

## Article

# Beyond Horizons: The Lived Experiences of Social Studies Teachers in Teaching Out-of-Field Subjects

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**Abstract:** Out-of-field teaching has increasingly challenged the Philippine education system, particularly in public secondary schools. This study explores the lived experiences of Social Studies teachers in Cabuyao City who were assigned to teach subjects beyond their specialization, such as MAPEH, TLE, Filipino, and Values Education. Guided by Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory and Shulman's Pedagogical Content Knowledge framework, a qualitative phenomenological research design was employed. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with ten purposively selected teachers and analyzed using Colaizzi's seven-step method. The analysis revealed two major themes: (1) Challenges Faced When Teaching Outside Expertise, and (2) Adaptive Strategies for Overcoming Out-of-Field Teaching Challenges. Key challenges included subject mastery gaps, difficulty in lesson delivery, lack of curriculum resources, increased preparation time, and anxiety. Despite these, participants demonstrated resilience by seeking peer support, attending professional development seminars, diversifying their teaching strategies, and embracing lifelong learning. Motivation, flexibility, and administrative support were vital to their ability to navigate these difficulties. Findings emphasized the importance of continuous professional development, mentorship, and institutional support systems to aid out-of-field teachers. The study concludes that while teaching outside one's specialization imposes significant instructional and emotional challenges, it also offers opportunities for professional growth, adaptability, and innovation in teaching practices. These insights are critical for shaping educational policies and support programs that can better equip teachers to handle the demands of out-of-field teaching and enhance overall educational quality.

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## 1. Introduction

Education is a vital force behind national development, and at the core of effective education is quality teaching. In the Philippines, the implementation of the K-12 curriculum aimed to enhance the quality of basic education and better prepare students for higher education and employment. However, the system has long struggled with challenges such as inadequate facilities, lack of learning materials, insufficient teacher training, and rushed implementation. In response, the Department of Education introduced the MATATAG Curriculum to address these gaps by simplifying content, focusing on foundational literacy and numeracy, and integrating core values and life skills into early education. Despite these reforms, one of the most pressing and persistent issues within the educational system is out-of-field teaching. Due to ongoing teacher shortages, many teachers are assigned to teach subjects outside their specialization. This practice can

compromise instructional quality, lower student engagement and achievement, and lead to increased stress and dissatisfaction among teachers. Teachers in such situations often face difficulty in lesson planning, content mastery, and classroom management due to lack of relevant training and limited institutional support. While this issue is widespread, there is limited research focused on how teachers cope with these assignments—particularly in specific local contexts. This study aims to explore the lived experiences, coping strategies, and professional development needs of public high school teachers in Cabuyao City who teach outside their area of specialization.

### Research Questions

This study, *Beyond Horizons: The Lived Experiences of Social Studies Teachers in Teaching Out-of-Field Subjects*, has explored the lived experiences of social studies teachers who have been assigned to teach subjects outside their field of specialization, such as MAPEH, TLE, Filipino, Entrepreneurship, Research, and Values Education. The research focused on the challenges these teachers have encountered in navigating unfamiliar curricula, pedagogical demands, and professional expectations, while also examining the coping mechanisms and strategies they have employed to address these difficulties. In particular, the following questions have been the focus of this study.

1. What are the lived experiences of out-of-field social studies teachers in the Division of Cabuyao?
2. What themes emerged from the lived experiences of out-of-field social studies teachers in the Division of Cabuyao?
3. What output can be proposed based on the findings?

### 2. Materials and Methods

The study utilized a qualitative phenomenological research design to examine the lived experiences of secondary social studies teachers instructing subjects outside their specialization in public secondary schools within Cabuyao, Laguna, Philippines. Ten participants were selected through purposive sampling. They were Social Studies teachers with at least two years of experience, teaching subjects such as MAPEH, Filipino, TLE, Applied Economics, Entrepreneurship, Research, and Values Education. Only teachers whose primary specialization was Social Studies were included, excluding those with dual specializations. All held the rank of Teacher I or II, and both junior and senior high school levels were represented.

Data collection was conducted using semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions, allowing participants to provide detailed, reflective responses. Follow-up questions were included to probe deeper into the participants' responses. Experts in research and Social Studies reviewed the interview protocol to ensure validity. Each interview was recorded using audio and video devices with the participants' consent and transcribed within 24 hours to ensure data accuracy. Data were analyzed using Colaizzi's (1978) seven-step method, which involved transcribing interviews, identifying significant statements, formulating meanings, clustering themes, developing an exhaustive description, and validating findings through participant feedback.

No statistical tests were applied, as the study was qualitative in nature; instead, themes and patterns were identified through iterative coding and analysis. Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Research Ethics Review Committee of Pamantasan ng Cabuyao. All participants provided written informed consent, and confidentiality was maintained by anonymizing data and securely storing files in compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173). Participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any point without consequence.

### 3. Results

The results of the study were analyzed and discussed according to each research problem. Since the main objective of the study was to explore the lived experiences of Social Studies teachers in teaching out-of-field subjects, the researcher has developed superordinate themes based on the codes derived from the participants' responses. These overarching themes served as the main categories used to address each research problem.

**Table 1.** Summary of the Superordinate Themes and Major Themes Emerged in the Study.

Superordinate Themes	Major Themes
Subject Mastery and Pedagogical Challenges	Challenges Faced When Teaching Social Studies Outside Expertise
Resource and Curriculum Constraints	
Preparation and Reliance on Peer Support	
Seeking Support and Professional Growth	
Enhancing Teaching Strategies	Adaptive Strategies for Overcoming Out-of-Field Teaching Challenges
Lifelong Learning and Self-Improvement	
Motivation and Resilience	

The first major theme, Challenges Faced When Teaching Social Studies Outside Expertise, highlights the lived experiences of Social Studies teachers as they navigate the difficulties of teaching beyond their subject specialization. This theme encompasses issues related to subject mastery and pedagogical challenges, limited resources and curriculum constraints, and the need for preparation and reliance on peer support.

The second major theme, Adaptive Strategies for Overcoming Out-of-Field Teaching Challenges, presents how teachers respond to the demands of out-of-field teaching. This theme includes seeking support and professional growth, enhancing teaching strategies, committing to lifelong learning and self-improvement, and demonstrating motivation and resilience in overcoming instructional challenges.

**Table 2.** Summary of Subordinate Themes, Superordinate Themes, and Major Theme for Research Question 1.

Subordinate Themes	Superordinate Themes	Major Theme
1. Encountering Gaps in Subject Mastery	Subject Mastery and Pedagogical Challenges	Challenges Faced When Teaching Social Studies Outside Expertise
2. Struggles with Lesson Delivery		
3. Challenges in Breaking Down Complex Ideas		
4. Extended Study Hours		
5. Apprehension in Teaching Beyond Expertise		
6. Unfamiliarity with the Subject		
7. Struggles in Obtaining Learning Resources	Resource and Curriculum Constraints	
8. Gaps with Curriculum Implementation		
9. Limited Eligibility for Subject-Specific Training		

10. Perceived Skill Gap Among Colleagues	Struggles in Preparation and Reliance on Peer Support		
11. Challenges in Lesson Preparation			
12. Motivation Support from Colleagues			
13. Seeking Guidance for Lesson Enhancement	Seeking Support and Professional Growth		
14. Professional Development Through Training Seminars			
15. Administrative Support for Instructional Materials			
16. Diversifying Teaching Strategies	Enhancing Teaching Strategies	Adaptive Strategies for Overcoming Out-of-Field Teaching Challenges	
17. Utilizing Multimedia for Effective Instruction			
18. Utilizing Interactive Teaching Approaches			
19. Ensuring Lesson Clarity	Lifelong Learning and Self-Improvement		
20. Explores Multiple References for Teaching			
21. Embracing Lifelong Learning in Teaching			
22. Proactive Learning for Teaching	Motivation and Resilience		
23. Embraces Learning Outside One’s Expertise			
24. Self-Directed Learning			
25. Embracing Challenges for Growth			
26. Reward-Based Motivation			
27. Enhance Professional Confidence			
28. Passion for Teaching			
29. Adapting to Out-of-Field Teaching			

Table 2 shows the themes that emerged from the qualitative data gathered. The themes presented highlight how teachers face the demands and challenges of teaching social studies outside their expertise. Despite the challenges and struggles teachers encounter in teaching social studies outside their expertise, teachers continue to find ways to overcome these hurdles.

#### 4. Discussion

##### Challenges Faced When Teaching Social Studies Outside Expertise

##### Subject Mastery and Pedagogical Challenges

The results of this study highlight the significant challenges encountered by teachers assigned to teach Social Studies outside their area of expertise. These include gaps in subject mastery, difficulties in lesson delivery, struggles in simplifying complex concepts, extended hours spent on self-study, and anxiety about teaching unfamiliar content. These findings are consistent with those of Abaño et al [1], who reported that out-of-field teachers often lack sufficient subject knowledge, making it difficult to confidently address students' questions. Participants in this study echoed these concerns, particularly in reference to specialized subjects such as Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE), where teaching demands technical skills and industry-specific knowledge that many teachers lack.

In addition to knowledge-related barriers, participants identified significant resource and curriculum constraints. Teachers described difficulties accessing appropriate

instructional materials and highlighted limited eligibility for subject-specific training programs. These findings align with the work of Co et al [14], who noted that out-of-field teachers often struggle to select effective teaching strategies and bridge knowledge gaps due to inadequate resources and support. Participants emphasized that the absence of aligned materials and curriculum guidance intensified the complexity of teaching unfamiliar subjects.

The study also underscores the critical role of collegial and administrative support. Teachers reported relying heavily on peer collaboration and motivational support from both colleagues and school leaders to navigate the demands of out-of-field teaching. This supports Roxas [41], who emphasized the value of peer networks in helping teachers overcome instructional challenges. Participants highlighted that guidance and encouragement from more experienced colleagues provided not only pedagogical strategies but also emotional reassurance, enhancing their professional confidence and resilience.

Moreover, the findings highlight the importance of continuous learning and self-improvement. Participants demonstrated a strong commitment to professional growth, embracing collaborative development and research-informed practices to adapt to their out-of-field roles. This aligns with the conclusions of Buenacosa and Petalla [12], who found that insufficient subject knowledge contributes to daily teaching stress and job dissatisfaction. In response, participants actively sought professional development opportunities and adopted new teaching approaches to increase their instructional effectiveness.

Overall, this study underscores the urgent need to provide comprehensive support for teachers assigned to teach outside their specialization. Addressing the challenges of out-of-field teaching requires a multi-faceted approach that includes targeted professional development, access to subject-specific instructional resources, and robust peer and administrative support systems. These measures are essential not only for enhancing teacher performance but also for improving student learning outcomes. As such, educational institutions and policymakers must prioritize structural interventions that empower teachers to succeed in diverse instructional roles.

### **Resource and Curriculum Constraints**

The findings of this study reveal that the dual burden of inadequate learning resources and curriculum-related constraints significantly compromises instructional effectiveness, particularly for teachers assigned outside their area of specialization. These challenges are further magnified under the recently implemented MATATAG Curriculum, which many participants described as rushed, overly ambitious, and unsupported by essential resources and training. A recurring theme in the participants' responses was the severe lack of curriculum-aligned instructional materials. This deficit hindered lesson planning, delivery, and learner engagement—especially in subjects requiring specialized knowledge. These experiences align with the findings of Abaño et al [1], who observed that public school teachers, especially in underfunded settings, often lack the necessary tools for effective instruction.

This issue becomes even more acute for out-of-field teachers. Participants 4, 5, and 7 emphasized that the absence of official resources forced them to spend excessive hours sourcing or improvising materials from various online and informal sources. This mirrors the observations of Du Plessis [21], who noted that out-of-field teachers frequently experience heightened workloads due to a lack of subject-specific resources and training. Furthermore, some schools reportedly restrict access to instructional materials produced outside their division, further exacerbating the problem and limiting teachers' ability to adapt or improve their instructional content. These systemic limitations point to broader issues in policy coordination and resource distribution.

In addition to resource gaps, the MATATAG Curriculum itself presented several implementation challenges. Teachers described the rollout as poorly timed and inadequately supported, with curriculum content often exceeding the limits of class schedules and learner capacity. Participant 5 criticized the reform as “not fully developed,” citing abrupt leadership transitions and unrealistic pacing guides as contributing factors. These concerns echo the findings of Baras and Gillo [9], who argued that curricular reforms lacking proper planning and training often result in instructional confusion and teacher burnout. Participant 7’s struggle to simplify complex lessons within limited instructional hours further illustrates the disconnect between curriculum design and classroom realities, reinforcing Roxas’s concern [41] that such misalignments can compromise both teacher morale and student outcomes.

Professional development, or the lack thereof, also emerged as a critical concern. Several participants noted that subject-specific training opportunities were typically limited to teachers officially assigned to those subjects, leaving out-of-field teachers with minimal formal support. This exclusion is particularly problematic in schools where out-of-field teaching has become increasingly common due to staffing limitations. Roxas [41] emphasized that even capable teachers may falter when teaching unfamiliar content without adequate training. Similarly, Baras and Gillo [9] advocated for inclusive and continuous professional development, especially in the context of major curriculum reforms like MATATAG. Abrantes and Bargamento [2] echoed this view, arguing that assigning teachers to out-of-field subjects without structured upskilling pathways weakens instructional quality and increases teacher stress.

While peer collaboration was mentioned as a coping mechanism, its effectiveness varied. Some participants benefited from mentoring and shared resources, while others found such support inconsistent or limited by their colleagues’ own constraints. This reflects Vygotsky’s Social Constructivist Theory, which posits that learning is mediated through interactions with More Knowledgeable Others (MKOs). However, in environments where MKOs are either unavailable or insufficiently trained, the benefits of collaborative learning are diminished. Participant 9’s difficulty in contextualizing research instruction due to limited mentoring exemplifies how the lack of structured support systems hampers both professional growth and instructional success.

The data suggest that educational reforms like the MATATAG Curriculum must be implemented holistically. Without adequate instructional materials, realistic pacing, and inclusive teacher training, even well-intentioned reforms risk overburdening teachers and undermining educational outcomes. The recurring theme of teacher improvisation—borne out of necessity rather than innovation—underscores the systemic gaps in policy execution. Teachers, particularly those without subject expertise, are left to navigate complex curriculum demands with limited institutional support. These findings reinforce the conclusions of Du Plessis [21], and Roxas [41], who warned that the lack of comprehensive support structures jeopardizes both the success of reforms and the well-being of teachers.

In sum, this study highlights the intersection of material scarcity, curricular overload, and inadequate professional development as key barriers to effective instruction. The MATATAG Curriculum, while progressive in intent, falls short in execution due to the absence of foundational supports necessary for its success. Moving forward, it is imperative that policymakers and educational leaders address these structural issues by ensuring equitable access to instructional materials, expanding training opportunities to include out-of-field teachers, and aligning curriculum timelines with real-world classroom conditions. Only through such comprehensive measures can educational reforms achieve their intended outcomes and avoid deepening the existing inequities faced by teachers and learners alike.

### **Struggles in Preparation and Reliance on Peer Support**

Teachers often face significant challenges in lesson preparation, especially when assigned to subjects outside their area of expertise. This situation amplifies feelings of inadequacy and increases professional stress due to a lack of content mastery and familiarity with effective instructional strategies. Roxas [41] emphasized that out-of-field teaching introduces multiple challenges, particularly in lesson planning, content comprehension, and the creation of engaging activities. These issues are intensified when teachers are expected to meet curriculum standards without sufficient background knowledge or subject-specific training. Baras and Gillo [9] similarly noted that out-of-field teachers are often compelled to devote excessive time to studying content and preparing materials because they lack the foundation and confidence required to teach the subject effectively. This added workload not only strains teachers' time but also compromises their ability to deliver high-quality instruction consistently.

The complexity of lesson preparation for unfamiliar subjects is compounded by the scarcity of specialized training and support systems. Du Plessis [21] found that out-of-field teachers frequently rely on extensive self-study and repetitive practice to develop a working knowledge of the subject matter. This reality underscores the critical role of structured and inclusive professional development. When teachers are assigned to subjects beyond their specialization without access to appropriate training, their instructional performance suffers, and student learning outcomes may also be compromised. The lack of tailored seminars and workshops leaves these teachers ill-equipped to design lessons that are both content-accurate and pedagogically sound.

While peer support is often cited as a coping mechanism, its effectiveness is limited by the availability and competence of knowledgeable colleagues. Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory posits that learning is facilitated through interactions with more knowledgeable others (MKOs). However, in many school settings—particularly under-resourced ones—these MKOs may be unavailable or themselves unprepared, limiting the practical benefits of collaboration. The resulting knowledge gaps force out-of-field teachers to operate largely in isolation, relying on their own research and intuition, which increases their workload and decreases instructional confidence.

Moreover, lesson preparation for unfamiliar subjects requires teachers to invest significantly more time in aligning their content with curriculum expectations and ensuring their activities meet learner needs. Unlike subject specialists, out-of-field teachers must constantly verify the accuracy of their content and seek alignment with curricular goals. This effort, though commendable, often leads to emotional exhaustion and diminished professional satisfaction. As highlighted by Abrantes and Bargamento [2], teachers working outside their specialization without adequate preparation are more likely to experience burnout and decreased instructional efficacy.

In summary, the struggle of lesson preparation among out-of-field teachers is a compounded issue driven by insufficient training, lack of subject mastery, and inadequate institutional support. Without systematic interventions such as inclusive training programs, access to subject-specific resources, and supportive peer collaboration structures, out-of-field teaching risks undermining both educator effectiveness and student learning. The findings from this study reinforce the importance of holistic teacher development and the need for policies that consider the realities of multi-subject assignments in today's educational landscape.

### **Adaptive Strategies for Overcoming Out-of-Field Teaching Challenges**

#### **Seeking Support and Professional Growth**

Out-of-field teachers often depend on the support of their colleagues to manage the difficulties of teaching subjects outside their area of specialization. The data revealed that collaboration among teachers plays a central role in helping them cope with instructional

challenges. Participants frequently mentioned turning to subject specialists for advice, instructional strategies, lesson materials, and moral encouragement. These interactions fostered a sense of belonging and emotional reassurance, helping alleviate feelings of uncertainty and inadequacy. This is consistent with the findings of Belmonte et al [11], who asserted that collegial support creates effective learning environments and boosts teacher adaptability. Similarly, Hobbs et al [27] and Arendain [7] emphasized that peer collaboration and professional learning communities not only improve teacher competence but also enhance student outcomes. These support systems serve as informal yet powerful forms of mentorship that facilitate knowledge exchange and skill development.

Another significant theme that emerged is the importance of professional development in building teaching capacity. Participants acknowledged that attending training seminars and workshops enabled them to gain deeper subject knowledge, explore new pedagogical techniques, and adapt to curriculum changes. Such opportunities were particularly helpful in preparing instructional materials and improving lesson delivery. This aligns with Co et al [14], who noted that teachers who lack subject specialization can compensate by engaging in structured learning and professional development. Layese et al [29] also emphasized the role of lifelong learning in enhancing teaching effectiveness, highlighting how teachers consistently pursue learning opportunities to strengthen their instructional practices. Furthermore, Bugwak [13] pointed out that participation in targeted training contributes to continuous improvement and ensures instructional alignment with student needs and curriculum goals.

The study also found that school leadership and administrative support significantly contribute to the success of out-of-field teachers. Participants reported receiving teaching aids, instructional materials, and technical assistance from school heads and coordinators. In some cases, principals and supervisors conducted regular check-ins, offered feedback, and facilitated communication with the division office to address specific instructional challenges. This organizational support eases the burden of lesson preparation and reinforces teacher confidence. Layese et al [29] underscored the importance of strong principal-teacher relationships, showing that effective school leadership creates a nurturing environment that fosters student success. The availability of instructional materials, assistance with teaching tools, and logistical support during training further demonstrate how administrative systems can create conditions for professional growth and improved classroom performance.

Overall, the findings reinforce that seeking support and pursuing professional growth are essential strategies that enable out-of-field teachers to navigate unfamiliar teaching assignments. While the lack of subject expertise presents considerable challenges, these can be mitigated through collaborative learning, professional development, and strong institutional support. The integration of these support mechanisms not only enhances teaching effectiveness but also contributes to teacher resilience, motivation, and professional identity. As supported by the studies of Co et al [14], Belmonte et al [11], and Layese et al [29], when teachers are equipped with the right resources and networks, they are more capable of delivering quality education—even in subjects beyond their specialization. These insights highlight the need for educational policies that promote ongoing professional training, strengthen collegial networks, and ensure school leaders are equipped to support diverse teaching assignments in an increasingly dynamic educational landscape.

### **Enhancing Teaching Strategies**

To effectively teach subjects outside their area of expertise, teachers adopt a variety of strategies aimed at enhancing student engagement and improving instructional delivery. These strategies often include the integration of multimedia tools, interactive activities, and various reference materials to make lessons more relatable and easier to

understand. By utilizing online platforms, simulations, virtual labs, and interactive media, teachers create immersive learning environments that foster curiosity and deepen student comprehension.

Research supports the effectiveness of these strategies. Co et al [14] highlighted the use of YouTube videos to enhance students' understanding, which aligns with the practices of many out-of-field teachers. The integration of technology, especially practical ICT tools, is particularly beneficial in teaching unfamiliar subjects. Bayani and Guhao [10] noted that out-of-field teachers often use engaging techniques to draw students' attention and boost academic performance.

In addition, Belmonte [11] found that teachers frequently rely on textbooks, division modules, and online resources such as Google and YouTube to access diverse content. This practice supports the findings of Mishra and Koehler [32], who emphasized the importance of integrating technology into pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) to improve both subject mastery and instructional strategies. Similarly, Layese et al [29] recommended the use of interactive methods such as role-playing, group work, and board work to promote active learning.

Bugwak [13] also emphasized that the careful organization of subject matter and well-prepared lesson plans contribute significantly to teaching effectiveness. Belmonte et al [11] reiterated the importance of accessible learning materials in helping out-of-field teachers simplify complex topics for better student understanding. As a result, many teachers continually explore and adapt teaching strategies to meet students' diverse learning needs.

### **Lifelong Learning and Self-Improvement**

Lifelong learning and self-improvement are crucial for teachers, particularly those teaching subjects outside their area of expertise. Ongoing professional development helps teachers adapt to new teaching methods, deepen their subject knowledge, and refine their instructional techniques. By actively seeking learning opportunities, teachers can enhance their effectiveness, ensuring they provide quality education while also boosting their own skills and confidence.

Du Plessis [21] emphasized that quality education requires continuous professional growth and the acquisition of new knowledge. Layese et al [29] supported this view, stressing the importance of equipping teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge through research and self-study. Roxas [41] highlighted that out-of-field teachers often depend on collaboration and peer support to fill gaps in their knowledge and abilities. In this context, peer mentoring and collegial support become vital tools for improving instructional quality.

Abaño et al [1] noted that teachers engage in self-directed learning by conducting extensive online research, reading, and hands-on experiences to address teaching challenges and improve their competence. Arendain and Limpot [7] also emphasized the significance of teachers continually reviewing and studying the subjects they teach to ensure effective instruction. Participants in the study shared their experiences of engaging in self-study, attending seminars, and seeking additional training to enhance their teaching abilities.

In addition, out-of-field teachers rely on peer tutoring and collaboration with colleagues to bridge gaps in their knowledge and skills. These interactions foster an environment of shared learning, where teachers support one another's professional development. Participants further emphasized the importance of self-directed learning, using methods like internet research, intensive reading, and hands-on experiences to overcome teaching challenges and improve teaching competency.

Roxas [41] emphasized the value of collaborative learning among teachers, noting that teacher-to-teacher interactions contribute to professional growth and help bridge

knowledge gaps. Buenacosa et al [13] also underscored the importance of professional communication, asserting that sharing best practices enhances teaching quality and student outcomes. Bayani and Guhao [10] reinforced that 21st-century teachers must continuously refine their teaching methods to address the evolving needs of students. Additionally, Roxas [41] argued that out-of-field teachers must embrace lifelong learning as they navigate new subjects, leveraging technology and professional development to close content gaps. Lastly, Rebucas and Dizon [17] advocated for a positive attitude toward lifelong learning, suggesting that teachers who acknowledge their knowledge limitations and actively seek improvement are more adaptable and resilient in the classroom.

### **Motivation and Resilience**

Out-of-field teachers show impressive motivation and resilience as they tackle the challenges of teaching subjects outside their area of expertise. By viewing these challenges as opportunities for growth, they consistently improve their skills and broaden their knowledge. Their passion for teaching fuels their determination, while motivation linked to rewards and professional confidence propels them to continually enhance their abilities.

Bayani and Guhao [10] discussed how acknowledging teachers' efforts and offering support can boost their motivation and commitment. Through adaptability and a focus on lifelong learning, these teachers not only overcome obstacles but also become more effective in varied teaching settings. Roxas [41] emphasized that out-of-field teachers see their challenges as chances for professional development and adjustment. Du Plessis [21] highlighted that quality education requires recognizing and supporting teachers, which can elevate their motivation and dedication. Wheeley et al [49] suggested that overcoming the difficulties of out-of-field teaching boosts teachers' self-efficacy and confidence.

Moreover, Arendain [7] pointed out that teachers' passion for their profession drives them to overcome difficulties and aim for excellence. Bugwak [13] supported the idea that peer mentoring, professional development, and resourcefulness are key to helping teachers manage unfamiliar subjects and enhance their teaching. Similarly, Arendain and Limpot [7] stressed the importance of peer support, professional development, and resourcefulness in assisting teachers in navigating unfamiliar content.

Participants' responses highlight how out-of-field teaching challenges contribute to their personal and professional growth. They view these challenges as valuable learning experiences that help them acquire new knowledge, refine their teaching methods, and enhance their professional development. Over time, their perseverance allows them to approach these assignments with greater confidence and competence, strengthening their adaptability as teachers.

### **Themes Emerged from the Lived Experiences of Out-of-Field Social Studies Teachers**

#### **Theme 1: Challenges Faced When Teaching Social Studies Outside Expertise**

Teaching Social Studies outside one's area of expertise presents several significant challenges that impact both educators and students. One of the primary difficulties faced by teachers is subject mastery, which often leads to struggles in lesson delivery, simplifying complex ideas, and effectively engaging students. This challenge necessitates extended study hours and generates apprehension about teaching unfamiliar content. Additionally, the limited availability of subject-specific training and resources further complicates curriculum implementation, leaving educators to rely on peer support, which may not always be adequate. The pressure to perform effectively in a subject outside their expertise often results in anxiety and frustration, which in turn affects the overall quality of instruction. Furthermore, the misalignment between teachers' qualifications and their assigned subjects not only places additional burdens on educators but also influences student learning outcomes. To address these challenges, it is crucial to provide sufficient training, resources, and ongoing support, thereby ensuring effective instruction in out-of-field teaching contexts.

## Theme 2: Adaptive Strategies for Overcoming Out-of-Field Teaching Strategies

Teachers assigned to subjects outside their expertise develop adaptive strategies to ensure effective instruction. One key strategy is seeking support from colleagues and attending professional development seminars, which helps build confidence and enhance instructional methods. Many educators also diversify their teaching approaches by incorporating multimedia tools, interactive activities, and multiple references to improve lesson engagement and clarity. Additionally, a strong commitment to lifelong learning enables teachers to expand their knowledge through self-directed study and proactive skill development. Despite the challenges, motivation and resilience play a crucial role in overcoming these obstacles. Teachers view these assignments as opportunities for professional growth, refining their teaching practices and finding fulfillment in their evolving roles. Through adaptability, collaboration, and continuous learning, they successfully navigate out-of-field teaching challenges, ensuring meaningful learning experiences for their students.

### Proposed Output Based on Findings

Based on the findings from the study, the proposed BRIDGE Framework aims to enhance the task performance of Out-of-Field teachers and improve overall organizational efficiency. This framework identifies six critical areas for improvement, each represented by a component of the BRIDGE acronym. By implementing these components, institutions can create a more supportive, structured, and growth-oriented work environment.

The first component, Build Competency through Professional Development, focuses on equipping teachers with the skills and knowledge needed to teach beyond their specialization. The proposed action plan includes organizing quarterly training workshops on out-of-field subject content and pedagogy, with school heads, division training units, and DepEd Curriculum Implementation Division responsible for execution. Resources needed include budget for trainers, modules, venue logistics, and certificates, with success indicated by 90% attendance and positive feedback from participants.

Resource Access and Enhancement aims to provide ready access to teaching materials and tools to aid instructional delivery. The action plan involves developing a centralized digital resource bank for out-of-field subjects, managed by ICT coordinators and department heads. Necessary resources include a Learning Management System (LMS), internet access, and educational content subscriptions, with success measured by at least 50% of out-of-field teachers accessing and using the resource bank.

The third component, Initiate Mentorship and Peer Collaboration, promotes knowledge-sharing and support through strong peer and mentor relationships. This involves implementing a buddy system pairing in-field and out-of-field teachers for weekly planning and co-teaching, coordinated by department heads and master teachers. Resources needed include time allotment in schedules, mentoring guidelines, and feedback forms, with success indicated by at least 75% of pairs reporting improved teaching performance.

Develop Resilience and Motivation focuses on fostering emotional well-being, motivation, and adaptability in teachers. The action plan includes hosting quarterly motivational seminars and teacher wellness programs, organized by the guidance office, HRD, and external motivational speakers. Resources needed include venue, honorarium, and wellness materials, with success measured by increased job satisfaction and decreased burnout among teachers.

Generate Policy Support ensures institutional and administrative support through clear, inclusive policies. The action plan advocates for a policy memo institutionalizing BRIDGE framework support programs, with principals, division superintendents, and school governing councils responsible for execution. Resources needed include research

documents, policy drafts, and consultation meetings, with success indicated by policy adoption and implementation in pilot schools.

Finally, Elevate Teacher Confidence and Efficacy aims to recognize and empower teachers to thrive in any teaching assignment. The action plan involves establishing a recognition system for out-of-field teaching achievements, managed by school administration, HR, and awards committees. Resources needed include awards criteria, budget for incentives, and certificates, with success measured by increased teacher performance ratings and retention.

By addressing these key areas, the BRIDGE Framework aims to empower out-of-field teachers, enhance their performance, and contribute to a more effective and supportive educational environment.

## 5. Conclusion

Based on the study's findings, several conclusions were drawn regarding the assignment of Social Studies teachers to teach outside their field of specialization. Firstly, this assignment presents significant instructional challenges, primarily in subject mastery, lesson delivery, and curriculum implementation. The lack of specialized training and limited access to resources exacerbate these difficulties, affecting both teacher performance and student learning outcomes. Despite these challenges, Social Studies teachers demonstrate adaptability and resilience, employing various coping strategies to ensure effective teaching. Seeking peer support, attending training sessions, and utilizing diverse instructional methods help mitigate the negative impact of out-of-field teaching assignments.

Furthermore, professional development and administrative support play a crucial role in improving the experiences of out-of-field teachers by providing necessary training, resources, and guidance to enhance teaching effectiveness. These support systems help teachers gain confidence and competence in delivering lessons outside their expertise. The importance of continuous learning and self-improvement is evident, as teachers proactively seek knowledge and refine their teaching strategies. The ability to adapt and innovate is a key factor in overcoming the challenges posed by out-of-field teaching.

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