

Competence, challenges and adaptive strategies of beginning teachers

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Abstract: Beginning teachers employ various adaptive strategies in facing a wide range of challenges in the classroom to maintain teaching competence. The research study was conducted to identify the challenges, adaptive strategies, and competence of beginning teachers in the first district of Capiz during the school year 2023-2024. Participants of the study were 53 beginning elementary teachers selected through stratified random sampling. The research instruments used were the Individual Performance Commitment and Review Form (IPCRF) for competence and modified questionnaires for challenges from Ribot (2022) and adaptive strategies from Brown and Bond (2019). The descriptive statistics used were frequency count, mean, and standard deviation. The inferential statistics used was Pearson r . The alpha level of significance was set at 0.05. Results of the study revealed that all beginning teachers have a very high level of competence. In addition, beginning teachers' level of challenges was moderately challenging when taken as a whole and in terms of ancillary activities only. On the other hand, pedagogical and technological activities were less challenging. Moreover, beginning teachers moderately used adaptive strategies as a whole and in terms of active adaptive strategies, accommodative adaptive strategies, cognitive adaptive strategies, and behavioral adaptive strategies but they very often used emotional adaptive strategies. Furthermore, there were no significant relationships among competence, challenges, and adaptive strategies of beginning teachers.

Keywords: Challenges, adaptive strategies, competence, and beginning teachers

Date Submitted: May 1, 2024

Date Accepted: May 15, 2024

Date Published: May 20, 2024

INTRODUCTION

A teacher who has been employed by a school for less than five years is considered a beginning teacher. Beginning teachers require assistance from staff members and other teachers in the early stages of their careers. According to research, first-year teachers who want to pursue teaching as a second career often work in the field for five to eight years. Additionally, half of newly hired teachers quit within the first five years of their employment, with the majority leaving within the first three (Nayani, 2021).

The Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) serves as a guideline of the competencies, skills, and knowledge expected of a professional teacher.

Under the PPST, teachers are categorized into four levels/stages, namely: Beginning, Proficient, Highly Proficient, and Distinguished. Basically, the PPST is an improved version of the National Competency-Based Teacher Standard (NCBTS) with the utmost goal to sufficiently equip teachers with the necessary skills for the K to 12 curriculum implementation; all teachers' development initiatives should align with the PPST. Additionally, it is employed in the hiring and advancement of educators (Department of Education, 2017).

In addition, to aim for greatness, inexperienced teachers must possess competence. A diverse set of skills is required of new educators to perform well in the context of contemporary classroom. Teaching competency is an essential component of any excellent training initiatives that aims improve teaching practice. Teachers are the primary players in

the teaching-learning process. The effectiveness of training and instruction is determined by the readiness, level of experience, and performance of the teachers (Ribot, 2022).

Furthermore, the pandemic's impacts on the school system as a whole present a variety of pedagogical difficulties for new teachers. It could be challenging for novice educators to inspire students to take more initiative. Despite the pandemic, they are having difficulty enhancing learning outcomes and personalizing and differentiating instruction. Moreover, novice teachers are facing difficulties when it comes to using digital tools, which are now the norm for instructing students (Buenvinida and Gecolea, 2021).

Moreover, to cope with the challenges presented by the new normal configuration of the educational system, as well as to keep up with ancillary responsibilities, boost parental participation, and understand technological development, beginning educators in the new normal utilize a range of adaptation strategies. Teachers now have more duties and responsibilities than ever before. The three adaptive methods that were most frequently observed were social support, exercise, and leisure activities. Teachers also employ acceptance, thorough planning, and reframing as techniques. It was evident how adaptable and upbeat Filipino teachers were despite the psychological strain or anxiety brought on by the increased standard of education (Collie and Martin, 2017).

The researcher deemed it necessary to conduct this study to assess the competence, challenges, and adaptive strategies of beginning teachers to address the research gap. Personally, during the first five years in service, the researcher encountered challenges such as adapting to educational trends, classroom management, endless paperwork, and irrelevant ancillary load. The researcher employed different adaptive coping strategies in mitigating challenges encountered thus maintaining excellent teaching competence.

Statement of the problem

This research study, in general, aimed to describe the competence, challenges, and adaptive strategies of beginning teachers.

Specifically, this sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of teaching competence of the beginning teachers?
2. What is the level of challenges of the beginning teachers as a whole and in terms of technological, pedagogical, and ancillary activities?
3. What is the level of adaptive strategies of the beginning teachers as a whole and in terms of active, accommodative, emotional, behavioral, and cognitive adaptive strategies?
4. Are there significant relationships among beginning teachers' competence, challenges, and adaptive strategies?

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on the three established theories specifically, Sanford's Theory of Challenge and Support, Grime and Pierce's Universal Adaptive Strategy Theory, and Medley's Theory of Teacher Competence. These were the basic substantiating notions used for the advancement of the study and to study the existing thoughts relative to competence, challenges, and adaptive strategies of beginning teachers.

Beginning teachers' challenges are anchored in Sanford's Theory of Challenge and Support. According to this theory, in order for growth to take place, an individual must get the right amount of support and challenge in relation to the work at hand. A person also has to be psychologically and physically prepared for growth. The notion states that when someone receives too much help, they are unable to learn, and when they receive little support, they often become discouraged by their difficulties and give up. Today, a lot of business executives battle with the conflict this growth and development process causes (Patton et al., 2016).

The research study on challenges, adaptive strategies, and competence of beginning teachers is anchored on the Theory of Challenge and Support because it provides a robust framework for understanding how individuals respond to stressors within their environment. Beginning teachers face numerous challenges, such as managing classroom dynamics, designing effective lesson plans, and navigating school policies. According to the Theory of Challenge and Support, people function best when they are faced with a balance between the resources that are available to them to meet their demands (support) and the demands that are placed on them (challenges). Using this theory, the researcher can examine the particular difficulties faced by new educators and pinpoint the kinds of support networks required to improve their ability to adjust to the classroom environment and achieve success.

Moreover, the beginning teachers' adaptive strategies were anchored on Grime and Pierce's Universal Adaptive Strategy Theory (UAST). The Universal Adaptive Strategy Theory (UAST) is a concept that can be applied to various fields and situations, including the challenges faced by beginning teachers. UAST suggests that individuals employ a set of general strategies to adapt to new and unfamiliar situations. This theory, when applied to new teachers, can assist them in comprehending how they manage and get past the difficulties they face in their early teaching careers. The universal theory of adaptive strategy offers a framework for comprehending how new educators adjust to the difficulties they face in the classroom. Beginning teachers can successfully navigate their early years in school and develop into competent educators by identifying, obtaining information, making decisions, carrying out, observing, and modifying their teaching practices (Grime and Pierce, as cited by Patton et al., 2016).

Moreover, the Universal Adaptive Strategy Theory complements this research by offering inputs into the mental and behavioral processes involved in adapting to new situations. Beginning teachers often employ various adaptive strategies to cope with the demands of their profession, ranging from seeking mentorship to implementing innovative teaching techniques. This theory suggests that individuals utilize a repertoire of adaptive strategies, which may differ from the challenges they encounter. By integrating the Universal Adaptive Strategy Theory, the researcher can explore the diversity of approaches utilized by beginning teachers to address their challenges and enhance their professional competence.

In addition, competence is anchored in Medley's Theory of Teacher Competence (Yan Ye, 2017). As per this notion, a teacher can be considered competent if they possess any certain knowledge, ability, or professional value that is thought to be important for teaching to be done successfully. As the theory suggest, the key factors of teaching competence revolves around the classroom environment, teacher's competence and professionalism and instruction planning.

A thorough framework for assessing how well new teachers perform in their professional tasks is provided by grounding the research in the Theory of Teacher Competence. The term teacher competence refers to a broad set of abilities, know-how, and attitudes that are necessary to support students' growth and learning. Through the application of teacher competency, the researcher can analyze the difficulties faced by new teachers and pinpoint the precise areas in which professional development programs and assistance are required. Furthermore, by using this theoretical framework, researchers may evaluate how adaptive strategies affect the development of teacher competence over time. This information can then be used to inform the creation of focused interventions that promote the professional development of new teachers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Competence of beginning teachers

The need for education institutions to produce starting teachers who are culturally competent has been recognized. Therefore, a proficient beginning teacher must possess pedagogical culture. Three elements make up pedagogical culture: axiology, which refers to teachers' acceptance of the values of pedagogical work; technology, which makes it easier to complete various pedagogical tasks; and heuristics, which involve goal-setting, preparation, analysis, and self-criticism—the creative aspect of pedagogical work. Since a teacher's personality is one of the most important factors that greatly influences the quality of education, evaluating teachers' professionalism and professional competence receives a lot of attention. Being a good teacher is an issue, one could say, of the teacher's entire lifelong professional career, which is another reason why assessments of educators are given long-term attention (Magová, 2016).

Being an effective teacher requires more than just knowing how to teach. It also calls for teaching expertise and practice, yet even these things are insufficient. Even if a teacher develops good teaching skills, these skills cannot be regarded as fully formed and sufficient just yet. Teacher evaluation is one of the most crucial things that help a teacher in their roughly lifelong pursuit of professional excellence. But in reality, teacher evaluation receives insufficient attention (Stranovská, Lalinská, & Boboňová, 2018).

The most common methods of teacher assessment are evaluations of the learning outcomes attained by their students and evaluations of the teacher's overall effectiveness. Without question, the role of the educator in the education of students is crucial. However, this position must be granted in reference to a level of teacher performance that is continuously examined and monitored. It is important to view teacher assessment as a combination of two aspects: evaluating the teacher's performance and highlighting their understanding of the material, and supporting their ongoing professional development (Darling-Hammond as cited by Ribot, 2022).

Additionally, teachers' ability to present a lesson is essential for effective education and student learning results. A variety of abilities and characteristics that support both the growth of pupils and the successful transmission of knowledge are included in effective teaching. Teachers must be well-knowledgeable about the subjects they are instructing. To effectively explain ideas and respond to inquiries from students, they must be authorities in their field. This calls for good teaching abilities. To meet the needs and learning styles of their pupils, teachers need to be knowledgeable about a variety of teaching strategies, tactics, and instructional techniques. Proficiency in communication is crucial for educators in order to effectively communicate knowledge. This entails speaking with students, writing instructions and assignments, and actively listening to their inquiries.

Competent educators can modify their lesson plans and instructional techniques to fit the demands of a variety of students. They understand that every learner is unique and may benefit from a variety of teaching methods. Educators must possess the ability to develop tests that precisely gauge pupils' comprehension. To aid in students' improvement, they must also give prompt, helpful criticism. Developing a good rapport with pupils is a prerequisite for successful teaching. In addition to being personable and empathetic, teachers should foster a positive learning atmosphere. To cover the curriculum and make sure that each session is organized and on schedule, teachers must efficiently manage their time (Gadušová et al., 2017).

For educational institutions and administrators, proficiency in managing the learning environment of teachers—also known as teacher support or professional development—is essential. Allocating resources (money, time, and materials) to properly support efforts for

teacher development is crucial. Ensuring educators have access to the resources and tools they need to advance their careers, creating mentorship programs that place seasoned educators with novices, and hiring instructional coaches who can collaborate one-on-one with educators to offer focused feedback, serve as role models for efficient instruction, and foster their professional development are key strategies. Identifying potential teacher leaders and offering them chances for leadership development, along with engaging the community, parents, and students in promoting teacher growth, is also important (Ribot, 2022).

Evaluation and assessment are essential components of a teacher's competency, ensuring successful instruction and learning objectives. Both formative assessments, which are ongoing evaluations conducted during instruction, and summative assessments, which are evaluations completed at the conclusion of a unit or course, require a thorough understanding of the many assessment techniques by teachers. Competent educators should provide assessments that are impartial and fair, offer transparent and unambiguous assessment standards, and give timely feedback on tests to help students identify their areas of strength and growth. Effective communication of assessment findings and progress to administrators, parents, and students is crucial. Skilled educators practice reflectively by analyzing the results of their evaluations on a regular basis and modifying them as necessary. They seek input from superiors and peers to refine their evaluation and assessment techniques.

The professionalism of teachers is a crucial component of the educational system, encompassing a broad spectrum of traits, actions, and obligations that support educators' efficacy and legitimacy. Educators must stay current with the most recent advancements in both their field and pedagogy (Ribot, 2022). Effective teachers possess pedagogical abilities such as classroom management, instructional tactics, and assessment strategies, and they engage in lifelong learning and professional development. Effective communication is important between teachers and their peers, parents, and students. Building healthy relationships with both kids and their families and abiding by all applicable laws and rules pertaining to education, particularly those dealing with student safety, privacy, and special needs, are essential for educators.

The advancement of science, technology, art, and society as a whole must be reflected in the professionalism of educators. Thus, teacher performance should be improved through the process of evaluating teacher performance competency. Evaluating a teacher's proficiency ought to enhance the educator's execution of their duties. Teachers who do not receive feedback from assessments are less motivated to learn and grow personally. Various approaches to evaluating the performance and competency of teachers, such as portfolios for teachers, monitoring of student work samples and products (learning successes), and educator performance observation, should clearly define the competence being evaluated (Sandanusová et al., 2018).

The multifaceted concept of teacher competency describes how well a teacher performs and uses reason to fulfill requirements in the classroom. It encompasses many techniques, capacities, knowledge, skills, and abilities to support learning (Carreker & Boulware, 2015). Global interest in educational innovation is growing, and numerous nations have started implementing educational reforms aimed at altering the objectives and methods of instruction. Many anticipate that integrating ICT (information and communication technologies) into the teaching and learning process will help or leverage such breakthroughs (Redding, 2014).

Advancements in education are radically altering how students learn. Innovation modifies the educational framework, enhancing both the instructional process and its outcomes, including increasing student motivation, covering more content, expediting training, and improving time management. Regular areas of innovation include the use of new training technologies, the introduction of more progressive approaches, and the use of active teaching styles. True innovations provide new theoretical frameworks and useful tools

for attaining ideal outcomes. Educational paradigms must be changed to accommodate pedagogical innovation. Pedagogical experience is a crucial component of a competent teacher. Experience in advanced pedagogy can be replicated and passed on to others, as well as utilized to train colleague educators in strategies and methods that yield excellent outcomes without requiring extra time. The knowledge, abilities, and attitudes required to compete in the 21st-century workforce are known as 21st-century competences (Redding, 2014).

Teacher preparation and professional development must be redesigned to include instruction in teaching essential competencies. The teacher of the twenty-first century must understand how to help learners learn using technology and how to use it to their advantage (Panda, 2019). Educators exhibit leadership by maintaining a safe and orderly classroom, managing student behavior, defusing disruptive behavior, using appropriate seclusion and restraint techniques, and assessing student progress using various goals. By participating in professional learning activities and using relevant data, teachers can improve school plans and identify areas of need (Panda, 2019).

Teachers also lead the teaching profession by participating in professional development events and advocating for both schools and students. They create a respectful atmosphere for a diverse range of pupils by fostering positive learning environments, dispelling stereotypes, and recognizing cultural contributions. Teachers modify their instruction to better serve students with special needs and work with families and communities to benefit students. Educators are well-versed in their academic subjects and incorporate effective literacy instruction across the curriculum. They connect their subject matter expertise to other disciplines and integrate 21st-century skills into their lessons (Panda, 2019).

Teachers support their students' development as thinking individuals by using specific instruction that fosters critical thinking and problem-solving. They facilitate teamwork and leadership development in their students by forming learning teams. The most effective ways for teachers to connect with all their students are through varied communication strategies, constant encouragement, and support. Teachers use a variety of formative and summative indicators to track student progress, influence instruction, and demonstrate that students are acquiring necessary knowledge, abilities, and attitudes. Educators reflect on their work by analyzing student learning data and engaging in professional development activities to enhance teaching and learning (Panda, 2019).

Addressing challenges faced by beginning teachers

The need for education institutions to produce starting teachers who are culturally competent has been recognized. Therefore, a proficient beginning teacher must possess pedagogical culture. Three elements make up pedagogical culture: axiology, which refers to teachers' acceptance of the values of pedagogical work; technology, which makes it easier to complete various pedagogical tasks; and heuristics, which involve goal-setting, preparation, analysis, and self-criticism—the creative aspect of pedagogical work. Since a teacher's personality is one of the most important factors that greatly influences the quality of education, evaluating teachers' professionalism and professional competence receives a lot of attention. Being a good teacher is an issue, one could say, of the teacher's entire lifelong professional career, which is another reason why assessments of educators are given long-term attention (Magová, 2016).

Being an effective teacher requires more than just knowing how to teach. It also calls for teaching expertise and practice, yet even these things are insufficient. Even if a teacher develops good teaching skills, these skills cannot be regarded as fully formed and sufficient just yet. Teacher evaluation is one of the most crucial things that help a teacher in their

roughly lifelong pursuit of professional excellence. But in reality, teacher evaluation receives insufficient attention (Stranovská, Lalinská, & Boboňová, 2018).

The most common methods of teacher assessment are evaluations of the learning outcomes attained by their students and evaluations of the teacher's overall effectiveness. Without question, the role of the educator in the education of students is crucial. However, this position must be granted in reference to a level of professionalism that allows for effective teaching and adaptation.

The constant exposure to innovation, change, and uncertainty that comes with teaching is one quality that makes it different from other professions. The ability to deal with this shift effectively is known as adaptability. People grow emotionally, mentally, and physically throughout their lives, encountering change, novelty, and uncertainty through important life events and typical occurrences. Adaptability is the ability to productively and efficiently adjust to different situations, controlling psycho-behavioral processes in response to novel, changing, and uncertain environments (Collie & Martin, 2017).

Martin's three-part model of adaptability—cognitive, behavioral, and emotional—defines the ability to change one's thoughts, actions, or emotions in response to novel, uncertain, or changing circumstances (Martin et al. as cited by Collie & Martin, 2017). The lifespan theory of control conceptualizes adaptation by positing that successful adaptation impacts longevity, involving compensatory control, which entails changing behavior or thinking to react effectively to situations (Reeve et al., 2015).

Teachers aim to maintain their positive self-image and emotional stability by using adaptive techniques to cope with or tolerate unpleasant events or circumstances. Lazarus and Folkman's seminal transactional model of stress and behavioral self-regulation distinguishes between emotion-focused and problem-focused coping techniques (Boniwell & Tunariu, 2019). Secondary school teachers commonly use strategies like planning, active coping, and positive reframing to manage stress, reflecting the importance of finding positives in challenging situations (Johnson et al., 2015).

Coping strategies vary with age. Younger teachers (27-34 years) often work hard to manage expectations and prepare thoroughly, despite experiencing high levels of fatigue. As a result, some shift to less ambitious strategies over time. Middle-aged teachers (35-50 years) also work hard but are more likely to take sick leave to manage stress and consider leaving the profession or reducing their workload (Reeve et al., 2015).

Effective coping mechanisms are crucial for maintaining well-being and job satisfaction among teachers. These include connecting with colleagues, setting boundaries, effective communication, problem-solving skills, and seeking professional support when needed (Brown & Bond, 2019). Teachers also employ accommodating strategies like adjusting lesson plans, continuous learning, and building resilience to adapt to changes and challenges.

Emotional adaptive coping strategies, such as mindfulness and positive self-talk, help teachers manage stress and maintain emotional well-being. Behavioral strategies like time management, classroom management, and self-care are essential for handling workloads and maintaining balance (Boniwell & Tunariu, 2019). Cognitive coping strategies, such as systematic problem-solving and goal-setting, further support teachers in managing challenges effectively (Brown & Bond, 2019).

Adaptability is a key quality for teachers, enabling them to manage the constant change and uncertainty inherent in their profession. Effective coping strategies, whether cognitive, behavioral, or emotional, are essential for maintaining teachers' well-being, job satisfaction, and effectiveness. These strategies help teachers navigate the complexities of their work, ensuring they can provide quality education while maintaining their own health and resilience.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

The method used in this study was descriptive-correlational. Descriptive research was appropriate in this study since it aimed to describe a population, situation, or phenomenon accurately and systematically. It can answer what, where, when, and how questions, but not why questions. A descriptive research design used a wide variety of research methods to investigate one or more variable s(McCombes, 2023). This method answered the quantitative questions such as the level of competence, challenges, and adaptive strategies of beginning teachers.

On the other hand, In order to determine the relationship between two closely related things, how one affects the other, and what changes are eventually noticed, the correlational approach was used. This research method was carried out to offer value to naturally occurring relationships, and a minimum of two separate groups are necessary to undertake this quantitative research approach successfully. A relationship between two groups or entities needs to be established without making assumptions about various features (Singleton and Straits, 2017). In this study, the correlational method was used to determine if there are significant relationships among the competence, challenges, and adaptive strategies of beginning teachers.

Locale of the study and respondents

The study was conducted among the schools in the 1st District of Capiz, which are in Maayon, Panay, Panit-an, Pilar, Pontevedra, and President Roxas, during the school year 2023-2024. The participants of the study were 53 out of 60 beginning elementary teachers in the 1st District of Capiz for the school year 2023-2024. Beginning teachers were those teachers who have been in the service for 5 years and below. The respondents were identified through stratified sampling. In order to estimate statistical measures for each sub-population, each stratum was sampled using a different probability sampling technique, such as cluster sampling or simple random sampling. In addition to preventing research biases like under-coverage bias, this aids in the study's generalizability and validity (Thomas, 2023).

Research instruments

The instrument was divided into four parts. The questionnaire for challenges of beginning teachers was modified from the study of Ribot (2022) on the Challenges, Digital Literacy, and Competence of Teachers in New Normal Education. The questionnaire for adaptive strategies was modified from the study of Brown and Bond (2019) on the Pragmatic Derivation and Validation of Measures of Adaptive and Maladaptive Coping Styles. Additionally, as for beginning teachers' competence, the researcher utilized a secondary data specifically their present Individual Performance Commitment and Review Form (IPCRF) rating. These were the appropriate measures to examine the variables in this study.

A pilot testing was conducted, the result being used in determining computer-processed factor analysis, construct validation, and reliability testing of the research instrument using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Software. The pre-tested data was tabulated for the determination of the reliability of the instrument.

The reliability coefficient was computed using Cronbach Alpha. An instrument was considered reliable if the computed reliability coefficient was 0.80 and above but not more than 1.0. The result of the Cronbach alpha of the challenges questionnaire showed a reliability index of .88. This means that all items in the research instrument were reliable and valid. Furthermore, the Cronbach alpha of the adaptive strategies questionnaire showed a reliability index of .84. The results of statistical tests indicated that all items in the research instrument were also reliable and valid.

Data gathering procedure

After gathering the number of participants and the validity and reliability of the research instruments were ascertained, approval for the formal conduct of the research instruments to the Division of Capiz, District Offices, and the school where the study was conducted. After acquiring permission, the researcher personally administered the questionnaire to beginning teachers. The questionnaire was then retrieved. The gathered data were tabulated, analyzed, and interpreted using the appropriate statistical tools. Participants' information and data that were collected in the entire conduct were kept and assured to be secured for research purposes only. This was not disclosed to the public without the participants' prior approval.

Data analyses procedure

All the data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, Version 17) and based on appropriate statistical tools. Frequency count and percentage was used to determine beginning teachers' demographic profile in terms of sex, age, highest educational attainment, school type, class size, and length of service. Mean was employed to describe the competence, challenges, and adaptive strategies of beginning teachers. Standard deviation was used to determine the homogeneity as well as the heterogeneity of the competence, challenges, and adaptive strategies of beginning teachers. Pearson r was used to determine if there are relationships among competence, challenges, and adaptive strategies of beginning teachers.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Competence of beginning teachers

All the beginning teachers who participated in this study have a "Very high" level of competence as indicated by the overall mean of 4.87. This implies that beginning teachers complete teacher education programs that provide them with a solid foundation in educational theory, pedagogy, and classroom management. They can effectively do their tasks in school despite the challenges they encounter. They are exposed to the latest educational trends, instructional strategies, and technologies, contributing to their perceived competence in applying contemporary teaching approaches. Some beginning teachers have the benefit of mentorship programs or experienced colleagues who guide them during their initial years. Many of them, especially those from younger generations, are comfortable with and knowledgeable about technology.

Furthermore, they possess deep understanding of subject matter, pedagogical strategies, and the diverse needs of learners. All beginning teachers continuously engage in professional development to refine their skills, staying abreast of evolving educational theories and practices. They adapt their methods to accommodate various learning styles, abilities, and cultural backgrounds, showcasing their adaptability and dedication to student success.

The results are consistent with the study carried out by Carreker and Boulware (2015), who claimed that teacher competence is a multifaceted concept that relates to performance and reasoned action to satisfy specific requirements in the work of teaching. It stands for many techniques, capacities, knowledge, skills, and abilities to support learning, all of which ought to be taken into consideration when evaluating a teacher's competency.

The outcome is consistent with Ribot's (2022) findings. According to a study by Ribot (2022), qualified educators offer transparent and unambiguous assessment standards. Educators frequently exhibit a high degree of adaptability, showing that they can adjust curricula, meet the requirements of students, and implement changes in educational practices.

This flexibility enhances their general competency in handling a variety of educational scenarios. Beyond their first training, some new teachers take the initiative to look for chances for professional growth. Because of this dedication to lifelong learning, the individual's skill set grew, and their perceived competence increased.

Challenges faced by beginning teachers

The majority of beginning teachers encountered moderately challenging situations during their service, accounting for 41.51%, followed by less challenging scenarios at 37.74%, while 11.32% faced challenging situations, and 9.43% found their experiences not challenging. With a mean score of 2.62, it's evident that beginning teachers navigate a landscape of moderately challenging circumstances in their teaching careers, signifying a notable level of difficulty in their roles. Moreover, classroom management skills take time to develop, and beginners may face difficulties in handling diverse student behaviors and maintaining order in the classroom. Also, designing effective lesson plans that engage students and align with curriculum standards is a skill that develops with experience. New teachers may find it challenging to strike the right balance between covering content, ensuring understanding, classroom management, and keeping students engaged. It is also challenging for them to balance their teaching loads and ancillary activities while maintain their teaching competence.

Meeting the diverse needs of students with varying learning styles, abilities, and backgrounds requires skillful differentiation. This can be challenging for beginning teachers who are still learning how to adapt their teaching methods to cater to the unique needs of each student. Also, balancing the demands of lesson planning, grading, meetings, and other ancillary tasks can be overwhelming for new teachers. Beginning teachers may find it challenging to develop fair and effective assessment strategies and provide constructive feedback to help students improve their learning skills and academic performance.

This data backs up Brubaker's (2016) assertion that the field of education, and classroom teaching in particular, offers a special set of difficulties not found in other occupations. Supporting students with different personalities, dealing with unmet expectations in the teaching profession, and inadequate training in classroom management are the problems. Additionally, the outcome is consistent with a study by Buenvenida and Gecolea (2021), which claimed that competency mismatch, student diversity, being overwhelmed by work, and conflict with colleagues are some of the most difficult experiences for new educators.

Adaptive strategies of beginning teachers

The majority of beginning teachers in the first district of Capiz demonstrate a moderate to very frequent use of adaptive strategies, with 47.17% falling into the "moderately used" category and 45.28% in the "very often used" category. A small percentage of teachers, only 5.66%, report "seldom" use, while a mere 1.89% indicate "rare" usage of adaptive strategies. With a mean score of 2.31, it's evident that beginning teachers employ adaptive coping mechanisms to navigate the dynamic and multifaceted nature of the teaching profession. Recognizing the importance of flexibility, they adeptly adjust their teaching methods to cater to the diverse needs and behaviors of their students.

Moreover, they skillfully integrate available resources into their instructional approaches, thereby enriching the learning experience for their students. The results are consistent with the study by Johnson et al. (2015), which found that the most common coping mechanisms used by secondary school teachers were planning, adaptive coping, and positive reframing. This means that teachers usually push themselves to see the bright side of a

challenging or unfavorable scenario, understand that stressful conditions are a part of life, come up with coping mechanisms, and learn to live with them.

Furthermore, the outcome is consistent with research by Rajesh et al. (2022), which discovered that recently hired teachers had demonstrated effective adaptive coping strategies.

Relationships among competence, challenges, and adaptive strategies of beginning teachers

The challenges and competence of beginning teachers were found not significantly related ($p=.562$, $p>0.05$). The result also shows a negative relationship between challenges and competence ($v= -.081$). The result implies that the challenges encountered by the beginning teachers do not affect their capability as teachers. Their competence is very high regardless of the level of challenges they encounter in their teaching career. This finding, though, runs counter to that of Luft et al. (2015), who found a complicated and interwoven relationship between teachers' ability and obstacles. When they begin their teaching careers, novice or preservice teachers encounter a variety of difficulties. These difficulties may significantly affect how competent they become as teachers. The result of the study failed to reject the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between challenges and competence of beginning teachers.

Moreover, the findings revealed that there was no significant relationship between adaptive strategies and the competence of beginning teachers ($p=.604$, $p>0.05$). The result implies that the adaptive strategies used by beginning teachers do not affect their competence as educators. They can still teach effectively regardless of the mechanisms used in coping with the challenges in education. The outcome runs counter to Peklaj's (2015) findings. Peklaj contends that a crucial component of teacher growth and efficacy in the classroom is the connection between teachers' competency and adaptive coping methods. To improve their teaching abilities, teachers must employ adaptive tactics. The development of adaptable methods aids in the professional and personal development of new teachers. Over time, it assists them in developing into more capable, resilient, and introspective teachers. A key component of a successful teaching strategy is flexibility and experience-based learning. The result of the study failed to reject the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between adaptive strategies and competence of beginning teachers.

Furthermore, the analysis revealed that there was no significant relationship between challenges and adaptive strategies of beginning teachers ($p=.157$, $p>0.05$). The result also shows a negative relationship between challenges and competence ($v= -.197$). The result implies that whatever the challenges faced by beginning teachers, this does not affect their mechanisms and ability to cope. Moreover, their adaptive strategies have nothing to do with the challenges and struggles they encounter as teachers. Conversely, according to Lacy and Guirguis (2017), a crucial part of new teachers' professional development is understanding the connection between their issues and adaptive methods. The first step for new teachers in creating adaptable solutions is to pinpoint the unique difficulties they encounter. This entails introspection, asking mentors or colleagues for criticism, and paying attention to the demands and actions of their students. Upon identifying obstacles, novice educators focus on creating flexible approaches. These tactics are intended to deal with the particular problems they encounter in the classroom. Lesson plan modifications, the use of classroom management measures, and the pursuit of professional development opportunities are examples of adaptive strategies.

Thus, the result of the study failed to reject the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between challenges and adaptive strategies of beginning teachers.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

Beginning teachers in District I demonstrate a very high level of competence, possessing a strong foundation of knowledge, skills, and adaptability, which contributes to positive learning outcomes for students. This competence reflects the effectiveness of teacher education programs, mentorship, and ongoing professional development in preparing them for the multifaceted demands of the teaching profession. While these teachers face some difficulties, they are not overwhelmingly daunting, indicating areas for targeted support and professional development, particularly in administrative tasks and interpersonal aspects of their roles. Their confidence in instructional and technological skills suggests that training in these areas has been effective. Additionally, beginning teachers' moderate use of adaptive strategies reflects a balanced approach to meeting diverse learning needs, fostering an inclusive and supportive learning environment. This judicious application of adaptive strategies enhances student engagement, promotes academic success, and cultivates a culture of lifelong learning. The moderate challenges they face do not hinder their overall competence, nor do they affect their use of adaptive coping strategies, highlighting the resilience and preparedness of these educators.

Recommendations

Teachers are encouraged to engage in continuous professional development, peer collaboration, workshops, and mentorship to enhance their teaching competence and maintain effectiveness in the classroom. Administrators should foster a supportive and collaborative school environment by sharing best practices, promoting mentorship programs, and encouraging a culture of continuous learning to support educators' professional growth and satisfaction. The Department of Education is urged to invest in targeted professional development initiatives, support research-based practices, disseminate successful teaching strategies, and facilitate collaboration among educators to enhance the teaching profession. Teachers should seek professional development opportunities to enhance their skills, overcome challenges, and build positive relationships. Administrators should implement training sessions, workshops, and innovative teaching methods, providing regular feedback and support. Moreover, teachers should prioritize developing adaptive coping mechanisms through seminar-workshops, while administrators should facilitate forums for sharing strategies and creating a collaborative environment. A holistic approach to professional development, addressing competence, challenges, and adaptive strategies, is essential, and the Department of Education should promote diverse training sessions and resources to empower teachers with a well-rounded skill set.

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