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Assessment of the instructional planning practices of SHS teachers

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ABSTRACT

Teachers' instructional planning practices play a crucial role in enhancing educational processes. By meticulously mapping out the curriculum, teachers receive clear instructional guidelines aimed at attaining specific learning objectives and goals. This study aimed to assess and document instructional planning practices of the SHS teachers in the Division of Zamboanga City. A hybrid method, specifically an explanatory sequential research design, was utilized to determine the frequency level of teachers' instructional planning and the significant differences in the instructional planning practices of teachers pertinent to length of service and area of specialization. Framed from the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), the study found that the SHS teachers frequently practice the five domains investigated relative to instructional planning: content knowledge and pedagogy, learning environment, diversity of learners, curriculum planning, and assessment and reporting, which are PPST Domains 1 through 5, respectively. However, teachers occasionally practice the specific strand within Domain 1, utilization of research-based knowledge and principles of teaching and learning, and the one within Domain 3, creation, modification, and practice of instructional strategies, adaptable to students with abilities, gifts, and disabilities. Based on the findings, the following recommendations are presented: utilize the findings of the study as a reference for formulating policies, guidelines, and training frameworks in the conduct of Division and Regional training for teachers; and implement the proposed professional enhancement model.

Contribution/Originality: The current study is an addition to the relevant body of literature by investigating the instructional practices of teachers, particularly in the Southern part of the Philippines, and more specifically in Zamboanga City. Novel insights about the foregoing practices within the specific domains of PPST have been provided, hence clarifying what is already in place and what necessitates attention relative to teachers' instructional planning practices.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Instructional planning is defined as a psychological process whereby an individual visualizes what is to come and pertains to the activities that teachers carry out in the planning phase (Ball, Knobloch, & Hoop, 2007). Instructional planning is an imperative concern, necessitating seriousness, as this is a blueprint of the teaching paradigm that teachers deliver in the process of teaching and learning. Furthermore, it is one of the responsibilities whose importance is prodigious that teachers ought to accomplish and where their work ascertains students' learning,

including the curricular requirements and meets societal expectations. An effective instructional plan is indicative of the teachers' expertise (Farrell, 2013) and competence (Ruys, Keer, & Aelterman, 2012). Its importance is laid bare in the link between it and pedagogical quality relative to student achievement and teaching (Greer & Meyen, 2009) (Naafs et al., 2002, as cited in (Ruys et al., 2012)), and it is a concern in research enterprise to investigate teachers' instructional planning for effective instruction in the purview of some pedagogical environments (Lim & Chai, 2008). Moreover, it provides a great deal of educational advantages: a blueprint for teachers; provision of time and space for the motivational section for the learners; and evaluation of student performance and their own teaching (Ball et al., 2007).

Instructional planning is significant to teaching as it fosters the link between curriculum and learning (Clark and Yinger, 1987, as cited in Ball et al. (2007)). Being an important component of it, systematic lesson planning is at the core of the teachers' professional competence and is associated with instructional quality dimensions (König, Bremerich-Vos, Buchholtz, & Glutsch, 2020; Kunter et al., 2013; Stürmer, Könings, & Seidel, 2015). Specifically, studies claim that many teachers spend a great deal of time thinking about content's nature (Eggen & Kauchak, 2003) and likewise the experiences and interests of the students (Eggen & Kauchak, 2003); hence, significance is placed on the reflective facet of instructional planning, as remarked by one informant, specifically the refinement of the same in its next lesson delivery (Marshall, 2010). Also, planning has the tendency to bear an individualized process where teachers' varied approaches are translated into planning, further demonstrating their instructional style (Wilen, Ishler, Hutchinson, & Kindsvatter, 2000). Relatedly, it is contended that teachers are initially involved in the selection of pedagogical methods prior to the content knowledge (Farrell, 2013). Further, instructional planning likewise may be delineated between the instructivist and the constructivist (Baylor & Kitsantas, 2005; Farrell, 2013) where a learner-centric pedagogy is the business of the constructivist tradition, while the teacher-centered instruction falls within the instructivist school of thought (Baylor & Kitsantas, 2005). Between these two foregoing approaches, the former seems to have gained the upper hand (Sharil & Kyriacou, 2015).

Hinged on the preceding premises, this paper's impetuses are two-pronged: (1) research pertinent to instructional planning in the Philippine context is relatively meager, much less in a specific area in one of the southernmost areas in the Philippine archipelagic locations: Zamboanga City, specifically. (2) Of equal importance to address is that teachers imperatively play a role in ensuring that students assimilate the most of the instructional delivery during face-to-face classes. It has, however, been observed that there emerges an inadequacy of teacher experience insofar as the current state of affairs is concerned (Tosun, Mihci, & Bayzan, 2021) and regardless of the circumstances, teachers must deliver instruction effectively via a responsive pedagogy (Pentang, 2021). Thereby, the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, notwithstanding, which still sends shockwaves to academia up until the present, alongside the other pedagogical tasks that beset teachers, their (the teachers') service via instructional materials development and guiding scholastic student activities does not halt (Berame, Lapada, Miguel, Noguera, & Alam, 2020). The instructional materials and activities are suggestive of the inclusion of their instructional practices, which currently remain unexplored in the purview of a rigorous investigation. Consequently, the instructional practices of teachers need examination for the determination of whether these are pedagogically sound and responsive to the instructional context.

The foregoing propositions being the point of departure, this study aimed to assess the instructional planning practices of Zamboanga City Division senior high school (henceforth, SHS) teachers based on the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (henceforth, PPST), since a mandate and an expectation for SHS teachers to observe are premised on the standards set. More specifically, the following are the research questions that directed the route of the investigation.

Following the PPST domains, how frequently do teachers practice?

1. Content Knowledge and Pedagogy.
2. Learning Environment.

3. Diversity of learners.
4. Curriculum Planning.
5. Assessment and Reporting?

Is there a significant difference in the level of frequency of instructional planning practices of teachers, based on the following classifications:

1. Length of Service.
2. Area of Specialization?

As such, this study may contribute to the instructional planning practices literature, aiding in comprehending this variable's state in the Philippine context. The findings of the study may be regarded as baseline data for the engenderment of a professional enhancement program, aimed at equipping teachers with the technicalities for an effective mapping out of the details for and the implementation of a relevant and responsive instruction. Hence, this study has been carried out not solely in the orbit of advantageousness but likewise in the sphere of necessity.

2. MAIN BODY

2.1. Research Design

This study adopted the mixed-methods approach, specifically the sequential explanatory research design, where the qualitative data serve as a supplement. Further, it is a cross-sectional investigation, which is described by Figueiredo, Patino, and Ferreira (2025) as a type of observational study widely utilized across various disciplines. It makes available a snapshot of a population in the context of a specific occasion and makes possible the teasing out of the variable associations in the absence of temporal factor influences. One favorable strength that a cross-sectional study bears is its cost-effectiveness and efficiency on account of its completion pace and inexpensiveness. The qualitative supplementation via open-ended questions provides respondents an opportunity to air their thoughts relative to the core of the discourse (Singer & Couper, 2017). Likewise, this strategy lays bare empowerment and motivation that respondents may capitalize on (Wenemark, 2010) and aids in redressing the imbalance in ascendancy between the inquirer(s) and the participants (O'Cathain & Thomas, 2004). This, in fact, obliges the former to take a listen to the former's thoughts or read their written responses. Not to advocate the return of unstructured interviews, but the judicious utilization of open-ended questions as a scaffold for methodological goals is what the open-ended questions for (Singer & Couper, 2017).

2.2. Participants

As for the self-assessment on PPST domains, SHS teachers across the districts of Talon-Talon, Putik, Tetuan, Sta. Maria and Manicahan in the Zamboanga City Division were involved. Specifically, with the sample size data and percentages, the schools from where the data were collected were as follows: Maria Clara Lorenzo Lobregat National High School where 14% or 21 of participants came from, Zamboanga City High School Main that had 12% or 18 participants, Arena Blanco National High School which also had 12% or 18 participants, Talon-Talon National High School whose participants were 20 in number or 13% in total, Mercedes National High School with 7% or 11 participants, Pasonanca National High School having 5% or 8 participants, Culianan National High School with 12% or 18 participants, Don Pablo SHS where 20% or 30 participants came from, and Manicahan National High School that had 6% or 10 participants.

The sample size was measured using the Raosoft online calculator. Raosoft online calculator is designed specifically for population surveys to estimate the sample size and determine how many responses are needed, to meet the desired confidence level with the margin of error-typically 5%. The total population of the SHS teachers from the aforesaid districts was 251. To obtain a confidence level of 95% and a 5% margin of error, a minimum sample size of 154 was necessary, which was ascertained via Slovin's formula.

For the supplementation qualitative data, a focus group discussion was handpicked from those who rated themselves relatively low in the specific domains of (1) teaching and learning principles and research-based know-how, and (2) creation, modification, and practice of instructional strategies, which are adaptable to learners with special necessities, gifts, and disabilities alike. At the core of the grounds for the implementation of this data gathering procedure is the clear-cut explication of the participants' relatively low self-rating on particular domains, as mentioned previously. Naturally, to generate qualitative data, informants who were selected purposively had to be queried with in-depth probing, and this was carried out via a Focus Group Discussion. Primarily, the determination of two major groups was done from the total number of participants involved in the self-assessment task: a group of participants who descriptively obtained "very high" for the mean values across all domains, and another whose qualitative description was "very low," likewise throughout the domains. A total of eight (8) participants from each group took part in the Focus Group Discussions (henceforward FGD). Opportunities in instructional planning were at the core of the discussion for the "very high" group, while the challenges in instructional planning were the fulcrum of the discussion of the "very low" group. Moreover, only those who consented took part in the FGD.

2.3. Theoretical Basis

The process of instructional planning is deemed a thoughtful, careful, and proactive decision, and is regarded as an action that is indicative of permanent and meaningful student outcome alterations. To contextualize the investigation in the Philippine setting within the purview of instructional planning, teachers' instructional planning practices were evaluated via the PPST, which primarily defines teacher quality of service and guides them in planning for instruction. The PPST is utilized as a launching pad for teacher learning and the development of programs, and it intends to ensure teachers' intensive preparation for the effective implementation of the K-to-12 program (Gepila, 2020). It pronounces teachers' expectations pertinent to the increase in the levels of knowledge, instructional practices, and professional engagement. Subsumed within the PPST are the domains relevant to instructional planning, to wit: (1) content knowledge and pedagogy, (2) learning environment, (3) diversity of learners, (4) curriculum and planning, and (5) assessment and reporting. Further, the PPST aligns with the modifications caused by multifarious national and international frameworks and the changing necessities of learners of the 21st century to manifest creativity and criticality as thinkers (DepEd Order No. 22 s. 2017).

2.4. Data Analysis and Instrumentation

From the 7 domains of PPST, Domains 6 and 7 were deliberately excluded, as they do not precisely relate to instructional planning. Statements out of each of the strands per domain were generated to tailor-fit each one as survey-appropriate sentential items. A five-point Likert scale was utilized, from which the respondents could handpick the most suited response for them, to wit: *very frequently*, *frequently*, *occasionally*, *rarely*, or *never*. All the statements were positively phrased such that no reverse-coding was necessary. As far as the data analysis is concerned, the *Mean* was used for the determination and interpretation of the frequency level of SHS teachers' instructional planning practices. For the qualitative supplementation, thematic analysis was carried out, adhering to the sequence that an inquirer has to embark on, to wit: 1. Familiarization with the data, 2. Searching for themes, 3. Reviewing the themes, 4. Defining and naming themes, and 5. producing the report, which is termed the six-phase framework (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

3. RESULTS

3.1. Instructional Planning Practices of the SHS Teachers

Utilizing the adapted questionnaire of the PPST, five domains in the instructional planning practices were investigated in this current study. Content knowledge and pedagogy, learning environment, diversity of learners, curriculum planning, and assessment and reporting were the domains included in the study.

Table 1. Teachers' instructional planning practices in terms of content knowledge and pedagogy.

Statements	Mean	SD	Remarks
Utilize content knowledge across the curriculum teaching areas.	3.88	0.616	Frequently
Use research-based knowledge and principles of teaching and learning to enhance professional practice.	3.37	0.693	Occasionally
Make sure that ICT is used in a good way to make teaching and learning easier.	3.85	0.647	Frequently
Make use of a variety of teaching methods to improve student achievement in literacy and numeracy skills.	4.11	0.676	Frequently
Develop higher-order thinking skills, such as critical and creative thinking, by employing a variety of teaching methods.	4.19	0.625	Frequently
Display proficient use of Mother Tongue, Filipino, and English to facilitate teaching and learning.	3.95	0.755	Frequently
Support student understanding, participation, engagement, and achievement by employing effective verbal and nonverbal classroom communication strategies.	3.74	0.837	Frequently
Grand Mean	3.87	0.692	Frequently

Note: 4.51 – 5.00 (Very frequently); 3.51 – 4.50 (Frequently); 2.51 – 3.50 (Occasionally); 1.51 – 2.50 (Rarely); 1.00 – 1.50 (Never).

As depicted in Table 1, the grand mean response for Instructional Planning Practice of Content Knowledge and Pedagogy is 3.87 with a descriptive rating of *frequently* and a low standard deviation of 0.692, implying that the responses of the respondents are clustered close to the mean.

Additionally, the teachers *frequently* hone skills regarding higher-order thinking skills, creative thinking, and critical thinking via the utilization of various instructional methods (4.19). They draw on a myriad of instructional methods, aimed at heightening student achievement in both numeracy and literacy skills (4.11), displaying proficiency in the mother tongue, English, and Filipino in the teaching and learning facilitation (4.11), utilizing content knowledge throughout the curriculum teaching areas (3.88), ensuring the leverage of ICT for a seamless teaching and learning (3.85), and scaffolding student comprehension, engagement, and achievement via the employment of effective communication strategies, that is, verbal and non-verbal alike (3.74). All the respondents are centripetally at a close proximity to the mean, as the standard deviations indicate. Conversely, a mean score of 3.37 was obtained pertinent to the use of research-based knowledge and principles of teaching and learning in the enhancement of professional practice, which descriptively falls within the periphery of *occasionally*.

For a more in-depth teasing out of this seeming divergence among the other items in the instrument, the qualitative facet of the appendage substantiates the finding. Two (2) essential themes emerged: (1) *lack of knowledge* (for new teachers) and (2) *time constraints*.

Lack of Knowledge for New Teachers: Knowing research-based teaching and learning principles is crucial for teachers' professional practice enhancement (Rosenshine, 2012). Indicating otherwise, four novice teachers elaborated that a *lack of knowledge* in the ins and outs of research-laced teaching-learning knowledge and principles is one reason being at the fulcrum why they only occasionally exhibit the foregoing instructional practice. To flesh out these claims, excerpts were lifted from the transcripts, as may be gleaned below:

> Teacher 1:
>
> *"The reason why we occasionally practice the use of research knowledge and principles of teaching is that we have limited knowledge in terms of evidence and established principles from educational research. Actually, I am new in the system of DepEd, so I am not so familiar with this thing."*
>
> Teacher 2:
>
> *"The reason why I rarely practiced the use of research-based knowledge and principles of teaching and learning is that I am a novice in the department, and it is hard sometimes to look for a research-based pedagogy in teaching."*
>
> Teacher 4:
>
> "Because I'm new too, sir. I don't know much about the PPST indicators." [translated response].

Relatedly, the school head affirmed this, as indicated in the excerpt below.

School Head 1:

I think most of those who answered occasionally are the new faculty members from SHS. I believe their knowledge of PPST is limited because the majority of them did not undergo the teacher induction program. This only emphasizes the need to foremost orient teachers on the PPST to be aware of the standards that they are expected to follow.

Time Constraints: Another significant factor why teachers occasionally practice teaching and learning principles premised on research is due to time constraints. Four of the participants stated that time constraints affected their integration of research-based practices in teaching and learning, as shown in the excerpts below.

Teacher 5:

"The reason why we occasionally practice the use of research knowledge and principles of teaching is [because of] limited time for preparation, particularly in doing lesson plans."

Teacher 6:

"We lack time in preparing lesson plans, especially when you have a lot of subject preparation." [translated response]

These accounts are indicative of the instructional planning practices relative to knowledge and principles that are premised on research, which were practiced by the SHS teachers merely occasionally, on account of an inadequacy of knowledge for new teachers and also owing to time constraints. In times, teachers experience time constraints and are otherwise unequipped with the knowledge for the effective application of well-established educational methods and theories; to effectively apply well-established educational theories and methods, it potentially hampers their full capacity in the delivery of instruction that aligns with the pedagogical best practices relative to instruction deeply rooted in the rigor of research. This circumstance proves to be a bottleneck in their skills germane to instructional delivery that coordinates with the best practices and empirically supported pedagogical principles. This lends support to Gold (2001) insights; the combination of time constraints and a lack of knowledge can significantly impact the way teachers approach their teaching.

Despite the reasons why teachers occasionally practice the use of empirically grounded pedagogical knowledge and principles in enhancing professional practice, there are accounts from the research participants that foreground coaching and mentoring as an opportunity for teachers to acquire and share with each other the best practices relative to the use of research-based techniques within the purview of pedagogy. The excerpts are as follows:

Teacher 2:

"Most of the time during the classroom observation, we are being coached and mentored by our subject group head in the department. We learned from them, especially on how to improve our instruction.

School Head 2:

"We usually ask our master teachers from the Junior High school to give technical assistance, like the mentoring and coaching that they used to during the post-conference of CO. In the way, teachers, especially those new to the system, will learn from the tenured teachers."

These participants' statements underscore that mentoring and coaching are best practices that they use to improve their instructional planning practices, both from a particular sense and a generic perspective alike. Likewise, the mentoring and coaching approach provides teachers with valuable support, guidance, and feedback for better planning of instruction.

This is a substantiation of the investigation of Alemayehu (2021), which proffered the significance of mentorship and coaching in continuous improvement and professional growth of teachers.

Table 2. Teachers' instructional planning practices in terms of the learning environment.

Statements	Mean	SD	Remarks
Establish safe and secure learning environments to enhance learning through the consistent implementation of policies, guidelines, and procedures.	4.38	0.753	Frequently
Maintain learning environments that promote fairness, respect, and care to encourage learning.	4.44	0.713	Frequently
Manage the structure of the classroom to engage students, either individually or in groups, in meaningful exploration, discovery, and hands-on activities.	4.28	0.747	Frequently
Keep learning environments that are supportive and encourage students to participate, work together, and learn together in the future.	4.28	0.701	Frequently
Make use of a variety of effective methods to maintain learning environments that encourage students to work productively by taking responsibility for their own education.	4.31	0.700	Frequently
Manage learner behavior constructively by applying positive and non-violent discipline to guarantee learning-focused environments.	4.19	0.718	Frequently
Grand Mean	4.31	0.722	Frequently

Note: 4.51 – 5.00 (Very frequently); 3.51 – 4.50 (Frequently); 2.51 – 3.50 (Occasionally); 1.51 – 2.50 (Rarely); 1.00 – 1.50 (Never).

As may be seen in Table 2, 4.31 is the overall mean response of the teachers' instructional practice in terms of the learning environment, which descriptively means *"frequently"*. In addition, the standard deviation is 0.722, implying that the responses of the respondents closely cluster around the mean. Moreover, Table 2 reveals that the participants *"frequently"* kept learning environments that seek to foster respect, fairness, and care to encourage learning (4.44) with a standard deviation of 0.713; set up secure and safe environments for learning that seek to hone learning via consistency in policy, guideline, and procedure implementation (4.38) with a standard deviation of 0.753; utilized a series of effectual methods for the maintenance of learning environments that promote productivity via owning up to their own education (4.31), whose standard deviation is 0.700; managed the structure of the classroom to engage students, either individually or in groups, in meaningful exploration, discovery, and hands-on activities (4.28) and standard deviation of 0.701; kept learning environments that are supportive and encouraging for students' participation, collaboration, and unified learning in the future; and managed the behavior of learners constructively via the application of non-violent and positive discipline to ascertain focused learning environments (4.19), whose standard deviation is 0.718.

Table 3. Teachers' instructional planning practices in terms of the diversity of learners.

Statements	Mean	SD	Remarks
Address learners' gender, requirements, strengths, interests, and experiences with differentiated and developmentally appropriate learning experiences.	3.94	0.777	Frequently
Use teaching methods that take into account students' linguistic, cultural, socioeconomic, and religious backgrounds to build a culture that values the learner.	3.90	0.682	Frequently
Create, modify, and put into practice instructional strategies that are adaptable to students who have abilities, gifts, and disabilities.	3.45	0.796	Occasionally
Implement and plan instructional strategies that are in response to the particular educational requirements of students whose circumstances are challenging, such as isolation due to location, persistent illness, displacement as a result of war, urban relocation, or natural disasters, and child labor and abuse of children.	4.05	0.755	Frequently
Adapt and use culturally appropriate teaching strategies to address the needs of learners from indigenous groups.	3.97	0.707	Frequently
Grand Mean	3.86	0.743	Frequently

Note: 4.51 – 5.00 (Very frequently); 3.51 – 4.50 (Frequently); 2.51 – 3.50 (Occasionally); 1.51 – 2.50 (Rarely); 1.00 – 1.50 (Never).

From Table 3, participants' instructional planning practice relative to learning and diversity, which obtained 3.86 as a grand mean, and which is described as *"frequently,"* may be gleaned. Further, the standard deviation is 0.743, implying that the responses of the respondents gravitate close to the mean.

Moreover, it can be gleaned from Table 3 that item 3 obtained a mean score of 3.45, which falls within the range of 2.51 – 3.50, with a qualitative description of "*occasionally*" and the standard deviation of 0.796. To flesh out this

varying response from the participants, the qualitative supplementation sought to shed more light on this nearly aberrant result. To make this take shape, appropriate inquiries were raised during the FGD, whose findings indicate that the reason why SHS teachers occasionally practice the aforementioned instructional planning is due to *limited training in special education.* To further expatiate on this finding, the following is the presentation of excerpts and discourse on the matter.

Limited Training in Special Education: Most of the participants mentioned that they did not receive extensive training in special education, particularly on how to create individualized education plans for students with special needs, as shown in the following excerpts.

Teacher 2:

The reason why teachers occasionally practice it is that we don't have much training on inclusive education, particularly on how to deal with students with special needs. Most of the time, we are struggling with how to find for best strategies that are suited to the learners with special needs or learners with disabilities.

Teacher 4:

We are not trained to handle students with disabilities, particularly those with learning disabilities. I believe teachers should be trained on this. Training in special education is important for us teachers. Similarly, the school head confirmed this, as evident in the following excerpt:

School Head 3:

As a school head, I acknowledge that this is really occasionally practiced by the teachers, knowing that the school is on inclusive education, so definitely the classroom setting is dynamic. I could say that most of the teachers have limited training in terms of strategy and other pedagogical approaches for inclusive education.

School Head 4:

This has been a problem. When DepEd Order no. 44 s. In 2021 was released showing that students with different special needs are now in mainstream classes. The challenge now is that most of the teachers are not well trained, although some have had the opportunity to attend seminars; the majority of the teachers have not undergone training.

This indicates that participants have limited access to training sessions focused on inclusive education due to insufficient resources. Inclusive education training often requires specific resources, materials, and expertise (Smith & Tyler, 2011). The excerpts indicating the informants' remarks imply that teachers with limited training in special education may struggle to create instructional plans that effectively address the diverse needs of students with disabilities. This can result in less effective teaching strategies. The study of Gerstin and Dimino (2006) concurs with the study's findings that limited training may hinder teachers from recognizing early signs of learning disabilities or other special needs, potentially delaying the implementation of necessary interventions and support.

To help teachers improve instructional planning practices, specifically in creating, modifying, and putting into practice instructional strategies that are adaptable to students who have abilities, gifts, and disabilities, the participants highlighted collaborative planning, which is validated by the lifted excerpts from their responses below:

Teacher 3:

During the department meeting and LAC session, we do collaborative planning, especially on doing lessons that highlight the utilization of differentiated instructions. Most of the time, we are clustered according to the year level that we handle. There, we can plan together and share ideas on how to improve our instructions.

Teacher 5:

There are times that we collaborate with other teachers and we come up with a consensus instructional plan. I believe that planning together can contribute to a positive and dynamic school culture. I feel valued, supported, and connected with my colleagues.

These accounts indicate that collaborative planning is one of the best practices that the teachers do to improve instructional planning practices, the said practice is tantamount to the opportunity that they experience during

department meetings and LAC sessions. Furthermore, teachers learn from others and enable them to take part in decision-making, particularly on instructional plans. Thus, it highlights the importance of creating collaborative environments within the schools where teachers can work together to improve instructional practices and better meet and address their students' needs. By fostering collaboration among teachers, schools can generate dynamic and learner-centered learning environments that are supportive of the students' success in education (Dole, Sharon, Bloom, & Kowalske, 2016).

Table 4. Teachers' instructional planning practices in terms of curriculum planning.

Statements	Mean	SD	Remarks
Plan, manage, and carry out developmentally sequenced teaching and learning processes to meet the requirements of the curriculum and the various teaching contexts.	4.19	0.632	Frequently
Establish learning objectives that are appropriate, attainable, and consistent with the learning competencies.	3.88	0.642	Frequently
Implement learning programs that are relevant and responsive to the requirements of all students by adapting and implementing them.	4.13	0.736	Frequently
Engage in group discussions that make use of feedback from students and teachers to improve teaching methods.	3.95	0.666	Frequently
Select, develop, organize, and utilize appropriate teaching and learning resources, including ICT, to achieve learning goals.	4.27	0.706	Frequently
Grand Mean	4.08	0.676	Frequently

Note: 4.51 – 5.00 (Very frequently); 3.51 – 4.50 (Frequently); 2.51 – 3.50 (Occasionally); 1.51 – 2.50 (Rarely); 1.00 – 1.50 (Never).

The overall mean response of the teachers' instructional planning practices in terms of curriculum planning is 4.08, which is described as "*frequently*". Further, the standard deviation of 0.676 is low, indicating that the responses are closely clustered around the mean.

In a more specific lens, it can be observed in Table 4 that teachers demonstrate development, organization, and appropriate utilization of teaching-learning resources at a "*frequent*" pace, such as ICT, for the attainment of learning goals, which has a mean score of 4.27 and a standard deviation of 0.706; they map out, carry out, and manage developmentally sequenced processes in teaching and learning to meet curricular requirements and variety of teaching contexts (4.19), whose standard deviation is 0.632; embark on group discourses that draw on student and teacher feedback for the refinement of teaching methods (3.95), whose standard deviation is 0.666; and institute learning competency-consistent, appropriate, and attainable learning objectives (3.88), whose standard deviation is 0.642.

Table 5. Teachers' instructional planning practices in terms of assessment and reporting.

Statements	Mean	SD	Remarks
Plan, select, organize, and use diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment strategies consistent with curriculum requirements.	3.74	0.836	Frequently
Monitor and evaluate learner progress and achievement utilizing learner attainment data.	3.94	0.662	Frequently
Improve learner performance by implementing strategies for providing timely, accurate, and constructive feedback.	4.12	0.697	Frequently
Promptly and clearly communicate the needs, progress, and accomplishments of students to key stakeholders, including parents and guardians.	3.94	0.662	Frequently
Make changes to the teaching and learning practices and programs based on the assessment data.	4.12	0.697	Frequently
Grand Mean	3.97	0.711	Frequently

Note: 4.51 – 5.00 (Very frequently); 3.51 – 4.50 (Frequently); 2.51 – 3.50 (Occasionally); 1.51 – 2.50 (Rarely); 1.00 – 1.50 (Never).

As shown in Table 5, the overall mean response of teachers' instructional planning in terms of assessment and reporting is 3.97, which is described as "*frequently*". Further, the standard deviation of the mean is 0.711, suggesting that the responses of the respondents are relatively close to the mean.

Looking at the linchpin more closely, items in assessment and reporting garnered mean scores within the 3.51-4.50 range, *"frequently,"* which indicates the predominant utilization of assessment methods, learner progress, and accomplishment tracking and evaluation; learner necessities, progress, and achievement communication to stakeholders; and the use of assessment data for the refinement of the teaching and learning process and programs.

Table 6. Summary of teachers' instructional planning practices.

No.	Instructional planning practices (PPST Domains)	Mean	Interpretation
1	Content knowledge and pedagogy	3.87	Frequently
2	Learning environment	4.31	Frequently
3	Diversity of learners	3.86	Frequently
4	Curriculum planning	4.08	Frequently
5	Assessment and reporting	3.97	Frequently

Table 6 presents the instructional planning practices summary of the SHS teachers. Premised on the results as the table indicates, it succinctly manifests that the Learning Environment obtained the highest mean score of (4.31). Following closely behind, Curriculum Planning obtained a mean score of 4.08. The assessment and reporting received a mean score of 3.97. Content Knowledge and Pedagogy, and Diversity of Learners obtained a mean score of 3.87. The domain for Diversity of Learners obtained a mean score of 3.86, though lower in terms of mean scores compared to other domains.

3.2. The Significant Difference of Teachers' Instructional Planning Practices under the Length of Service and Area of Specialization Classification

It has been hypothesized in this study that the teacher-participants' instructional planning practices may differ when length of service and area of specialization are the classifications in question. In light of testing the hypothesis, the Kruskal-Wallis Test was carried out at a 0.05 level of significance.

Table 7. Kruskal-Wallis test results in juxtaposition of the teachers' instructional planning practices and length of service.

Instructional planning practices	Length of service	Remarks	Decision on Ho
	p-value		
1. Content knowledge and pedagogy	0.000	Significant	Reject
2. Learning environment	0.159	Not significant	Retain
3. Diversity of learners	0.002	Significant	Reject
4. Curriculum and planning	0.256	Not significant	Retain
5. Assessment and reporting	0.043	Significant	Reject

Note: α=0.05.

Table 7 shows the results for the significant difference in the teachers' instructional planning practices and length of service, where the Kruskal-Wallis Test was used to determine if a significant difference between the instructional planning practices and the length of service emerged. The alpha level (0.05) is numerically higher than the p-values for Content Knowledge and Pedagogy (p = 0.000), Diversity of Learners (0.002), and Assessment and Reporting (0.043). Using the preceding data, the rejection of the null hypotheses is necessary for all three of the aforementioned practices. Hence, a significant difference emerges in the teachers' instructional practices, particularly in Content Knowledge and Pedagogy, Diversity of Learners, and Assessment and Reporting when participants are classified according to length of service.

It is also reflected in the table that the value of the alpha level (0.05) is lower than the p-values for learning environment and curriculum planning, whose values are 0.159 and 0.256, respectively. Thereby, the retention of the null hypotheses is required.

Table 8. Kruskal-Wallis test results in juxtaposition of the teachers' instructional planning practices and area of specialization.

Instructional planning practices	Area of specialization p-value	Remarks	Decision on Ho
1. Content knowledge and pedagogy	0.590	Not significant	Retain
2. Learning environment	0.973	Not significant	Retain
3. Diversity of learners	0.776	Not significant	Retain
4. Curriculum and planning	0.967	Not significant	Retain
5. Assessment and reporting	0.834	Not significant	Retain

Note: α=0.05.

In Table 8, the significant differences of the juxtaposed variables, the instructional planning practices and the area of specialization are displayed. The results reveal the p-values across the instructional planning practices, to wit, Content Knowledge and Pedagogy, Learning Environment, Diversity of Learners, Curriculum Planning, and Assessment and Reporting, whose values are as follows, respectively: p=0.590, p=0.973, p=0.776, p=0.967, and p=0.834, all of which are higher than the alpha value. Thereby, the decision is to retain the null hypotheses across domains.

4. DISCUSSIONS

This first finding is relative to the instructional planning practices of content knowledge and pedagogy. The finding implies that the participants acknowledged the essence of being in possession of both a dynamic and critical grasp in applying teaching and learning theories and principles alongside their mastery of the content knowledge and its link within the confines of the curriculum areas and beyond. In the same token, in the attempt for the production of high-quality learning outcomes, content knowledge has relevance in the competence of the teachers in the mother tongue, Filipino, and English during the instructional delivery. Likewise, the same holds for the necessary technological skills, pedagogical methodologies, and communication strategies. This finding resonates with Gamayao and Binas (2021) study, which highlighted that the SHS teachers have a level of pedagogical content knowledge sufficient to help their students learn better. Teachers' expertise in the subject matter maximizes students' learning by effectively conveying complex concepts, providing insightful explanations, and fostering a comprehensive grasp of instructional materials. Teachers provide appropriate methods and strategies of learning for the students' content knowledge acquisition. The extrapolated implication for the item with the interpretation of *occasionally* is that teachers do not draw on research-based know-how in instruction for the refinement of their professional practice, a proposition that runs counter to Niemi (2008) argument for promoting research-based practice in education and training.

As for the second finding, the instructional planning practices in terms of learning environment, the teachers practice creating a positive learning milieu for the most part. The result reveals that there is a provision of nurturing, stable, encouraging, and just educational settings that foster both success and accountability in learners. Further, teachers establish a learning-centered environment and carry out an effective handling of student conduct in physical and virtual platforms alike. Likewise, the participants' general awareness of the significance of planning and creating both a safe and conducive learning atmosphere for learners is an observed truth. The preceding proposition is an indicator of quality in teaching and learning. This concurs with Gepila (2020) thoughts generated via a scientific investigation, which reported that basic education teachers manifest high proficiency in the promotion of a fair learning environment in the classroom domain. Furthermore, the finding indicates that the participants are actively engaged in implementing strategies to create positive, safe, and effective learning environments that prioritize

students' engagement, responsibility, collaboration, and constructive behavior management. The high mean scores across these domains indicate a strong commitment of SHS teachers in fostering a positive and optimal atmosphere.

The next finding on the instructional planning practices relative to Learner Diversity is an implication that the diversity of learners is taken into account by the SHS teachers in many cases. Moreover, they frequently engender diversified learning environments among learners, and, when designing learning opportunities and planning, they put emphasis on the necessity of teachers to possess respect, understanding, and knowledge for the varied student characteristics and experiences. In the same token, diversity in instruction and advocacy for success-supportive teaching methods are promoted by them, as they navigate the fast-changing community-based and cross-border environments. This also validates Gepila (2020) study, which noted that basic education and higher education teachers alike exhibit proficiency in diversified student management, particularly in gender-related necessities and in the multiplicity of experiences pertinent to teaching. Citing Wiseman, Cooner, and Knight (1999) and Ruhman (2010) contended that effective teachers recognize student diversity and possess both willingness and ability in comprehending the influence of divergence in learner backgrounds and abilities on the learning process. The result that *occasionally* suggests that the participants create, modify, and put into practice instructional strategies that are adaptable to students who have abilities, gifts, and disabilities.

The result for the instructional planning practices in terms of Curriculum Planning implies that the majority of the teachers put a premium upon their engagement with and understanding of national and local curricular mandates. Likewise, they embody a capacity for curricular content conversion into learning tasks that are in synergy with the learner necessities and that are adherent to success in teaching and learning. Additionally, it implies teachers' utilization of their expertise in strategic organization and production of well-structured lessons, either unilaterally or collaboratively with peers. The related learning programs and lesson sequences have to be within the context that is adaptive to what the learners require, and likewise incorporate an assortment of pedagogical materials. This manifests consistency with Gepila (2020) findings relative to curriculum and management, and based on the results, most teachers deem themselves as skilled in the orbit of instructional planning and management.

Moreover, the SHS teachers actively and adeptly engage in the development and utilization of teaching resources, meticulous planning and management of teaching processes, and are willing to incorporate feedback for improvement. While the establishment of learning objectives receives a slightly lower mean score, it still indicates a significant effort to align objectives with learning competencies.

The instructional planning practices pertinent to Assessment and Reporting results are suggestive that the majority of teachers mostly practice the utilization of assessment data to guide and refine the entirety of pedagogy and educational programs. This incorporates teachers' furnishing students with crucial feedback relative to their achievements in education. Also, it is pertinent to the methods that are linked with a series of assessment tools and strategies employed by teachers intended for overseeing, assessing, recording, and communicating with learners' accomplishments, advancements, and requirements. This is a clear-cut concurrence with the analysis of Gepila (2020) whose contention is that most of the SHS teachers display proficiency in activities and skills management in consonance with the student progress report and assessment.

The summary of the results demonstrates that teachers make available fair, supportive, secure, and safe learning environments such that learner responsibility and achievement are promoted. Also, the senior high teachers *frequently* practice curriculum planning processes in their instructional planning, indicating that they translate curriculum content into scholastic activities, map out well-structured and systematically arranged lessons, and communicate learning objectives in support of achievement, understanding, and participation of the learners. An implication may likewise be drawn that teachers frequently use an array of assessment tools and strategies for the purpose of evaluating, monitoring, reporting, and documenting the needs, progress, and achievement of the learners. Also, it may be deduced that the SHS teachers frequently acknowledge the essence of content knowledge mastery and its interlinkages within and across curricular areas; use developmentally suited and meaningful instruction premised on

current research; and utilize communication and pedagogic strategies and technology in the promotion of high-caliber learning outcomes. Furthermore, they generally draw on these instructional planning practices most of the time, particularly in establishing learning environments that are responsive to student diversity and encouraging the affirmation of instructional diversity, and the necessity for differentiated teaching practices, in an attempt to cultivate learners into becoming efficacious citizens in a community-based and cross-border environment where constancy is non-existent. There may be areas for improvement in terms of addressing the needs of diverse learners. In consonance with Gepila (2020) secondary teachers embody high proficiency in terms of addressing the learning milieu and exhibit competence in curriculum planning, assessment, and reporting, content knowledge, and pedagogy, and the diversity of learners.

Furthermore, the SHS teachers generally view instructional planning practices positively in their educational settings, with particular strengths identified in learning environment and curriculum planning. However, there may be opportunities for improvement in assessment and reporting, as well as in domains regarding the content knowledge and pedagogy, and diversity of learners.

As far as the comparison between the teachers' instructional planning practices and their length of service is concerned, participants' length of service, their instructional planning practices related to Content Knowledge and Pedagogy, Diversity of Learners, and Assessment and Reporting remain consistent; that is, the length of service does significantly influence teachers' instructional planning practices in these specific domains. Further, the length of service plays a role in shaping instructional practices and contributes to a clearer understanding of the impact of experiences on the teaching methodologies of teachers. This is in concurrence with the study of Chai, Koh, and Tsai (2013), where teachers are believed to gain more experience over time, their instructional planning practices evolve, and further reflect deeper content and refined pedagogical approaches. Further, the result implies that regardless of teachers' length of service, their instructional planning practices related to the learning environment and curriculum do not significantly vary. Thus, the finding underscores the consistency and stability of teachers' instructional planning practices in these specific areas across different levels of teaching experience. This specific finding resonates with the study of Joo, Park, and Lim (2018), arguing that the influence of teachers' length of service may diminish compared to other factors influencing instructional planning practices of teachers.

Insofar as the juxtaposition of the teachers' instructional planning practices and their area of specialization, all the instructional planning practices domains do not bear any differences whose margin is deemed significant within specialization. The results also reveal that regardless of their area of specialization, SHS teachers demonstrate consistent practices in instructional planning relative to the following: Content Knowledge and Pedagogy, Learning Environment, Diversity of Learners, Curriculum Planning, and Assessment and Reporting. Quite analogous to these current findings is the study of Christian, Kelly, and Bugallo (2021), suggesting that instructional planning practices may be more influenced by factors other than area of specialization, such as teachers' teaching philosophies and professional development opportunities in teaching.

5. CONCLUSION

The findings confirm that the teachers' instructional planning practices in terms of content knowledge and pedagogy, learning diversity, and assessment and reporting have significant differences with the teachers' length of service. On the other hand, the learning environment and curriculum planning have no significant difference with the teachers' length of service. Further, no significant differentiation is manifested when instructional planning practices are analyzed against the area of specialization.

The current investigation is suggestive of the necessity to fortify the culture of research in the region. Although apparent attempts have been locally observed and noticed, the results direct educators to solidify already emergent efforts for research practices, both as a cognitive exercise and as an effort that comes second nature to their rigorous academic system. In so doing, it is ascertained that a way is paved for research-based instructions to take shape, as

research per se is already deeply seated in the educative culture and system. In like manner, special education training has to be made available for teachers in the basic education, particularly at the level of the SHS. This is grounded upon the current finding relative to the specific strand within the domain of Diversity of Learners, whereby teachers only occasionally embark on instructional planning practices intended for learners with special gifts, abilities, and disabilities. On account of the integration of learners with special needs into mainstream instruction, woven with the preceding proposition, it is imperative that equipping be done for teachers across the board, as an influx of students with special needs has been observed in a wide array of academic realities.

Further, the current results, as an offshoot of the investigation, have addressed a clear gap in the literature, that is, findings pertinent to instructional planning practices of teachers in the SHS within the Region of Zamboanga City, Philippines, dispel any unfounded wishful thinking in that regard. Further, the findings in this exploration bear a point of departure for policies and a basis to train teachers pertinent to instructional planning practices with the utilization of research-laced knowledge and teaching and learning principles for the enhancement of professional practice and the embarkation on instructional practices intended to foster inclusivity for learners as a fulcrum of the aforementioned training. Likewise, a proposal of a professional enhancement model within the orbit of the instructional planning practices may be carried out, richly drawing on the findings in this paper.

Furthermore, the findings underscore a commendable commitment among the participants to sound instructional planning practices, emphasizing the significance of content mastery, effective use of ICT, and strategies for fostering critical thinking skills. Notably, the auspicious utilization of the following languages: the mother tongue, Filipino, and English in pedagogy, alongside the effective classroom communication strategies, reflects a holistic approach to pedagogy. As SHS teachers continue to navigate the evolving landscape of education, a balanced integration of both practical experience and research-informed methodologies can contribute to a more dynamic and impactful teaching environment.

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Transparency: The authors state that the manuscript is honest, truthful, and transparent, that no key aspects of the investigation have been omitted, and that any differences from the study as planned have been clarified. This study followed all writing ethics.
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