

Teaching Physical Education Subject in in-Person Classes: Challenges and Coping Mechanisms of Out-of-Field Teachers

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ABSTRACT

Background: Physical Education (PE) plays a crucial role in enhancing students' competence and self-confidence in participating in various physical activities, both in and outside of school. Nevertheless, the shift to face-to-face classes has posed difficulties for Senior High School teachers, specializing in Physical Education, who are teaching out-of-field in public schools. This qualitative study aimed to explore the challenges faced by these teachers and their coping mechanisms in the context of in-person class implementation.

Twenty-two Senior High School teachers delivering Physical Education, who are teaching out-of-field, took part in this descriptive narrative study. These teachers were situated in Areas 2A and 2B within the Leyte Division. The findings from interviews were analyzed, categorized, and transcribed to identify key themes and sub-themes, which are outlined below: lack of mastery of skills, insufficient training and seminar in physical education and sports, lack of equipment and facilities, technological constraints with sub-theme, adaptive technology strategy. As to coping mechanisms; adopt with the challenges, provide positive outlook or open-mindedness, attend trainings and seminars in PE and sports and provide equipment and supply.

Results: This study reaffirms that while online learning offers comfort and safety, in-person classes remain effective in providing students with well-structured physical activities, innovative exercise routines, enhanced motivation, and direct guidance from Physical Education Teachers. The accentuated challenges emphasize the necessity for ongoing support, training, and allocation of resources to ensure the effective delivery of Physical Education even amid the transition to in-person settings.

Keywords: out-of-field PE teaching, public senior high school, challenges, coping mechanisms

INTRODUCTION

Out-of-field teaching, as a concept, is used by many to refer to those teachers assigned to teach subjects in which they have not specialized (Ingersoll & Collins, 2018). Hobbs and Porsch (2021) stated that out-of-field teaching occurs when teachers teach a subject for which they are not qualified. According to Ingersoll and Curan (2004), it happens when school heads assign teachers to teach a subject for which they are not qualified. This has been an important but long unrecognized problem in schools and in education in general (Cobbold, 2010).

The 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines (Article XIV, Section 1) declares that the state is mandated to safeguard and enhance the right of all citizens to receive quality education at all levels, and it shall undertake appropriate measures to ensure such education is accessible to everyone. Similarly, Article 26, Section 2 of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights asserts that education should be oriented

towards the complete development of the human personality and the reinforcement of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. This implies a constitutional obligation for the Department of Education to guarantee that adequately qualified educators deliver quality education to learners. Implicit in this constitutional mandate is the overarching principle that the best interests of the child are of paramount importance in all matters concerning the child (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 26, Section 2).

As a result, Physical Education stands as a fundamental component of the overall educational curriculum. This discipline is designed to foster the psychological, mental, and physical well-being of individuals, cultivating them into active members of society (Badeda & Shabeba, 2012). Within a classroom setting, the role of Physical Education teachers is immensely significant. Their responsibilities encompass various dimensions, including devising and executing physical and sports activities that contribute to the development and enhancement of learners' values and ethics. Additionally, these teachers strive to enhance learners' physical abilities, strength, psychological health, motor skills, and social attitudes, while also maximizing opportunities for physical activity (AbuJameh, 2013).

The aim of this study is to delve into the verbal and non-verbal expressions of participants, seeking to comprehend the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching. Addressing research gaps highlighted by Hobbs (2012), it becomes imperative to investigate the out-of-field teaching scenario in Region VIII, particularly within Leyte Division schools. The educational competencies of physical education teachers play a crucial role in facilitating learning, given the focus on this specific subject. Consequently, numerous educational and personal challenges arise in teaching physical education in public high schools. This research, therefore, concentrates on unveiling the untold stories associated with teaching the subject, especially considering the limited knowledge of teachers. The study is undertaken with the primary purpose of understanding and exploring the experiences of out-of-field senior high school teachers engaged in teaching physical education in public high schools. The objective is to provide targeted support, recognizing these teachers as pivotal resources shaping the learning outcomes.

METHODS

Study Design and Participants

With the use of a pre-planned set of semi-structured questions, while an in-depth interview was conducted to gather the information from the participants that was required to address the study's research problems.

Research Design

This research adopts a qualitative phenomenological approach to explore and document the challenges and coping mechanisms encountered by out-of-field public senior high school teachers tasked with teaching Physical Education subjects. The primary goal is to identify and characterize the tangible challenges faced by these teachers in the real-world context of teaching physical education, along with an examination of the strategies employed to overcome these challenges. The study draws inspiration from Creswell (2013), aligning with qualitative research methodologies, particularly the phenomenological approach.

Participants of the Study

The participants in this scholarly study comprised public senior high school teachers designated to teach Physical Education in Areas 2A and 2B within the Leyte Division. Selection of participants was executed through purposive sampling, specifically targeting out-of-field public senior high school physical education teachers as the distinct cohort under investigation.

The application of purposive sampling in this study adhered to the rationale that it involves a deliberate selection process driven by the specific purpose and phenomenon under exploration, as outlined by Arikunto (2010).

Data Collection Procedure

The primary method used for gathering data for this study was the in-depth interview. The study was carried out in stages, starting with getting the approval letter, data collecting, and moving on to data analysis in relation to the phenomenon with the use of the interview guide. In order to assure accuracy and completeness of the data needed for the study, the researcher individually explained to the participants the objective of the interview and made sure that all questions in the semi-structured interview guide were asked. As recommended by Diehl et al. (2011), the in-depth interview allowed the participants to talk in the vernacular to explain the phenomenon. This allowed the participants to voice their opinions and attitudes, which improved the credibility of the results (Berger, 2011). More so, the interviewees' permission was obtained before the recording of responses, which was essential for the analysis of the data.

Data Analysis

The Colaizzi Method's stages were employed for an inductive thematic analysis to interpret the participants' narrative accounts. Colaizzi's descriptive phenomenology approach served as the foundational framework to delineate and portray the experiences of the mentioned individuals, aiming to unveil emerging themes and their interconnected relationships, as noted by Wirihana et al. (2018). The qualitative research experts initially conducted a comprehensive review, rereading, and cross-checking of each participant's transcript to obtain a holistic understanding of their experiences teaching physical education (P.E.) in senior high schools. Subsequently, notable statements related to the study's experiences were extracted, and careful documentation of page numbers and audio references was undertaken to ensure transcription accuracy. The extracted phrases were then organized into various sub-themes, and further analysis led to the creation of overarching themes. These findings were synthesized into a comprehensive description of the phenomenon under investigation, substantiated by relevant literature studies. The essential structure of the phenomenon was outlined, followed by a validation step, where participants were invited to confirm the researcher's descriptive findings by comparing them with their own experiences as out-of-field senior high school teachers instructing physical education classes in their respective schools.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the interviews were categorized and transcribed in order to develop and portray the primary themes and subthemes. The participants encountered challenges such as a lack of skill mastery, insufficient of trainings and seminars, a lack of equipment and facilities, and technological skills constraint. Also, the responses of the 22 participants in their quest to provide quality education to PE learners revealed the following coping mechanisms: adopt the challenges, provide a positive outlook (open-mindedness), attend trainings and seminars, and provide equipment and sports supply.

In the presentation of results, they were tagged as OOF P.E. TA or Out-of-Field Physical Education Teacher A up to Teacher V. These were italicized and the translations were enclosed in parenthesis. The quoted responses and feedback from the researcher were presented as supporting evidence

Challenges Encountered by Out-of-field Senior High School PE Teachers in the Teaching-Learning Process

In the context of this study, challenges refer to the challenges encountered by out-of-field public senior high

school teachers while teaching PE during the teaching-learning process. Hence, participants faced problems such as a lack of skill mastery, insufficient of training and seminars, a lack of equipment and facilities, and technological skills constraint.

Theme 1 Lack of Mastery and Skills

A teacher's proficiency in the subject matter is a cornerstone for their pedagogical competence. For Physical Education instructors, mastery of the subject is essential, encompassing the ability to navigate the interconnections between various subjects and other related aspects. According to Johansson and Myberg (2019), a teacher's effectiveness is influenced by factors such as their understanding of teaching methods, command over the subject matter, and the qualifications acquired during teacher training. This aligns with Hattie's (2016) perspective, which emphasizes that instructing teachers on the content to be taught enables them to better prepare for teaching. Subject matter expertise extends beyond the mere conveyance of facts and information, as teachers' ultimate objective is to guide learners in acquiring knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values.

The following are some of the participants' experiences:

"I sometimes encountered difficulties in understanding some terminologies met and cannot elaborate well the meaning of it". [I sometimes encounter difficulties in understanding some terminologies and I cannot elaborate well the meaning of those terms]. –**OOF PE TB**

"I think it is the lack of skills and the mastery of the subject matter". –**OOF PE TV**

"Damo nga challenges, usa na paunanhon ko pagtutdo han skills han Basketball kay diri man ako MAPEH Major and I cannot master the skills hin usa la semester nga pagtutdo hin P.E. Mauro-upay gud an MAPEH Major nga matutdo kay iya man gud forte". [There are lots of challenges met. First is how can I teach the skills in Basketball since I am not a MAPEH Major and I have not mastered the skills in teaching Physical Education with the one-semester stint on the subject; it is much appropriate if it will be a MAPEH Major who will be teaching the subject since it is their forte]. –**OOF PE TU**

Johansson and Myberg (2019) posited that, among various factors, the efficacy of a teacher is significantly influenced by their understanding of teaching, command over the subject matter, and the qualifications acquired during teacher training. Additionally, teachers with a limited grasp or possession of inaccurate information about the subject matter may inadvertently convey incorrect ideas to learners or, more critically, fail to guide them appropriately. The proficiency of teachers in the subject matter equips them to effectively aid students in learning and comprehending the content.

Theme 2 Insufficiency of Trainings and Seminars

A teacher is lacking a certain competence if there aren't enough trainings and seminars for senior high school teachers who work outside their profession. Therefore, offering the right training will lessen accidents caused by inexperience (Jago et al., 2009). De Sousa (2011) suggested using appropriate training to cut down on accidents when teaching PE skills. On the study of Hammond and Snowden (2007) gives support for the preceding comments; hence, classroom instructors believe they require more thorough teacher preparation in physical education offered through longer courses with more exposure to PE teaching.

The following are some of the participants' experiences to this issue:

"Sa pagtuturo ko ng Physical Education, wala po akong formal training in teaching Physical Education". [In my teaching of Physical Education, I don't have any formal trainings regarding teaching Physical

Education]. **-OOF PE TA**

"Basically, wala po akong trainings na related sa Physical Education". [Basically, I don't have trainings that are related to Physical Education]. **-OOF PE TC**

"None, hindi po ako naka-attend ng trainings related to Physical Education". [None. I wasn't able to attend any trainings related to Physical Education]. **-OOF PE TV**

The study conducted by Hammond and Snowden (2007) aligns with the viewpoints expressed in the preceding responses, indicating that classroom teachers express a need for more extensive teacher training in physical education. According to Morgan and Bourke (2005), there is a robust correlation between teachers' training in physical education and their self-reported confidence in delivering the subject. Non-PE teachers, who felt they lacked sufficient training, displayed notably lower confidence levels in teaching specific curriculum areas. Undoubtedly, the influence of PE teachers' experiences significantly shapes their attitudes and perceived competencies in teaching physical education within a classroom setting or other contexts. In many cases, this experience serves as the primary source of information about PE for teachers, potentially influencing their confidence in delivering PE programs. It is essential to acknowledge the potential negative implications of this proposition.

Theme 3 Lack of Equipment and Facilities

The absence of instructional equipment and facilities can adversely affect the standard of teaching and learning. When the necessary facilities for teaching and learning are inadequate or, in some instances, unavailable, it compromises the overall quality of education (Jones et al., 2010). Therefore, ensuring a sufficient supply of appropriate facilities, materials, and equipment is equally crucial as offering adequate incentives for both teachers and students. However, maintaining such facilities, supplies, and equipment can pose administrative challenges.

The following are some of the participants' experiences to this issue:

"Ang mga challenges na na-encounter ko sa physical education (P.E.) are lack of resources and infrastructure and lack of school management, and the weakening of expert P.E. teachers and lastly the student's struggle". [The challenges I encountered in teaching physical education (P.E.) were lack of resources and infrastructure as well as that of inefficient school management and the weakening of P.E. expertiser among the teachers, and lastly that of the students' struggle].

-OOF PE TU

"Mahirap in my part as a teacher because our school is lacking of materials and equipment". [Challenging in my part as a teacher because our school lacks materials and equipment].

-OOF PE TM

"During class time specially when the topic is sports, as a teacher it is somewhat challenging in my part due to lack of equipment and materials". **-OOF PE TP**

Certainly, ensuring the availability of appropriate facilities, supplies, and equipment is as crucial as offering sufficient incentives for both teachers and learners. However, the effective maintenance of such facilities, supplies, and equipment frequently poses a managerial challenge. Consequently, the school functions as a social institution responsible for the formal education of society's youth. In alignment with this perspective, Orunaboka and Nwachukwu (2012) emphasized that sporting activities have long been acknowledged as a

fundamental component of educational programs globally.

Theme 4 Technological Skills Constraint

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the internet has emerged as a crucial lifeline, particularly for economic opportunities. Without internet access, individuals face limitations in economic, health, and educational spheres. Due to the pandemic, students have been directed to continue their studies online after being sent home from schools and colleges. Schools provide instructional videos and request students to upload their assignments. However, the lack of internet access in certain regions has resulted in some learners losing out on educational opportunities.

The following are some of the participants' experiences to this issue:

"Nagamit ako hin appropriate strategies, I let them watch videos or sometimes in a friendly competition". [I always use the appropriate strategies, I let them watch videos or sometimes in a friendly competition]. –

OOF PE TL

"Han una, we do the activities in the field. But this time of modular distance learning, the learners will just do the activity at home and record it thru a video presentation and submit it to me". [Before, we did the activities in the field. But this time of modular distance learning, the learners do the activity at home and record it thru a video presentation and submit it to me]. –

OOF PE TJ

"Pinapapagkita ko hira hin videos hit proper execution of the lesson and on how to do it and I told them on how to emulate it. Sometimes, I do lectures and practical tests". [I let them watch videos on the proper execution of the lesson and I told them on how to emulate it. Sometimes, I do lectures and practical tests].

-OOF PE TU

The aforementioned observations underscore the utilization of technology in the educational setting. Traditional classroom tools like chalkboards, textbooks, and bulky desktop computers have been largely replaced by interactive whiteboards, tablets, and laptops. In the contemporary educational landscape, teachers and students benefit from a wealth of programs, videos, and online courses designed to enhance the learning experience (Allenby & Sarewitz, 2011).

Coping Mechanisms of Out-of-field Public Senior High School PE Teachers

The out-of-field situation frequently becomes challenging, leading teachers to employ coping strategies in an effort to project a more competent image. Teachers endeavor to conceal the struggles they face, including a lack of discipline in the classroom, with the hope that someone else will recognize the predicament they are grappling with. This underscores that the professional crisis experienced by teachers significantly diminishes their expertise, prompting a reflective process and efforts to enhance their proficiency as educators.

The following coping mechanisms emerged from the responses of the 22 participants in their quest of providing quality education to PE learners to wit: adopt with the challenge, provide positive outlook (open-mindedness), attend trainings and seminars in physical education and sports, and provide equipment and sports supply.

Theme 1 Adopt with the Challenges

It is crucial to adopt a flexible teaching approach, especially for learners who rely on their teacher for structure, guidance, and to maintain a sense of order, regardless of the circumstances. Learners are highly perceptive, easily discerning whether a teacher is adequately prepared and in control. When a class

perceives a lack of control, students may test boundaries, and in severe cases, the classroom dynamics may shift to become student-led rather than teacher-led.

The following are some of the participants' experiences to this issue:

“As a teacher in DepEd it is expected from us that teachers must be flexible and that is why what I am doing is accept the task and do what is right for the benefit of the learners”. **-OOF PE TO**

“So, as a Teacher perhaps we have to be flexible. So, every challenge that we face, face it with confidence. Because whatever task given to a teacher. We need to accept it”. **-OOF PE TE**

“Embrace, as an educator we were taught to embrace that even though you are not a PE major, you can teach it, as it is another set of learnings and self-development altogether”. **-OOF PE TC**

“We, teachers are resilient and even if it is difficult; even in this time of pandemic, on how we can teach PE thru module, with the provision of WHLP and we constantly communicate to student and inform them ahead of time if there are activities and thru video for MOVs”. **-OOF PE TH**

To effectively guide a diverse group of learners, a teacher's teaching style should incorporate flexibility as a core principle. The more adaptable a teacher's approach is and their ability to think on their feet, the greater the likelihood of increased student participation, ensuring that every child is engaged (Filiz & Konukman, 2020).

Theme 2 Provide Positive Outlook (Open-mindedness)

Open-mindedness entails being receptive to a diverse range of ideas, arguments, and information. Considered a positive quality in teachers (Bacon, 2019), being open-minded is particularly crucial for out-of-field teachers as it facilitates the acquisition of new concepts and strategies in the teaching process.

The following are some of the participants' experiences to this issue:

“I am open-minded, in the process of crafting the Lesson Plan and there will be observation with one-on-one forum, I will accept and improve the needed task in teaching PE”.

-OOF PE TC

“So far, for me. I accept it that I am not perfect and this is not my expertise and if you have suggestions you tell it to me, so that when I still teach the subject I can apply it”.

-OOF PE TK

“In my case, if there are suggestions, I accept it wholeheartedly so that I will be able to teach the lesson well”.

-OOFPE TJ

“It's when you are teaching a lesson that you are not familiar. I look at the positive side of it because at the same time, I am learning. I have gained new sets of knowledge that I somehow forget, that's the best experience ever”.

-OOF PE TL

Embracing open-mindedness doesn't imply that it's always a straightforward task. Welcoming new ideas

and experiences may occasionally cause confusion and cognitive dissonance when confronted with information that contradicts existing beliefs. Nevertheless, the capacity to adjust and update outdated or incorrect beliefs is a crucial aspect of learning and personal development. To reap the advantages of open-mindedness, strive to enhance this ability.

Theme 3 Attend Trainings and Seminars in PE and Sports

In the realm of teaching and learning, the role and significance of PE teachers are undoubtedly substantial. Individuals must undergo training that enables them to keep abreast of societal and global changes and actively contribute to them (Esentas et al., 2018). Additionally, it is imperative for schools to provide high-quality education, implying an elevation in the standard of teaching to foster student success. As highlighted by Omar et al. (2020), this can only be achieved with qualified teachers who shoulder diverse responsibilities in imparting new skills and values to themselves, learners, and the broader society in the long run.

The following are some of the participants' experiences to this issue:

“Para haakon, macocope namon inin nga amon challenges in teaching physical education kun makakamay-ada kami hin more trainings and workshops that is focused in Physical Education”. [For me, we can cope with the challenges we face in teaching physical education if we will be sent to more trainings and workshops that are focused in PE]. **-OOF PE TU**

“Mas maupay kun an DepEd mag provide hin more trainings para haamon nga out-of-field physical education teachers in order to have a quality instruction and basically will result to quality education”. [It is best if DepEd will provide more trainings for us out-of-field senior teachers in order to achieve quality instruction which basically will result to quality education]. **-OOF PE TI**

In contemporary societies, teachers are perceived not solely as technical personnel delivering education and training but also as individuals who serve as role models for both learners and society. This dual role is fulfilled through the presence of qualified physical education teaching personnel and a well-established education system (Teaching and School Administration, 2020).

Theme 4 Provide Equipment and Sports Supply

The absence of proper equipment and supplies can have an impact on the quality of teaching and learning. Quality tends to decline when the facilities necessary for instruction and learning are insufficient or, in some instances, unavailable (Sanni et al., 2018). Clearly, the presence of adequate facilities, equipment, and supplies, along with their effective utilization, is crucial for any physical education and sports program. Ogbu (2015) emphasized that availability pertains to resources that are ready, able, and easily accessible for use.

The following are some of the participants' experiences to this issue:

“Perhaps on the learning materials because there are no available learning resources and that's why I have to purchase my own learning materials online”. **-OOF PE TD**

“In teaching Physical Activities, it is very much difficult in the teaching and learning process since we lack sports equipment at hand and I cannot force the learners to bring and provide their own”.

-OOF PE TA

“One of the challenges that I encountered in teaching PE is the lack of equipment and supply that are very

much needed in the skills acquisition during the first-hand experience of the physical activities”. **-OOF PE TB**

Ugwuanyi (2013) observed that availability refers to ensuring the provision of satisfactory standard requirements in terms of teaching resources to enhance effective instructional activities in a specific subject. In contrast, Peng (2019) highlighted the connection between the knowledge of a skill and its actual utilization. She emphasized that the expected outcomes in a program do not result solely from acquiring knowledge but from its practical application.

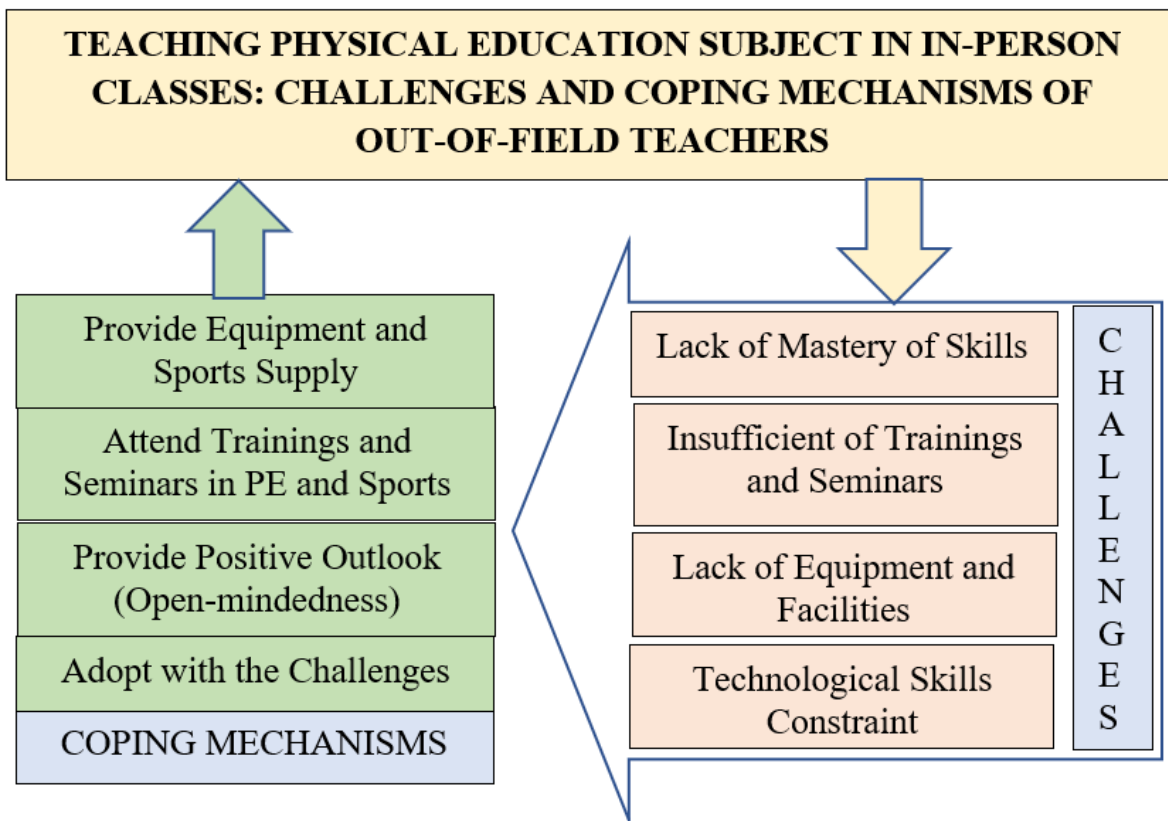


Figure 1: Thematic Map

Discussion

The insights gathered from the perspectives and responses of the participants in this phenomenological study shed light on the critical challenges faced by out-of-field public Senior High School Physical Education (PE) teachers. The findings underscore the significant impact of teaching in a subject area outside of one’s expertise on the professional effectiveness of these educators.

Firstly, the Competence and Professional Effectiveness, the study underscores the importance of competence in content knowledge for teaching effectiveness. Out-of-field PE teachers often encounter hurdles in delivering a well-rounded educational experience. They may struggle to effectively convey the practical aspects of physical education, which is integral to the subject. This deficiency in content knowledge has a direct bearing on their professional effectiveness and, by extension, the quality of education they provide to their students.

Secondly, on the Practical Expertise, that the findings emphasize that teaching PE goes beyond the theoretical dissemination of knowledge; it encompasses practical skills demonstration and acquisition. It is not sufficient for PE teachers to be knowledgeable about the subject in theory; they must also possess the

practical expertise to model and teach physical skills effectively. In this regard, out-of-field teachers may face additional challenges in honing their practical teaching skills.

Thirdly, the Need for Comprehensive Teacher Preparation, this study highlights the critical need to equip PE teachers, especially those who may be out-of-field, with a comprehensive toolkit of knowledge and skills. Teacher preparation programs and professional development opportunities should extend beyond theoretical content to include practical, hands-on training. This can help bridge the gap between the knowledge PE teachers possess and their ability to effectively transmit that knowledge to students.

Lastly, the Importance of Ongoing Support that it is imperative for educational institutions and school districts to provide ongoing support and resources to out-of-field PE teachers. This support may include mentorship programs, access to specialized training, and opportunities for collaboration with experienced PE educators. By addressing the unique challenges faced by out-of-field teachers, schools can work to improve the overall quality of PE education.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the insights gleaned from the perspectives and responses of the participants in this phenomenological study offer a comprehensive understanding of the experiences and competencies of out-of-field public Senior High School Physical Education (PE) teachers. The findings unequivocally demonstrate the profound influence of out-of-field teaching on the professional effectiveness of these educators.

Crucially, this research reaffirms the pivotal role that content mastery plays in the teaching-learning process. It highlights that teaching PE subjects transcends the theoretical imparting of content; instead, it places paramount importance on skills demonstration and acquisition. As such, this study underscores the imperative of equipping PE teachers, particularly those who may be out-of-field, with not only the theoretical knowledge but also the practical expertise required to excel in the dynamic field of PE education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

With the outcomes of this study, other researchers may study further the experiences of out-of-field public Senior High School PE teachers. The fact that it is still stirring makes it unrecognized. Thus, this study on the phenomenon of out-of-field teaching invites future researchers to expand the current scope and focus on the solution of the observed problems and consider the following recommendations;

1. Assessment of this out-of-field teaching practice of the Department of Education as to the merit or demerit of the program implementation;
2. Re-visitation on the curricular offerings of Teacher Education Institutions and reconsideration on the offering back of minor fields by BSEd students – a fall back of the currently inevitable out-of-field in-service teaching assignments;
3. Provide out-of-field PE teachers with comprehensive training programs that cover the fundamentals of physical education, including curriculum design, instructional strategies, assessment techniques, and classroom management.
4. Train out-of-field PE teachers in inclusive teaching practices, emphasizing the importance of accommodating students with varying abilities and needs in PE classes.

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