



NAVIGATING OUT-OF-FIELD TEACHING COMPETENCE AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TECHNICAL-VOCATIONAL-LIVELIHOOD TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

Out-of-field teaching continues to challenge teachers who are expected to deliver quality instruction despite specialization mismatches. This study examined the relationship between out-of-field teaching competence and professional development among Technical-Vocational-Livelihood teachers in Dupax del Sur and Dupax del Norte, Nueva Vizcaya. Its importance lies in providing evidence for strengthening teacher support, instructional effectiveness, and professional growth among teachers handling subjects beyond their field of specialization. A quantitative descriptive-correlational design was used, involving thirty-one purposively selected teachers from five public secondary schools. Data were gathered through a validated four-point Likert-scale questionnaire and analyzed using mean, standard deviation, the Shapiro-Wilk test, and the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient at the 0.05 level of significance. Results showed that respondents had a high level of out-of-field teaching competence, with classroom management receiving the highest mean and subject matter mastery showing the lowest. Moreover, professional development indicated a high level, with instructional adaptability obtaining the highest mean, and perceived career growth obtaining the lowest. The variables were normally distributed, and correlation analysis revealed a moderate, positive, and significant relationship between out-of-field teaching competence and professional development. The findings indicate that teacher competence and professional development are mutually reinforcing. The proposed Technical-Vocational-Livelihood Support for Teaching Effectiveness and Professional Growth Program may therefore serve as a school-based intervention to strengthen content mastery, instructional support, assessment practices, mentoring, reflection, and career growth among teachers assigned outside their specialization.

KEYWORDS: instructional intervention, out-of-field teaching competence, professional development, teacher competence, Technical-Vocational-Livelihood teachers

INTRODUCTION

Teachers play a central role in ensuring quality education, yet many classroom realities require them to handle subjects beyond their specialization. This condition, commonly referred to as out-of-field teaching, becomes particularly challenging in specialized tracks where teachers must demonstrate content mastery, classroom management, and appropriate learning assessment while adapting to unfamiliar subject matter. In the Technical-Vocational-Livelihood track, where instruction is expected to prepare learners for practical, industry-related competencies, the alignment between teacher specialization and teaching assignment is especially important.

Out-of-field teaching has persisted in many education systems because of teacher shortages, staffing needs, and uneven distribution of qualified teachers. Literature suggests that teachers assigned outside their specialization may experience difficulty in content delivery and confidence, particularly in subject matter mastery (Guerriero, 2017; Ingersoll et al., 2018; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2019). Nevertheless,

such situations may also encourage teachers to adapt, collaborate, and engage in continuous professional learning (Du Plessis, 2017; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Thus, out-of-field teaching may be viewed both as a professional challenge and as a context for teacher growth.

In the Philippine setting, the implementation of the K to 12 Curriculum increased the demand for teachers in specialized learning areas, including the Technical-Vocational-Livelihood track. In local school contexts such as Dupax del Sur and Dupax del Norte, Nueva Vizcaya, staffing limitations may require teachers to teach subjects outside their field of preparation. These conditions underscore the need to examine teachers' competence in out-of-field assignments and their professional development, particularly in competence enhancement, instructional adaptability, professional learning engagement, and perceived career growth.

This study examined the relationship between out-of-field teaching competence and professional development among Technical-Vocational-Livelihood teachers. Specifically, it



determined the level of out-of-field teaching competence in terms of subject matter mastery, classroom management, and learning assessment; assessed the level of professional development in terms of competence enhancement, instructional adaptability, professional learning engagement, and perceived career growth; tested the significant relationship between the two variables; and developed an instructional intervention based on the findings.

Furthermore, the study is aligned with the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers, which emphasize teacher competence, professional growth, and effective teaching practices (Department of Education, 2017).

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design. The descriptive component was used to determine the levels of out-of-field teaching competence and professional development, while the correlational component was used to examine the relationship between the two variables without establishing cause and effect.

The respondents were thirty-one Technical-Vocational-Livelihood teachers from selected public secondary schools in Dupax del Sur and Dupax del Norte, Nueva Vizcaya, namely Balance Technical Vocational School, Dupax del Norte National High School, Dupax del Sur National High School, Lamo National High School, and Mungia National High School. Purposive sampling was used because the study required teachers with direct experience in teaching subjects outside their field of specialization.

Data were gathered using a structured survey questionnaire adapted from related studies and literature on teacher competence, professional development, self-efficacy, and out-of-field teaching. The instrument measured out-of-field teaching competence along subject matter mastery, classroom management, and learning assessment, and professional development along competence enhancement, instructional adaptability, professional learning engagement, and perceived career growth. A four-point Likert scale was used. The questionnaire underwent content validation by education experts, followed by pilot testing. Reliability testing yielded Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.81 for out-of-field teaching competence and 0.80 for professional development, indicating acceptable internal consistency.

The researcher secured the necessary institutional permissions and coordinated with school heads before administering the questionnaire. Participation was voluntary, and confidentiality and anonymity were observed. The data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to describe the levels of the variables, the Shapiro-Wilk test to determine normality, and the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient to determine the strength, direction, and significance of the relationship between out-of-field teaching competence and professional development.

All statistical inferences were tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results show that the respondents demonstrated a high level of out-of-field teaching competence, with an overall mean of 3.03 and a standard deviation of 0.41. Among the domains, classroom management obtained the highest mean of 3.30, indicating that teachers were able to maintain an organized and supportive learning environment despite teaching outside their specialization. Subject matter mastery obtained the lowest mean of 2.85, suggesting that content knowledge, lesson explanation, and contextualization remain major areas for support. Learning assessment also received a high rating, with a mean of 2.95, showing that teachers generally perceived themselves as capable of assessing student learning, although further strengthening may still be needed.

The respondents also demonstrated a high level of professional development, with an overall mean of 3.13 and a standard deviation of 0.40. Instructional adaptability obtained the highest mean of 3.35, indicating that the teachers were able to adjust teaching strategies, modify lesson delivery, and respond to learners' needs in out-of-field situations. Perceived career growth obtained the lowest mean of 2.90, suggesting that although teachers were professionally engaged, they may have limited perceptions of advancement, recognition, or long-term growth opportunities arising from their out-of-field assignments.

Before correlation analysis, the Shapiro-Wilk test was conducted. Results showed that out-of-field teaching competence was normally distributed, with $W = 0.952$ and $p = 0.182$, while professional development was also normally distributed, with $W = 0.958$ and $p = 0.264$. Since both p -values were greater than 0.05, the use of the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was appropriate.

Correlation analysis revealed a moderate, positive, and statistically significant relationship between out-of-field teaching competence and professional development, with $r = 0.441$ and $p = 0.013$. Since the p -value was less than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that teachers with higher out-of-field teaching competence also tended to report higher professional development. The moderate strength of the relationship indicates that competence and professional development are connected but may also be influenced by other factors such as institutional support, access to training, workload, mentoring, and professional recognition.

These findings affirm that out-of-field teaching competence and professional development are mutually reinforcing. Teachers who engage in professional learning are more likely to strengthen their instructional practices, while teachers who become more competent in challenging teaching assignments may also develop greater confidence and motivation to continue improving. The results provide the basis for the proposed Technical-Vocational-Livelihood Support for Teaching Effectiveness and Professional



Growth Program, which focuses on content enhancement, lesson contextualization, assessment development, mentoring, reflective practice, and career growth support.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings indicate that Technical-Vocational-Livelihood teachers possess a high but still developing level of competence in handling out-of-field teaching assignments. Their strongest area is classroom management, while subject matter mastery remains the primary area needing further support. This suggests that while teachers can maintain classroom order and learner engagement, they still need sustained assistance in deepening content knowledge and contextualizing unfamiliar topics.

The respondents also demonstrate a high level of professional development, particularly in instructional adaptability. However, perceived career growth emerged as the lowest domain, indicating the need to strengthen recognition, advancement opportunities, and long-term professional support for teachers assigned outside their specialization.

The significant positive relationship between out-of-field teaching competence and professional development confirms that the two variables are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. As teachers improve their competence in out-of-field assignments, their professional development also tends to improve. Consequently, sustained and needs-based professional development is essential in supporting teachers who are required to teach beyond their specialization.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, several recommendations are proposed to enhance the out-of-field teaching competence and professional development of Technical-Vocational-Livelihood teachers. First, TVL teachers may be provided with targeted training, instructional resources, and continuous support to enhance their out-of-field teaching

competence, particularly in strengthening subject matter mastery and learning assessment practices.

Second, schools may provide accessible, relevant, and sustained professional development opportunities that promote competence enhancement, instructional adaptability, professional learning engagement, and perceived career growth among TVL teachers.

Third, professional development programs may be aligned with the specific competency needs of teachers handling out-of-field assignments, since the findings revealed a significant relationship between out-of-field teaching competence and professional development.

Fourth, the proposed TVL-STEP Program may undergo quality assurance, expert validation, and pilot implementation prior to full adoption to ensure its relevance, effectiveness, and responsiveness to the needs of TVL teachers. Once validated, it may be considered for possible use by other schools offering TVL programs.

Fifth, the Department of Education, school administrators, and human resource personnel may strengthen teacher deployment, staffing, load distribution, and specialization alignment practices to minimize specialization mismatch and ensure that teachers are assigned to learning areas aligned with their expertise whenever possible.

Sixth, school leaders and policymakers may provide stronger institutional support systems, such as mentoring programs, collaborative professional learning opportunities, and recognition mechanisms, to improve teachers' motivation, confidence, and long-term professional growth.

Finally, future researchers may conduct follow-up studies to evaluate the effectiveness of the TVL-STEP Program and explore other factors influencing out-of-field teaching competence and professional development using broader respondents, different research designs, or other educational contexts

Table 1
Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents

Respondents	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Belance Technical Vocational School	7	22.58%
Dupax del Norte National High School	7	22.58%
Dupax del Sur National High School	8	25.81%
Lamo National High School	4	12.90%
Mungia National High School	5	16.13%
Total	31	100%



Table 2

Level of Out-of-Field Competence of the Respondents in terms of Subject Matter Mastery, Classroom Management, and Learning Assessment

Domain	Mean	Standard Deviation	Qualitative Description
Subject matter mastery	2.85	0.36	High Competence
Classroom management	3.30	0.46	High Competence
Learning assessment	2.95	0.22	High Competence
Overall	3.03	0.41	High Competence

Table 3

Level of Professional Development of the Respondents in terms of Competence Enhancement, Instructional Adaptability, Professional Learning Engagement, and Perceived Career Growth

Domain	Mean	Standard Deviation	Qualitative Description
Competence nhancement	3.20	0.40	High Professional Development
Instructional adaptability	3.35	0.48	High Professional Development
Professional learning engagement	3.05	0.22	High Professional Development
Perceived career growth	2.90	0.30	High Professional Development
Overall	3.13	0.40	High Professional Development

Table 4

Test of Normality of the Variables Using Shapiro–Wilk Test

Variables	W	p-value	Interpretation
Out-Of-Field Teaching Competence	0.952	0.182	Normally Distributed
Professional Development	0.958	0.264	Normally Distributed

Table 5

Relationship Between Out-of-Field Teaching Competence and Professional Development

Variables	<i>r</i>	Df	p-value	Remark
Out-Of-Field Teaching Competence and Professional Development	0.441	29	0.013	Significant

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