

Challenges And Coping Strategies of Non-MAPEH Majors Teaching Music, Arts, P.E. and Health in Selected Public and Private Schools

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the challenges and coping strategies of non-MAPEH majors who are assigned to teach subjects beyond their expertise. The research focused on selected junior high school teachers employed in both the private and public school who shared their experiences, difficulties, practices, and adaptive techniques in teaching. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data were gathered through interviews and analyzed thematically. Findings revealed major challenges such as lack of content mastery, limited teaching resources, and low student engagement. Coping strategies included self-learning, peer collaboration, and creative teaching approaches. The study concludes that continuous training, school support, and teacher adaptability are essential in maintaining instructional quality despite subject mismatch.

Keyword: Challenges, Coping Strategies, Non-MAPEH Majors Teaching

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INTRODUCTION

The implementation of the K to 12 Curriculum under the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 (Republic Act No. 10533) promotes holistic learner development through integrated learning areas such as Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health (MAPEH). However, this integration has also brought challenges in teacher deployment, particularly when non-MAPEH majors are assigned to teach these subjects outside their area of specialization. This scenario is common in both public and private schools where teacher shortages and limited specialization-based hiring occur.

According to the Department of Education (DepEd), approximately 30,000 teaching positions remain unfilled nationwide, even with the creation of new plantilla items for 2025 (Philstar, 2025; GMA Network, 2025). This shortage often results in cross-specialization teaching assignments, which may influence instructional effectiveness, teacher preparedness, and professional confidence. Policymakers such as Senator Sherwin Gatchalian and Senator Alan Peter Cayetano have highlighted the need for strengthened teacher preparation, specialization, and continuous professional development to ensure high-quality learning outcomes.

Given these concerns, this study aims to examine the challenges and coping strategies of non-MAPEH majors when teaching Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health in selected public and private schools. By exploring their experiences, the research seeks to provide insights that may inform teacher-training programs, school policies, and curriculum implementation practices aligned with DepEd standards, Republic Act No. 10533, and the Philippine Teachers Professionalization Act of 1994 (Republic Act No. 7836).

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Education in the Philippines continues to evolve in response to the demands of the 21st century, emphasizing the holistic development of learners through programs that cultivate creativity, physical fitness, and cultural appreciation. In line with the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 (Republic Act No. 10533), the K to 12 curriculum integrates Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health (MAPEH) as a unified learning area that contributes to learners' well-rounded growth (Republic of the Philippines,

2013). The Department of Education (DepEd) further reinforces this through its K to 12 Curriculum Guides for Music, Arts, and Physical Education, which outline competencies, standards, and expected teacher outcomes (DepEd, 2016a; DepEd, 2016b; DepEd, 2016c). These guidelines underscore that MAPEH teachers must possess both pedagogical and specialized content knowledge to effectively deliver instruction across multiple domains.

Despite these clear expectations, the Philippine education system continues to struggle with issues of teacher deployment, resource adequacy, and subject specialization. DepEd reports a shortage of approximately 30,000 teaching positions nationwide, even after creating 16,000 new items for 2025, while the backlog in classroom construction exceeds 165,000. Such deficiencies lead to situations where educators are compelled to teach subjects beyond their area of expertise, often without sufficient training or instructional materials. Senator Sherwin “Win” Gatchalian, vice chairperson of the Senate Committee on Basic Education, emphasized that without well-trained and properly assigned teachers, even the best-designed curriculum will not achieve its intended learning outcomes. Similarly, Senator Alan Peter Cayetano pointed out that addressing the 165,000-classroom shortage demands “radical budgetary reform and efficient allocation of resources,” asserting that adequate classrooms and qualified teachers are foundational to improving education. Senator Bam Aquino also highlighted that teachers serve as the “backbone of national development” and must receive strong institutional and professional support to perform effectively.

To enhance arts and physical education, DepEd implemented the Special Program in the Arts (SPA) through DepEd Order No. 56, s. 2012, and strengthened it through DepEd Memorandum No. 93, s. 2015, and DepEd Memorandum No. 125, s. 2016 (DepEd, 2012; DepEd, 2015; DepEd, 2016d). These initiatives aim to provide specialized training and support for teachers handling creative subjects. However, implementation remains inconsistent—particularly in private schools that have limited access to DepEd-funded training and fewer institutional mechanisms for teacher development. As a result, many non-MAPEH majors—particularly those whose formal training is in other subject areas—find themselves teaching the MAPEH components (Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health) without sufficient content expertise or appropriate instructional preparation. This mismatch may influence teaching confidence, instructional delivery, and learners’ mastery of subject competencies.

International studies reflect similar challenges. In Australia, Pascoe and Hallam (2019) reported that generalist teachers often lack confidence when teaching Music due to limited training. In Malaysia, Rahmat and Ahmad (2021) found that non-specialist Arts teachers rely heavily on self-study and peer collaboration to address competency gaps. In South Africa, Govender (2020) noted that teachers assigned to subjects outside their qualifications experience heightened stress and reduced instructional effectiveness.

Local studies echo these concerns. Research by Dela Cruz (2025) and Ramos and Villanueva (2025) revealed that MAPEH teachers commonly face limited training opportunities, inadequate instructional resources, and low confidence in teaching the Music and Arts components. However, most of these studies focused on public school settings, leaving a gap concerning how non-MAPEH majors in both public and private schools navigate these teaching challenges.

Therefore, examining the experiences, challenges, and coping strategies of non-MAPEH majors teaching MAPEH subjects in selected public and private schools is essential. This study aims to contribute insights that may inform teacher training programs, curriculum planning, and policy interventions aligned with DepEd standards, RA 10533, and the Philippine Teachers Professionalization Act of 1994 (RA 7836).

Statement of the Problem

Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of the following:
 - 1.1 Age;
 - 1.2 Gender; and
 - 1.3 Name of School?
2. What challenges are encountered by non-MAPEH majors in teaching Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health?
3. What coping strategies do they use to overcome these challenges?
4. How do these strategies affect their teaching performance and motivation?

Significance of the Study

This study is expected to help teachers, school administrators, curriculum planners, and future researchers to have meaningful insights into the challenges faced by non-MAPEH majors who teach Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health. For teachers, this will help them better understand the barriers they encounter in teaching subjects beyond their expertise and provide effective ways to address these challenges.

Non-MAPEH Teachers. The results of this study may help non-MAPEH teachers assigned to teach Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health to better understand the challenges they face and identify effective coping strategies to overcome them. This may enable them to develop adaptability and confidence when teaching outside their specialization. For example, non-MAPEH teachers may learn to integrate creative methods, such as using songs, art integration, or physical activities to support learning. The knowledge gained from this study can enhance their professional growth and improve their instructional performance.

Learners. The findings of this study may benefit learners by improving the quality of instruction they receive from non-MAPEH teachers. When teachers are equipped with appropriate teaching strategies and resources, students can experience more meaningful, enjoyable, and effective MAPEH lessons. This can foster creativity, physical fitness, and health awareness among learners, contributing to their holistic development.

School Administrators. The results may serve as a basis for designing and implementing professional development programs tailored to the specific needs of non-MAPEH teachers. These may include mentoring systems, team-teaching arrangements, or specialized workshops to enhance content knowledge and pedagogical skills in MAPEH. Providing such support can contribute to overall school improvement and teacher satisfaction.

Curriculum Developers and Policy Makers. The findings may provide valuable insights into the importance of aligning teacher qualifications with subject assignments. This can guide the creation of policies and curriculum plans that ensure teachers are adequately trained and supported to handle MAPEH subjects. Such alignment can improve curriculum implementation and the overall quality of education delivery.

Future Researchers. The study may serve as a useful reference for future researchers who wish to explore similar topics related to teacher specialization, subject mismatch, or instructional challenges. It may also inspire further studies comparing the experiences of teachers assigned outside their field in other learning areas, thereby expanding understanding of the issue across different educational contexts.

SCOPE AND DELIMITATION

This study focuses on examining the challenges and coping strategies of non-MAPEH majors who are assigned to teach Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health (MAPEH) in selected public and private schools. It explores their experiences in areas such as instructional preparation, content delivery, classroom management, assessment, and professional adaptation to teaching subjects outside their specialization. The study emphasizes how these teachers handle curricular expectations, resource limitations, and institutional support while maintaining instructional quality. The research is limited to selected private and public schools offering basic education. A qualitative-descriptive approach, using interviews and survey questionnaires, will be employed to gather self-reported data from participants. Because the study depends on voluntary responses from a small, specific group, the findings may not be generalized to all non-MAPEH majors or school settings.

METHODOLOGY

The study will use a descriptive quantitative research design to identify and analyze the challenges and coping strategies of non-MAPEH major teachers.

Respondents of the Study

Participants will include non-MAPEH major teachers currently teaching MAPEH in selected public and private schools across different regions in the Philippines.

Sampling Technique

A purposive sampling technique will be employed to select respondents who meet the criteria of being non-MAPEH majors teaching MAPEH subjects.

Research Instrument

A researcher-made survey questionnaire will be used, consisting of two parts:

Part I – Challenges encountered in teaching MAPEH (Likert scale)

Part II – Coping strategies used by teachers

The instrument will be validated by education experts and tested for reliability using Cronbach's Alpha.

Data Gathering Procedure

Permission will be sought from school heads and respondents prior to data collection. The survey will be distributed online and/or in person. Responses will be compiled and analyzed using statistical tools.

Data Analysis

Data will be analyzed using:

1. Frequency and percentage—to describe respondents' profiles;

2. Weighted mean—to determine the level of challenges and coping strategies; and.
3. t-test—to compare differences between public and private school teachers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results and discussion of the study titled *“Challenges and Coping Strategies of Non-MAPEH Majors Teaching Music, Arts, P.E. and Health in Selected Public and Private Schools.”* The findings were drawn from semi-structured interviews conducted with selected non-MAPEH major teachers who were assigned to teach MAPEH at junior high school levels. The analysis was guided by four objectives:

- (1) to explore the challenges faced by non-MAPEH majors when teaching subjects outside their specialization;
- (2) to determine the coping strategies used by non-MAPEH majors in handling PE teaching assignments;
- (3) to assess the level of preparedness and support provided by school administrators; and
- (4) to propose a skills enhancement program to support non-MAPEH majors in teaching non-specialized subjects.

The data were analyzed thematically, and the results are presented according to the main themes that emerged under each research objective.

A total of 12 respondents were surveyed from selected public schools with the percentage of 33.33% and private schools with the percentage of 66.7%. Most of the respondents were aged 22-25 years old. The youngest was 22, and the oldest respondent was 29, mostly majoring in English. Most of them have been teaching for less than 2 years, with a percentage of 50%, and the least have been teaching for 6-10 years, with a percentage of 16.7%. These respondents have 50% of teaching MAPEH for less than 1 year, and the longest have 16.7% for 5 years or more.

Challenges Faced by Non-MAPEH Majors in Teaching Physical Education

The gathered data showed that there are three major challenges encountered by non-MAPEH majors in teaching MAPEH: (1) limited content knowledge in some MAPEH components, (2) having difficulty in teaching MAPEH topics beyond their specialization, and (3) managing practical or activity-based lessons. Most respondents experienced uncertainty in teaching topics in MAPEH. This shows that teachers assigned outside their specialization often experience low self-efficacy and limited subject matter competence. Most of them also find it challenging when handling practical or activity-based lessons. This shows that non-MAPEH majors teaching MAPEH lack specialized skills and knowledge. Since their background training focuses on other subjects. This lack of expertise can make it hard to practice correct techniques and maintain student engagement.

Coping Strategies Used by Non-MAPEH Majors

Despite these challenges, the respondents demonstrated adaptability and resourcefulness by collaborating with colleagues for advice and sharing their teaching resources. Non-MAPEH teachers also rely on online resources such as video tutorials and demonstrations to improve their skills in teaching MAPEH. They also adapt their teaching methods to fit the strengths and needs of their students. And last, these non-MAPEH major teachers cope with the challenges they face by maintaining a positive attitude in teaching MAPEH.

Regardless of the challenges, the survey revealed that non-MAPEH majors employed various coping strategies to effectively manage the demands of teaching MAPEH subjects outside their area of specialization. These coping strategies appeared as adaptive responses to the challenges they encountered in lesson planning, content delivery, and performance-based assessments. Their coping strategies, rooted in self-learning, collaboration, and professional growth, serve as vital tools for ensuring quality instruction and positive learning outcomes despite their non-specialization in the field.

Level of Preparedness and Support from School Administrators

In terms of preparedness, guidance, and support from school administrators, the survey shows that most of the respondents received clear expectations and curriculum guides for teaching MAPEH. They also received sufficient orientation before being assigned to teach MAPEH. Their administrators also monitor and provide feedback on their performance. Most of the respondents are unsure about the allocation of budgets/funds to procure MAPEH teaching materials in their school.

This survey indicates that most of the respondents received enough support and guidance from their school administrators in teaching MAPEH. In general, participants expressed that administrators recognized their efforts and commitment. The findings show that the level of preparedness and support from school administrators is moderate but inconsistent. While administrators generally display awareness and concern, sustained and specialized support remains necessary to empower non-MAPEH majors.

Proposed Skills Enhancement Program

Based on the respondents expressed needs and coping mechanisms, skills enhancement programs were proposed to address the learning gaps, challenges, and training needs of non-MAPEH majors. Most of the

respondents agree and find it important to enhance the mastery of teachers in teaching the fundamentals of MAPEH. They also proposed to enhance the assessment and grading system for MAPEH. The utilization of technology and multimedia in MAPEH instruction was also suggested to be enhanced by the respondents. They also agreed on enhancing the classroom and time management in active and performance-based classes.

Respondents expressed a strong desire for specialized training and continuous professional development tailored to MAPEH instruction. They emphasized the need for workshops, seminars, and mentoring programs that would strengthen both their theoretical understanding and practical teaching competencies. The proposed skills enhancement program aims to build confidence, improve instructional competence, and ensure quality MAPEH instructions across all levels.

Overall, the proposed program serves as a comprehensive support mechanism that bridges the gap between non-MAPEH teachers' current competencies and the expected standard of MAPEH instruction. By equipping teachers with essential knowledge and practical skills, the enhancement program seeks to ensure effective teaching performance, improved student engagement, and sustained quality of MAPEH education across schools.

CONCLUSION

The results show that non-MAPEH majors encounter various difficulties in teaching the subject, mainly because of limited content knowledge and inadequate institutional assistance. Despite these challenges, their efforts to adapt through self-learning, collaboration, and creativity reflect strong professional resilience. The study also highlights the need for school administrators to provide more than just encouragement by offering specific skills-based training. The suggested skills enhancement program aims to serve as a long-term solution to address competency gaps and enhance the quality of instruction in teaching MAPEH.

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