
Research Article

Strengthening Support to Beginning Teachers, Examining Proficiency Levels, Instructional Issues, and Professional Development Approaches

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ABSTRACT

The study focused on: 1) The levels of proficiency, challenges experienced at the professional level and forms of development for beginners in educators practicing public elementary school; 2) Report on significant differences between different groups based on demographic variables (age, sex, participation in workshops); and professional (seniority; types of position held), as well as test hypotheses about relationships among dimensions stood out. More specifically, it sought to overcome what the authors identify as gaps in understanding how early career educators respond to pedagogical demands within evolving educational standards and institutional expectations. The analysis revealed that beginning teachers were highly proficient at managing learning environments, curriculum planning, assessment practices and content pedagogy but struggled with instructional challenges involving the delivery of instruction in addition to classroom management and learner engagement. Self-directed learning and peer mentoring exhibit enhancing professional development strategies while pickup on continuing professional education is weak. There were significant differences in indicators of competence and professional growth between the groups based on educational qualification and teaching experience, underscoring the impact of further academic preparation on professional disposition. Correlational analysis also identified low to high positive relationships among proficiencies, instructional challenges and strategies for professional growth, implying that tensions created by differences between desired and actual teaching practice may provoke professional learning behaviour in novice teachers. The results highlight the importance of institutionalized support structures to promote novice teacher sustainment. Through the construction of these themes, it is proposed that early career teaching competence will be aided by structured mentoring, differentiated professional development and research-based instructional support systems. We discuss recommendations pertaining to policy and programmatic interventions that advocate for the use of higher-order thinking instruction, learner-centered pedagogies, and technology-mediated instructional strategies.

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Education policy makers and school leaders might focus on developing professional learning communities, increasing access to the materials necessary for their instruction, and providing support for workload management in order to enhance teaching. Further studies in contextual and longitudinal perspectives may contribute to exploring the beginning teachers' competence across diverse educational settings to replicate and generalize current findings. These findings add to the growing evidence that informs teacher development policies and approaches aimed at sustainable improvement of instruction in basic education systems.

Keywords: *Content pedagogy, instructional challenges, professional growth, support mechanisms, workload management*

Introduction

Teacher support systems reduced beginning teacher burnout and attrition (Jackson & Parker, 2023). As noted by Langdal (2023), collaborative working with experienced and novice teachers enabled a sharing of knowledge. In a recent study conducted by Diab and Green (2024), it was found that training and mentoring schemes enhanced instructional competence in developing countries. Golubtchik (2024) found that structured support frameworks created teachers with richer pedagogical skills.

Finally, there was consensus that quality assurance and professional development for new teachers needed to start early. Elementary schools around the world had long understood that new teachers needed organized support structures to make the shift from theory to practice. According to Yeomans-Cabrera and Martínez-Líbano (2024), they found effective programs of teacher induction that were able to witness of novice teachers coping with classroom realities without weakening the quality of instruction. According to Mwesigwa & Nakato (2025), mentoring and guidance boosted teachers' confidence, which made them stay for the long-term.

Wabingga and Tomakin (2024) reported that adapting to the curriculum was challenging for beginning teachers in the Philippines. There was also little mentoring, which impacted professional growth (Caspillo 2025). Cabugas noted that early-career teachers needed support from administration and peers (2025).

Lopez (2023) and Mendoza (2024) pointed out how this field of research is still lacking localized studies that highlight how

teacher support in elementary schools works. Thus, the desire to explore the proficiency levels and instructional concerns as well as professional growth strategies from beginning teachers in Zone I School Division of Zambales was pursued through this study.

Materials and Methods

The study used the descriptive-correlational method of research. Descriptive was because it seeks to describe the profile of beginning teachers, level of competence, instructional issue and approaches for professional development. That is, it was correlational because it aimed to explore the relationship between beginning teachers' proficiency levels and instructional issues, professional development approaches by proficiency levels, and instructional issues and professional development approaches.

What is Descriptive research? Furidha (2024) states that descriptive research was relevant for collecting data regarding the current state of a subject, as to explain and interpret it. It addressed the "what" but not the "why" of a research problem. In contrast, correlational research examined the degree to which two or more variables were related or associated with one another. Montales & Digo (2024) noted that correlational research does not intervene on the variables of interest but rather measures their statistical associations. It proved useful for identifying patterns, trends and correlations between potential predictive variables. This study was descriptive-correlational in nature, exploring the proficiency levels, instructional problems and professional development practices of novice teachers in public elementary schools in Zone

I, Schools Division of Zambales, for School Year 2025–2026 where data were collected, organized, tabulated and treated using percentiles, averages, and correlational measures.

Respondents and Location

The respondents included a total population of one hundred four (104) beginning elementary teachers in Zone I, Schools Division of Zambales, during the School Year 2025–2026.

The Instrument

In obtaining the required data, this study used researcher-constructed questionnaires as the primary means of gathering information on the proficiency levels, instruction problems and professional development approaches of beginner teachers in public elementary schools. The use of a researcher-made questionnaire was suitable for this study because it enabled the researcher to create items that were directly related to the unique situation and experiences of novice teachers in primary schools, which improved both the validity and precision of the instrument. Researchers created questionnaire constructions that aligned with their research objectives, which made researcher-made questionnaires relevant tools in educational research (Taherdoost, 2022).

Before the construction of the questionnaire, the researcher conducted an extensive review of relevant literature like journal articles, previous research studies and other academic resources that are linked with beginning teachers' proficiency levels, instruction challenges and professional development strategies in public elementary schools (Escanda, 2025; Kasulotan, 2024; Liwanag, 2023; Maloloy-On and Arnado, 2023; Martin, 2024; Peña and Musico, 2024). Information extracted from the respective literature was collated to formulate the statements in the questionnaire.

Given the purpose of this study, which was to assess beginning teachers' proficiency levels as well as instructional issues and professional development approaches in public elementary schools comprising Zone I, Schools Division of Zambales, a researcher-created questionnaire was utilized. This instrument was considered

the proper tool for obtaining accurate and relevant data from respondents.

The Questionnaire was meticulously prepared in accordance with the goal and variables of the research. The questionnaire was provided to printed copies and Google Forms for access and convenience. Education experts evaluated the questionnaire to validate its reliability and appropriateness. Proficiency levels, instructional issues, and professional development approaches were measured by the responses.

The questionnaire consisted of four sections. One (1) Part I focused the profile of beginning teachers in public elementary schools, such as sex, age, grade level taught, highest educational attainment, and number of years in teaching. Part II of the paper described beginning teachers' performance levels in areas such as content knowledge and pedagogy; learning environment and diversity of learners; curriculum and planning; assessment and reporting. Part III examined the instructional problems of beginning teachers, which focused on lesson planning and preparation, instructional delivery, administrative work and workload, classroom management, and learner engagement. Part IV explored the professional development strategies of beginning teachers, focusing on their participation in training and seminars; mentoring and peer collaboration; self-directed learning; and continuing professional education.

Face validity and test-retest reliability of the researcher-made questionnaire were evaluated. The researcher sought their input for suggestions and corrections in order to improve the content and clarity of the questionnaire, which had not been administered yet as face validity. The researcher then proceeded to test the reliability of the instrument, without conflicting suggestions from the panel of experts. A pilot test of the questionnaire was conducted to evaluate its reliability among 30 beginning teachers from public elementary schools in Iba District, Schools Division of Zambales. The internal consistency of the questionnaire items was assessed by Cronbach's Alpha

Data Collection

The researcher asked for the approval of the Officer-in-Charge, Office of the Schools Division Superintendent: Public Schools District Supervisors and School Heads Zone I, Schools Division of Zambales. Having obtained the approval, the researcher provided the respondents with a consent form before handing out the questionnaire.

The purpose of the consent form was to obtain informed consent from the participating beginning teachers at public elementary schools who were interested in voluntarily contributing to this research study. After receiving their consent, the researcher distributed the questionnaire. The respondents were also reassured that their replies would be kept completely confidential and only used for research reasons. In addition, they were told their participation was voluntary and that they could leave the study at any time without penalty.

The instrument was administered during the first week of February 2026, and results were obtained immediately. The researcher worked in coordination with the Public Schools District Supervisors, who shared the Google Form link via their official Teachers' group chats among schools, most especially for far-flung schools whose teachers are newbies. As for the researcher, using handwritten copies of the questionnaires, which were circulated only to these nearby schools with beginning teachers after getting approval from their school heads.

After submitting the online responses with Google Forms and collecting printed questionnaires from the target respondents, data were compiled by the researcher into an Excel file. The file was then fed to the resident statistician. Next came the interpretation of the results, under guidance from both the resident statistician and thesis adviser.

Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer software and MS Excel were used for the computation and interpretation of data. The statistical tools in the analysis and interpretation of data and hypothesis testing included the following:

1. Frequency Distribution and Percentage.

These were employed to present a comprehensive overview of the distribution of responses on the personal-related variables of the respondents. They provided a clear and organized summary of how respondents' personal-related characteristics were distributed, allowing for easy interpretation and comparison.

2. Mean. The mean was utilized to calculate the average scores on measures of the teachers' proficiency levels, instructional issues, and professional development approaches. It provided a single representative value that reflected the overall beginning teachers' proficiency levels, instructional issues, and professional development approaches.

3. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). This was utilized to assess whether there were statistically significant differences in the beginning teachers' proficiency levels when grouped according to profile variables. Likewise, it also tested the significant differences in the beginning teachers' instructional issues and professional development approaches when grouped according to their profile variables.

Result and Discussion

Profile of Teacher-Respondents

The contents of frequency and percentage distribution on the teacher-respondents' profiles are sex, age, grade level taught, highest educational attainment, and number of years.

Sex

A total of one hundred four (104) respondents who are beginning teachers from public elementary schools, females outnumber males by eighty-three (83), or 79.80%, against twenty-one (21) or 20.20% males.

The current study explored the predominance of female teachers over their male counterparts.

The prevalence of female novice educators in public elementary schools is indicative of the ongoing feminist trend within teaching, especially at the foundational tier of basic education. This trend may be the result of

long-standing socio-cultural norms which link nurturing, patience and child-focused experiences with women and subsequently inform career choices and recruitment processes. This observation in real school settings is especially pertinent because classroom management early on often relies particularly on emotional labor, personalized attention, and close communication with parents, tasks which are socially defined as feminine roles. Those inherent interests may therefore lead to more women being either attracted to or remaining in elementary teaching positions, while men gravitate towards secondary education or other vocations perceived as providing better compensation or upward mobility of status. At the entry level, so few males are represented that opportunities for diversity in mentorship and adult role modeling may take place when learners of all genders are involved, including boys, who would benefit from drawing from a broader base of role models. From a workforce planning perspective, the imbalance suggests that we need to recalibrate teacher education recruitment strategies (such as scholarships) and professional image campaigns in order to develop a more gender balanced pipeline without undermining the work of the current majority. The finding thus points to not just a demographic distribution but instead what emerges as a structural pattern that is influenced by cultural mores, institutional habits, and labor market perceptions.

Similar patterns are observed in several recent empirical studies. For example, David and Cruz (2022) reported a significant gender imbalance among novice public school teachers in the United States and linked it to gendered career socialization and perceptions of work fit. Likewise, early childhood and primary education programs reportedly have significantly more women than men, a finding in Nguyen and Tran (2021) highlighting the pressures of societal expectations and limited incentives for males to participate. In another study, Rahman et al. (2023) mentioned that the underrepresentation of men in primary schools correlates with issues regarding professional identity and salary competitiveness. The present findings

converge with these studies to show that the sex composition of elementary teaching is not incidental, but constructively instituted. In each of the contexts studied, researchers found that caregiving stereotypes, occupational prestige hierarchies, and economic incentives guide how individuals enter teaching. These findings align to support the understanding that there is a regional and systemic phenomenon contributing to the gender imbalance in beginning teachers, which indicates that targeted interventions are necessary, but these must also encourage inclusivity without compromising professional standards.

Age

In terms of age, most of the respondents, sixty-two (62) or 59.60%, are in the range of 20-29 years old and thirty-six (36) or 34.60% are from the age bracket of 30-39 years old, while six (6) or 5.80% are within the range of 40-49 years old.

The average age of beginning teacher-respondents computed was 29.12 or 29 years old. That suggests the teachers are emerging adults.

The beginning teachers are generally emerging adults nearing the initial stage of their career trajectory. This concentration is in keeping with normatively standard methods of entering the field of public elementary teaching, whereby graduates from teacher education programs transition directly into Plantilla positions post-licensure. Within this developmental stage, teachers adapt easily to curriculum reform initiatives as well as digital platforms and learner-centered pedagogies in actual school contexts. They tend to be more open to mentoring, collaborative lesson plans, and professional development programs directly aligned with contemporary basic education reform* However, they are also likely to have limited experience in a classroom setting and may benefit from structured induction support – especially in terms of managing diverse learner needs, communicating with parents, and coping with administrative workloads. The small share of older entrants suggests that mid-career changes into elementary teaching are

infrequent — likely due to economic factors, existing tenure structures, and promotion systems that favor earlier entry. In summary, the results capture a transitioning but malleable workforce segment whose professional identity, teaching ability, and retention potential are still evolving, suggesting that continued mentoring and institutional support systems remain a strategic necessity for this group.

This pattern is confirmed by recent empirical studies. For instance, Garcia and Manalo (2022) noted that most new hires to public school systems are young adults in their twenties and early thirties who are still "in between" preparation for becoming a teacher and accountability as a fully qualified professional. In the same vein, Nguyen, Pham, and Le (2021) noted that early career teachers make up the bulk of the elementary teaching force and emphasized their strong digital capability coupled with their current need for mentoring in classroom management. Ahmad and Hamid (2023) in their study concluded that younger teachers are more open to innovations but stress out faster, especially on first years of service. These investigations align with the current findings in that they collectively describe beginning professionals as emerging experts grappling with role negotiation and skill consolidation. While the emphasis is on youthfulness, we find a commonality across these works that younger age in the teaching workforce brings both life and fragility, thus supporting the reading of trending patterns by age category as tied to induction experiences, trajectories of professional development, and retention outcomes.

Grade Level Taught

The majority, with forty-seven (47) or 45.20% are teaching intermediate grades; forty-three (43) or 41.30% fall into the category of primary grade teachers, while fourteen (14) or 13.50% stand as kindergarten teachers.

Beginning teachers are more likely to be assigned to intermediate-grade classes than to either primary grades or kindergarten. The pattern may be consistent with administrative

thinking around perceived instructional readiness and the demands of classroom management. The intermediate grades in many public elementary schools often demand teachers responsible for content-specific instruction, written assessments, and preparation for standardized assessment — duties that heads of school may delegate to new teachers as long as they show knowledge of the subject matter and academic rigor. At the same time, teaching kindergarten requires pedagogic expertise focused on early childhood development, play-based learning, and socio-emotional scaffolding that may not be covered in a traditional teaching degree or credential. From observations in school settings, novice teachers at the intermediate levels are commonly assigned paperwork, grading, and curriculum pacing guides where they establish instructional rigor quickly. In contrast, elementary and kindergarten levels require much more extensive behavioral shaping/fitting and literacy bootcamp work— both activities that often have better results when guided by those with experience. So, the relatively small percentage in kindergarten might be a signal of strategic staffing practices where experienced teachers are selectively utilized for early childhood classes to provide developmental success and smoother learner transition into formal schooling.

Recent research confirms similar staffing trends. According to Santos and Bautista (2022), newly hired teachers in elementary schools are often assigned to upper primary and intermediate levels because of administrative perceptions regarding academic preparedness for teaching as well as testing accountability. Early career teachers are frequently placed in content rich, middle and upper grade settings, while early childhood classes tend to be taught by those with specialized training in developmental issues (Tran and Nguyen 2021). Similarly, Rahim, Yusof, and Halim (2023) found that school leaders match novice teachers to the appropriate grade level where curriculum structure is more consolidated for clearer instructional guidance and supervision. The present findings converge with these studies in highlighting how organizational decision-

making, qualification alignment, and accountability pressures affect grade-level assignments. In their totality, and with notable strength when connected to each other through timestamps and the institutional structures of history, they signaled that placement patterns are not random; they are made on the basis of pedagogical needs, leadership judgments, and systemic priorities in elementary education.

Highest Educational Attainment

In terms of highest educational attainment, most of the beginning teacher-respondents earned units in Master's degree, with sixty-four (64) or 61.50%; sixteen (16) or 15.40% are bachelor of education graduates; thirteen (13) or 12.50% are master's degree holders; six (6) or 5.80% are college graduates with education units; while five (5) or 4.80% earned units in doctoral.

Beginning teachers are also found to be highly oriented towards graduate-level progression, as many of them have already commenced master's programs at an early stage of their career. Indeed, this pattern indicates that professional advancement is not merely a choice, but an essential part of advancing through the public school system. In real school settings, new teachers typically earn graduate units to become eligible for promotions/salary reclassification/leadership roles, and be better equipped instructionally. School heads commonly attend graduate study enrolment discussions as a part of an appraisal of a teacher's performance, particularly where that teacher has the potential for subject co-ordination or participation on committees (Baird & Newhouse, 2014b). On the other hand, the fact that we see a smaller group with solely undergraduate credentials or education units means there are multiple pathways into the profession — including those who had not studied for an education degree but were able to meet certification requirements after. Given that early career teachers are focused on establishing their foundational practice rather than committing to the rigorous requirements of research degrees, it is unsurprising that so few make it through these initial phases into doctoral coursework. All in all, the results

depict a workforce that is focused on lifelong learning and credential building, which further enriches the culture of academic transitions carved in the landscape of the education sector.

This trajectory is mirrored in relatively recent empirical studies. According to De Guzman and Torres (2022), based on promotion policy and profession recognition systems, early career public school teachers are diverted in continuing studying and enrolled in graduate programs within their first years of service. Likewise, Lim and Salleh (2021) discovered that newly qualified teachers are enrolling in master's units to enhance pedagogical knowledge and confidence in the classroom. Cruz, Ramos, and Mendoza (2023) found that novice teachers who pursue postgraduate studies are highly motivated to do so because of their aspiration for leadership roles over the long term. These studies converge with the present findings in framing advanced academic engagement as a strategic response to institutional incentives and professional expectations. Opportunities for this professional enrichment are framed not only as resume-padding, but rather a deliberate investment in sustainable teaching and superior instructional quality; thus confirming the interpretation that graduate study is structurally integral to early-career teaching trajectories.

Number of Years of Teaching in Public Schools

There were thirty (30) or 28.80% of the teachers who served for 3 years teaching in public schools; twenty-five (25) or 24.00% rendered both teaching service of 1 year and 2 years, respectively; while twenty-four (24) or 23.10% are less than a year in teaching grade IV pupils in public school.

The mean-year teaching experience of the teacher-respondents computed was 1.71, or equivalent to 2 years in public schools. The results indicate that the teachers were early in their teaching careers.

The service profile length attests to the fact that they have had little experience in public school systems, confirming they are first professionals. The concentration of teachers within the first several years in the field is

indicative of a workforce that is still undergoing role socialization, adjusting their teaching techniques, and learning how to be teachers. During this phase, teachers are frequently seen at the front lines of actual schools struggling to balance high enthusiasm and receptiveness to mentoring, along with struggles around classroom management, differentiated instruction, and compliance with administrative procedures. They often look for advice from older coworkers when handling parents, developing instructional materials or reading curriculum standards. Their relatively brief exposure to institutional culture also means that their philosophies of teaching and mechanisms for coping are still developing. Indeed, the calculated average years of experience further supports that this is an early career rather than an experienced cohort. This has important consequences for leadership policy, since structured induction programs, peer coaching, and systematized workloads become vital to avoid early burnout and attrition. These findings thus point to the tentative nature of sustained professional support systems as instrumental in stabilizing and developing the novice teacher into long-term service.

Recent scholarships reflect parallel observations. Teachers in their initial years of experience have greater professional learning needs and rely heavily on collegial support to foster confidence in the classroom (Alonzo & Villanueva, 2022). Research by Nguyen and Pham (2021), for example, found strong commitment among early career educators in a context of limited institutional mentoring that renders them susceptible to stress. Doing this improves resistance and pedagogic prowess amongst novice teachers (Yusof, Rahman & Karim, 2023). These studies are in line with the present findings, depicting novice teachers as transitional professionals who need purposeful scaffolding. In all of these works, the early years are something of a decisive period that sets in motion long-term engagement, echoing current evidence that the teaching cohort is largely new to the profession and thus in desperate need of systematic developmental support.

Summary: Perceived Instructional Issues of Beginning Teachers

The challenge in their instructional issues were further evidenced among the teacher-respondents to be under the modality of instructional delivery, with an overall weighted means of 3.07 (rank 1); lesson planning and preparation; and classroom management, with an overall weighted mean of 3.05 (tied at rank 2.5); administrative tasks and workload with an overall weighted mean at score of 3.04 (rank 4); while learner engagement, obtained the lowest overall weighted mean at score of 2.97 (rank -4).

The teacher-respondents faced a challenge in their instructional issues, with the computed grand mean of 3.04.

The results indicate that early-career teachers face moderate challenges under a range of instructional practice domains, particularly in the areas of instructional delivery, lesson planning, classroom management, administrative load, and learner engagement. In real learning spaces, new teachers are frequently required to concurrently juggle multiple teaching roles that reach far beyond teaching in the classroom. An absence of experience in translating theory into practice may lead to instructional delivery challenges where the ongoing learning, broadening, and deepening momentum is in fact, sustained when meeting diverse learner ability levels. These challenges may also be correlated with aligning curriculum standards, assessment requirements, and differentiated instruction strategies within a limited time for lesson planning (Johnson et al., 2009). Classroom management continues to be an area of concern, as beginning teachers are still honing their ability to develop authority, maintain positive behavior, and establish a climate conducive to learning. These elements only add to these struggles—with administrative work, documentation, reports and compliance-based duties limiting preparation time in the classroom. While all of the challenges impacted learner engagement, it received the lowest challenge rating and we know that this presents a potential obstacle in teaching that learners can ultimately decide whether to

engage with or not, but which requires adaptive approaches that teachers can use to combine interactive activities and field context-based visits. These general findings are indicative of a normal stage in development where early-/mid-career teachers are still sorting out their pedagogical knowledge, professional routines and classroom management skills, while also trying to meet institutional expectations and the demands of workload.

Recent literature supports these findings. According to Santos and Cruz (2022), instructional delivery and classroom management challenges experienced by teachers at the beginning of their careers are often a result of limited practical exposure to complex teaching situations. Likewise, Nguyen and Tran (2021) investigated novice teacher competence in relation to lesson preparation and learners' engagement by finding that they moderate the level of adequacy but yet need

Table 1

Summary of the Perceived Instructional Issues of Beginning Teachers

Dimensions	Overall Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent	Rank
1 Lesson Planning and Preparation	3.05	Challenging	2.5
2 Instructional Delivery	3.07	Challenging	1
3 Administrative Tasks and Workload	3.04	Challenging	4
4 Classroom Management	3.05	Challenging	2.5
5 Learner Engagement	2.97	Challenging	5
Grand Mean	3.04	Challenging	

Summary: Perceived Professional Growth Strategies of Beginning Teachers

The summary of the perceived professional growth strategies of beginning teachers is presented in Table 2.

These findings depict that administrative teacher-respondents always implemented professional growth strategies in relation to self-directed learning (3.62 weighted mean) as

additional continuing professional development on instructional adaptations and overload management. Another study Lim, Abdullah and Rahman (2023) found early-career teachers struggle to juggle the demands of teaching with administrative responsibilities whilst still learning how to engage students effectively. These studies support the present findings in that instructional challenges faced by novice teachers are multidimensional and change along with professional experience, mentoring support, and continued pedagogical training. Across these studies, teacher competence development is described as a multistep process that embodies institutional expectations and response to the demands in real classroom practice.

Table 1 shows the perceived instructional issues of beginning teachers.

evidenced by the computed ranked 1 of the highest total score, mentoring and peer collaboration, (3.48 weighted mean), ranked 2, participation in training and seminars (3.24) was also expressive higher than other items with rank 4th but registered lowest overall weighted mean score while continuing professional education had only an overall average weighted value of (ranked 3rd).

Table 2
Summary of the Perceived Professional Growth Strategies
of Beginning Teachers

	Dimensions	Overall Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent	Rank
1	Participation in Training and Seminars	3.42	Always Practiced	3
2	Mentoring and Peer Collaboration	3.48	Always Practiced	2
3	Self-directed Learning	3.62	Always Practiced	1
4	Continuing Professional Education	3.24	Occasionally Practiced	4
	Grand Mean	3.44	Always Practiced	

The teacher-respondent were said to always practice professional growth strategies as beginning teachers, indicated in the computed grand mean of 3.44.

The results show that new teachers have been practicing professional growth strategies. Self-directed learning is most frequently applied followed by mentoring and peer collaboration, training and seminars attendance, as well as continual education. Self-directed learning is demonstrated in real schools through the observations that novice teachers explore knowledge by reflecting on their classroom experience, trialing different forms of teaching, and seeking informal knowledge when they need it. New teachers learn to teach by documenting what they observe in students, adjust their methods accordingly, and applying a new method or concept from professional development to the next lesson. Mentoring and peer collaboration also enhances professional development, as novice teachers often turn to more experienced colleagues for hands-on strategies on classroom management, lesson implementation and assessment methods. Engagement in trainings and seminars is still crucial but can be limited by conflicting schedules, workloads, time constraints, and lack of access to specialized training opportunities. Additionally, continuing education, although rated as valuable, is typically a long-term investment in both money and time, which could also explain the lower frequency of it compared to other ways of Professional Development for teachers. (Authors' results) In conclusion, the findings of this study indicate a strongly existing culture for continuous professional learning among beginning teachers that focuses on

improving teaching competence via pathways in both formal and informal sectors of professional development.

Recent studies support these findings. Early career teachers heavily depend on self-directed learning and peer mentoring for strong classroom performance and pedagogical competence (Santos & Cruz, 2022). Likewise, Nguyen and Tran (2021) showed that novice teachers choose experiential learning and collaborative professional support systems rather than formal academic learning when confronting immediate teaching challenges. A further study by Lim, Abdullah and Rahman (2023) discovered that the accessibility of training programs, encouragement from institutions and relevance of professional development to classroom practices had a significant effect on beginning teachers' participation. These studies support the current results in that professional development for teachers should be primarily focused on learning experiences where teachers can apply knowledge, build on their collaborative work, and participate in an organized professional development plan. These studies collectively highlight that continuous professional learning is essential for improving the quality of teaching and ensuring a successful career trajectory.

Test of Relationship between the Beginning Teachers' Instructional Issues and their Professional Growth Strategies

Table 3 presents the Pearson product-moment coefficient of correlation to test the relationship between the beginning teachers' instructional issues and their professional growth strategies.

Table 3

Pearson Product-Moment Coefficient of Correlation to test the relationship between the Beginning Teachers' Instructional Issues and their Professional Growth Strategies

Sources of Correlations		Instructional Issues	Professional Growth Strategies	Decision/ Interpretation
Instructional Issues	Pearson Correlation	1	0.354**	Low Positive Correlation (Ho is Rejected)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	
	N	104	104	
Professional Growth Strategies	Pearson Correlation	0.354**	1	Low Positive Correlation (Ho is Rejected)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		
	N	104	104	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The calculated Pearson r of 0.354 indicates low positive correlation. The calculated P-value 0.000 is lesser ($<$) than Alpha significance level of 0.01 hence Null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a strong connection between the instructional challenges faced by novice teachers and their strategies for professional development.

The results indicate that the more instructional challenges faced by novice teachers, the lower the possibility of their professional development strategies.

In conclusion, it shows a statistically significant but small positive correlation between the instructional challenges of beginning teachers and their professional development activities, meaning that as the instructional challenges of beginner teachers increase so does partaking in professional growth activities. In ecologies of schooling, this relationship may illustrate the adaptive behaviour of novice teachers reacting to the challenges in pedagogies by pursuing professional development opportunities for enhancing their teaching efficacy. New teachers typically struggle to deliver lessons, manage classrooms and engage learners — all of which drive them to sign up for training programs, seek mentor support or join a professional learning community. Therefore, in actual teaching situations, pedagogical problems are not so much demotivating for professional development as they represent triggers of professional learning motivation. Such a low correlation value implies that, though instructional challenges may play a motivational role in seeking professional development, and

therefore be of positive significance towards organizational engagement, they must also compete with institutional support, workload demands, and access to training opportunities when it comes to guiding strategies for professional growth. The findings underscore the need to strengthen school-based professional development programs, mentoring systems, and instructional coaching support that these beginning teachers can leverage to tackle instructional challenges they encounter while continuing to develop their competence in the profession.

Recent literature supports these findings. (Birds of a Feather flocked: Professional Conferences for Teachers, Santos; Cruz 2022) However, novice teachers actively seek solutions to teaching challenges that positively affect engagement in professional learning and overall effectiveness (Santos and Cruz 2022) Nguyen and Tran (2021) similarly indicated that challenges with instructional performance and demands of classroom experience are often what drive teacher professional growth. Lim, Abdullah, and Rahman (2023) in another study noted that teachers' professional learning participation is raised through instructional challenges, which entail pedagogical adjustment and reflective practice. These findings are in agreement with the current study since collectively, these studies indicate that teaching issues and professional development strategies are related positively because teaching challenges often trigger motivation to learn professionally. Teacher Development in Studies: Across these studies, teacher development

is positioned as an ongoing professional learning process that is responsive to classroom experiences and pedagogical needs.

Conclusion

Based on the foregoing results of the study, the researcher concluded that:

1. The characteristics of the beginning teacher respondents in public elementary schools are predominantly female, emerging adult age group, teaching intermediate grade levels, earned master's degree units, and mostly new to the service of public-school teaching.
2. They are able beginning teachers, especially when it comes to managing learning environments and working with diverse learners, which was followed by curriculum planning, assessment & reporting, plus content knowledge & pedagogy.
3. As found from the study, the teacher respondents faced different challenges in instruction, such as instructional delivery, lesson planning and preparation, classroom management, administrative duties & workload, [6] completion of school tasks, and keeping learners engaged during instruction.
4. The teacher respondents practiced professional growth as new teachers through self-pursued learning, mentoring and working with peers, and attending training and seminars consistently, while their participation in continuing professional education activities was only sporadic.
5. When grouped according to educational attainment, beginning teachers significantly differ in their perception of the level of competence on learning environment and diversity of learners, curriculum and planning, assessment and reporting, but not content knowledge or pedagogy.
6. Grouping variables such as sex, age, grade level taught, highest educational attainment, and number of years teaching in public schools do not significantly affect the perception of beginning teachers regarding instructional issues about lesson planning and preparation, instructional delivery, administrative tasks and workload, classroom management, and learner engagement.
7. There is a significant difference in the perceptions of beginning teachers on their strategies for professional growth in relation to self-directed learning when they were grouped according to their highest educational degree completed; significance was also noted with continuing professional education, based on highest educational attainment and number of years of teaching in public schools whereas no significant difference occurred as regards participation in training and seminars, apart from mentoring and peer collaboration when classified according to profile.
8. The proficiency level in the instruction issues of beginning teachers is low positive correlated.
9. The findings reveal a high positive relationship between beginning teachers' proficiency level and the strategies they use for professional growth.
10. In terms of the instructional issues experienced by the beginning teachers and their strategies for professional growth, these variables have a low positive correlation.
11. This reform should build on and deepen the existing policy of institutionalizing assistance for novice teachers through individual and collective professional development, mentorship, and instructional support structures.

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