

Out-of-Field MAPEH Teaching and Grade 7 Learners' Attitudes, Engagement, and Skill Development: Evidence from a Philippine Public Junior High School

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Abstract

This study examined how the assignment of non-MAPEH teachers affects Grade 7 learners' attitudes, engagement, and skill development in Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health (MAPEH) at Doyong National High School in San Carlos City, Pangasinan. Framed by Social Cognitive Theory and Teacher Efficacy Theory, the study assumed that teacher specialization shapes instructional quality, learner motivation, and classroom participation. A descriptive correlational mixed-method design was used. Data were gathered from 50 Grade 7-UNITY learners through a validated questionnaire and open-ended responses, then analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, weighted means, and qualitative thematic grouping. Results showed that the strongest perceived impact of non-MAPEH teaching was on academic skills (average weighted mean = 2.69, High Impact), followed by meaning of studies (2.40, Less Impact), social practices (2.45, Less Impact), and participation (1.94, Less Impact). Learners most strongly reported difficulty in developing MAPEH skills and feeling unprepared for assessments due to limited teacher expertise. The most frequently cited challenges were limited creative expression (42.00%), reduced engagement, motivation, and interest (28.00%), and limited hands-on experiences (24.00%). The findings indicate that out-of-field teaching in MAPEH affects not only the acquisition of technical skills but also the quality of the learner experience in creative, collaborative, and performance-based tasks. The study recommends structured professional development for non-MAPEH teachers, especially in skill demonstration, assessment, and interactive teaching strategies, to improve learner outcomes in MAPEH.

Keywords: out-of-field teaching, MAPEH, learner attitudes, student engagement, teacher specialization, junior high school

Introduction

Teacher specialization is a continuing concern in education because schools sometimes assign teachers to subjects outside their area of formal preparation due to staffing shortages, workload concerns, or administrative needs. This practice, known as out-of-field teaching, may affect instructional quality, teacher confidence, and learner engagement. In MAPEH, the issue becomes more critical because the subject requires demonstration, movement, creativity, practice, and immediate feedback. Non-MAPEH teachers may find it difficult to deliver performance-based lessons effectively, especially when they lack specialized pedagogical content knowledge.

The research gap addressed in this study is that most discussions of out-of-field teaching focus on teacher challenges or academic performance, while giving limited attention to how learners themselves experience MAPEH when taught by non-specialists. Specifically, there is a need to understand how Grade 7 learners perceive the effects of non-MAPEH teachers on their meaning of studies, academic skills, social practices, and participation. This gap is important because learners' classroom experiences can reveal whether out-of-field teaching weakens not only academic achievement but also skill development, interaction, motivation, and experiential learning.

To address this problem, the study examines Grade 7 learners' perceptions at Doyong National High School regarding the influence of non-MAPEH teachers on their learning experiences. Guided by Social Cognitive Theory and Teacher Efficacy Theory, the study analyzes how teacher confidence, competence, and instructional behavior shape learners' attitudes, participation, and skill development. The findings are intended to provide evidence-based recommendations for teacher assignment, instructional support, professional development, and possible intervention programs to improve the delivery of MAPEH, even when non-specialists are assigned to teach the subject.

Methodology

The study used a descriptive correlational design with a mixed-method approach. It was conducted at Doyong National High School in San Carlos City, Pangasinan, and involved the total enumeration of 50 Grade 7-UNITY learners enrolled in MAPEH. According to the source thesis, the instrument comprised three parts: a demographic profile, a Likert-scale assessment of the impact of non-MAPEH teachers on learner attitudes and engagement, and an open-ended item on learner challenges. The questionnaire underwent expert validation by three evaluators and pilot reliability testing with 50 learners from other institutions. Ethical procedures included informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and restricted academic use of the data.

Quantitative data were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, and weighted means. The thesis also stated that Spearman's rho and chi-square tests were intended for testing relationships; however, the uploaded results chapters reported only descriptive findings, not inferential outputs. For that reason, the present article limits interpretation to the descriptive and thematic results actually available in the source document.

Results

All 50 respondents were 13–14 years old. Female learners comprised 58.00% of the sample, while 42.00% were male. In terms of parental income, 54.00% came from households earning PHP 10,001–15,000 monthly, 38.00% from households earning above PHP 15,001, and 8.00% from households earning PHP 5,001–10,000. These data suggest a relatively homogeneous early-adolescent sample drawn largely from low- to middle-income households.

Across the four measured dimensions, the highest perceived effect of non-MAPEH teaching was found in **academic skills** (AWM = 2.69, High Impact). Learners reported difficulty grasping concepts, applying lessons, mastering MAPEH skills, and preparing for assessments when teachers lacked subject-specific knowledge. The strongest single indicator in this cluster was feeling unprepared for MAPEH assessments because of inadequate guidance on technical skills (WM = 2.96).

Regarding the meaning of studies, the average weighted mean was 2.40 (Less Impact), but one item stood out: learners reported difficulty developing skills in MAPEH due to teachers' limited expertise in music, arts, PE, and health (WM = 2.96, High Impact). This suggests that even where overall disengagement was moderate, learners clearly perceived a deficit in skill-building instruction.

For **social practices**, the overall mean was 2.45 (Less Impact), although learners reported high impact on difficulty engaging in MAPEH discussions (WM = 2.84) and difficulty developing teamwork and communication skills due to the lack of social activities in class (WM = 2.62). For **participation**, the overall mean was 1.94 (Less Impact), indicating a milder effect, though lower enthusiasm, weak demonstration, and less interactive activities still reduced participation to some extent.

The most frequently reported learner challenges were **limited creative expression** (42.00%), **reduced engagement, motivation, and interest** (28.00%), and **limited hands-on experiences** (24.00%). Only 6.00% identified low grades as their main challenge. The thesis also proposed four corresponding interventions: a Comprehensive MAPEH Skills Workshop, Assessment and Evaluation in MAPEH Training, Interactive Teaching Strategies for MAPEH, and Demonstration and Modeling Techniques in MAPEH.

Table 1. Consolidated Summary of Respondents' Profile, Perceived Impact of Non-MAPEH Teachers, and Challenges Encountered

Area	Indicator	Salient Result	Statistical Value	Interpretation
Demographic Profile	Age	Majority of respondents were 13–14 years old	50 learners; 100.00%	Respondents were age-homogeneous, indicating that age was not a major source of variation in the study.
	Sex	Female respondents were slightly higher than male respondents	Female: 29; 58.00% Male: 21; 42.00%	Both sexes were represented, although the findings may slightly reflect more female learner experiences.
	Parents' Monthly Income	Most respondents came from families earning ₱10,001–₱15,000 monthly	27 learners; 54.00%	The respondents generally belonged to low- to middle-income households.
Impact of Non-MAPEH Teachers	Meaning of Studies	Learners reported some difficulty in appreciating and finding meaning in MAPEH, especially in skill development	AWM = 2.40	Less Impact
	Academic Skills	The strongest impact was observed in academic and performance-based skills, particularly assessment readiness and mastery of technical skills	AWM = 2.69	High Impact
	Social Practices	Learners experienced reduced interaction, teamwork, and collaborative learning opportunities	AWM = 2.45	Less Impact
	Participation	Participation was affected only to a limited extent; learners still showed willingness to join MAPEH activities	AWM = 1.94	Less Impact
Challenges Encountered	Limited creative expression	Most frequently reported challenge	21 learners; 42.00%	The major concern was not low grades but limited opportunities for creativity and expression.
	Reduced engagement, motivation, and interest	Second most common challenge	14 learners; 28.00%	Some learners became less motivated when activities were not engaging or interactive.

Area	Indicator	Salient Result	Statistical Value	Interpretation
	Limited hands-on experiences	Third most common challenge	12 learners; 24.00%	Learners lacked sufficient experiential and practical learning opportunities.
	Having a low grade	Least reported challenge	3 learners; 6.00%	Academic grades were less affected compared with affective, creative, and experiential learning outcomes.

Discussion

The results indicate that out-of-field teaching in MAPEH has the strongest effect on learners in areas that require demonstration, coaching, and guided practice. This pattern aligns with literature on out-of-field and non-specialist teaching, which shows that reduced content confidence and weaker pedagogical fit can diminish teacher efficacy and learner support (Hobbs et al., 2022; Recede et al., 2023; Mesias & Pelicano, 2024). In MAPEH, this becomes especially consequential because learners are expected not merely to recall information but to perform skills, create outputs, and participate in physically and socially interactive activities.

The stronger effect on academic skills than on participation is noteworthy. Learners did not completely withdraw from MAPEH participation, but they did report limitations in mastering concepts, applying lessons, and preparing for assessments. This suggests that personal interest, peer influence, or the inherently activity-based nature of MAPEH may sustain some degree of participation even when instruction is imperfect. However, sustained participation alone does not guarantee meaningful learning. Research in physical education shows that teaching strategies and teacher behavior directly shape learner engagement, motivation, and perceived emotional support, all of which influence the depth of learning rather than mere attendance or involvement (Leo et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2024; González-Peño et al., 2021).

The social-practice findings also deserve attention. Although the overall mean for social practices fell within the “Less Impact” range, the high ratings on classroom interaction and teamwork difficulties suggest that the collaborative dimensions of MAPEH are vulnerable when teachers do not intentionally structure peer-based learning. This is consistent with evidence that collaborative physical education can significantly improve communication, cooperation, empathy, and conflict resolution among learners (Adifa & Amri, 2024). In other words, MAPEH is not only a skills subject but also a social learning space, and weak facilitation in this area undermines one of the subject’s core developmental functions. The most frequently cited challenge, limited creative expression, reinforces the argument that the real cost of non-specialist MAPEH teaching lies in the narrowing of learning experience. Recent work on music teaching in the Philippines emphasizes that pedagogical content knowledge is central to meaningful arts instruction and that limited specialization restricts both instructional depth and learner creativity (Alngog, 2025). The thesis findings echo that pattern: learners were affected less by grades than by reduced opportunities to explore, perform, create, and practice.

Conclusions

The study shows that non-MAPEH teaching has a measurable negative effect on Grade 7 learners’ MAPEH experiences, with the strongest effects observed in academic skills and practical skill development. Learners particularly struggle when instruction lacks subject-specific guidance, technical demonstration, and performance-based feedback.

The findings also show that out-of-field teaching influences more than academic attainment. It affects how learners interpret the value of MAPEH, how they interact with peers, and how fully they experience

creativity and hands-on learning. Participation may remain present, but the quality of engagement becomes thinner.

Overall, the study supports the view that teacher specialization matters in performance-oriented subjects. When specialization is not possible, structured support for non-MAPEH teachers becomes essential if schools want to preserve the holistic, creative, and participatory goals of the MAPEH curriculum.

Recommendations

Schools should implement structured professional development for non-MAPEH teachers assigned to MAPEH, beginning with foundational workshops on music, arts, physical education, and health. These should be paired with training in performance-based assessment, demonstration techniques, and interactive classroom strategies.

School leaders should also establish mentoring systems in which MAPEH specialists coach non-specialists on lesson planning, activity design, and skills demonstration. Because the most prominent learner challenges involved creative expression, motivation, and hands-on experience, interventions should prioritize active learning, peer collaboration, and authentic practice rather than content delivery alone.

At the policy level, teacher deployment should give greater weight to subject-specialization alignment in MAPEH whenever feasible. Where staffing realities make out-of-field assignments unavoidable, schools should treat these assignments as high-support roles rather than routine substitutions.

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