

Navigating Coping Practices of Out-of-Field Teachers in the Philippine Basic Education: A Meta-Synthesis

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out-of-field teaching, coping practices, qualitative meta-synthesis, teacher adaptation, teacher resilience, Philippine basic education, thematic analysis

Abstract. Out-of-field teaching, defined as assigning teachers to subjects outside their area of specialization, remains a persistent concern in Philippine basic education due to teacher shortages and staffing imbalances. While existing studies have extensively documented the challenges associated with this practice, there is limited integrative understanding of how teachers cope across different contexts. This study aimed to synthesize the coping practices of out-of-field teachers and to identify patterns of adaptation and resilience evident in qualitative research. Using a qualitative meta-synthesis approach guided by the PRISMA 2020 framework, sixteen (16) qualitative studies published between 2015 and 2025 were systematically reviewed and analyzed. Data were interpreted using Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis to generate higher-order themes from the included studies. Findings revealed seven major coping themes: (1) interaction with learners, (2) professional development, (3) instructional planning and preparation, (4) resourcefulness and innovation, (5) emotional resilience and mindset, (6) instructional knowledge and skills enhancement, and (7) collaboration and support systems. Among these, instructional knowledge enhancement and emotional resilience emerged as the most dominant coping practices. The results indicate that coping is not a singular or isolated response but a dynamic and multidimensional process that integrates cognitive, emotional, and social strategies. The study concludes that out-of-field teachers demonstrate strong adaptability and resilience in navigating instructional challenges. However, reliance on individual coping underscores the need for structured institutional support. These findings provide a basis for developing targeted professional development programs, strengthening mentoring systems, improving resource provision, and informing policy interventions to better support out-of-field teachers in diverse educational settings.

Introduction

Teachers play a crucial role in an individual's holistic development, not only in enhancing learners' cognitive and academic skills but also in shaping their values, character, and overall well-being. They are often regarded as second parents, providing guidance, support, and a safe space where students feel comfortable expressing their authentic selves. While teaching is widely recognized as a fulfilling and rewarding profession, given its profound impact on students' growth, it is equally demanding and complex. The challenges of teaching become more pronounced when educators handle large classes or are assigned subjects beyond their area of specialization. This situation remains a persistent concern, particularly in schools experiencing shortages of qualified teaching personnel. As a result, teachers are often required to teach subjects outside their field of expertise, a practice commonly referred to as out-of-field teaching. Such assignments place additional demands on teachers, requiring them to navigate unfamiliar content while maintaining effective instruction and student engagement.

Out-of-field teaching refers to the assignment of teachers to subjects that are not aligned with their academic specialization or formal training. This practice has been widely known across educational systems and is often explained with reasons such as teacher shortages, staffing imbalances, and institutional demands (Ingersoll, 2001; Ingersoll & Curran, 2004). In the

Philippine basic education context, out-of-field teaching remains a persistent concern, particularly in public schools where the availability of subject-specialist teachers is limited. As a result, many teachers are required to teach unfamiliar subjects, which has implications for instructional quality and teacher well-being. Previous studies consistently report that out-of-field teachers experience difficulties related to content mastery, increased preparation time, and reduced confidence in delivering lessons (Ambroce & Daza, 2025; Caparrosso & Pepito, 2025).

Despite these challenges, research also shows that out-of-field teaching is not solely a negative experience. Teachers develop various adaptive responses as they navigate unfamiliar teaching assignments. For instance, studies have found that teachers engage in self-directed learning, collaborate with colleagues, and utilize flexible instructional strategies to address gaps in their knowledge (Capulong et al., 2023; Landicho, 2025). At the same time, coping extends beyond instructional adjustments and includes emotional and psychological processes such as resilience, perseverance, and the ability to reframe challenges as opportunities for growth (Yumang, 2021; Abrantes & Bargamento, 2024). These findings suggest that coping is a central and dynamic component of the out-of-field teaching experience, shaping how teachers respond to professional demands and sustain their practice.

However, much of the existing literature remains fragmented, with studies often limited to specific contexts, subject areas, or teacher groups. While individual qualitative studies provide rich descriptions of teachers' experiences, they tend to present coping strategies as discrete responses rather than as part of a broader, interconnected process of adaptation and professional development. Moreover, there is a lack of integrative research that systematically synthesizes these findings to generate higher-order insights into how coping practices evolve and interact across different contexts. This gap limits the ability of educators, researchers, and policymakers to develop comprehensive support systems for out-of-field teachers.

In response to this gap, the present study employed a qualitative meta-synthesis to integrate findings from existing studies on out-of-field teaching in Philippine basic education. By synthesizing multiple qualitative accounts, this study aimed to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how teachers cope with the demands of teaching outside their specialization. Specifically, it examined coping practices as a dynamic and multidimensional process that reflects patterns of adaptation, resilience, and professional growth. Through this integrative approach, the study contributed to a deeper and more meaningful understanding of out-of-field teaching, offering insights that may inform teacher support programs, instructional practices, and educational policy.

Research Questions

Specifically, this study sought answers to the following research questions:

1. What coping practices are demonstrated by out-of-field teachers in qualitative studies within Philippine basic education?
2. What thematic patterns emerge from the synthesized coping practices of out-of-field teachers?
3. What coping mechanism and institutional support implications may be proposed based on the synthesized findings?

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative meta-synthesis design to systematically gather, analyze, and integrate findings from existing qualitative studies on the coping experiences of out-of-field teachers in Philippine basic education. Meta-synthesis is a research approach that involves the collection and interpretation of qualitative evidence in order to generate new and deeper insights into a particular phenomenon (Horton, 2020). Rather than simply summarizing previous findings, this method allows for the development of higher-order interpretations by examining patterns, relationships, and meanings across studies. Through this approach, the present study aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how out-of-field teachers cope, adapt, and respond to the challenges of teaching outside their area of specialization, as well as the broader implications for educational practice and policy.

Search Strategy

The data collection process for this meta-synthesis was guided by the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA 2020) framework to ensure transparency, rigor, and replicability in the identification and selection of relevant studies. To locate pertinent literature, three major scholarly databases were utilized, namely Google Scholar, CrossRef, and OpenAlex. These databases were selected due to their broad coverage of peer-reviewed and open-access research, particularly in the field of education. In line with the focus of this study, literature published between 2015

and 2025 was considered. This time frame was chosen to capture both foundational and recent qualitative studies that examine the experiences and coping practices of out-of-field teachers in Philippine basic education. Harzing's Publish or Perish (PoP) software was used as the primary search tool to systematically retrieve academic articles across the selected databases. The software facilitated efficient data extraction and allowed for the organization of search results based on relevance and citation metrics. The search strategy employed keywords including "out-of-field teaching," "non-major teaching," "teaching outside specialization," "coping strategies," "adaptation," "resilience," and "lived experiences," combined with the term "Philippines." These keywords were iteratively refined throughout the search process to ensure comprehensive coverage of relevant studies.

The search process was conducted until saturation was reached, or when no additional relevant studies could be identified from the databases. All retrieved records were exported and organized for further screening. The identified studies were then subjected to a systematic screening and eligibility assessment based on the predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria to determine their suitability for inclusion in the meta-synthesis.

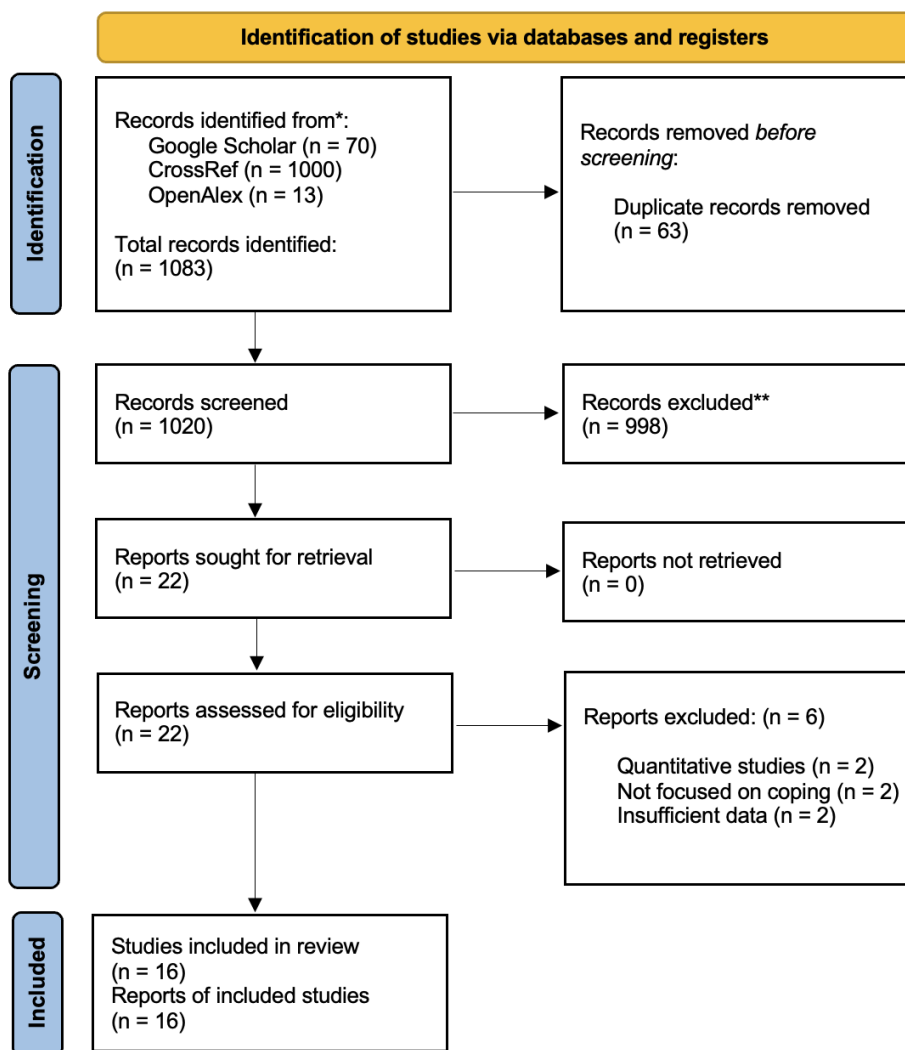


Figure No. 1. PRISMA flow diagram on data selection

The study followed the PRISMA 2020 framework in identifying and selecting relevant studies. A total of 1,083 records were initially identified from CrossRef (n = 1000), Google Scholar (n = 70), and OpenAlex (n = 13). After removing 63 duplicate records, 1,020 studies remained for title and abstract screening. Of these, 998 studies were excluded due to lack of relevance to out-of-field teaching, non-teacher populations, or non-qualitative designs. A total of 22 studies were assessed for full-text eligibility. Six studies were excluded for not meeting the inclusion criteria, including non-qualitative design, lack of focus on coping practices, and insufficient data. In total, 16 qualitative studies were included in the final meta-synthesis.

Research Participants

This study does not involve the recruitment of primary participants. Instead, it utilizes participants drawn from previously published qualitative studies on out-of-field teaching in Philippine basic education. These participants consist of teachers whose lived experiences, narratives, and interpretations are documented in the selected studies included in the meta-synthesis. In this context, the participants are considered secondary sources of data, as their accounts have already been collected and analyzed in prior research. These secondary participants serve as the primary units of analysis for the present study, providing rich qualitative evidence for synthesis. This approach is consistent with established practices in qualitative meta-synthesis, where existing studies are systematically integrated to generate higher-order interpretations and insights.

Study Procedure

This study followed a systematic and transparent procedure guided by the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA 2020) framework to ensure methodological rigor in the identification, screening, and inclusion of relevant studies. Literature retrieval was conducted using Harzing's Publish or Perish (PoP) software, which facilitated access to multiple academic databases, specifically Google Scholar, CrossRef, and OpenAlex. These databases were selected to capture a broad range of peer-reviewed and scholarly works relevant to out-of-field teaching. All identified records were exported and organized using Microsoft Excel. Key bibliographic information, including authors, publication year, title, abstract, and source link, was systematically recorded to support the screening and selection process. An initial search was performed using a combination of keywords such as "out-of-field teaching," "non-major teaching," "teaching outside specialization," "teachers," and "coping strategies." This search yielded a substantial number of studies across the selected databases.

Following data retrieval, duplicate records were identified and removed through a combination of manual checking and data cleaning procedures in Excel. The remaining studies were then subjected to title and abstract screening to determine their relevance to the focus of the study. Articles that were not related to out-of-field teaching, did not involve teachers, or did not align with the qualitative nature of the meta-synthesis were excluded at this stage. Subsequently, full-text versions of the remaining studies were retrieved and assessed for eligibility based on the predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Studies were excluded if they employed quantitative designs, lacked a clear focus on coping practices or lived experiences, were not situated within the Philippine basic education context, or did not provide sufficient qualitative data for synthesis. All exclusion decisions were documented to ensure transparency and replicability of the selection process.

To further strengthen the comprehensiveness of the review, a manual search was conducted by examining the reference lists of selected studies and identifying additional relevant literature. Studies that met the inclusion criteria through this process were incorporated into the final dataset. After completing the screening and eligibility stages, a total of sixteen (16) qualitative studies were included in the meta-synthesis. These studies served as the primary sources of data for analysis, from which themes related to coping practices, adaptation, and resilience among out-of-field teachers were generated.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To ensure the relevance and quality of the studies included in this meta-synthesis, a set of inclusion and exclusion criteria was established prior to the screening process. These criteria guided the selection of studies and ensured consistency and transparency in decision-making.

To be eligible for inclusion, a study must meet the following criteria:

- (a) it must employ a qualitative research design (e.g., phenomenology, grounded theory, or qualitative case study);
- (b) it must focus on out-of-field teaching or teaching outside one's area of specialization;
- (c) it must involve teacher participants within the context of Philippine basic education;
- (d) it must examine or provide insights into teachers' coping strategies, adaptive practices, or lived experiences;
- (e) it must be written in English; and
- (f) it must be published between 2015 and 2025 to ensure the inclusion of both foundational and recent studies.

Studies were excluded if they met any of the following conditions:

- (a) they employed purely quantitative methods or mixed-method designs without substantial qualitative findings;
- (b) they focused exclusively on higher education contexts;
- (c) they were conceptual papers, opinion articles, editorials, or literature reviews without primary qualitative data;
- (d) full-text access was unavailable; or
- (e) they did not provide sufficient data relevant to the coping experiences of out-of-field teachers.

Research Instrument

In qualitative meta-synthesis, the researcher serves as the primary instrument in the interpretation and integration of data. As such, the researcher plays a central role in examining, comparing, and synthesizing findings across selected studies to generate meaningful insights. To ensure methodological rigor and consistency in evaluating the included studies, the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) checklist was used as a supporting research instrument. The CASP checklist is a widely recognized tool designed to assess the quality, credibility, and relevance of qualitative research. It provides a structured framework for evaluating key aspects of a study, including its research design, data collection procedures, analytical rigor, ethical considerations, and overall contribution to knowledge. Each study included in the meta-synthesis was appraised using the CASP criteria to determine its suitability for inclusion. Only studies that met acceptable quality standards were retained for the final synthesis. This process ensured that the findings generated in this study were based on credible and methodologically sound qualitative evidence.

Data Analysis

This meta-synthesis employed thematic analysis to systematically organize and analyze the collected qualitative data. Following the six-phase framework of Braun and Clarke (2019), thematic analysis was used to identify patterns related to the coping processes of out-of-field teachers. The analysis involved the following phases: (1) familiarization with the data, (2) generation of initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) producing the synthesis. Through this process, recurring patterns and higher-order themes were identified to provide a comprehensive understanding of how teachers cope, adapt, and respond to out-of-field teaching.

Results and Discussion

Findings

This section presents the synthesized findings derived from the collected, reviewed, and analyzed data of the included studies. It highlights the key insights that emerged from the qualitative meta-synthesis, particularly focusing on how out-of-field teachers navigate and respond to the demands of teaching outside their area of specialization. Table 1 summarizes the essential characteristics of each study, including the author and year, number of informants, subject taught, school level, and the coping practices employed by teachers.

Code	Author(s), Year	No. of Informants	Subject	School Level	Coping Practices	Type of Study
A1	Ortega-Dela Cruz (2025)	5	English	Elementary	reliance on peer support, use of digital tools, self-initiative, professional development	Qualitative (Case Study)
A2	Eroja et al. (2025)	8	Kindergarten	Elementary	communicating with nature, child-centered strategies, stakeholder support, resilience and adaptability	Phenomenological
A3	Ofril (2024)	8	Various	Secondary	adaptive strategies, application of best practices, sustaining motivation	Phenomenological
A4	Landicho (2024)	10	Social Studies	JHS/SHS	peer support, professional development, diversified strategies, continuous learning	Phenomenological
A5	Caparroso & Pepito (2025)	10	Various	SHS	mentorship, professional growth, planning, positive mindset, collaboration	Phenomenological
A6	Dela Cruz et al. (2025)	3	TLE	JHS	collaboration, mentorship,	Phenomenological

A7	Ambroce & Daza (2024)	Not specified	Science	Secondary	technology integration, growth mindset dynamic teaching practices, collaboration, continuous learning play-based strategies, differentiated instruction, routines, training participation self-directed learning, collaboration, online platforms, personal experience integration collaboration, mentorship, self-efficacy, emotional regulation, innovation	Phenomenological
A8	Estapia et al. (2025)	7	Kindergarten	Elementary	resilience-building, positive mindset, adaptive teaching adaptability, resilience, positive outlook	Qualitative
A9	Colisao et al. (2025)	12	ESP	JHS	self-study, expert consultation, technology use, resourcefulness peer mentoring, professional engagement, adaptability	Phenomenological
A10	Mansalon & Lopez (2025)	20	MAPEH	JHS	self-directed learning, collaboration, role adjustment	Phenomenological
A11	Abrantes & Bargamento (2024)	12	Physical Science	SHS	collaboration, online resources, material modification, communication strategies	Phenomenological
A12	Buenacosa & Petalla (2022)	6	English	Secondary		Phenomenological
A13	Tingzon & Buyok (2025)	12	TLE	JHS		Phenomenological
A14	Yumang (2021)	10	Various	SHS		Phenomenological
A15	Cariño et al. (2025)	15	Various	Secondary		Phenomenological
A16	Alagase & Diaz (2023)	12	Social Studies	SHS		Phenomenological

Table No. 1. Descriptions of the Included Studies

As shown in Table 1, the included studies span several years, with a noticeable concentration of publications in more recent years, reflecting the growing scholarly attention to out-of-field teaching in the Philippine context. The number of teacher-informants across the selected studies varies, ranging from as few as three participants to as many as several respondents in large-scale investigations, indicating both in-depth qualitative inquiries and broader descriptive studies. In terms of subject areas, the studies cover a wide range of disciplines within the K-12 curriculum, including English, Science, Social Studies, Values Education (ESP), TLE, MAPEH, and other non-specialized subjects. This diversity highlights the widespread nature of out-of-field teaching across different learning areas. With regard to school level, a number of studies focused on junior high school teachers, while others examined senior high school contexts. Several studies included participants from both levels, whereas a few did not explicitly specify the educational level of the informants.

More importantly, the synthesis of findings reveals that teachers employed a variety of coping practices in response to the demands of teaching outside their specialization. These include self-directed learning, collaboration with colleagues, participation in professional development activities, use of instructional technologies, and the development of adaptive teaching strategies. Emotional resilience, positive mindset, and continuous professional growth also emerged as key mechanisms that enabled teachers to navigate the challenges of out-of-field teaching. Across the selected studies, phenomenology emerged as the most commonly utilized research design, reflecting the emphasis on capturing teachers'

lived experiences. Overall, the included literature demonstrates that while out-of-field teaching presents significant demands, teachers actively engage in coping and adaptive processes that support their professional functioning and instructional effectiveness.

Meta-Theme	Themes	Codes	Frequency
Coping Practices of Out-of-Field Teachers	Interaction with Learners	adjusting communication strategies, simplifying explanations, managing student inquiries, building rapport, adapting to learners' needs	10
	Professional Development	attending seminars and training, participation in LAC sessions, seeking mentorship, peer coaching, continuous professional learning	9
	Instructional Planning and Preparation	advance lesson planning, use of teaching guides, content familiarization, lesson rehearsal, curriculum adaptation	13
	Resourcefulness and Innovation	use of online resources, instructional material adaptation, multimedia integration, resource sharing, maximizing available materials	11
	Emotional Resilience and Mindset	maintaining positive mindset, resilience, self-motivation, emotional regulation, reframing challenges, perseverance	14
	Instructional Knowledge and Skills Enhancement	self-directed learning, improving content mastery, flexible teaching strategies, bridging theory and practice, skill development	15
	Collaboration and Support Systems	peer collaboration, seeking expert help, teamwork, professional learning communities, administrative support	12

Table No. 2. Themes, Sub-themes, and Codes Emerged from the Included Studies

Sixteen (16) included studies were conducted within the Philippine basic education context. The experiences of out-of-field teachers drawn from these studies were presented in Table 1, including the subject areas taught, school level, and key coping practices employed by teachers. These experiences were systematically clustered and analyzed using the six-phase thematic analysis framework, which resulted in the emergence of seven (7) major themes, namely: (1) interaction with learners, (2) professional development, (3) instructional planning and preparation, (4) resourcefulness and innovation, (5) emotional resilience and mindset, (6) instructional knowledge and skills enhancement, and (7) collaboration and support systems. Among the identified themes, coping practices related to instructional knowledge and skills enhancement ($f = 15$) emerged as the most frequently observed, indicating that teachers primarily rely on self-directed learning, development of content mastery, and the use of flexible teaching strategies to address instructional gaps. This is followed by emotional resilience and mindset ($f = 14$), highlighting the importance of maintaining a positive outlook, perseverance, and emotional regulation in sustaining teaching performance. In contrast, professional development ($f = 9$) appeared as the least frequent among the themes, although it remains a significant coping mechanism through participation in seminars, training, and mentoring activities.

The integration of these themes led to the development of one overarching meta-theme: coping practices of out-of-field teachers. This meta-theme captures how teachers actively respond to the demands of teaching outside their specialization through a combination of cognitive, emotional, and social strategies. Overall, the findings suggest that coping among out-of-field teachers is a multidimensional process that integrates cognitive, emotional, and social strategies. The interrelatedness of these themes further demonstrates how teachers actively construct adaptive responses to manage the complexities of out-of-field teaching. The identified themes and meta-theme are further elaborated in the succeeding sections.

Thematic Discussion

Theme 1. Interaction with Learners

Interaction with learners plays a significant role in teachers' coping practices. Teachers adjust their communication strategies, simplify explanations, and build rapport to facilitate student understanding and engagement (Landicho, 2025). The findings indicate that teachers actively respond to students' needs by providing additional support, clarifying difficult concepts, and creating a more inclusive learning environment (Colisao et al., 2025). These practices reflect the relational dimension of coping, where effective teacher-student interaction becomes essential in maintaining classroom effectiveness despite content limitations.

Theme 2. Professional Development

Professional development, although the least frequent among the identified themes, remains a significant coping mechanism. Teachers participate in seminars, training programs, and Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions to improve their competencies and adapt to their teaching assignments (Capulong et al., 2023). Mentorship and peer coaching also contribute to teachers' professional growth, enabling them to develop confidence and improve instructional practices. While less frequently reported, professional development plays a crucial role in supporting long-term adaptation and enhancing teachers' ability to manage out-of-field teaching demands.

Theme 3. Instructional Planning and Preparation

Instructional planning and preparation were identified as another key coping strategy. Teachers devote significant time and effort to preparing lessons, familiarizing themselves with content, and designing instructional materials to ensure effective teaching (Ambroce & Daza, 2025). The findings indicate that teachers engage in advance lesson planning, use teaching guides, and rehearse lesson delivery to improve their confidence and classroom performance. This additional preparation reflects the extra workload associated with out-of-field teaching, as teachers must compensate for their limited background knowledge. Thus, careful planning becomes a crucial coping mechanism that supports instructional effectiveness.

Theme 4. Resourcefulness and Innovation

Resourcefulness and innovation emerged as another important coping practice. Teachers demonstrate creativity and adaptability by maximizing available resources and exploring innovative teaching methods to address instructional challenges (Magtulis & Brunio, 2025). The studies revealed that teachers utilize online platforms, adapt instructional materials, and integrate multimedia tools to enhance lesson delivery (Mansalon & Lopez, 2025). In contexts where resources are limited, teachers rely on resource sharing and improvisation to meet classroom demands. This theme highlights the ability of teachers to transform constraints into opportunities for innovation, reinforcing the dynamic nature of coping.

Theme 5. Emotional Resilience and Mindset

Emotional resilience and mindset also emerged as a central coping mechanism. Out-of-field teachers often experience stress, anxiety, and self-doubt due to their lack of specialization; however, they develop resilience by maintaining a positive outlook and reframing challenges as opportunities for growth (Yumang, 2021). Studies revealed that teachers cope by cultivating perseverance, patience, and emotional regulation, which enable them to sustain their performance in demanding teaching contexts (Abrantes & Bargamento, 2024). Moreover, teachers' ability to accept their situation and remain motivated reflects a strong sense of professional responsibility. This theme highlights that coping is not only cognitive and instructional but also deeply emotional, requiring teachers to manage internal pressures while fulfilling their roles.

Theme 6. Instructional Knowledge and Skills Enhancement

Instructional knowledge and skills enhancement emerged as the most prominent coping practice among out-of-field teachers. Across the studies, teachers actively engaged in self-directed learning to compensate for gaps in content knowledge and pedagogical expertise. This includes independent study, reviewing subject materials, and continuously improving their understanding of the topics they teach (Caparrosso & Pepito, 2025; Cariño et al., 2025). Teachers also demonstrated efforts to bridge theory and practice by refining their instructional approaches and developing flexible teaching strategies suited to unfamiliar subject areas (Ambroce & Daza, 2025). In many cases, teachers emphasized the importance of mastering lesson content and enhancing their teaching competencies to maintain instructional effectiveness. These findings suggest that coping is largely rooted in teachers' proactive efforts to improve their professional capabilities despite being assigned outside their field.

Theme 7. Collaboration and Support Systems

Collaboration and support systems play a vital role in helping teachers cope with out-of-field teaching. Teachers frequently seek assistance from colleagues, mentors, and subject experts to improve their understanding of unfamiliar content and enhance their teaching strategies (Landicho, 2025; Tingzon & Buyok, 2025). Peer collaboration, mentoring, and participation in professional learning communities were commonly reported as effective coping mechanisms. Teachers also benefit from administrative support and school-based initiatives that provide guidance and resources (Caparrosso & Pepito, 2025). These findings emphasize that coping is not solely an individual effort but is strengthened through social and professional relationships within the school environment.

Meta-Theme: Coping Practices of Out-of-Field Teachers

Coping plays a crucial role in the experiences of out-of-field teachers, as they are often assigned to subjects outside their area of specialization. This situation requires teachers to continuously adjust and develop strategies to meet instructional demands (Ingersoll, 2001; Ingersoll & Curran, 2004). Across the included studies, coping is seen as an active and ongoing process. Teachers manage their challenges by engaging in self-directed learning, seeking help from colleagues, and participating in professional development activities (Ambroce & Daza, 2025; Landicho, 2025). These practices help them improve their teaching and build confidence over time.

In addition, coping also involves emotional resilience. Teachers maintain a positive mindset, stay motivated, and view challenges as opportunities for growth (Buenacosa & Petalla, 2022; Yumang, 2021). Support from peers and school systems further strengthens their ability to adapt (Capulong et al., 2023). Overall, the findings show that out-of-field teachers are not passive. Instead, they actively find ways to adjust, improve, and succeed. These coping practices highlight their resilience and emphasize the need for stronger institutional support.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Out-of-field teachers demonstrate multifaceted coping practices in navigating the demands of teaching subjects outside their area of specialization. The findings of this meta-synthesis revealed that coping among out-of-field teachers is not limited to a single strategy but involves a combination of instructional, emotional, and social processes. These practices enable teachers to sustain their performance and maintain instructional quality despite the challenges associated with out-of-field teaching. The study highlights that teachers primarily cope by enhancing their instructional knowledge and skills through self-directed learning and continuous improvement of their teaching practices. At the same time, emotional resilience plays a crucial role, as teachers manage stress, anxiety, and self-doubt while maintaining a positive mindset and professional commitment. Instructional planning and preparation further support their coping, as teachers invest additional time and effort to ensure effective lesson delivery.

Moreover, collaboration and support systems significantly contribute to teachers' coping processes, as peer mentoring, teamwork, and professional learning communities provide both academic and emotional support. Teachers also demonstrate resourcefulness and innovation by maximizing available materials and integrating technology into their instruction. Additionally, effective interaction with learners allows teachers to adapt their communication strategies and maintain meaningful classroom engagement. Despite these adaptive practices, the findings suggest that professional development opportunities remain limited, indicating the need for stronger institutional support. While teachers exhibit resilience and adaptability, their coping strategies often emerge as responses to systemic gaps rather than structured support mechanisms. Overall, this study concludes that coping practices of out-of-field teachers are dynamic and interconnected, reflecting their ability to transform challenges into opportunities for growth and professional development. These findings underscore the need for targeted interventions that support both the instructional and emotional needs of teachers assigned outside their specialization.

It is therefore recommended that educational institutions and policymakers strengthen professional development programs, provide accessible instructional resources, and establish structured mentoring and support systems. Furthermore, attention should be given to teachers' well-being by offering emotional and psychological support to ensure their sustained effectiveness in the teaching profession.

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Competing Interests Statement

The author declares that there are no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this article.

Data Availability Statement

Data sharing is not applicable to this study, as no new data were generated or analyzed. All information used was derived from previously published sources, which are properly cited in the reference list.

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Appendices

No appendices are attached to this study.