

# Competencies and Challenges in Teaching Music

Mitchel Joy A. Roa<sup>a</sup>, Rochelle A. Luzano<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>mitcheljoy.roa@deped.gov.ph, <sup>b</sup>rochelle.luzano@deped.gov.ph  
Southern de Oro Philippines College – Graduate School, Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines

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## Abstract

It is generally agreed upon that teachers must possess certain competences in order to provide students with instruction of the highest caliber and encourage meaningful learning. Despite the fact that many studies have been done on competences in various fields, few studies have been done specifically on teachers' competencies in music education. This study looked at the various degrees of expertise held by elementary school music teachers (n=153). A quantitative research design was employed. The instrument utilized was researcher-made – validity and reliability were established. Based on the findings, teachers were generally competent in teaching Music though most of them have no units in Music in their bachelor's degree and with less opportunity to attend training related to Music. Teaching Music was quite challenging. However, curriculum, instructional materials, and physical facilities were more challenging than teaching strategies when teaching Music. Teachers' Music competence and challenges in teaching Music were significantly correlated. Teachers' ability to handle Music teaching process is associated to the challenge they encounter. Therefore, this study recommends training programs for teachers be designed based on Music competencies and challenges in teaching.

**Keywords:** competencies, challenges, elementary teachers, teaching Music

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## 1. Introduction

One of the noblest professions is teaching because it involves knowledge and skill to impact the students. Every educator aspires to achieve global competitiveness in their specialization. Indeed, every teacher has a field of expertise that needs to be developed and practiced to meet their subjects' expected skills and competencies. Without skill-based subjects, a child is limited from learning anything and learning about other skills, which makes skill-based subjects crucial. It serves as a backbone and framework of any education. Moreover, when it comes to ensuring that pupils are fully developed, especially in schools, teachers' competency in delivering the teaching-learning process is paramount. Competent teachers impact students' academic growth and skills and aid in teachers' efforts to enhance their delivery methods. One of the skills a pupil needs to acquire is musical proficiency. However, teachers need also to be competent in teaching their specialization.

The study aimed to identify the musical proficiency and difficulties of instructors who primarily teach music in elementary school, where the official introduction of the fundamental components of music begins. Certainly, every learner must comprehend the fundamental ideas while performing, listening, and creating while honing their musical awareness and appreciation skills. There are three phases of standards to consider when teaching Music. These are the lower primary level (Kindergarten to Grade 3), upper primary level (Grades 4 to Grade 6), the Junior High School (Grades 7 to 10). Most of the Music theory and fundamentals are taught in the early grades (Jacinto, 2019). Hence, it is important to investigate these grade levels.

However, according to Manila (2020), among the four components of the subject MAPEH, Music is the least taught by elementary teachers even though it has been given more classroom time with a 40-minute allocation starting from Grade 1 to Grade 6. In his study, he stated that as a subject, Music might

appeal to be one of the most challenging subjects to teach by a generalist teacher who does not have the expertise or any background in Music. His findings further imply that respondents have a low level of mastery of the contents of Music. Most of them articulated openly that they hardly understood most of the contents of Music, specifically lessons on Music theory. In a study conducted by Atilano (2018), she identified reasons why teachers were hesitant to teach Music subject. The following were they lack the competencies to teach Music and knowledge to conduct assessments in Music. She further states, based on the results of her study, that these teachers find difficulty, particularly in teaching reading notations. As a result, most of them dislike teaching Music, and they tend not to teach music simply because they are not specialized in teaching Music.

As a result, the circumstance was never unexpected. According to certain studies, non-specialist music educators have trouble integrating music into their curricula (Julia et al., 2020). In public elementary schools, a teacher's musical knowledge and skill are an issue, and most of them are not qualified as Music teachers (Villanueva, 2019). And it is not only elementary teachers who find it difficult to teach. According to the study of Pestaño and Ibarra (2021), even teachers in Junior High School generally encounter challenges and struggles in teaching one of MAPEH's parts – Music. They stipulated that MAPEH teachers' pedagogical competencies might be affected when one has acquired inadequate musical skills and knowledge to teach a specific musical concept. Moreover, teachers' mastery of music competencies somehow affects their performance in executing the lesson inside the classroom. A teacher's capacity to foster a setting that is fair, understanding, and welcoming of many pupils, ideas, experiences, and backgrounds is improved by good performance. As cited by Garcia (2019) believes that the success and the failure of a nation depend on the quality of education that the youth receive. Teachers' performance or competence has a lot of influence on the learner because the teacher's mastery of the subject matter is a prerequisite for effective and substantial teaching.

Comparatively speaking, teachers who are new to teaching Music subject, especially in primary grades from different schools in West II District of Cagayan de Oro City Division, have the same sentiments and feedback, which is quite alarming. Henceforth, it prompted the researcher to conduct the study, which is very much concerned with the mastery of Music Competencies and somehow could affect their performance in teaching. The researcher believes that the instruction of Music could be better improved if the actual scenario is revealed in such a way that the people involved in the improvement of the program will work together towards the same goals. Because of these reasons, the researcher decided to conduct a study about Teachers' Competencies and Challenges in Teaching Music among Public Elementary Schools in West II District, Division of Cagayan de Oro City. The finding of the study serves for better planning for the administrator and uplifts teachers in teaching Music with more confidence and competence and might improve future achievement test results as well. As musical awareness grows, teachers must instruct pupils to rediscover the parts of the music in a more complex way.

## 2. Methodology

To determine the teacher's level of Music competence and level of challenges, this study adopted a quantitative research design. Hence, it employed descriptive methods in describing and interpreting the conditions and testing the hypothesis. In quantitative research, the objective is to determine the relationship between an independent variable and a dependent or outcome variable in a population. Moreover, the study employed a quantitative method in the analysis of the data gathered. This was deemed appropriate for this study because this intends to investigate the teacher's level of music competence and level of challenges, specifically on the public elementary teachers of West II District in Cagayan de Oro City Division. The study also employed hypotheses testing. It is a required analysis of data to see if there is a correlation between the teacher's level of music competence and the level of challenges. A test of significant difference in the challenges of teaching Music if respondents are grouped according to their demographic profile was also employed.

The respondents of the study were the public elementary school teachers from West II Districts of

the Division of Cagayan de Oro for the School Year 2022-2023. This is composed of a total of the one hundred fifty-three (153) teachers from elementary schools. The teacher respondents from each school representative answered the questionnaire during the conduct of the study. They are selected through an online sample size calculator, Raosoft Application and Stratified Random Sampling.

The instrument utilized in this study was a researcher-made questionnaire that obtained the necessary data from the respondents. There are three parts to the questionnaires in the study. Part I of the research instrument consisted of the items which gathered respondents' profiles such as their name, sex, civil status, education, teaching position, length of service, and training attended. Part II of the questionnaire dealt with the teacher's level of competencies, such as cognitive competence, affective competence, psychomotor competence, pedagogical competence, and professional competence. Part III of the questionnaire determined the level of challenges in teaching music in terms of curriculum, instructional materials, teaching strategies, and physical facilities. This research instrument used the Likert Scale as the basis for measuring the respondent's responses in Part I and Part II. The researcher provided a five-point scale that allows the respondents to express the level of competence they have with the statements in Part II and how much they agree or disagree with the statements in Part III, with a range from 1.00 to 5.00.

The following statistical treatments were employed for the analysis and interpretation of data, wherein these treatments were used to summarize the teacher's Competence and Challenges in teaching Music. The Frequency and Percentage were used to determine the demographic profile variables of the respondents using the formula. The Mean and Standard Deviation were the formulas used to analyze responses gathered from respondents regarding their level of competence and challenges. While the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to answer Problem 4. Pearson R Moment Correlation was used in research Problem 5.

### 3. Results and Discussion

Table 1 shows students' interpersonal relationships. It has an overall Mean of 3.40 with SD=0.48 which is described as Always and interpreted as Very High. It means that students have a very high level of interpersonal relationships in school by observing good manners and right conduct. They want to maintain healthy relationships with all school personnel and the ideals of the schools that shape and mold them into mature and holistic individuals. Erdoğan (2016) states that school engagement means students' relations with their schools, school personnel, and the ideals that are aimed to be achieved. It implies that students have developed a strong bond through constant communication and interaction with their families, peers, teachers, and communities by observing values, norms, and moral standards in school. They even use social media to interact and communicate. In fact, Abdelraheem (2016) argues that social networking sites have altered how people communicate today. Before, the means of interaction were through exchanging photos, conversing about shared interests, and enhancing conventional social interactions. Now, they use Facebook, Instagram, and Messenger applications.

Table 1 on the next page presents the frequency and percentage distribution of the respondent's Demographic Profile. In terms of Sex, the result shows that most of the respondents are Female, with 141 of them or 92.2 %. This means that female teachers dominated the teaching force of the three big schools of West II District, specifically Bulua Central School, Iponan Elementary School, and Pedro "OLOY" N. Roa Sr. Elementary School. The study conducted by Pestaño and Ibarra (2021) also revealed that female teachers are the ones predominating in teaching Music. This implies that women tend to show a higher desire to work with children, especially young ones. Also, more women are pursuing education courses rather than men, which only means more women have a higher chance of being accepted into the education sector due to its large number.

**Table 1**  
**Respondents' Profile**

Variable	Categorization	<i>f</i>	%
Sex	Male	12	7.8
	Female	141	92.2
	Total	153	100.0
Civil Status	Married	88	57.5
	Single	54	35.3
	Separated	3	2.0
	Widow	8	5.2
	Total	153	100.0
Educational Attainment	Bachelor's degree with Units in Music	40	26.1
	Bachelor's degree without Units in Music	67	43.8
	Master's Degree with Units in Music	13	8.5
	Master's Degree without Units in Music	33	21.6
	Total	153	100.0
Teaching Position	Teacher 1	93	60.8
	Teacher 2	14	9.2
	Teacher 3	35	22.9
	Master Teacher 1	6	3.9
	Master Teacher 2	3	2.0
	Master Teacher 3	0	0.0
	Others	2	1.3
	Total	153	100.0
Length of Service	0-3 years	16	10.5
	4-6 years	25	16.3
	7-9 years	21	13.7
	10-12 years	24	15.7
	13-15 years	17	11.1
	16 years above	50	32.7
	Total	153	100.0
Trainings Attended	None	80	52.3
	1-3 Seminars/Trainings	53	34.6
	4-6 Seminars/Trainings	11	7.2
	7-10 Seminars/Trainings	2	1.3
	More than 10 Seminars/Trainings	7	4.6
	Total	153	100.0

On the other hand, there were 12 or 7.8 % of males. It means that the percentage of male teachers is at its lowest number. Over many years, fewer males have chosen elementary teaching as a career. According to Manske (2021) of Marian University Wisconsin, the teaching profession is expected to grow 4% or more in

the next decade at all teaching levels. As such, there are many opportunities for men in education. However, recent data shows that while there is ample opportunity for male teachers, there's still a shortage in supply. It only implies that men are less interested in teaching, especially in primary education. This could be because the numerical predominance of women in education professions, especially those designed for the youngest children, is usually explained as an effect of the conviction that teaching should be regarded as an extension of adults' work with their children, which is still performed more often by women than men. This idea was supported by the study of McGrath and Van Bergen (2017), which findings indicate a strong decline in male representation in both primary and secondary schools.

As to the Civil Status of the respondents, the study found that out of 153 teachers, 88 or 57.5 % were Married. It was the highest frequency distribution. According to the study by Mocheche et al. (2018) among teachers, the married formed most of their participants as well. In addition, they also support that married teachers had higher job satisfaction in teaching compared to single, separated, and widowed. It further implies that most married elementary teachers can handle the Music subject well.

On the previous table shows that there were 3 or 2.0% answered Separated and the lowest in the distribution. This means that teachers are separated when spouses in a marriage stop living together without getting separated. Teachers are also human beings; they are not exempt from life's misfortune. But it does not mean that a teacher from a broken home cannot perform to their maximum and cannot healthily develop their pupils' academic potential to the fullest due to the fact that they are separated.

Looking at the respondents' Education, the majority have bachelor's degrees without units in Music, with 67 or 43.85%. This only means that teachers are being hired because of the necessity regardless of the specialization of the teacher. Moreover, teaching Music in elementary schools does not require a Music specialist. Results further imply that most respondents do not have background knowledge of the basics of Music since they do not have any units back in college. The Department of Education already addressed this issue through memorandum Number 128, series of 2006, which confirmed that a large part of the total population of Filipino Music teachers does not have basic or necessary Music skills and competencies. The research of Obeng et al. (2018), which found that the majority of elementary school instructors hold degrees in fields other than music, also supports this finding. This only implies that teachers' educational background in Music could be a great help in delivering the lesson in the class.

On the other hand, Table 1 in the previous page, shows the lowest distribution belongs to master's degrees, with Units in Music at 13 or 8.5%. It simply indicates that fewer teachers who majored in music are interested in earning a master's degree in music. It's because, in comparison to other courses, higher education only offers a small number of courses relating to music instruction. According to Labrador (2016), there is a lack of mastery among music graduates in higher education, as well as among education graduates (MAPEH graduates). It further implies that the discontinuation of musical skills of the teachers may affect their performance in teaching the subject effectively.

In particular, the same table, as to the Length of Service, the highest distribution of the respondents belongs to the bracket of 16 years and above with 50 or 32.7%. This means that teachers with the most years of teaching experience handle and teach Music in elementary. This is contrary to the study of Daga (2021), where most teachers teaching music are the younger ones or new to the teaching service. Accordingly, data showed that most of the respondents who are teaching the subject have been in the teaching service between 0-5 years. However, assigning a teacher to handle Music subject in elementary usually depends on the teachers' availability regardless of their teaching experience. It only implies that seasoned teachers were confident in teaching Music.

In the same table, the lowest distribution was from 0-3 years, that has 16 or 10.5 %. This means that teachers belonging to these groups were new to the service. Most likely, they were the newly hired ones. Newly hired teachers are people who have just got employed in schools. According to the Department of Education (DepEd) in the Philippines, a newly hired teacher is specifically a teacher with zero (0) to three (3) years of experience in the public school system and is further classified as a beginner teacher. It further

implies that, as of the moment, fewer teachers have been hired in the division of Cagayan de Oro for the last 3 years due to the pandemic and election ban.

In terms of Teaching Position, the result shows that the highest distribution of the respondents was Teacher I, with 93 or 60.8%. This means that in teaching Music in elementary, a teacher does not need to be in a higher position. We can see from the result that Teacher I position dominated in teaching Music subject. However, when it comes to teaching positions, the Magna Carta for Public School teachers states that they shall be properly graded to recognize that certain positions require higher qualifications and greater responsibility than others. Therefore, it is either teacher who did not seek higher qualification to get a higher position or teachers' promotion to the higher position was still very few due to a lack of budget. Therefore, it only implies that Teacher I position is expected to outnumber the other higher positions in the Division.

On the other hand, Table 1 shows the respondents were Substitute Teachers, with 2 or 1.3%. This means that opportunities for being hired as substitute teachers seldom happen. Being hired as a substitute teacher is the most rewarding part as a teacher. It could be the next step closer to being hired. However, there were studies like that of Armstrong (2020) where she stated that there was a shortage of substitute teachers in the reopening of classes during the pandemic time. The study by Armstrong contradicts the result of this study. It only implies that DepEd does not need to hire more substitute teachers, and it is still depending on the necessity.

In the same table, the highest distribution of the respondents had not attended a seminar or training related to Music, with 80 or 52%. This means that most of the respondents are teaching music without proper training and even no seminars. Manila (2020) indicated that pieces of training are an important factor in teachers' knowledge of the subject they are teaching. He added that teachers who attended more relevant training were more likely to have sufficient knowledge about the subject matter of Music than those who attended less or no training at all. It further implies that even though teachers were not equipped with the skills they needed to teach the subject, they were able to carry it out in the class because teachers were resourceful.

Further, Table 1 shows the lowest distribution of 7-10 seminars, with 2 or 1.3%. This means that a small number of teachers have the chance or opportunity to attend seminars related to music subject. When it comes to training or seminars in Music, studies show that Music has been given less priority compared to other learning areas such as English, Math, and Science. According to Obeng and Senyah (2018), one of the biggest challenges in teaching music is the lack of training offered by the institution.

**Table 2**

**Overall Teacher's Competence in Teaching Music**

Competence	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Cognitive Competence	2.97	0.93	Moderately High Competence
Affective Competence	3.43	0.97	High Competence
Psychomotor Competence	2.84	1.03	Moderately High Competence
Pedagogical Competence	3.18	1.03	Moderately High Competence
Professional Competence	2.91	1.03	Moderately High Competence
Overall	3.06	0.99	Moderately High Competence

**Note:** 4.21-5.00 Very High Competence, 3.41-4.20 High Competence, 2.61-3.40 Moderately High Competence, 1.81-2.60 Low Competence, 1.00-1.80 Very Low Competence

Table 2 demonstrates the Teacher's Competence in Teaching Music with an overall Mean of 3.06 with an SD=0.99, which is interpreted as Moderately High Competence. This means that in teaching Music to elementary students, the integration of cognitive, affective, psychomotor, pedagogical, and professional competence has room for improvement. Various factors contribute to their continuous growth. As cited by Davidova, 2019 a good foundation for Music education teachers can lead to professional competence in the future. This is consistent in the Skills Theory drawn by the study of Silvestre and Itaas (2020) stated that teachers' abilities, acquired skills, and knowledge were significant factors in effective teaching. Technical skills, which are acquired knowledge related to the field and learned skills, were essential factors for realistic



teaching. With a clear intention to teach MAPEH, especially Music, to learners, it would be a valuable tool for lifelong learning for students. This table also shows affective competence got the highest Mean of 3.43 with SD=0.97 and is interpreted as High Competence. This means that teachers are developed emotionally and socially. They can handle stressful situations and overcome challenges in teaching music with ease. In short they are confident in dealing with the subject emotionally. On the other hand, Psychomotor Competence got the lowest with a Mean of 2.84 with SD= 1.03, interpreted as Moderately High Competence. This means that teachers are struggling in teaching Music due to lack of expertise in playing Musical instruments. This can be explained due to the fact that they do not have background knowledge in playing Music instruments during college and lack of trainings within their years in service.

**Table 3**

Overall Level of Teachers' Challenges in Teaching Music

Challenges	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Curriculum	3.19	0.97	Moderately High Competence
Instructional Materials	2.97	1.04	High Competence
Teaching Strategies	3.66	0.94	Moderately High Competence
Physical Facilities	2.73	1.14	Moderately High Competence
Overall Mean	3.14	1.02	Moderately High Competence

**Note:** 4.21-5.00 No challenge at all, 3.41-4.20 Moderately challenging, 2.61-3.40 Challenging, 1.81-2.60 Very Challenging, 1.00-1.80 Extremely Challenging

In particular, Teaching Strategies got the highest among the Challenges with a Mean of 3.66, SD = 0.94, which is interpreted as Moderately High Competence. This means that teachers are very well equipped in terms of teaching strategies even if they are not specialized in teaching the subject. It is because of the fact that they are already seasoned teachers. They can use other resources and methods of teaching that can be applicable just to achieve the goal of teaching music.

However, Physical Facilities got the lowest Mean among the challenges, with a Mean of 2.73, which is described as Moderately High Competence. This means that teachers have no control over what is available or not inside the physical facilities of the school. It is the school administration that is responsible for providing these facilities, not the teacher. Although teachers can help in some way providing is not their priority.

**Table 4**

Test Difference on Teachers' Demographic Profile and Challenges

**Overall Challenges in Teaching Music**

Profile	f-value	p-value	Interpretation
Sex	1.18	0.28	Not Significant
Civil Status	0.53	0.66	Not Significant
Educational Attainment	2.05	0.11	Not Significant
Teaching Position	1.02	0.41	Not Significant
Length of Service	2.93	0.02*	Significant
Number of Trainings Attended	0.60	0.66	Not Significant

\*S = significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed), NS = not significant

Table 4 presents the data on difference of the Teachers' Demographic Profiles and Challenges. Generally, data in Table 1 shows that overall challenges significantly differ according to the length of service of the teacher (f-value=2.93, p-value=0.02). All the indicators are not significantly related to challenges encountered by teachers in teaching Music except for the length of service. It is important to note that teachers' length of service means more experience. Results also validate the study of Kini and Podolsky (2016) where teachers with less experience in teaching come with more challenges in the workplace. Moreover, the benefits of teaching experience will be best realized when teachers are carefully selected and well prepared at the point of entry into the teaching workforce, as well as intensively mentored and rigorously

evaluated prior to receiving tenure. It is important to note that teachers' length of service means more experience. Results also validate the study of Kini and Podolsky (2016), where teachers with less experience in teaching come with more challenges in the workplace. Moreover, the benefits of teaching experience will be best realized when teachers are carefully selected and well-prepared at the point of entry into the teaching workforce, as well as intensively mentored and rigorously evaluated prior to receiving tenure.

**Table 5***Respondents' Overall Music Competence and Challenges in Teaching Music*

	Correlations	Challenges	Interpretation
Competence	r-value	.737	Significant
	p-value	0.00**	

\*S = significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed), \*S = significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), NS = not significant

Table 5 reveals the relationship between Teacher's Competence and Challenges in Teaching Music. It can be gleaned that there is a significantly high correlation between teachers' competence on the challenges in teaching Music (r-value=0.737, p-value=0.000). This implies that the teacher's ability to deliver Music instruction is associated with the level of the challenges the teacher is experiencing. Hence, the lesser competence in teaching means that the teacher is experiencing considerable challenges in teaching Music. This result is supported by Semaka (2020), who developed the Westera Model associated with teachers' music appreciation based on Gordon's Music Learning Theory, for it primarily focuses on teaching competence and challenges faced by teachers in teaching Music. Teachers build up competencies and experience challenges associated with the different variables (profile) at different career stages (new in the service, seasoned teachers). It was discovered that new teachers felt less competent teaching music, although teachers' views of difficulties differed depending on their profile. The table also demonstrates the considerable correlation between each subfactor. As a result, research confirms that the problems a teacher must overcome are strongly related to their overall skill in teaching music.

#### 4. Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, relevant implications can be drawn.

1. First, it confirms that generally, female teachers dominate the field of teaching. Teacher, I is supported by a greater number of plantilla item in Teacher I compared to higher teaching positions. Nevertheless, teachers are provided with less opportunity to attend training related to teaching music.

2. Teachers are generally competent in teaching the topic even though the majority of them lack training or units in music. Particularly, affective educators are capable of managing the social and emotional components of the learning process.

3. Challenges in teaching Music, overall, it is quite challenging. However, curriculum, instructional materials, and physical facilities are more challenging than teaching strategies when it comes to teaching Music.

4. The challenges of teachers in teaching Music, when grouped according to their profile, show that only the length of service is significant. The ability to handle challenges is learned over time. Hence, when faced with a challenge in teaching, a more experienced teacher can handle it well than those who have not yet experienced the situation.

5. Finally, teachers' music competence and challenges in teaching music are significantly correlated. It implies that the teacher's ability to handle Music teaching processes is associated with the challenges faced.

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Based on teachers' level of competencies, School Learning Action Cell (SLAC) for Music teachers will be designed based on the identified lowest competencies under Cognitive, Affective, Psychomotor, Pedagogical and Professional competence.

2. Conduct a narrative analysis of the experiences of teachers who have more than five years of



experience in teaching music. The results of the analysis shall be utilized to design a training program to address the teaching competencies and challenges.

3. Other factors that might affect the level of competencies and degree of challenges in teaching Music can be explored. This is to understand the varied interrelationships, causes, and effects of factors resulting in a teacher's competence in teaching.

4. To address the challenges in delivering Music instruction, designing a program for conducting comprehensive music training could be one of the suggested solutions to the problem with follow-up through class observation and application of constructive criticism. Since music is being taught as a separate subject, teachers may practice Team Teaching. Teachers who have enough knowledge of music may mentor those who need technical assistance in teaching the subject.

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