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Research Article

Mapping the Path: Tracing Teacher Career Trajectories Towards Professional Teaching Standards

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ABSTRACT

In the dynamic landscape of education, the quality of teaching remains a fundamental determinant of student success. Understanding teachers' competence across multiple professional domains not only highlights their strengths but also identifies gaps that may limit instructional effectiveness and student learning outcomes. This study aims to examine the competence of public school teachers in the Philippines across the seven domains of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), with the goal of identifying both areas of excellence and opportunities for professional growth. Employing a descriptive cross-sectional research design, the study surveyed 300 teachers from a range of large and small public secondary schools in Palawan, Philippines. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire aligned with the seven PPST domains and analyzed using mean scores to determine the levels of teacher competence. Results indicate that teachers generally demonstrate high to very high competence, with particular strengths observed in content mastery, classroom management, and professional commitment. Conversely, lower ratings were noted in domains such as differentiated instruction, actively seeking feedback, and implementing innovative teaching practices, signalling the need for targeted interventions. These findings underscore the importance of focused professional development programs that address specific areas of need, thereby fostering a more balanced, effective, and innovative teaching workforce. By addressing these gaps, policymakers and educational leaders can enhance teaching quality, ultimately supporting improved student learning outcomes and advancing the overall standards of Philippine public education.

Keywords: Career paths, PPST, Quality education, Teacher standards, Professional development

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Background

Quality teaching is the cornerstone of a thriving educational system, and at the heart of quality teaching lies the continuous professional development of teachers. Quality education is the solution to the problems as it serves as a powerful tool for individual and societal transformation, and teachers are the main ingredients in giving quality education (Mincu, 2015; Syukkur & Fauzan, 2021; Sulastri, et al, 2024). This underscored the role of teachers as one of the most important drivers in providing quality education. As the demands on educators continue to evolve, driven by technological advancements, shifting pedagogical approaches, and the diverse needs of students, it has become increasingly clear that the professional growth and learning of teachers is vital to maintaining and enhancing the quality of instruction within the classroom.

Quality education is a critical foundation for individual and societal success, and teachers play a pivotal role in shaping this (Harding, et al., 2020). However, the role of teachers has significantly evolved in recent decades to meet the changing needs and dynamics of the modern educational landscape (Siddiqui & Ahamed, 2020). Traditionally, the teacher's role was primarily focused on imparting knowledge through lectures and textbook-based instruction. The teacher was seen as the sole authority and repository of information in the classroom. However, this model is increasingly becoming outdated as students today have easier access to information through the internet and other digital resources.

In the modern education system, the role of the teacher has shifted towards facilitating learning and guiding students to acquire knowledge and skills, rather than merely disseminating information (Gajjar, 2017). Teachers are now expected to be facilitators of learning, designing engaging and interactive lessons that encourage critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaborative learning. They must identify each student's unique learning styles and needs, and adapt their teaching methods accordingly. Furthermore, teachers today must be adept at leveraging technology to enhance the learning experience. Integrating digital tools, multimedia resources, and online

learning platforms into the curriculum has become essential for delivering quality education. Teachers must possess the skills to effectively use these technologies and guide students in navigating the digital landscape.

To meet these diverse demands, ongoing professional development has become a critical component in shaping effective and adaptable teachers. Professional development opportunities allow teachers to continuously enhance their pedagogical skills, expand their content knowledge, and stay abreast of the latest trends and best practices in education (Berry, 2016; Lunenberg et al., 2017). Effective professional development programs provide teachers with the knowledge, skills, and tools necessary to deliver high-quality instruction, ultimately benefiting the students they serve. Through opportunities for ongoing learning, collaboration, and the implementation of evidence-based practices, teachers can continuously refine their craft, staying abreast of the latest research and innovations in the field. Teachers who engage in professional development focused on instructional strategies, classroom management techniques, and student engagement methods are better equipped to create dynamic, learner-centered environments that cater to the diverse needs of their students. By deepening their understanding of how students learn and the most effective ways to facilitate that learning, teachers can optimize their instructional practices and maximize student achievement.

Numerous studies have established a strong correlation between teacher professional development and the delivery of quality teaching (Mansfield & Gu, 2019; Kohli, 2019; Raduan & Na, 2020). This symbiotic relationship is multifaceted and has been extensively explored in the educational research literature. Professional development directly enhances teachers' pedagogical skills and knowledge, which in turn leads to more effective and engaging teaching. At the same

time, quality teaching drives teachers to seek out professional development opportunities, creating a reinforcing cycle (Postholm, 2018). This relationship is further strengthened by the importance of aligning professional

development with the specific needs and contexts of teachers and their schools.

Teaching is a dynamic profession, with educators navigating diverse career pathways and trajectories over the course of their professional lives. As teachers progress through different stages of their careers, from novice to experienced, their competencies, practices, and adherence to professional standards are expected to evolve. Understanding this complex interplay between teachers' career development and their alignment with teaching standards is crucial for supporting their growth, improving instructional quality, and ultimately enhancing student learning outcomes. Numerous teaching standards have been established to define the core competencies, knowledge, and skills that effective educators should possess. These standards serve as frameworks for initial teacher preparation, ongoing professional development, and career-long performance evaluation. However, the extent to which teachers' actual career trajectories and practices align with these prescribed standards remains an important area of inquiry.

Research studies in education aim to provide an analytical overview of the attributes that make an effective teacher. However, only few of them do not possess the depth and breadth of the competences that should be taken into consideration. Thus, adopting a more appropriate set of standards is necessary since some frameworks only supply incoherent and impractical norms, rather than considering a workable and comprehensive framework. In this instance, a few frameworks have been compiled and expanded upon below to provide insight into the factors that a technical panel made up of field education practitioners teaching a variety of subject areas reviewed.

In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) through the Teacher Education Council (TEC), issued DepEd Order no. 42, s. 201, adopted the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) as a comprehensive framework that outlines the competencies and responsibilities expected of teachers in the country. The PPST is built upon a wealth of educational research and global best practices, making it even more cognizant of shifts brought about by multiple national and

international frameworks and adaptable to changing needs of 21st-century learners who are technology-savvy, creative, critical thinkers, and eager to collaborate and communicate across multiple platforms (Gepila, 2020).

The standards outlined in the PPST are organized into seven domains: Content Knowledge and Pedagogy, Learning Environment, Diversity of Learners, Curriculum and Planning, Assessment and Reporting, Community Linkages and Professional Engagement, and Personal Growth and Professional Development. The PPST has been instrumental in guiding the design and implementation of teacher professional development programs in the Philippines. By outlining clear competency standards, the PPST provides a roadmap for schools and local education offices to identify the specific areas where teachers require support and targeted training (Jugar, 2020; Rungduin & Rungduin, 2015). This, in turn, has led to the development of more relevant and impactful professional development initiatives that directly address the needs of the teaching workforce.

One of the key strengths of the PPST is its holistic approach to teacher professionalism. The standards do not merely focus on instructional skills but also emphasize the importance of teacher well-being, community engagement, and continuous learning (DepEd, 2017). This aligns with research that highlights the multifaceted nature of teaching and the need for a comprehensive framework to support the professional growth of educators (Stronge, 2018; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Furthermore, the PPST has been integrated into the teacher evaluation and promotion systems in the Philippines. The standards serve as a benchmark for assessing teacher performance and determining career advancement opportunities (DepEd, 2017). This alignment between professional standards, professional development, and teacher evaluation has been identified as a key factor in fostering a culture of continuous improvement and accountability within the teaching profession (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Goe et al., 2008).

Several studies conducted on teachers' competence in the light of the tenets of the PPST. According to Gepila (2020), most

teachers assessed themselves as highly proficient in managing the learning environment and proficient only in coping up with learners' diversity. A study by Batas et al. (2021) evaluated the PPST competence levels of school teachers across the Philippines. Their findings underscored that while most teachers demonstrated competence in certain PPST domains, such as content knowledge and pedagogy, there were significant gaps in areas like assessment and reporting, and community linkages and professional engagement. This coincides with the study of Dela Cruz et al. (2019) who stressed that teachers felt most confident in the content knowledge but less so in domains like diversity of learners and curriculum and planning and personal growth and professional development domain.

However, the successful implementation of the PPST is not without its challenges. Ensuring consistent understanding and application of the standards across the highly decentralized education system in the Philippines remains an ongoing concern (Jugar, 2020). Additionally, the provision of adequate resources and support for teachers to meet the PPST requirements is a persistent challenge that requires sustained commitment from policymakers and school leaders. The existing literature reveals a limited number of published studies that have empirically examined and documented teachers' mastery of the PPST standards. In fact, in the province of Palawan, there is a scarcity of research that has systematically assessed and reported on teachers' competence across the different PPST domains. Furthermore, it is the researcher's belief that more comprehensive studies are still needed to further explore this important area of teacher development and the PPST's impact on the Philippine education system.

This study intended to investigate the relationship between teachers' career progression and their demonstrated competencies in relation to established teaching standards. By tracing the developmental patterns of educators over time, the research shed light on how teachers' professional identities, instructional practices, and standards-based competencies evolve throughout their careers. The findings provided valuable insights into the factors that

facilitate or hinder the alignment between teachers' career milestones and their attainment of teaching standards. Exploring these issues is crucial for informing policies, programs, and support structures that can better nurture and sustain teachers throughout their careers. The results of this study have implications for pre-service teacher education, in-service professional development, teacher evaluation systems, and career advancement pathways - all of which should be designed to cultivate teaching excellence and ensure standards-driven practice.

Methods

Research Design

To answer the research queries raised in this study, a descriptive cross-sectional design was employed to further provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under investigation. This design highlights that the explanatory component allows researchers to provide a detailed and comprehensive description of the characteristics, behaviors, or phenomena under investigation. This detailed description is crucial for developing a thorough understanding of the variables and their distributions within the study population.

Moreover, the insights gained from descriptive cross-sectional studies can be used to inform and guide practical decisions, program development, and policy-making in various fields, such as education, healthcare, and social sciences. In the context of this study, the descriptive study was used to determine the PPST domains in which the identified teachers demonstrate the strongest and weakest levels of competence. Furthermore, since the use of this design provides a versatile and valuable approach for exploring and understanding the relationships between variables and informing practice and policy, it was used to propose evidence-based recommendations for enhancing teachers' PPST competence through targeted professional development programs and support mechanisms.

Sample

The target population for this study was the basic education teachers in Palawan, Philippines. To ensure the sample is representative

of teachers from both small and large school environments, a proportionate stratified random sampling approach will be utilized. According to Creswell (2015), proportionate stratified random sampling is a type of stratified random sampling that divides the entire population into homogeneous groups called strata. In this study, the strata were the 300 teachers from big and small public secondary schools in the Philippines. In the context of this study, school size was defined by student population, with 'large' schools having over 500 students and 'small' schools having under 500 students. This sampling design ensured the final sample included an equal representation of secondary school teachers from both small and large school settings. By incorporating this school size criterion as a sampling stratification factor, the findings of this study provide a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem across the diverse landscape of public secondary schools in the province.

Data collection instruments

In order to collect the needed data, this study employed a survey questionnaire containing two parts. The first part describes the demographic profile of the respondents, such as their number of years in teaching, highest educational attainment, position, and the classification of their school. On the other hand, the second part of the questionnaire will consist of a 5-point Likert scale that will assess the teachers' performance along with the tenets of the PPST. As mentioned in the previous part of this study, the PPST contains 7 domains that define the key areas of teacher proficiency and performance. These 7 domains are: (a) Content Knowledge and Pedagogy - This domain focuses on the teacher's deep understanding of the subject matter and effective teaching strategies; (b) Learning Environment - This domain covers the teacher's ability to create a safe, inclusive, and engaging learning environment for students; (c) Diversity of Learners - This domain emphasizes the teacher's competence in addressing the diverse needs and backgrounds of students; (d) Curriculum and Planning - This domain assesses the teacher's skills in designing, implementing, and evaluating curriculum and lesson plans; (e) Assessment and

Reporting - This domain covers the teacher's proficiency in assessment practices and communicating student progress. (f) Community Linkages and Professional Engagement - This domain evaluates the teacher's involvement in the school community and professional development, and (g) Personal Growth and Professional Development - This domain focuses on the teacher's commitment to continuous learning and self-improvement.

To ensure the reliability and validity of the data collection instrument, the survey questionnaire underwent a rigorous validation process prior to its administration. First, the questionnaire items were reviewed by a panel of 5 subject matter experts in the field of education. These experts assessed the content validity of the items, evaluating whether the questions accurately capture the constructs and variables under investigation. Based on the expert feedback, the questionnaire was refined and revised as needed. Next, the revised questionnaire was pilot-tested with a sample of 30 participants. The pilot test served to identify any issues with question wording, response options, skip patterns, and overall questionnaire flow. The pilot test data was analyzed to evaluate the internal consistency reliability of the questionnaire using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The results of Cronbach's alpha of 0.896 indicate that the questionnaire has a high level of internal consistency.

Statistical analysis

To answer the problems raised in this study, descriptive statistics were employed. The respondents' demographic characteristics, such as age, gender, educational attainment, teaching experience, and others, were analyzed using frequency counts and percentages. This provided a clear picture of the sample's composition. Meanwhile, the respondents' competence across the seven domains of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) was evaluated using measures of central tendency (mean) and dispersion (standard deviation). This allowed the researcher to understand the teachers' overall levels of competence as well as their strengths and weaknesses in relation to the PPST standards.

Results

Teachers' Competency per PPST Domain

The following tables depict the competency of the public school teachers across the seven domains. The results provide a comprehensive view of the teachers' strengths

and areas for improvement. For each domain, the indicators capture specific teaching practices, classroom management skills, curriculum alignment, assessment techniques, engagement with stakeholders, and commitment to professional development.

Table 1. Teachers' Competence in Domain 1: Content Knowledge and Pedagogy

| Indicator | Mean Rating | s | Descriptor |
|--|-------------|------|-------------|
| 1. Demonstrates mastery of subject content | 4.34 | 0.06 | Very high |
| 2. Applies teaching strategies that promote critical and creative thinking | 2.65 | 0.86 | Moderate |
| 3. Uses appropriate teaching methods for the learning objectives | 4.18 | 0.15 | High |
| 4. Integrates accurate and updated content in teaching | 4.26 | 0.09 | Very high |
| 5. Aligns learning activities with curriculum standards | 4.29 | 0.08 | Very high |
| Overall Mean Rating | 3.94 | | High |

Legend: 1.00-1.79 (very low); 1.80-2.59 (low); 2.60-3.39 (moderate); 3.40-4.19 (high); 4.20-5.00 (very high)

The data in Table 1 reveal that teachers generally demonstrate a high level of competence in Domain 1: Content Knowledge and Pedagogy, with an overall mean rating of 3.94. Among the specific indicators, the highest ratings were observed in *demonstrating mastery of subject content* ($M = 4.34, s = 0.06$), *aligning learning activities with curriculum standards* ($M = 4.29, s = 0.08$), and *integrating accurate and updated content in teaching* ($M = 4.26, s = 0.08$), all of which were described as very high. This suggests that teachers possess strong content mastery and are highly capable of aligning and updating instructional content in accordance with curriculum expectations. Meanwhile, *using appropriate teaching methods for the*

learning objectives earned a high rating ($M = 4.18, s = 0.15$), indicating that most teachers effectively select teaching methods that match intended learning outcomes. However, *applying teaching strategies that promote critical and creative thinking* received the lowest mean ($M = 2.65, 0.86$), corresponding to a moderate level. This points to a relative gap in fostering higher-order thinking skills among learners, which may require targeted professional development. Overall, while teachers show notable strengths in content mastery and curriculum alignment, enhancing pedagogical approaches that stimulate critical and creative thinking remains an area for improvement.

Table 2. Teachers' Competence in Domain 2: Learning Environment

| Indicator | Mean Rating | s | Descriptor |
|---|-------------|------|------------------|
| 1. Creates a safe and secure learning environment | 4.32 | 0.09 | Very high |
| 2. Establishes classroom routines that promote order and engagement | 4.27 | 0.13 | Very high |
| 3. Maintains a respectful and inclusive atmosphere | 4.28 | 0.15 | Very high |
| 4. Encourages collaboration and active participation | 4.23 | 0.21 | Very High |
| 5. Utilizes classroom space and resources effectively | 4.21 | 0.20 | Very High |
| Overall Mean Rating | 4.26 | | Very high |

Legend: 1.00-1.79 (very low); 1.80-2.59 (low); 2.60-3.39 (moderate); 3.40-4.19 (high); 4.20-5.00 (very high)

Table 2 indicates that teachers exhibit a very high level of competence in Domain 2: Learning Environment, with an overall mean rating of 4.26. The highest-rated indicators include *creating a safe and secure learning environment* ($M = 4.32, s = 0.09$), *maintaining a respectful and inclusive atmosphere* ($M = 4.28, s = 0.15$), and *establishing classroom routines that promote order and engagement* ($M = 4.27, s = 0.13$), all of which fall under the very high descriptor. These results suggest that teachers excel in fostering safety, inclusivity, and consistent classroom structure,

which are essential for effective learning. Meanwhile, *encouraging collaboration and active participation* ($M = 4.23, s = 0.21$) and *utilizing classroom space and resources effectively* ($M = 4.21, s = 0.20$) also received very high ratings, indicating strong but slightly less pronounced competence in these areas. Overall, the findings demonstrate that teachers are highly effective in creating a positive and conducive learning environment, though opportunities remain to further strengthen strategies that promote collaboration and optimize resource utilization.

Table 3. Teachers' Competence in Domain 3: Diversity of Learners

| Indicator | Mean Rating | s | Descriptor |
|---|-------------|------|-------------|
| 1. Identifies learners' needs, strengths, and backgrounds | 4.29 | 0.07 | Very high |
| 2. Adapts instruction for learners with diverse abilities | 3.43 | 1.12 | High |
| 3. Integrates gender sensitivity in teaching | 3.87 | 0.98 | High |
| 4. Designs activities suited to multiple learning styles | 3.32 | 1.06 | Moderate |
| 5. Provides equitable learning opportunities | 3.37 | 1.01 | Moderate |
| Overall Mean Rating | 3.65 | | High |

Legend: 1.00-1.79 (very low); 1.80-2.59 (low); 2.60-3.39 (moderate); 3.40-4.19 (high); 4.20-5.00 (very high)

The results in Table 3 show that teachers possess a generally high level of competence in addressing the diversity of learners, with an overall mean rating of 3.65. Strengths are most evident in their ability to identify learners' needs, strengths, and backgrounds, which earned a very high rating ($M = 4.29, s = 0.07$). This suggests that teachers are perceptive in recognizing individual differences and can gather relevant information about their students. Competence is also evident in adapting instruction for diverse abilities ($M = 3.43, s = 1.12$) and integrating gender sensitivity in teaching ($M = 3.87, s = 0.98$), both rated as high, reflecting a commendable effort to respond to varying learner profiles and promote

inclusivity. However, moderate ratings were given for designing activities suited to multiple learning styles ($M = 3.32, s = 1.06$) and providing equitable learning opportunities ($M = 3.37, s = 1.01$). These results point to areas where instructional strategies could be further diversified and where equity measures could be strengthened to ensure that all students, regardless of background or ability, have equal access to quality learning experiences. Thus, while teachers show strong awareness of learner diversity, targeted professional development in differentiated instruction and equitable practice may enhance their capacity to meet varied learning needs more effectively.

Table 4. Teachers' Competence in Domain 4: Curriculum and Planning

| Indicator | Mean Rating | s | Descriptor |
|--|-------------|------|------------|
| 1. Prepares lesson plans aligned with the curriculum | 4.32 | 0.06 | Very high |
| 2. Selects learning materials that meet objectives | 4.36 | 0.05 | Very high |
| 3. Organizes lessons logically and coherently | 4.27 | 0.11 | Very high |
| 4. Plans for differentiated instruction | 2.57 | 1.17 | Low |

| Indicator | Mean Rating | s | Descriptor |
|---|-------------|------|-------------|
| 5. Incorporates ICT in lesson planning when appropriate | 3.42 | 0.76 | High |
| Overall Mean Rating | 3.79 | | High |

Legend: 1.00-1.79 (very low); 1.80-2.59 (low); 2.60-3.39 (moderate); 3.40-4.19 (high); 4.20-5.00 (very high)

The findings in Table 4 indicate that teachers demonstrate a high overall competence in curriculum and planning, with an overall mean of 3.79. The strongest areas are evident in preparing lesson plans aligned with the curriculum ($M = 4.32$, $s = 0.06$), selecting learning materials that meet objectives ($M = 4.36$, $s = 0.05$), and organizing lessons logically and coherently ($M = 4.27$, $s = 0.11$), all of which were rated very high. These results suggest that teachers are highly capable of designing instructional

plans that are both curriculum-driven and well-structured. Competence in incorporating ICT into lesson planning earned a high rating ($M = 3.42$, $s = 0.76$), indicating that technology is being integrated, though perhaps not yet to its fullest potential. Notably, the lowest rating was for planning differentiated instruction ($M = 2.57$, $s = 1.17$), which falls in the low category. This gap suggests a need for stronger strategies and resources to address varying learner needs during the planning stage.

Table 5. Teachers' Competence in Domain 5: Assessment and Reporting

| Indicator | Mean Rating | s | Descriptor |
|---|-------------|------|-------------|
| 1. Designs assessment tools aligned with learning outcomes | 4.27 | 0.09 | Very high |
| 2. Uses both formative and summative assessments effectively | 3.57 | 1.03 | High |
| 3. Provides timely and constructive feedback to learners | 2.58 | 1.28 | Low |
| 4. Maintains accurate and updated records of learners' progress | 4.23 | 0.12 | Very high |
| 5. Utilizes assessment data to improve teaching strategies | 3.46 | 1.17 | High |
| Overall Mean Rating | 3.62 | | High |

Legend: 1.00-1.79 (very low); 1.80-2.59 (low); 2.60-3.39 (moderate); 3.40-4.19 (high); 4.20-5.00 (very high)

Table 5 shows that teachers have a generally high level of competence in assessment and reporting, with an overall mean rating of 3.62. The highest-rated competencies are designing assessment tools aligned with learning outcomes ($M = 4.27$, $s = 0.09$) and maintaining accurate, updated records of learners' progress ($M = 4.23$, $s = 0.12$), both rated very high. These findings indicate strong skills in creating valid assessment instruments and ensuring systematic documentation of student performance. High ratings were also observed for using both formative and summative assessments effec-

tively ($M = 3.57$, $s = 1.03$) and utilizing assessment data to improve teaching strategies ($M = 3.46$, $s = 1.17$), reflecting a solid application of assessment principles in guiding instruction. However, the provision of timely and constructive feedback to learners received the lowest rating ($M = 2.58$, $s = 1.28$), categorized as low, suggesting a significant gap in the feedback process. While teachers excel in the technical aspects of assessment design and record-keeping, improving the timeliness and quality of feedback could strengthen the overall impact of assessment practices on student learning.

Table 6. Teachers' Competence in Domain 6: Community Linkages and Engagement

| Indicator | Mean Rating | s | Descriptor |
|--|-------------|------|-------------|
| 1. Establishes partnerships with parents and stakeholders | 4.27 | 0.07 | Very high |
| 2. Participates in community programs that support learning | 3.57 | 1.06 | High |
| 3. Coordinates with other professionals to address learners' needs | 2.58 | 1.49 | Low |
| 4. Engages in school-community activities | 4.23 | 0.09 | Very high |
| 5. Promotes school programs to the local community | 3.46 | 1.24 | High |
| Overall Mean Rating | 3.62 | | High |

Legend: 1.00-1.79 (very low); 1.80-2.59 (low); 2.60-3.39 (moderate); 3.40-4.19 (high); 4.20-5.00 (very high)

Table 6 shows that teachers exhibit a generally high competence level in community linkages and engagement, with an overall mean of 3.62. The highest-rated competencies are establishing partnerships with parents and stakeholders ($M = 4.27$, $s = 0.07$) and participating in school-community activities ($M = 4.23$, $s = 0.09$), both rated very high, indicating strong efforts in fostering collaboration and involvement between the school and the community. Participation in community programs that support learning ($M = 3.57$, $s = 1.06$) and promoting school programs to the local community (M

$= 3.46$, $s = 1.24$) also received high ratings, reflecting consistent engagement beyond the classroom setting. On the other hand, coordinating with other professionals to address learners' needs earned the lowest score ($M = 2.58$, $s = 1.49$), classified as low, pointing to a need for improvement in interdisciplinary cooperation. Additionally, while teachers excel in establishing community partnerships and actively engaging in local initiatives, strengthening collaboration with other professionals could further enhance learner support and development.

Table 7. Teachers' Competence in Domain 7: Personal Growth and Professional Development

| Indicator | Mean Rating | s | Descriptor |
|--|-------------|------|-------------|
| 1. Reflects on teaching practices for continuous improvement | 4.18 | 0.09 | High |
| 2. Participates in professional development activities | 3.41 | 1.24 | High |
| 3. Seeks feedback from peers and supervisors | 2.42 | 1.67 | Low |
| 4. Adopts innovative teaching practices | 2.76 | 1.53 | Moderate |
| 5. Demonstrates commitment to the teaching profession | 4.45 | 0.06 | Very High |
| Overall Mean Rating | 3.44 | | High |

Legend: 1.00-1.79 (very low); 1.80-2.59 (low); 2.60-3.39 (moderate); 3.40-4.19 (high); 4.20-5.00 (very high)

Table 7 shows that public school teachers exhibit generally strong competence in Domain 7: Personal Growth and Professional Development, with an overall mean rating of 3.44, interpreted as *High*. The highest-rated indicator is *demonstrating commitment to the teaching profession* ($M = 4.45$, $s = 0.06$, Very High), suggest-

ing a deep dedication to their roles and responsibilities as educators. This is followed closely by *reflecting on teaching practices for continuous improvement* ($M = 4.18$, $s = 0.09$, High), indicating that teachers are inclined to evaluate and enhance their instructional methods to improve learning outcomes. Moderate strengths

are seen in *participating in professional development activities* ($M = 3.41$, $s = 1.24$, High), showing that teachers engage in learning opportunities, although greater frequency and consistency could further strengthen this area. On the other hand, *adopting innovative teaching practices* ($M = 2.76$, $s = 1.53$, Moderate) and *seeking feedback from peers and supervisors* ($M = 2.42$, $s = 1.67$, Low) are identified as weaker areas. These findings point to the need for cultivating a stronger culture of innovation and collaborative feedback in schools, which could enhance both professional growth and instructional quality.

Discussion

The results of the present study indicate that public school teachers generally possess a high to very high level of competence across the seven domains of professional standards, though notable strengths and areas for improvement are evident in specific indicators.

In Domain 1: Content Knowledge and Pedagogy, teachers demonstrated strong mastery of subject matter, effective curriculum alignment, and the ability to integrate accurate, updated content. These strengths reflect findings by Velasco and de Guzman (2023), who reported that mastery of subject content is a consistent predictor of instructional quality in Philippine public schools. However, the moderate rating in applying strategies that promote critical and creative thinking suggests a need for targeted interventions. This aligns with Datu and Valdez's (2022) findings that higher-order thinking skills are often underdeveloped in classroom practice due to heavy curriculum loads and traditional teaching approaches. Professional development programs that emphasize inquiry-based learning and problem-solving strategies could bridge this gap, fostering students' 21st-century skills.

Domain 2: Learning Environment scored very high overall, indicating teachers' excellence in maintaining safe, inclusive, and well-structured classrooms. Such competence is consistent with international evidence that positive learning environments are directly linked to student engagement and achievement (UNESCO, 2022). The slightly lower—but still high—ratings in encouraging collaboration and

optimizing resource use suggest that while teachers provide a supportive atmosphere, there is room to enhance peer learning and the creative utilization of instructional materials. Schools may address this by promoting cooperative learning models and offering training on innovative resource management, especially in resource-constrained contexts.

In Domain 3: Diversity of Learners, teachers showed strong skills in identifying students' needs and integrating gender sensitivity into instruction. However, moderate competence in designing activities for multiple learning styles and providing equitable opportunities highlights the need for more robust differentiated instruction strategies. According to Bautista et al. (2024), while Philippine teachers recognize learner diversity, many lack sufficient training in implementing inclusive pedagogical approaches, especially for learners with special needs. Addressing this through sustained capacity-building and access to adaptive learning resources could strengthen equity in classroom learning experiences.

The findings for Domain 4: Curriculum and Planning reflect high competence overall, with very high ratings in lesson preparation, material selection, and logical lesson organization. These strengths affirm the teachers' ability to translate curriculum goals into structured instructional plans. Nonetheless, the lowest rating in planning differentiated instruction—categorized as low—mirrors the challenge noted in Domain 3, suggesting that differentiation remains a systemic area for improvement. This is consistent with the DepEd Learning Recovery Program (2023), which underscores differentiated planning as a critical strategy in addressing post-pandemic learning gaps.

Domain 5: Assessment and Reporting also showed high competence, particularly in designing valid assessment tools and maintaining systematic records. However, the low rating for timely and constructive feedback is noteworthy, as feedback is a key driver of student learning progress (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; updated in García & Fernández, 2021). This gap may be due to large class sizes or administrative workload, as reported by Torres and Mariano (2023). Schools should explore strategies such as peer feedback systems, digital

grading tools, and manageable assessment schedules to ensure that feedback remains prompt and actionable.

In Domain 6: Community Linkages and Engagement, teachers excelled in building partnerships and participating in school-community activities, which is critical for holistic student development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; updated in Espinosa et al., 2022). The low competence in coordinating with other professionals, however, suggests limited interdisciplinary collaboration. International studies (e.g., OECD, 2023) emphasize that multi-professional teamwork—integrating guidance counselors, social workers, and healthcare professionals—can significantly improve learner outcomes, especially in vulnerable communities. Enhancing inter-professional networks at the school and district level could address this gap.

Finally, Domain 7: Personal Growth and Professional Development reveals teachers' deep commitment to their profession and openness to self-reflection. However, moderate competence in adopting innovative practices and low ratings in seeking peer feedback point to the need for fostering a stronger culture of collaboration and innovation. Research by Lim and Bautista (2023) notes that Filipino teachers' reluctance to seek feedback may stem from hierarchical school cultures, where peer evaluation is underutilized. Encouraging professional learning communities (PLCs) and mentorship systems could normalize feedback-seeking behaviors and promote experimentation with new pedagogies.

Conclusion

The findings collectively suggest that while teachers demonstrate commendable competence in curriculum mastery, safe learning environments, and community engagement, sustained improvement requires targeted interventions in differentiated instruction, feedback practices, interdisciplinary collaboration, and innovation adoption. Professional development programs should not only enhance individual skills but also reshape organizational cultures to value peer learning, reflective practice, and collaborative problem-solving. Furthermore, policymakers and school leaders should ensure that systemic barriers—such as

large class sizes, limited resources, and rigid hierarchies—are addressed to fully enable teachers to apply these competencies in daily practice.

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