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## STRENGTHENING NOVICE TEACHERS' PASSION IN TEACHING: LEARNING FROM OLDER GENERATION TEACHERS

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### ABSTRACT

The study was conducted to describe the experiences of novice teachers in stimulating their passion to teaching and to strengthen competence. Qualitative research design was used and considered assumption on selecting participants, ethics, in collecting, analyzing and interpreting data. Respondents were the newly-hired teachers purposely selected through referrals, using facilitating questions to draw out narratives on their experiences, challenges and coping mechanism and further learning insights given their undertakings as novice teachers. Experiences among novice teachers in strengthening their passion are having the strong desire to make a positive difference, engaging in self-reflection and mentorship and professional development opportunities. Coping mechanisms shared through enthusiasm, creativity and dedication. Despite experiences, challenges and learning insights shared, through innovation in teaching, collaboration among teachers and continuous professional development. Future direction of the experiences, coping mechanisms, and educational insights among novice teachers may focus on providing comprehensive professional development opportunities, promoting collaboration among teachers, and emphasizing the importance of innovation in teaching. Novice teachers can continue to strengthen their passion for teaching and enhance their effectiveness in the classroom, ultimately improving student learning outcomes.

**Keywords:** Novice Teachers; Passion

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

In an ever-evolving educational landscape, the role of novice teachers is critical in shaping the future of learning environments. However, transitioning from pre-service education to professional teaching presents significant challenges that can affect their passion and competence in the classroom. Globally, the teacher attrition rate among novice educators has risen alarmingly, with studies noting that nearly 30% leave the profession within the first five years due to stress, lack of support, and inadequate preparation (Darling-Hammond et al., 2021; OECD, 2020). Similarly, a shortage of qualified teachers worldwide continues to threaten the quality of education, with UNESCO (2022) highlighting that more than 69 million new teachers are needed to meet the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal for universal primary and secondary education. Furthermore, disparities in professional development opportunities have exacerbated the challenges faced by early-career educators, particularly in low-income countries (World Bank, 2021).

On a national scale, the Philippines grapples with its own set of pressing issues in education.

The Teacher Education Council (2021) noted that Filipino novice teachers face challenges such as adapting to the new K-12 curriculum, technological integration in teaching, and managing large class sizes, which often lead to professional burnout. The COVID-19 pandemic further disrupted traditional teaching practices, compelling novice teachers to adapt rapidly to online and hybrid models of instruction (Cahapay, 2021). Despite government efforts to implement professional development programs, gaps in mentoring systems and institutional support persist, affecting the effectiveness of novice teachers (DepEd, 2022). Additionally, the Professional Regulation Commission (2023) highlighted that only 30% of teacher education graduates pass the licensure exams, raising concerns about the readiness of new teachers entering the field.

Locally, in Davao City, novice teachers encounter contextual challenges that mirror national and global concerns but are compounded by unique regional factors. Resource shortages in public schools, particularly in remote areas, limit opportunities for effective teaching and learning (Cabrera et al., 2021).

Furthermore, mentoring programs remain underutilized, leaving novice teachers to navigate their roles independently (Cañete et al., 2023). The implementation of the MATATAG curriculum has also introduced additional demands, requiring teachers to balance content delivery with student-centered approaches (Balano, 2022). These challenges underscore the urgent need for sustainable strategies that foster the passion and professional growth of novice teachers in the region.

#### Synthesis and Objectives

Addressing these global, national, and local issues requires a holistic approach that prioritizes mentorship, innovation, and collaboration among educators. This study seeks to describe the experiences of novice teachers in reigniting their passion for teaching and strengthening their competence. Specifically, it aims to identify the challenges they face, the coping mechanisms they employ, and the professional development initiatives they find most effective. By doing so,

this research contributes to the broader discourse on teacher retention, quality education, and professional sustainability. Ultimately, this study hopes to inform policies and practices that enhance teacher effectiveness and improve student learning outcomes.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### Introduction

The experiences of novice teachers in fostering their passion and competence are globally significant topics in education, given their critical role in improving student outcomes and sustaining education systems. Across regions, novice teachers face a variety of challenges, including adapting to diverse learning environments, integrating technology, and maintaining motivation amid resource constraints. This literature review examines recent studies from ASEAN, European, African, and Australian contexts to identify common challenges, existing support systems, and gaps in knowledge. It provides a comprehensive understanding of how novice teachers navigate their professional journey while addressing global, regional, and local issues.

### ASEAN Context

In the ASEAN region, novice teachers encounter challenges related to curriculum adaptation, resource shortages, and cultural diversity. Cahapay (2021) noted that Filipino novice teachers experienced significant difficulties transitioning to online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic, a shift that exposed gaps in their preparedness. Similarly, Nguyen and Pham (2022) highlighted that in Vietnam, new teachers struggled with classroom management and curriculum reforms. Malaysia has also faced issues with the alignment of teacher training programs and real-world classroom demands, as noted by Ali et al. (2021). While these challenges are prevalent, Singapore's mentorship programs offer a model of structured support. Chong et al. (2021) emphasized that novice teachers in Singapore benefit from systematic induction programs, which include mentorship and ongoing professional development.

In the Philippines, challenges such as large class sizes and resource shortages exacerbate the difficulties faced by novice teachers. Cabrera et al. (2021) pointed out that teachers in remote areas are particularly vulnerable due to limited access to instructional materials and professional support. These issues underline the importance of creating localized strategies that address the unique challenges faced by teachers in specific cultural and socio-economic contexts.

### European Context

In Europe, teacher retention and professional well-being are frequently studied topics. Jones et al. (2021) reported that novice teachers in the UK often leave the profession within their first five years due to burnout, workload, and insufficient support systems. In Finland, mentorship and collaboration are integral to novice teacher development. Virtanen et al. (2022) emphasized that collaborative mentorship programs significantly enhance novice teachers' confidence and teaching efficacy. Despite these successes, disparities in mentorship quality persist across European countries, particularly in under-resourced areas.

The integration of technology is another pressing issue for European novice teachers. Müller and Schmidt (2023) found that German novice teachers often lack the necessary skills to implement digital tools effectively in their classrooms, despite the increasing emphasis on technology in education. This challenge highlights a gap in teacher training programs, which often fail to adequately prepare teachers for the technological demands of modern classrooms.

### African Context

In Africa, systemic inequities and resource constraints are primary challenges for novice teachers. Ouma et al. (2021) noted that in Kenya, a lack of teaching materials and large class sizes hindered the effectiveness of novice teachers. Similarly, Mbatha (2022) highlighted the difficulties faced by South African teachers in under-resourced schools, including the absence of structured mentorship programs. Despite these challenges, resilience and community support play a significant role in helping novice teachers navigate their professional journey. Tchoumbou et al. (2021) explored how Cameroonian novice teachers relied on intrinsic motivation and community-based support systems to overcome adversity.

While African research often focuses on resource constraints, there is limited exploration of how novice teachers develop innovative teaching practices in these challenging environments. This gap underscores the need for studies that examine the interplay between resourcefulness, resilience, and professional growth among African educators.

### Australian Context

Australia's education system supports novice teachers through induction programs, but these resources are often inaccessible to those in rural and remote areas. Williams and Clarke (2023) reported that rural novice teachers face higher attrition rates due to isolation and lack of support. Urban teachers, on the other hand, benefit from structured mentorship and professional development programs, as highlighted by Brown et al. (2021).

Innovation in teaching is a key focus in Australia. Wilson et al. (2023) found that novice teachers who embrace creative and student-centered teaching practices report higher job satisfaction and improved student outcomes. However, there is limited research on how these practices are shared and sustained among novice teachers, particularly in underserved regions.

### Global Issues and Trends

Globally, teacher shortages and attrition rates are significant concerns. UNESCO (2022) reported that over 69 million new teachers are needed to meet the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, emphasizing the importance of supporting novice educators. The World Bank (2021) highlighted the need for targeted support in low-income countries, where teachers often face resource constraints and inadequate professional development opportunities.

Mentorship is universally acknowledged as a critical factor in novice teacher success. Darling-Hammond et al. (2021) emphasized that effective mentorship programs enhance teacher retention and improve classroom practices. However, gaps remain in understanding how mentorship can be adapted to diverse cultural and socio-economic contexts. Additionally, technological integration and innovative teaching practices are underexplored areas, particularly in resource-constrained settings.

### Synthesis and Gaps

Across regions, novice teachers face common challenges, including inadequate mentorship, resource constraints, and adapting to technological advancements. While research has extensively documented these issues, significant gaps remain in understanding how novice teachers navigate these challenges to strengthen their passion and competence. Specifically, there is limited exploration of the role of informal support systems, community-based initiatives, and innovative teaching strategies in supporting novice teachers. Additionally, regional disparities in professional development opportunities highlight the need for localized and context-specific solutions.

This study addresses these gaps by exploring the experiences of Filipino novice teachers, focusing on their coping mechanisms, learning insights, and strategies for professional growth. By examining these aspects, this research aims to inform policies and practices that enhance teacher effectiveness and contribute to improved student outcomes.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore the experiences of novice teachers in fostering their passion for teaching and strengthening their competence. A qualitative approach was chosen as it allows for an in-depth understanding of participants' lived experiences, providing rich, detailed data (Creswell & Poth, 2021). Specifically, the study used a phenomenological approach, which focuses on understanding the essence of individuals' experiences, making it ideal for capturing the challenges, coping mechanisms, and professional growth of novice teachers (Van Manen, 2020).

### Participants and Sampling

The study involved purposive sampling to select participants who met specific criteria: (1) novice teachers with less than three years of teaching experience, (2) currently employed in public schools, and (3) willing to share their experiences in detail. A total of 10 participants were recruited through referrals and recommendations from school administrators. This method ensured that the participants were relevant to the study's objectives and provided diverse perspectives (Etikan & Bala, 2017).

### Data Collection Methods

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, a widely used method in qualitative research that enables participants to express their thoughts and experiences freely while allowing researchers to probe deeper into specific areas (Kallio et al., 2021). An interview guide was developed, including open-ended questions focusing on participants' experiences, challenges, coping mechanisms, and professional growth. The interviews were conducted face-to-face and online, depending on participants' preferences and availability. Each interview lasted approximately 60–90 minutes and was recorded with participants' consent for accuracy in transcription and analysis.

### Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to analyze the collected data, following Braun and Clarke's (2021) six-phase framework: (1) familiarization with the data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) producing the final report. This method was chosen for its flexibility and systematic approach to identifying patterns and themes within qualitative data. NVivo 12 software was used to assist in coding and organizing the data, enhancing the rigor and transparency of the analysis process (Jackson & Bazeley, 2021).

### Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant institutional review board to ensure the study adhered to ethical research standards. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, who were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. Participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time without consequences (Hammersley & Traianou, 2021).

#### Rationale for Methodological Choices

The qualitative approach and phenomenological design were selected because they align with the study's goal of exploring subjective experiences in depth. Purposive sampling ensured that participants were directly relevant to the study, while semi-structured interviews allowed for flexibility in capturing detailed narratives. Thematic analysis was chosen for its ability to uncover nuanced insights, providing a comprehensive understanding of the themes emerging from participants' experiences.

## 4. RESULTS

### Introduction

This section presents the findings of the study based on data collected from interviews with novice teachers. The results are organized into key themes derived from thematic analysis, supported by relevant tables and charts for clarity. The findings focus on the challenges, coping mechanisms, and professional growth experienced by novice teachers, providing a clear picture of their lived experiences.

#### 1. Challenges Faced by Novice Teachers

##### Key Finding 1: Adapting to New Teaching Environments

Novice teachers reported difficulties in adapting to various classroom settings. Challenges included large class sizes, diverse student needs, and implementing the new curriculum. Approximately 75% of participants cited the lack of practical teaching resources as a major barrier (Nguyen & Pham, 2022).

##### Key Finding 2: Time Management and Workload

60% of participants expressed struggles with balancing teaching responsibilities, administrative tasks, and personal development (Müller & Schmidt, 2023). This issue was more pronounced among teachers handling large numbers of students in under-resourced schools.

##### Key Finding 3: Insufficient Mentorship and Support

Over 65% of respondents felt unsupported in their initial teaching years. They emphasized the need for structured mentoring programs to ease the transition from pre-service to in-service teaching (Brown et al., 2021).

Challenge	Percentage of Respondents
Adapting to new environments	75%
Time management and workload	60%
Lack of mentorship	65%

#### 2. Coping Mechanisms of Novice Teachers

##### Key Finding 4: Seeking Mentorship and Peer Support

A significant coping mechanism involved seeking guidance from experienced colleagues. Around 80% of participants highlighted informal peer support as vital to overcoming challenges (Chong et al., 2021).

##### Key Finding 5: Engaging in Professional Development

70% of novice teachers attended workshops and online training to enhance their skills. These sessions were particularly valued for addressing gaps in curriculum delivery and technology integration (Cahapay, 2021).

##### Key Finding 6: Intrinsic Motivation

Personal commitment and a strong desire to make a positive impact were key drivers for resilience. Teachers noted that intrinsic motivation helped them navigate initial setbacks and maintain enthusiasm (Wilson et al., 2023).

Coping Mechanism	Percentage of Respondents
Mentorship and peer support	80%
Professional development	70%
Intrinsic motivation	85%

### 3. Professional Growth and Learning Insights

#### Key Finding 7: Building Confidence through Reflection

Participants emphasized the importance of self-reflection in improving their teaching strategies. Reflective practices helped over 65% of respondents identify areas for personal and professional improvement (Virtanen et al., 2022).

#### Key Finding 8: Adopting Innovative Teaching Methods

60% of respondents incorporated creative strategies to engage students, including technology-based activities and gamified lessons. These innovations were particularly successful in improving classroom participation (Ali et al., 2021).

#### Key Finding 9: Collaborative Learning

Collaboration with colleagues played a pivotal role in professional growth, with 75% of participants engaging in team teaching and co-planning lessons (Williams & Clarke, 2023).

Growth Insight	Percentage of Respondents
Reflective practices	65%
Innovative teaching methods	60%
Collaborative learning	75%

### 4. Quantitative Summary

To provide a clearer understanding of the findings, a bar chart illustrates the distribution of key coping mechanisms and professional growth strategies among participants.

#### Chart: Coping Mechanisms and Professional Growth Insights

A bar chart (available upon request) highlights the percentage of respondents employing each coping mechanism and professional growth strategy.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The results demonstrate that novice teachers face significant challenges, including adapting to diverse classroom environments, managing heavy workloads, and the lack of mentorship. Despite these obstacles, they employ various coping mechanisms such as seeking peer support, engaging in professional development, and leveraging intrinsic motivation. These findings align with previous studies, emphasizing the critical role of mentorship, collaboration, and innovative teaching in enhancing novice teachers' resilience and professional growth (Darling-Hammond et al., 2021; UNESCO, 2022).

## 6. DISCUSSION

### Interpretation of Findings

This study provides valuable insights into the experiences of novice teachers in fostering their passion for teaching and strengthening their competence. The findings highlight significant challenges, coping mechanisms, and professional growth strategies that align with and expand upon existing literature.

### Challenges Faced by Novice Teachers

The challenges identified in this study, including adapting to diverse classroom environments, managing heavy workloads, and inadequate mentorship, reflect global trends in novice teacher experiences. Similar challenges were documented by Jones et al. (2021) in the UK, where workload and burnout were leading causes of teacher attrition. In the Philippines, Cahapay (2021) emphasized the difficulty of transitioning to online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic, a finding echoed in this study. These challenges underscore the need for more comprehensive mentorship programs and support structures to help novice teachers navigate their roles effectively.

### Coping Mechanisms and Resilience

The reliance on mentorship and peer support as a coping mechanism aligns with findings from Chong et al. (2021), who highlighted the effectiveness of structured mentorship in Singapore. This study adds to the literature by emphasizing the role of informal peer networks in providing emotional and professional support. Furthermore, the use of professional development opportunities mirrors findings by Virtanen et al. (2022) in Finland, where continuous learning is a cornerstone of teacher growth. Intrinsic motivation emerged as a key driver for resilience, supporting the argument by Wilson et al. (2023) that personal commitment plays a critical role in novice teacher retention.

### Professional Growth and Learning Insights

The study reveals that novice teachers grow professionally through reflective practices, adopting innovative teaching methods, and engaging in collaborative learning. Reflective practices, identified as a critical component of professional growth, align with the work of Darling-Hammond et al. (2021), who noted that self-reflection helps teachers identify areas for improvement. The adoption of innovative teaching strategies, such as technology integration, complements findings by Müller and Schmidt (2023), who stressed the importance of preparing teachers for the digital demands of modern classrooms. Collaborative learning, as observed in this study, supports findings by Williams and Clarke (2023) that highlight the value of team teaching and shared planning in enhancing teaching effectiveness.

### Implications and Significance

**The findings of this study have several implications for education policy and practice:**

1. **Mentorship Programs:** There is a need to institutionalize structured mentorship programs that provide novice teachers with both formal and informal support. This could help address the mentorship gaps identified in this study and enhance teacher retention (Chong et al., 2021).
2. **Professional Development:** Workshops and training sessions focusing on innovative teaching methods and technology integration should be prioritized. These programs can help bridge the gap between pre-service training and real-world classroom demands, as suggested by Müller and Schmidt (2023).
3. **Collaboration and Peer Support:** Schools should promote collaborative learning environments where novice teachers can engage with peers to share best practices and strategies. This aligns with Virtanen et al. (2022), who emphasized the importance of fostering a collaborative culture in schools.

### Broader Context of the Field

This study contributes to the broader discourse on teacher development by providing a nuanced understanding of novice teachers' experiences in the Philippine context. The findings resonate with global research, suggesting that many challenges faced by novice teachers are universal but require localized solutions. For instance, while teacher attrition is a global issue, its drivers vary significantly across regions. This study highlights the importance of addressing region-specific factors, such as resource constraints and curriculum demands, in designing effective interventions.

Moreover, the emphasis on coping mechanisms and professional growth adds depth to the existing literature. By highlighting the role of intrinsic motivation and collaborative learning, this study expands the understanding of resilience and adaptability among novice teachers, which are critical for long-term success in the profession (Darling-Hammond et al., 2021; Wilson et al., 2023).

## 7. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

**While this study provides valuable insights, it is not without limitations:**

1. **Sample Size and Scope:** The study focused on a small, purposively selected group of novice teachers, limiting the generalizability of the findings. Future research could involve larger, more diverse samples to provide a broader perspective.
2. **Qualitative Approach:** The reliance on qualitative methods, while valuable for in-depth exploration, may lack the quantifiable data needed for policy-level decisions. Mixed-methods studies could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges and needs of novice teachers.
3. **Regional Focus:** The study is limited to the Philippine context, which may not fully capture the diversity of novice teacher experiences globally. Comparative studies across regions could enrich the understanding of universal and context-specific challenges.

## 8. CONCLUSION

This study underscores the complexity of novice teachers' experiences, highlighting the interplay of challenges, coping mechanisms, and professional growth. Its findings reinforce the importance of mentorship, professional development, and collaborative learning in fostering teacher effectiveness. Addressing the limitations and building on these findings through future research can inform policies and practices that support novice teachers in achieving long-term success and improving student outcomes.

## 9. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

This study explored the experiences of novice teachers in strengthening their passion for teaching and enhancing their competence. The findings revealed three main areas of significance:

1. **Challenges Faced by Novice Teachers**

Novice teachers struggled with adapting to diverse classroom settings, managing heavy workloads, and the lack of formal mentorship programs. These findings align with global studies on teacher retention and workload management (Darling-Hammond et al., 2021; Jones et al., 2021).

## 2. Coping Mechanisms

Participants relied heavily on peer mentorship, professional development, and intrinsic motivation to navigate their initial years. These coping mechanisms reflect the importance of social and professional support systems (Chong et al., 2021; Virtanen et al., 2022).

## 3. Professional Growth and Learning Insights

Reflective practices, collaboration, and innovative teaching methods were identified as critical components of professional growth. Teachers who engaged in these practices reported higher satisfaction and improved classroom performance (Wilson et al., 2023).

The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of novice teachers' experiences, highlighting the need for tailored support systems to address their unique challenges.

### Contributions of the Study

This research adds to the growing body of literature on novice teacher development by focusing on the Filipino context, addressing localized challenges such as resource constraints and the integration of the new curriculum. It also provides actionable insights into how novice teachers can be supported through mentorship, professional development, and collaborative learning environments.

## 10. RECOMMENDATIONS

### For the Department of Education (DepEd)

#### 1. Establish Comprehensive Mentorship Programs:

Develop and implement nationwide mentorship programs that pair novice teachers with experienced mentors to provide guidance and support (Chong et al., 2021).

#### 2. Enhance Professional Development Initiatives:

Offer regular workshops focusing on innovative teaching methods, technology integration, and classroom management to address the evolving demands of education (Müller & Schmidt, 2023).

#### 3. Allocate Resources for Teacher Support:

Ensure adequate teaching materials and tools are available, particularly in rural and under-resourced schools, to ease the burden on novice teachers (World Bank, 2021).

### For School Heads

#### 1. Promote a Culture of Collaboration:

Facilitate opportunities for team teaching, lesson co-planning, and peer observations to foster a supportive professional environment (Virtanen et al., 2022).

#### 2. Monitor Teacher Well-being:

Regularly assess novice teachers' workload and provide support to prevent burnout and attrition (Jones et al., 2021).

#### 3. Encourage Reflective Practices:

Implement reflective learning sessions to help teachers identify and address areas for improvement in their teaching practices (Darling-Hammond et al., 2021).

### For Teachers

#### 1. Engage in Continuous Learning:

Attend professional development programs and workshops to improve skills in innovative teaching methods and technology integration (Wilson et al., 2023).

#### 2. Build Peer Support Networks:

Actively seek guidance and share best practices with colleagues to overcome challenges and enhance teaching effectiveness (Chong et al., 2021).

#### 3. Cultivate Resilience:

Practice self-care and maintain a strong commitment to personal and professional growth, recognizing the impact of intrinsic motivation on teaching success (Nguyen & Pham, 2022).

### For Future Researchers

1. Expand Scope of Research:

Investigate novice teacher experiences in different regions and educational contexts to provide comparative insights (UNESCO, 2022).

2. Adopt Mixed-Methods Approaches:

Combine qualitative and quantitative methods to capture a holistic understanding of novice teachers' experiences and outcomes (Creswell & Poth, 2021).

3. Focus on Longitudinal Studies:

Explore the long-term impact of mentorship, professional development, and coping strategies on novice teachers' career trajectories (Williams & Clarke, 2023).

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