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Teaching in a Changing Educational Landscape: A Qualitative Inquiry into Pedagogical Competencies, Instructional Adaptation, and Professional Practice among Public Secondary School Teachers in Andabuen National High School, Philippines

Iris Yap Tacac

Teacher III

Andabuen National High School

Benito Soliven South

Abstract

The rapidly evolving educational landscape has transformed the roles and responsibilities of teachers, requiring them to demonstrate pedagogical competence, instructional adaptability, and sustained professional growth. This study explored the pedagogical competencies, instructional adaptation strategies, and professional practices of public secondary school teachers in Andabuen National High School, Philippines. Using a qualitative phenomenological design, ten secondary school teachers were purposively selected as participants. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and reflective discussions and analyzed using Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis framework. Findings revealed six major themes: (1) learner-centered pedagogical competence as the foundation of effective teaching, (2) instructional adaptation in response to diverse learner needs, (3) technology integration and digital responsiveness, (4) classroom management and positive learning environments, (5) reflective practice and continuous professional growth, and (6) resilience and commitment amidst contemporary educational challenges. The findings suggest that effective teaching in contemporary contexts requires a combination of pedagogical knowledge, adaptability, technological competence, and reflective professionalism. The study recommends sustained professional development programs that strengthen adaptive teaching practices and support teacher well-being.

Keywords: *pedagogical competence, instructional adaptation, professional practice, teacher resilience, qualitative research, secondary education*

Introduction

Contemporary education is characterized by rapid technological advancement, curriculum reforms, learner diversity, and evolving societal expectations. These changes have significantly transformed teaching practices and increased the demand for highly competent and adaptable educators. Teachers are expected not only to possess strong content knowledge but also to demonstrate pedagogical expertise, technological proficiency, instructional flexibility, and reflective professional practice (Shulman, 1987; OECD, 2023). Effective teaching in the twenty-first century therefore requires the integration of pedagogical content knowledge, learner-centered approaches, and adaptive instructional strategies that respond to changing educational contexts.

Pedagogical competence remains one of the most important determinants of instructional effectiveness and student learning outcomes. Research suggests that teachers who demonstrate strong pedagogical competencies are better able to facilitate learner engagement, improve classroom experiences, and support academic achievement (Fauth et al., 2019). Furthermore, instructional competence is closely associated with student engagement, content mastery, and adaptability within diverse learning environments.

In the Philippine context, the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) emphasize the importance of content knowledge, pedagogy, assessment, learner diversity, learning environment, and professional engagement. However, public secondary school teachers continue to encounter challenges related to curriculum implementation, technology integration, learner diversity, and increasing professional demands.

Despite growing literature on teacher competence, limited qualitative studies have explored how secondary school teachers navigate contemporary educational demands in rural public school settings. This study addresses this gap by examining the lived experiences of teachers in Andabuen National High School.

Review of Related Literature

Pedagogical competence encompasses teachers' knowledge, skills, attitudes, and professional dispositions that enable effective instructional delivery. According to Shulman (1987), pedagogical content knowledge represents the integration of content expertise and teaching strategies that facilitate meaningful learning experiences. Effective teachers possess the ability to adapt instruction according to learner characteristics, educational contexts, and curriculum requirements.

Instructional adaptation refers to teachers' capacity to modify teaching strategies, learning activities, assessments, and instructional materials to accommodate diverse learner needs. Studies indicate that adaptability has become increasingly important in contemporary classrooms characterized by diverse learning abilities, technological innovations, and changing educational expectations (Fauth et al., 2019).

Professional practice likewise extends beyond classroom instruction and includes reflective practice, collaboration, professional development, and lifelong learning. Reflective practitioners continuously evaluate and improve their instructional approaches to enhance teaching effectiveness and learner outcomes (Larrivee, 2008).

Furthermore, professional development programs contribute significantly to enhancing teacher competencies, instructional effectiveness, and educational innovation. Teachers who engage in continuous learning demonstrate greater confidence and adaptability in responding to educational change (Apriliyanti, 2020).

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design to explore teachers' lived experiences regarding pedagogical competencies, instructional adaptation, and professional practice. The participants consisted of ten public secondary school teachers from Andabuen National High School selected through purposive sampling. Inclusion criteria included a minimum of three years of teaching experience and active classroom teaching responsibilities.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and reflective conversations. Interview questions focused on instructional practices, classroom experiences, adaptation strategies, professional growth, and challenges encountered in contemporary teaching. Data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis involving coding, categorization, theme generation, and interpretation. Ethical principles including informed consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation, and anonymity were strictly observed.

Findings and Discussion

Theme 1: Learner-Centered Pedagogical Competence as the Foundation of Effective Teaching

Participants emphasized the importance of understanding learners' needs, interests, and learning styles when designing instructional activities.

One participant stated:

"Hindi na sapat na magturo lang. Kailangan mong alamin kung paano natututo ang bawat estudyante."

Another teacher shared:

"Mas nagiging epektibo ang pagtuturo kapag learner-centered ang approach."

The findings suggest that pedagogical competence extends beyond content mastery and includes responsiveness to learners' characteristics. This finding supports Shulman's (1987) pedagogical content knowledge framework and studies highlighting the role of pedagogical competence in enhancing learning outcomes.

Theme 2: Instructional Adaptation in Response to Diverse Learner Needs

Participants consistently reported modifying instructional strategies according to learners' academic readiness, abilities, and learning preferences.

One teacher explained:

"Hindi pare-pareho ang kakayahan ng mga bata kaya kailangan naming mag-adjust."

Another participant remarked:

"Minsan binabago namin ang activities para mas maintindihan nila ang lesson."

The findings demonstrate the importance of instructional adaptability in addressing learner diversity. Adaptability enables teachers to create inclusive learning environments and improve learner participation. These findings align with studies emphasizing methodological flexibility and differentiated instruction.

Theme 3: Technology Integration and Digital Responsiveness

Participants identified technology as an essential component of contemporary teaching.

One teacher shared:

"Malaking tulong ang technology sa paggawa ng mas interactive na lessons."

Another stated:

"Patuloy naming pinag-aaralan ang paggamit ng digital tools para mas maging engaging ang klase."

The findings indicate that technological competence has become a critical aspect of modern pedagogy. Effective integration of technology enhances instructional delivery and learner engagement. These findings support the TPACK framework, which highlights the importance of integrating technology, pedagogy, and content knowledge.

Theme 4: Classroom Management and Positive Learning Environments

Participants emphasized the importance of creating safe, supportive, and respectful classroom environments.

One participant noted:

"Kapag maayos ang classroom environment, mas madaling matuto ang mga estudyante."

Another teacher explained:

"Ang magandang relasyon sa mga estudyante ay mahalaga para maging successful ang learning."

These findings indicate that effective classroom management contributes significantly to learner engagement and academic success. Similar findings have been reported in studies linking instructional competence and positive learning environments to improved educational outcomes.

Theme 5: Reflective Practice and Continuous Professional Growth

Participants viewed reflection and professional development as essential components of effective teaching.

One teacher stated:

"Laging may bagong natututunan sa pagtuturo kaya mahalaga ang reflection."

Another participant shared:

"Ang seminars at trainings ay nakakatulong para mapabuti ang aming practice."

The findings suggest that reflective practice enables teachers to evaluate and improve their instructional effectiveness. Continuous professional learning strengthens teacher competence and instructional innovation. These findings support studies emphasizing the role of professional development in teacher growth.

Theme 6: Resilience and Commitment Amidst Contemporary Educational Challenges

Participants described resilience as a necessary attribute for navigating increasing professional demands.

One participant shared:

"Maraming pagbabago at hamon pero patuloy kaming nag-aadjust para sa mga estudyante."

Another teacher remarked:

"Kahit mahirap, ginagawa namin ang lahat para matulungan ang mga learners."

The findings reveal that resilience enables teachers to maintain instructional effectiveness despite challenges related to workload, policy changes, and resource limitations. This reflects the evolving nature of teacher professionalism in contemporary educational contexts.

Conclusion

The study revealed that public secondary school teachers in Andabuen National High School demonstrate strong pedagogical competencies characterized by learner-centered instruction, instructional adaptability, technology integration, classroom management, reflective practice, and professional resilience. Teachers continuously adapt their instructional approaches to meet changing educational demands and learner needs. Effective teaching in contemporary educational settings requires not only content expertise but also flexibility, technological competence, and commitment to lifelong professional learning.

Implications of the Study

The findings highlight the need for educational institutions to strengthen professional development programs focusing on instructional adaptation, digital pedagogy, reflective practice, and teacher well-being. School leaders should create supportive environments that encourage collaboration, innovation, and continuous professional growth among teachers.

Recommendations

1. Strengthen school-based professional development programs on adaptive teaching practices.
2. Expand teacher training on technology integration and digital pedagogy.
3. Promote reflective practice through professional learning communities.
4. Enhance institutional support mechanisms for teacher well-being and resilience.
5. Conduct further qualitative and mixed-methods studies involving teachers from different educational contexts.

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