

Teaching Practices and Challenges Encountered by Out-of-Field Teachers of Junior High School in the City Division of Biñan

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out-of-field teaching, junior high school, teaching practices, challenges

Abstract. This study focused on determining the teaching practices and challenges faced by out-of-field teachers in public junior high schools. Few studies discussed out-of-field in junior high school, and the differences in the demographic profile (age, years of teaching non-major subjects, baccalaureate degree, and field of specialization of the teachers) and their relation to the teaching practices and challenges encountered were not much explored. The researcher employed a descriptive-correlational type of research in determining the association of the level of teaching practices (instructional strategies, student engagement, and classroom management) and challenges encountered (lesson planning, learning materials, and achievement of competencies) by the non-major teachers with their demographic profile. Using an adopted questionnaire from the standardized survey form of Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale developed by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk-Hoy (2001), the level of teaching practices and challenges encountered was determined and has been correlated with the demographic profile of non-major teacher respondents. Data revealed that there is no significant difference in the level of their teaching practices and challenges among out-of-field teachers in terms of their demographic profile. Moreover, the level of teaching practices and challenges faced by non-major respondents has a weak positive score ($r=0.202$), and the p-value (0.155) is higher than the level of significance (0.05). From the results, the Department of Education is expected to provide training to non-major teachers or come up with strategies to avoid mismatches in the subjects taught by teachers. Resiliency among non-major teachers heavily affects their mental and physical health and should not be normalized.

Introduction

Schools in Asia are reported to have teachers who are teaching beyond their specialization. Teacher-subject mismatch posed additional stress to teachers, lower productivity at work, a feeling of discouragement, and low academic performance among the students (Tingzon & Buyok, 2022). This topic is understudied and raises concerns for teachers (Caldis, 2022). Studies related to out-of-field teaching focused primarily on senior high school teachers and are limited to junior high school teachers. In addition, studies on teaching primarily focused on its effect on academic performance and not on the demographic profile of teachers. Moreover, this set-up became a culture in schools and has not been given importance for so many years, but it has become an issue today due to the Department of Education's prioritization of the mental health of students and teachers. .

With the abrupt changes in the educational system, teachers were obliged to teach subjects beyond their field of expertise; hence, out-of-field teaching became prevalent. In addition to this is the eagerness of teacher applicants to be accepted in the teaching field, even if they were offered a different subject from their major to teach. Highly qualified teachers may be considered unqualified if put into a task not related to their specialization (Co et al., 2021).

Contradicting findings were found on the difference between the challenges encountered by out-of-field teachers in years of service, age, and area of specialization. Moreover, opposing results were also documented on the level of teaching practice of out-of-field teachers with their years of teaching experience and age.

In a study conducted by Gaso (2025), she stated that the demographic profile of out-of-field teachers in terms of educational attainment is significantly related to the challenges they face in teaching non-major subjects. On the other hand, other profiles such as age, sex, number of years in teaching, and area of specialization do not significantly relate to the challenges encountered by out-of-field teachers. Conversely, Fullido (2025) reported that the teaching experience of out-of-field teachers has a strong effect on student engagement and academic performance. In addition, the availability of learning materials contributes to the effectiveness of out-of-field teachers in delivering learning adequately. Abala (2025) reported in his study that some of the challenges out-of-field teachers encounter are a lack of resources, content integration, and professional support. A study conducted by Bartolome (2026) explored the difference in pedagogical competencies of out-of-field teachers when grouped into profiles, including age, sex, educational attainment, field of specialization, years of teaching experience, and subject handled. The results showed a significant difference in the content knowledge and pedagogy and subject handled, but no significant difference in the rest of the profiles. On the other hand, the challenges encountered by out-of-field teachers showed a significant difference in years of teaching and field of specialization.

Based on the studies presented, the demographic profile of out-of-field teachers is not normally correlated with the teaching strategies and challenges they face, but more with the academic performance of the students, and mostly focuses only on the age and gender (Adewale, 2024). Thus, this study aimed to determine the teaching practices and challenges faced by the teachers in the Junior High School and their differences in terms of age, years in service, baccalaureate degree, and field of specialization. This is essential to design mechanisms to lessen the ratio of teacher-subject mismatch and help the teachers to pursue their career development based on their specialization.

Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Determine the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age, years in teaching non-major subjects, baccalaureate degree, and field of specialization
2. Determine the level of teaching practices used by the respondents in teaching non-major subjects in terms of instructional strategies, student engagement, and classroom management
3. Determine the challenges encountered by the out-of-field in terms of lesson planning, learning materials, and achievement of learning competencies
4. Determine the significant difference in the level of teaching practices among out-of-field teachers when grouped according to their demographic profile
5. Determine the significant difference in the challenges encountered by out-of-field teachers when grouped according to their demographic profile
6. Correlate the level of teaching practices and challenges faced by out-of-field teachers
7. Craft an action plan

Methodology

Research Design

This research employed a descriptive-correlational type of research in determining the difference in the level of teaching practices and challenges encountered by out-of-field teachers when grouped with their demographic profile. Descriptive research aims to outline the traits, behaviors, or occurrences as they are present, without altering or manipulating the conditions of the study (Hassan, 2024). The level of teaching practices was measured in terms of instructional strategies, student engagement, and classroom management. On the other hand, challenges encountered by the respondents were measured in terms of lesson planning, learning materials, and achievement of learning competencies. The demographic profile surveyed on the respondents includes age, years of teaching, baccalaureate degree, and field of specialization. Correlation between teaching practices and challenges was also evaluated.

Research Respondents

The respondents of the study consisted of fifty (50) out-of-field teachers from SDO Biñan: twenty-five (25) from Jacobo Z. Gonzales Memorial National High School and twenty-five (25) from Biñan Integrated National High School. The study employed purposive sampling in determining the respondents of the study. This type of sampling is necessary since the participants were selected by the researcher based on their characteristics relevant to the subject being studied (Nyimbili & Nyimbili, 2024).

Research Instruments

This study employed an adapted questionnaire based on the works of Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk-Hoy (2001) and Tope (2023). The questionnaire is divided into two sections: teaching strategies, which include 24 items across three subscales (instructional strategies, student engagement, and classroom management), and challenges faced, featuring 15 items across three subscales (lesson planning, learning materials, and achievement of learning competencies).

Instrumentation Validation

The adapted questionnaire underwent expert validation by teachers to ensure that the items retained reliability, validity, and appropriateness for the target population. It underwent face and content validation. The questionnaire achieved a reliability score of 0.968 using Cronbach's alpha test during a pilot test, indicating strong internal consistency and reliability of the instrument.

Data Gathering Procedures

The researcher began the study by sending letters to the school division superintendent for approval to conduct the study and to the school heads where the respondents were currently employed. Non-major teachers from Jacobo Z. Gonzales Memorial National High School and Biñan Integrated National High School were the respondents of the study. The collection of the respondents' consent was done before the distribution of questionnaires. The scores from the survey were the basis of the level of teaching practices performed by the respondents. Data collection was done online through Google Forms. The gathered data was tabulated, analyzed, and interpreted.

Statistical Treatment of Data

The study employed percentage distribution and ranking to describe the respondents' profile in terms of age, years of teaching non-major subjects, baccalaureate degree, and field of specialization. Weighted mean was used to describe the a) level of teaching strategies in terms of instructional strategies, student engagement, and classroom management; and b) challenges faced by non-major teachers in terms of lesson planning, learning materials, and achievement of learning competencies. At the 0.05 level of significance, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to determine the difference in the level of teaching strategies and challenges faced by non-majors when grouped according to their profile variables. Pearson's r Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to determine the strength of the relationship between the level of teaching strategies and challenges faced by non-major teachers.

Results and Discussion

The results of this study are presented according to the research questions:

1. Determine the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age, years in teaching non-major subjects, baccalaureate degree, and field of specialization

Profile	Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	30 years old and below	16	31.4
	31-40 years old	23	45.1
	41 years old and above	12	23.5
Years in teaching non-major subjects	5 years and below	26	51.0
	6-10 years	10	19.6
	11-15 years	7	13.7
	16 years and above	8	15.7
Baccalaureate degree	Bachelor of Science in Education	37	72.5
	Bachelor of Arts in Education	4	7.8
	BS Industrial Education	2	3.9
	Others (certificate in teaching, vocational-technical)	8	15.7
Field of specialization	English	14	27.5
	Filipino	7	13.7

Biological Science/Science	7	13.7
Mathematics	8	15.7
TLE/Food Technology	6	11.8
Social Studies	3	5.9
Others (Electronics technology, broadcasting, automotive)	6	11.8

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents

Table 1 summarizes the demographic profile of the respondents of the study, with most of the teachers ranging from 31 to 40 years old (45%). Most of the out-of-field teachers have been teaching for 5 years or less (51%). In terms of educational background, 37 (72.5%) of the total sample took a Bachelor of Secondary Education major in English (14, 27.5%), while the fewest are TLE majors (6, 11.8%). On the other hand, the Bachelor of Science in Industrial Education has the fewest number of respondents. The age distribution of the respondents from Biñan is in the mid-age phase, that is 31-40 years old.

The data reveal that out-of-field teachers are mostly fresh graduates, as Hermosa and Ampo (2022) mentioned in their study. This claim is also upheld by the findings of the study by Canoy et al (2022), who suggested that non-major teachers are newly hired. Gaso (2025) had also observed that most of the out-of-field teachers have English as their major. As stated by Maguire (2023) in his study, 12 million English teachers were expected in 2019, which must be the reason why there is an excess number of English teachers, and they were made to teach non-major subjects.

2. Determine the level of teaching practices used by the respondents in teaching non-major subjects in terms of instructional strategies, student engagement, and classroom management

Scale	Domains	WM	Interpretation	Rank
Teaching Strategies	Instructional strategies	4.23	Highly Utilized	1
	Student engagement	4.15	Utilized	2
	Classroom management	4.04	Utilized	3
OVERALL		4.14	Utilized	

Table 2. Level of Teaching Strategies used by the Respondents

Table 2 presents the overall level of teaching strategies used by the out-of-field teacher respondents. It gained a weighted mean of 4.14, which means that these teaching strategies are actively and regularly practiced. Instructional strategies received the highest ranking, with a mean score of 4.23. This was followed by student engagement, which had a mean score of 4.15, and lastly, classroom management, scoring a mean of 4.04.

The data above corroborates the idea of Vesagas and Lantaka (2025), who state that out-of-field teachers exhibit a high level of instructional strategies, especially in content mastery. Though they use multimedia, they utilize interactive and critical strategies less. In addition, Cañeda and Biol Jr. (2025) stated that out-of-field teachers' instructional skills and classroom management are very satisfactory, which affirms the findings of the present study. Maratas et al. (2025) also claimed that out-of-field teachers exhibit good classroom management through routines but still struggle with deep engagement and complex questions from students.

3. Determine the level of challenges encountered by the out-of-field in terms of lesson planning, learning materials, and achievement of learning competencies

Scale	Domains	WM	Interpretation	Rank
Challenges	Lesson planning	3.38	Moderately Encountered	1
	Learning materials	2.99	Moderately Encountered	3
	Achievement of learning competencies	3.04	Moderately Encountered	2
OVERALL		3.13	Moderately Encountered	

Table 3. Challenges encountered by out-of-field teachers

The results show the overall weighted mean of 3.13 of the challenges encountered by out-of-field teachers. This means that they are neither minimal nor extreme, but need to be focused on by policymakers to ensure the attainment of equipping the learners with proper skills before moving up to the tertiary level. Challenge in lesson planning ranked 1 with a mean score of 3.38. In rank 2 is achievement of learning competencies with a mean score of 2.04, and in the 3rd rank is preparation of learning materials with a mean score of 2.99.

The findings disclosed that out-of-field teachers have moderately encountered challenges in teaching non-major subjects. This confirms the work of Lopez and Ramos (2025), who reported that out-of-field teachers struggle the most in making lesson plans. Time constraints, ancillary tasks, workload, and lack of support can be factors in these challenges encountered by them. On the other hand, teachers' resilience in this type of situation is commendable, but needs to be addressed to maximize their full potential and must not be taken for granted to avoid burnout and stress (Obias et al., 2025). Cañeda and Biol Jr. (2025) noted that without mastery of the lesson, out-of-field teachers will struggle in aligning their lesson plans with the standard.

Hence, the teacher's knowledge of lessons is considered the base for all teaching preparations: from lesson planning, crafting of instructional materials, and learning activities. Without this, there will be difficulty in transferring knowledge to students; hence, learning competencies will not be developed

4. Determine the significant difference in the level of teaching practices among out-of-field teachers when grouped according to their demographic profile

Profile	Inferential	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Age	F = .212	.810	Fail to reject H ₀	Not Significant
Years in teaching non-major subjects	F=.791	.505	Fail to reject H ₀	Not Significant
Baccalaureate Degree	F= .721	.545	Fail to reject H ₀	Not Significant
Field of Specialization	F = .449	.842	Fail to reject H ₀	Not Significant

Table 4. Difference in the Level of Teaching Strategies when Grouped According to Respondents' Profile Variables

Table 4 displays the test difference on the level of demographic profile with the level of teaching practices of the respondents. Across the indicators, the p-values are greater than the significance level (0.05), indicating they are not significant. This means that age, years in teaching, a baccalaureate degree, and the field of specialization of the out-of-field teacher respondents do not significantly differ in the level of teaching strategies utilized in the classroom.

Based on the results, there is no significant difference in the level of their teaching practices among out-of-field teachers in terms of their demographic profile (age, years in teaching non-major subjects, baccalaureate degrees, and field of specialization). This suggests that the fresh graduates and teachers with longer service have the same efficiency in teaching practices. Moreover, it can be inferred that educational attainment and specialization of out-of-field teachers do not significantly affect their teaching practices.

The results differ from Fullido's (2025) claim that years of non-major teachers significantly affect students' engagement. This may be because of the teacher's adaptability, dedication, and resourcefulness. Moreover, the readily available online resources and AI tools may have helped them outsource the learning materials they need to teach non-major subjects.

5. Determine the significant difference in the challenges encountered by out-of-field teachers when grouped according to their demographic profile

Profile	Inferential	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Age	F = .219	.804	Fail to reject H ₀	Not Significant
Years in teaching non-major subjects	F=.600	.618	Fail to reject H ₀	Not Significant
Baccalaureate Degree	F= 1.593	.204	Fail to reject H ₀	Not Significant
Field of Specialization	F = 2.244	.056	Fail to reject H ₀	Not Significant

Note. Dependent: Challenges Faced

Table 5. Difference in the Challenges Encountered by Out-of-Field when Grouped According to Respondents' Profile Variables

Table 5 presents that the p-values for the indicators exceed the level of significance (0.05), failing to reject the null hypothesis and yielding a non-significant interpretation.

The results indicate that there is no significant difference in the challenges faced by the respondents' demographic profile (age, years in teaching non-major subjects, baccalaureate degrees, and field of specialization). This affirms the claim of Gaso (2025), who stated that these demographic profiles do not influence the challenges faced by non-major teachers. This may be because out-of-field teaching is not new, but has existed for a long time and is still being practiced today (Wheely et al., 2023).

6. Determine the significant difference in the challenges encountered by out-of-field teachers when grouped according to their demographic profile

Independent	Dependent	Pearson's r^a	p -value	Decision	Interpretation ^b
Teaching Practices	Challenges	.202 (weak)	.155	Fail to reject H_0	Not Significant

Table 6. Relationship Between the Level of Teaching Practices and Challenges Encountered by Out-of-Field Teachers

Table 6 depicts the relationship between the level of teaching practices and challenges encountered by the respondents. The correlation between the two variables has a weak positive score ($r=0.202$), and the p-value (0.155) is higher than the level of significance (0.05), which gives an interpretation of not significant. Therefore, we can conclude that there is no significant relationship between the level of teaching practices and challenges encountered by the out-of-field teachers.

The data revealed that there is no significant relationship between the level of teaching practices and challenges encountered among the out-of-field teacher respondents. As cited by Raymundo (2021), non-major teachers were afraid and challenged at first in teaching non-major subjects, but found it rewarding afterwards. Technological advancement helped them to prepare lesson plans and instructional materials. Teachers tend to maximize all the available resources and seek help from colleagues (Dungca & Calaguas, 2025). Moreover, they see it as an opportunity for professional development (Tran, 2023). Despite this, she mentioned that normalizing it is not good for the mental and emotional health, as well as the physical health, of teachers

Conclusion and Implications

The study concluded that the level of teaching strategies of the out-of-field respondents is interpreted as highly utilized; hence, they are efficient in their role as teachers, even teaching non-major subjects. This can be the result of the adaptation of teachers in the K to 12 Curriculum, which is a spiral approach in teaching. Lessons taught in each subject per grade level require mastery of its different branches, and the teachers exhaust their means to come up with instructional strategies to achieve the desired learning competencies. The challenges encountered by the out of field teachers are at a moderate level.

They can perform satisfactorily in lesson planning, material preparation, and achievement of learning competencies. The advancements in technology may be a factor in their coping mechanisms to continuously provide an adept teaching experience to learners, even teaching non-specialized subjects. Furthermore, there is no significant difference in the level of teaching strategies among out-of-field teachers when grouped according to their demographic profile (age, years in service, baccalaureate degrees, and area of specialization). This implies that out-of-field teachers teaching for longer years (older) have the same level of teaching strategies as the newly hired (fresh graduates). In addition, the area of specialization is not significantly different among the profiles of the respondents. Likewise, there is no significant difference in the challenges faced by the out-of-field teachers when grouped according to their demographic profile (age, years in service, baccalaureate degrees, and area of specialization). This concludes that if teachers are given a task not familiar to them, they tend to use their best teaching methods to educate the learners, whatever age they have, years in service, or specialization. The level of teaching practices and challenges encountered by the out of field teachers has a weak positive correlation, but they are not significantly related to each other. This suggests that teachers find their situation to be an opportunity for professional development. This also complies with Social learning theory, where teachers adapt to the teaching and learning environment they are in. Collaborations among teachers, availability of resources, and mentorship are some proposed activities that may support our non-major teachers in their teaching journey.

Drawing from these results, the proposed intervention program Project ALIGN: Advancing Learning through Inclusive Growth for Non-Majors was designed to support out-of-field teachers to bridge the gap between specialization and teaching assignments to cope with the demands of the current curriculum. The study also recommends that DepEd administrators conduct a wider level (district, division level) to verify the perceptions on challenges and teaching performance of out-of-field teachers. Also, a mixed method of research may be conducted to obtain more substantial data on the level of teaching

practices and challenges faced by the non-major teachers. Other indicators for teaching strategy and challenges faced by out-of-field teachers may be explored to add substance to the existing literature. Lastly, the Department of Education may issue a memorandum of incentives for teachers who are teaching non-major subjects or provide seminars and workshops to equip teachers with the necessary skills they need. Provision of learning materials and resources must also be their priority to lessen the time of in lesson planning and learning material preparation.

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Competing Interests Statement

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this article.

Data Availability Statement

The datasets generated and analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. Due to ethical considerations and the protection of student participants' confidentiality, raw individual responses cannot be publicly shared. However, aggregated data tables, statistical outputs, and supporting materials used in the analysis are accessible for academic and research purposes.

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Appendices

No appendices are attached to this study.