

Professional Competence and Creativity of Public Secondary School Teachers

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Abstract: In the dynamic landscape of modern education, a teacher's mastery of their craft and their ability to innovate are two sides of the same coin. This study delves into the vital synergy between professional competence and creativity among public elementary school teachers in the Tagum City Division. We sought to understand not just if a relationship exists, but how specific domains of a teacher's expertise—their knowledge of the subject, their skill in teaching it (didactic), and their understanding of how children learn (pedagogic)—serve as the essential foundation for creative teaching practices.

Through a descriptive-correlational survey of 100 public elementary teachers, selected to provide a representative voice, the data revealed a highly encouraging environment. Teachers in Tagum City demonstrated high levels of professional competence and, in parallel, high levels of creativity in their classrooms.

Statistical analysis confirmed a significant positive relationship between these two variables, affirming that deep professional knowledge fuels innovative teaching. A regression analysis provided the most nuanced insight: while all three domains of competence significantly influence creativity, it is didactic competence—the art and science of how to teach a subject—that emerged as the most powerful driver. This suggests that knowing how to explain a concept, design an activity, and sequence a lesson is the primary catalyst for creative instruction.

These findings lead to a powerful recommendation: for educational leaders to design professional development that moves beyond mere content knowledge. By intentionally strengthening teachers' didactic skills—their toolkit for instruction—we can directly unlock their creative potential. This strategic focus promises to cultivate classrooms that are not only competent but also captivating, fostering a love for learning that lasts a lifetime.

Keywords: Professional Competence, Creativity, Didactic Skills, Innovative Teaching, Descriptive Correlational, Tagum City Division, Philippines.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The most effective classrooms are often those that hum with a certain magic—where complex ideas are made accessible through analogy, where curiosity is sparked by a provocative question, and where learning feels like an adventure. This "magic" is, in fact, the product of a powerful combination: a teacher's deep professional competence seamlessly fused with their creativity.

In the public elementary schools of Tagum City Division, fostering this combination is key to meeting the diverse needs of young learners. While competence ensures accuracy and

structure, creativity ensures engagement and relevance. This study is founded on the belief that these attributes are not separate but are intrinsically linked; that a teacher's creativity is not a random spark of inspiration, but a flame that is kindled by a confident command of their subject and their craft. By investigating the specific relationship between the domains of professional competence (subject, didactic, pedagogic) and teacher creativity, this research aims to provide a blueprint for targeted professional growth. The ultimate goal is to empower educators to build their practice on a foundation of expertise that naturally gives rise to innovation, transforming their classrooms into vibrant hubs of learning and discovery.

II. METHODS

To capture the intricate relationship between a teacher's knowledge and their innovation, this study employed a descriptive-correlational design. This approach allowed for the precise measurement of both foundational competence and creative application.

A cohort of 100 public elementary school teachers from across the Tagum City Division was selected through probability sampling, ensuring their experiences represented the wider teaching community. These educators provided their insights through validated survey instruments, one designed to measure their professional competence across three core domains (subject knowledge, didactic skills, and pedagogic understanding) and another to assess their creativity in lesson design and problem-solving. The collected data was then subjected to a multi-layered statistical analysis. Mean scores established the overall levels of competence and creativity, Product-Moment Correlation uncovered the strength of their relationship, and Regression Analysis pinpointed the specific influence of each competence domain, revealing which one serves as the greatest catalyst for creative teaching.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings paint a picture of a skilled and innovative teaching force in Tagum City. The analysis revealed that teachers possess high professional competence and exhibit high creativity, indicating a strong baseline from which to grow.

Most significantly, the analysis confirmed a significant positive correlation between professional competence and creativity. This means that teachers with a stronger command of their profession are also more likely to design inventive lessons, adapt to unexpected challenges, and engage students in novel ways.

The most compelling insight came from the regression analysis, which revealed that all three domains of competence are significant influencers on creativity, but didactic competence demonstrated a markedly higher influence. This reveals a critical nuance: while deep subject knowledge (what to teach) and sound pedagogical theory (why we teach a certain way) are essential, it is the mastery of the how—the didactic skill—that most directly empowers creativity. This makes intuitive sense; a teacher who possesses a rich repertoire of instructional strategies, explanations, and activity structures has more "raw materials" to remix, adapt, and innovate with in the classroom.

This discussion underscores a vital principle for professional development: to foster creativity, we must first fortify competence, with a special emphasis on didactic skills. Training programs that focus on modeling diverse teaching methods, lesson design, and questioning techniques provide

teachers with the practical toolkit they need to become confident innovators. By investing in these core competencies, school leaders are not standardizing teaching but are instead liberating it, empowering educators to translate their expertise into engaging and unforgettable learning experiences for their students.

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