

Competency-Based Education: Aligning Instructional Practices as Viewed by Teachers

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Abstract. This study explored teachers' experiences in aligning instructional practices with the principles of Competency-Based Education (CBE) within the school setting. Specifically, it aimed to examine how teachers adapt their teaching strategies to meet CBE expectations and identify their coping mechanisms when addressing implementation challenges. A phenomenological approach was utilized to gain a deep understanding of their lived experiences through semi-structured online interviews and a focus group discussion. Data were analyzed using thematic coding to uncover essential patterns and insights. For the first objective, teachers' experiences in aligning instructional practices with CBE thematic analysis revealed key insights. Teachers reported efforts in Individualized Pacing and Student-Centered Planning, and emphasized the importance of Mastery-Based Assessment and Continuous Feedback. However, they also encountered barriers such as the Misalignment Between Curriculum Expectations and Available Resources, and Inconsistent Support and Understanding from Stakeholders, which hindered full implementation of CBE principles. The second objective focused on how teachers cope with the challenges in implementing CBE. Emergent themes included Strategic Time Management and Prioritization of Competencies, Collaborative Planning and Peer Support, and the pursuit of Professional Development and Continuous Learning. The study also yielded valuable insights for educational management. Themes such as Adapting Instruction to Student Needs, Fostering Collaboration Among Students, and Empowering Teachers Through Professional Development surfaced, highlighting the importance of flexible, learner-centered strategies supported by responsive leadership.

KEY WORDS

1. Competency-Based Education 2. Instructional Practices 3. Mastery
Learning

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1. Introduction

Competency-based education (CBE) has gained significant traction worldwide as an innovative approach to transforming traditional educational systems. Rooted in the principle of equipping learners with practical skills and knowledge, CBE ensures students achieve specific competencies required for academic, pro-

fessional, and personal success. This model addresses the global demand for educational systems that are inclusive, adaptable, and aligned with the needs of the 21st-century workforce. By emphasizing mastery of learning outcomes over seat time, competency-based education has received positive recognition for its abil-

ity to bridge gaps in student performance, promote equity, and prepare learners for the dynamic challenges of a rapidly evolving global landscape. In the United States, competency-based education has been widely implemented to address learning disparities and enhance personalized instruction. However, studies reveal persistent challenges in aligning instructional practices with the CBE framework. Educators often struggle with the transition from traditional time-based curricula to performance-driven models, citing a lack of comprehensive training and institutional support. Furthermore, while CBE is recognized for fostering individualized learning, gaps remain in ensuring equitable access to resources, particularly in underfunded schools, leaving room for further investigation into strategies that support effective implementation. In the United Kingdom, efforts to integrate competency-based education into school systems have been met with a mix of optimism and concern. Research highlights gaps in consistency and scalability, particularly in adapting CBE frameworks to meet the diverse needs of learners across urban and rural settings. Challenges in assessment practices and alignment with national standards also persist, raising questions about how instructional practices can be effectively harmonized within the broader educational landscape. Addressing these concerns requires an in-depth understanding of teacher perspectives to ensure that instructional approaches align with the goals of competency-based education. Similarly, in China, competency-based education initiatives have been introduced as part of educational reforms aimed at developing students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills. However, studies indicate a misalignment between intended learning outcomes and instructional practices due to traditional teaching methods still prevalent in many classrooms. Teachers often face difficulties in implementing student-centered learning strategies, as the high-pressure examination culture and rigid cur-

riculum frameworks continue to dominate the educational system. These gaps underscore the need for a closer examination of how teachers perceive and adapt to competency-based approaches within a context deeply rooted in academic rigor and competitiveness. In the Philippines, particularly in the National Capital Region (NCR), Western Visayas, and Central Visayas, the adoption of competency-based education has been increasingly promoted as a strategy to enhance student achievement and workforce readiness. However, gaps in alignment between instructional practices and CBE principles remain evident. In NCR, where schools are often better resourced, the challenge lies in addressing the diverse needs of learners in highly urbanized and competitive settings. Teachers report difficulties in balancing the demands of competency-based instruction with existing standardized testing frameworks, which often emphasize rote learning over practical application. In Western Visayas, where many schools are situated in semi-urban and rural areas, the implementation of competency-based education is hindered by limited access to instructional materials, technology, and teacher training. Educators face significant barriers in shifting to student-centered learning due to infrastructure deficits and inconsistent support from local education stakeholders. These challenges highlight the need to equip teachers with adequate resources and professional development to fully embrace competency-based approaches. Meanwhile, in Central Visayas, the integration of competency-based education is shaped by the region's cultural and socio-economic landscape. While some schools have successfully adopted aspects of CBE, gaps remain in ensuring that instructional practices meet the needs of marginalized learners, particularly in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas. Teachers often express concerns about insufficient guidance on how to implement CBE effectively within the constraints of traditional curricula and lim-

ited time for instructional planning. These regional disparities call for a closer examination of teacher experiences to bridge the gap between policy and practice in competency-based education. Despite the growing emphasis on competency-based education, there remains a significant gap in understanding how instruc-

tional practices align with this approach in Tagbaros Elementary School, Maco South District, Division of Davao De Oro, highlighting the need to pursue this study to address these gaps and support teacher development in the local context.

1.1. Purpose of the Study—The purpose of this study, entitled “Competency-Based Education: Aligning Instructional Practices as Viewed by Teachers,” was to explore and analyze the firsthand experiences of educators as they navigate the complexities of implementing Competency-Based Education (CBE) within their classrooms. By identifying the specific challenges teachers face such as inadequate training, resource limitations, and assessment difficulties this research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the barriers hindering effective CBE implementation. Additionally, the study seeks to highlight the opportunities that arise from these experiences, including professional growth, enhanced student engagement, and improved learning outcomes. Ultimately, the findings may inform educational stakeholders, including policymakers and school administrators, about the necessary support and resources needed to facilitate a successful transition to CBE, thereby enriching the educational landscape in the Philippines.

1.2. Research Questions—The purpose of this study is to investigate the experiences of teachers in implementing Competency-Based Education, focusing on the challenges they encounter and the opportunities for growth and improved learning outcomes within the educational framework. The study aimed to specifically answer the following questions:

- (1) What are the experiences of the teachers in the implementation of competency-based education?
- (2) How do teachers cope with the challenges in the implementation of competency-based education?
- (3) What educational management insights can be drawn from the findings of the study?

1.3. Definition of Terms—The following definitions below shall be used throughout the study.

Competency-Based Education (CBE) In this study, competency-based education refers to an educational approach that prioritizes the achievement of clearly defined learning outcomes or competencies. It emphasizes mastery of skills and knowledge at the learner’s own

pace, ensuring that students demonstrate proficiency in specific standards before progressing.

Instructional Practices In this study pertain to the teaching strategies, methods, and techniques employed by teachers in the classroom to facilitate learning. These practices are assessed in terms of their alignment with the principles of competency-based education, focusing on promoting mastery and addressing individual learning needs.

1.4. Significant of the Study—The highlights of this study were significant to the following:

Teachers
This study provides insights into effective strategies for addressing challenges in imple-

menting competency-based education.

Students

It highlights opportunities to enhance learning experiences and achieve better educational outcomes.

Parents

It informs them of how competency-based education can support their children's academic growth and development.

Department of Education

It offers valuable data for refining policies and training programs to improve the implemen-

tation of competency-based education. Stakeholders

It guides investments and supports initiatives to address challenges and maximize opportunities in competency-based education.

Future Researchers

It serves as a foundational reference for further studies on competency-based education practices and their impact. Lastly, to fellow educational researchers, this study could be a reference to similar and comparative studies.

1.5. Theoretical Lens—Constructivist Learning Theory (Piaget,1970 and Vygotsky,1980): The constructivist learning theory emphasizes that learners actively build their knowledge and understanding through experiences and interactions. Piaget's stages of cognitive development and Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development provide insights into how teachers can scaffold learning to meet students' individual needs. This theory aligns with competency-based education by advocating for instructional practices that adapt to each student's learning progress, ensuring mastery of competencies before moving forward. *Mastery Learning Theory* (Bloom, 1968): Bloom's mastery learning theory serves as a cornerstone for competency-based education, focusing on the principle that all students can achieve mastery if given adequate time and support. It stresses the importance of clear objectives, formative assessments, and corrective feedback, which directly relate to the study's aim of analyzing how teachers in Tagbaros Elementary School align their instructional practices with the principles of competency-based education. *Differentiated Instruction Theory* (Tomlinson, 2001): Differentiated instruction theory highlights the need for teachers to modify their content, process,

and products based on students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles. This theory supports competency-based education by emphasizing the importance of flexible teaching strategies that cater to diverse learners, ensuring that all students achieve mastery of defined competencies. It underscores the critical role of aligning instructional practices to meet varied student needs, which is central to this study. The diagram consists of two overlapping circles. The first circle represents "My Participants' Experiences in Implementing Competency-Based Education (CBE)", highlighting their instructional strategies, classroom practices, and how they perceive the effectiveness of CBE. The second circle represents "How My Participants Cope with Challenges in Implementing CBE", which focuses on the obstacles they face and the strategies they use to overcome them. In the overlapping section of the two circles, "Educational Management Insights" are presented. This section captures the key findings that emerge when both experiences and coping mechanisms are analyzed together. These insights contribute to a better understanding of how school administrators, policymakers, and educators can enhance CBE implementation through improved support systems, training, and resource allocation.

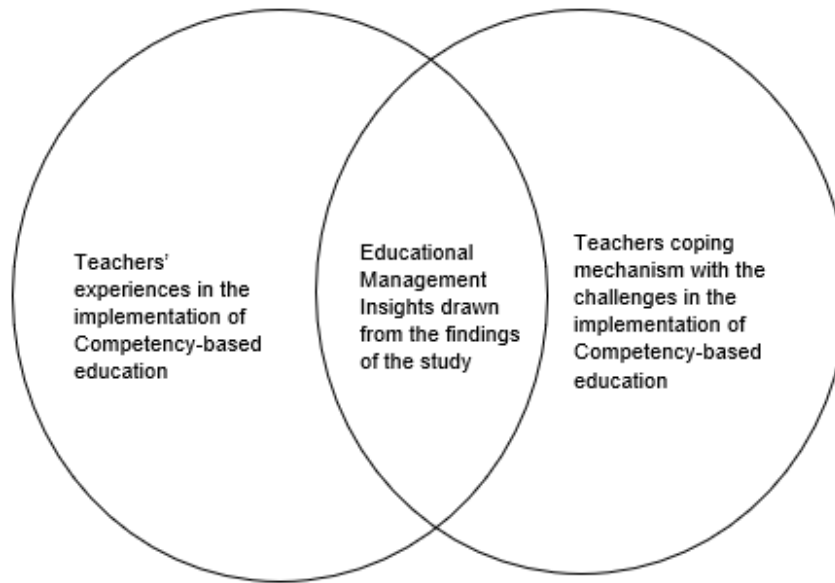


Fig. 1. The Conceptual Framework of the Study

2. Methodology

This chapter will introduce the methods that shall be used in conducting the study and gathering data. It will also include the research design, philosophical assumptions, research participants and sampling, data collection, research instrument, the trustworthiness of the study, and ethical considerations. Common qualitative methods will be participant observation, in-depth interviews, and focus groups. Each method will be particularly suited for obtaining a specific type of data. Participant observation will be appropriate for collecting data on naturally occurring behaviors in their usual contexts. In-depth interviews (IDIs) will be optimal for collecting data on individuals' personal histories, perspectives, and experiences, particularly when sensitive topics are being explored. Focus groups will be effective in eliciting data on creating and sustaining innovation in schools for school development. Phenomenology, according to Patton (2019), is an investigation that asks, "What is the structure and essence of the experience of this occurrence for these people? This definition was a good fit for the research's objective, which was to comprehend the school heads' experiences as they attempted to compare how it was implemented back then and now. Giorgi (2019) advised researchers to be ready for a more thorough and comprehensive examination than the provided description suggested. He recommended considering information to be only the beginning.

2.1. Philosophical Assumptions—In this study, the philosophical assumptions will serve as the foundation for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data related to the experiences of teachers in implementing competency-based education, focusing on both challenges and opportunities. These assumptions provide a guiding framework for drawing conclusions and making informed decisions regarding educational practices and policies. The following discussion will explore various types of philosophical assumptions relevant to this study. Effective research begins with selecting a topic or problem of interest, in this case, the implementation of competency-based education, and identifying the appropriate paradigm to guide the inquiry.

A well-constructed study begins with selecting a relevant topic, problem, or area of interest, followed by identifying the guiding paradigm. In the context of this study on the experiences of teachers in the implementation of competency-based education: challenges and opportunities, the paradigm serves as a foundation for understanding and interpreting the research focus. Stanage (2019) traced the term "paradigm" to its Greek (*paradeigma*) and Latin (*paradigm*) roots, meaning pattern, model, or example, emphasizing its role as a framework for thought and action. Simply put, a paradigm reflects a specific worldview or approach to understanding phenomena (Stanage, 2019). Supporting this view, Denzin and Lincoln (2020) describe a research paradigm as a "basic set of beliefs that guide action," encompassing the researcher's fundamental principles, worldview, and philosophy—essential elements in exploring the complexities of implementing competency-based education. **Ontology**

Ontology in this research refers to the nature of reality as it pertains to the subject being studied. According to Creswell (2022), reality is subjective and varies from individual to individual, as perceived by participants. For qualitative researchers, ontology addresses the idea that multiple realities exist those of the researcher, the participants, and the readers or audience interpreting the study. In this research, the participants will discuss the realities of school development and their experiences coping with the implementation of innovations. To capture these realities, I rely on the participants' voices and interpretations, utilizing extensive quotations and themes that reflect their perspectives. The participants' responses will be coded and analyzed to identify commonalities and differences. Care will be taken to ensure that their answers are accurately coded to maintain the reliability and authenticity of the results while minimizing any potential bias on my part.

Epistemology Epistemology refers to how

knowledge claims are justified, focusing on reducing the distance between the researcher and the participants to gather firsthand information. Guba and Lincoln (2019), as cited by Creswell (2022), emphasized that in epistemological assumptions, researchers aim to lessen the distance by spending time in the field and collaborating closely with participants, essentially becoming "insiders." For this study, I adopt a phenomenological approach, utilizing thematic analysis to explore the experiences and coping strategies of school heads in creating and sustaining innovations. By engaging closely with the participants, I aim to gain direct insights into the knowledge underpinning their actions.

Axiology

Axiology pertains to the role of values in research. Creswell (2022) highlighted the importance of acknowledging the influence of values on a study. In this context, I will openly discuss the values that shape the narrative and provide my own interpretation alongside the participants' views. Throughout the study, I honor the dignity and worth of the information provided by participants, recognizing the personal and value-laden nature of the data. The responses of the participants were carefully interpreted, ensuring that their insights on safety measures, security challenges, and coping strategies were presented with integrity of their contributions.

Rhetoric

By employing a narrative approach, I was able to convey the lived experiences of the ten (10) teacher-participants from Tagbaros Elementary School, Maco South District, Davao de Oro Division, each with at least three (3) years of teaching experience. This ensured that their voices were authentically represented in the study. This approach allowed for a deeper, more personal exploration of their coping strategies, challenges, and perceptions regarding competency-based education. Writing in the first person also reinforced my active role in the research process, ensuring that the study

remained grounded in the voices of the participants while maintaining clarity and coherence in presenting their insights.

2.2. Qualitative Assumptions—Methodology refers to the creative and flexible approach used to understand research questions, while methods outline the specific procedures employed to gather knowledge (Gerodias, 2019). In this study, the experiences of teachers in implementing competency-based education, including the challenges they face and the opportunities they encounter, will be explored through in-depth interviews (IDIs). The strategies these teachers use to navigate the implementation process will be drawn from their responses. My curiosity about the lived experiences of teachers in this context led to the adoption of a qualitative research approach. Kalof and Dietz (2020) emphasize the value of qualitative methods in uncovering the meanings, motivations, and deeper insights behind personal and cultural experiences. By employing phenomenology, I aim to illuminate the stories of these teachers, bringing out the themes, symbols, and meanings embedded in their experiences, as described by David (2020). This approach will

provide a deeper understanding of how teachers navigate the demands of competency-based education in their classrooms. **Phenomenology and Research Premises:** Two fundamental tenets form the basis of phenomenological inquiry. The first is that knowledge from human experience is rich and important. According to Becker (2019), who was quoted by Morrissey and Higgs (2020), experience is a fundamental component of comprehending human events and shapes behavior. According to the second assumption, the everyday world can provide important insights into human events by examining how they transpire in day-to-day living (Morrissey and Higgs, 2020). Through the phenomenological approach, which focuses on the "what" and the "how" (Moustakas, 2019), I aim to highlight the subjective experiences and perspectives of the school heads, demonstrating how they create and sustain innovations in their schools. This will provide valuable insights into the crucial role school heads play in driving school development and fostering innovation.

2.3. Design and Procedure—This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design to explore the experiences of teachers in implementing competency-based education, focusing on the challenges they face and the opportunities they encounter. The phenomenological approach captured the participants' interpretations of their lived experiences. Teachers first respond to a set of questions provided through Google Forms. Following this, they invited to participate in a Focus Group Discussion, conducted either virtually or face-to-face, depending on the circumstances. At the conclusion of the study, themes and common patterns to identified and analyzed from their

responses (Jamon Cabanes, 2019). This design was chosen because it enables a deep understanding of teachers' individual experiences, shedding light on their unique perspectives and strategies in navigating competency-based education. There were 10 teachers as participants in the study who have firsthand experiences of implementation of Competency-Based Education challenges and opportunities. The data gathered to recorded, transcribed, and validated to extract the firsthand experiences of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in the role of the school heads in the school development in terms of innovations and sustaining it. The Colaizzi method of data analysis in a

phenomenological research design will be used. This study purely academic. The participants may sign informed consent, and there no risk in this study. They able to withdraw as participants at any time. Ethical considerations and safety health protocols will be followed. Phenomenology is an approach to qualitative research that focuses on the commonality of a lived experience within a particular group. The fundamental goal of the approach was to arrive at a description of the nature of the particular phenomenon (Creswell, 2019). Typically, interviews were conducted with a group of individuals who had firsthand knowledge of an event, situation, or experience. The inter-

views attempted to answer two broad questions (Moustakas, 1994): What had you experienced in terms of the phenomenon? What contexts or situations had typically influenced your experiences of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2019). Other forms of data such as documents, observations, and art were also used. The data was then read and reread and culled for like phrases and themes that were then grouped to form clusters of meaning (Creswell, 2019). Through this process, the researchers constructed the universal meaning of the event, situation, or experience and arrived at a more profound understanding of the phenomenon.

2.4. Research Participants—In the selection of the research participants, purposive sampling will be applied. Purposive sampling is a technique in which the researcher relies on their judgment when choosing members of the population to participate in the study. It is a non-probability sampling method, and it occurred when elements selected for the sample were chosen based on the researcher's judgment. Researchers often believed that they could obtain a representative sample by using sound judgment, which resulted in saving time and money (Black, 2020). In this study, the participants will include ten (10) teachers, either male or female, from Grades 1 to 6, who are actively implementing Competency-Based Education at Tagbaros Elementary School, Maco South District, Division of Davao De Oro. The selected participants must have at least three (3) years of teaching experience to ensure familiarity and depth of understanding regarding instructional practices aligned with Competency-Based Education. To protect the identity of the participants, coding will be used, with T1 to T10 representing the informants in the in-depth interviews. In this study, I will play various roles to attain the suc-

cess of the study. First, I will ask for permission to conduct the study, starting with the school division Superintendent and then proceeding to the participants of my study. As a researcher, once consent is obtained, I will record the actual interview to meet the needs of this type of research. The purpose of the interview is to gain deeper insights into the experiences of teachers in implementing competency-based education, focusing on the challenges they face and the opportunities they encounter. It will also explore how the Department of Education can enhance its programs to support teachers in this transition. After collecting the necessary data, the researcher will transcribe and analyze the responses. It is essential, however, to acknowledge the role of human instruments in this study, as potential biases and assumptions may influence the quality of the research, particularly in how participants are engaged (Greenbank, 2019). This consideration is especially important in understanding the implementation of competency-based education, where teachers play a crucial role in shaping effective classroom practices and driving educational innovation.

2.5. Ethical Considerations—

In this section, I will outline the ethical principles that will guide my research, ensuring the protection and well-being of the ten teacher participants from Grades 1 to 6 at Tagbaros Elementary School in Maco South District, Division of Davao De Oro, who are actively implementing Competency-Based Education. These principles include my commitment to social value, informed consent, addressing the vulnerability of research respondents, upholding privacy and confidentiality, carefully considering risks, benefits, and safety, ensuring justice, maintaining transparency, acknowledging my qualifications as the researcher, addressing potential conflicts of interest, ensuring the adequacy of resources, and recognizing community relevance. Social Value. I recognize the significant social value of this research. By exploring teachers' perspectives on aligning instructional practices with Competency-Based Education at Tagbaros Elementary School, I aim to contribute to a deeper understanding of its practical implementation at the elementary level. I believe my findings can offer valuable insights for curriculum developers, school administrators, and fellow educators in Maco South District and potentially beyond. This understanding can lead to more effective professional development, improved instructional strategies, and ultimately, enhanced learning outcomes for students within a competency-based framework.

Informed Consent. I will personally ensure that each of the ten teacher participants provides their informed consent. Prior to their involvement, I will clearly explain the study's purpose, the data collection methods I will use (such as interviews or focus group discussions), the estimated time commitment required, and their unequivocal right to withdraw from the study at any point without any negative consequences. I will provide a detailed consent form outlining these aspects, and I will only proceed with their participation once I am confident, they fully comprehend the information and

voluntarily agree to participate. **Vulnerability of Research Respondents.** I acknowledge that teachers, while dedicated professionals, may have concerns about openly sharing their perspectives, especially regarding the implementation of educational policies. They might be sensitive to how their opinions could be perceived by school administration or colleagues. Recognizing this potential vulnerability, I am committed to creating a research environment characterized by trust and openness. I will explicitly assure participants that their participation is entirely voluntary and that their individual responses will be kept strictly confidential and anonymized in any reporting of the findings. My aim is to empower them to share their experiences honestly, knowing their input will be valued and will not negatively impact their professional standing.

Privacy and Confidentiality. I will prioritize the privacy and confidentiality of all participating teachers from Tagbaros Elementary School. I understand the importance of creating a secure space for them to share their insights on aligning instructional practices with CBE. To ensure this, I will implement stringent measures to protect their identities and their responses. Each participant will be assigned a unique code, and all collected data will be stored securely with access limited solely to me. In any dissemination of my findings, I will present the data in an aggregated form, ensuring that no individual teacher can be identified. **Risks, Benefits, and Safety.** I have carefully considered the potential risks to the participating teachers, which I anticipate to be minimal, primarily involving the time they dedicate to the study and perhaps some reflection on their current instructional practices. However, I believe the benefits of their participation are significant outweigh these concerns. By sharing their experiences and insights, they will contribute to a valuable understanding of the practicalities of CBE implementation. This knowledge can inform future professional de-

velopment and support initiatives, potentially benefiting the teachers themselves and their colleagues. I will ensure that all data collection activities are conducted respectfully of their time and professional obligations, prioritizing their comfort and well-being throughout the process.

Justice. I am committed to ensuring justice in this research by selecting participants from Grades 1 to 6 at Tagbaros Elementary School who are actively involved in CBE implementation. My aim is to gather a range of perspectives from teachers working across different grade levels within the elementary curriculum. Furthermore, I will ensure that the findings of my study are shared with the participating teachers and the school administration, providing them with access to insights that could inform their ongoing efforts in implementing CBE effectively. My goal is to ensure that the knowledge gained from their participation is shared and potentially beneficial to their professional practice. **Transparency.** I understand that transparency is crucial for building trust and fostering open communication. Throughout this research process, I will maintain clear and open lines of communication with the participating teachers. I will ensure they are well-informed about the study's objectives, my methodologies, and the potential impact of their contributions. I will also be readily available to address any questions or concerns they may have, fostering a collaborative and respectful research environment. **Qualification of the Researcher.** As the researcher undertaking this thesis, I bring a strong foundation of relevant qualifications that are essential for conducting ethical and impactful research. I possess a comprehensive understanding of educational principles and curriculum development, including the theory and practice of Competency-Based Education. My skills in educational research methodologies, encompassing qualitative data collection and analysis, equip me to design a rigorous and insightful study focused on teacher perspectives.

Furthermore, I am deeply committed to ethical research practices, ensuring the well-being and privacy of all participants. My analytical abilities and dedication to accurate interpretation will allow me to draw meaningful conclusions from the teachers' valuable insights. **Conflict of Interest.** I will be vigilant in identifying and addressing any potential conflicts of interest that might arise from any connections I may have with Tagbaros Elementary School or the participating teachers. Should any such conflicts, perceived or actual, emerge, I will disclose them transparently and take steps to ensure they do not compromise the integrity and objectivity of my research. My priority is to conduct unbiased and trustworthy research that accurately reflects the teachers' experiences. **Adequacy of Resources.** I will ensure that the participation of the teachers from Tagbaros Elementary School is facilitated with adequate resources and minimal disruption to their demanding schedules. I will be flexible in arranging data collection activities, such as interviews or focus groups, at times and locations that are convenient for them within the school setting, in coordination with the school administration. I will also provide any necessary materials or support to ensure their participation is as smooth and comfortable as possible. I am committed to respecting their time and contributions. **Community Involvement.** I believe this research holds significant relevance for the educational community at Tagbaros Elementary School, the Maco South District, and potentially the wider Division of Davao De Oro. By focusing on teachers' perspectives on aligning instructional practices with CBE, the findings can provide valuable feedback to the school and district leadership. This can inform professional development initiatives, curriculum implementation strategies, and the overall support for teachers in effectively delivering competency-based education, ultimately benefiting the students at Tagbaros Elementary School.

2.6. *Role of the Researcher*—In this study, I will undertake multiple roles to ensure the success of the research. Initially, I will seek permission to conduct the study, beginning with the school division superintendent, followed by obtaining consent from the participants. After securing approval, I will conduct and record the interviews essential to this type of research.

The primary aim of these interviews is to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of school heads, particularly in their efforts to create and sustain innovation within their schools. Additionally, the discussions will explore how the Department of Education can enhance its programs to support school development and innovation further, underscoring the crucial role of school heads in driving positive change.

2.7. *Data Collection*—Data is to be collected to reproduce real-life communication scenarios in which the participants made oral or written contributions useful for research purposes and their learning process. Establishing rapport with the participants is an important step that allows them to provide good data. To collect information, I developed protocols or written forms for recording data, such as interviews or observation. Additionally, I will anticipate issues that may hinder or contribute to lost information. In this study, I will employ the following data-gathering steps. On April 02, 2025, I sent a formal request to the Schools Division Superintendent of Davao de Oro for permission to conduct the study in Tagbaros Elementary School Maco South District, Davao De Oro. I will secure the superintendent's permission. I will send the superintendent a letter explaining the study's objectives and the participants' identification, with an attached copy of Chapters 1 and 2 and the research instrument. I would only start after I will receive the Superintendent's approval. On April 14, 2025, I received the approval from the SDS. Following this after securing approval from the SDS, on April 22, 2025, I submitted a formal letter to the District Coordinating Principal was obtained on May 06, 2025, On May 07, 2025, I asked for permission to the school heads of Tagbaros Elementary School. I sent letters to the principals or school heads of the identified

schools explaining the study to be conducted in their schools. On May 07, 2025, I also met with the selected teachers' participants to provide an orientation about the study and secure their informed consent. Participants were assured of confidentiality, voluntary participation, and their right to withdraw at any stage. From May 07 to May 09, 2025, I conducted the interview. I used the interview questionnaire to conduct an in-depth interview. I took participants' profiles, took notes, and recorded conversations using a sound recorder for easy transcription. Likewise, I carefully listened and actively responded during the interviews. On May 13, 2025, I was transcribed the interviewees' responses. The researcher would then precisely transcribe the interviewees' responses by recalling their answers from the sound recorder. Since the participants used their vernacular language, the researcher translated it into English. On May 14, 2025, I refined the Data Coding and thematizing. Categorizing and coding the data would come after the transcription process. Themes were extracted, and participants' data were contrasted and compared. The researcher would then conduct a second round of interviews (FGD) to confirm data requiring more justification and participant feedback. The newly acquired material was carefully analyzed and added to the existing body of knowledge. Then, in order to identify patterns and trends, data were contrasted and compared between the individuals.

2.8. *Data Analysis*—

All data collected for this study will be carefully examined and thoroughly analyzed. To minimize bias and maintain objectivity, I will begin by reflecting on my personal experiences with the phenomenon under investigation, using bracketing techniques to separate my perspectives from the participants' viewpoints. This will allow me to focus on capturing the true essence of the participants' experiences. Next, I will identify significant statements from the participants' responses that illustrate their experiences with the implementation of competency-based education. These statements will be categorized as relevant and organized into a comprehensive list, ensuring there is no repetition or overlap. The significant statements will then be grouped into themes that capture the essence of the shared experiences among the participants. This thematic analysis will allow me to provide a deeper understanding of the commonalities and variations in how teachers experience competency-based education. I will describe what the participants experienced in implementing this approach, followed by an analysis of how these experiences unfolded, including the challenges and opportunities they encountered along the way. Finally, I will write a composite description of the phenomenon, combining both textural (what was experienced) and structural (how it was experienced) descriptions. This comprehensive approach will offer a well-rounded understanding of the teachers' experiences, highlighting not only the nature of their involvement with competency-based education but also the contextual factors that influenced their practices.

Thematic Content Analysis

Thematic analysis will be employed to identify patterns and essential themes in the data, using these themes to address the research objectives. As thematic analysis does not require the in-depth theoretical and technological expertise of other qualitative approaches, it offers an accessible method of analysis, particularly for

researchers early in their careers (Braun Clarke, 2006). Regardless of the study type or its purpose, the most crucial aspect of the analysis is that the researcher respects the data and aims to represent the interview results as truthfully and accurately as possible (Mortensen, 2020). In this study, the thematic analysis will ensure that the participants' experiences are reflected authentically, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of how competency-based education is being implemented and perceived by the teachers at Tagbaros Elementary School.

Document Analysis

In this study, I will employ document analysis as a systematic method to examine relevant records that provide insights into the implementation of Competency-Based Education (CBE) at Tagbaros Elementary School, Maco South District, Division of Davao De Oro. This approach will help me analyze written materials, such as lesson plans, assessment reports, and curriculum guides, to answer specific research questions aligned with my study's objectives. Document analysis allows me to extract meaningful patterns and trends related to teachers' experiences and coping strategies in implementing CBE. Unlike field observations or interviews, this method enables a flexible and iterative approach, where I can pause and resume the analysis as needed. By systematically reviewing these documents, I can validate and complement the data gathered from interviews, ensuring a well-rounded understanding of how teachers navigate the challenges of CBE implementation.

Triangulation of Data

In this study, I will apply triangulation by using multiple data sources and methods to gain a comprehensive understanding of teachers' experiences in implementing Competency-Based Education (CBE). Following Patton (2019), triangulation enhances the validity of my findings by cross-verifying data collected from different sources, reducing bias, and strengthening the

study's credibility. I will combine in-depth interviews, document analysis, and focus group discussions (FGD) to ensure a well-rounded perspective. Interviews will capture individual teachers' experiences, document analysis will provide objective evidence from official records and instructional materials, and FGDs will allow teachers to engage in discussions that reveal shared challenges and coping strategies. By integrating these methods, I will establish a more reliable and nuanced understanding of how teachers implement CBE and manage its challenges in Tagbaros Elementary School, Maco South District, Division of Davao De Oro.

Environmental Triangulation

In this study, I will apply environmental triangulation by considering different locations, settings, and contextual factors that may influence teachers' experiences in implementing Competency-Based Education (CBE). Follow-

ing Guion et al. (2021), I will examine how elements such as school environment, availability of resources, and timing of data collection impact the responses of my participants. By conducting interviews and observations at different times of the school year such as the start of implementation, mid-year adjustments, and final evaluation I can assess whether teachers' perspectives remain consistent. Additionally, I will compare data across various school contexts within Tagbaros Elementary School, Maco South District, Division of Davao De Oro, ensuring that my findings account for differences in school leadership, student demographics, and resource availability. Establishing validity through environmental triangulation will provide a more comprehensive and reliable understanding of the challenges and strategies teachers use in implementing CBE.

2.9. Framework of Analysis—My analytical framework was flexible enough to allow me to either gather all of the data and then analyze it or evaluate it while it was being collected. The data collected was then sifted, charted, and categorized in line with key topics and themes during the analysis stage. This process involved familiarization, coding, developing a thematic framework, indexing, charting, mapping, and interpretation (Ritchie and Spencer, 2019). I began by thoroughly reading and re-reading all the transcribed interviews. This step was crucial as it allowed me to immerse myself in the data, ensuring a full understanding of the content and context of the participants' responses. By repeatedly engaging with the transcriptions, I identified recurring patterns, themes, and nuances that might not have been immediately apparent. This process helped build a comprehensive foundation for further analysis. I then extracted significant statements from the transcribed interviews specific phrases or sentences

that directly pertained to the investigated phenomenon. The goal was to isolate the most relevant and impactful parts of the data that would contribute to a deeper understanding of the subject. By focusing on these key statements, I distilled the essence of the participants' experiences and insights. Giving meaning to these extracted statements followed. I categorized pertinent quotes into broader themes, interpreting their meanings to understand their underlying implications. By organizing the data into themes, I started to see how different aspects of the participants' experiences connected to each other and to the overall phenomenon being studied. I applied this process consistently across all interviews, ensuring that each participant's responses were analyzed with the same depth and rigor. By treating each interview individually and then comparing themes across interviews, I identified commonalities and differences in the participants' experiences. This step was essential for building a robust and com-

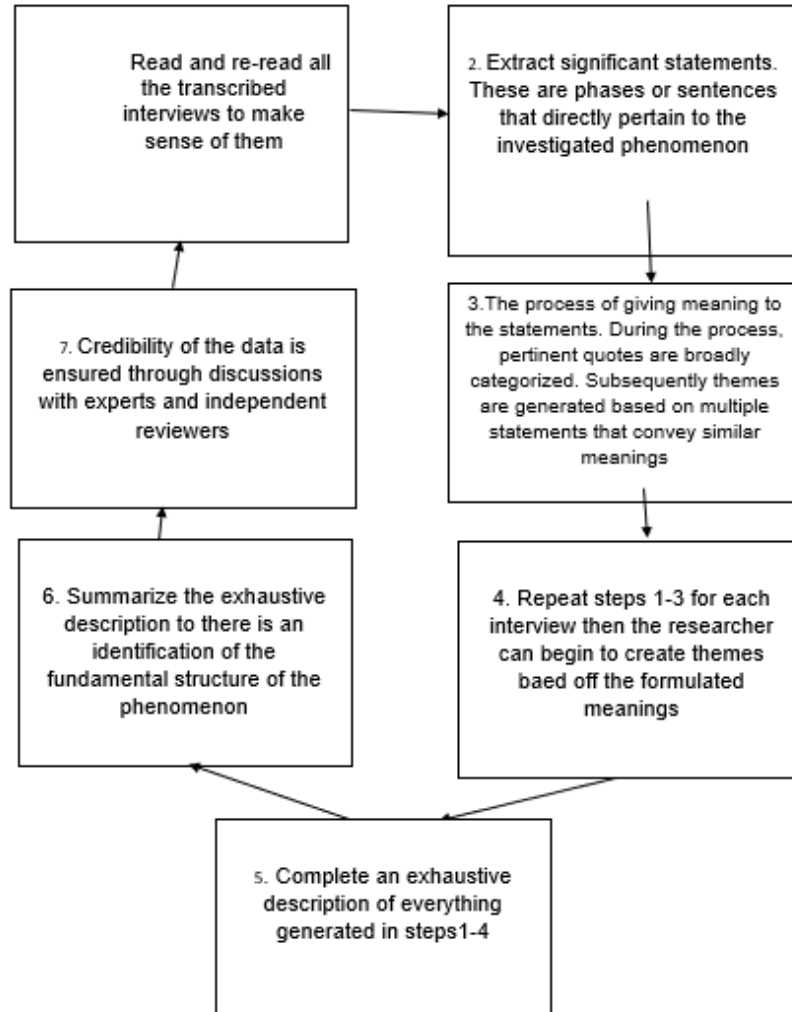


Fig. 2. Analytical Framework of the Study (Ritchie and Spencer 2019)

prehensive analysis. After completing the initial analysis of all interviews, I compiled an exhaustive description of everything generated in the previous steps. This comprehensive summary included all significant statements, their meanings, and the themes identified. The goal was to create a detailed and holistic representation of the data, capturing the full complexity of the participants' experiences. Finally, I summarized this exhaustive description to identify the fundamental structure of the phenomenon. Distilling the detailed descriptions into a more concise and coherent narrative helped clarify the essential features of the participants' experiences and how they manifested in their profes-

sional contexts. The final step was to ensure the credibility of the data through discussions with experts and independent reviewers. By seeking external validation, the researcher confirmed the accuracy and reliability of their findings. These discussions helped identify any potential biases or gaps in the analysis, ensuring that the conclusions drawn were well-supported by the data. This step was crucial for enhancing the trustworthiness and validity of the research. By following these steps systematically, the researcher conducted a thorough and credible phenomenological analysis that provided deep insights into the phenomenon under study.

2.10. Trustworthiness of the Study—The concepts of validity and reliability were relatively foreign to the field of qualitative research. Instead of focusing on reliability and validity, I substituted data trustworthiness. Trustworthiness consists of the following components: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Harts, 2019).

Credibility

Credibility contributed to a belief in the trustworthiness of data by observing the attributes of prolonged engagement. To address the issue of credibility, I interviewed as many research participants as possible, or up to the point of saturation. Transferability was concerned with the extent to which the findings of one study could be applied to other situations. In positivist work, the concern often lay in demonstrating that the results of the work at hand could be applied to a wider population. Since the findings of a qualitative project were specific to a small number of particular environments and individuals, it was impossible to demonstrate that the findings and conclusions applied to other situations and populations. Therefore, to ensure transferability, I acknowledged that it was my responsibility as a researcher to provide sufficient contextual information about the fieldwork sites to enable the reader to make such a transfer.

Transferability

Was addressed by providing detailed descriptions of the research setting, participants, and context. While qualitative research does not seek generalizability in the same way as quantitative studies, I ensured that readers could evaluate whether the findings could be applicable to similar settings. The rich contextual information allowed for meaningful comparisons with

other schools facing similar safety and security concerns.

Confirmability

Confirmability associated objectivity in science with the use of instruments that were not dependent on human skill and perception. It was, however, difficult to ensure real objectivity since, even though tests and questionnaires were designed by humans, the intrusion of my biases was inevitable. Here, I took steps to help ensure as far as possible that the work's findings were the result of the experiences and ideas of the participants, rather than my own characteristics and preferences.

Dependability

Was ensured through a transparent and well-documented research process. The participants were given opportunities to review and verify the accuracy of their interview transcripts and the study's findings. Their feedback was incorporated to maintain the integrity of the data. Additionally, peer reviews and consultations with research experts helped refine the analysis and interpretations. By adhering to these principles of trustworthiness, this study maintained high ethical and methodological standards, ensuring that the findings provided a meaningful and reliable insight into the safety and security experiences of teachers at Tagbaros Elementary School.

3. Results and Discussion

This chapter addresses the research questions and presents the emerging themes based on the participants' responses. The first research question aimed to explore how teachers experience and interpret the alignment of their instructional practices with the principles of Competency-Based Education (CBE).

3.1. Teachers' Experiences in Aligning Instructional Practices with Competency-Based Education —

Teachers who implement Competency-Based Education often find themselves navigating a shift in both mindset and instructional approach. Many participants described this experience as both demanding and rewarding. It required them to rethink the structure of their lesson plans, assessments, and classroom routines in order to better reflect the competencies their students were expected to master. One of the most prominent experiences shared was the need to individualize instruction based on students' progress toward mastery, rather than relying on traditional pacing guides or time-based progression. Teachers noted that this necessitated continuous monitoring of students' performance and flexible planning to adjust to

varying learning speeds. This aligns with the views of Anderson and Krathwohl (2001), who emphasized that CBE fosters deeper learning by focusing on the mastery of clearly defined skills and knowledge. In a similar vein, Le, Wolfe, and Steinberg (2014) argue that CBE shifts the teacher's role from a content deliverer to a learning facilitator who supports students as they progress at their own pace toward competency goals. Despite the benefits, teachers also discussed significant challenges—chief among them was the balancing act of managing a diverse group of learners, each at a different level of progress, while ensuring that all curriculum standards were addressed.

3.1.1. Individualized Pacing and Student-Centered Planning.—One of the key themes that emerged from the interviews was the deliberate shift toward individualized pacing and planning. Teachers shared that their lesson delivery was no longer fixed to a rigid timeline but was adjusted based on formative assessments and students' actual demonstration of competencies. Supporting this approach, Sturgis and Patrick (2010) noted that CBE empowers students by focusing on what they can do with their knowledge, not

just how much content they can recall. Teachers in this study echoed this, stating that they became more intentional in providing timely and constructive feedback to ensure that learners understood and applied their skills in meaningful ways. Teachers also acknowledged that while CBE demanded more time and planning, it led to more effective learning. They noted increased student confidence, engagement, and ownership of learning is a clear sign that the shift toward personalized and competency-focused instruction was worth the effort.

3.1.2. Mastery-Based Assessment and Continuous Feedback. —A major shift experienced by teachers implementing Competency-Based Education was in how they assessed student learning. Rather than relying on periodic summative assessments, the focus shifted to mastery-based assessment where students are evaluated based on their demonstrated understanding and skill application, not just on test performance or compliance with deadlines. Participants emphasized the importance of formative assessments and performance tasks that allow students to show their learning in authen-

tic and measurable ways. This also meant that students were given multiple opportunities to improve and demonstrate mastery, creating a more supportive and less punitive classroom environment. Teachers expressed that using clear rubrics and learning targets helped students take ownership of their progress. Students became more aware of their strengths and areas for improvement, and teachers were better able to track individual growth over time. According to Guskey (2025), mastery learning approaches, like those used in CBE, provide students with clear expectations and the time and

support needed to achieve those standards. The participants in this study affirmed this, noting that when students understand the "why" behind learning goals and are given the chance to improve without penalty, they become more motivated and confident. Teachers also mentioned that mastery-based assessment challenged traditional grading practices. Some shared that the school system still expected quarterly grades,

but they found ways to align these with CBE principles by documenting student performance based on learning outcomes and mastery indicators. Although this approach required more time for planning, feedback, and documentation, participants agreed that it was more aligned with real learning—prioritizing depth over speed and empowering students to be active participants in their educational journey.

3.1.3. Misalignment Between Curriculum Expectations and Available Resources. — While teachers strongly supported the goals of Competency-Based Education, a common challenge they highlighted was the disconnect between curriculum design and the resources available to implement it effectively. Many expressed that although the CBE framework emphasized individualized learning, mastery assessment, and flexible pacing, the realities of limited time, materials, and institutional constraints often made these ideals difficult to fully realize. Many teachers expressed frustration over the pressure to meet curriculum targets while simultaneously tailoring instruction for individual learners. They reported that standard pacing guides and administrative expectations often conflicted with the CBE principle of allowing students to progress at their own pace. The lack of centralized, competency-aligned teaching and assessment materials further compounded the issue. These experiences are supported by recent studies. Darling-Hammond et al. (2020) highlight that for CBE to be effective, systemic alignment across curriculum, instruction, and assessment is crucial. Without sufficient resource allocation and structural support, teachers are left to fill in the gaps—often without the training, time, or tools needed to do so effectively. Similarly, DeLorenzo and Battino (2022) emphasize that while CBE promotes educational equity, its successful implementation demands robust institutional frameworks, including teacher support systems and acces-

sible, competency-specific instructional materials. Without these, there's a risk that the intended benefits of CBE remain theoretical rather than practical. Despite these obstacles, participants still advocated for the vision behind CBE. For many, the challenge reinforced the need for policy-level action to ensure that instructional expectations are matched with realistic support, particularly in rural and underserved schools.

3.1.4. Inconsistent Support and Understanding from Stakeholders—A recurring challenge voiced by several participants was the lack of consistent support and understanding from stakeholders, including parents, local officials, and sometimes even school administrators. Teachers emphasized that while some stakeholders are highly supportive, others do not fully grasp the goals and implementation of Competency-Based Education (CBE), leading to misaligned expectations and insufficient backing. Teachers shared that efforts to implement CBE were often hampered by resistance or indifference from those outside the classroom. For instance, some parents struggled to understand the shift from traditional grading systems to competency-focused assessments. Others viewed the new approach as an unnecessary deviation from long-established practices. The participants' experiences align with the findings of Rahayu et al. (2022), who emphasize that stakeholder engagement is essential for successful educational reform. When parents, administrators, and local authorities are not well-informed or involved, teachers often

carry the full weight of implementation alone, which may lead to burnout or resistance. Similarly, Pangilinan and Alvarez (2023) point out that policy awareness and communication strategies must be improved to align all stakeholders with the goals of CBE. Without mutual understanding and cooperation, even well-designed programs risk inconsistent implementation and poor sustainability. Despite the challenges, participants underscored the importance of continuous advocacy, orientation sessions, and collaborative meetings to build stakeholder understanding. They believe that with proper support and shared vision, the potential of CBE can be fully realized in their communities. Figure 3. The experiences of the teachers in the implementation of competency-based education,” illustrates the perspectives of educators as they adopt and practice competency-based education (CBE). The diagram effectively divides these experiences into two main categories: Positive Experiences and Challenges. Under the Positive Experiences, the diagram highlights two key aspects. Firstly, teachers are “Embracing Learner-Centered Approaches through CBE.” This suggests that CBE encourages educators to shift their focus towards individual student needs and learning progress rather than solely on content delivery. Secondly, the implementation involves

“Aligning Assessment Practices with Competency Standards.” This indicates that teachers find value in tailoring their assessment methods to directly measure specific skills and competencies that students are expected to achieve, leading to a more focused and meaningful evaluation of learning. Conversely, the diagram also points to significant Challenges faced by teachers. One major difficulty is “Limited Instructional Time and Overlapping Responsibilities.” This suggests that the demands of implementing CBE, which often requires more individualized attention and flexible pacing, can be constrained by rigid timetables and additional duties assigned to teachers. Another challenge is “Inconsistent Support and Understanding from Stakeholders.” This implies that a lack of consistent backing and clear understanding of CBE’s principles and practices from parents, administrators, or the wider community can create obstacles for teachers in its effective implementation. In essence, the diagram portrays the implementation of competency-based education from the teachers’ viewpoint, showcasing the benefits of a more student-focused and skills-aligned approach, while also revealing the practical difficulties related to time constraints and the need for greater stakeholder support and understanding

3.2. Teachers Coping Mechanism with the Challenges in the Implementation of Competency-Based Education—In response to the various challenges encountered in implementing Competency-Based Education (CBE), teachers employ a range of coping strategies rooted in both innovation and resilience. This section outlines the ways in which educators actively address obstacles such as curriculum overload, diverse learner needs, and resource limitations. The participants’ narratives reveal a

deep commitment to student learning, demonstrated through deliberate planning, collaboration, and continuous adaptation. Their coping strategies not only reflect personal initiative but also align with effective educational practices that support learner-centered instruction. By exploring these themes, this section highlights how teacher agency, professional collaboration, and strategic management contribute to the successful implementation of CBE within the classroom setting.

3.2.1. Strategic Time Management and Prioritization of Competencies—

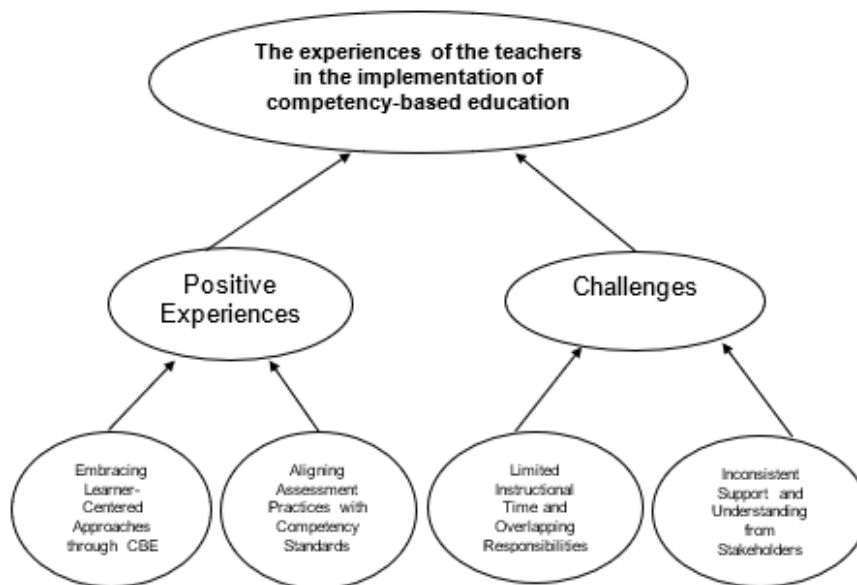


Fig. 3. The experiences of the teachers in the implementation of competency-based education

To address the challenge of limited instructional time and overlapping responsibilities, many teachers emphasized the need to be intentional with how they allocate their teaching hours. One of the key coping strategies was the strategic prioritization of most essential learning competencies (MELCs), allowing teachers to focus on depth rather than breadth in lesson delivery. This approach helped streamline instruction and ensured that students could achieve mastery over core skills without being overwhelmed by excessive content. Teachers also reported that effective lesson planning became even more critical in the context of CBE. By planning ahead and allocating specific time blocks for each competency, they were able to better monitor student progress and adjust instruction accordingly. This helped avoid rushed lessons and allowed for more student-centered

activities such as formative assessments and re-mediation.

These coping mechanisms reflect teachers' capacity to navigate structural constraints through planning and prioritization. According to Ironside and Hennessy (2022), prioritizing learning outcomes and maximizing instructional time are critical strategies for effective competency-based models, especially in systems with limited resources. Similarly, Sahrir et al. (2021) note that clear instructional frameworks and practical time management are essential for sustaining teacher performance and learner outcomes in competency-based classrooms. By focusing on essential competencies and integrating instruction, teachers not only manage time more effectively but also foster deeper understanding among students one of the core goals of competency-based education.

3.2.2. Collaborative Planning and Peer Support—Another strategy teachers used to cope with the challenges in CBE implementation was the establishment of collaborative plan-

ning and peer support networks. By working together, teachers could share ideas, resources, and best practices to address the difficulties they faced in adjusting to CBE. Collaboration was

seen not only as an opportunity to pool expertise but also as a means of providing emotional and professional support in the midst of challenges. Teachers reported that when they worked together, they could divide the workload, especially in planning lessons around the competencies, and reduce the feeling of isolation often felt in the classroom. Peer collaboration also helped to address the gaps in knowledge or skills, as teachers learned from one another's strengths and experiences. The responses highlight that collaboration is a vital resource for rural teachers who often face limited support and resources. By working together, teachers can share the mental load of teaching, making complex tasks more manageable. Collaboration also leads to faster problem-solving, as teachers rely on each other for support, advice,

and diverse perspectives, improving both time management and efficiency. Additionally, working as a team boosts teacher confidence, enabling them to take risks, experiment with new methods, and tackle challenges with greater resilience. Through collaboration, teachers can align their goals and tasks, ensuring everyone is on the same page and clarifying their roles and responsibilities in the classroom. This theme aligns with the findings of Dela Cruz and Toledo (2021), who highlight that teacher collaboration positively impacts instructional quality and promotes effective implementation of competency-based education. Similarly, an earlier study by Reyes and Bautista (2020) emphasizes that collaboration fosters a sense of community and reduces burnout, particularly when teachers face demanding teaching strategies like CBE.

3.2.3. Professional Development and Continuous Learning. —A crucial factor in overcoming the challenges of CBE implementation was the emphasis on ongoing professional development and continuous learning. Teachers acknowledged that the shift to CBE required new skills and pedagogical approaches, and many felt that professional development programs played a key role in helping them adapt to these changes. Participation in workshops, training sessions, and online courses provided teachers with the tools and strategies needed to better align their teaching practices with the competency-based framework. Moreover, teachers noted that continuous learning was essential not just for improving their content knowledge, but also for enhancing their confidence in managing the demands of CBE. As they gained a deeper understanding of competency-based strategies, they became more adept designing activities and assessments that fostered the development of 21st-century skills among their students. These responses highlight the crucial role that training and professional

development play in helping teachers adapt to competency-based education (CBE). Teachers recognize that attending training sessions provides them with valuable teaching techniques that enhance their ability to implement CBE effectively. Such training boosts their confidence as they see tangible improvements in their skills, making them feel more capable and equipped to handle the challenges of CBE. Additionally, seminars and workshops are seen as vital resources, particularly during difficult transitions, as they provide teachers with the support and guidance needed to better understand and address the needs of their students, especially in challenging classes. Ultimately, these responses emphasize that ongoing training is key to adapting to and succeeding in CBE. These insights resonate with the work of Perez and Banez (2022), who found that ongoing professional development was critical in helping teachers transition to and effectively implement CBE. They argue that professional development provides teachers with updated pedagogical knowledge, which is essential for adapting to the dy-

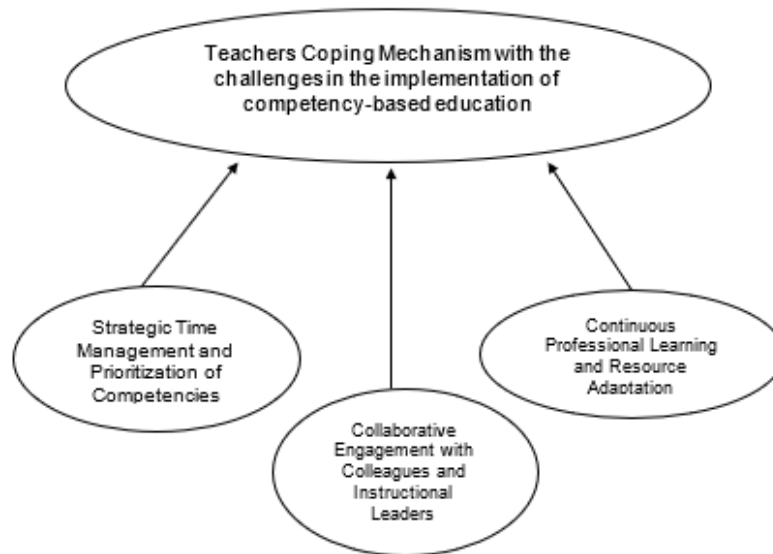


Fig. 4. Teachers coping mechanism with the challenges in the implementation of competency-based education

namic needs of modern classrooms. Furthermore, according to Lopez (2021), professional learning communities and continuous training foster resilience among teachers and improve the quality of education by ensuring that teachers are equipped to handle the evolving demands of the curriculum. Figure 4 shows that teachers implementing competency-based education navigate its inherent challenges through several key strategies. They employ strategic time management and prioritize the development of student competencies, a crucial approach for effective

teaching and ensuring mastery in this educational model. Additionally, collaborative engagement with colleagues is vital, allowing teachers to share instructional strategies, resources, and experiences to mutually support the adaptation to new pedagogical demands. Furthermore, a commitment to continuous professional learning and development is essential, as teachers must constantly update their skills and understanding to effectively implement and refine their practices within a competency-based framework.

3.3. Educational Management Insights Drawn from the Findings of the Study—This section presents key educational management insights that emerged from the lived experiences of teachers implementing Competency-Based Education (CBE) in their respective schools. These insights provide a deeper understanding of how classroom-level practices intersect with broader educational management strategies. As teachers navigated the challenges and applied coping mechanisms, they generated practical

knowledge that can inform school leaders, curriculum planners, and policy-makers. These insights not only reflect the realities of CBE implementation but also highlight areas where school management practices can support and enhance its success. The themes discussed herein offer valuable perspectives on instructional leadership, collaborative learning, and reflective practice—each playing a significant role in sustaining meaningful and effective CBE environments.

3.3.1. Adapting Instruction to Student Needs—

The findings highlight the importance of teacher adaptability in the successful implementation of Competency-Based Education (CBE). Teachers in the study demonstrated a high level of flexibility in adjusting their teaching strategies to meet the varying needs of their students. Whether it was differentiating lessons for diverse learning paces or modifying assessments to better align with competencies, the ability to adapt was crucial for fostering an inclusive and effective learning environment. This adaptability is seen as key to overcoming the inherent challenges of CBE implementation. The findings of this study underscore the critical role of teacher adaptability in effectively implementing Competency-Based Education (CBE). Participants consistently demonstrated a high degree of instructional flexibility to address the varied needs of their learners, such as differentiating lesson content, modifying assessments, and tailoring learning activities based on stu-

dent readiness and progress. This aligns with DeLorenzo and Battino (2022), who assert that adaptability is a cornerstone of successful CBE, enabling educators to personalize learning pathways that promote equity and mastery. Similarly, Gervais (2021) emphasizes that continuous instructional adjustments are essential for meeting students where they are, ensuring that every learner has a fair opportunity to succeed. Moreover, Le, Wolfe, and Steinberg (2023) highlight that responsive teaching practices, particularly those informed by formative assessments, empower teachers to realign instruction in real-time—thus reinforcing the core principle of CBE: allowing students to advance upon demonstrated mastery. Collectively, these studies support the view that teacher adaptability is not only beneficial but necessary for the inclusive and effective delivery of competency-based learning.

3.3.2. Fostering Collaboration Among Students—The findings suggest that collaborative learning plays a significant role in overcoming the challenges associated with CBE. Teachers in the study emphasized the importance of fostering a collaborative atmosphere in the classroom, where students help each other in mastering competencies. This approach not only nurtures peer support but also promotes social interaction, which can improve student engagement and foster a deeper understanding of the material. These responses emphasize the value of collaborative learning as a key strategy in implementing competency-based education (CBE). Teachers observe that when students work in groups, they not only assist one another in understanding difficult concepts but also develop a sense of camaraderie and shared responsibility. Group work transforms the classroom into a community of learners, where knowledge is constructed through peer interaction and mu-

tual support. This approach encourages students to take ownership of their learning, fosters social-emotional skills, and strengthens their mastery of competencies. Additionally, using group-based projects provides opportunities for students to apply what they've learned in practical and cooperative ways, further enhancing both academic and interpersonal growth within a CBE framework. Fostering student collaboration is a vital strategy employed by teachers to enhance engagement and support mastery in Competency-Based Education (CBE). Participants described how structured group activities, peer tutoring, and cooperative learning arrangements created opportunities for students to learn from one another and build both academic and social competencies. This approach aligns with the findings of Vygotskian-inspired frameworks, which emphasize the role of social interaction in cognitive development. According to Loo and Thorpe (2021), collaborative learning envi-

ronments not only improve student motivation and accountability but also allow learners to process competencies more deeply through dialogue and shared problem-solving. Meanwhile, Evans, Landl, and Thompson (2023) argue that fostering peer-to-peer collaboration within CBE classrooms helps distribute the teaching load, encourages autonomy, and strengthens learners' sense of agency. Furthermore, Kallick and

Zmuda (2017) highlight that such collaboration encourages the development of essential soft skills like teamwork, communication, and empathy—all crucial for long-term success. These insights affirm that collaboration is more than a pedagogical technique; it is a foundational element that enhances the overall effectiveness and inclusivity of competency-based instruction.

3.3.3. Empowering Teachers Through Professional Development—The study's findings also underscore the critical role of teacher empowerment in addressing the challenges of CBE implementation. Teachers who felt empowered—through access to resources, training, and professional development opportunities—were more confident in their ability to implement CBE effectively. Empowered teachers were also more proactive in creating innovative solutions to meet the diverse needs of their students and ensure that learning outcomes aligned with competencies. These responses collectively highlight the significance of teacher empowerment and institutional support in effectively implementing competency-based education (CBE). Teachers express increased confidence and adaptability when schools provide seminars, training, and necessary resources that guide them through the transition. The presence of strong administrative support motivates teachers to embrace new strategies, knowing that they are not alone in the process. Empowerment—through professional development and adequate backing—enables teachers to take initiative, overcome challenges, and fully engage with the principles of CBE. Without such support, they acknowledge that adjusting to the system would be difficult, reinforcing the idea that institutional support is vital to successful educational reform. The findings of the study underscore the value of reflective teaching as a powerful tool in addressing the complexities

of Competency-Based Education (CBE). Teachers reported that continuous self-assessment and reflection allowed them to evaluate the effectiveness of their strategies, revise lesson plans based on student feedback, and realign instructional goals with intended competencies. This practice enabled them to respond more thoughtfully to classroom challenges and make informed instructional decisions. According to Schön (1983), reflective practice is essential for professional growth, as it encourages educators to think critically about their actions and adapt them to diverse learning contexts. Supporting this, Farrell (2019) explains that reflective teachers are more likely to develop adaptive expertise, which is crucial for addressing the nuanced needs of learners in a competency-based framework. More recently, Musfiroh and Wahyuni (2022) emphasized that reflection enhances teachers' ability to personalize learning pathways and maintain the learner-centered focus that CBE requires. Through reflection, teachers become more aware of their own biases, teaching patterns, and student outcomes—making this practice indispensable for cultivating effective, inclusive, and adaptive CBE environments. Figure 5. Drawing from the study's findings, several key educational insights emerged, highlighting crucial areas for effective teaching and learning. A significant insight emphasizes the importance of adapting instruction to student needs, recognizing that tailoring teaching methods and content to indi-

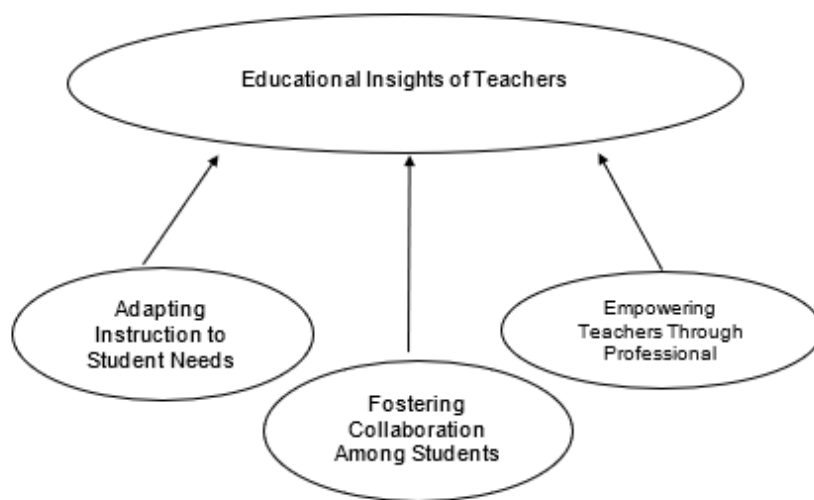


Fig. 5. Educational Insights Drawn from the findings of the Study

vidual learners is essential for their success. The study also underscored the value of fostering collaboration among students, suggesting that encouraging peer interaction and group work enhances learning and develops important social skills. Furthermore, the findings point to the necessity of empowering teachers through professional development and learning, as equipping

educators with the necessary skills and support is critical for implementing adaptive instruction and facilitating student collaboration effectively. Collectively, these insights stress the interconnectedness of flexible teaching approaches, student teamwork, and ongoing teacher support in creating a thriving educational environment.

4. Implications and Future Directions

This chapter summarizes the key findings of the study and discusses their broader implications for the implementation of Competency-Based Education (CBE) in elementary schools. The research focused on the experiences of teachers at Tagbaros Elementary School, Maco South District, who are actively engaged in CBE practices. The study explored the challenges they face in aligning instructional practices with CBE principles and how they cope with these challenges.

4.1. Findings—The findings highlight the flexibility required in adapting lessons to the diverse learning needs of students and the importance of fostering collaboration among learners to achieve competency mastery. Teachers also face significant challenges in managing instructional time and assessing student competencies effectively. Despite these obstacles, the study reveals that teachers use adaptive strategies, such as differentiated instruction and collaborative learning, to overcome the barriers

to successful CBE implementation. The chapter also outlines the implications of these findings for educational leaders and policymakers, emphasizing the need for professional development, resource support, and a collaborative school culture to facilitate the successful adoption of CBE in the classroom. This research contributes to the growing body of literature on CBE, providing insights into the practical realities teachers face in its implementation and suggesting pathways for improvement.

4.2. Implications—The findings of this study resonate with key educational theories, highlighting how teachers’ practices in the implementation of Competency-Based Education (CBE) align with and are informed by foundational learning theories. First, the Constructivist Learning Theory by Piaget and Vygotsky emphasizes the importance of active learning, social interaction, and the construction of knowledge through personal experience. Teachers’ adaptability in modifying lessons to meet the diverse needs of students directly aligns with this theory, as learners are encouraged to construct knowledge based on their existing understandings and social contexts. The use of collaborative learning strategies, as observed in the study, also echoes Vygotsky’s concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), where more knowledgeable peers guide less experienced learners, facilitating growth and skill development within their competency levels. The Mastery Learning Theory by Bloom (1968) also supports the study’s findings, particularly in terms of the emphasis placed on helping every student achieve a high level of understanding. In the study, teachers demonstrated a commitment to ensuring that all students, regardless of initial ability, could master

the competencies by using differentiated assessments and feedback mechanisms. This reflects Bloom’s assertion that with sufficient time and appropriate instructional strategies, all students can reach mastery, which aligns with the individualized approaches teachers adopted in their classrooms. Lastly, Differentiated Instruction Theory by Tomlinson (2001) is central to the findings of the study. Teachers in this research regularly employed strategies to differentiate instruction by adjusting content, processes, and assessments according to the needs, interests, and learning profiles of their students. This theory emphasizes the importance of tailoring teaching to ensure that each learner has access to appropriate challenges and support. The teachers’ use of flexible grouping, multimodal learning tools, and culturally responsive content further align with Tomlinson’s approach to providing an inclusive and supportive learning environment that responds to the diverse needs of learners. Together, these theories underscore the relevance of flexible, student-centered instructional strategies in achieving the goals of CBE, supporting the claim that when educators are provided with the right tools, resources, and training, they can effectively address the diverse needs of their students, fostering an environment where all learners can succeed.

4.3. Future Directions—Based on the findings of this study, several future directions can be drawn to enhance the effectiveness of Competency-Based Education (CBE) implementation. These recommendations aim to provide actionable steps for key stakeholder’s educational institutions, school leaders, teachers, and policymakers in order to foster an environment conducive to improving student outcomes in diverse educational settings.

Department of Education (DepEd)

The DepEd must prioritize the creation of flexible policies and training programs that sup-

port the diversity of learners in integrated school settings. The study’s findings indicate that teachers need continuous professional development in both pedagogy and classroom management. DepEd should consider developing localized instructional materials and inclusive teaching strategies that are responsive to the varied cultural and linguistic backgrounds of students. These materials should align with the principles of Differentiated Instruction and Mastery Learning theories, ensuring that all students, regardless of background, can achieve mastery of competencies. Additionally, the integration of

constructivist practices that focus on scaffolding and peer learning can be encouraged through curriculum reforms that incorporate real-life examples and culturally relevant content.

School Principals and School Heads

As the leaders in their schools, principals play an instrumental role in supporting teachers. Findings from this study highlight the importance of professional development opportunities, peer mentoring, and resource-sharing practices. School leaders must foster an environment where collaboration, innovation, and emotional support are prioritized. They should implement strategies that allow teachers to engage with colleagues, share best practices, and improve their instructional strategies for diverse classrooms. For principals to facilitate the successful adoption of CBE, they should also promote a school culture that values teacher well-being and continuous learning, ensuring that teachers are equipped to address the challenges of CBE implementation.

Teachers

The study underscores the importance of teachers continuing to adapt their teaching strategies to meet the varying needs of their students. To effectively implement CBE, teachers must embrace Differentiated Instruction practices by employing varied teaching methods and assessments tailored to individual learner needs. Teachers should also focus on creating inclusive learning environments that foster student engagement and a sense of belonging. It is essential that teachers reflect on their own practices,

seek out ongoing professional development, and collaborate with their peers to refine and expand their pedagogical approaches. Teachers are encouraged to integrate real-world, culturally relevant content into their lessons, as this approach enhances student engagement and helps to make the learning experience more meaningful.

Future Researchers

Future research should explore additional dimensions of CBE implementation in diverse classrooms, particularly examining how students experience competency-based assessments and how these methods impact their learning outcomes. Research could also focus on the long-term effects of CBE on student achievement, engagement, and self-regulation. Comparative studies across different schools or regions with varying levels of resource availability could provide insights into the ways that CBE can be adapted to different educational contexts. Moreover, investigating how students and teachers perceive the effectiveness of digital tools in CBE delivery would help shape future recommendations for integrating technology in competency-based learning environments. Through these future directions, it is possible to strengthen the implementation of CBE, ensuring that all students receive the individualized support they need to succeed in a rapidly changing educational landscape. These recommendations will help to ensure that CBE not only addresses the challenges teachers face but also promotes equitable and inclusive educational practices that benefit all learners.

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