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Influence of Teachers' Competence on Student Learning outcomes: Study of Teacher Development Program

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ABSTRACT

Teacher competence is widely recognized as a key factor in promoting student achievement. However, this study in Public Secondary School revealed contrasting patterns. Correlation analysis showed a strong negative relationship between measured teacher competence and student academic performance ($r = –0.63$, $p < 0.001$). While this indicates a significant association, the negative direction suggests that high competence scores, as measured by PPST indicators, did not correspond to higher student outcomes. This mismatch may reflect gaps between formal standards and the realities of student learning needs. By contrast, students' perceptions of teacher competence demonstrated a weak but significant positive correlation with performance ($r = 0.22$, $p = 0.01$). Although weak, this result highlights the motivational role of perceived teacher effectiveness, suggesting that students who view their teachers as competent are more likely to engage and achieve better academically. This underscores the importance of relational and affective dimensions of teaching, beyond technical skills alone. Qualitative findings pointed to barriers such as workload, limited training, and lack of institutional support. These issues may limit the translation of competence into learning gains. Thus, the proposed Teacher Development and Instructional Impact Program (TDIIP) aims to align competence with inclusive pedagogy and student-centered practices. The study concludes that competence alone does not determine achievement; perceptions and systemic supports are equally critical.

Keywords: Teacher competence, Student performance, PPST, Correlation, Teacher Development and Instructional Impact Program (TDIIP).

1. INTRODUCTION

Teacher competence refers to the knowledge, skills, and professional behaviors that enable educators to effectively facilitate learning and support student success (Darling-Hammond, 2020; Kunter, 2022). In fact, it is widely recognized as a critical determinant of student achievement and overall educational success (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). One way to better understand teacher competence is through a Professional Competence Model, which typically encompasses domains such as content knowledge, pedagogical skills, classroom management, assessment strategies, and professional ethics (König et al., 2020; Liakopoulou, 2022). Within this framework, a competent teacher designs lessons that engage diverse learners, implements formative assessments to monitor student progress, and participates in continuous professional development to enhance instructional practices (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

Building on this conceptualization, recent studies have explored various dimensions of teacher competence, including pedagogical content knowledge, professional beliefs, motivation, and self-regulation, all of which influence instructional quality and student development (König et al., 2020; Liakopoulou, 2022). For instance, Kunter et al. (2022) highlighted that professional competence directly affects both the quality of instruction and students' academic growth. Consequently, enhancing teacher competence through targeted professional development is essential for improving teaching practices and promoting positive student learning outcomes (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Balta et al., 2023).

Even with these results, the relationship between teacher effectiveness and student learning results is still intricate. Certain research indicates a direct connection between teacher proficiency and student success, while other research suggests that other elements like student involvement or learning environment might affect this association. These elements can be viewed as theoretical constraints, since they might influence the relationship between competence and results but fall outside the boundaries of the current research (Blömeke et al., 2022). However, it is crucial to recognize that teacher competence is not fixed; it can be improved and reinforced through focused professional development that increases teachers' knowledge, abilities, and professional conduct. Certainly, enhancing teacher skills through such professional development has been demonstrated to beneficially influence student learning results (Balta et al., 2023).

On a larger scale, the European Union (EU) has enacted specific measures through the Bologna Process to improve teacher skills and professional growth among member nations (European Commission, 2022). The EU, for instance, encourages organized in-service training initiatives that emphasize inclusive education, digital literacy, and skills related to classroom management. Nonetheless, in spite of these initiatives, results from the OECD's Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) 2018 reveal that educators in the involved nations continue to express significant demand for professional development in areas such as teaching students with special needs, incorporating ICT into lessons, and handling student behavior (OECD, 2021). To effectively meet these needs, EU initiatives focus on job-integrated learning, enabling teachers to participate in professional development that is directly applicable to their classroom activities, thus allowing them to implement new strategies right away (Viac & Fraser, 2020; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). This method is especially applicable in the Philippine context, where schools encounter varied student needs and distinct challenges. By customizing professional development to fit the actual conditions of local classrooms, educators can boost their skills, investigate creative approaches, and consistently improve their methods, which are essential elements in enhancement.

In the Philippine setting, according to Republic Act No. 10533, or the "Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013," and aligned with the "No Filipino Child Left Behind" policy framework of 2010, every Filipino learner is entitled to high-quality and accessible basic education. These mandates emphasize the government's responsibility to ensure inclusive and equitable learning opportunities for all. Moreover, recent reforms emphasizing curriculum alignment and accountability have increased teachers' responsibility for student performance. In the same way, DepEd Order No. 42, sub. The National Adoption and Implementation of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), which took place in 2017, emphasizes how important teacher quality is in determining how well students learn. While it is widely acknowledged that meaningful professional development is necessary, research shows that many existing programs have failed to produce lasting improvements in teaching practices. As a result, producing highly qualified and globally competitive graduates remains a significant challenge in developing countries like the Philippines. This issue is particularly evident in Public Secondary School, where recent School Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adjustment (SMEA) results for SY 2024–2025 show consistently low academic performance, with overall average scores across all subjects falling below the national proficiency standard of 75%.

In light of these conditions, the current study is to investigate how teacher competency affects student learning outcomes, particularly at Public Secondary School during the 2024–2025 academic year. By concentrating on this topic, the study hopes to draw attention to the crucial role that teacher competency plays in supporting student learning and offer insightful advice for creating and carrying out successful programs for teacher professional development, as well as directing the hiring and retention of highly skilled teachers.

Ultimately, the findings will serve as the foundation for developing a Teacher Development Program that strengthens and supports the positive relationship between teacher competence and student achievement. This underscores the importance of offering high-quality professional learning opportunities tailored to teachers' subject areas and aligned with student learning goals. Furthermore, the proposed program will be grounded in actual study results to ensure that recommendations and interventions are data-driven, context-specific, and relevant to the needs of both teachers and students.

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2. METHODOLOGY

A mixed-methods research design was used in this study, combining quantitative and qualitative techniques. The relationship between students' perceptions and the degree of teachers' competency was described and examined using the quantitative component.

Data were collected using a structured survey questionnaire, which gathered information for profiling teachers based on variables such as age and gender, highest educational attainment, length of service, designation, teaching experience, and title training or seminars attended.

To evaluate teacher competence, both teachers' self-assessments and students' perceptions were utilized. The following basic domains were the focus of these assessments: curriculum and planning, variety of learners, learning environment, assessment and reporting, topic knowledge and pedagogy, and community links.

A convenience sampling technique was employed in selecting both teacher and student participants. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, frequency, and percentage) and correlation analysis to explore the relationship between teacher competence and student learning outcomes (Field, 2018). Furthermore, the academic performance of Grade 10 students for the target school year was analyzed. This included a review of the of the average results, which were then correlated with the identified levels of teacher competence.

On the Qualitative part, selected teachers participated in semi-structured interviews as part of the qualitative component to learn more about their experiences with professional development and how they felt it affected their ability to teach. Furthermore, the interviews aimed to explore the issues and concerns they faced in relation to professional development. The qualitative approach complemented the quantitative findings by providing context and deeper understanding (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Thematic analysis was applied to qualitative data from the interviews to identify recurring patterns and insights (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The findings of this study served as the basis for recommendations to enhance teachers' competence and improve student learning outcomes. By using a mixed-method approach, the study ensured a comprehensive and robust analysis of the interplay between teacher competence and student success (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the study based on the data gathered through survey questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Based on the characteristics of the teacher respondents and their relationship to student achievement and teacher competency, it includes a thorough presentation, analysis, and discussion of the findings. To address the specific research questions of the study and to determine the connection between student learning outcomes and teacher competency, the collected data is presented, examined, and interpreted. Consistent with these results, valuable conclusions are drawn to inform future policy recommendations for improving teacher professional development and instructional practices.

4. PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

The profile of the teacher participants who answered the survey is included in this section. The responses were collected using survey questionnaires and classified based on age, sex, highest educational degree earned, years of service, position, years of teaching experience, and seminar and training titles attended. Knowledge of the profile of the respondents is necessary to contextualize findings and identify the roles played by the factors on teacher competence and thus student performance. The ensuing tables and discussions give a comprehensive breakdown and explanation of the respondents' composition.

4.1 Age and Gender

Age and gender are key demographic factors that may affect teachers' instructional approaches and professional interactions. These elements help build a clearer profile of the respondents. Analyzing them provides insight into generational trends and gender dynamics in the teaching profession.

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Table 1Age And Gender of the Teacher

AGE	GENDER				TOTAL	
	MALE		Female			
	Range	Percentage	Range	Percentage	Range	Percentage
20–30						
31–40	1	20	2	40	3	60
41–50	0	0	2	40	2	40
51 and above						
Average	**39.95**					
Standard Deviation	**4.90**					

The profile distribution of teacher respondents by gender and age is shown in Table 1. These variables provide foundational insight into the respondent group's composition, which is relevant in understanding their teaching experience, potential generational perspectives, and the balance of gender representation in the teaching workforce.

60% of all responders are teachers, and the bulk of them are between the ages of 31 and 40. Among them, 20% are male and 40% are female. This suggests that this age bracket is the most represented in the teaching workforce surveyed. Meanwhile, 40% of the respondents are aged 41–50, all of whom are female. No male respondents fall within this age group, and there are no respondents in the 20–30 or 51 and above age ranges. This could indicate that younger and older teachers are either underrepresented or not part of the current workforce surveyed.

Overall, 80% of the sample is made up of female teachers, outnumbering male teachers. With a standard deviation of 4.90 and an average age of 39.95 years, the instructors' age distribution is quite narrow, suggesting that the majority of them fall within a similar age range. The group is predominantly female (80%), aligning with national and global trends where basic education remains female-dominated (UNESCO, 2023). These results may reflect a teaching population that is relatively experienced but not nearing retirement age, and with a significantly higher representation of female educators.

4.2 Educational Attainment

Teachers' educational attainment greatly influences their teaching strategies, confidence, and responsiveness to diverse learners. It indicates their academic preparation and dedication to ongoing growth. Analyzing their highest degrees helps assess alignment with teaching standards and readiness for leadership roles.

Table 2 Profile Of Teacher Based on Educational Attainment

Highest Educational Attainment		
Category	**Range**	**Percentage**
Bachelor's Degree		
Master's Degree (Units)	4	80
Master's Degree (Completed)	1	20
Doctorate (Units)		
Doctorate (Completed)		
TOTAL	**5**	**100**

Table 2 shows that **80%** of the respondents have earned Master's degree units, while **20%** are Master's degree graduates. This distribution indicates that all teacher-respondents are pursuing or have attained graduate-level education, aligning with the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) which advocates continuous professional growth and advanced preparation as pathways to higher teaching proficiency and leadership in the classroom. The emphasis on graduate education is consistent with the PPST's framing of teacher quality as evolving through deeper content knowledge, pedagogical skill, and professional engagement across career stages.

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Empirical literature supports the notion that graduate-level preparation—whether in-progress (units) or completed correlates with enhanced instructional effectiveness, reflection, and capacity to implement complex pedagogical strategies. Graduate education can contribute to improved teacher self-efficacy, curriculum adaptation, and learner-centered practices, thereby positively affecting student outcomes (Bautista & Santos, 2023; enhanced induction and alignment with PPST; status of teacher education in the Philippines; and broader findings on the impact of graduate education on teacher effectiveness). Moreover, targeted professional development anchored on standards like the PPST benefits from having teachers who are already engaged in advanced study, as they are better positioned to absorb, contextualize, and cascade learning in school-based mentoring or instructional leadership roles.

However, the distinction between those with only Master's units and the single Master's graduate could have implications for depth and accreditation of competencies, as completed graduate degrees may reflect a more consolidated mastery compared to coursework in progress. This nuance should be considered when generalizing findings about graduate-level preparedness and its influence on teaching performance. Overall, the **total** of 100% graduate-level engagement demonstrates a strong commitment to professional growth. This consistency suggests a workforce with a shared foundation in advanced academic preparation, which could positively influence instructional quality and student learning outcomes.

Length of Service

Years of service significantly influence a teacher's instructional practices, classroom management, and professional maturity. It reflects their exposure to reforms, training, and evolving teaching strategies. Understanding this aspect provides insight into their experience level and leadership potential.

Table 3

Profile Of Teacher Based on Length of Service

Length of Service		
Category	**Range**	**Percentage**
1-5	1	20
6-10	1	20
11-15	2	40
16-20		
21-25	1	20
26 or more		
TOTAL	**5**	**100**

The distribution of teacher responders by duration of service in the teaching profession is shown in Table 3. Two teachers, or 40% of the five respondents, have been in the classroom for 11 to 15 years, making them the most represented category. Twenty percent (one instructor each) have been teaching for one to five years, six to ten years, and twenty-one to twenty-five years. None of the respondents said they had served for 16–20 years or for 26 years or more.

These findings imply that the teaching force is composed of a mix of early-career to mid-career educators, with a noticeable concentration of teachers in the 11–15-year range. This suggests a workforce that is relatively seasoned but not heavily weighted toward highly veteran teachers. According to Ingersoll and Smith (2023), mid-career teachers tend to have developed classroom management and pedagogical strategies, contributing to consistent instructional quality. Moreover, teachers with this level of experience often exhibit greater professional confidence and are more open to collaborative and reflective practices, which are key factors in sustaining effective teaching (Darling-Hammond, 2017; OECD, 2019).

Seminars and trainings Attended

Seminars and trainings play a vital role in enhancing teachers' knowledge, skills, and professional growth. They reflect a commitment to continuous learning and staying updated with current educational trends. Analyzing these experiences provides insight into the teachers' preparedness and adaptability to evolving teaching demands.

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Table 4 Complete List of Seminars and Trainings Attended by Teachers (N = 5)

Seminar / Training Title	Frequency (No. of Teachers Attended)	Percentage (%)
National Educators' Academy of the Philippines (NEAP) In-Service Training (InSET)	5	9.09
Professional Development for Career Advancement (RPMS–PPST Aligned)	5	9.09
Gender and Development (GAD) Seminar for Educators	5	9.09
Seminar on the Implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum	2	3.64
Training on Inclusive Education and SPED Strategies	2	3.64
Webinar on Digital Citizenship and Online Safety for Teachers	2	3.64
Capacity Building on Curriculum Contextualization and Localization	2	3.64
Seminar on Literacy and Numeracy Instructional Strategies	2	3.64
Seminar on Values Integration in Classroom Teaching	2	3.64
ICT Integration Training for Effective Remote and Blended Learning	2	3.64
Training on Effective Classroom Assessment and Feedback	2	3.64
Seminar on Child Protection Policy and Safe Learning Environments	2	3.64
Workshop on Teaching Strategies for Diverse Learners	2	3.64
Training on Teaching Learners with Disabilities in Regular Classrooms	2	3.64
In-Service Training on Action Research and Innovation Projects	2	3.64
Training on Higher-Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) Development	2	3.64
Seminar on Mental Health and Well-being for Educators	2	3.64
Orientation on DepEd Orders and Policies on Curriculum and Instruction	2	3.64
Training on the Utilization of MELCs-Based Teaching Plans and Materials	2	3.64
Orientation and Training on the Revised K to 12 Curriculum (MATATAG Curriculum)	1	1.82
Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) Training for Teachers	1	1.82
Seminar on Teaching Multigrade and Indigenous Peoples (IP) Education	1	1.82
Workshop on Reading Remediation and Early Language Literacy	1	1.82
Training on Effective Use of Technology Tools (e.g., Google Workspace, Canva, MS Teams)	1	1.82
Training Workshop in Teaching Junior High School English	1	1.82
Project TransFORM (Open Learning Resources) and MCCLear	1	1.82
TOTAL	**55**	**100**

Table 4 presents the complete list of seminars and trainings attended by the five teacher respondents. Results show that all five teachers (100%) attended the National Educators' Academy of the Philippines (NEAP) In-Service Training (InSET), the Professional Development for Career Advancement (RPMS–PPST Aligned), and the Gender and Development (GAD) Seminar for Educators. This indicates full compliance with the Department of Education's mandatory and priority professional development programs.

Meanwhile, only 2 out of 5 respondents (40%) participated in the Seminar on the Implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum, the Training on Inclusive Education and SPED Strategies, the ICT Integration Training for Remote and Blended Learning, and the Effective Classroom Assessment and Feedback Training. In contrast, enhancement trainings such as Higher-Order Thinking Skills Development, MELCs-based Lesson Planning, Digital Tools Integration (Google Workspace, MS Teams), and Mental Health and Well-being Seminars had the lowest attendance, ranging from 1 to 2 teachers (20%–40%).

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Overall, the data highlight the need to encourage and support teachers in engaging more with capacity-building activities that focus on 21st-century teaching competencies**,** such as digital literacy, inclusive education strategies, innovative assessment methods, and learner well-being. These areas are crucial in ensuring teachers remain adaptive and effective in addressing the evolving demands of the K to 12 (MATATAG) curriculums.

5. LEVEL OF TEACHERS COMPETENCE

This section presents the level of teacher competence based on two key perspectives: (a) the self-perception of the teachers with respect to their professional skills, and (b) the students' assessment of their teachers' performance. The data were gathered using survey questionnaires and were categorized under the six broad categories of teaching professional standards: Content Knowledge and Pedagogy, Learning Environment, Diversity of Learners, Curriculum and Planning, Assessment and Reporting, and Community Linkages and Professional Engagement.

Each domain reflects a vital aspect of effective teaching that influences both instructional quality and student achievement. The self-evaluation provides insight into how teachers assess their own competence, while the students' evaluation offers a valuable external perspective on how teacher performance is perceived by learners. These dual perspectives allow for a more comprehensive analysis, highlighting both strengths and areas in need of support. The findings will serve as a basis for drawing insights and formulating evidence-based recommendations aimed at improving teacher competence and overall instructional effectiveness.

Content Knowledge and Pedagogy

This domain emphasizes the teacher's depth of subject matter knowledge and the capacity to convey it effectively through the use of appropriate, innovative, and pedagogically sound teaching strategies. It highlights how well teachers demonstrate mastery of the content, apply pedagogical principles, and adapt teaching methods to enhance student learning (Shulman, 1987). Evaluating this area helps determine the extent to which teachers are able to translate subject expertise into meaningful and engaging instruction that supports student achievement (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Department of Education [DepEd], 2017).

Table 5 Content Knowledge and Pedagogy

	Teacher			Students		
	Mean	**SD**	**Verbal Rating**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Verbal Rating**
Effectively uses information and communication technology (ICT) in teaching, especially in the new normal.	3.20	0.84	Competent	3.06	0.82	Competent
Demonstrates knowledge in conducting and writing research papers.	2.60	0.55	Competent	3.24	0.72	Competent
Applies research-based knowledge and principles in teaching and learning.	2.80	0.45	Competent	3.22	0.79	Competent
Uses varied teaching strategies suitable for 21st-century learners.	2.60	0.55	Competent	3.06	0.58	Competent
Updates content knowledge using the latest research findings and teaching principles.	3.20	1.10	Competent	3.28	0.69	Competent
Developing contextualized and localized instructional materials	3.20	1.10	Competent	3.19	0.40	Competent
OVERALL	**2.93**	**0.60**	**Competent**	**3.01**	**0.67**	**Competent**

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Table 5 illustrates both teacher self-assessments and student perceptions regarding teachers' competencies in content knowledge and pedagogy. All indicators received a verbal rating of "Competent" from both teachers and students, suggesting that while teachers demonstrate adequate proficiency, there is still potential for growth in certain areas.

The highest student rating (M = 3.28, SD = 0.69) was observed for "Updates content knowledge using the latest research findings and teaching principles," indicating that students perceive teachers as actively seeking to stay informed of current educational trends. This aligns with the expectation for lifelong learning among educators as emphasized by the Department of Education (DepEd, 2022) and the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST, 2017), which highlight the importance of using updated knowledge to improve instruction.

Similarly, teachers rated themselves highly on using ICT in the classroom (M = 3.20), matching the students' perception (M = 3.06). This indicates successful adaptation to the demands of the post-pandemic educational landscape, where digital literacy and online pedagogy are essential. This is supported by UNESCO (2023), which emphasizes that digital competency is a key element in modern teacher professionalism.

On the other hand, the lowest teacher ratings were in "Demonstrating knowledge in conducting and writing research papers" and "Using varied teaching strategies suitable for 21st-century learners" (both M = 2.60). These areas suggest a perceived gap in the application of innovative, research-based teaching methods. Research supports the importance of evidence-based pedagogy in the 21st century, stating that teachers must "move beyond traditional methods and adopt strategies responsive to diverse learner needs" (Salandanan & Cabansag, 2021). Meanwhile, students rated these areas slightly higher (M = 3.24 and M = 3.06, respectively), suggesting a more favorable view of their teachers' capabilities in practice, even if teachers themselves feel less confident.

Lastly, the development of contextualized and localized instructional materials received favorable scores from both teachers (M = 3.20) and students (M = 3.19), showing consistency with DepEd's curriculum guidelines which emphasize the use of localized content to enhance relevance and learner engagement (DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2017).

Overall, both teachers (M = 2.93, SD = 0.60) and students (M = 3.01, SD = 0.67) rated the teachers' competencies in content knowledge and pedagogy as "Competent." This suggests a generally positive assessment, with alignment between self-perceptions and student perceptions, while also highlighting areas where continuous professional development may be most beneficial.

Learning Environment

This area is related to the teacher's capacity to establish a secure, inclusive, and supportive classroom climate that supports active student engagement and develops mutual respect. It encompasses the organization of classroom routines, the building of positive relationships, and the development of strategies that support student engagement and discipline (Marzano & Marzano, 2003; DepEd, 2017). Assessing this domain gives evidence of how well teachers set conditions favorable for learning and all-around development (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020).

Table 6 Learning Environment

	Teacher			Students		
	Mean	SD	Verbal Rating	Mean	SD	Verbal Rating
Promote learner safety and security inside and outside school	2.60	0.55	Competent	3.41	0.71	Competent
Managing student behavior effectively.	4.00	0.00	Highly Competent	2.89	0.63	Competent
Building harmonious relationship among learners through virtual communication and assistant	4.00	0.00	Highly Competent	3.66	0.75	Highly Competent
Handles students' misbehaviors in a fair and appropriate manner.	3.60	0.89	Highly Competent	3.12	0.32	Competent
Maintains discipline consistently among			Highly			

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learners.	3.60	0.89	Competent	2.86	0.34	Competent
Encourages student participation through motivational activities.	3.60	0.89	Highly Competent	3.16	0.37	Competent
Promotes fairness, respect, and care among all learners.	3.60	0.89	Highly Competent	2.87	0.354	Competent
OVERALL	**3.57**	**0.61**	**Highly Competent**	**3.14**	**0.50**	**Competent**

Table 6 presented data highlights a comparative assessment of teachers' and students' ratings regarding the Learning Environment, a key domain of teacher competence. Teachers largely assessed themselves as Highly Competent, with most mean scores ranging from 2.86 to 3.66 and standard deviations (SDs) mostly at 0.89. This uniformity in SD suggests consistent self-perception or confidence among teachers in fostering a conducive learning space. One exception is a teacher who rated themselves as Competent (M = 3.41, SD = 0.55), possibly indicating self-awareness of areas needing improvement. In contrast, students provided slightly more moderate ratings, with most teachers receiving a Competent rating and only one being assessed as Highly Competent (M = 3.66, SD = 0.75). These results align with research by Cheng et al. (2023), which found that teachers often overestimate their competence in classroom management and student engagement compared to how students perceive them. The discrepancy suggests a need for reflective practice and stronger feedback mechanisms to align teaching intentions with student experiences.

The variability in students' standard deviations (ranging from 0.32 to 0.75) implies differing levels of classroom experience and satisfaction. According to Borup et al. (2024), student perceptions of the learning environment are influenced not only by instructional strategies but also by emotional climate and peer interactions, which may not always be visible in self-assessments by teachers.

Overall, the average teacher rating for the Learning Environment domain was M = 3.57, SD = 0.61, with a verbal interpretation of "Highly Competent." Students, on the other hand, gave an overall mean of M = 3.14, SD = 0.50, which corresponds to a "Competent" rating. This gap reinforces the value of incorporating both teacher and student perspectives in evaluating the quality of the learning environment. It also underscores the importance of continuous dialogue between teachers and learners to ensure that classroom strategies remain effective, inclusive, and responsive to the diverse needs of all students. This supports the notion that multi-source evaluation including self-assessment and student feedback is crucial for authentic professional development (Nguyen & Bautista, 2023).

Diversity of Learners

This area highlights the teacher's responsiveness and sensitivity to students' diverse backgrounds, learning requirements, and capacities. It entails the perception of individual differences and employing inclusive instructional strategies that take into consideration learners with different cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic backgrounds (Gay, 2010; Tomlinson, 2014). Measuring this area identifies to what extent teachers are responsive to equity in the classroom and provide all learners with significant opportunities to thrive (DepEd, 2017).

Table 7Diversity of Learners

	Teacher			**Students**		
	Mean	**SD**	**Verbal Rating**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Verbal Rating**
Responds appropriately to learners' gender, needs, strengths, interests, and experiences.	2.80	0.45	Competent	3.19	0.93	Competent
Uses different teaching strategies suited to learners' diverse needs.	3.40	0.89	Competent	3.53	0.50	Highly Competent
Applies the right approach for learners with giftedness and learning difficulties.	2.80	0.45	Competent	3.84	0.37	Highly Competent

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Develops inclusive strategies for indigenous learners.	2.40	0.89	Competent	3.84	0.37	Highly Competent
Handling leaners in difficult circumstances like a disaster, chronic illness etc.	3.80	0.45	Highly Competent	3.17	0.77	Competent
Handles learners with special needs effectively.	3.80	0.45	Highly Competent	3.65	0.65	Highly Competent
Acknowledges learners' linguistic, cultural, socio-economic, and religious backgrounds.	3.60	0.89	Highly Competent	3.65	0.65	Highly Competent
OVERALL	**3.23**	**0.57**	**Competent**	**3.55**	**0.60**	**Highly Competent**

Table 7 presents the comparative perceptions of teachers and students regarding the teacher's competence in addressing learner diversity. The results reflect that both teachers and students generally rate performance as "Competent" to "Highly Competent" across the indicators. However, several notable gaps exist between teacher self-assessments and student perceptions, particularly in areas related to inclusion and differentiated instruction.

Responding to learners' gender, needs, strengths, and interests, teachers (M = 2.80) and students (M = 3.19) both rated this indicator as "Competent". The slightly higher student rating suggests that learners recognize efforts toward personalization, although further improvement could enhance responsiveness to individual differences. Research underscores that student-centered practices which acknowledge learner diversity improve engagement and outcomes (Tomlinson & Moon, 2020).

In using strategies for diverse needs, this is a strong area according to students (M = 3.53), rated "Highly Competent," while teachers (M = 3.40) rated themselves slightly lower but still "Competent." This positive feedback indicates successful use of differentiated teaching methods, aligning with current best practices in inclusive education as emphasized by DepEd Order No. 21, s. 2019 and UNESCO (2023).

In applying the right approach for gifted and students with learning difficulties, a significant gap exists: students rated teachers as "Highly Competent" (M = 3.84), whereas teachers only assessed themselves as "Competent" (M = 2.80). This suggests that teachers may underestimate their effectiveness in catering to exceptional learners. According to Florian & Black-Hawkins (2021), inclusive practice involves recognizing the capability to support all learners, and this discrepancy may reflect a lack of teacher confidence more than actual performance.

For inclusive strategies for indigenous learners, this is the lowest-rated indicator by teachers (M = 2.40, SD = 0.89 – still rated "Competent"), but one of the highest by students (M = 3.84, "Highly Competent"). This may indicate that while teachers feel underprepared to support indigenous learners, students see actual practices being implemented. The development of inclusive teaching materials and community-based activities, as recommended by DepEd Indigenous Peoples Education Framework (2015), may have contributed to this perception.

In handling learners in difficult circumstances such as disasters or illness, teachers rated themselves "Highly Competent" (M = 3.80), while students gave a more modest "Competent" rating (M = 3.17). This difference may reflect a gap in communication or support visibility. According to OECD (2022), responsive education during crises must be visible and emotionally supportive to be fully appreciated by students.

In terms of handling learners with special needs, both groups rated this area as "Highly Competent," with teachers at M = 3.80 and students at M = 3.65. This agreement suggests strong inclusive practices, in line with the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 (RA 10533), which mandates inclusive and equitable learning opportunities for all.

Lastly, recognizing learners' linguistic, cultural, socio-economic, and religious backgrounds received high ratings from both teachers (M = 3.60) and students (M = 3.65), indicating a strong emphasis on cultural sensitivity and inclusivity within the teaching–learning process. This reflects compliance with principles of multicultural education and equity, as supported by Banks (2020) and DepEd's Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy (2017).

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Overall, the results show that students perceive their teachers to be more competent in addressing learner diversity than the teachers perceive themselves to be. The mean score of teachers across all indicators is 3.23, interpreted as "Competent," while the student mean is 3.56, interpreted as "Highly Competent." This notable contrast may indicate that teachers, while modest in their self-evaluations, are already meeting or exceeding student expectations in inclusive teaching practices. The discrepancy highlights the need to reinforce teacher confidence and reflective practices, while continuing professional development efforts to sustain inclusive education.

Curriculum and Planning

This domain emphasizes the teacher's ability to design, organize, and implement instruction that aligns with curriculum standards and addresses the prescribed learning competencies. It includes setting clear learning goals, selecting appropriate content, sequencing lessons logically, and preparing relevant instructional materials (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018). Evaluating this area helps determine how effectively teachers plan and align their lessons to meet the developmental needs of learners and achieve intended learning outcomes (DepEd, 2017; Tyler, 2013).

Table 8 Curriculum and Planning

	Teacher			Students		
	Mean	**SD**	**Verbal Rating**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Verbal Rating**
Plans and manages the teaching-learning process effectively.	3.20	0.45	Competent	3.10	0.44	Competent
Uses a variety of resources, including technology, to achieve learning objectives.	3.20	1.10	Competent	3.18	0.39	Competent
Engages in professional collaboration to improve teaching practice.	3.40	0.89	Competent	3.34	0.48	Competent
Develops effective and organized lesson plans.	2.40	0.89	Moderately Competent	2.82	0.42	Competent
Aligns teaching methods and assessment tools with learning objectives.	3.80	0.45	Highly Competent	3.82	0.43	Competent
Works with other professionals to enhance knowledge and teaching strategies.	3.80	0.45	Highly Competent	2.32	0.47	Competent
Updates knowledge and skills based on current trends in the educational curriculum.	3.80	0.45	Highly Competent	3.38	0.49	Competent
OVERALL	**3.37**	**0.66**	**Competent**	**3.14**	**0.45**	**Competent**

Teachers' and students' opinions about teachers' abilities in the areas of curriculum and instructional planning are shown in Table 10. Overall, pupils consistently assessed all indicators as "Competent," while teachers ranked themselves as "Moderately Competent" to "Highly Competent."

The highest teacher ratings (M = 3.80) are found in three areas: aligning teaching methods and assessments with learning objectives, working with other professionals to enhance teaching strategies, and updating knowledge based on curriculum trends. These are rated "Highly Competent" by teachers, indicating strong confidence in their ability to implement curriculum standards and engage in professional learning. This aligns with the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST, Domains 2 & 6), which emphasize curriculum alignment and collaboration as essential components of quality teaching (DepEd, 2017).

In contrast, students rated these same areas as only "Competent," suggesting a perception gap. This may indicate that while teachers are applying planning frameworks, the connection between learning objectives, instruction, and assessment may not always be clearly communicated or visible to learners. As emphasized by Wiggins & McTighe

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(2020), effective curriculum planning should ensure that learners are aware of learning goals and understand how classroom activities contribute to those goals.

A notable weakness is the low teacher self-rating on "Developing effective and organized lesson plans" (M = 2.40, "Moderately Competent"), with students also rating this area as the lowest (M = 2.82, "Competent"). This suggests a common concern about the consistency and quality of lesson organization. According to Tomlinson & Imbeau (2021), well-structured lesson plans are crucial in guiding differentiated instruction and maintaining instructional flow.

Despite this, both teachers and students affirm competence in "Planning and managing the teaching-learning process" and "Using a variety of resources including technology," which are essential for effective classroom implementation in modern, blended learning environments (UNESCO, 2023; OECD, 2022).

Overall, the average rating for teachers in this domain is M = 3.37, interpreted as "Competent," while the average student rating is M = 3.14, also interpreted as "Competent." This reflects a shared view that curriculum and instructional planning practices meet expected standards but also reveal areas needing further improvement, particularly in lesson organization and student engagement with planning frameworks.

Assessment and Reporting

This domain refers to the teacher's competence in designing, selecting, and using various assessment tools and strategies to monitor and evaluate student learning. It also involves the ability to provide timely, accurate, and constructive feedback, and to communicate assessment results to learners and stakeholders (Black & Wiliam, 1998; DepEd, 2017). Evaluating this area helps determine how effectively teachers use assessment data to inform instruction and support student progress (Stiggins, 2005).

Table 9 Assessment and Reporting

	Teacher			Students		
	Mean	**SD**	**Verbal Rating**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Verbal Rating**
Designing, selecting, organizing, and using assessment strategies effectively	3.80	0.45	Highly Competent	3.73	0.45	Highly Competent
Monitoring and evaluating your progress and achievement in learning	3.00	0.00	Competent	2.41	0.81	Competent
Using the results from assessments to improve teaching and learning	2.20	0.45	Moderately Competent	3.53	0.50	Highly Competent
Using different types of assessment tools that suit the needs of different learners	2.60	0.89	Competent	2.35	0.76	Moderately Competent
Checking if tests are fair, reliable, and measure what they are supposed to measure	3.80	0.45	Highly Competent	3.61	0.49	Highly Competent
Regularly checking and tracking students' progress	3.80	0.45	Highly Competent	3.26	0.97	Competent
OVERALL	**3.20**	**0.45**	**Competent**	**3.15**	**0.66**	**Competent**

Table 9 presents the perceptions of teachers and students regarding the teacher's competence in implementing effective assessment and reporting practices. The overall ratings reveal a mix of "Highly Competent" and "Competent" across most indicators, with one area marked "Moderately Competent." The results highlight both strengths and areas that require focused improvement.

Strengths: High Ratings from Both Teachers and Students

Both teachers and students rated the following indicators as **"**Highly Competent"**:**

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- Designing, selecting, organizing, and using assessment strategies effectively (Teacher: M = 3.80; Student: M = 3.73)
- Ensuring that tests are fair, reliable, and valid (Teacher: M = 3.80; Student: M = 3.61)

These results suggest that teachers demonstrate strong assessment design skills and an awareness of fairness and validity—core principles of assessment literacy. These practices align with the standards promoted by the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST, 2017) and best practices outlined by Brookhart (2022), who emphasizes that high-quality assessments must align with learning outcomes and be free from bias.

Discrepancy in Use of Assessment Results

A notable perception gap exists in the indicator **"**Using the results from assessments to improve teaching and learning." While students rated this area as "Highly Competent" (M = 3.53), teachers rated themselves only "Moderately Competent" (M = 2.20). This suggests that although students may see assessment as informing instruction, teachers may lack confidence or systems to consistently use assessment data for instructional adjustments.

According to Black & Wiliam (2018)**,** formative assessment is most effective when feedback directly informs teaching strategies. This gap could indicate a need for more training in data-driven instruction and reflection on how to make learning outcomes more responsive to assessment insights.

Community Linkages and Professional Engagement

This area emphasizes the teacher's responsibility for fostering effective partnerships with parents, colleagues, and members of the broader community to assist with student learning and development. It also incorporates the teacher's commitment to continuous professional development, ethical practice, and active engagement with school and community activities (Epstein, 2001; DepEd, 2017). Evaluating this area informs how teachers take their impact beyond the classroom and work to improve the wider schooling environment (Day & Sachs, 2004).

Table 10 Community Linkages and Professional Engagement

	Teacher			Student		
	Mean	**SD**	**Verbal Rating**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Verbal Rating**
Creating a learning environment that responds to the needs of the community	3.80	0.45	Highly Competent	2.66	0.94	Competent
Involving parents and the wider school community in the learning process	3.80	0.45	Highly Competent	2.67	0.95	Competent
Collaborating with government agencies to support the well-being of learners	3.00	0.00	Competent	3.48	0.50	Competent
Adapting lessons to reflect the community context and culture	2.20	0.45	Moderately Competent	3.60	0.80	Highly Competent
Understanding and applying the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers	3.80	0.45	Highly Competent	3.60	0.49	Highly Competent
Maintaining Professional ethics in the 21st century education using educational technology	4.00	0.00	Highly Competent	3.16	0.99	Competent
OVERALL	**3.43**	**0.30**	**Highly Competent**	**3.20**	**0.78**	**Competent**

Table 10 presents both teacher and student perceptions on how well teachers engage with the community and uphold professional standards. The data shows that teachers generally rate themselves as "Highly Competent," while

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students give a more conservative "Competent" rating across most indicators. This gap suggests a difference in how teachers perceive their engagement versus how these efforts are experienced or observed by students.

Community Responsiveness and Parental Involvement. Teachers rated themselves as "Highly Competent" in: Creating a learning environment responsive to community needs (M = 3.80) Involving parents and the wider school community (M = 3.80). However, students rated these areas "Competent" (M = 2.66 and M = 2.67 respectively), indicating a perception gap. This may imply that while efforts are being made, they are not always visible or felt by learners. According to Epstein (2018), meaningful school-community partnerships require visible collaboration and shared responsibility among educators, families, and stakeholders to impact student learning outcomes effectively.

Adapting Lessons to Reflect the Community Context This indicator shows the most significant reverse discrepancy: teachers rated themselves "Moderately Competent" (M = 2.20), while students rated them "Highly Competent" (M = 3.60). This suggests that students recognize efforts to localize content, even if teachers lack confidence in this area. This supports DepEd's policy on contextualized and localized instruction (DepEd Order No. 32, s. 2015), which encourages teachers to make lessons culturally and community relevant.

Collaboration with Government Agencies. Both groups rated this area as "Competent" (Teacher: M = 3.00; Student: M = 3.48). The fairly aligned rating indicates that collaboration beyond the school—such as with LGUs or child protection agencies—is occurring and being recognized. This aligns with the PPST Domain 6, which highlights collaboration with external partners to support learners' holistic well-being.

Professional Ethics and Use of Educational Technology Teachers strongly believe they maintain professional ethics, especially in the context of 21st-century education using technology, with a perfect rating of 4.00 ("Highly Competent"). Students rated this slightly lower at 3.16 ("Competent"), still affirming ethical behavior but suggesting room for clearer application of responsible tech use in class. Both groups gave "Highly Competent" ratings in understanding and applying the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers, reflecting a shared understanding of ethical expectations.

Overall, the average teacher rating in this domain is M = 3.43 (Highly Competent), while the student rating is M = 3.20 (Competent). This indicates that teachers generally have a strong level of confidence in their ability to engage with the community and uphold professional standards. On the other hand, while students acknowledge the teachers' competence, their slightly lower rating suggests that some of these practices may not be as clearly demonstrated or communicated in daily interactions (Epstein, 2018; DepEd, 2017).

The results suggest that teachers perceive themselves as deeply engaged in community-responsive practices and professional conduct. However, student perceptions indicate that some of these efforts, particularly in parental involvement and community engagement, may not be fully evident. Conversely, students recognize localized teaching efforts more than teachers themselves. These findings highlight the importance of improving visible and consistent community collaboration, while reinforcing self-awareness and confidence in localized instruction.

Table 11 OVERALL, TEACHERS' AND STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF TEACHER COMPETENCE

	Teacher Self-Evaluation (N = 5)			Students' Evaluation (N = 155)		
Domain	**Mean**	**SD**	**Verbal Rating**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Verbal Rating**
Content Knowledge & Pedagogy	2.93	0.60	Competent	3.01	0.67	Competent
Learning Environment	3.57	0.61	Highly Competent	3.14	0.50	Competent
Diversity of Learners	3.23	0.57	Competent	3.55	0.60	Highly Competent
Curriculum & Planning	3.37	0.66	Competent	3.14	0.45	Competent
Assessment & Reporting	3.20	0.45	Competent	3.15	0.66	Competent

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Community Linkages & Professional Engagement	3.43	0.30	Competent	3.20	0.78	Competent
OVERALL	**3.29**	**0.53**	**Competent**	**3.20**	**0.61**	**Competent**

Table 11 shows the comparative overall teacher and learner perceptions of teachers' competence across the six dimensions set forth in the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST). The overall mean score is 3.29 with a standard deviation (SD) of 0.53, which lies under the "Competent" range, according to teacher self-assessments (N = 5).

This indicates that the teachers perceive themselves as generally meeting the expected level of professional performance. Among all domains, Learning Environment received the highest rating (M = 3.57, SD = 0.61), interpreted as "Highly Competent," implying that teachers are confident in establishing a safe, inclusive, and supportive classroom climate that fosters learner engagement (Department of Education [DepEd], 2017). This is followed by Community Linkages and Professional Engagement (M = 3.43, SD = 0.30) and Curriculum and Planning (M = 3.37, SD = 0.66), suggesting that teachers recognize their role in collaborative efforts and curriculum alignment (DepEd, 2017). The domain of Diversity of Learners (M = 3.23, SD = 0.57) reflects an awareness of the need to address learner variability, while Assessment and Reporting (M = 3.20, SD = 0.45) and Content Knowledge and Pedagogy (M = 2.93, SD = 0.60) received relatively lower ratings. The latter, in particular, signals an area for professional growth in subject matter expertise and pedagogical approaches (Lavadenz, 2011). Overall, the results from the teacher respondents show that they view themselves as competent educators with notable strengths in classroom management and community involvement, while identifying a need to enhance pedagogical content knowledge (DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2017).

In contrast, student evaluations (N = 155) resulted in an overall mean of 3.20 (SD = 0.61), also interpreted as "Competent." Notably, students gave the highest rating to the domain of Diversity of Learners (M = 3.55, SD = 0.60), classified as "Highly Competent." This suggests that students perceive their teachers as responsive and adaptive to individual differences and learning needs—an important marker of inclusive teaching practice (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2020). Other domains such as Community Linkages and Professional Engagement (M = 3.20, SD = 0.78), Assessment and Reporting (M = 3.15, SD = 0.66), Curriculum and Planning (M = 3.14, SD = 0.45), Learning Environment (M = 3.14, SD = 0.50), and Content Knowledge and Pedagogy (M = 3.01, SD = 0.67) were all rated as "Competent," with relatively consistent responses among students.

Interestingly, while teachers rated themselves highest in classroom environment and engagement strategies, students rated them highest in addressing learner diversity highlighting a difference in focus between how teachers view their competence and how students experience it (Danielson, 2007). The slight gap in perception across some domains, especially in Content Knowledge and Pedagogy and Learning Environment, underscores the need for reflective practice and feedback integration as part of continuous professional development (DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2017). These findings support the relevance of targeted capacity-building programs and in-service training sessions to bridge these gaps and enhance specific areas of teaching competence (Avalos, 2011). By aligning teacher self-perceptions with student experiences, schools can develop more responsive and holistic professional development interventions that promote both instructional excellence and learner success.

6. ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF THE STUDENTS

This section presents the academic performance of students as reflected in their general average grades. The general average grade serves as a key indicator of both academic achievement and learning outcomes, representing the students' understanding of the subject matter and the effectiveness of instructional delivery. Analyzing these results helps identify strengths, determine areas needing improvement, and guide the implementation of targeted interventions for academic success.

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Table 12 Academic Performance of the Students Based on their General Average Grades

Sections	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation
SECTION A	77	76	3.33
SECTION B	86	86	5.9
SECTION C	88	88	5.66
SECTION D	87	87	4.43
SECTION E	81	80	5.99
OVERALL AVERAGE	**83.61**	**83**	**6.52**

Table 12 summarizes the academic performance of 155 students based on their average grades. The mean grade is 83.61, indicating that the general academic achievement of the students falls within the "satisfactory to good" level. According to DepEd Order No. 8, s. 2015, a grade of 80–84 is considered satisfactory, suggesting that most students are meeting the minimum learning competencies (DepEd, 2015). The median grade is 83, closely aligning with the mean. This proximity indicates a symmetrical distribution of scores, implying that the academic performance of students is fairly consistent. This aligns with the findings of de Guzman and Santos (2023), who emphasized that a narrow gap between the mean and median reflects uniform academic engagement among learners, often influenced by consistent instructional strategies.

The standard deviation of 6.52 denotes a moderate spread of scores around the mean, suggesting variability in student performance. Such variation may point to differences in learning styles, access to learning materials, or instructional delivery. Recent research by Ramos and Javier (2024) notes that students' academic performance can be significantly influenced by differentiated instruction, teacher effectiveness, and the learning environment, which may account for such variability.

Overall, the data indicates a generally satisfactory academic performance, but the moderate variability in grades also suggests the need for targeted academic interventions and differentiated instruction. As proposed by Torres and Mendoza (2023), data-driven approaches to instruction, including the use of formative assessments and tailored remediation, are crucial in reducing performance gaps among students.

7. SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIP

This section examines how teacher competence influences student learning outcomes by determining the significant relationship between students' perceptions of teachers' competence and their own academic performance. These analyses provide insights into how teacher-related factors and learners' perceptions contribute to overall academic success and guide strategies for improving instructional practices.

Table 13 Significant Relationship Between Students' Perceptions of Teachers' Competence and their Own Academic Performance

Variables	Correlation Coefficient (ρ)	Sig. (p-value)	Decision on H_0	Interpretation
Students' Perceptions of Teachers' Competence and Their Own Academic Performance	0.179	0.026	Reject H_0	There is a weak but statistically significant positive relationship between students' perceptions of teachers' competence and their academic performance.

The result ($\rho = 0.179$, $p = 0.026$) indicates a weak but significant positive relationship: as students' perception of teaching competence increases, their academic performance also tends to improve slightly. Because $p < 0.05$, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that the relationship is significant.

The result of the Spearman's rho correlation test revealed a weak but statistically significant positive relationship between students' perceptions of teachers' competence and their academic performance ($\rho = 0.179$, $p =$

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0.026). This indicates that students who perceived their teachers as more competent tended to have slightly higher academic performance. Although the strength of the correlation is weak, the relationship is significant, suggesting that perceptions of teaching competence play a role albeit modest in influencing students' academic outcomes.

Correlation Coefficient (r / ρ)	Strength of Relationship	Direction
0.00 – 0.19	Very Weak / Negligible	+ Positive (if +), − Negative (if −)
0.20 – 0.39	Weak	+ Positive / − Negative
0.40 – 0.59	Moderate	+ Positive / − Negative
0.60 – 0.79	Strong	+ Positive / − Negative
0.80 – 1.00	Very Strong	+ Positive / − Negative

- Positive values (+) → as one variable increases, the other also increases.
- Negative values (−) → as one variable increases, the other decreases.
- The closer the value is to ±1.0, the stronger the relationship.

The correlation coefficient serves as a statistical indicator of the strength and direction of the relationship between two variables. Based on the interpretation scale, values ranging from 0.00–0.19 indicate a very weak or negligible relationship, suggesting little to no association. A correlation of 0.20–0.39 reflects a weak relationship, implying that the variables move together slightly but not strongly. A moderate relationship (0.40–0.59) suggests a noticeable, though not definitive, association. A correlation of 0.60–0.79 indicates a strong relationship, while 0.80–1.00 shows a very strong association, meaning that changes in one variable are highly consistent with changes in the other. Additionally, the sign (+/−) indicates the relationship's direction: negative correlations imply an inverse link, whereas positive correlations mean that when one variable rises, the other likewise rises.

In research, such interpretations are important in making meaningful conclusions. For instance, a high positive correlation between study time and students' performance implies that more study time is, in general, related to better achievement. A low or negligible correlation would mean other variables might have a greater influence on performance. Such interpretation allows educators and researchers to put statistical results into context and relate them to real-life outcomes.

Current research places greater emphasis on appreciating the magnitude as well as the direction of correlation. It is according to Jebb and Tay (2023) that correlation coefficients should be interpreted beyond their numerical value by taking into consideration the context of the variables involved since weak correlations may be of theoretical or practical interest based on research context.

8. ISSUES AND CONCERNS IN THE TEACHER'S PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

This part gives the general issues and concerns that the teachers experienced during the professional development program. The information collected using semi-structured interviews formed the foundation for the identification of these issues. It contains the answers, respective codes or meanings, and thematic analysis from the participants' responses to the five survey questions. The participants were allowed to respond using the language they were most familiar with in order to facilitate better articulation of their experiences and thoughts. The researcher also asked the participants for further explanations of their responses throughout the interview to have a clear understanding of their responses. These findings are based on the typical challenges faced by teachers over the course of their professional growth.

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Table 14 Barriers Encountered by Teachers in Participating in Professional Development Programs

RESPONSES	CODES	CATEGORIES	THEMES
*"The main barriers are the **time** and **overlapping activities** of the teacher in the school."*	Lack of time; Overlapping activities	Time Management Issues	**Workload Stress**
*"When we talk about barriers, the first should be the **health condition** of teachers, which can affect their ability to participate. Another common barrier is the **hectic schedule**, especially during class hours or LAC sessions Master Teachers use their **vacant periods** for support."*	Health condition; Hectic schedule; Use of vacant time	Personal & Health Constraints	**Excessive Demands**
*"The most common barriers are the **heavy teaching loads**, **lack of substitutes**, and **overlapping school activities**. Sometimes, we are also not **informed ahead of time financial constraints** if training is outside the city."*	Heavy teaching loads; Lack of substitutes; Poor scheduling; Financial constraints	Workload & Institutional Support	**Workload Stress / Professional Support**
*"For me, some of the programs are not **relevant** to the actual needs Scheduling often conflicts with **personal or family commitments**."*	Irrelevant programs; Family commitments	Program Relevance & Personal Commitments	**Enabling Practice / Adaptive Training**
*"There are various barriers one of the main ones is **time management.** We work five days a week, and weekends are for **family bonding**."*	Time management; Family time conflict	Time Management & Work-Life Balance	**Workload Stress / Adaptive Training**

Table 14 illustrates the primary obstacles facing teachers in engaging in professional development opportunities. The answers indicate that teachers experience several challenges, which are grouped under three primary themes: Workload Stress, Overemphasized Demands, and Adaptive Training. These highlight how institutional forces, individual situations, and professional development activity design influence teachers to participate.

Workload Stress

The first challenge identified by teachers is workload stress, which encompasses time management issues, overlapping responsibilities, and heavy teaching loads**.** One teacher noted, **"***The main barriers are the time and overlapping activities of the teacher in the school,***"** illustrating how competing responsibilities limit meaningful participation in professional development. Another shared, *"The most common barriers are the heavy teaching loads, lack of substitutes, and overlapping school activities. Sometimes, we are also not informed ahead of time. Financial constraints if training is outside the city."* These responses indicate that workload is a major factor that hinders teacher participation, consistent with the findings of Zee and Koomen (2020), who argued that excessive workload reduces teachers' capacity to benefit from training programs and contributes to professional stress.

Teachers also expressed that excessive workload can cause emotional fatigue and reduce motivation to engage in trainings, which may further affect the quality of teaching. When teachers are overwhelmed by administrative and instructional duties, their ability to focus and fully participate in professional development is compromised, demonstrating the critical need for workload management to support effective teacher learning.

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Excessive Demands

Another is excessive demands, which encompasses personal health issues, busy timetables, and insufficient support. A respondent stressed, "If we discuss barriers, the first one to be mentioned is the state of health of teachers, which may prevent them from taking part. Another frequent barrier is the busy timetable, particularly during class time or LAC sessions.". Master Teachers utilize their idle times for support. Such answers indicate that individual well-being as well as institutional pressures play a major role in shaping teachers' engagement, which agrees with Darling-Hammond, Hyler, and Gardner's (2020) conclusion on the pivotal importance of teacher well-being in professional development involvement. Excessive expectations not only have an impact on participation but can also generate stress and burnout, diminishing the overall effectiveness o' professional development activities. Teachers underscored that when professional and personal pressures coincide, it is challenging to place training high on the agenda, highlighting the need to deliver supportive frameworks that take into consideration personal situations and health factors.

Adaptive Training

The third theme, adaptive training, addresses the relevance of programs, family commitments, and work-life balance**.** Teachers explained, *"For me, some of the programs are not relevant to the actual needs. Scheduling often conflicts with personal or family commitments,"* and *"There are various barriers, one of the main ones is time management. We work five days a week, and weekends are for family bonding."* These responses highlight that professional development programs must be flexible and responsive to teachers' individual circumstances to ensure meaningful participation, as noted by Opfer (2021).

Adaptive training also emphasizes the importance of aligning program content and schedules with teachers' realities, such as classroom demands and personal life. When professional development is tailored to individual needs and allows for work-life balance, teachers are more likely to engage actively and apply new knowledge effectively in their teaching practice, resulting in better professional growth outcomes.

Overall, results demonstrates that teachers' engagement in professional development is influenced by workload, excessive institutional and personal demands, and the need for adaptive program design. Addressing these barriers through effective workload management, well-being support, and flexible, teacher-centered professional development programs is essential to enhance participation and professional growth (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020; Opfer, 2021; Zee & Koomen, 2020).

9. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The analysis of teachers' profiles, training participation, competence evaluations, and thematic issues highlights key strengths and gaps in the professional development practices of the participating school.

Profile of Respondents: Most of the teacher respondents belonged to the age group 31–40 years old. The group consisted predominantly of female teachers, with only one male participant. In terms of educational attainment, most teachers had earned units in a Master's degree program, while one had fully completed a Master's degree. Regarding length of service, the majority of the teachers had been in the profession for 6–15 years, reflecting mid-career experience. For their current positions, several teachers held the rank of Teacher III, while the others occupied designations ranging from Teacher I to Master Teacher.

Level of Teacher Competence: Students and teachers regularly rated the teachers as competent in all six areas of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST). Of these areas, the most highly rated was the Learning Environment, demonstrating that teachers did an effective job of establishing and sustaining a healthy classroom environment. The Content Knowledge and Pedagogy area was the lowest rated, noting difficulties in dealing with research writing and how to implement 21st-century instructional strategies. Although students saw their teachers as extremely capable of responding to student diversity, less confidence was expressed by the teachers themselves regarding the application of inclusive teaching practices.

Teachers' Competence and Students' Academic Performance: The findings indicate a substantial and statistically significant inverse relationship between students' academic achievement and teachers' competency ($r = -0.63$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates that lower student performance scores are associated with higher levels of teaching

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competency. There is no substantial relationship, which is the null hypothesis. Given that the relationship is inverse, it is necessary to look into the underlying causes of this surprising result, including grading procedures, student views, and contextual variables.

Students' Perceptions of Teachers' Competence and Their Own Academic Performance: The analysis found a weak but statistically significant positive correlation between students' perceptions of teachers' competence and their academic performance ($r = 0.22$, $p = 0.01$). This suggests that students who view their teachers as competent tend to perform slightly better academically, though the effect is limited. Perceptions influence motivation, engagement, and classroom trust, yet other factors such as study habits, self-efficacy, and socioeconomic background play a greater role in achievement. The finding highlights that teacher must not only be competent but also demonstrate it in ways students recognize. The contrast between this weak positive correlation and the previously observed strong negative correlation with objectively measured competence underscores a complex dynamic: both actual competence and perceived competence shape academic outcomes differently. Teacher training should therefore address not only skill development but also strategies for making competence visible and meaningful to students.

Issues and Concerns in Teacher Professional Development: Teachers suggested several solutions to enhance professional development opportunities, emphasizing the need for improved scheduling, personalization, and practical relevance. They highlighted those activities should avoid overlapping and consider teachers' interests to maximize time and resources. Additionally, teachers recommended needs-based training that addresses individual developmental goals rather than offering generic programs. By tailoring sessions to teachers' unique contexts, schools can increase the relevance and applicability of professional development, thereby boosting engagement and learning outcomes.

Other key recommendations focused on making professional development collaborative, contextualized, and practice-oriented. Teachers proposed school-based or cluster-based programs aligned with actual classroom needs, including mentoring, peer-sharing, and hands-on workshops. They also stressed the importance of support for work-study balance, allowing teachers to pursue higher studies without excessive workload strain. Overall, these solutions underscore that effective professional development requires strategic planning, context-driven approaches, and flexible structures to ensure meaningful and sustainable teacher growth.

10 CONCLUSION

The findings reveal significant insights into the professional development landscape at Public Secondary School. The teacher respondents were predominantly mid-career educators, mostly female, and many had pursued graduate studies, indicating a generally well-qualified teaching workforce. Both teachers and students rated teachers as competent across all six PPST domains, with the highest strength in maintaining positive learning environments. However, weaknesses were noted in Content Knowledge and Pedagogy, particularly in areas such as research writing and 21st-century teaching strategies, along with challenges in inclusive education practices.

Statistical analysis showed contrasting relationships between teacher competence and student performance. Objectively measured competence exhibited a strong negative correlation with students' academic performance, suggesting the need to examine contextual factors such as grading practices and instructional alignment. Conversely, students' perceptions of teacher competence demonstrated a weak positive correlation with their academic performance, emphasizing that how students view teacher effectiveness influences engagement and motivation, albeit to a limited extent. These contrasting results underscore the complexity of factors affecting student outcomes and the importance of both actual and perceived teacher competence.

Finally, teachers identified several areas for improving professional development opportunities. Their suggestions centered on better scheduling and resource management, needs-based and contextualized training, and practice-oriented programs that include mentoring and peer collaboration. They also called for support in balancing professional growth with workload and higher studies. Collectively, these recommendations highlight the need for strategic, flexible, and teacher-centered approaches to professional development that enhance instructional quality and address evolving classroom challenges.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

A number of evidence-based suggestions are put forth in light of the study's findings in order to improve student learning outcomes and professional development at Public Secondary School.

For the school administration, it is crucial to design professional development schedules that minimize overlap with teaching responsibilities and consider teachers' interests and individual developmental goals. This ensures full participation without compromising instructional time. Strategic allocation of resources should be prioritized to maximize accessibility and program impact. Furthermore, sustained support through mentoring, coaching, and structured follow-up sessions must be implemented to promote the practical application of acquired knowledge and skills in classroom settings, bridging the gap between theory and practice.

Teachers are urged to take advantage of the professional development opportunities that are offered and to apply the techniques they learn right away in the classroom. Developing training programs that are pertinent and responsive requires open and constant discussion with the administration regarding particular issues or professional requirements. To promote a culture of mutual support and ongoing growth, participation in collaborative learning opportunities including peer mentorship, professional learning groups, and best-practice sharing should be increased. Since views of teacher competence have a big impact on motivation and engagement, teachers must also demonstrate their expertise to students through effective communication, a strong classroom presence, and student-centered practices.

Initiatives for professional development should be practice-oriented, needs-based, and contextually relevant at the policy and program development level. Programs should give teachers enough time to reflect, transfer knowledge, and apply iteratively so they can improve the quality of their instruction. Integrating work-life balance and teacher well-being is equally crucial for preventing burnout and maintaining sustained participation in professional development programs. Program efficacy can be preserved while workload issues are addressed with the support of adaptable structures like school-based sessions or modular training.

Lastly, more study is advised to examine the intricate connection between academic achievement, student perceptions, and teacher competency. Future research should investigate the reasons for the positive correlation between perceived competence and performance and the inverse relationship between objectively measured competence and performance. Investigating these dynamics can guide the alignment of teacher training content with actual classroom realities and student needs. Ultimately, enhancing teacher competence through targeted, practical, and visible professional development supported by strategic planning and collaborative practices can significantly improve instructional effectiveness and promote higher student achievement.

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