these concerning effects.

### *Significance of the Study*

The significance of this study lies in the critical issue of teachers' low competence in handling learners with difficulty. Understanding the gaps in teachers' competence can help schools and education authorities develop effective training programs, instructional strategies, and support systems that enhance inclusive education. The findings can contribute to better learning outcomes, greater student engagement, and equitable access to quality education for all learners. By investigating this issue, the study fosters inclusive and equitable education in accordance with Sustainable Development Goal 4, while promoting the National Goal of the Department of Education to guarantee high-quality instruction that satisfies the diverse needs of every student. Furthermore, by promoting students' holistic development, improving teachers' capacity to offer tailored support, and bolstering inclusive classroom practices to create efficient and equitable learning environments, the study is in line with Holy Cross of Davao College's Vision, Mission, and Goals.



### Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to ascertain how important professional development strength and availability of resources are in predicting teacher competence. It specifically sought to accomplish the following goals:

1. To determine the levels of professional development in terms of teachers' perception of professional development programs and common professional activities; availability of resources in terms of physical facilities and teaching and learning materials; and teacher competence in terms of classroom management, mastery of subjects, instructional materials development, teaching strategies and approaches, communication skills, learning assessment and reporting and community linkages.

2. To determine the relationship between professional development and the availability of resources, and the teacher competence in handling learners with learning difficulties.

3. To determine the significance of the influence of professional development and availability of resources on teacher competence in handling learners with learning difficulties.

### Hypotheses

The hypotheses that were tested in the study at the 0.05 level of significance are the following:

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Professional development and availability of resources are not significantly correlated with teacher competence in handling learners with learning difficulties.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** Professional development and availability of resources do not significantly predict teacher competence in handling learners with learning difficulties.

### Theoretical Framework

Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) (1989) serves as the foundation for this research. Social Cognitive Theory explains how people learn through observation and how personal, behavioral, and environmental factors interact. It posits that observational learning (watching others) helps individuals build confidence and mastery. Meanwhile, SCT also highlights that the environment can facilitate or hinder the enactment of learned behaviors.

In this study, the professional development variable, as indicated by teachers' perceptions of professional development programs and common professional activities, is associated with the observational learning matter presented in the theory; the availability of resources variable, as indicated by physical facilities and teaching and learning materials, is associated with the environment. Finally, the teacher competence variable, as indicated by classroom management, mastery of subjects, instructional materials development, teaching strategies and approaches, communication skills and learning assessment and reporting, and community linkages, refers to the behavioral component highlighted in the theory.

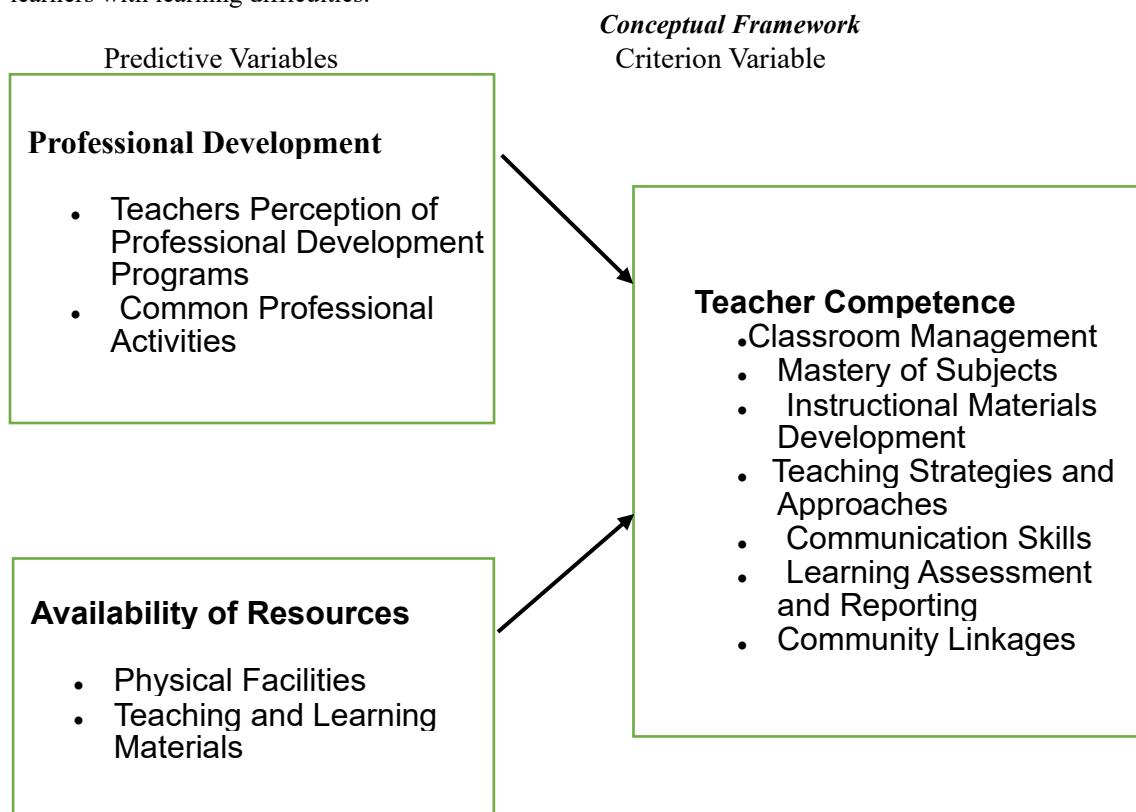


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study



## METHODOLOGY

The research design, research location, sample and sampling method, data collection and analysis method, and ethical considerations were all covered in this chapter.

### *Research Design*

In this study, predictive research design was employed. Predictive research design is a quantitative research approach used to determine whether variables can predict an outcome. With the goal predicts future outcomes or behaviors, it evaluates the connection between criterion variable and predictive variable. This design goes beyond merely identifying relationships by using statistical techniques, such as regression analysis and predictive modeling, to assess how well one or more variables can predict a particular outcome. By analyzing existing or historical data, predictive research enables researchers to identify patterns and trends that may influence future events or conditions (Cardoso-Pulido et al., 2022; Relich, 2023).

Predictive research design is employed when the primary objective of a study is to forecast future outcomes based on current relationships among variables. In educational research, for example, it may be used to determine whether factors such as professional development or resource availability can predict teacher competence or student performance. One of its major advantages is that it helps researchers and institutions make evidence-based decisions by identifying the most significant predictors of an outcome. Additionally, it supports proactive planning by enabling organizations to anticipate potential outcomes and implement appropriate interventions to improve outcomes or prevent potential problems (Relich, 2023; Sivo, 2025).

### *Research Locale*

The study was carried out in the southern part of the Municipality of Governor Generoso, Davao Oriental, in the Schools Division of Davao Oriental, Governor Generoso South District. Situated in the southern region of Davao Oriental, Governor Generoso is a coastal municipality that faces the Philippine Sea. It is known for its scenic landscapes, including rolling hills, beaches, and lush forests which attract nature enthusiasts. The people are primarily engaged in farming, fishing, and small-scale trade, reflecting a community that values close ties to both the land and the sea while preserving cultural traditions. Governor Generoso South District comprises 12 schools that offer a suitable environment for conducting this research study and can provide the necessary resources to assess teacher competence in public elementary school educators in the second district.

### *Sample and Sampling Technique*

The study consisted of 119 respondents from a population of 170 teachers in the Governor Generoso South District. These teachers teach general education to elementary-level students in Kindergarten through Grade 6 in public schools.

The identified samples were selected using stratified random sampling. In this probability sampling method, the

population is first split into more manageable, homogeneous subgroups, or strata, according to shared attributes like age, gender, or grade level. To ensure that each stratum is represented in the final sample, from each subgroup, a random sample is selected once the population has been divided into these strata. This method improves the representativeness of the sample because each population subgroup has an equal chance of being included, proportional to its size. As a result, stratified random sampling helps researchers obtain more reliable and accurate estimates of population characteristics compared with simple random sampling (Thomas, 2023; E. Team, 2024).

The use of stratified random sampling is carried out when the population is heterogeneous or composed of distinct subgroups that may differ in relation to the variable being studied. Researchers use this method when they want to ensure that important groups within the population are adequately represented and when comparisons between groups are necessary. The main advantages of stratified random sampling include greater accuracy and precision of results, improved representation of all subgroups, and reduced sampling bias. It also allows researchers to compare outcomes across different groups while using resources more efficiently during data collection (S. P. Team, 2023; ArabPsychology, 2024).

### *Data Gathering Technique*

This study employed the survey questionnaire method of data collection. A structured list of questions intended to methodically gather data from respondents for quantitative research is called a survey questionnaire. It allows researchers to gather measurable data on participants' characteristics, attitudes, behaviors, or opinions, which can be statistically analyzed (Kuphanga, 2024). This technique is widely used because it produces standardized responses that can be quantified and compared, ensuring objectivity and reliability in the data collection process (Ranganathan & Caduff, 2023).

Survey questionnaires are particularly useful when the research aims to collect data from a large population, compare responses between groups or over time, and generalize findings to a broader population (Ranganathan & Caduff, 2023). They are cost-effective and time-efficient, enabling researchers to gather structured, numerical data suitable for statistical analysis (Kuphanga, 2024).

In this research, three questionnaires were adapted and modified. The first questionnaire is from Eksi (2010) and consists of 16 items that evaluate how teachers' view professional development and initiatives and activities. The second questionnaire is from Atieno (2014) and comprises 19 items that focus on physical facilities and teaching-learning materials in inclusive classrooms. The third questionnaire is from Toston (2023), with 35 items that assessed classroom management, subject mastery, instructional materials development, teaching strategies, communication skills, learning assessment and reporting, and community linkages.

The instrument underwent a pilot test with 30 respondents. Using Cronbach's alpha, professional development had 0.859 (good internal consistency), availability of resources



had 0.958 (excellent internal consistency), and teacher competence had 0.942 (excellent internal consistency). These findings show that the tools are trustworthy and appropriate for the research.

### Data Analysis Technique

This study used three types of data analysis: descriptive, correlation and multiple regression.

By arranging, evaluating, and presenting data in a comprehensible fashion (e.g., measures like mean, median, mode, range, and frequency), a statistical method for summarizing and describing a dataset's salient characteristics is called descriptive

analysis. Moreover, correlation analysis is a statistical method used in research to evaluate and quantify the direction and strength of correlations between two or more quantitative variables, based on the International Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology (2024). Multiple regression analysis is a statistical method for concurrently analyzing the connection between one criteria variable and two or more predictive variables. The Mean and Standard Deviation were the statistical tools employed in the descriptive analysis To measure and interpret the Mean, the following standards scheme was followed.

| Range of Means | Descriptive Level | Professional Development | Availability of Resources | Teacher Competence |
|----------------|-------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| 3.26 – 4.00    | Very High         | Very Good                | Much Available            | Very Good          |
| 2.51 – 3.25    | High              | Good                     | More Available            | Good               |
| 1.760 – 2.50   | Low               | Poor                     | Less Available            | Poor               |
| 1.00 – 1.75    | Very Low          | Very Poor                | Not Available             | Very Poor          |

To measure and interpret the standard deviation, the following standard scheme was followed.

Standard Deviation Value Interpretation:

| Standard Deviation | Level of Variability | Interpretation                                             |
|--------------------|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.50 and above     | High                 | widely spread, varied perceptions                          |
| 1.00-1.49          | Moderate             | moderate differences                                       |
| 0.50-0.99          | Low                  | relatively consistent with minimal differences             |
| 0.00-0.49          | Very Low             | highly consistent with a tight clustering around the mean. |

The Pearson correlation coefficient was the statistical instrument utilized in the correlation analysis. To determine the correlation's strength the following scheme was followed.

| Computed r                | Descriptive Interpretation  |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| +/-1.00                   | Perfect correlation         |
| Between +/-0.75 - +/-0.99 | High correlation            |
| Between +/-0.51 - +/-0.74 | Moderately High correlation |
| Between +/-0.31 - +/-0.50 | Moderately Low correlation  |
| Between +/-0.01 - +/-0.30 | Low correlation             |
| 0.00                      | No correlation              |

Lastly, under multiple linear regression analysis, the statistical tools used were unstandardized and standardized Beta coefficients. The following standard scheme was followed to measure the strength of the influence.

| $\beta$ Value Range   | Strength of Influence |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| $\pm 0.00 - \pm 0.09$ | Very Weak             |
| $\pm 0.10 - \pm 0.29$ | Weak                  |
| $\pm 0.30 - \pm 0.49$ | Moderate              |
| $\pm 0.50 - \pm 0.69$ | Strong                |
| $\pm 0.70$ and above  | Very Strong           |

### Ethical Considerations

The researcher acquired endorsement from SMILE, the Society for Moral Integrity and Legal Ethics and approval from the Department of Education, Division of Davao Oriental, to carry out the research. The survey questionnaire underwent pilot

testing and validation with the Dean of the researcher's academic institution providing endorsement. After securing all permissions, paper-based questionnaires were distributed to elementary teachers in the district. Participants provided informed consent,



and the study purpose was explained while ensuring anonymity and confidentiality.

## RESULTS

This chapter presents the data analysis and interpretation.

### Descriptive Analysis

Table 1 displays descriptive statistics for professional development, resource availability, and teacher competence variables.

**Table 1. Descriptive Analysis Results**

| Variables                                       | SD   | Mean | Descriptive Level |
|-------------------------------------------------|------|------|-------------------|
| Professional Development                        | 0.31 | 3.57 | Very High         |
| Perception of Professional Development Programs | 0.34 | 3.75 | Very High         |
| Professional Development Activities             | 0.41 | 3.39 | Very High         |
| Availability of Resources                       | 0.50 | 2.87 | High              |
| Physical Facilities                             | 0.52 | 2.99 | High              |
| Teaching and Learning Materials                 | 0.56 | 2.74 | High              |
| Teacher Competence                              | 0.36 | 3.52 | Very High         |
| Classroom Management                            | 0.43 | 3.47 | Very High         |
| Mastery of Subjects                             | 0.43 | 3.56 | Very High         |
| Instructional Materials Development             | 0.44 | 3.49 | Very High         |
| Teaching Strategies and Approaches              | 0.44 | 3.37 | Very High         |
| Communication Skills                            | 0.44 | 3.57 | Very High         |
| Learning Assessment and Reporting               | 0.42 | 3.58 | Very High         |
| Community Linkages                              | 0.41 | 3.61 | Very High         |

4.20-5.00 Very High, 3.40-4.19 High, 2.60-3.39 Moderate, 1.80-2.59 Low, 1.00-1.79 Very Low

The professional development variable had a mean of 3.57, which is very high, reflected in Table 1. This suggests that the responders' professional growth is very good. The responses are quite consistent, as seen by the standard deviation of 0.31, which shows very little fluctuation in the responses. It is said to have very high indications. Additionally, the variable measuring availability of resources had a mean of 2.87, suggesting high availability. It suggests that the responders have access to more resources. With the standard deviation of 0.50, the variability of responses is low, suggesting a relatively consistent pattern with minimal differences. Its two indicators are described as high.

Additionally, the mean of teacher competence variable was 3.52, which is considered very high. It suggests that the responders are highly competent teachers. With a standard deviation of 0.36, the variability of responses is very low,

suggesting a compact gathering around the average. It is considered that all of its indicators are very high.

Lastly, both professional development and teacher competency are described at a very high level, suggesting that teachers exhibit both a very high degree of competence and a very strong participation in professional growth. In contrast, the availability of resources is rated slightly lower but still indicates that resources are generally more available to support teaching.

### Correlation Analysis

The correlation analysis is shown in Table 2. It includes the predictive variables, which include availability of resources and professional development. It also includes the criterion variable, which is teacher competence. In the end, the table includes the null hypothesis decision, the r-value, the p-value, and the related interpretation.

**Table 2. Correlation Analysis Results**

| Variables                 | Teacher Competence |         |                 |                             |
|---------------------------|--------------------|---------|-----------------|-----------------------------|
|                           | r-value            | p-value | Decision on Ho1 | Interpretation              |
| Professional Development  | 0.621              | 0.000   | Reject          | Moderately High Significant |
| Availability of Resources | 0.354              | 0.000   | Reject          | Moderately Low Significant  |

0.05 Significant Level

In fact, Table 2 demonstrates that the link between teacher competence and professional development has a p-value of 0.0000, which is below the 0.05 confidence threshold. The null hypothesis was thus disproved. It shows that there is a significant association between these variables. A moderately high correlation is shown by an R-value of 0.621.

Moreover, the association between availability of resources and teacher competence attained a p-value of 0.0000,

below the 0.05 threshold. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected. It reveals that these variables are significantly correlated. A moderately low correlation is evident with an R-value of 0.354.

The finding reveals that professional development has a significant relationship with teacher competence, showing a stronger correlation. In contrast, the availability of resources, though significantly related to the criterion, shows a weaker correlation.



### Regression Analysis Results

Table 3 illustrates the results of the regression analysis. The presentation includes the predictors, the criterion variable, the estimates, the standard error, the t-value, the p-value and the decision regarding the null hypothesis.

The table specifically shows the regression model for teacher competence:  $TC = 0.676 PD + 0.164 AR + 0.637$ . With a p-value of 0.000, which is less than 0.05, the model predicting teacher competence from professional development and resource

availability is essential. The model with an  $R^2$  value of 0.434 can moderately predict teacher competence.

**Table 3.** Regression Analysis Results

The regression analysis shows that professional development and resource availability significantly influence teacher competence. Professional development has a stronger effect on teacher competence than resource availability.

| Predictor                                                                                                                 | Teacher Competence |                 |       |      |       |                 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|-------|------|-------|-----------------|
|                                                                                                                           | Estimate           | Stand. Estimate | SE    | t    | p     | Decision on Ho2 |
| Intercept                                                                                                                 | 0.637              |                 | 0.308 | 2.07 | 0.041 |                 |
| Professional Development                                                                                                  | 0.676              | 0.571           | 0.085 | 7.96 | 0.000 | Reject          |
| Availability of Resources                                                                                                 | 0.164              | 0.225           | 0.052 | 3.14 | 0.002 | Reject          |
| R= 0.659, $R^2=0.434$ , Adjusted $R^2=0.424$ , F=44.5, Sig.=0.000<br>Regression Model: $TC = 0.676 PD + 0.164 AR + 0.637$ |                    |                 |       |      |       |                 |

### Summary of Findings

Based on the statistical results, it was specifically found that:

1. Professional development and availability of resources significantly correlate with teacher competence in handling learners with learning difficulties.
2. Professional development and availability of resources significantly predict teacher competence in handling learners with learning difficulties.

### DISCUSSIONS

This chapter covers the discussions, conclusions, and recommendations derived from the findings.

#### Professional development relates to teacher competence.

Dayagbil & Alda (2024) observed that teachers who participated in professional growth activities improved their teaching competence and instructional practices, demonstrating the connection between teacher competence and professional development. Despite obstacles such as a lack of funds or time, teachers said that high-quality, needs-based professional development improved their abilities and their capacity to meet professional standards. Furthermore, Staverman's (2025) synthesis of studies, which demonstrates that online and blended professional development formats predominantly resulted in favorable impacts on teachers' competence and teaching practices, is supported by the current study. This includes improvements in skills, knowledge, and classroom practice, directly connecting professional development with enhanced teacher competence.

The current result, however, runs counter to the Padillo et al. (2021) study, which found no significant relationship between professional development activities and teaching competence. This suggests that professional development participation does not always result in quantifiable gains in teaching competence. It revealed that involvement in professional development did not align with stronger teacher competence.

Though this claim sounds convincing, the categorical rejection is stronger, given that there were more schools involved (9) in the current study than in the previous one (1).

#### The availability of resources connected to teacher competence.

The current study, which argues that resource availability affects teacher competence, aligns with Cudal et al. (2024), who found a positive relationship between instructional resource availability and teacher competence. Specifically, Cudal reported that as resources become more available and accessible, teaching effectiveness tends to improve, highlighting the importance of resource availability in shaping teacher competence. In addition, the present study supports the idea of Dioquino & Paglinawan (2024), who found that teachers with greater access to resources demonstrate higher teaching competence.

Nevertheless, the results of Kohanová et al. (2025), who found a modest correlation between teacher competency and available resources, are contradicted by the current study. This suggests that even when participants used resources more often, it did not strongly correspond to feeling more competent or confident in teaching these complex topics.

#### Professional development and resource availability predict teacher competence.

Teacher competence is shaped by both professional development opportunities and adequate resources. The present analysis supports the study by Dioquino & Paglinawan (2024), which stipulates that resource availability and professional development significantly predict teacher digital competence. The study discovered that even when access to digital tools alone was insufficient, teachers' proficiency in utilizing digital technologies in the classroom was substantially predicted by the availability of resources and training (related to professional



development). On top of that, the present research accepts the idea of (Kohanová et al., 2025) that teachers' use of instructional resources (including physical and digital materials) is positively associated with teachers' self-reported confidence and competence in instructional practices. This implies that teachers' confidence and instructional ability can be improved when they have access to a wider variety of excellent resources.

Meanwhile, the present results oppose the research undertaken by Hamzah et al. (2025) that declares teachers' competency is influenced by more than only their technical and cognitive abilities related to professional development or the availability of resources. but also by a wider range of contextual and societal factors that could counteract or mitigate the effects of professional growth and resources. The present results focus on a single sample size, whereas the cited reference provides different sample sizes.

## Conclusion

The results indicate that the model's capacity to forecast teacher competency, with professional development and resource availability as predictors, is moderately significant (43.4%). Hence, the Social Cognitive Theory, positing that observational learning and the environment contribute to the development of confidence and mastery, is fully affirmed.

## Recommendations

Based on the outcomes, other variables not included in the study may be used to monitor down the remaining 56.6% of the gap in teacher competency that the predictors lack the ability to explain can be used for further research. To investigate emerging topics that could be used as factors in future research, a qualitative study could be conducted.

Furthermore, school leaders may initiate programs that enhance professional development and provide greater access to physical and instructional resources that augment teacher competence.

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