

# Uplifting Adaptability among Out-of-Field Teachers through School Program

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**Abstract:-** The purpose of the study was to determine what quantitative aspects need further explanation on the performance of out-of-field teachers in terms of; (1) dealing with insecurities and anxieties, (2) lack of content mastery (3) lack of teaching strategies and techniques, (4) be able to shape up progress and (5) coping mechanism. Also, it seeks to determine the level on adaptability in terms of (1) self-awareness, (2) personal management, (3) problem-solving and decision making (4) attitude and (5) knowledge of competencies. Further, to find out the significant relationship between the variables mentioned, and lastly to find out the school program to uplift adaptability among out-of-field teachers. A total of 10 out-of-field teachers of Don Julian Rodriguez Sr. Elementary School, San Roque District, Davao City Division are the respondents were identified through purposive sampling technique. The study utilized explanatory sequential mixed method design. Two methods in collecting the data were utilized, for the quantitative phase the researcher used survey questionnaire in determining level of performance of out-of-field teachers and adaptability. Furthermore, in the qualitative phase the researcher used in-depth interview in gathering the data to identify what school program should develop to uplift adaptability among out-of-field teachers. On the quantitative analysis, there is a significant difference between the performance of out-of-field teachers and adaptability. In addition, the quantitative findings were follow-up by the qualitative findings. Thus, it was found that the school program to uplift adaptability among out-of-field teachers revealed four major themes namely: (1) self-learning, (2) continuing professional development, (3) peer mentoring and (4) openness and acceptance.

**Keywords:** *Out-of-Field Teachers, Adaptability, Explanatory Sequential.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Out-of-field teachers may lack a deep understanding of the subject matter, making it difficult to explain complex concepts clearly. They might struggle to employ appropriate methods for subjects they are not trained in. It is difficult to find ways to engage students in a subject that the teacher is less passionate or knowledgeable about its content and strategy to employ the lesson. Giving constructive feedback that helps students improve can be harder when the teacher is not confident in their own understanding of the subject matter. Gaining the respect

and trust of students is more difficult when the teacher is not perceived as an expert in the subject.

Balancing the demands of learning a new subject with existing teaching responsibilities is challenging. The pressure to teach effectively without a strong background in the subject can lead to significant stress and anxiety. Lower confidence and higher stress levels can negatively influence job satisfaction and overall morale. Lack of adequate support from colleagues who are specialists in the subject can hinder the adaptation process.

Out-of-field teaching has been a worldwide phenomenon and issue. In Australia, according to the report of the Australian Council for Educational Research, twenty-six percent (26%) of the teachers who have been teaching years 7–10 are teaching outside their expertise found difficulty in adapting teaching career. Similarly, in Washington, USA, the number of teachers assigned to teach subjects that do not match their education keeps on escalating, although almost all of them hold at least basic qualifications. In addition, out-of-field teaching has worsened slightly in recent years, regardless of plenty of changes focused on enhancing teacher quality.

In the Philippines, out-of-field teaching is an important but long-unrecognized issue in schools and in the Department of Education in general. This might be because the department might have practiced it over time and may not have implemented reforms on the concerns of out-of-field teaching among DepEd schools in the country. These teachers took years to adapt the skills and strategy needed to improve teaching. Over the past decade, various studies, commissions, and national reports have bemoaned the qualifications and quality of teachers.

With the above-facts, the researcher would like to have an empirical evidence based on scientific approach on the perceived adaptive skills to developed for out-of-field teachers of public elementary teachers in the San Roque District, Davao City Division.

This study This study aimed to determine the level of out-of-field teachers of San Roque District, Davao City Division.

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

- What is the level of out-of-field teachers in terms of:
  - Dealing with insecurities and anxieties

- Lack of content mastery
  - Lack of teaching strategies and techniques
  - Being able to shape up progress
  - Coping mechanism
- What is the level of adaptability in terms of?
    - Self-awareness
    - Personal management
    - Problem-solving and decision making
    - Attitude
    - Knowledge of competencies
  - Is there a significant relationship between the performance of out-of-field teachers and adaptability (Quantitative)?
  - What school program should be created to uplift adaptability of out-of-field teachers (Qualitative)?
  - HO<sub>1</sub>. There was no significant relationship between the performance of out-of-field teachers and adaptability.

## II. METHOD

This section discussed the study's techniques, such as the research design, research respondents, research instrument, data gathering procedure, ethical considerations, data analysis and sequence, emphasis and procedures.

This research employed an explanatory sequential mixed-method design, integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches to examine the performance and adaptability of out-of-field teachers. The study initially used surveys to gather quantitative data and interviews for qualitative insights, following Creswell et al. (2003). Quantitative data were analyzed first to establish a broad understanding, with qualitative data collected subsequently to elaborate and explain the quantitative findings. This sequential approach linked both phases for interpretation, aiming to provide a comprehensive view of the research problem. Quantitative analyses focused on predictors of job satisfaction among out-of-field graduate teachers, while qualitative aspects documented teachers' experiences related to the study variables, emphasizing participant perspectives.

The purpose of this mixed-methods sequential explanatory study was to identify the level of the out-of-field teachers and adaptability by obtaining quantitative results from a survey of 10 out-of-field graduate teachers and then following up with five (5) purposefully selected non-education graduate teachers to explore those results in more depth through an in-depth interview. For this study, certain inclusion criteria were implemented in determining the teacher respondents of the study. The primary consideration of this study was to choose teacher respondents who could provide information to achieve the purpose of this study. Hence, only those teachers who were officially hired in San Roque District, Davao City Division. Moreover, the study was delimited only to the nature of the

problem based on the research questions and thus it did not consider performance of the teacher.

In this study, adapted survey questionnaires were used to gather quantitative data, each subjected to content validity by a panel of experts and pilot tested for reliability. The first questionnaire, adapted from Patalinghug's (2018) study, focused on out-of-field teachers with 5-item statements per indicator, yielding a Cronbach alpha of .865, indicating good reliability. The second questionnaire, developed by Munda (2021), assessed teachers' adaptability with a Cronbach alpha of .967, also demonstrating good reliability. Expert validation ensured questionnaire quality, with feedback incorporated before pilot testing. For the qualitative phase, semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted using a validated guide. Participants granted permission for note-taking during interviews, aligning with Guion's (2002) description of in-depth interviews as focused discussions on specific topics among individuals sharing common backgrounds and interests.

In the quantitative phase of the study, several key steps were undertaken: permission was obtained from the Dean of the Graduate School of Rizal Memorial Colleges and the Office of Division Superintendent, with approval letters presented to school principals. Questionnaires underwent content validation by experts and pilot testing with 30 teachers not part of the study, confirming instrument reliability. Questionnaires were then administered face-to-face or placed in dropboxes for respondents to complete and return. Completed questionnaires were retrieved and analyzed using Mean and Pearson r statistical tools. In the qualitative phase, one-on-one in-depth interviews were conducted in a quiet setting, lasting 10-20 minutes each. A validated interview protocol ensured comprehensive exploration of participants' experiences and perspectives on enhancing out-of-field teachers' adaptability. Ethical considerations were discussed, with participant views prioritized. Interviews were recorded with consent and stored securely for analysis (Creswell, 2007).

The researcher adhered to RMC's Research Ethics principles throughout this study, encompassing social value, informed consent, risk assessment, benefits and safety, privacy and confidentiality, justice, transparency, researcher qualification, adequacy of facilities, and community involvement. The study aimed to identify the level of out-of-field teachers and their adaptability. Informed consent procedures ensured clarity and respect for participants, with consent obtained through written approval and endorsement from the school superintendent. Risks were minimized, and participant data securely stored to protect confidentiality and comply with data privacy laws. Equal treatment of respondents, token compensation, and transparent reporting were ensured, with findings disseminated widely to benefit researchers and community members interested in the study's concern.

The following statistical tools were employed to address the research questions: Mean was used to assess the level of out-of-field graduate teachers and their adaptability. Pearson r was utilized to determine the relationship between the level of out-of-field teachers and adaptability. Thematic Content Analysis (TCA), described by Anderson (2007), was also used by analyzing interview transcripts and other relevant texts to identify meaningful themes. The process, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), includes steps such as familiarizing oneself with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report. This method ensured a thorough analysis of qualitative data, facilitating the interpretation and presentation of findings in relation to the research questions and existing literature.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the results of the data gathered to answer the stated problem of the study. The presentation starts from the descriptive analysis of the performance of out-of-field teachers and adaptability followed by the discussion on the correlation between the two variables. The presentation ends

with the discussion of the themes to determine what school program to be used to rise job adaptability of teachers.

#### ➤ *Level of Performance of Out-of-Field Teachers*

Table 1 revealed the level of performance of out-of-field teachers, measured by five indicators: Dealing with insecurities and anxieties, lack of content mastery, lack of teaching strategies and techniques, being able to shape up progress, and coping mechanism. The mean ratings for these indicators are as follows: (1) Dealing with insecurities and anxieties had a mean of 2.94, which was moderate and described as sometimes observed. (2) Lack of content mastery had a mean of 2.80, also moderate and described as sometimes observed. (3) Lack of teaching strategies and techniques had a mean of 3.51, which was high and described as oftentimes observed. (4) Being able to shape up progress garnered a mean score of 3.45, which was high and described as oftentimes observed. Lastly, (5) Coping mechanism had a mean of 3.30, which was moderate and described as sometimes observed. The overall mean result of performance of out-of-field teachers 3.20 or moderate equivalent means that being able to shape up progress and lack of teaching strategies and techniques in the five indicators have been oftentimes observed.

**Table 1.** Level of Performance of out-of-Field Teachers

No.	Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
1	Dealing with insecurities and anxieties	2.94	Moderate
2	Lack of content mastery	2.80	Moderate
3	Lack of teaching strategies and techniques	3.51	High
4	Being able to shape up progress	3.45	High
5	Coping mechanism	3.30	Moderate
	<b>Overall</b>	<b>3.20</b>	<b>Moderate</b>

Out-of-field graduate-teachers are faced with considerable knowledge-gaps concerning different facets of their professional competence. These gaps in turn affect their capability to act effectively in the classroom, to provide high quality lessons, and to support sustainably students' performances (Richter, Kuhl, Haag, & Pant, 2013). Being perceived as competent in the classroom is important for teachers (Hattie, 2009) and being in an out-of-field graduate situation where they experience a lack of subject knowledge hampers a positive outlook about the out-of-field experience. Some teachers try to cover their gaps in content knowledge in order to uphold an image of being in control of their subject.

Similar result found from the study of Zepeda (2006), that there are pro-active approaches whereby the expertise of colleagues supports the out-of-field graduate teacher and assists these teachers to cope with their teaching position. Zepeda further noted that it is short sighted not to focus on individual teachers' needs and differentiate professional development according to these needs. Emotional experiences in relation to out-of-field teaching call on parents to play a more prominent supportive role in the learning and teaching environment.

Darling-Hammond (2010) claimed that key educational resources inside and outside school, such as parents, can also influence outcomes.

#### ➤ *Level of Adaptability of Teachers*

Table 2 revealed the level of adaptability of teachers, measured by five indicators namely: self-awareness, personal management, problem solving and decision making, attitude, and knowledge of competencies. The mean ratings for these indicators are as follows: (1) *Self-awareness* had a mean of 3.11, which was moderate and described as sometimes observed. (2) *Personal management* had a mean of 3.39, also moderate and described as sometimes observed. (3) *Problem-solving and Decision-making* had a mean of 2.59, which was low and described as seldom observed. (4) *Attitude* garnered a mean score of 3.18, which was moderate and described as sometimes observed. Lastly, (5) *Knowledge of Competencies* had a mean of 3.30, which was moderate and described as sometimes observed. The overall mean result of level of adaptability of teachers 2.93 or moderate equivalent means that self-awareness, personal management and attitude in the five indicators have been sometimes observed.

**Table 2.** Level of Adaptability of Teachers

No.	Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
1	<i>Self-awareness</i>	3.11	Moderate
2	<i>Personal Management</i>	3.39	Moderate
3	<i>Problem-solving and Decision-making</i>	2.59	Low
4	<i>Attitude</i>	3.18	Moderate
5	<i>Knowledge of Competencies</i>	2.42	Low
<b>Overall</b>		<b>2.93</b>	<b>Moderate</b>

Self-aware teachers can identify their own knowledge gaps in the new subject area, allowing them to seek out specific resources or professional development to fill those gaps. They can also leverage their strengths, such as teaching strategies or classroom management skills, to compensate for their lack of content knowledge in certain areas. Effective personal management allows teachers to plan and prepare lessons more efficiently, even when they are not familiar with the subject. This includes organizing materials, designing lesson plans, and anticipating potential challenges. Good time management skills enable teachers to balance their teaching responsibilities with the time needed to learn new content and develop appropriate instructional strategies. A positive attitude, particularly a growth mindset, encourages teachers to embrace challenges as opportunities to learn and grow rather than as insurmountable obstacles. This mindset fosters resilience, allowing teachers to persist through difficulties and setbacks they may encounter

when teaching outside their field. Teachers with a positive attitude can inspire and motivate their students, creating a more engaging and supportive learning environment. A positive attitude also helps in building and maintaining good relationships with colleagues, who can be valuable sources of support and knowledge when navigating unfamiliar subjects.

➤ *Significant Relationship between Performance of Out-of-Field Teachers and Adaptability*

Presented in Table 3 are the results of the test of relationship between the variables involved in the study. The overall correlation had a computed value r-value of 0.83 with a p-value of 0.002 which is significant at 0.04 level. This rejects the null hypothesis, stating no significant relationship between the performance of out-of-field teachers and adaptability. This means that as performance of out-of-field teachers increase, adaptability also increases or vice versa.

**Table 3.** Significant Relationship between Performance of Out-of-Field Teachers and Adaptability

Variables		R-Value	Strength of Relationship	P-Value	Decision
Performance of out-of-field teachers (x)	Adaptability (y)	0.83	Very Strong correlation	.001	Reject $H_0$

According to Cohen (2002), the computed r-value of 0.83 indicates a strong positive correlation between the two variables that were used to test the hypothesis of a meaningful association. The results unmistakably suggested a very strong, significant relationship between the performance of out-of-field teachers and adaptability. Having a pairwise correlation among the measures of both variables, it can be gleaned that absences revealed computed –values of 0.83 respectively with p=values which are less than 05 in the level of significance. This implies that as performance of out-of-field teachers increase, the adaptability increases.

The result can be associated to the study of (Buenacos & Petalla 2022) highlighted the adaptability and resiliency of the participants as essential factors in overcoming the demands of challenges encountered by the participants such as creating a detrimental effect on professional growth, teachers' performance, and the well-being of teachers and how they were able to endure and embrace all of them.

➤ *School Program to Uplift Adaptability among Out-of-Field Teachers*

Figure 3 shows the school program to uplift adaptability among out-of-field teachers. Four (4) themes were found

namely: (1) self-learning, (2) continuing professional development, (3) peer mentoring and (4) openness and acceptance. The results showed based on the participants' responses were based on their experiences on how they cope up with the situation concerning adaptability.

➤ *Self-Learning.*

The first theme found from the interview is self-learning. Self-learning mainly emerged from the answers of the participants. Surfing the internet to research, doing intensive reading, and learning by doing are just among the different ways they did to learn by themselves and cope with the teaching challenges they encountered at that moment.

*It is really hard because you need to study further since there are topics that you were not able to learn before. You have to research because if you don't know the subject, if there were questions, you will have a hard time answering these questions. It is challenging for you as a teacher. (P2, D1)*

*As a teacher, you have to define limitations. You conduct research or study so you can address the learning need of students and their skills will be developed. (P3, D1)*



The result is connected to the study of Loeng (2020) found that self-directed learning is one important piece of the mosaic forming the knowledge base of adult learning. As a self-directed learner, you must have minimum control over the time, pace, and place for learning. Control of the learning situation is only one element of self-directed learning. Other elements are the ability and willingness to reflect, critical judgement, and necessary knowledge of alternatives. The individual's ability to self-direct is of great importance to the society, working life, and self-development.

➤ *Continuing Professional Development.*

The second theme found is continuing professional development. Learning is a continuous process. Continuing professional development (CPD) is essential for teachers as it enhances their adaptability and effectiveness in the classroom. CPD helps teachers in updating knowledge and skills, enhancing pedagogical techniques, improving classroom management, fostering reflective practice, supporting collaborative learning, responding to policy and curriculum changes, incorporating technology, building resilience and flexibility, meeting diverse student needs, promoting lifelong learning.

*I have a problem in terms of expertise in the subject I teach and I am trying to address it in the form of reading references of the subjects assigned to me. (P5, D2)*

*We have professional development wherein out-of-field teachers can engage like BEd graduates. They can enroll in masters and seminars or workshops afterwards. (P4, D3)*

Continuing professional development is not just a requirement but a vital component of a teacher's career. It equips teachers with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to adapt to changes in the educational environment and meet the evolving needs of their students. Through CPD, teachers can remain effective, innovative, and responsive to the challenges and opportunities in education. Study of Marvi (2023) posited that CPD provides teachers with a structured and purposeful approach to improve their professional practice throughout their careers. It equips them with the necessary knowledge and skills to address the challenges of the modern classroom, ensuring that they remain at the forefront of education excellence.

*Of course you can learn more if you don't rely solely on yourself. You can also learn a lot from others. (P3, D4)*

*I have no idea about memos and orders issued by the department, especially those old ones, that is why I open my queries to my co-teachers or even my school head. (P3, D3)*

Similar result revealed from the study of Gehreke, Schilling and Kauffeld, (2024) that peer mentoring is an effective support mechanism, yielding favourable impacts across various outcomes: social and academic integration, career benefits, emotional benefits, soft skills, university-life balance, study dropout intention and sense of belonging to university. Also, study of Forber (2024) found that participation in peer mentoring provided a support mechanism through which they developed confidence in risk-taking and experienced professional growth.

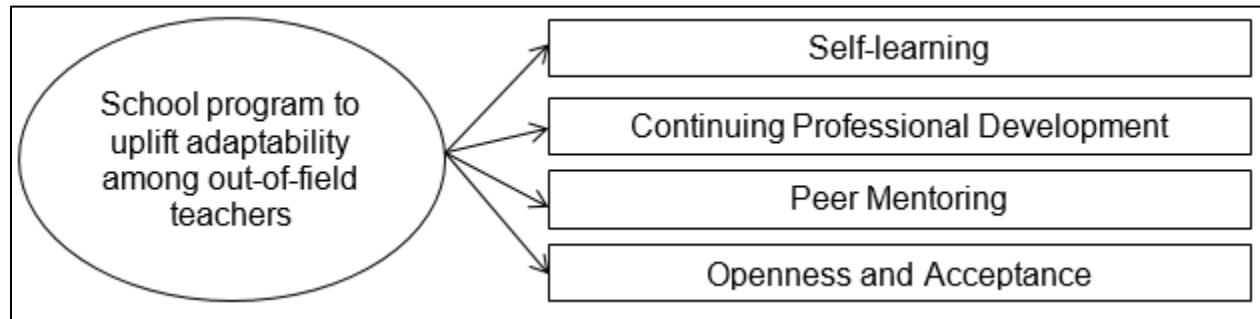
➤ *Openness and Acceptance .*

Openness and acceptance was the fourth theme revealed from the interviews. All of the study participants stressed the importance of accepting the real challenges of their job, including being assigned to teach subjects out of their field. According to them, acceptance is really the key to be able to find ways to cope with the challenges because without acceptance, they say they will be stuck in the negative emotions they are feeling and it would not do any good to them.

*Of course, since I was tasked to teach these subjects, I willingly accepted it. I took it as a challenge. For me, acceptance is the key. Then I find ways to learn. I surf the internet and read more resources about certain things that I don't know. (P1, D4)*

*In times of difficulty, I never hesitate to ask my co-teachers to make sure that I do what is right and to avoid error and rework. (P3, D4)*

This result is related to the study of Ln (2023) posited that openness tend to enjoy venturing beyond their comfort zone. They are always eager to seek out new and unconventional experiences like travelling to new places, embracing different cultures and practices. Higher levels of openness can lead a person to be more open to novel or unconventional ideas. This results in a higher level of creativity and a radical perspective. However, people with low openness to experience are happier to seek refuge in their comfort zone and familiar surroundings.



**Fig 1.** School Program to Uplift Adaptability among Out-of-Field Teachers

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

➤ *Based on the Findings of this Study, the following Conclusions were Offered:*

Adaptable teachers can quickly acquire and understand new subject matter, identifying key concepts and integrating information efficiently. They modify their teaching strategies to suit different subjects, using varied instructional techniques and educational technologies. This flexibility ensures a student-centered approach, aligning teaching methods with students' understanding and interests.

Adaptable teachers tailor their methods to meet diverse student needs, using different strategies to ensure comprehension. They engage in ongoing professional learning through workshops, coursework, and professional learning communities to enhance their subject knowledge and pedagogical skills.

When faced with challenges, adaptable teachers find innovative solutions, seek resources, and collaborate with colleagues. They incorporate feedback effectively, manage stress, and maintain a positive classroom environment. This resilience and willingness to learn foster a positive and collaborative learning environment.

Adaptable teachers draw on previous experiences and pedagogical skills, applying them in new contexts. They seek help from colleagues, join professional networks, and collaborate, sharing strategies and resources for teaching out-of-field subjects effectively.

Being adaptive means embracing new technologies and teaching resources, such as online courses and educational apps, to support teaching and enhance subject understanding. This adaptability helps teachers integrate new research, methods, and technologies into their teaching.

By modeling adaptability, teachers encourage students to develop a growth mindset. They navigate unexpected challenges effectively, ensuring learning objectives are met. Adaptability is key to ongoing professional growth, helping out-of-field teachers continuously improve their teaching practice.

Adaptable teachers focus on student needs rather than strictly adhering to preset curricula. This student-centered approach is particularly effective for out-of-field teachers, ensuring their teaching methods align with students' understanding and interests.

➤ *Based upon the Outcomes of the Findings, the Following Recommendations are Suggested for Consideration:*

The Department of Education (DepEd) should implement targeted professional development programs that address the specific needs of out-of-field teachers. Attend workshops and seminars related to the new subject area. These can provide foundational knowledge and introduce new teaching methods.

The school would establish a supportive environment of which can foster a positive and supportive school culture that values the unique perspectives and contributions of out-of-field teachers. Encourage collaboration among teachers and create opportunities for sharing ideas and resources.

The school head and master teachers ought to establish mentorship programs pairing out-of-field teachers with experienced educators. Mentors can provide guidance, share best practices, and offer support in navigating challenges. Additionally, they clearly communicate expectations for out-of-field teachers, including performance standards and evaluation criteria. This transparency helps teachers understand what is expected of them and how they can meet those expectations. Likewise, establish regular feedback mechanisms for teachers, allowing them to receive constructive feedback on their performance. This can help identify areas for improvement and celebrate successes.

Further, connection with experienced teachers in the new subject area who can provide guidance and support enlightens the confusions and queries along the way. Do observe classes taught by experienced colleagues to understand effective teaching strategies and classroom management techniques. Seek help from the co-teacher with a subject specialist, if possible, to gain hands-on experience and immediate feedback.

Teacher, stakeholders and school community must create professional learning communities within the school where

teachers can collaborate, share experiences, and learn from one another. This collaborative approach can contribute to a sense of belonging and professional growth. By implementing these strategies, stakeholders can contribute to creating an environment where out-of-field teachers feel supported, valued, and equipped to excel in their roles, ultimately boosting job satisfaction and performance.

Future researchers should explore the impact of adaptability on teaching effectiveness, particularly for out-of-field teachers. Investigate the specific strategies adaptable teachers use to quickly acquire new subject matter and modify teaching methods across different subjects.

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