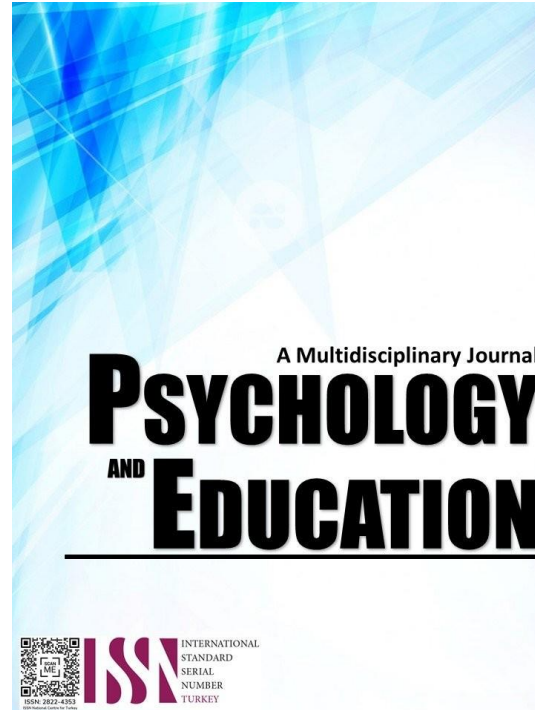


CHALLENGES FACED BY TEACHERS HANDLING NON-MAJOR SUBJECTS: A ROOT CAUSE STUDY



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Challenges Faced by Teachers Handling Non-Major Subjects: A Root Cause Study

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Abstract

This study investigates the challenges faced by teachers assigned to teach non-major subjects in public junior and senior high schools in Mabinay District 1. It seeks to determine the underlying reasons behind such assignments and examine the extent of challenges encountered in terms of assessment procedures, pedagogical knowledge, curriculum knowledge, content mastery, and instructional strategies. Using a quantitative descriptive research design, data were gathered from 73 teachers across five schools through a structured questionnaire. Statistical tools such as percentage, weighted mean, and chi-square were used to analyze responses. Findings reveal that a significant number of teachers handle subjects outside their specialization due to administrative decisions, teacher shortages, and the expectation of teacher adaptability. The most prominent challenges include difficulty in designing appropriate assessments, mastering unfamiliar subject content, and staying updated with curriculum changes. However, results indicate that teachers' profiles—such as age, gender, and years of experience—do not significantly influence the extent of challenges faced, except for their highest educational attainment. The study recommends targeted interventions, such as specialized training programs, professional development workshops, and stronger collaboration between teachers and subject specialists. Moreover, education policymakers should prioritize hiring teachers based on subject specialization to enhance teaching effectiveness. Ensuring proper teacher placement and continuous capacity-building initiatives will contribute to improved instructional quality and student learning outcomes.

Keywords: *non-major subjects, teacher challenges, subject specialization, pedagogical knowledge, professional development, education policy*

Introduction

Teachers are among the most noble individuals, dedicating great effort to ensure students meet the learning objectives. They continuously craft lesson plans and materials, striving to enhance the teaching and learning process. They also develop intervention strategies for struggling students, fostering a culture of lifelong learning. These exhibit teachers' perseverance in their pursuit of high-quality education. However, teaching presents particular challenges in the Philippines, especially for public school teachers who are assigned to teach subjects that are not their chosen major.

Before becoming licensed educators, especially in secondary education, aspiring teachers must choose their specialization based on subject passion or expertise. Applicants are selected based on qualifications outlined in DepEd Order No. 7, series of 2023, which specify academic and professional eligibility. Once selected, teachers are assigned to public schools offering their subject of expertise which presently is not totally the case. Even though teaching requires subject-matter expertise, teachers frequently encounter challenges most especially in contexts outside of their areas of expertise. Although this displays versatility among teacher, it poses dilemmas. A few of which include inadequate understanding of the subject and its topics, lack of knowledge on the lesson preparation of the subject, limited resources and difficulties encouraging students. These issues are even made worse by the pressure of meeting curriculum standards, teachers being obliged to stick with their lessons even if they are unfamiliar with them and inadequate training. This then results to poor instruction which yields unsatisfactory learning outcomes that could negatively impact students' performance.

This has been an issue in the Philippines for quite some time and not much has been discussed to address such. Moreover, not much is said about how a burden it is to teachers and how it has affected their work-life balance, emotional state and even decision-making skills.

This topic was chosen to be the center of the study due to the fact that while there are existing researches that emphasizes the challenges of teaching non-major subjects, there is still a need to do more research to gain a better understanding of these concerns. The purpose of this research is to identify the major causes and determine the various challenges encountered by public school teachers while handling non-major subjects. The thesis seeks to offer significant insights into possible topics for curriculum development, teaching qualifications review and teacher training program enhancement by identifying such challenges. The study also contributes to a better knowledge of how to assist educators in engaging students and encouraging a deeper comprehension of concerns beyond their subject major. The ultimate objective is to make a positive impact on teaching methods and the students' entire educational experience.

Research Questions

This study aims to determine the challenges encountered by teachers of Mabinay District 1 teaching non-major subjects. Specifically, it aims to respond to the following questions:

1. What is the socio-demographic characteristics of the teacher respondents in terms of:
 - 1.1. sex;

- 1.2. age;
- 1.3. highest educational attainment;
- 1.4. number of years in service; and
- 1.5. area of specialization?
2. What are the prevailing reasons of teachers handling non-major subjects?
3. What are the challenges encountered by teachers handling non-major subjects in terms of:
 - 3.1. knowledge of assessment procedures;
 - 3.2. pedagogical knowledge;
 - 3.3. curriculum knowledge;
 - 3.4. content knowledge;
 - 3.5. knowledge of specific and general contexts; and
 - 3.6. knowledge of learners and learning?
4. To what extent are these challenges encountered by teachers handling non-major subjects
5. Is there a significant relationship between the profile and the extent of the challenges faced by teachers handling non-major subjects?
6. What implications can be drawn on the findings of this study?

Methodology

Research Design

The methods used in this study was the descriptive method. This method describes what the respondents' perceptions are in terms of the reasons behind teachers handling non-major subjects, the challenges encountered when teaching subjects beyond their area of expertise and its extent and the significant relationship between the teacher respondents' profile and the extent of the challenges encountered when handling non-major subjects.

The questionnaire was the main instrument used in gathering that data. It consists of three parts namely: 1. The socio-demographic profile of the teachers handling non major subjects, 2. The prevailing reasons of teachers handling non-major subjects and 3. Challenges of teachers handling non-major subjects.

The data was gathered by the research through floating of questionnaire to the respondents. The respondents answered it honestly and the researcher gathered it until all the respondents answered the questionnaire. The frequency was tabulated and with the use of the statistical tools, the mean, standard deviation and Chi-Square Goodness-of-Fit Test, the data was analyzed whether to accept or reject the null hypothesis.

Respondents

The research respondents of the study were mainly the junior and senior high school teachers of the public secondary schools of Mabinay District 1, Negros Oriental Division. The respondents comprised of 73 teachers. 33 teachers are from Benedicto P. Tirambulo Memorial National High School, 14 are from Bagtic National High School, 10 teachers are from Canggohob High School, 7 are from Cansal-ing High School and 9 are from Mayaposi Community High School.

Instrument

This study utilizes a checklist questionnaire as the main instrument which consists of three parts namely: 1. The socio-demographic profile of the teachers handling non major subjects, 2. The prevailing reasons of teachers handling non-major subjects and 3. Challenges of teachers handling non-major subjects in the public junior and senior high schools of Mabinay District 1.

Procedure

A letter of request addressed to the School's Division Superintendent of the respondents of the Division of Negros Oriental specifically of Mabinay District 1 is prepared by the researcher asking permission to conduct a research study. The approval of the researcher's letter request to the school's division superintendent was granted with the copy furnished to all school principal's teacher respondents. After certifying no objection of the conduct of the study, the researcher started floating the questionnaires to the teacher respondents. The researcher gathered the answered questionnaires and the data was tabulated, interpreted and analyzed. With the use of statistical tools such as the percentage rank, weighted mean, and Chi-Square Goodness-of-Fit Test, the researcher rejected or accepted the null hypothesis.

Data Analysis

The following statistical tools were used by the researcher to statistically treat the data that were gathered.

Percent Rate – It is determined by dividing the part (the smaller value) by the whole (the larger value), and then multiplying the result by 100.

Weighted Mean – This was utilized to determine the extent of the challenges faced by teachers handling non-major subjects. The Likert’s 5-point scale was used.

Chi-square. This was used to confirm the significant relationship between variables.

Results and Discussion

This section will go into the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of the data collected for each individual topic. To ensure identity and clarity, the findings are presented in the order of the problems discussed in this study. Following the retrieval of the surveys, the replies were tallied. The data were analyzed after it was computed. To make the data easier to read, the researcher employed tables.

Table 1.1. *Profile of the Respondents in Terms of Sex (N=73)*

Sex	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Rank
Male	23	31.51	2
Female	50	68.49	1
Total	73	100.00	

As shown in the table, a significant gender disparity among teachers with females composing the majority of the respondents with 68.49 percent and males with 31.51 percent.

This result suggests that in Mabinay District 1, female teachers are more prevalent in handling non-major subjects. This is also true in terms of teaching in general. The data are a combination of the five schools involved, and it is a consistent observation that females dominate in number.

Branzuela et al (2023) also supported this and revealed that more female teachers were engaged in teaching subjects that are not aligned with their area of specialization. The general dominance of women in teaching aligns with data from UNESCO indicating that globally, women are over-represented in the teaching force. And their numbers are rising: Since 2015, globally, the proportion of female teachers has increased across primary, lower, and upper secondary levels. In pre-primary education, women make up 94% of the teaching force. But at higher levels of education, their numbers dwindle. Women make up 68% of the teaching force in primary, 58% at lower secondary, 52% at upper secondary and 43% at tertiary level. (UNESCO, 2023).

Table 1.2. *Profile of the Respondents in Terms of Age (N=73)*

Age bracket	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Rank
25 and below	1	1.37	4.5
26 – 35	34	46.58	1
36 - 45	22	30.14	2
46 - 55	15	20.55	3
56 and above	1	1.37	4.5
Total	73	100.00	

Table 1.2 illustrates that most of the teachers are aged between 26-35 with 46.58 percent and the least number of teacher respondents with 1.37 percent aged 56 and above.

This age distribution suggests a relatively mid-career teaching workforce of Mabinay District 1.

Hermosa & Ampo (2022) also backed this up and inferred in their research that majority of their teacher respondents are fresh graduate instructors and young in the teaching profession. This is also supported by a study conducted by Canoy et al (2022) that highlights the majority of teachers teaching non-major subjects are somewhat newly-hired and new to the field of teaching.

Table 1.3. *Profile of the Respondents in Terms of Highest Educational Attainment (N=73)*

Highest Educational Attainment	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Rank
Bachelor’s Degree	47	64.38	1
Master’s Degree	24	32.88	2
Doctorate Degree	2	2.72	3
Total	73	100.00	

In this table, it is reflected that a significant proportion of the respondents, 64.38 percent, hold a Bachelor’s Degree, while 32.88 percent of the respondents hold a Master’s Degree and only 2.72 percent hold a Doctorate Degree.

The high percentage of respondents with a Bachelor’s degree indicates that most individuals in this group have completed foundational higher education, which is often a basic qualification requirement in many fields, especially in professional settings.

Canoy et al (2022) also revealed in their study that 50% of the entire group of their respondents are college graduates and have not taken yet any post-graduate courses. The same result was also revealed in the study of Bozkuş (2020) as it revealed that most of the



teachers had a Bachelor’s Degree.

Table 1.4. Profile of the Respondents in Terms of Number of Years in Service (N=73)

Number of Years	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Rank
Less than 5 years	15	20.55	3
5 – 9 years	33	45.21	1
10 – 14 years	16	21.92	2
15 – 19 years	5	6.85	4
20 years and above	4	5.48	5
Total	73	100.00	

From the table, it is evident that the teachers are mostly in the service for 5-9 years with 45.21 percent and only 5.48 percent are teachers in service for 20 years & above.

It can be gleaned that most teachers are often transitioning from mid-career teachers into more experienced educators.

This was cited by Bugwak (2021) that in the study conducted by Weldon (2016), he reported secondary school teachers teaching subjects outside their comfort zone. About 26 percent of teachers at years seven (7) to ten (10) teach a subject in which they have not specialized as part of their teaching load.

Table 1.5. Profile of the Respondents in Terms of Area of Specialization (N=73)

Area of Specialization	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Rank
English	20	27.40	1
Mathematics	1	17.81	8
Filipino	5	6.85	5.5
Science	14	19.18	2
Araling Panlipunan	6	8.22	4
MAPEH	5	6.85	5.5
TLE/ICT	8	10.96	3
Values Education	2	2.74	7
Total	73	100.00	

Table 1.5 shows the profile of the respondents in terms of their area of specialization. As the table presents, teachers who specializes in English constituted the majority with a percentage of 27.40. On the other hand, only 17.81 percent of the teacher respondents specializes in Mathematics.

The table shows that there are more English teachers hired and teach non major subjects than any other subject teachers in Mabinay District 1. This predominance suggests a strong demand or emphasis on English within the curriculum.

Branzuela et al (2023) also proved in their study that the prevalent area of specialization of their respondents is English. The International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 and Bridge Universe supported emphasized that in 2019, there were about 93.7 million teachers worldwide and there are an estimated 12 million English teachers (Maguire, 2023). The results also correspond to Teast, "Teaching In The East", that mentioned there is a growing demand for English teachers in The Philippines, with many schools, language centers, and universities seeking qualified instructors.

Table 2. Prevailing Reasons of Teachers Handling Non-major Subjects (N=73)

Indicators	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Rank
1. There is teacher shortage on specialized subjects.	60	82.19	1
2. The size of the school is small with few teachers resulting to handling non-major subjects	36	49.32	4
3. There is teacher availability due to leaves or turnovers and positions unfilled	9	12.33	14
4. There is a lack of standardized subject assignment.	21	28.77	11
5. There are similarities of subjects in terms basic information (e.g. English and Filipino)	22	30.14	10
6. There is expectation of teacher versatility and adaptability to handle non-major subjects.	46	63.01	2
7. There is teacher preference to teach non-major subjects.	14	19.18	12
8. There is decision made by the administration	44	60.27	3
9. There is a large number of students with limited teachers handling their major subjects.	35	47.95	5.5
10. There is subject popularity among education graduates	10	13.70	13
11. There is a difficulty in attracting specialized teachers as school is in remote or rural areas	24	32.88	9
12. There is a common practice and culture for teachers to handle non-major subjects.	31	42.47	7
13. There is encouragement to teach non-major subject due to professional development	25	34.25	8
14. There is a need to balance teacher workload and optimize the use of resources.	35	47.95	5.5

As illustrated in Table 2, majority of the respondents thought that the number one prevailing reason of teachers handling non-major subjects is “there is a shortage on specialized subjects” with a percentage of 82.19. This is followed by the reason “there is an

expectation of teacher versatility and adaptability to handle non-major subjects” with 63.01 percent. However, the respondents thought that the least prevailing reason with 12.33 percent is “there is teacher availability due to leaves or turnovers and positions unfilled.”

This indicates a significant gap in the availability of subject matter experts in specific fields, leading schools to assign teachers to subjects outside their primary area of specialization. On the other hand, the least prevalent reason suggests that although staff turnover and absences are factors, they may not be as significant a concern in this context compared to the more pressing issue of teacher shortages in specialized subjects.

Co et al (2021) supported this and identified essential factors that resulted in them teaching outside their area of specialization, such as shortage of qualified teachers, the issue under load, subjects misalignment, and staffing management. They face and embrace challenges encountered in teaching less familiar subjects in Senior High School like lack of learning references, lack of training and support, lack of planning and preparation of lessons. Furthermore, it emphasized that shortages of qualified teachers led to an increase in teachers’ teaching outside their subject areas, undermining a common practice without appropriate response and mitigation. Philstar also reported that the problem boils down to a lack of plantilla positions for teachers, said Vladimer Quetua, chairperson of the Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT). “The budget [for hiring] is actually not enough. [DepEd’s schools division offices] know this. For example, for English, there’s a lack of teachers there, but because they hire a lot of teachers they believe to be ‘good enough,’ they let them teach,” Quetua said in a mix of English and Filipino. (Philstar 2024). This also conforms to the study done by Barbadillo (2021) which uncovered that all participants shared the reasons why they end up teaching major subjects that are outside their field of specialization and those are lack of teachers and lack of teaching load. Furthermore, Hobbs (2020) stated that two of the reasons the out-of-field phenomenon arise are systemic teacher shortages and unequal distribution of teachers. Within such constraints, the question then becomes what is a person ‘capable’ and ‘willing’ to teach rather than what is a teacher certified/approved to teach or specialized in. Through challenges, different problems and difficulties arises were overcome. It enhances the capabilities and skills in every aspect once it was surpassed. (Raymundo, 2021)

Table 3.1. *Extent of Challenges Encountered by Teachers Handling Non-major Subjects in Terms of Knowledge of Assessment Procedures (N=73)*

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description	Rank
1. Understanding the assessment criteria of the subject	3.18	Neutral	7
2. Designing appropriate assessment for the subject that accurately gauge student understanding.	3.51	Very Challenging	1
3. Aligning teaching methods with the assessment	3.36	Neutral	4
4. Providing constructive feedback to students based on assessment results.	3.40	Neutral	3
5. Communicating assessment expectations clearly to students.	3.32	Neutral	5
6. Ensuring fairness and impartiality in assessment processes	3.19	Neutral	6
7. Adapting assessment techniques for diverse learning styles and abilities.	3.42	Very Challenging	2
Average Weighted Mean	3.34	Neutral	

Legend: 4.21 – 5.00 Extremely Challenging | 3.41 – 4.20 Very Challenging | 2.61 – 3.40 Neutral | 1.81 – 2.60 Not Very Challenging | 1.00 – 1.80 Not at all Challenging

Table 3.1 shows the extent of challenges encountered by teachers handling non-major subjects in terms of knowledge of assessment procedures. The table indicates that the teacher found that the challenges presented received an average weighted mean is 3.34 with a verbal description Neutral. Strictly speaking, this rating suggests that teachers may neither feel fully confident nor highly challenged in this area but may experience some uncertainty or inconsistency in their familiarity with assessment practices.

Further investigation reveals that the respondents perceived the highest mean score of 3.51 on item no 2 which states that, Designing appropriate assessment for the subject that accurately gauge student understanding with a verbal description of Very challenging. Conversely the lowest mean score of 3.18 is on item no. 1 which states Understanding the assessment criteria of the subject with a verbal description of neutral.

This implies that while teachers may understand the overall assessment requirements of non-major subjects they handle, they encounter significant challenges in developing assessments that accurately measure student learning.

The results are consistent with the study of Co & De Jesus (2021). According to them teachers teaching outside their specialization face crucial issues and challenges. They couldn’t generate new activities, less creative, less confident, and followed the traditional method. In addition to that, according to Auseon (2019), he stated that a teacher’s professional knowledge affects assessment and reflection. In the art of education, limited knowledge affects the teacher’s representation of art, the focus of inquiry and criticism, and the criteria and method for assessment.

Table 3.2 presents the extent of challenges encountered by teachers handling non-major subjects in terms of pedagogical knowledge. As demonstrated in the table, the extent of challenges encountered by teachers handling non-major subjects in terms of pedagogical knowledge acquired an overall mean score of 3.32 interpreted as Neutral. This shows that although teachers might not have a lot of trouble with their pedagogical knowledge, this neutral rating implies that they could not feel totally confident either.

Investigating further, the respondents observed a highest mean score of 3.45 on item no. 4, which states Delivering and teaching the topics of the subject effectively described as Very challenging. On the other hand, the lowest mean score of 3.12 is on item no. 7, that

states Managing classroom dynamics and behavior described as Neutral.

Table 3.2. *Extent of Challenges Encountered by Teachers Handling Non-major Subjects in Terms of Pedagogical Knowledge (N=73)*

<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Weighted Mean</i>	<i>Verbal Description</i>	<i>Rank</i>
1. Adapting teaching methods to suit different learning styles.	3.37	Neutral	2
2. Integrating technology and multi-media resources effectively into teaching the subject.	3.33	Neutral	4.5
3. Managing classroom dynamics and behavior.	3.12	Neutral	7
4. Delivering and teaching the topics of the subject effectively	3.45	Very Challenging	1
5. Maintaining student interest and engagement throughout lessons.	3.34	Neutral	3
6. Creating opportunities for active learning, such as group discussions, hands-on activities, and problem-solving exercises.	3.33	Neutral	4.5
7. Establishing a collaborative and personalized learning setting.	3.9	Neutral	6
Average Weighted Mean	3.32	Neutral	

This suggests that, despite teachers considering themselves quite competent in managing classroom behaviors, they have considerable challenges in effective content delivery.

The results parallel the findings from the work of Villano-ac (2024) which revealed that the participants mentioned that teaching non-major subjects is problematic because it requires extensive reading and further research. They exclaimed that most of them are new to the subjects they are teaching. Moreover, they are not aware or equally knowledgeable as to the subject content. This is roughly determined to be one of their primary concerns. The result corresponds to the analysis of the study by Rebuscas (2022) supported by the joint statements of the participants that they had experienced struggle in delivering and discussing the lessons or even answering student's misconception due to the reason of that they are not familiar with the subject and the subject itself does not relate to their field of specialization. On top of that Barbadillo (2021) uncovers that participants are having a hard time in comprehending terminologies that are new and unfamiliar to them, limited content knowledge and lastly, finding the effective strategies appropriate for the discussion.

Table 3.3. *Extent of Challenges Encountered by Teachers Handling Non-major Subjects in Terms of Curriculum Knowledge (N=73)*

<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Weighted Mean</i>	<i>Verbal Description</i>	<i>Rank</i>
1. Understanding of the overall structure and organization of the curriculum of subjects	3.38	Neutral	2
2. Being familiar with the specific content and topics covered within the curriculum of subjects	3.37	Neutral	3
3. Aligning teaching strategies with the objectives and learning outcomes outlined in the curriculum.	3.26	Neutral	5
4. Keeping up-to-date with changes or revisions in the curriculum.	3.41	Very Challenging	1
5. Identifying and utilizing relevant resources and materials for teaching the subject.	3.30	Neutral	4
6. Collaborating with colleagues or subject major teachers to enhance knowledge of the curriculum.	3.19	Neutral	6
Average Weighted Mean	3.32	Neutral	

Table 3.3 exhibits the extent of challenges encountered by teachers handling non-major subjects in terms of curriculum knowledge. The table drew an average mean score of 3.32 inferred as Neutral. The result indicates that teachers may feel moderately prepared in terms of curriculum knowledge, but may encounter certain uncertainties or limitations when working with a less standardized curriculum.

Further investigation discloses, the respondents observed a highest mean score of 3.41 on item no. 4, which states Keeping up-to-date with changes or revisions in the curriculum with a verbal description Very challenging. In contrast, the lowest mean score of 3.19 is on item no. 6, that states Collaborating with colleagues or subject major teachers to enhance knowledge of the curriculum with a verbal description Neutral.

The data indicates that staying informed about curriculum updates is a significant concern. Alternatively, working with colleagues reflect a moderate level of challenge that may not greatly impact teachers' curriculum knowledge.

These outcomes reflect the study results of Aytac (2023) examined and revealed that teachers do not want to adopt and implement the new changes in the curriculum, and they thought that the curriculum change would not affect the efficiency of the teaching and learning environment. DepEd also noted, on the implementation of MATATAG Curriculum, that among the initial challenges observed during the pilot run included familiarization of teachers with the competencies and producing appropriate learning materials. (Hernando-Malipot 2023)

Research.com revealed that where from different subject areas work together, can provide new insights and approaches to enhance teaching strategies. By blending expertise from diverse disciplines, teachers can create more engaging, comprehensive learning

experiences for students (Research.com 2024).

Canoy, et al, (2022) states that all of the teachers are always looking at the learning competencies in each quarter of the entire school year. They said that they are calculating and have prepared the DLL including the number of hours in a week for each competency. But the problem is, if you are teaching subjects that are not in your specialty, of course it needs enough time to study, to prepare learning materials, checking the student's notebooks or papers for them to give feedback. And if ever some of the students got a poor result, then they are force to re-teach and discuss again. In this scenario, the estimation of each topic to be discussed for that period of time will be extended and it is quite a burden for them. Another instance if their immediate advice that they have to attend seminars, or unannounced meeting and the like then it really hinders the 100 percent coverage for that quarter.

Table 3.4. *Extent of Challenges Encountered by Teachers Handling Non-major Subjects in Terms of Content Knowledge (N=73)*

INDICATORS	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description	Rank
1. Understanding and explaining complex concepts	3.47	Very Challenging	3.5
2. Addressing student questions and inquiries about the subject.	3.30	Neutral	6
3. Explaining complex or technical ideas in a manner that students understand.	3.47	Very Challenging	3.5
4. Crafting engaging and effective lesson plans for non-major subjects.	3.53	Very Challenging	2
5. Ensuring clear expectations of learning the subjects to students.	3.38	Neutral	5
6. Mastering the different contents of the non-major subjects.	3.63	Very Challenging	1
Average Weighted Mean	3.46	Very Challenging	

Table 3.4 displays the extent of challenges encountered by teachers handling non-major subjects in terms of content knowledge. The table showed an average weighted mean of 3.46 which is interpreted as Very challenging. This suggests that teachers feel a significant level of difficulty in mastering the content of the subjects they teach.

Looking further, item no. 6, Mastering the different contents of the non-major subjects shows the highest weighted mean of 3.63 which is described as Very challenging while item no. 2, Addressing student questions and inquiries about the subject, obtained a weighted mean of 3.30 described as, Neutral.

This underscores that despite the teacher respondents having the ability to respond to students' inquiries about the contents of non-major subjects on a basic level, they still struggle significantly to gain in-depth understanding across the diverse content areas they are assigned.

In effect, Caldis (2017) divulged that out-of-field teaching affects the subject quality and it has massive results in the students' level of passiveness and learning. It also implies low esteem among educators to their competency to deliver the lesson efficiently. (Yumang 2021). According to the study conducted by Raymundo, (2021), Teacher A said, "The greatest challenges that I encountered when teaching non-major subjects are those times that I am not familiar with the topic or content of the lesson, especially when the learners asked me some questioned and I doubt myself if I gave the precise answer. To add to this, Roxas (2022) discloses that teachers who teach outside their area of expertise face critical issues and challenges. These difficulties are primarily the result of a lack of subject matter knowledge (SMK), which has influenced the teacher's pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), which is critical in both preparation and actual teaching.

Table 3.5. *Extent of Challenges Encountered by Teachers Handling Non-major Subjects in Terms of Knowledge of Specific and General Contexts (N=73)*

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description	Rank
1. Explaining real-world applications and relevance of subjects to students' lives.	3.27	Neutral	4
2. Relating subjects to current events and issues.	3.25	Neutral	5
3. Integrating local, national, and global views into teaching.	3.34	Neutral	1.5
4. Assessing students' prior knowledge about the subject.	3.29	Neutral	3
5. Relating the topics of the subject to other different subjects	3.34	Neutral	1.5
Average Weighted Mean	3.30	Neutral	

Table 3.5 presents the extent of challenges encountered by teachers handling non-major subjects in terms of knowledge of specific and general contexts. As shown, the table acquired a general average mean score of 3.30 inferred as "neutral." This implies that while teachers do not find contextual knowledge overwhelmingly challenging, they also do not feel entirely confident in their understanding of these contexts.

With further analysis, the respondents discern a highest mean score of 3.34 on item no. 3, which states Assessing students' prior knowledge about the subject, and item no. 5, Relating the topics of the subject to other different subjects which are interpreted Neutral. In comparison with lowest mean score of 3.25 is on item no. 2, that states Relating subjects to current events and issues with a verbal description, Neutral.

This finding reveals that teachers handling non-major subjects frequently encounter moderate challenges not only in linking content to students' prior knowledge and across other subjects and curriculums, as well as in making content applicable to current events.

A study conducted by Adanza et al (2023) reveals that the non Araling Panlipunan teacher find teaching its contents challenging and

that the problems and woes are using the concept of across curriculum, making the activities relevant to student experiences; the content of the subject is difficult and stimulates boredom; the content of the subjects requires a lot of reading which often leads to boredom. In comparison, some of the participants was able to integrate their field of specialization in some topics in Araling Panlipunan. Also, incompetent teaching, incapability of answering students' queries, insufficient information shared, irrelevant experiences inculcated, and uncertainty on what to teach were mainly manifested during lesson delivery which highly affects teacher's confidence in teaching. (Rebucas, 2022)

Table 3.6. *Extent of Challenges Encountered by Teachers Handling Non-major Subjects in Terms of Knowledge of Learners and Learning (N=73)*

<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Weighted Mean</i>	<i>Verbal Description</i>	<i>Rank</i>
1. Understanding the diverse learning styles and preferences of students	3.30	Neutral	4
2. Recognizing and addressing individual strengths and weaknesses of students	3.32	Neutral	3
3. Providing differentiated instruction to meet the diverse needs of students	3.51	Very Challenging	1
4. Fostering a positive learning environment conducive to learning	3.25	Neutral	5.5
5. Establishing a class environment that encourages learners' critical thinking and problem-solving skills.	3.36	Neutral	2
6. Creating an inclusive and supportive classroom environment for all students.	3.25	Neutral	5.5
Average Weighted Mean	3.33	Neutral	

Table 3.6 presents the extent of challenges encountered by teachers handling non-major subjects in terms of knowledge of learners and learning. As shown, the table acquired a general average mean score of 3.33 inferred as Neutral. This suggests that, while teachers do not perceive extreme difficulty in this area, there is room for improvement in their understanding of diverse learner needs, learning styles, and effective instructional methods tailored to these needs.

With further analysis, the respondents discern a highest mean score of 3.51 on item no. 3, which states Providing differentiated instruction to meet the diverse needs of students. which is interpreted Very challenging as opposed to the lowest mean score of 3.25 on item no. 4, that states Fostering a positive learning environment conducive to learning and item no. 6, Creating an inclusive and supportive classroom environment for all students which are inferred Neutral.

This distinction suggests that, while teachers in Mabinay 1 may find it moderately challenging to create a generally positive and inclusive atmosphere, they struggle more significantly with adapting instruction to the varied learning needs within their classrooms.

The result is consistent with the findings of Onyishi & Sefotho (2020) which uncovers that most of the teachers indicated that time is their constraint to the use of differentiated instructional strategies. They indicated that when they use differentiated instruction, they find it difficult to cover the curriculum content in the stipulated time. They also submitted that they need more information on how to differentiate instruction without watering down the curriculum content. The research made by Castro, et al., (2023) concurred that teachers who assigned teaching loads which are not part of their preservice training showed some confidence that they can teach their students well. This was shown on the question how confident they were in teaching their students to become critical thinkers and 8 or (66.67 %) of the total number of the teacher participants said that they have a moderate effort exerted in encouraging students to become critical thinkers. This is because of the fact that they themselves are not even sure of themselves that they are knowledgeable of the subject that they are teaching at the moment.

Table 4. *Summary Table of the Extent of Challenges Encountered by Teachers Handling Non-major Subjects (N=73)*

<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Weighted Mean</i>	<i>Verbal Description</i>	<i>Rank</i>
1. knowledge of assessment procedures	3.34	Neutral	2
2. pedagogical knowledge	3.32	Neutral	5.5
3. curriculum knowledge	3.32	Neutral	5.5
4. content knowledge	3.46	Very Challenging	1
5. knowledge of specific and general contexts	3.30	Neutral	3
6. knowledge of learners and learning	3.33	Neutral	4
Overall Weighted Mean	3.35	Neutral	

Table 4 exhibits the extent of challenges encountered by teachers handling non-major subject. The table revealed a general average mean score of 3.35 inferred as Neutral. This demonstrates that teachers are encountering challenges in handling non-major subjects, but these challenges may not be overwhelmingly positive or negative on average.

With further analysis, the respondents perceived a highest mean score of 3.46 on item no. 4, content knowledge which is interpreted Very challenging as opposed to the lowest mean score of 3.32 on items no. 2, pedagogical knowledge and no. 3, curriculum knowledge which are inferred Neutral.

This high level of perceived difficulty suggests that teachers may feel less confident in their expertise when teaching contents of the subjects outside their specialization. On the other hand, in terms of pedagogical knowledge and curriculum knowledge, the neutrality could imply that teachers feel relatively more prepared or adaptable when it comes to general teaching strategies and understanding the

curriculum.

Challenges with content knowledge are common among teachers asked to teach beyond their primary field, as mastering unfamiliar subject matter requires time, resources, and continuous professional development (Blömeke & Kaiser, 2019). Furthermore, Rebuscas (2022) concluded that having an inadequate background on subject matter knowledge in teaching leads to teacher's incompetence, primarily in finding relevant teaching strategies, detailing lessons beyond knowledge level, looking for relevant learning experiences, lesson organization, and building students' knowledge foundation in learning, making them a competent citizen of the world.

Table 5. Relationship Between the Profile of the Respondents and the Extent of Challenges Encountered by Teachers Handling Non-major Subjects (N=73)

Profile of the respondents paired extent of factors influencing their track and strand preference	X2 Computed Value	X2 Tabular Value	df	Level of significance	Decision Rule	Remarks
Sex	6.023	9.488	4	0.05	Not Significant	Accept Ho
Age	9.156	26.296	16	0.05	Not Significant	Accept Ho
Highest educational attainment	21.972	15.507	8	0.05	Significant	Reject Ho
Number of years in service	11.575	26.296	16	0.05	Not Significant	Accept Ho
Area of specialization	26.400	41.337	28	0.05	Not Significant	Accept Ho

Table 5 discloses the relationship between the profile of the respondents and the extent of challenges encountered by teachers handling non-major subjects. As demonstrated in the table, the findings indicate that the calculated chi-square values of sex (6.023), age (9.156), numbers of years in service (11.575) and area of specialization (26.400) are less than the tabular values of 9.488 (sex), 26.296 (age), 26.296 (numbers of years in service) and 41.337 (area of specialization) thus, the null hypothesis is accepted signifying that there is no significant relationship between the profile of the respondents and the extent of challenges encountered by teachers handling non-major subjects.

In comparison, the computed chi-square value of highest educational attainment, 21.972, is greater than the tabular value of 15.507 hence, rejecting the null hypothesis. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between the highest educational attainment of the respondents and the extent of challenges encountered by teachers handling non-major subjects.

This outcome indicates that the demographic and professional characteristics of teachers do not substantially impact the perceived challenges they encounter when handling non-major subjects however their highest educational attainment significantly contributes to the challenges experienced.

The result is supported by the study of Hobbs & Porsch (2021) which found that though teachers go through an initial teacher education program, they are unable to provide their students with an enabling learning environment. Clarke & Morris (2019), suggest that age does not play a significant role in teaching challenges; instead, experience and training are more predictive of teachers' success in addressing classroom and content-related difficulties.

Conclusions

It is determined that most teachers are female, 25-36 years old, Bachelor's degree major in English holder, and relatively 5-9 years in service.

Furthermore, it is concluded that the prevailing reasons of teachers handling non-major subjects are due to the decision made by the school administrator as a result of: teacher shortage, expectation of teacher versatility and adaptability to handle non-major subjects, and the size of the school which affect teachers' workload.

Additionally, the teachers handling non-major subjects encountered the following challenges: designing appropriate assessment for students based on assessment results, adapting assessment techniques for diverse learning styles and abilities, delivering and teaching the topics of the subject effectively, keeping up-to-date with changes or revisions in the curriculum, mastering the different contents of the non-major subjects, crafting engaging and effective lesson plans for non-major subjects, explaining complex or technical ideas in a manner that students understand and understanding and explaining complex concepts, providing differentiated instruction to meet the diverse needs of students which determined that the most demanding factor among teachers is content knowledge.

These challenges encountered by teachers are not influenced by their profile such as sex, age, numbers of years in service and area of specialization except for highest educational attainment.

It is recommended that DepEd should prioritize hiring more teachers that specialize on subject areas needed by the school. DepEd should also conduct more intensive workshops and training sessions focusing on curriculum knowledge, assessment techniques, content delivery, and differentiated instructions strategies for teachers handling non-major subjects. In addition, the school administrator should also ensure that the decision made is impartial from evaluating teachers' capabilities and overall workload to ensure a fair distribution of responsibilities. Furthermore, teachers should also collaborate with subject specialists and master teachers to co-plan lessons, share best practices, and enhance teaching outcomes. Conclusively, teachers are highly encouraged to pursue graduate or even post-graduate degree.

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