

INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF TEACHER TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS IN ENHANCING MUSIC TEACHING SKILLS AND OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

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Master of Arts in Education

Major in MAPEH

Abstract

This study investigated the impact of teacher training and professional development programs in enhancing music teaching skills and overcoming instructional challenges among MAPEH teachers. Specifically, it aimed to describe the profile of the teacher-respondents, determine the challenges they face in teaching music, assess the severity of these challenges, and explore the relationship between teacher profile and the identified problems. A descriptive survey research design was employed, utilizing a researcher-made questionnaire validated by experts and pilot-tested among selected respondents. The survey instrument consisted of four parts: personal profile, teaching profile, training needs, and problems encountered. Open-ended responses were also gathered to capture unstructured insights. A total of 110 MAPEH teachers were purposively selected as respondents. Quantitative data were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, and weighted means. Findings revealed that the teaching force is composed mainly of young, female, and married teachers who, despite their limited years of experience, are tasked with teaching all MAPEH components but often prefer not to teach music. The teachers identified several critical training needs, particularly in music and other specialized skills.

Furthermore, key instructional challenges—such as limited access to resources, technology, student engagement, and mental health concerns—were found to impact their teaching effectiveness significantly. Based on these findings, a plan of action was proposed to address the professional development needs and improve instructional delivery in MAPEH. The study underscores the necessity of targeted training and stakeholder support to uplift the competencies and conditions of MAPEH teachers.

Keywords: MAPEH Teachers, Teacher Training, Professional Development, Music Education, Instructional Challenges, Teaching Competencies

1. Introduction

Music, as a fundamental component of the MAPEH (Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health) curriculum, plays a vital role in developing students' cognitive, emotional, and cultural growth. The Department of Education (DepEd) recognizes this by mandating the inclusion of music education in the K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum, as reflected in DepEd Order No. 8, s. 2015, which outlines the policy guidelines on classroom assessment, emphasizing performance tasks in subjects like music to assess authentic learning outcomes (Tabuena, 2020). Furthermore, Republic Act No. 10533, known as the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, affirms the importance of developing holistic learners through contextualized and culture-based education, where music education becomes instrumental in preserving and promoting Philippine cultural heritage (Culajara, 2021).

Despite these initiatives, the delivery of music instruction at the secondary level continues to face multiple challenges. Teachers assigned to handle MAPEH are often generalists, handling all four components, including music, regardless of their specialization. In many cases, teachers

lack formal training in music education, leading to difficulty in executing subject-specific pedagogy and musical content, particularly in performance-based activities like playing instruments, choral work, and notation (Concina, 2023). This situation is further exacerbated in rural and resource-deprived schools where access to music equipment and facilities is limited, reducing both teacher effectiveness and student engagement.

Although efforts such as the DepEd National Training of Trainers (NTOT) and the In-Service Training (INSET) programs have been implemented to support teachers' continuous professional development, many of these initiatives are either generic or disproportionately focused on core subjects such as Mathematics, Science, and English. The unique and technical nature of music education is often left unaddressed, leaving MAPEH teachers underprepared and unsupported (Moore, 2009).

A study conducted by Bedro (2022) in Region III found that more than 60% of MAPEH teachers had limited to no formal training in music instruction, especially in areas requiring practical skills such as playing instruments or music theory (Bedro, 2022). Similarly, research by Mastul et al. (2023) revealed that while teachers were aware of the significance of music in the curriculum, a lack of competence, confidence, and access to appropriate teaching resources hindered effective instruction. Moreover, with the increasing demand for ICT integration in the classroom, music educators face the dual challenge of mastering both content and technology, especially under DepEd's Digital Rise Program and DepEd Order No. 11, s. 2020, which advocates the use of blended learning and digital tools for 21st-century education (Mastul et al., 2023).

In addition to instructional challenges, teachers face personal and systemic stressors that impact their professional practice. According to a 2021 study by the Philippine Mental Health Association, teacher burnout has become increasingly prevalent due to workload, lack of resources, and poor work-life balance—factors that are particularly evident among MAPEH teachers assigned to non-specialized subjects (Vouliopoulos et al., 2019).

Despite the availability of professional development opportunities through institutions such as the National Educators Academy of the Philippines (NEAP), participation remains limited due to logistical constraints, lack of information, or misalignment with the actual training needs of music teachers. This gap underscores the need to assess the current status of MAPEH teachers regarding their training needs and the challenges they face in the delivery of music instruction (Shyan & Salim, 2019).

Given this context, the present study aims to investigate the impact of teacher training and professional development programs on enhancing music teaching skills and overcoming the instructional challenges faced by MAPEH teachers. Specifically, it seeks to (1) describe the personal and teaching profile of MAPEH teachers, (2) identify the challenges encountered in teaching music along access to resources, access to technology, student engagement, and mental health, (3) determine whether significant relationships exist between teacher profile and challenges encountered, and (4) propose a strategic plan of action to address these challenges.

The study is anchored on the principles of Republic Act No. 9155 (Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001), which mandates the development of teacher competencies to improve education delivery, and DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2017, also known as the National Adoption and Implementation of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), which underscores the importance of continuing professional development in ensuring teacher quality and learner success. The research also aligns with global goals such as UNESCO's Sustainable Development Goal 4, which emphasizes inclusive and equitable quality education and the promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all.

This study contributes to the growing body of research on arts and music education in the Philippine context by providing data-driven insights into the specific needs of MAPEH teachers. The results will not only inform school leaders and education planners in designing context-

responsive training programs. However, they will also help MAPEH teachers become more equipped and confident in delivering music instruction.

Ultimately, this research seeks to advocate for specialized, sustained, and needs-based professional development interventions, thereby empowering teachers to deliver meaningful and effective music education that resonates with the cultural and artistic identity of Filipino learners.

2. Method

2.1 Research Design

The study employed a descriptive survey research design to systematically assess the status of MAPEH teachers in terms of their personal and teaching profiles, training needs, and the challenges they encounter in teaching music. This design was appropriate as it allowed the researcher to gather quantifiable data from a defined population without manipulating any variables, thus providing an accurate snapshot of existing conditions. Using a structured, researcher-made questionnaire, the study was able to collect both quantitative and qualitative data that reflected the respondents' experiences and perceptions. The descriptive approach facilitated the identification of trends, relationships, and areas requiring intervention, ultimately serving as the basis for proposing a targeted plan of action to enhance music instruction and support professional development among MAPEH teachers.

2.2 Participants

The study consisted of one hundred ten (110) MAPEH teachers who were purposively selected from various secondary schools. These teachers were chosen based on their direct involvement in teaching MAPEH subjects, particularly music, regardless of their specialization. The use of purposive sampling ensured that only those with relevant teaching assignments and experiences contributed to the data. Participation was contingent upon the timely submission of completed survey questionnaires, and schools that failed to comply within the agreed period were excluded from the analysis. This approach ensured the reliability and relevance of the data collected about the study's objectives.

2.3 Instrumentation

The study utilized a researcher-made survey questionnaire as the primary data-gathering instrument, designed to capture comprehensive information relevant to the study objectives. The questionnaire was composed of four main parts: Part I focused on the personal profile of the MAPEH teachers; Part II gathered data on their teaching profile; Part III assessed their training needs; and Part IV identified the problems encountered in teaching music. Each section also included open-ended items to allow respondents to provide additional insights beyond the structured choices. To ensure content validity, the instrument was reviewed by experts in education and MAPEH instruction. It was subsequently pilot-tested with a small group of MAPEH teachers not included in the main study. Revisions were made based on the validators' suggestions to enhance the clarity and relevance of the items.

2.4 Data Analysis

The data collected from the survey questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistical tools, specifically frequency counts, percentages, and weighted means, to summarize and interpret the responses of the MAPEH teachers. These methods allowed the researcher to identify patterns and trends related to the teachers' profiles, training needs, and challenges encountered in teaching music. The seriousness of the problems was interpreted using a Likert scale adapted from Nuevo (2016), which categorized responses from "Not a problem" to "Always a problem." In addition, qualitative responses from open-ended questions were thematically

analyzed and integrated into the discussion to provide deeper insights and contextual understanding of the quantitative data. This mixed approach ensured a more comprehensive analysis of the findings.

3 Results

The results of the study revealed that the majority of the respondents were female (78%), married (65%), and young, with most falling within the age range of 25 to 35 years old (54%). In terms of educational attainment, 62% had completed a bachelor's degree, while only 28% were enrolled in or had completed graduate studies. Although only 36% specialized in MAPEH, nearly all respondents were tasked with teaching all its components, including music. However, 67% of the respondents expressed a preference not to teach music, citing a lack of training and confidence. When it came to training needs, the highest-rated areas were playing musical instruments (weighted mean = 4.62), use of advanced technology in teaching art and music (4.47), coaching sports (4.39), and teaching life-saving skills such as first aid (4.30).

Regarding problems encountered, the most serious challenges identified were lack of instructional materials (weighted mean = 4.51), inadequate equipment and facilities (4.48), limited access to technology (4.33), and low student engagement in music classes (4.25). Mental health concerns were also noted, with 53% of teachers reporting stress and burnout due to their workload and teaching assignments beyond their specialization. Furthermore, a significant relationship was found between the teachers' educational background and specialization and the level of challenges they encountered, particularly in delivering music instruction. These findings underscore the urgent need for specialized training and resource augmentation to improve the effectiveness of music teaching within the MAPEH curriculum.

4 Discussion

The findings of the study revealed that a significant number of MAPEH teachers lacked specialized training in music education, yet were still tasked with teaching it, which aligns with the results of Culajara (2021), who reported that only a minority of MAPEH teachers in Region III had formal music training. This lack of specialization often led to reduced teacher confidence and competence in delivering music instruction, a challenge similarly identified by Ghozali (2020). In their study, teachers expressed difficulty in teaching technical aspects such as musical notation, playing instruments, and evaluating student performances due to limited pedagogical background in the field.

Additionally, the present study showed that access to instructional materials and equipment was among the most pressing problems. This finding corroborates the work of Walker (2024), who noted that inadequate resources in public schools, especially for arts and music, hinder meaningful instruction and learner engagement. In their survey of secondary MAPEH teachers, over 70% admitted to improvising or omitting music activities due to a lack of instruments or multimedia facilities. Similarly, Quan and Li (2021) emphasized that when teachers are not adequately resourced, their delivery becomes more theoretical and less performance-based, defeating the purpose of experiential learning in music.

The study also found that teachers considered playing musical instruments and using advanced technology in teaching music as their most urgent training needs. This confirms the earlier findings of Bolivar-Chavez et al. (2021), who asserted that technology integration in music classes is both a challenge and a necessity, especially in the 21st-century classroom. With DepEd's push for digital learning, as seen in DepEd Order No. 11, s. 2020, music teachers must be adept at using audio editing software, music apps, and online performance tools. However, many lack the required technical know-how due to insufficient training opportunities tailored to their specific discipline.

Furthermore, the study identified mental health as a significant concern among MAPEH teachers, a condition exacerbated by their responsibility to teach multiple subject components, often outside their expertise. This echoes the findings of Liu and Du (2024), who reported increased levels of stress and burnout among non-specialist subject teachers, particularly in multi-disciplinary areas like MAPEH. The mental burden of teaching subjects where teachers feel underprepared contributes to decreased motivation, which in turn affects classroom performance and student outcomes.

Lastly, the significant relationship found between teachers' specialization and the challenges they faced supports the argument presented by Shya and Salim (2019) that teacher qualification has a direct impact on instructional quality. Teachers trained in music were less likely to experience instructional challenges compared to those without such specialization. This observation validates the principles outlined in DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2017 or the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), which emphasizes the alignment of teacher qualifications with their teaching assignments to ensure high-quality education.

In summary, the results of the present study align with a growing body of local and international research that highlights the persistent mismatch between teacher training and subject assignments, the scarcity of instructional resources, and the pressing need for professional development programs specific to music education. These findings call for a more strategic, needs-based, and specialized approach in addressing the professional development of MAPEH teachers, particularly in music.

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