

Profile, Challenges and Coping Mechanisms of Out-of-Field Teachers in the Second Congressional District of Sorsogon

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Abstract: *The study aimed to determine the profile, challenges and coping mechanisms of out-of-field teachers in the 2nd Congressional District of Sorsogon for school year 2019-2020. It used the descriptive-survey method since a questionnaire was devised in gathering the primary data as reflected in the problem. The correlational method was also utilized in finding out the dependency between the variables. The respondents were randomly selected 201 out-of-field teachers in the 2nd Congressional District of Sorsogon. The statistical tools utilized were frequency count, percentage, and ranking. The study revealed that majority of the out-of-field teachers have field of specialization in academic-related subjects, have 0-5 years of teaching experience, and are teaching practical subjects. Likewise, the most critical challenges encountered by the respondents are limited number of resource materials in making lesson plan insufficient instructional materials available; lack of training on teaching methodologies, techniques, and strategies required by learning competencies; and scarcity of equipment or facilities required in teaching. Moreover, the consultation with the experienced colleague in the school emerged as the common coping mechanism done by the out-of-field teachers in order to overcome the difficulty when grouped according to their profile. The study concluded that majority of the out-of-field teachers have field of specialization in academic-related, have 0-5 years of teaching experience, and are teaching practical subjects; the most critical challenges encountered by the respondents are limited number of resource materials in making lesson plan insufficient instructional materials available; lack of training on teaching methodologies, techniques, and strategies required by learning competencies; and scarcity of equipment or facilities required in teaching.; the consultation with the experienced colleague in the school emerged as the common coping mechanism done by the out-of-field teachers in order to overcome the difficulty. An action plan was designed to improve the teaching methodologies, techniques and strategies of the out-of-field teachers. It was recommended that the school administrators may work together with the teachers to deal with out-of-field phenomenon. They may engage in discussion on the out-of-field phenomenon, meetings may be held which aim to prepare the teacher who teaches outside his/her field of expertise. The subject coordinators may serve as learning facilitators who become aware of the out of field phenomenon as well as the implications it has. Support programs should be experienced by the coordinators who are aware of the needs of the out of field teachers in the specific subjects. The school administrators may provide effective professional development programs that will include concepts since out of field teachers have problems to grasp new methods and concepts because of their lack of knowledge and experience in the field in which they have to teach. The school administrators may provide in-service programs that are focused on individualistic problem areas. These programs may be aimed at subject matters, classroom management techniques and conferences on new curriculum. The school administrators may strive to collaborate with the Division Office to review the recruitment procedures and inhibit the growth of the out of field phenomenon at their schools.*

1. Introduction

The primary foundation of an educational system is the teachers. They play a dynamic role in the civilization not only in its prime duty to educate the learners but in molding them to be productive and be part in nation building.

The part played by teachers in the society is definitely significant and, in their hands, lie the mission of creating professionals such as doctors, nurses, engineers, chemists, chefs, welders and many others who said to be pillars of society. No doubt, educators are heroes who lighten the future of those individuals who have the vision of fulfilling their dreams. According to Saharan and Sethi (2009), teachers are nation builders who mold one's character and personality and their commitment makes a generation knowledgeable and morally upright.

In today's complex world, teachers are confronted with various challenges that seem to hinder them to do their duty as educators. The generation itself poses as a challenge because teachers' creativity and patience are at stake for it demands technological skills to meet the needs of the learners and to adjust to the fast pacing changes in the environment. Certainly, the skills a teacher possess should also be upgraded and well-balanced in order to be effective

reservoir of knowledge. Chen (2012) points out that reports tell that students are more technologically advanced than many teachers today and it can be difficult also to keep students' interest and attention if technology and education go together.

Interestingly, out-of-field teachers or teachers handling subjects not their major is another issue that needs to be given attention. Teachers usually complain to their school head if given load assignment not their main expertise because it is wearisome and outcomes could be serious. According to National Education Association (2019), out-of-field teaching has long been and continues to be an important issue in public schools. This phenomenon can be attributed to selective shortages of teachers as well as misplacement of teachers.

This circumstance is also experienced in other countries such as Australia. According to Hobbs (2015), there are too many teachers in the country who are teaching outside their expertise and therefore consider it as just what teachers have to do. Nevertheless, result shows that out-of-field teachers produce lower student gains and they rely much on teaching methods that are traditional and ineffective such as solely using the textbook. Here, problem can still be linked to teachers not performing their ultimate goal to let students

master the competencies because of some factors that need to be analyzed.

In line with this, this factual set-up is also observed in Philippine educational system. Teachers who are non-major of a learning area is tasked to teach the learners in the best possible ways. The worst thing is that some teachers are handling two or three different subjects in a year. Teachers who are confronted with this dilemma cannot but accept the challenge knowing that many of them are also experiencing the same agony. Valenzona (2019) wrote about the plight of Filipino teachers and expressed his opinion about the reality that confronts teachers. He exposed the truth that teachers are usually the first to blame whenever students do not learn properly despite the fact that they monitor 300 students a day. Additionally, teachers face administrative and even criminal charges of mistakes teachers did not make or without even acknowledging the teachers' side.

The Magna Carta for Public School Teacher Act better known as R.A. 4670 aims to promote and improve the social and economic status of public school teachers, their living and working conditions, their employment and career prospects so that they may compare favorably with existing opportunities in other walks of life, attract, and retain in the teaching profession with the proper qualification. In lieu of this, teachers' welfare should also be taken as a priority of the Department of Education and school administrators to empower teachers to be the best facilitator of learning.

In the same manner, Republic Act No. 9155 known as "Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001" states that the state encourages local initiatives to improve schools and learning centers and provide means by which these improvements may be achieved and sustained. This unyielding proposal to offer solutions to existing problem is the key objective of this study. Out of field teaching has not been given full attention or even prioritized although it is one of the many root causes of failure among students as well as the teachers.

Looking closer and analyzing the scenarios presented, there is really a need to conduct this study. The National Achievement Test result in 2017 presents the data on problem solving, information literacy and critical thinking on the five learning areas being tested such as Filipino, Mathematics, English, Science and HEKASI. The overall MPS of the three skills highlighted are 40.31 for problem solving, 41.44 for information literacy and 39.02 for critical thinking. These numbers are too low to the 75% target performance level for each subject area. The failure presented could be one of the negative impact of out of field teaching because this result conforms with Patalinghug (2018) study where major findings showed that out of field teachers felt guilty for being unqualified in their assigned area due to lack of content knowledge and the necessary strategies and techniques to teach the students on the assigned subject.

In addition to the cited statistics, out of 1,490 secondary teachers in the 2nd Congressional District of the Division of Sorsogon, 419 are out of field teachers. This compromises a 28% of the total population. For instance, Matnog National

High School which is one of the big public schools in the Division of Sorsogon has eighty-five junior high school teachers and twenty of them are out-of-field teachers. This covers the twenty-four percent (24%) of the entire population. This arrangement is synonymous with the junior high school teachers in a neighboring private school in the Municipality of Matnog. Pacific View Academy has 7 teachers and 4 of them are teaching not their major subject.

With the given data, this big number of out-of-field teachers specifically in Matnog cluster should be given attention for the quality of teaching and the achievement of the learners can be at stake. Many factors on the failure of the students could be rooted from this condition. Absenteeism, drop-out rates, failing grades and negative attitude toward learning could be traced as impact of this scenario. As the authority to nurture the minds of the learners and to prepare them for lifelong achievements, out-of-field teachers should be ready enough as masters of the subjects they are handling. Failure to do so would mean failure of the learners.

As solution to this situation, this study needs to be carried out due to the fact that in identifying the profile, challenges and coping mechanisms of out-of-field teachers, proper resolutions can be undertaken to solve issues related to this situation. Aside from this, learners' competence could be harness and develop knowing that appropriate measures are at hand. This study conforms with the recommendation of Fameronag (2018) affirming that that administrators should be objective enough in assigning teachers based on their teaching qualification.

Indeed, the need to conduct this study arises due to the demand of producing quality graduates who can compete in the real world with their knowledge and skills honed in their years of schooling. If students are well-trained by teachers who are adept and confident in teaching their subject matters, surely learners will be developed as lifelong learners and productive citizens of the country. Thus, identifying the profile, challenges and coping mechanisms of out-of-field teachers should be given full support and consideration in order to curtail serious fallouts regarding the subject presented.

Research Questions

The study aimed to determine the profile, challenge, and coping mechanisms of out-of-field teachers in the 2nd Congressional District of Sorsogon for school-year 2019-2020

Specifically, it sought answer to the following questions:

- 1) What is the profile of out-of-field teachers along:
 - 1.1 Field of Specialization;
 - 1.2 Length of Service
 - 1.3 Subject taught?
- 2) What are the challenges encountered by out-of-field teachers in terms of:
 - 1.4 Lesson Planning;
 - 1.5 Achievements of the Learning Competencies;
 - 1.6 Pedagogy; and
 - 1.7 Learning Materials?
- 3) What are the coping mechanisms of the out-of-field teachers when grouped according to their profile?

- 4) What action plan could be proposed based on the results of the study?

2. Methodology

This study aimed to determine the profile, challenges and coping mechanisms of Out-of-Field Teachers in the Second Congressional District of Sorsogon relative to the field of specialization, length of service, trainings attended, and subject taught.

This study used the descriptive-survey research design since a questionnaire was utilized to gather the primary data from the respondents. Likewise, documentary analysis and unstructured interview were adopted for the secondary data. The respondents were the 204 out-of-field junior high school teachers in the Second Congressional District of Sorsogon which were determined using the Slovin's formula and were randomly chosen. The results were analyzed and interpreted with the use of appropriate statistical tools such as frequency count, percentage, ranking and Chi-square test.

The Sample

The primary sources of data were the 204 out-of-field junior high school teachers in the second congressional district of Sorsogon. The researcher used the Slovin's formula since the total possible number of respondents is too large and chosen utilizing the stratified random sampling.

Table 1: The Respondents

<i>Districts</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
1. Barcelona	11	5
2. Bulan	50	25
3. Bulusan	14	7
4. Gubat	28	14
5. Irosin	20	10
6. Juban	27	13
7. Matnog	20	10
8. Prieto Diaz	20	10
9. Sta. Magdalena	11	6
Total	201	100

The respondents were composed of 11 (6%) teachers from Barcelona, 50 (25%) teachers from Bulan, 14 (7%) teachers from Bulusan, 28 (14%) teachers from Gubat, 20 (10%) teachers from Irosin, 27 (13%) teachers from Juban, 20 (10%) teachers from Matnog, 20 (10%) teachers from Prieto Diaz and 11 (6%) teachers from Sta. Magdalena. Table 1 presents the frequency distribution of the respondents.

The Instrument

The researcher with the assistance of the adviser drafted the questionnaire in order to deal with the various issues covered in this study. The questionnaire checklist was composed of three parts. The first part contained the professional profile of the Out-of-Field junior school teachers in the Second Congressional District of Sorsogon. The second part was focused on the challenges encountered by the Out-of-Field teachers along the identified variables. The Coping mechanisms of the Out-of-Field teachers was included in the third part.

The data used in the study was obtained through a questionnaire which was distributed to the junior high school teachers of the respondents' school. Prior to the distribution of the instrument, the researcher asked the adviser to check the instrument and was later brought to the panel members for further checking. After getting the questionnaire checked, the researcher incorporated the suggested revision until the final version was done. A dry run was conducted on February 2, 2020 at Holy Spirit Academy of Irosin with at least 10 Out-of-Field teachers accomplishing the questionnaire. Then, the final copy was formatted since the accuracy and reliability of the instrument was attained.

Data Collection Procedures

With the instrument ready for administration, a letter of request addressed to the Superintendent of Schools Division of Sorsogon was sought for the approval of the conduct of study. Upon the granting of the approval, the researcher then asked permission to the school principals for the actual conduct of the study in their locality. The questionnaires were distributed to the identified respondents for them to accomplish. The researcher was able to attain a 100 percent retrieval rate of the instruments. The data gathered from the respondents was collated, tallied, and analyzed for statistical interpretation.

Data Analysis Procedures

The data collected from the respondents were subjected to the appropriate statistical analysis. The frequency and percentage were utilized to present the profile of the out-of-field teachers relative to the field of specialization, length of service, and subject taught.

Then, the frequency and rank were employed on the challenges encountered by the Out-of-field teachers along lesson planning, achievements of the learning competencies, pedagogy, and learning materials.

Also, the frequency and rank were used on the coping mechanisms of the Out-of-Field teachers when grouped according to their profiles.

3. Results and Discussions

Findings

Based on the data collected, the following are the findings of the study:

- 1) Out of the 201 respondents surveyed, 83 (41%) teachers have academic-related subjects as fields of specialization; 137 (67%) teachers have teaching experience of 0-5 years; and 162 teachers have practical subjects as subjects taught.
- 2) The top three challenges encountered by the out-of-field teachers along lesson planning are: the limited number of resource materials in making lesson plan ($f=134$); unavailability of instructional materials related to the subject ($f=115$); and difficulty to cover the competencies listed in the Curriculum Guide ($f=106$).
 - a) In terms of achievements of learning competencies: availability of instructional materials is insufficient ($f=137$); limited training attended on various approaches and strategies in teaching the subject ($f=123$); and unpacking of competencies due to lack of training ($f=92$).

- b) Relative to pedagogy: lack of training on teaching methodologies, techniques and strategies required by the learning competencies (f=126); inadequacy of instructional materials suited to the different teaching methodologies, techniques and strategies (f=94); and limited number of local and indigenous teaching materials useful in the delivery of the lesson (f=88).
- c) In relation to learning materials, scarcity of equipment or facilities required in teaching the subject (f=127); insufficient learning materials or references provided by the school or division (f=121); difficulty in utilizing of ICT in the teaching-learning process (f=88).
- 3) The five most common coping mechanisms of the out-of-field teachers when grouped according to their profiles are the following: talk to experienced colleagues so as to overcome the difficulty; improvise instructional materials; discuss the problems with other teachers; spend my own money on resources in order to survive; and reflect to discover the personal weaknesses and how to improve.
- 4) An action plan may be designed to improve the teaching methodologies, techniques and strategies of the out-of-field teachers.

4. Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher arrived at the following conclusions:

- 1) Majority of the out-of-field teachers have field of specialization in academic-related, have 0-5 years of teaching experience, and are teaching practical subjects.
- 2) The most critical challenges encountered by the respondents are limited number of resource materials in making lesson plan insufficient instructional materials available; lack of training on teaching methodologies, techniques, and strategies required by learning competencies; and scarcity of equipment or facilities required in teaching.
- 3) The consultation with the experienced colleague in the school emerged as the common coping mechanism done by the out-of-field teachers in order to overcome the difficulty.
- 4) An action plan was designed to improve the teaching methodologies, techniques and strategies of the out-of-field teachers.

5. Recommendations

In the light of foregoing conclusions, the following recommendations were offered:

- 1) The school administrators may work together with the teachers to deal with out-of-field phenomenon. They may engage in discussion on the out-of-field phenomenon, meetings may be held which aim to prepare the teacher who teaches outside his/her field of expertise.
- 2) The subject coordinators may serve as learning facilitators who become aware of the out of field phenomenon as well as the implications it has. Support programs should be experienced by the coordinators who are aware of the needs of the out of field teachers in the specific subjects.

- 3) The school administrators may provide effective professional development programs that will include concepts since out of field teachers have problems to grasp new methods and concepts because of their lack of knowledge and experience in the field in which they have to teach.
- 4) The school administrators may provide in-service programs that are focused on individualistic problem areas. These programs may be aimed at subject matters, classroom management techniques and conferences on new curriculum.
- 5) The school administrators may strive to collaborate with the Division Office to review the recruitment procedures and inhibit the growth of the out of field phenomenon at their schools.
- 6) Further research be conducted on the awareness of the need to look at approaches and perceptions of principals and other members of the school administration concerning the teacher who teaches outside his/her field of expertise.

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