

Professional Development and Social Support Networks on Instructional Competence of Novice Basic Education Teachers

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ABSTRACT

The primary aim of this study was to determine the predictors of instructional competence among novice basic education teachers, considering professional development and social support networks for the school year 2024-2025. The participants in the study were randomly selected public elementary and secondary school teachers from the Valencia City division. The study utilized a descriptive -correlational research design. The statistical techniques employed were descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analysis.

Descriptive analysis indicated that commitment to ongoing learning consistently emerges as the strongest predictor. The research results suggested that novice teachers who are more committed to continuous professional growth tend to demonstrate higher instructional competence. On the other hand, engagement in collaborative learning also showed a significant contribution, indicating that participation in collaborative activities such as peer discussions and group learning enhances instructional competence. The results implied that instructional competence among novice basic education teachers is significantly influenced by both their commitment to professional growth and the level of support they receive from their environment. Teachers who actively engage in continuous learning and collaborative practices, while also receiving strong support from their community and peers, are more likely to demonstrate higher instructional competence.

Keywords: Instructional competence, Novice teachers, Professional development, Collaborative Learning, Social Support

INTRODUCTION

Novice teachers in basic education, especially in the Philippines like Cagayan de Oro and Valencia City, face steep challenges in their first 1-3 years—such as classroom management, time constraints, diverse student needs, and adapting methods amid budget shortages and post-pandemic gaps. These issues erode confidence, boost attrition, and harm student outcomes (Inocian & Inocian, 2024).

Professional development programs, including induction, workshops, and targeted training, build skills in content delivery, assessment, and ethics, accelerating growth to match veteran teachers (Suphaari & Chinokul, 2021; Kutsyuruba et al., 2019).

Social support networks like mentorship and peer groups provide practical advice, feedback, and emotional resilience, proving vital in the community-oriented Philippine context and amid K-12 reforms (Ulla et al., 2022; Sanchez, 2022; Torres & Abad, 2021).

Urban novices with combined formal (e.g., mentoring) and informal support excel more (Santos & Tan, 2022). Despite growing evidence, research gaps persist on how these factors specifically boost instructional competence. This study targets that gap for Valencia City teachers in SY 2024-2025 (Villanueva, 2023; Mendoza, 2020).

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive-correlational research design was used for this study. As it is intended to describe the level of instructional competence of novice basic education teachers in Valencia City Division, the descriptive method was used. The correlation method was used to ascertain the relationship between the novice teachers' professional development and their social support networks. Data were collected through surveys to understand these variables better.

These instruments were pilot-tested to determine each questionnaire's Cronbach's alpha. Three (3) sets of questionnaires were used to collect the relevant data to answer the research questions of this study. The researcher uses the questionnaires, and pilot tested the adapted instruments. The questionnaires are composed of indicators of professional development, social support networks and instructional competence of novice basic education teachers. The research instrument consisted of three (3) parts: Part I covered the professional development; Part II dealt on the level of social support networks and Part III talked about the instructional competence of novice teachers.

Part I Professional Development. To assess the level of professional development practices of novice teachers, the modified from the work of TALIS 2018 Teacher Questionnaire was used. The questionnaire contained indicators related to professional development, including participation in formal trainings and workshops, engagement in collaborative learning, reflective practice, application of new knowledge and skills, and commitment to ongoing learning.

Part II Social support networks. To identify novice basic education teachers' social support networks, the researcher adapted the Teaching Satisfaction Scale (TSS) based on the Life Satisfaction Scale to administered social support received by novice teachers.

Part III Instructional Competence. To measures instructional competence, the research instruments utilized in this study adapted the Teacher's Professional Development Competencies Scale (TPDCS) by Kırkıç et al. This Instructional Competence Subscale assesses key aspects of teachers' classroom management, lesson planning, assessment practices, student guidance and support, and overall instructional abilities.

The respondents of the study consisted of three hundred (300) public novice teachers from the Division of Valencia City, comprising both elementary and secondary public school teachers. The researcher asked permission to conduct the study from the School Division Superintendent of the Division of Valencia City specifically to Lumbo Integrated School, Cabanuangan Integrated School, Valencia National High School, Valencia City Central School, Sinalayan Elementary School, Batangan Integrated School, Sugod Integrated School, Tongantongan National High School, Pinatilan Elementary School, and Mailag Central School. After the letter has been approved, the researcher presented the endorsement letter to the Public Schools District Administrators/Principals of each school for the researcher to be accommodated. The researcher will then thoroughly explain the study's goal to ensure they understand what will be measured.

The researcher employed the quantitative method, using a descriptive-correlational design. Quantitative data were analyzed using a statistical approach. To determine whether there is a relationship between two or more variables, the correlation method was utilized. This technique allowed the researcher to establish connections between professional development and social support networks on instructional competence of novice teachers.

Furthermore, Pearson's correlation coefficient will be utilized to examine the relationships between the independent and dependent variables. Moreover, stepwise multiple regression analysis was used to determine the variables that best predict the instructional competence of novice teachers.

Collectively, these statistical techniques will provide a comprehensive understanding of the coping styles employed by neophyte teachers and their potential impact on instructional supervisory competence.

Frequency in percentage. It was used to calculate the frequency’s share of the overall frequency. It is stated as percentage. Mean. It was utilized to calculate the respondent’s average Professional development and social support networks scores as a whole. Pearson’s Correlation. It assessed the substantial correlation between the novice teachers of Division of Valencia City on professional development and social support networks.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Professional development of novice teachers

As shown in Table 1 summarizes professional development practices of novice teachers, showing an overall mean score of 4.38 rated "Agree/Effective," with the highest mean score in application of new knowledge and skills with mean score of 4.44, followed by reflective practice with mean score of 4.40, engagement in collaborative learning got mean score of 4.36, commitment to ongoing learning with mean score of 4.36, and participation in formal training and workshops with mean score of 4.35.

The highest mean score 4.44 is for Application of new knowledge and skills, suggesting that when novice teachers learn something new, they are very effective at putting it into practice in their classrooms. The lowest mean score 4.35 is for Participation in formal training and workshops, still solidly in the “Agree” range, implying that while workshops are valued, application and reflection are slightly more emphasized.

Table 1. Summary of the Mean Scores of professional development of novice teachers.

Indicator	Mean	Descriptive Rating	Qualitative Interpretation
Participation in formal training and workshops	4.35	Agree	Effective
Engagement in collaborative learning	4.36	Agree	Effective
Reflective Practice	4.40	Agree	Effective
Application of new knowledge and skills	4.44	Agree	Effective
Commitment to ongoing learning	4.36	Agree	Effective
Overall mean	4.38	Agree	Effective

LEGEND:

Mean Interval	Descriptive Rating	Qualitative Interpretation
4.51-5.00	Strongly Agree	Very effective
3.51 – 4.50	Agree	Effective
2.51 – 3.50	Undecided	Neutral
1.51 – 2.50	Disagree	Ineffective
1.0 – 1.50	Strongly Disagree	Very ineffective

These findings confirmed DepEd Region 10's comprehensive PD ecosystem aligns with Darling-Hammond et al.'s (2019) effective PD theory and RA 10912 CPD Act through DO 32 s. 2021 LAC maturation, where application excellence with mean score of 4.44 validates Guskey's (2020) Levels 2-3 transfer amid post-pandemic recovery, surpassing meta-analytic benchmarks of 0.06 student effect sizes (Lynch et al., 2019).

Implications include empirically proven novice competence acceleration positioning Northern Mindanao for 2027 PPST national scaling, sustained retention beyond Evans' (2023) 22% attrition via integrated formal collaborative, reflective, application, commitment pathways, policy justification for increased LAC funding as Region 10 out performs Philippine benchmarks (e.g., 4.73 induction means, Campilla 2024), and readiness for advanced teacher leadership pipelines where sustained "Effective" ratings (all domains 4.35-4.44) transform structured PD into observable classroom mastery and scalable professional growth models.

This pattern suggests that their professional development is not limited to one-off seminars but is embedded in everyday teaching routines.

The high scores for Engagement in collaborative learning with mean score of 4.36 and for Commitment to ongoing learning with mean score of 4.36 resonate with Stein and Nelson (2019), who emphasize that sustained, networked learning communities and intrinsic motivation are key to effective teacher development.

The "Effective" overall rating with mean score of 4.38 affirms novice Philippine basic education teachers' holistic embrace of professional development practices, foundational for instructional competence amid systemic challenges like K-12 implementation and resource scarcity (DepEd, 2020).

Level of the Social Support Networks

The level of social support networks received by novice teachers across four main indicators namely: Family support, Peer/colleague support, School administrator support, and Community support.

As shown in Table 2, all four indicators mean scores are above 4.30, with the highest mean of 4.46 for Community support, followed closely by Family support with a mean of 4.35 and School administrator support with a mean of 4.35, and the lowest mean of 4.32 for Peer/colleague support. Despite these slight differences, all values fall within the “High level – Satisfactory” range, indicating a consistently strong perception of support across the four sources. The overall mean of 4.37 suggests that novice teachers, as a group, experience moderately high to high levels of social support from their family, peers, school leaders, and the wider community.

Table 2. Summary of the Mean Scores of social support networks for novice teachers.

Indicator	Mean	Descriptive Rating	Qualitative Interpretation
Family support	4.35	High level	Satisfactory
Peer/colleague support	4.32	High level	Satisfactory
School administrator support	4.35	High level	Satisfactory
Community support	4.46	High level	Satisfactory
Overall mean	4.37	High level	Satisfactory

LEGEND:

Mean Interval	Descriptive Rating	Qualitative Interpretation
4.51 - 5.00	Very high level	Very satisfactory
3.51 – 4.50	High level	Satisfactory
2.51 – 3.50	Moderate level	Average

1.51 – 2.50	Low level	Weak
1.0 – 1.50	Very low level	Very poor

These social support networks act like safety nets for novice teachers: families provide encouragement and practical help (like childcare), peers share lesson ideas and emotional support during tough days, administrators offer PD resources and recognition, and communities supply materials through PTAs as exactly what research confirms reduces burnout (Santos & Tan, 2022 found 28% less stress) and boosts skills (Kutsyuruba et al., 2019 showed 22% better teaching).

In real-world impact, strong networks cut early quit rates below 22% (Evans, 2023), speed up classroom mastery (Ulla et al., 2022: 2x faster strategy improvement), and make PD training stick better when teachers discuss it with trusted colleagues or family. The key takeaway is community support shines brightest with mean score of 4.46, suggesting Region 10's barangay/PTA involvement creates the biggest buffer, perfect for scaling nationwide by 2027 as novices turn support into confident teaching.

The findings imply that novice teachers benefit from a broad network of social support systems that help them adjust to the demands of the teaching profession. Strong social support is important in reducing stress, improving job satisfaction, and enhancing instructional performance.

Instructional Competence of Novice Teachers

In Table 3 presents the summary of the mean scores of instructional competence of novice basic education teachers across four core domains: Classroom management, Lesson planning, Assessment, and Student guidance and support. The table reports the mean score, descriptive rating, and qualitative interpretation for each domain, as well as the overall mean. All four indicators fall under the “Agree” category, qualitatively interpreted as “Effective,” indicating that novice teachers, as a group, are perceived as competent and effective across these instructional areas. The overall mean of 4.30 suggests that novice teachers demonstrate a moderately high level of overall instructional competence.

Among the indicators, the highest mean of 4.40 is recorded for “Classroom management,” followed by “Assessment” with a mean of 4.30, “Student guidance and support” with a mean of 4.25, and “Lesson planning” with a mean of 4.24, all of which remain within the “Agree – Effective” range. The relatively consistent means across the four domains reveal that novice teachers are perceived as functionally effective in their core teaching responsibilities.

Table 3. Summary of the Mean Scores of instructional/PTA competence of novice teachers.

Indicator	Mean	Descriptive Rating	Qualitative Interpretation
Classroom management	4.40	Agree	Effective
Lesson planning	4.24	Agree	Effective
Assessment	4.30	Agree	Effective
Student guidance and support	4.25	Agree	Effective
Overall mean	4.30	Agree	Effective

LEGEND:

Mean Interval	Descriptive Rating	Qualitative Interpretation
4.51-5.00	Strongly Agree	Very effective

3.51 – 4.50	Agree	Effective
2.51 – 3.50	Undecided	Neutral
1.51 – 2.50	Disagree	Ineffective
1.0 – 1.50	Strongly Disagree	Very ineffective

From the study of Danielson (2020), establishes classroom management, lesson planning, assessment, and student guidance as interconnected components of the Framework for Teaching, where competence emerges from their synergistic integration rather than isolated mastery. Her research demonstrates that novice teachers achieving balance across these domains create productive learning environments, with classroom management serving as the foundational enabler for planning, assessment and guidance effectiveness.

Classroom control is the foundation—when novice teachers handle behavior well first, they have mental energy left for planning lessons, giving feedback, and helping individual students, exactly as Danielson (2020) predicted.

Lesson planning needs the most help with lowest mean score of 4.24—targeted training on clear objectives and activity alignment will lift overall performance fastest, per Tomlinson's (2020) differentiation principles.

They're already good at using test data as shown in the assessment mean score of 4.30—this data-responsive teaching makes them better than many Philippine novices, ready to grow into advanced differentiated instruction.

Emotional support is working under guidance with mean score of 4.25—warm student relationships plus strong management create motivated classrooms, key to keeping new teachers from quitting (Jennings & Greenberg, 2022).

In a bigger picture, Region 10's training system works, these novice teachers aren't perfect but functionally effective across all teaching domains. Focus PD sessions on planning + guidance collaboration = national model by 2027. In the Philippine context, the pattern of results in Table 17 suggests that novice teachers are already effective in classroom management and assessment, and reasonably effective in lesson planning and student guidance, but that targeted mentoring, professional development, and collaborative coaching can further refine their instructional competence across these domains.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the results of the study, the following conclusions were derived:

Teachers who actively engage in professional development activities, particularly those who demonstrate strong commitment to ongoing learning, are more likely to exhibit higher levels of teaching competence. This highlights the importance of continuous professional growth in enhancing teachers' effectiveness in the classroom.

School administrators were identified as key strengths indicating that strong leadership and guidance are essential in helping novice teachers succeed, emerging as the greatest correlation. Regression analysis identifies a clear predictor hierarchy: commitment to ongoing learning leads as the dominant professional development driver, followed by collaborative learning, community support, and peer support. Classroom management constitutes novices' strongest competence domain while lesson planning represents the targeted growth opportunity, with management foundations enabling lesson planning, assessment, and guidance proficiency. The results indicate that professional development and social support networks significantly influence the instructional competence of novice basic education teachers.

Thus, all professional development indicators and social support networks significantly correlate with instructional competence, rejecting the null hypothesis.

The study also concludes that instructional competence is not solely dependent on individual effort but is influenced by both personal and environmental factors. The combined effect of professional development and social support provides a more comprehensive explanation of teacher competence, as evidenced by the significant predictors identified in the regression analysis.

Finally, commitment to ongoing learning consistently emerged as the strongest predictor of instructional competence. This implies that teachers who value lifelong learning and continuously seek improvement are better equipped to manage classrooms, plan lessons, assess learners, and provide effective student support.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations can be made:

School administrators may strengthen support systems for novice teachers by providing mentorship programs, regular coaching, and constructive feedback. Through launching quarterly principal training workshops focusing on mentoring protocols, release time scheduling for teacher PD, and RPMS feedback delivery within 48 hours of classroom observations to leverage administrators as the strongest correlate of teacher success, complemented by a "novice teacher buddy system" pairing each school principal with 3-5 new teachers for biweekly check-ins and resource allocation. They may also create a supportive school environment that encourages professional growth and collaboration.

Novice teachers may encourage to actively participate in professional development activities, especially those that promote continuous learning and collaboration. Engaging in reflective practices and applying newly acquired knowledge can further enhance their instructional competence. By creating personalized "Teacher Growth Contracts" during orientation where novice teachers set 3 specific PD goals—such as completing 2 online courses or leading 1 LAC session signed by both teacher and principal and tracked monthly through a simple Google Form dashboard accessible to school heads to cultivate commitment to lifelong learning as the dominant predictor. Setting schedule fixed "Collaboration Fridays" (last Friday monthly, 8-11 AM) protected by DepEd memo where teachers rotate peer observations using a standardized 5-item checklist covering lesson flow, engagement, assessment, differentiation, and closure, followed by 30-minute debriefs with written takeaways to institutionalize collaborative learning as the second strongest driver.

For school related activities, may establish "Family Teacher Nights" held twice in a school year where parents and barangay captains co-plan 2 specific support actions such as classroom supplies, reading volunteers, or field trip chaperones, documented in simple MOUs with PTA presidents responsible for follow-through tracking to deepen community partnerships.

Roll out 4-session "Planning Bootcamp" during in-service days teaching backward design templates with 3 components—clear objective, success criteria, and differentiation strategy, requiring teachers to submit 1 revised lesson plan per session for school principal approval before classroom use to target lesson planning proficiency as the identified growth area.

Implement "PD Points System" where teachers earn points for completing growth contracts, peer observations, and collaboration sessions, redeemable for priority seminar slots, materials budget, or reduced non-teaching duties to link support access to active engagement and reinforce commitment against one school year.

The Department of Education may design and implement sustainable professional development programs that focus on long-term teacher growth. Policies that promote collaboration, peer support, and community involvement should also be strengthened.

Parents and community members may encourage to support teachers by fostering a positive learning environment and participating in school programs. Strong community involvement can help improve teachers' motivation and effectiveness.

Future studies may explore other factors that influence instructional competence, such as motivation, teaching self-efficacy, and school culture. Researchers may also consider using mixed-method approaches to gain deeper insights into the experiences of novice teachers.

Overall, it is recommended that a holistic approach integrating continuous professional development and strong social support systems be adopted to enhance the instructional competence of novice basic education teachers.

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