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Abstract

One of the most commonly argued issues in education is the quality of teachers in the secondary level of basic education. And the problem that has caught many educators' attention is hiring teachers out of their field of specialization. This study aims to report findings from a phenomenological study designed to investigate the lived experiences of out-of-field teachers in MAPEH. In depth interviews were made to five participants who were purposively selected with range of experience in handling MAPEH as outside their field of expertise. Moreover, the interview transcripts were analyzed using phenomenological methodology. As a result, six emergent themes were identified: (1) Lack of Subject Knowledge, (2) Adaptation of the job, (3) Used of Varied Strategies, (4) Complexity of Teaching MAPEH, (5) Collaboration with Experts, (6) Insufficiency of teachers. On the other hand, out-of-field teacher employment provides advantages such as meeting the teacher shortages, decreasing unemployment and providing different perspectives on teaching. Despite these advantages, out-of-field teacher employment as a means of meeting the teacher shortages must be put to an end.

Keywords: Qualitative, employment, education, phenomenology, text mining, sentiments, out-of-field teachers, MAPEH, Philippines.

1. Introduction

The phenomenon of out-of-field teaching or teachers teaching subjects for which they have no or little training has long been a critical but relatively unrecognized problem in schools (Smith, Hillier & Erduran, 2024). It is a crucial issue because highly qualified teachers may in actuality become highly unqualified if they are assigned to teach subjects out of their expertise or specialization. The Philippines as a developing country faces different educational problems and one of these problems that educational makers face is the closing gap between teachers supply and demand, they feel that secondary schools lack well-qualified teachers.

In the 21st century, all professional teachers are expected to demonstrate expertise in their areas of specialization. However, in the country today the problem that has caught the attention of many educators is the unacceptably high rates of out of field teachers assigned in secondary schools (Caylo, 2015). There are several reasons why out-of-field teachers occurred in education. According to Ingersoll (2019) lack of agreement between teacher teaching qualification and a teachers' teaching assignment, teachers union, and the shortages of teachers at a particular field were factors that caused out-of-field teaching. In his study claimed that out-of-field teaching had been a problem in education but largely unrecognized, because there was no accurate information on the situation. Moreover, secondary teachers should have both formal education and teacher training in the subject that they taught.

Objectives of the Study

The problem of out-of-field teaching has become a major concern in the realm of educational policy in the country. Despite this attention, however, a great deal of misunderstanding surrounds the problem of out-of-field teaching, especially with regard to the questions of;

1. Why so many teachers are still teaching subjects out of their specialization.
2. What are their experiences as out-of-field teachers?
3. How the out-of-field teachers coped-up with such situation?

This study has a great interest of finding the lived experiences of these out-of-field teachers especially the MAPEH teachers and why they are still teaching the subjects out of their field of specialization.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This was primarily a phenomenological study based on individual in-depth interviews with teachers in Dep.Ed. who are handling or teaching the subject MAPEH outside their area of expertise. Langdridge (2017) defines phenomenology as a discipline that aims to focus on people's perceptions of the world in which they live in and what it means to them; a focus on people's lived experience. It further clarifies that phenomenology as a qualitative method focuses on human experience as a topic in its own right. It concerns with meaning and the way in which meaning arises in experience.

This study utilized the hermeneutic phenomenology which is concerned with understanding texts. In this study, the researcher allowed the participants to write their answers on a piece of paper to clarify the true meaning of their experiences. Moreover, in this approach the researcher aims to create rich and deep account of a phenomenon through intuition, while focusing on uncovering rather than accuracy, and amplification with avoidance of prior knowledge.

2.2 Research Locale

This study was conducted in selected secondary schools in Region VIII, Philippines, where out-of-field teaching in MAPEH is observed. The schools were chosen purposively due to the presence of teachers handling MAPEH subjects outside their area of specialization. These schools vary in terms of student population, available resources, and teacher assignments, providing a diverse context to explore the lived experiences of out-of-field teachers. The locale offers an authentic setting to examine how teachers cope with challenges related to insufficient subject knowledge, adaptation strategies, and collaboration with colleagues and experts, thereby reflecting the realities of the Philippine secondary education system.

2.3 Research Participants

Five participants were purposively selected with a variety of experiences in handling MAPEH as outside their field of expertise. The researcher chose them because they have actual experiences of said situation for more than five years and above already and have strong emotional reliability to share their stories. Also, they can express themselves and can share their experiences meaningfully and conscientiously.

2.4 Research Instrument

The primary instrument of this study was a semi-structured interview guide designed to capture the lived experiences of out-of-field MAPEH teachers. Questions focused on participants' challenges, coping strategies, teaching methods, and professional development experiences. Follow-up prompts were included to encourage participants to elaborate on specific experiences, ensuring depth and richness in responses. The interview guide was reviewed by experts to ensure clarity, relevance, and content validity.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

Data were collected through in-depth interviews with five purposively selected teachers handling MAPEH outside their specialization. Participants first wrote their reflections on teaching MAPEH, which were then discussed during one-on-one interviews. All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and later transcribed verbatim. Clarifications and follow-ups were conducted to ensure accurate representation of participants' experiences.

2.6 Data Analysis

Interview transcripts were analyzed using phenomenological methodology. Significant statements were extracted, grouped, and clustered into themes representing shared experiences. Redundant or irrelevant statements were removed, and central themes were interpreted in the context of participants' experiences. Direct quotations were included to support findings and maintain descriptive validity.

2.7 Ethical Considerations

Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and their participation was voluntary. They could withdraw at any time without consequences. Anonymity was ensured by using codes instead of real names, and all data were kept confidential. Consent forms were signed before interviews, and participants were assured that findings would be used solely for research purposes.

2.8 Trustworthiness

To ensure credibility, member checking was conducted where participants validated the themes derived from their responses. Peer review and expert validation were used to confirm accuracy and relevance of findings. Detailed documentation of the research process, triangulation of data, and the inclusion of direct quotations enhanced the study's reliability and transferability.

2.9 Reflexivity

The researcher's position as a MAPEH instructor influenced the study, allowing deeper understanding and insight into participants' experiences. Reflexive journal and continuous self-assessment were employed to acknowledge personal biases, ensuring that interpretations reflected participants' perspectives rather than the researcher's assumptions.

3. Results and Discussion

From the data analysis, six major themes with sub-themes emerged: (1) Lack of Subject Knowledge, (2) Adaptation of the Job, (3) Use of Varied Strategies, (4) Complexity of Teaching MAPEH, (5) Collaboration with Experts, (6) Insufficiency of teachers.

Theme 1. Lack of Subject Knowledge

Participants consistently expressed challenges in teaching MAPEH due to insufficient subject knowledge and lack of confidence, particularly in music and arts. One participant noted their inability to teach musical notes without assistance, highlighting a gap in technical knowledge (HM01-26). This aligns with Bugwak, (2021), who reported that out-of-field teachers often feel alienated due to the mismatch between their qualifications and teaching assignments, resulting in insufficient subject expertise. The findings underscore that limited knowledge can hinder effective instruction and impact teachers' confidence in delivering lessons.

Subtheme A. Insufficient Knowledge

Transcript # 77, line 91-94

And then, specially like us, like zero knowledge in music, even the notes we cannot teach it without the assistance of the musicians.

Subtheme B. Lack of Confidence in Teaching

Transcript # 144, line 44-51, informant HM01-26

I just seek for assistance from my other teacher. For example, I ask one of our teacher because she's also, as my batch mate she is a music major so I ask her assistance "Ate, how should I deliver this in my lesson? What is the proper way? or Could I invite you to make some demonstrations" or in dealing with the notes, on

how to read it on how to pronounce it, then that's it. That's the only thing that I know, how can I deliver the topic, lessons properly.

In summary, the theme of Lack of Subject Knowledge highlights that out-of-field teachers face significant challenges in delivering effective MAPEH instruction due to limited technical expertise and low confidence, particularly in music and arts. Participants relied heavily on colleagues for guidance and demonstrations, indicating a dependence on peer support to fill knowledge gaps (HM01-26). This finding reflects broader concerns in education, as noted by Rebolledo et.al.(2025), where out-of-field teaching can alienate educators and hinder the quality of instruction due to the misalignment between teachers' qualifications and their teaching assignments. Overall, insufficient subject knowledge not only affects teachers' confidence but may also compromise student learning outcomes, underscoring the need for targeted professional development and mentoring programs to support teachers in out-of-field assignments.

Theme 2. Adaptation of the Job

Out-of-field teachers coped by learning while teaching and through mentoring from experienced colleagues. Participants described gradual improvement through handling classes progressively and seeking guidance from experts (Transcripts #107, #77, #94). This reflects the concept of experiential learning, where teachers acquire skills through practice and reflection, as noted by Roland (2017), who emphasized that personal adaptation and mentorship help teachers manage subjects beyond their specialization. Adaptation, therefore, becomes a crucial strategy for mitigating challenges posed by out-of-field teaching.

Subtheme A. Learning while Teaching the Subject

Transcript # 107, line 28-32.

Learning while teaching, just like that...so when I learned, our head let me handled the first year and second year already because second year is only a continuation of the first year.

Subtheme B. Learning from Mentoring

Transcript # 107, line 79-84.

Like I said, during my first and second year in teaching, I find it so difficult but later on because of our mentors like some of our musicians here who are also music teachers, they teach us how to read notes and now I can already read notes.

Transcript # 77, line 30-34.

Through asking help with my co-teachers who are expert in teaching MAPEH and also instinct. Because I believe that you are not only a teacher, a classroom teacher, I mean you can teach any subject since a teacher should be a versatile person.

Transcript # 94, line 30-34.

The best thing that I am doing ma'am is actually asking questions from my colleagues here in music because only the subject music where I find it hard because there are concepts in music that I don't understand and some concepts in music which I find very confusing.

Thus, the theme of Adaptation of the Job demonstrates that out-of-field teachers rely heavily on experiential learning and mentorship to overcome the challenges of teaching subjects beyond their specialization. By gradually handling classes, observing student responses, and seeking guidance from more knowledgeable colleagues, teachers are able to develop their skills and confidence over time (Transcripts #107, #77, #94). This aligns with van Ginkel et.al.(2016), who emphasizes that adaptation through practice, reflection, and mentoring is essential for teachers to manage unfamiliar subjects effectively. The findings suggest that structured support systems, including peer mentoring and progressive class responsibilities, can significantly enhance the capacity of out-of-field teachers to deliver quality instruction.

Theme 3. Use of Varied Strategies

Participants employed diverse instructional strategies, including learning-by-doing, performance-based activities, and acting as facilitators depending on the class level (Transcripts #78, #107). This creative approach helped them compensate for gaps in subject knowledge while maintaining student engagement. Hobbs & Porsch (2021) similarly reported that out-of-field teachers often develop innovative strategies that combine their expertise with the new subject area, offering fresh perspectives to teaching. These varied strategies demonstrate the resourcefulness required to maintain instructional effectiveness despite limitations.

Subtheme A. Learning by Doing

Transcript # 78, line 37-44.

I actually adopted the DLP or the Dynamic Learning Program. I actually learned it from my old school, Sacred Heart School. It's a learning by doing approach so that's actually used here in Tacloban City National High School and I find it more effective because I give a little activity, a little background of the lesson and then I give already an activity which can be applied by the students.

Subtheme B. Facilitator

Transcript # 107, line 46-49

It depends on the situation, like there are times that teacher serves as a facilitator specially if it's a higher section and if it's lower section it's like lecture and discussion, it will just depend what is applicable.

Subtheme C. Performance Based

Transcript # 78, line 57-62.

P.E. it's more on performance-based, but before performance-based I make sure that I give first concepts and then performance-based already. Health the same with music and arts. I actually teach first the concepts then evaluation again.

In summary, the theme Use of Varied Strategies highlights how out-of-field teachers creatively adapt their instructional methods to address gaps in subject knowledge and maintain student engagement. By

employing learning-by-doing, performance-based activities, and acting as facilitators, teachers are able to provide meaningful learning experiences despite their limited expertise (Transcripts #78, #107). This finding supports Napier, Luft & Singh (2020), who noted that out-of-field teachers often develop innovative teaching strategies by combining their existing skills with new subject content. Overall, the use of varied strategies reflects the resourcefulness and adaptability necessary for effective teaching in challenging out-of-field contexts.

Theme 4. Complexity of Teaching MAPEH

Teaching MAPEH was described as both difficult and interesting due to its multidisciplinary nature and the participants' lack of formal training in arts and music (Transcripts #78, #144). Participants noted challenges in understanding musical notation and art concepts, highlighting the cognitive and skill-based demands of the subject. These findings resonate with Luft et.al.(2020), who emphasized that the complexity of teaching out-of-field subjects can limit a teacher's professional growth and affect students' learning experiences.

Transcript # 78, line 18-28

Well I find it difficult but interesting and fun since I actually share my knowledge about music because I was trained at our church on how to read notes and on how to sing and find it more fun since I know how to dance, since when I was in college I used to dance with the group in our school. Yah! It's more fun but it's difficult since information about MAPEH like the Art, the historical views in Arts then other components like in physical education is not only my forte because you know I'm a science major.

Transcript # 78, line 67-68.

I am not that good in arts actually. I know how to draw abstract but not so artistic, just like the other artist.

Transcript # 144, line 90-99

Because musicians had their own language, and they are the only one who can do it. We have zero knowledge in Music unlike P.E., Health and Arts we can have itself learning, we can gather ideas by just reading the materials but music is not our nature, it's like a self-skill and talent.

The theme Complexity of Teaching MAPEH underscores the multidimensional challenges faced by out-of-field teachers. The participants' limited formal training in music and arts, combined with the subject's cognitive and skill-based demands, made teaching MAPEH both difficult and demanding (Transcripts #78, #144). This aligns with Badaru & Ndlovu (2025), who noted that the complexity inherent in teaching out-of-field subjects can hinder teachers' professional growth and negatively impact students' learning experiences. Despite these challenges, teachers relied on personal skills, prior experiences, and adaptive strategies to navigate the complexity, highlighting the resilience and dedication required in managing such multifaceted subjects.

Theme 5. Collaboration of Experts

Teachers relied on collaboration with colleagues, attending trainings, and consulting subject experts to improve their competence (Transcripts #107, #144, #94). Professional development activities and mentorship were instrumental in helping them deliver effective lessons despite being out-of-field. Kenny, Hobbs & Whannell (2020) similarly noted that collaborative learning and professional development are key mechanisms for out-of-field teachers to enhance their skills. This theme highlights that collaboration serves as both a support system and a strategy to overcome knowledge gaps.

Subtheme A. Attending Trainings and Seminars

Transcript # 107, line 35-43

Learning more about MAPEH through research and more on trainings, I was trained in music, I was sent to U.P., at least I learned about what is music and then we were trained in the K12. My first training was in grade 7 and then they let me focused in grade 9, then from there, I enjoyed.

Transcript # 144, line 113-119

Yes, there is also a professional development that our school offered, we were sent to attend trainings and seminars but some of those trainings are not funded by the school so we have to personally fund the expenses. So that's the only difficulty but what is important is the learning you can get and the experience.

Subtheme B. Consultation with Experts

Transcript # 144, line 28-32.

We really ask assistance from our co-teacher who are music major to assist us in teaching music because we really find it hard to deliver what is the proper way, on how and to what kind of strategies we are going to use so we can properly the lesson.

Transcript # 94, line 54-58

I conduct research then what I had from my research I shared this to my students; in P.E. I can manage because I am into sports; and in Music I actually undergo mentoring ma'am, because in Leyte High they gave us mentoring for non- majors in a particular field.

Thus, the theme Collaboration of Experts emphasizes that out-of-field teachers rely heavily on professional networks, mentorship, and formal training to bridge their knowledge gaps. Participants reported that attending seminars, trainings, and consulting subject-matter experts not only enhanced their competence but also increased their confidence in teaching MAPEH (Transcripts #107, #144, #94). This finding is consistent with Saldivar (2024), who highlighted collaboration and professional development as critical strategies for out-of-field teachers to improve instructional effectiveness. Overall, collaboration emerges as both a support system and a practical approach for overcoming the challenges of teaching outside one's specialization.

Theme 6. Insufficiency of Teachers

The primary reason for teaching out-of-field was the shortage of qualified MAPEH teachers, forcing schools to assign teachers from other departments (Transcripts #94, #144). Participants acknowledged that this practice addresses teacher shortages and provides employment opportunities, yet it compromises teaching quality. Vale & Drake (2019), indicated that teacher shortages are a major driver of out-of-field teaching, creating systemic challenges in ensuring instructional quality. This finding underscores the need for policy interventions to align teacher supply with subject demand.

Transcript # 94, line 2-5

I actually start teaching MAPEH when I, I was assign in the mountain, because in the mountain there are deficient number of teachers so I actually teaches there. I teach their MAPEH and my of course mathematics and science my major.

Transcript # 144, line 12-15

Actually we are in the TLE Department we were so many teachers assigned there and then in the MAPEH Department they lack MAPEH teachers so since we were excess, we were chosen to be assigned on the MAPEH Department.

Overall, the findings of this study indicate that most of the participants agree that teaching MAPEH as their out-of-field subject is hard mainly because participants noted that they lacked subject knowledge and they experienced complexity of teaching the said subject area. The study of Madulara (2022), yield similar findings, out-of-field teachers felt alienated because of the inconsistency between their field of expertise and their field of assignment, thus preventing any chance to use their professional skills and has insufficient knowledge on their assigned subject.

Also, the result shows that most out-of-field teachers in MAPEH coped through learning while teaching the subject, using their own special skills or talents in music, dance and sports, and through mentoring and collaborating with colleagues who have special skills in teaching music, arts, and sports or MAPEH as a whole. Attending seminars and workshops helped them as well in coping with such situation. The study of Du Plessis, (2013) similarly reported that out-of-field teachers made use of their personal skills and talents to teach effectively the subject out of their specialization. They also used their training certification to effectively teach the subject area out of their expertise.

Moreover, the result shows that the reason why there are still teachers who are teaching subjects out of their field of specialization, because there is insufficiency of teachers teaching MAPEH. Despite these disadvantages they see it as an advantage for employment or meeting the teacher shortages and in helping the country in decreasing unemployment. Another most important advantage the participants reported is using or providing varied strategies to effectively teach MAPEH as out of their specialization. In the study of Hobbs & Torner (2019), reported similar findings when the participants reported that out-of-field teachers provides different perspective on teaching the subject out of their expertise, since out-of-field teachers can combine their field study with teaching and they discovered strategies that work in the class.

4. Conclusion

The study explores students' experiences with YouTube educational videos for learning Philippine Folk Dance. Positive feedback highlights the effectiveness of videos in facilitating self-paced learning and improving academic performance. However, concerns about video accuracy, potential over reliance, and internet connectivity challenges are identified. The conclusion advocates for a balanced approach, emphasizing meticulous content curation, guidance on critical thinking, and measures to address equity issues.

The study encourages the thoughtful integration of educational videos as supplements to traditional teaching methods for a comprehensive and inclusive learning experience in Folk Dance education.

5. Recommendation

This study recommends curating and promoting accurate YouTube content to ensure reliability in Philippine Folk Dance education. Educators should integrate critical thinking and media literacy training to reduce overreliance on videos and deepen understanding of dance techniques. Diversified learning resources, including offline materials and interactive activities, can support varied learning styles. Addressing internet access issues through alternative resources and advocacy is essential. Collaborating with professional dancers for content creation and exploring engaging multimedia strategies can further enhance learning. These measures aim to create a balanced, inclusive, and effective approach to using educational videos in dance education.

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