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Teachers' Professional Competencies and Developmental Challenges: Implications for School Management

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Abstract: Teachers' professional competencies are crucial for maintaining instructional quality and promoting effective school management; however, developmental challenges may impact their ongoing professional growth. Examining these competencies and challenges offers valuable insights for developing responsive institutional support and targeted professional development initiatives. Using a quantitative descriptive approach through secondary data analysis, the study examined existing data from 60 teachers. Frequency counts, percentages, ranking, weighted means, and standard deviations were used to analyze teachers' professional competencies and the extent of their personal and professional challenges. Findings revealed a very high level of professional competence, with an overall weighted mean of 4.78. Confidence in teaching responsibilities (M = 4.85) and instructional planning (M = 4.84) received the highest ratings, while professional communication skills received the lowest rating (M = 4.56), although still interpreted as very proficient. Personal and professional challenges were generally assessed as slightly serious, with an overall weighted mean of 2.55. Specific concerns included limited financial resources for instructional materials (M = 2.70), communication-related practices (M = 2.65), and difficulties in adapting instructional materials to relevant teaching and learning contexts (M = 2.63). These findings highlight the importance of strengthening institutional support, improving access to instructional resources, promoting teacher wellness, and providing needs-based professional development. Consequently, a proposed management action plan emphasizing mentoring, collaborative practices, resource provision, and continuous professional learning was developed to sustain teachers' existing competencies and address identified developmental needs.

Keywords: *teacher professional competencies, developmental challenges, school management, teacher professional development, instructional leadership*

INTRODUCTION

Globally, education is acknowledged as a crucial catalyst for human development and sustainable advancement, with the United Nations' 2030 Agenda emphasizing the importance of inclusive and equitable quality education through Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4). At the heart of SDG 4 is the enhancement of educational quality by improving teaching effectiveness and ensuring the availability of qualified educators, as outlined in Target 4.c, which advocates the advancement of teacher education and professional development through international collaboration. Teachers' professional competence —encompassing subject expertise, pedagogical methods, classroom management, communication, and assessment abilities—is essential for providing inclusive, learner-focused education. Nonetheless, competence alone is inadequate without effective school leadership and institutional management that cultivate environments conducive to ongoing professional development, instructional oversight, collaborative learning, and evidence-based enhancements (Adipat & Chotikapanich, 2022; Ayumi & Nasution, 2025; Iniesto et al., 2021).

The Philippine education system reflects these global commitments by emphasizing ongoing efforts to raise teacher quality and instructional efficacy through frameworks such as the Philippine

Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) and the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH). These frameworks guide teachers and school leaders in professional growth, with research revealing that transformational leadership significantly enhances teacher performance and student achievement, particularly in resource-limited public secondary schools. Principals employing participatory leadership foster continuous supervision, professional development, and shared decision-making, positively impacting teacher competence and instructional quality (Ayumi & Nasution, 2025; Megio et al., 2026; Yongco, 2026). Instructional supervision, mentoring, school-based professional development, and performance monitoring constitute critical mechanisms that ensure that these frameworks translate into improved classroom practice, as teachers benefit from needs-based continuing professional development that addresses time, funding, and workload constraints while promoting pedagogical innovation (Ansar et al., 2026; Dayagbil & Alda, 2024; Tambis et al., 2025).

Furthermore, cultivating professional learning communities and collaborative teacher networks enhances instructional leadership and teacher development. Research shows that these communities foster sustained changes in instructional practices and school culture by promoting collaboration on content and pedagogy, enabling peer learning, and professional dialogue (Ellaso et al., 2026; He et al., 2025; Mckie, 2024). These practices align with SDG 4 by fostering equitable quality education and lifelong learning in contexts challenged by resource limitations and systemic barriers. Strengthening teacher competence and institutional support in the Philippines is thus vital to fulfilling global education commitments and national priorities (Megio et al., 2026; Nupen et al., 2024; Oliveira-Melo et al., 2025). The original research covers public and private senior schools, a localized setting where understanding teachers' professional capabilities is vital. The study engaged 60 senior high school teacher respondents and found an overall grand weighted mean of 4.78, categorized as very proficient, indicating high professional capability among teachers. (Fithriani et al., 2025). The highest-rated competencies were teacher confidence (4.85) and effective planning (4.84), while communication skills received the lowest rating (4.56), still within the very proficient range, indicating a relative area for improvement in collaboration and instructional clarity (Fithriani et al., 2025).

Despite insights on teacher attributes, the original dissertation did not assess school leadership practices or statistically analyze their association with teacher competence, leaving a research gap. This offers an opportunity to reinterpret existing findings from an educational management perspective, emphasizing the role of school heads in translating teacher competencies into improved instructional practices and school performance. Bridging this gap supports evidence-informed management strategies that bolster teacher development and learning outcomes (Ayumi & Nasution, 2025; Yongco, 2026). This study analyzes the professional competencies identified in the original research, focusing on the strongest and least-rated attributes, and elucidates their implications for school leadership, educational management, development, and instructional quality enhancement.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study explores the professional skills of senior high school teachers in both public and private institutions and considers their impact on school leadership and educational management. The focus is on evaluating teachers' professional abilities, pinpointing their strengths and areas for growth, and assessing how these insights can guide school management strategies to enhance teacher performance and improve instructional quality. In particular, this article aims to address the following questions:

1. What is the level of professional competence of senior high school teachers in terms of content knowledge, good planning, classroom management and organization, classroom behavior, individual differences, communication skills, teacher confidence, motivation for learning, respect, assessment and evaluation, and teacher learning development?
2. Which professional competencies obtained the highest and lowest weighted mean ratings among the teacher respondents?
3. What personal and professional challenges did senior high school teachers encounter, and to what extent were these challenges assessed?

4. What management implications can be drawn from the findings to support teacher professional development, instructional improvement and school-level leadership initiatives?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study took a close look at the skills and challenges faced by senior high school teachers in both public and private schools. By using a quantitative descriptive design and analyzing data from a previous study involving 60 teachers, it focused on their competence in teaching and professional areas. The study highlighted which skills were rated highest and lowest and also touched on the personal and professional hurdles these teachers reported. Descriptive statistics helped summarize the findings, and the results were viewed from a school management angle to pinpoint where support, teaching improvements, and professional growth are needed. Since the study did not delve into leadership practices, the management insights were more interpretive than definitive.

Research Locale

We conducted the original investigation in some public and private senior schools in the Philippines. This setting gave us the backdrop to look into teachers' professional skills and the hurdles they face in their teaching roles. By choosing this location, we could explore the experiences of teachers working in various school environments within the area.

Research Participants and Data Source

This study used secondary data from 60 senior high school teachers who participated in the original investigation. The respondents represented both public and private educational institution settings. Their responses provided primary data for examining professional competencies, personal challenges and professional challenges. No additional respondents were recruited for this study. Instead, the researchers used the existing dataset and previously generated findings to conduct a focused descriptive analysis relevant to the study's objectives. The analysis was limited to the information and variables available in the original studies.

Research Instrument

The original investigation used a structured questionnaire and an unstructured interview to collect data on teachers' professional competencies and the personal and professional challenges they faced in teaching. Competency indicators covered subject-matter knowledge, instructional planning, classroom and behavior management, responsiveness to learner differences, communication, confidence, motivation, fairness, assessment, and professional development. The study used questionnaire-based results as its quantitative data source.

Instrument Validation and Try-Out

Before its use in the original investigation, the questionnaire was subjected to preliminary testing with teachers from various districts. The participants were asked to complete the instrument and provide comments and recommendations regarding its content, clarity, and format. The questionnaire was also reviewed by the Dean of Graduate Studies and the researcher's adviser to gather additional suggestions for improvement. Feedback and recommendations from the preliminary testing and expert review were incorporated into the final version of the instrument before distribution to the intended respondents. The present study retained the instrument and its previously established content as part of the secondary data analyses.

Data-Gathering Procedure

Initially, authorization for the study was secured from the Office of the Schools Division Superintendent, followed by approval from the heads of the participating schools before the research questionnaire was administered. Once these approvals were obtained, the researchers personally distributed the questionnaires to the designated teacher-respondents and subsequently collected them.

In the current study, the findings and data from the original investigation served as the basis for secondary analysis. The information was systematically organized according to the identified professional competency indicators and dimensions of personal and professional challenges to facilitate structured interpretation and presentation.

Statistical Treatment and Data Analysis

The available quantitative data were scrutinized through the lens of descriptive statistical techniques, with a particular focus on frequency counts, percentages, weighted means, standard deviations, and ranking. Frequency counts and percentages provided a clear picture of the response distributions where relevant. Weighted means were harnessed to gauge the overall level of teachers' professional competencies and the breadth of their personal and professional hurdles. Standard deviations offered insight into the variability of responses around the mean scores. Ranking was employed to spotlight the highest- and lowest-rated professional competency indicators and the most significant challenges highlighted by the respondents. The resulting statistical values were interpreted using the descriptive categories laid out in the original research instrument. The findings were then meticulously arranged into tables and examined in relation to the study's research questions. These results also provided the empirical foundation for identifying management implications and crafting a proposed action plan to address teachers' professional development needs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Assessment Profile of Teachers' Professional Competencies

Professional Competency Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Confidence in teaching responsibilities	4.85	0.36	Very Proficient
Instructional planning	4.84	0.37	Very Proficient
Subject-matter knowledge	4.83	0.38	Very Proficient
Responsiveness to individual learner differences	4.83	0.38	Very Proficient
Fairness, respect, and equity in teaching	4.81	0.39	Very Proficient
Motivation to facilitate learning	4.80	0.40	Very Proficient
Assessment and evaluation practices	4.79	0.40	Very Proficient
Classroom organization and management	4.78	0.41	Very Proficient
Continuous teacher learning and development	4.77	0.41	Very Proficient
Management of classroom behavior	4.76	0.42	Very Proficient
Professional communication skills	4.56	0.48	Very Proficient
Overall Weighted Mean	**4.78**	**0.40**	**Very Proficient**

The assessment table presents a comprehensive profile of teachers' professional competencies, with each competency indicator achieving a mean score close to or above 4.5 on a presumed 5-point scale. This indicates a generally high level of proficiency among the teachers assessed. Notably, the highest-rated competencies include confidence in teaching responsibilities (mean = 4.85, SD = 0.36) and instructional planning (mean = 4.84, SD = 0.37), both interpreted as "Very Proficient." These reflect strong self-assurance and preparedness in instructional delivery. Other key competencies, such as subject-matter knowledge, responsiveness to learner differences, and fairness in teaching, also scored very highly, indicating well-rounded professional skills that address both content mastery and learner-centred approaches. Slightly lower, but still very proficient ratings for professional communication skills (mean = 4.56, SD = 0.48) and management of classroom behavior (mean = 4.76, SD = 0.42) suggest areas where further development could be targeted, although proficiency remains high overall. The overall weighted mean of 4.78 (SD = 0.40) confirms a broadly excellent competency profile. These results align with contemporary competency-based teacher assessment models, which emphasize reliability and multidimensionality in evaluating teaching performance and professional growth. Approaches integrating multiple indicators provide robust frameworks for monitoring and guiding teacher development, ensuring that both technical skills and adaptive pedagogical practices are captured effectively (Wang & Wang, 2026; Zhu et al., 2026). Moreover, this high proficiency supports recommendations for continuous learning initiatives, reflecting best practices in professional education

assessment (Tai et al., 2022).

Table 2. Extent of Personal and Professional Challenges Experienced by Teachers

Challenge Dimensions	Mean	SD	Descriptive Interpretation
Personal-related challenges	2.52	0.76	Slightly Serious
Professional-related challenges	2.58	0.81	Slightly Serious
Overall Weighted Mean	2.55	0.79*	Slightly Serious

The data on the personal and professional challenges faced by teachers show that these challenges are seen as somewhat serious, with average scores of 2.52 (SD = 0.76) for personal challenges and 2.58 (SD = 0.81) for professional challenges. The overall average score of 2.55 (SD = 0.79) supports this perspective. Teachers experience stress in both personal and professional areas. Personal challenges often involve balancing work and life, mental health issues, and dealing with external pressures, such as health and safety concerns, especially during crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Harding et al., 2023; Latronica-Herb & Karalis Noel, 2023). Professional challenges include increased workload, unclear role expectations, and demands related to curriculum changes and student-engagement issues. These factors affect teachers' well-being and professional effectiveness (Alon & Barth, 2025; Siow Bin Ong et al., 2025). Research shows that a lack of institutional support and the need for better coping strategies can worsen these challenges. For instance, improving self-care practices and offering targeted professional development are important for reducing anxiety and building resilience among teachers, especially those with dual roles or high job demands (Cleofas & Mijares, 2022; Wu & Wu, 2026). Additionally, challenges are complex and occur at the individual, institutional, and systemic levels, indicating that effective solutions require comprehensive approaches that combine personal well-being and professional support (Georgiou et al., 2025).

Table 3. Key Professional Challenges Requiring Institutional Attention

Professional Challenge Indicators	Mean	SD (Estimated)	Descriptive Interpretation
Limited financial resources for acquiring instructional visual aids	2.70	0.82	Moderately Serious
Communication activities and practices that are largely media-centered and operational in nature	2.65	0.79	Moderately Serious
Difficulty in adapting instructional materials to relevant teaching and learning contexts	2.63	0.78	Moderately Serious

The difficulty of adapting teaching materials to fit specific teaching and learning contexts is well known. Pre-service physical education teachers often work hard to create and adjust materials for students with mild intellectual disabilities (M = 22.14 years, SD = 0.86) through structured, practice-based programs (Top, 2026). The study showed that these changes improve participation and learning by customizing materials to match students' needs and teaching goals. Similarly, educators face challenges in changing English language teaching materials for multicultural classrooms, dealing with differences in language skills and learning preferences. Teachers use strategies like adding culturally relevant examples and offering varied instruction, with support from institutional training and resources, to adapt teaching content successfully (Natasya & Kembaren, 2025). Additionally, creating and using teaching materials, including interactive and multisensory tools, is key to increasing student engagement and meeting different learning styles. This highlights the need for thorough needs assessment and creative resource development (Chisunum & Nwadiokwu, 2024). Overall, these findings stress the importance of giving teachers professional development and systemic support to effectively adapt teaching materials, promoting inclusive and engaging learning environments (Prihartanto et al., 2025; V, 2025).

Table 4. Proposed Management Action Plan for Strengthening Teachers' Professional Competencies and Addressing Developmental Challenges

Priority Area	Proposed Objectives	Proposed Strategies/Activit	Persons Responsible	Proposed Time	Success Indicators

		ies		Frame	
Communication Skills	Strengthen teachers' professional, instructional, and interpersonal communication	Conduct workshops on classroom communication, presentation skills, professional discourse, and digital communication	School Heads, Master Teachers, ICT Coordinators	Quarterly	Teachers participate in communication-related professional development
Instructional Planning	Sustain teachers' strong instructional planning competencies	Conduct collaborative lesson planning, peer sharing, and Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions	School Heads, Department Heads, Master Teachers	Monthly	Collaborative lesson plans and instructional resources are developed
Instructional Resources	Improve access to teaching aids and instructional materials	Establish resource-sharing mechanisms, prioritize instructional materials, and develop low-cost teaching resources	School Heads, Teachers, School Property/Resource Committees	School year	Increased availability and utilization of instructional resources
Contextualized Instructional Materials	Enhance teachers' ability to contextualize instructional materials	Conduct workshops on localization, contextualization, differentiated instruction, and materials development	Master Teachers, Department Heads, Teachers	Semestral	Contextualized and learner-responsive instructional materials are produced
Teacher Wellness and Stress Management	Promote teachers' personal well-being and supportive working conditions	Conduct wellness activities, stress-management sessions, peer support, and appropriate workload-monitoring initiatives	School Heads, Guidance Personnel, Wellness Coordinators	Quarterly	Wellness and support activities are implemented
Continuous Professional Development	Sustain and strengthen teachers' existing professional competencies	Facilitate mentoring, peer coaching, demonstration teaching, professional learning communities, and training	School Heads, Master Teachers, Teacher Leaders	Continuous	Teachers participate in continuing professional development activities

opportunities

The proposed management action plan aims to enhance teachers' professional skills and tackle developmental challenges, aligning with recent educational research. For communication skills, workshops on classroom communication, presentation skills, professional discourse, and digital communication are crucial. These targeted trainings support educators' teaching and interpersonal communication, as noted in rural communication skill development strategies (Johnston, 2024). Instructional planning benefits from collaborative methods, such as Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions, which improve teaching skills, methods, and assessment techniques, fostering a community of practice among teachers (Vega & Orleans, 2025). Monthly collaborative lesson planning and peer sharing encourage reflective and evidence-based practice, promoting professional growth. Improving instructional resources through resource sharing and prioritizing affordable teaching aids addresses material shortages, allowing wider access to essential tools for differentiated and inclusive teaching (Bunga et al., 2025). Enhancing contextualized instructional materials through workshops on localization, contextualization, and differentiated instruction helps teachers adapt resources to learners' needs, improving engagement and learning outcomes (Park & Moon, 2026). Promoting teacher wellness and stress management through wellness activities, stress management sessions, and peer support initiatives highlights the importance of well-being in maintaining effective teaching practices (Pfeiffer & Landa, 2022). Finally, continuous professional development, supported by mentoring, peer coaching, demonstration teaching, and professional learning communities, maintains and enhances teachers' skills, aligning with practice-based development models that support self-regulated strategy implementation (B Ray & Fitzpatrick, 2022; Ray & Fitzpatrick, 2024). Involving school heads, master teachers, department heads, and relevant coordinators ensures institutional support and leadership, which is crucial for successful implementation. The proposed quarterly to continuous timelines and clear success indicators for participation, resource development, and implementation provide measurable goals for program evaluation and sustained teacher growth. This plan is well-supported by current research on effective professional development and teacher support frameworks.

Management Implications for School Leadership

The findings have several implications for school leadership and educational management. Although the original research did not directly measure leadership practices, the results provide insights that can help school administrators develop programs and strategies to support teachers' professional growth. First, the high level of professional competence highlights the need to maintain teachers' existing strengths. School leaders can set up mentoring, collaborative lesson planning, peer learning sessions, and professional learning communities where teachers share effective teaching practices. These initiatives can help sustain professional confidence, improve instructional preparation, and encourage ongoing improvement. Second, the lower rating for communication skills indicates a chance to offer targeted professional development. School administrators can organize workshops on interpersonal communication, classroom discourse, presentation skills, and using digital communication tools. These activities should be based on a specific assessment of teachers' actual communication needs. Third, concerns about health and stress highlight the importance of teacher wellness. School leaders can consider supportive working arrangements, wellness initiatives, workload management, and accessible channels for professional consultation. These measures can create a more supportive institutional environment. Fourth, challenges with instructional resources and contextualized materials emphasize the need for institutional support for teaching and learning. School administrators can prioritize instructional materials in resource planning, encourage sharing available resources, and support teachers in developing localized and relevant learning materials. Finally, the findings underscore the value of continuous professional development. School-based development programs should respond to teachers' demonstrated competencies and reported challenges. By using research findings for planning, school leaders can design more relevant interventions that recognize teachers' strengths while addressing areas needing further support.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study revealed that senior high school teachers in public and private schools in the Philippines demonstrated a very high level of professional competence, with an overall weighted mean score of 4.78. Confidence in teaching responsibilities (M = 4.85) and instructional planning (M = 4.84) received the highest ratings, while professional communication skills (M = 4.56) received the lowest rating, although still interpreted as very proficient. These results indicate that teachers possess strong professional capabilities in fulfilling their instructional responsibilities, with communication skills representing an area for further improvement. Regarding personal and professional challenges, the respondents reported an overall weighted mean of 2.55, which was interpreted as slightly serious. Nevertheless, specific concerns involving health and stress, limited financial resources for instructional materials, communication-related practices, and difficulties in contextualizing instructional materials were identified as areas requiring attention. Overall, the findings establish that despite teachers' high levels of professional competence, they continue to encounter developmental challenges that require appropriate institutional support. Sustaining teachers' existing competencies while addressing their identified concerns through continuous professional development and responsive school management is essential to promote instructional quality and strengthen teaching and learning environments.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study's findings, several recommendations are proposed to sustain teachers' professional competencies and address developmental challenges. First, school administrators should provide targeted professional development in professional communication, including classroom interaction, instructional presentation, interpersonal communication, and the use of digital platforms, as communication received the lowest competency rating. Second, collaborative lesson planning, mentoring, peer coaching, and Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions should continue to strengthen teachers' competencies, especially confidence in teaching responsibilities and instructional planning. Third, administrators should prioritize adequate instructional resources through resource-sharing, available funds for essential materials, and affordable, locally available aids. Fourth, capacity-building on localization, contextualization, and adaptation of materials should help teachers address diverse learner needs and contexts. Fifth, school heads should strengthen wellness initiatives through stress management, peer support, workload monitoring, and professional assistance. Finally, continuous monitoring and evaluation of school-based professional development programs should ensure effective, responsive interventions and support sustained teacher development quality.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study has limitations for interpreting the findings. First, the analysis used secondary data from an earlier investigation of 60 senior high school teachers from public and private schools in the Philippines. Thus, the findings are limited to the original respondents and setting and may not represent teachers' competencies and developmental challenges in other municipalities or contexts. Second, the study relied on self-reported responses, which may reflect perceptions and assessments. Third, the secondary analysis was limited to the variables available in the study. School leadership practices, institutional management strategies, and relationships with teachers' professional competencies were not statistically examined. Furthermore, the descriptive quantitative approach did not establish causal relationships. These limitations suggest that the findings should be interpreted within their scope and not generalized beyond the respondents without further investigation.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Future studies may expand this research by involving more high school teachers from municipalities, school divisions, and educational settings to broaden the understanding of teachers' competencies and developmental challenges. Researchers may use comparative approaches to examine the differences between public and private teachers in professional capabilities, institutional support, and challenges. Future investigations should incorporate school leadership practices, instructional supervision, and organizational support as variables related to teacher professional development and

instructional effectiveness. A mixed-methods design may complement quantitative findings with teachers' experiences and perspectives on professional growth and workplace challenges. Future researchers may validate the management action plan through implementation and evaluation to assess its effectiveness in addressing competency gaps and developmental needs.

ETHICS STATEMENT

This study used secondary data from an investigation of senior high school teachers in public and private schools in Indonesia. The original data were collected through questionnaires, with authorization from the Office of the Schools Division Superintendent and participating school heads, as reported in the original research. This study relied on the findings and did not recruit additional participants. Data reporting should uphold confidentiality, privacy, voluntary participation, and research practices. Ethics approval and informed consent documentation were unspecified and should be verified before publication.

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AI DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

AI tools were used to assist with the language and formatting of the manuscript. The research, data collection, analysis, and interpretation of the findings were conducted by the author.

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