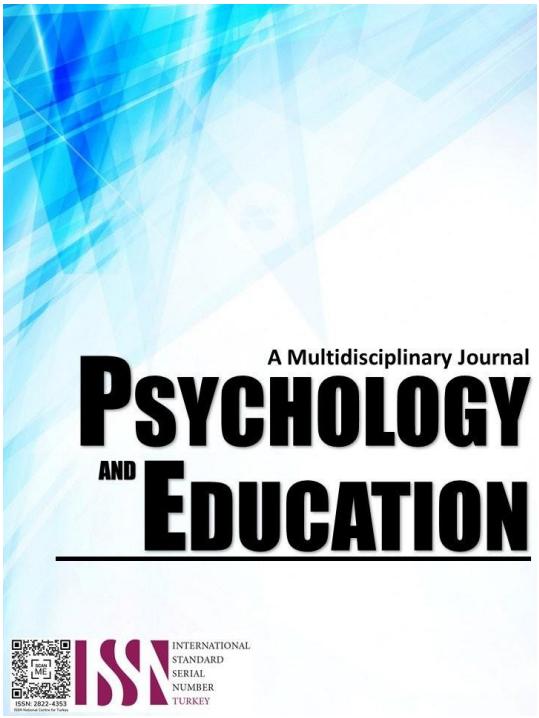
DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS AND COMPETENCIES OF ELEMENTARY TEACHERS IN POST-COVID19 ERA



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Research Article

Demographic Characteristics and Competencies of Elementary Teachers in Post-COVID 19 Era

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Abstract

The resumption of Face-to-Face classes in the Philippine schools post-COVID-19, the Department of Education (DepEd) intensified the implementation of the Results-Based Performance Management System (RPMS), anchored on the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), to uphold educational continuity and teacher proficiency. This descriptive-comparative study explored the relationship between demographic factors and the functional and core behavioral competencies of elementary school teachers within the post-COVID19 era educational context. Employing a quantitative design, data were collected from 40 teachers at Pedro Acharon Sr. Central Elementary School using validated questionnaires assessing demographic profiles and RPMS-aligned competencies. Statistical analyses, including frequency counts, percentages, means, weighted means, t-tests, and ANOVA (α=0.05), were conducted. Results indicated that teachers demonstrated high functional competence (mean = 4.19) and strong core behavioral competencies across domains. Notably, statistical analyses revealed no significant differences in functional competence concerning sex (F=0.762, p=0.451), plantilla position (F=2.610, p=0.052), or highest degree (F=1.382, p=0.264). Similarly, core behavioral competence showed no significant variations based on age (F=1.090, p=0.393), sex (F=0.567, p=0.628), plantilla position (F=2.186, p=0.091), or highest degree (F=1.690, p=0.198). The consistent high competency levels, independent of demographic factors, suggest the potential efficacy of standardized DepEd teacher development initiatives. Consequently, this study recommends the development of a tailored learning and development plan to further optimize teacher preparedness and effectiveness in the evolving post-pandemic educational environment.

Keywords: *elementary teachers, functional competence, core behavioral competence, demographic profiles, Post-COVID-19 Education*

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly shook-up education in the Philippines, keeping millions of students out of physical classrooms for over two years. As things started to settle and learners finally returned, the potential long-term effects of this disruption on our schools became a key concern. It became clear that teachers needed to be ready for this "next normal." To figure out how best to support them, it's important to understand if factors like a teacher's age, gender, job title, or education level might influence how well they've adapted and are performing in this changed environment. This knowledge can help us create more effective support systems and policies for educators. Recognizing this need for resilience and improved teaching, the Department of Education (DepEd) took the opportunity to promote inclusivity. They encouraged the use of teaching methods that were not only up-to-date and relevant but also sensitive to the ongoing challenges posed by the pandemic (Hinampas, 2022).

To ensure quality education reaches every Filipino student, the DepEd emphasized the crucial role of the Results-Based Performance Management System (RPMS), which aligns with the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) (Donato, 2021). Think of the RPMS as a structured way to manage, track, and see how well things are going. It also helps pinpoint areas where schools and teachers might need extra support to keep improving and growing professionally (DepEd Order No. 2, s. 2015). For teachers to really shine within the RPMS framework, they need a solid set of personal and professional skills, along with specific job-related abilities tied to their key responsibilities. These job-related skills cover areas like creating a good learning environment, catering to different learning needs, assessing student progress, and communicating that progress. On the personal and professional side, it includes things like managing themselves effectively, focusing on results, working well with others, maintaining high ethical standards, and being dedicated to serving students.

This research sets out with three main goals: (1) to paint a clear picture of the teachers at Pedro Acharon Sr. Central Elementary School in terms of their background (age, gender, job title, education); (2) to get a sense of how strong their job-related and personal/professional skills are in this "next normal"; and (3) to see if there are any significant differences in these skills based on their backgrounds.

While studies have been conducted that centered on this topic, this research focused on the Pedro Acharon Sr. Central Elementary School teachers to address the gap of little to no local studies. A learning and development plan served as the output of this study to help capacitate the teachers to increase their functional and core behavioral competence which contains goals/objectives, activities, resources, persons involved, key performance indicators, and assumptions. Understanding this will help solidify whether educational institutions and teachers expected to be proactive in instruction and delivery can fulfill the promise of effective learning modalities in the next normal, especially in the chosen locale.

This study seeks to provide insights into the preparedness of educational institutions and teachers to effectively implement learning

modalities in the "next normal," particularly within the chosen local setting.

Research Questions

This study aimed to determine the significant difference between the demographic profile and the functional and core behavioral competencies of elementary teachers. This study also sought to develop a learning and development plan for the elementary teachers of Pedro Acharon Sr. Central Elementary School for the school year 2022-2023. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of elementary teachers in terms of:
    1.1. Age;
    1.2. Sex;
    1.3. Plantilla Position; and
    1.4. Highest Degree Obtained?
2. What is the extent of functional competence among elementary teachers in terms of:
    2.1. Content knowledge Pedagogy;
    2.2. Learning environment;
    2.3. Diversity of learning and assessment and reporting; and
    2.4. Community linkages?
3. Is there a significant difference in the extent of functional competence of elementary teachers when grouped according to:
    3.1. Age;
    3.2. Sex;
    3.3. Plantilla Position; and
    3.4. Highest Degree Obtained?
4. What is the extent of core behavioral competence among elementary teachers in terms of:
    4.1. Self-Management;
    4.2. Professionalism and Ethics;
    4.3. Results Focus;
    4.4. Teamwork;
    4.5. Service Orientation; and
    4.6. Innovation?
5. Is there a significant difference in the extent of core behavioral competence
    5.1. of elementary teachers when grouped according to:
    5.2. Age;
    5.3. Sex;
    5.4. Plantilla Position; and
    5.5. Highest Degree Obtained?

Literature Review

Demographic Profile of Teachers

Demographic profiles are crucial in research as they correlate with professional progress (Asio et al., 2019) and help understand participant backgrounds (Hinampas, 2022). Factors like age and education influence employee productivity (Auden, 2019), and academic staff demographics vary in education, age, marital status, gender, and tenure (Abaas et al., 2021).

Gender differences impact teacher performance (Sarmiento et al., 2021; Roman, 2021), while age and experience relate to job satisfaction (Tran et al., 2021). Higher teacher education improves student outcomes, and seminars enhance teacher performance (Tran et al., 2021; Ozamiz-Etxebarria et al., 2021).

Teacher competence positively affects student success (Palma, 2021), and age and experience affect teacher performance, with advanced degrees correlating with higher engagement (Sa'adatu, 2013, cited by López-Angulo et al., 2022).

However, some studies suggest minimal impact of demographic factors on student performance (Francisco, 2020). Plantilla positions provide staffing structure and stability (Roman, 2021), but can be rigid and complex to fill (Puri et al., 2020).

Functional Competence of Teachers

Teachers strengthen community ties through activities like clean-up drives and outreach, which, combined with parental involvement, enhance student learning (Ventanilla & Salcedo, 2019; Farrell, 2021). Functional competency significantly impacts teaching, with knowledgeable and skilled teachers improving student achievement (Lee et al., 2021).

Content knowledge pedagogy is vital, requiring continuous improvement (Ismail et al., 2020; Auden, 2019). Teachers face challenges engaging diverse learners due to varying backgrounds, necessitating strategies like benchmarking (Franco-Santos & Otley, 2018), and

policymakers should recognize classroom diversity (Chan et al., 2021).

Online learning, including blended approaches, offers opportunities but presents challenges in student autonomy (James et al., 2022). Instruction should prioritize meaningful learning with kindness and respect (Jain et al., 2021).

Core Behavioral Competence of Teachers

Teaching competency involves integrating knowledge, skills, and attitudes, including pedagogical, cultural, and ICT skills (Bustillo & Aguilos, 2022; Chan et al., 2021; Benkhider & Kherbachi, 2020; Abaas et al., 2021; Agarin, 2021; Amankwaa, 2020), but lacks research on core drivers of innovative teaching.

Effective management and leadership, enhanced by teacher self-management, are crucial for educational institutions (Bazohoori, et al., 2021; Aguinis et al. 2018). Professionalism and ethical conduct are essential for teachers, who serve as role models (Ben-Peretz, 2001 cited by Gabris & Ihrke, 2019).

Results focus, involving continuous improvement, is vital in education (Bazohoori, Et al., 2021). Teamwork facilitates knowledge sharing, especially for new teachers (Cahapay, 2021). Philippine institutions should develop educational recovery plans to adapt to the "next new normal" (Cahapay, 2021).

Teachers innovate through creative instruction, but innovation, unlike "new" education, fosters creative learning (Whitman, 1983 cited by Cahapay, 2021; Ferrari et al., 2009 cited by Kloot and Martin, 2018).

Learning and Development Plan (L&D)

Learning and Development (L&D) is essential for employee engagement, enhancing performance and productivity, and benefiting organizational outcomes. Consistent skill development values employees and promotes adaptability (Sundler et al., 2019). The relationship between education, planning, and human resource development, particularly in developing economies, is significant (Rao, 1966, cited by Werner, 2021).

In DepEd Region XII, while HRM practices are generally effective, there's room for improvement in specific procedural aspects across several divisions (Martin, 2018).

Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a descriptive-comparative quantitative research design. Descriptive-comparative quantitative research involves the systematic collection and analysis of numerical data to describe and compare different variables or phenomena within a study (Arnold, 2019). This approach allows researchers to explore relationships between variables, assess differences across groups, and make comparisons to better understand the nature of the phenomena being studied.

The descriptive-comparative design also supports the formulation of a learning and development plan, as it highlights areas where teacher competencies may be strengthened.

Findings from the comparative analysis will be a basis for the development of a targeted learning and development plan aimed at enhancing teacher competencies identified as needing support. The main goal of this descriptive-comparative study is to describe connections between variables rather than to establish a causal relationship.

Respondents

As the study employed a purposive sampling technique, forty (40) elementary teachers from Pedro Acharon Sr. Central Elementary School of the academic year 2022-2023 participated in the research as respondents. Teachers are the most suitable and acceptable data source because the study focuses on the demographic profile, the functional competence and the core behavioral competence of the teachers. To get the necessary data, a survey questionnaire created by the researcher was provided for them to answer.

Instrument

Since this study is descriptive, the main instrument utilized in the collection of the data was the questionnaire. This validated and established tool was carefully designed to gather the necessary information to address the research questions.

The questionnaire comprised three parts. Part 1 focused on the demographic profile of the respondents, with items derived from the RPMS-PPST framework of the Department of Education, a publicly available tool for performance management.

Part 2 assessed the extent of the teachers' Functional Competence. This section consisted of 18 items adapted from Part I of the RPMS-PPST tool of the Department of Education, which measures key functional competencies.

Part 3 of the questionnaire evaluated the extent of the teachers' Core Behavioral Competence. This section contained 30 questions adapted from Part II of the RPMS-PPST tool of the Department of Education, which focuses on core behavioral competencies.

Procedure

After the approval of the request letter to conduct the study by the Schools Division Superintendent, the researcher immediately coordinated with the school heads for the identification of the respondents. All procedures were followed with transparency, ethical standards, and respect for participants. The study began with an explanation of its objectives and a brief orientation. Data collection involved distributing questionnaire survey forms both online and in hard copy. Data collection involved the distribution of structured survey forms only, comprising three parts: Part 1 gathered demographic information, Part 2 assessed Functional Competence using 18 items, and Part 3 evaluated Core Behavioral Competence with 30 items adapted from Part 2 of the RPMS-PPST tool of the Department of Education. This questionnaire contained a total of 30 questions which was adapted from the part 2 of the RPMS-PPST tool of the Department of Education. This questionnaire was pilot tested to find its Cronbach's reliability alpha to establish its reliability.

Data Analysis

This study utilized frequency count, percentage mean, and weighted mean to analyze the demographic profile, functional competence, and core behavioral competence of elementary teachers; furthermore, ANOVA and t-tests for independent samples, assuming a normal distribution and employing a 0.05 significance threshold, were used to determine if significant differences existed between the demographic profile and both functional and core behavioral competence of the teachers.

Ethical Considerations

Throughout this study, the researcher maintained stringent ethical standards, adhering to Holy Trinity College's guidelines to ensure the well-being of participants and the integrity of the data. Informed consent was obtained, ensuring participants understood the study's purpose and their right to participate voluntarily or withdraw at any time without penalty. Data privacy and confidentiality were rigorously protected; participant identities were shielded, and information was used solely for research, reinforced by a non-disclosure agreement. The study was conducted with gender and cultural sensitivity, promoting equality and respect while eliminating discrimination. Furthermore, the researcher prioritized health and safety by implementing strict COVID-19 protocols, including mask-wearing and physical distancing during necessary in-person interactions, and utilizing digital communication to minimize risks, demonstrating a commitment to ethical and responsible research practices.

Results and Discussion

Demographic Profile of Teacher Respondent

Table 1.1. *Demographic Profile of Elementary Teachers in terms of Age*

Category	*Frequency*	*Percentage*
Above 55 years old	2	5.00%
51 – 55 years old	12	30.00 %
46 – 50 years old	7	17.50 %
41 – 45 years old	8	20.00%
36 – 40 years old	2	5.00%
31 – 35 years old	2	5.00%
25 – 30 years old	7	17.50%
Below 25 years old	0	0.00 %
Total	40	100%

Table 1.1 reveals the age distribution of respondents, with a significant portion, 30%, aged 51-55, and 20% aged 41-45. Conversely, age groups 31-35, 36-40, and over 55 each represented only 5% of the respondents. This aligns with Thakur's (2018) findings, suggesting that teachers typically reach their career peak between 40 and 50 years old, indicating a tendency for teachers in public elementary education to fall within the 40-45 age range.

Table 1.2. *Demographic Profile of Elementary Teachers in terms of Sex*

Category	*Frequency*	*Percentage*
Female	37	92. 50%
Male	3	7.50 %
Total	40	100%

Table 1.2 highlights the gender distribution, showcasing a substantial female majority, with 92.50% (37 out of 40) of respondents being female, while males comprised only 7.50% (3 out of 40). This demonstrates a clear gender imbalance within the surveyed teacher population.

In an ecological analysis conducted by Owolabi and Adebayo (2013), being a teacher has generally been perceived as a feminist job which urge female pre-collegiate teenagers to pursue education then the urge that the male population feel. Thus, male groups tend to incline themselves into what is more perceived to have male needs in nature. In the Philippine setting, about 95% of the nation's

teacher's population is composed of female while only 5% comprises the male category. While this claim is relevant to the result of this study, this has posed challenges to the educational leaders as they try to impose that teaching is a work of passion and creativity and not a work of gender.

Table 1.3. *Demographic Profile of Elementary Teachers in terms of Plantilla Position*

Category	*Frequency*	*Percentage*
Teacher I	18	45.00%
Teacher II	8	20.00 %
Teacher III	10	25.00%
Master Teacher I	3	7.50%
Master Teacher II	1	2.50%
Total	40	100%

Table 1.3 presents the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of plantilla position. Eighteen (18) or 45% of the teachers belong to the teacher I and ten (10) or 25% of the teachers belong to the teacher III category. Meanwhile, three (3) or 7.50% of the teachers belong to master teacher I category and only 1 (one) teacher or 2.50% belongs in master teacher II category.

This result reveal that most of the teachers in the pool of respondents belong to the teacher I category. This result is congruent to the study conducted by Asio and Jimenez (2020) which shows that while teachers are encouraged to pursue higher education degree to be eligible for higher teaching positions, majority of the population of the teachers belong to the teacher I category with about 446,112 since 2019 out of the 836,000-teaching force in the country.

Table 1.4. *Demographic Profile of Elementary Teachers in terms of Highest Degree Obtained*

Category	*Frequency*	*Percentage*
Bachelor's Degree	28	70.00%
Master's Degree	10	25.00 %
Doctorate Degree	2	5.00%
Total	40	100%

Table 1.4 illustrates the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of highest degree obtained. 28 out of 40 teachers or 70% obtained bachelor's degree, while only two (2) or 5% obtained doctorate degree. Meanwhile, ten (10) teachers or 25% from the group of participants obtained master's degree.

This result coincides to the findings of Francisco (2020) which explains that most teachers prefer to pursue higher educational degree when the circumstance forces them into such as the want to apply for higher teaching position. However, the same study also shows that most teachers start their master's degree for the goal of self-improvement, career growth, and professional growth.

Table 2.1. *Extent of Functional Competence of Elementary Teachers in terms of Content Knowledge Pedagogy*

	Item	*Mean*	*Description*
1.	Displayed a wide range of effective verbal and non-verbal classroom communication strategies to support learner understanding, participation, engagement, and achievement.	4.28	Often
2.	Modelled effective applications of content knowledge within and across curriculum teaching areas	4.23	Often
3.	Evaluated with colleagues the effectiveness of teaching strategies that promote learner achievement in literacy and numeracy.	4.18	Often
4.	Modelled and supported colleagues in the proficient use of Mother Tongue, Filipino, and English to improve teaching and learning, as well as to develop learners' pride in their language, heritage, and culture	4.18	Often
	Category Mean	4.22	Often

Table 1.2 outlines the demographic composition of the respondents, focusing specifically on their gender distribution. The data reveals a substantial majority of 92.50% among the female category, encompassing 37 out of the total 40 respondents. In contrast, the male segment comprises merely 7.50% of the respondents, totaling 3 individuals, all of whom are teachers. This gender distribution underscores a significant gender imbalance within the surveyed cohort, with females overwhelmingly outnumbering males.

Teachers generally exhibit strong functional competence, as evidenced by their frequent use of effective verbal and non-verbal communication strategies (mean of 4.18) and their ability to model effective content knowledge application across curricula (mean of 4.23). However, the lowest-scoring indicators reveal areas for improvement, specifically in teachers' collaborative assessment of instructional practices supporting literacy and numeracy development (mean of 4.18) and their modeling and support of colleagues in using Mother Tongue, Filipino, and English (mean of 4.18).

Teachers demonstrate functional competence in content knowledge pedagogy, with a mean of 4.22, described as "often." This finding aligns with the idea that implementing relevant instructional strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic facilitates effective education delivery (Hinampas, 2022). This also highlights the importance of continuous improvement to enhance faculty, leadership, and overall

school performance (Ismail et al., 2020).

Table 2.2. *Extent of Functional Competence of Elementary Teachers in terms of Learning Environment*

	Item	*Mean*	*Description*
1.	Exhibited effective practices to foster learning environments that promote fairness, respect, and care to encourage learning.	4.33	Often
2.	Exhibited effective strategies that ensure safe and secure learning environments to enhance learning through the consistent implementation of policies, guidelines, and procedures.	4.30	Often
3.	Worked with colleagues to share successful strategies that sustain supportive learning environments that nurture and inspire learners to participate, cooperate and collaborate in continued learning.	4.25	Often
4.	Modelled successful strategies and supported colleagues in promoting learning environments that effectively motivate learners to work productively by assuming responsibility for their own learning	4.20	Often
	Category Mean	4.27	Often

Teachers demonstrate strong functional competence in creating positive learning environments, as indicated by their high mean scores. They consistently promote justice, decency, and concern (mean 4.33), ensure safe and secure learning environments (mean 4.30), and model strategies that motivate learners (mean 4.20). This resilience is evident in their ability to adapt across various instructional modalities, from face-to-face to online and back again. The overall mean of 4.27, described as "often," reflects their adeptness in managing the learning environment. This aligns with Jokinen and Mikkonen's (2013) assertion that teachers are exposed to diverse learning options, including blended learning, and showcases their readiness to transition back to traditional classrooms despite the potential for blended learning to foster lifelong learning.

Furthermore, teachers effectively cultivate a conducive classroom environment by nurturing learner participation, cooperation, and collaboration. This approach aligns with Mann's emphasis on meaningful learning tailored to the learner, delivered with kindness and respect (Werner, 2021). The teachers' ability to create such an environment underscores their commitment to holistic student development and effective instructional practices.

Table 2.3. *Extent of Functional Competence of Elementary Teachers in terms of Diversity of Learning and Assessment and Reporting*

	Item	*Mean*	*Description*
1.	Worked collaboratively with colleagues to evaluate the design of learning plans that develop the knowledge and skills of learners at different ability levels.	4.13	Often
2.	Worked collaboratively with colleagues to analyze and utilize assessment data to modify practices and plans to further support learner progress and achievement.	4.13	Often
3.	Assisted colleagues to design, adapt and implement teaching strategies that are responsive to learners with disabilities, giftedness, and talents.	4.03	Often
4.	Developed and applied teaching strategies to address effectively the needs of learners from indigenous groups.	3.98	Often
	Category Mean	4.07	Often

Table 2.3 shows the extent of the functional competence of teachers regarding diversity of learning and assessment and reporting. In general, the result shows that the teachers express the extent of their functional competence in terms of diversity of learning and assessment and reporting with a mean of 4.07described as often which shows that the teachers have highly observable functional competence.

Teachers frequently collaborate to evaluate learning plans and analyze assessment data, both with a mean of 4.13, indicating strong teamwork in refining teaching strategies. They also often develop teaching strategies for indigenous learners, though slightly less frequently, with a mean of 3.98. This suggests teachers actively support colleagues and utilize student understanding to tailor tasks, acknowledging the challenges of engaging students from diverse cultural backgrounds (Franco-Santos & Otley, 2018).

To further enhance educational outcomes, policymakers should consider the racial, ethnic, and socio-economic diversity within classrooms as essential for quality education. Additionally, providing teachers with sufficient competency in classroom strategies for learners with special needs is crucial (Kagan, 2015).

Table 2.4. *Extent of Functional Competence of Elementary Teachers in terms of Community Linkages*

	Item	*Mean*	*Description*
1.	Exhibited commitment to and supported teachers in the implementation of school policies and procedures to foster harmonious relationships with learners, parents, and other stakeholders.	4.38	Often
2.	Identified and utilized personal and professional strengths to uphold the dignity of teaching as a profession to help build a positive teaching and learning culture within the school.	4.28	Often
3.	Manifested a learner-center teaching philosophy in various aspects of practice and supported colleagues in enhancing their own learner-centered teaching philosophy.	4.23	Often
4.	Reflected on and evaluated learning environments that are responsive to community contexts	4.00	Often
	Category Mean	4.22	Often

Table 2.4 presents the extent of functional competence of elementary teachers in terms of community linkages. In general, the teachers display the extent of their functional competence of in terms of community linkages with a mean of 4.22 described as often which means that the teachers have highly observable functional competence.

Teachers demonstrate strong commitment to school policies and procedures, fostering positive relationships with learners, parents, and stakeholders, as evidenced by a mean of 4.38. They also identify and utilize personal and professional strengths to uphold the dignity of teaching, contributing to a positive school culture, with a mean of 4.28. Additionally, teachers frequently reflect on and evaluate learning environments responsive to community contexts, scoring a mean of 4.00. This reflects a significant engagement with their communities, as teachers actively participate in various community-building activities, including clean-up drives, outreach programs, environmental protection, human rights advocacy, and support for the homeless (Ventanilla & Salcedo, 2019).

This community involvement signifies that teachers value not only the classroom environment but also their broader community. By strengthening these competencies, they enhance their relationships with school stakeholders, demonstrating a holistic approach to their professional roles and a commitment to serving their communities beyond the school's boundaries.

Table 2.5. *Summary Table on the Extent of Functional Competence of Elementary Teachers*

Indicators		*Mean*	*Description*
1.	Learning Environment	4.27	Often
2.	Community Linkages	4.22	Often
3.	Knowledge, Content and Pedagogies	4.21	Often
4.	Diversity of Learning and Assessment and Reporting	4.06	Often
	Over-All Mean	4.19	Often

Table 2.5 indicates that elementary teachers frequently demonstrate functional competence, with learning environment (mean 4.27) and community linkages (mean 4.22) receiving the highest ratings. Content knowledge pedagogy (mean 4.21) and diversity of learning, assessment, and reporting (mean 4.06) were also rated as "often," resulting in an overall mean of 4.19, signifying highly observable functional competence. This supports Kagan's (2015) assertion that teacher functional competency is significantly positive, as highly competent teachers possess strong subject knowledge, pedagogical skills, and student management abilities, leading to improved student academic achievement.

The findings align with Jokinen and Mikkonen's (2023) study, which highlighted teachers' high competence in establishing conducive learning environments. This includes the advantages of blended learning, such as flexibility, pedagogical richness, and cost-effectiveness, crucial for the "new normal." Blended learning promotes lifelong learning and learner autonomy, emphasizing that instruction should be tailored to the learner with kindness and respect, focusing on meaningful learning.

Functional Competence and Demographic Profile of Elementary Teachers

Table 3.1. *Significant Difference on the Extent of Functional Competence of Elementary Teachers When Grouped According to Age*

Category	*Mean*	*F-value*	*p-value*	*Remarks*
Above 55 years old	3.94	0.67	0.695	No Significant Difference
51 – 55 years old	4.37			
46 – 50 years old	4.10			
41 – 45 years old	4.16			
36 – 40 years old	4.47			
31 – 35 years old	4.0			
25 – 30 years old	4.05			
Below 25 years old				

Table 3.1 reveals the extent of functional competence among elementary teachers, categorized by age. Teachers aged 36-40 (mean 4.47) and 51-55 (mean 4.37) exhibited the highest mean scores, while those above 55 years old showed the lowest (mean 3.94). However, statistical analysis indicated no significant difference in functional competence based on age, with an F-value of 0.671 and a p-value of 0.695, exceeding the 0.05 margin of error. This suggests that age does not significantly impact teachers' functional competence, despite age potentially reflecting experience and years of service.

Conversely, research indicates that teacher effectiveness generally increases with experience, particularly after the initial years of teaching. Furthermore, competent instructors have a substantial influence on student progress. This suggests a potential relationship between teacher functional competence and age groups, contradicting the findings of this specific study (Jokinen & Mikkonen, 2023).

Table 3.2 presents the functional competence of elementary teachers categorized by sex, with male teachers showing a slightly higher mean of 4.38 compared to female teachers' 4.18. However, statistical analysis revealed no significant difference in functional competence between male and female teachers, as indicated by an F-value of 0.762 and a p-value of 0.451, which exceeds the 0.05

margin of error. This suggests that sex does not significantly influence the functional competence of elementary teachers.

Table 3.2. *Significant Difference on the Extent of Functional Competence of Elementary Teachers When Grouped According to Age*

Category	*Mean*	*F-value*	*p-value*	*Remarks*
Male	4.38	0.762	0.451	No Significant Difference
Female	4.18			

Conversely, a study by Abaas and Alrubaye (2023) found statistically significant differences between males and females in natural intelligence, favoring males. This discrepancy may be attributed to various factors considered in the present study that negated the significance of sex in relation to functional competence.

Table 3.3. *Significant Difference on the Extent of Functional Competence of Elementary Teachers When Grouped According to Plantilla Position*

Category	*Mean*	*F-value*	*p-value*	*Remarks*
Master Teacher I	4.75	2.610	0.052	No Significant Difference
Teacher III	4.35			
Teacher I	4.11			
Teacher II	4.01			
Master Teacher II	3.88			

Table 3.3 displays the functional competence of elementary teachers categorized by plantilla position. Master Teachers I (mean 4.75) and Teacher III (mean 4.35) exhibited the highest mean scores, while Master Teacher II showed the lowest (mean 3.88). However, statistical analysis revealed no significant difference in functional competence among different plantilla positions, as indicated by an F-value of 2.610 and a p-value of 0.052, which is slightly above the 0.05 level of significance. This suggests that plantilla position does not significantly influence the functional competence of elementary teachers in this study.

On the contrary, Sala and Comighud (2020) found that teachers in Bacong District, predominantly female, professionally advanced, and holding Teacher 2 plantilla positions, demonstrated "Very Satisfactory" performance and high motivation. Their study indicated a clear relationship between job performance and motivation, suggesting a potential significance between elementary teachers and their plantilla positions, which contrasts with the current study's findings.

Table 3.4. *Significant Difference on the Extent of Functional Competence of Elementary Teachers When Grouped According to Highest Degree Obtained*

Category	*Mean*	*F-value*	*p-value*	*Remarks*
Doctorate Degree	4.53	1.382	0.264	No Significant Difference
Master's Degree	4.31			
Bachelor's Degree	4.12			

Table 3.4 shows the extent of functional competence among elementary teachers, categorized by their highest degree obtained. Teachers with doctorate degrees had the highest mean (4.53), followed by those with master's degrees (4.31) and bachelor's degrees (4.12).

However, statistical analysis revealed no significant difference in functional competence based on the highest degree obtained, with an F-value of 1.382 and a p-value of 0.264, exceeding the 0.05 significance level. This indicates that the highest degree obtained does not significantly influence the functional competence of elementary teachers in this study.

However, Abaas and Alrubaye (2023) found that teachers with standard certification in their subject area significantly improved students' math test performance compared to those with probationary, emergency, private school, or no certification. They also noted that students taught by teachers with emergency teaching certificates performed similarly to those with standard credentials in math and science. This suggests that teacher certification and subject-specific training, rather than simply the highest degree obtained, may have a more significant impact on student achievement, which differs from the non-significant findings of this study regarding degrees.

Core Behavioral Competence of Elementary Teachers

Table 4.1. *Extent of Core Behavioral Competence of Elementary Teachers in terms of Self-Management*

	Item	*Mean*	*Description*
1.	Sets personal goals and directions, needs, and development.	4.30	Often
2.	Undertakes personal actions and behavior that are clear and purposive and takes into account personal goals and values congruent to that of the organization.	4.30	Often
3.	Prioritizes work tasks and schedules (through Gantt charts, checklists, etc.) to achieve goals	4.25	Often
4.	Displays emotional maturity and enthusiasm for and is challenged by higher goals	4.23	Often
5.	Sets high-quality, challenging, realistic goals for self and others	4.03	Often
	Category Mean	4.22	Often

Table 4.1 presents the core behavioral competence of elementary teachers regarding self-management, with an overall mean of 4.22, indicating "often" and signifying highly observable behavioral competence. Teachers frequently set personal goals and directions (mean 4.30) and engage in purposeful, transparent activities aligned with institutional objectives (mean 4.30). They also display emotional maturity and enthusiasm for challenging goals (mean 4.23) and set high-quality, realistic goals for themselves and others (mean 4.03). This suggests that elementary teachers effectively self-actualize.

This self-management aligns with Jones et al. (1980), as cited by Boachie-Mensah and Seidu (2014), who suggest that self-management enhances behavior maintenance by aligning actions with natural contingencies. The environment where teachers can assess and be assessed by colleagues fosters personal and professional growth, enabling them to effectively manage themselves.

Table 4.2. *Extent of Core Behavioral Competence of Elementary Teachers in terms of Professionalism and Ethics*

	Item	*Mean*	*Description*
1.	Demonstrates the values and behavior enshrined in the Norms and Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees (RA 6713)	4.40	Often
2.	Acts with a sense of urgency and responsibility to meet the organization's needs, improve the system and help others improve their effectiveness.	4.40	Often
3.	Practices ethical and professional behavior and conduct considering the impact of his/her actions and decisions.	4.43	Often
4.	Maintains a professional image: being trustworthy, regularity of attendance and punctuality, good grooming, and communication	4.38	Often
5.	Makes personal sacrifices to meet the organization's needs	4.25	Often
	Category Mean	4.22	Often

Table 4.2 indicates that elementary teachers frequently demonstrate core behavioral competence in professionalism and ethics, with an overall mean of 4.37, signifying highly observable behavioral competence. Teachers consistently practice ethical and professional behavior, considering the impact of their actions (mean 4.43), and demonstrate values aligned with the Norms and Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees (RA 6713) (mean 4.40). They also often make personal sacrifices to meet organizational needs (mean 4.25).

This high adherence to ethical standards reflects the teachers' professional conduct. According to the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE 2001) and Bridges (Ben-Peretz, 2001), teachers should possess specific professional characteristics and act ethically, based on a code of behavior. The results of this study confirm that elementary teachers maintain a high level of ethical standards, showcasing their professionalism in the workplace.

Table 4.3. *Extent of Core Behavioral Competence of Elementary Teachers in terms of Results Focus*

	Item	*Mean*	*Description*
1.	Expresses a desire to do better and may express frustration at waste or inefficiency. May focus on new or more precise ways of meeting goals set	4.13	Often
2.	Achieves results with optimal use of time and resources most of the time.	4.10	Often
3.	Makes specific changes in the system or in own work methods to improve performance. Examples may include doing something better, faster, at a lower cost, more efficiently, or improving quality, customer satisfaction, and morale, without setting any specific.	4.10	Often
4.	Avoids rework, mistakes, and wastage through effective work methods by placing organizational needs before personal needs.	3.88	Often
5.	Delivers error-free outputs most of the time by conforming to standard operating procedures correctly and consistently. Able to produce very satisfactory quality work in terms of usefulness/acceptability and completeness with no supervision required	3.88	Often
	Category Mean	4.02	Often

Table 4.3 reveals that elementary teachers frequently demonstrate core behavioral competence in results focus, with an overall mean of 4.02, indicating highly observable behavioral competence. Teachers often express a desire for improvement and focus on efficient goal attainment (mean 4.13), achieve results with optimal resource use (mean 4.10), and implement changes to enhance performance (mean 4.10). They also frequently strive to avoid errors and waste by prioritizing organizational needs (mean 3.88) and consistently delivering satisfactory, error-free outputs (mean 3.88).

This focus on results aligns with Bazohoori's (2021) suggestion that a results-focused learning environment is characterized by trusting individuals to ensure successful educational outcomes through appropriate outputs and competency achievement. By demonstrating this focus, elementary teachers provide contextualized solutions to learners' educational needs, fostering the development of capable students in the long term.

Table 4.4 presents the core behavioral competence of elementary teachers in teamwork, with an overall mean of 4.32, indicating "often" and signifying highly observable behavioral competence. Teachers consistently fulfill their responsibilities (mean 4.55) and promote collaboration by removing barriers to teamwork (mean 4.38). They also frequently apply negotiation principles to achieve win-win agreements (mean 4.10).

Table 4.4. *Extent of Core Behavioral Competence of Elementary Teachers in terms of Teamwork*

	Item	*Mean*	*Description*
1.	Willingly does his/her share of responsibility	4.55	Always
2.	Promotes collaboration and removes barriers to teamwork and goal accomplishment across the organization.	4.38	Often
3.	Works constructively and collaboratively with others and across organizations to accomplish organizational goals and objectives.	4.33	Often
4.	Drives consensus and team ownership of decisions	4.25	Often
5.	Applies negotiation principles in arriving at win-win agreements	4.10	Often
	Category Mean	4.32	Often

This demonstrates that elementary teachers frequently exhibit teamwork in their workplace. As Bazohoori (2021) suggests, knowledge management, crucial in the competitive academic landscape, relies heavily on teamwork. By consistently demonstrating teamwork in lesson delivery, teachers cultivate a learning-focused community and foster camaraderie among stakeholders.

Table 4.5. *Extent of Core Behavioral Competence of Elementary Teachers in terms of Service Orientation*

	Item	*Mean*	*Description*
1.	Participates in updating office vision, mission, mandates, and strategies based on DepEd strategies and directions	4.18	Often
2.	Develops and adopt a service improvement plan through simplified procedures that will further enhance service delivery	4.08	Often
3.	Takes personal responsibility for dealing with and/or correcting customer service issues and concerns	4.05	Often
4.	Initiates activities that promote advocacy for men and women empowerment	4.00	Often
5.	Can explain and articulate organizational directions, issues, and problems	3.98	Often
	Category Mean	4.06	Often

Table 4.5 indicates that elementary teachers frequently demonstrate core behavioral competence in service orientation, with an overall mean of 4.06, signifying highly observable behavioral competence. Teachers often participate in updating office strategies based on DepEd directives (mean 4.18) and develop service improvement plans (mean 4.08). They also frequently articulate organizational directions and issues (mean 3.98).

This suggests that schools should build upon existing educational continuity plans to create recovery plans, as suggested by Cahapay (2021). These plans should include strategies for managing new challenges, ensuring teachers maintain service orientation in the "next new normal." Implementing such plans will foster confidence and clarity among educators, learners, parents, and stakeholders, as they navigate evolving educational pressures.

Table 4.6. *Extent of Core Behavioral Competence of Elementary Teachers in terms of Innovation*

	Item	*Mean*	*Description*
1.	Promotes a creative climate and inspires co-workers to develop original ideas or solutions.	4.13	Often
2.	Examines the root cause of problems and suggest effective solutions. Foster new ideas and processes and suggests better ways to do things (cost and/or operational efficiency)	4.08	Often
3.	Translates creative thinking into tangible changes and solutions that improve the work unit and organization	4.03	Often
4.	Demonstrates an ability to think “beyond the box.” Continuously focuses on improving personal productivity to create higher value and results.	3.98	Often
5.	Uses ingenious methods to accomplish responsibilities. Demonstrates resourcefulness and the ability to succeed with minimal resources	3.95	Often
	Category Mean	4.03	Often

Table 4.6 indicates that elementary teachers frequently demonstrate core behavioral competence in innovation, with an overall mean of 4.03, signifying highly observable behavioral competence. Teachers often promote a creative climate and inspire original ideas (mean 4.13), examine problems and suggest solutions (mean 4.08), and use ingenious methods with resourcefulness (mean 3.95).

This highlights the importance of student-centered education as an innovation, considering each student's perspective and development (Slabbert, 1994, cited by Franco-Santos & Otley, 2018). Elementary teachers utilize this approach, focusing on training students in problem-solving strategies, demonstrating their innovative practices.

Table 4.7 summarizes the core behavioral competence of elementary teachers, with professionalism and ethics (mean 4.37), teamwork (mean 4.32), and self-management (mean 4.22) receiving the highest mean scores. Results focus (mean 4.02), innovation (mean 4.03), and service orientation (mean 4.06) received lower, but still positive, means.

The overall mean of 4.17 indicates that teachers frequently demonstrate highly observable behavioral competence, suggesting they possess the necessary competencies to adapt to the "new normal."

Table 4.7. *Summary Table on the Extent of Core Behavioral Competence of Elementary Teachers*

	Indicators	*Mean*	*Description*
1.	Professionalism and Ethics	4.37	Often
2.	Teamwork	4.32	Often
3.	Self-management	4.22	Often
4.	Service Orientation	4.06	Often
5.	Innovation	4.03	Often
6.	Results-focused	4.02	Often
	Over-All Mean	4.17	Often

This high level of behavioral competence aligns with research indicating that general teacher competencies should encompass expertise in subject matter, research, curriculum, lifelong learning, socio-cultural, emotional, communication, ICT, and environmental aspects (Kloot & Martin, 2015). The study's results suggest that elementary teachers exhibit well-developed core behavioral competencies, demonstrating holistic performance in their teaching practices both within and beyond the classroom.

Core Behavioral Competence and Demographic Profile of Teachers

Table 5.1. *Significant Difference on the Extent of Core Behavioral Competence of Elementary Teachers When Grouped According to Age*

Category	*Mean*	*F-value*	*p-value*	*Remarks*
Above 55 years old	3.71	1.090	0.393	No Significant Difference
51 – 55 years old	4.36			
46 – 50 years old	3.96			
41 – 45 years old	4.19			
36 – 40 years old	4.53			
31 – 35 years old	4.20			
25 – 30 years old	4.05			
Below 25 years old				

Table 5.1 shows the core behavioral competence of elementary teachers, categorized by age. Teachers aged 36-40 (mean 4.53) and 31-35 (mean 4.20) exhibited the highest mean scores, while those above 55 years old showed the lowest (mean 3.71). However, statistical analysis revealed no significant difference in core behavioral competence based on age, with an F-value of 1.090 and a p-value of 0.393, exceeding the 0.05 significance level. This indicates that age does not significantly influence teachers' core behavioral competence.

Despite the statistical finding, literature suggests that teacher effectiveness significantly increases after the initial years of teaching, and many teachers gain substantial experience before leaving the profession (Kloot & Martin, 2015). This could imply that age-related factors might influence core behavioral competencies, as older teachers might find it challenging to maintain the same energy levels as younger colleagues, potentially leading to a gradual retreat in their remaining years of service.

Tab le 5.2. Significant Difference on the Extent of Core Behavioral *Competence of Elementary Teachers When Grouped According to Sex*

Category	*Mean*	*F-value*	*p-value*	*Remarks*
Male	4.34	0.567	0.628	No Significant Difference
Female	4.15			

Table 5.2 presents the core behavioral competence of elementary teachers, categorized by sex, with male teachers showing a higher mean score of 4.34 compared to female teachers' 4.15. However, statistical analysis revealed no significant difference in core behavioral competence between male and female teachers, as indicated by an F-value of 0.567 and a p-value of 0.628, which exceeds the 0.05 significance level.

This finding contrasts with Abaas and Alrubaye's (2023) study, which found statistically significant differences between males and females in natural intelligence, favoring males. The current study might have considered factors that nullified the significance of sex in relation to core behavioral competence. Despite differences in natural intellectual capacity, this study concluded that in this specific context, sex does not significantly impact core behavioral competence.

Table 5.3 reveals variations in core behavioral competence among elementary teachers based on plantilla position, with Master Teacher I exhibiting the highest mean (4.73) and Master Teacher II the lowest (3.77). Teacher III also showed a relatively high mean of 4.3. However, statistical analysis indicated no significant difference in core behavioral competence across plantilla positions, with an F-value of 2.186 and a p-value of 0.091, exceeding the 0.05 threshold. This suggests that higher positions do not correlate with significant deviations in core behavior competence.

Table 5.3. *Significant Difference on the Extent of Core Behavioral Competence of Elementary Teachers When Grouped According to Plantilla Position*

Category	*Mean*	*F-value*	*p-value*	*Remarks*
Master Teacher I	4.73	2.186	0.091	No Significant Difference
Teacher III	4.31			
Teacher I	4.07			
Teacher II	4.05			
Master Teacher II	3.77			

Despite the established link between higher rankings and satisfaction as highlighted by Sala and Comighud (2020), this study found no consequential impact on core behavior. Specifically, the study of educator inspiration within the Bacong District, which identified a predominantly female, experienced Teacher 2 demographic, did not reveal any corresponding shift in satisfaction levels. This implies that while plantilla position may influence perceived competence, it does not significantly alter core behavioral performance.

Table 5.4. *Significant Difference on the Extent of Core Behavioral Competence of Elementary Teachers When Grouped According to Highest Degree Obtained*

Category	*Mean*	*F-value*	*p-value*	*Remarks*
Doctorate Degree	4.47	1.690	0.198	No Significant Difference
Master's Degree	4.34			
Bachelor's Degree	4.09			

Table 5.4 demonstrates the core behavioral competence of elementary teachers categorized by their highest degree. Teachers with doctoral degrees exhibited a mean of 4.47, master's degrees 4.34, and bachelor's degrees 4.09. However, statistical analysis revealed no significant difference in core behavioral competence based on the highest degree obtained, with an F-value of 1.690 and a p-value of 0.198, exceeding the 0.05 significance level. This indicates that, similar to plantilla position, educational attainment does not significantly influence the core behavior of elementary teachers.

The study by Abaas and Alrubaye (2023) examined the impact of teacher licensure standards on student achievement, finding a statistically significant positive effect of conventionally certified teachers on student math scores compared to those with private school credentials or no certification in their field. While this research highlights the influence of qualifications on content competency and knowledge, it does not demonstrate a corresponding impact on the core behavioral aspects of elementary teachers.

Learning and Development Plan

The final stage of this study aimed the development of a learning and development plan designed to address the statistical findings and prepare teachers for the "next normal" educational environment. The overall results indicated that teachers generally demonstrate high levels of both functional and core-behavioral competence. However, the research identified areas where further enhancement was needed to ensure teachers' readiness for the evolving educational landscape.

The learning and development plan, derived from the study's results, aimed to provide impactful activities and recommendations to strengthen teacher competence. Presented in a tabular format, the plan outlined goals/objectives, activities, resources, involved personnel, key performance indicators (KPIs), and assumptions. Goals/objectives defined measurable outcomes, activities detailed the instructional processes, resources listed necessary assets, personnel identified responsible parties, KPIs provided progress benchmarks, and assumptions projected expected results.

The plan's structure included distinct sections for functional and core behavioral competence. The "Resources" section detailed the necessary financial, material, personnel, and other assets required for plan execution. The "Persons Involved" section specified the individuals responsible for and participating in the plan's implementation. The "Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)" provided targets, milestones, and insights to guide decision-making during implementation. Finally, "Assumptions" outlined the anticipated outcomes following plan implementation.

The plan's key features included its results-based foundation, addressing the identified competency gaps. The specific, step-by-step format facilitated understanding and implementation. The functional competence plan focused on reinforcing knowledge of essential curriculum and official guidelines for structuring learning environments and implementing appropriate strategies for the new normal. The core behavioral competence plan aimed to enhance personal and professional workmanship through individual introspection and collaborative learning, fostering organizational contributions.

This learning and development plan aimed to elevate teacher competence from highly observable to extremely high observable, thereby empowering them to excel in the context of the new normal education. The plan's design and content were specifically tailored to bridge the identified gaps and ensure teachers are well-equipped to meet the challenges of the evolving educational landscape.

Conclusions

This study of elementary teachers revealed a distinct demographic profile characterized by a significant presence of older female

educators, predominantly holding Teacher I positions and bachelor's degrees. This demographic distribution underscores the critical need for tailored support systems and resources. Recognizing the diverse requirements arising from variations in age, gender, career stage, and educational attainment is essential, particularly considering the unique experiences these teachers navigated during the pandemic. These shared yet individual journeys likely shaped their current competencies, emphasizing the importance of professional development that acknowledges this collective history.

The findings indicate that teachers at Pedro Acharon Sr. Central Elementary School consistently exhibit strong functional competencies across crucial areas: content knowledge pedagogy, learning environment management, addressing learning diversity, assessment and reporting, and community linkages. This robust foundation in essential teaching practices likely reflects the positive impact of prior training initiatives in preparing educators for the initial demands of the "new normal." To further elevate these competencies in the context of their pandemic experiences and evolving educational needs, a targeted learning and development plan is vital. This plan should strategically address the identified competencies through focused workshops on innovative post-pandemic pedagogical approaches, collaborative mentorship programs facilitating the sharing of effective remote learning practices, and resource development initiatives that cater to the diverse learning needs identified during school closures.

The study found no significant correlation between teachers' demographic profiles and their functional competence, suggesting a generally consistent proficiency in key teaching areas, potentially due to the impact of standardized training programs. Similarly, core behavioral competencies—including self-management, professionalism and ethics, results focus, teamwork, service orientation, and innovation—are also consistently demonstrated and not significantly influenced by demographics. This highlights the teachers' adaptability and commitment, likely strengthened by the unprecedented challenges of the pandemic. The proposed learning and development plan aims to build upon these existing strengths, offering opportunities for teachers to progress from "highly observable" to an "extremely high observable" level in both functional and core behavioral competencies. This will involve advanced pedagogical training, leadership development to enhance self-management and results focus, team-building activities, ethical leadership workshops, and innovation grants.

Based on the study's conclusions, several recommendations are proposed to enhance teacher readiness. The Department of Education should implement targeted professional development programs to address identified gaps in areas such as content knowledge pedagogy and community linkages, where some elementary teachers may exhibit lower levels of functional competence. HR administrators, collaborating closely with educational institutions, should refine recruitment and selection processes to prioritize candidates demonstrating strong functional competencies, encompassing areas like learning environment management and assessment practices, alongside well-developed core behavioral competencies. Beyond initial hiring, they should invest in comprehensive and ongoing training and support programs that empower teachers to continually develop and refine their skills in both domains. School administrators are encouraged to cultivate a deeply collaborative and supportive environment that actively encourages teachers to share best practices through regular meetings, peer observation initiatives, and collaborative curriculum development. Additionally, they should prioritize the implementation of clear policies and proactive initiatives that explicitly promote self-management skills, uphold high standards of professionalism and ethical conduct, and strengthen teamwork among staff. Teachers are encouraged to proactively leverage the professional development opportunities offered by their institutions to specifically enhance their functional competencies, such as refining their assessment techniques and deepening their understanding of diverse learning needs. Parents and guardians should actively engage with their children's schools to gain a clear understanding of the specific initiatives being implemented to bolster teacher readiness for the evolving educational environment. Future researchers should build upon this study by conducting further research to validate the utility of self-assessment instruments across diverse educational contexts and demographic groups. Collaborative research endeavors are encouraged to identify and disseminate best practices and innovative approaches for effectively supporting teacher readiness and ultimately improving educational outcomes. Future researchers should explore the critical role of technology integration and digital literacy in bolstering teacher preparedness and effectiveness in remote and hybrid learning environments, ensuring that educators develop the essential skills and have access to the necessary resources to thrive in a rapidly evolving educational landscape.

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