Fostering Professional Growth and Teaching Performance Among Non-Plantilla Teachers: Basis for Professional Advancement

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Abstract

The quality of education in public elementary schools is deeply intertwined with the professional growth and teaching performance of its educators. For non-plantilla teachers, who face job insecurity and often limited professional development opportunities, maintaining a high level of competence becomes both a challenge and a necessity. This study determined the level of professional growth and level of teaching performance of non-plantilla teachers in Tampakan District, Schools Division of South Cotabato in the school year 2024-2025. Using descriptive-correlational research design to describe the current status of the variables and determine the relationship between professional growth and teaching performance. Data revealed that non-plantilla teachers exhibit a very high level of professional growth, primarily driven by self-directed learning, which underscores their strong commitment to continuous professional development despite limited access to structured training. Their high level of teaching performance demonstrates competence in creating inclusive learning environments and effectively utilizing assessment strategies, although some variability exists in professional engagement and reflective practices. The absence of a significant relationship between self-directed and structured learning with teaching performance suggests that other factors, such as teaching experience, school environment, and instructional support, play a more substantial role in determining teacher effectiveness. Moreover, financial constraints, workload, and limited career advancement opportunities pose significant barriers to the professional growth of non-plantilla teachers, highlighting the necessity for targeted support programs to enhance their professional development and job satisfaction.

Keywords**:** professional growth; teaching performance; non-plantilla teachers; self-directed learning; structured learning

I. Introduction

Background of the Study

The quality of education in public elementary schools is deeply intertwined with the professional growth and teaching performance of its educators. For non-plantilla teachers, who face job insecurity and often limited professional development opportunities, maintaining a high level of competence becomes both a challenge and a necessity. This is particularly true for temporary or contract teachers, who often struggle with the uncertainty of their employment status and lack of access to consistent professional growth opportunities. A study published in the International Journal of Research and Innovation in Applied Science found that 37% of teachers in the Philippines reported feeling overwhelmed by their workload, which often conflicts with professional development activities. Additionally, a survey by the Department of Education revealed that 54% of teachers felt their workload hindered their participation in professional development activities. Research has highlighted that such teachers face unique obstacles in maintaining their effectiveness, as the absence of job security and limited resources can hinder their ability to engage in professional development and, consequently, affect their teaching performance Ng & Tan (2015). Despite their temporary status, these educators play a pivotal role in shaping young learners.

The world faces a critical shortage of teachers, hindering the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 4 and the Education 2030 agenda. This first Global Report on Teachers (2023) stresses the urgency of this challenge and calls for immediate action. Filling a void in the field and grounded in new data, the report calls for international cooperation and increased education investment, offering a roadmap to empower teachers and to find policy solutions to ensure every learner is taught by a qualified, motivated and well-supported teacher. Many ASEAN Member states are committed to transforming their educational systems through various measures, including curriculum reform, teacher professional development, and increased investment in education technology. These efforts reflect the region's ongoing focus on improving education quality and achieving sustainable development goals. As noted by the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO, 2020), ASEAN countries have continuously prioritized educational reform as a key driver for socio-economic progress and regional cooperation.

However, not all teachers possess holistic competencies. There is a needed to ensure consistent quality and professional development, address skills gaps, and foster critical competencies across ASEAN member States (Sabila & Sioson, 2024). Moreover, teaching standards need to be upgraded. A study (Bautista, 2023) reveals that teachers' creativity and resourcefulness to effectively serve learners, even in resource-deprived environments is important.

In the Philippines, shortages of teachers are address through non-plantilla teachers; those who are not permanently employed or not included in the regular staffing complement. As of May 2024, the Department of Education (DepEd) in the Philippines reported 46,703 unfilled positions, with 58% (26,984) designated for teaching roles. Despite plans to create 20,000 new teaching positions for fiscal year 2025, DepEd estimates a shortfall of 56,050 teachers, requiring an additional ₱15.4 billion to address the gap. This shortage has led to the increased hiring of non-plantilla or contractual educators to fill the gap. These teachers, often hired on a temporary or contractual basis, play a crucial role in filling gaps caused by insufficient full-time, permanent staff. According to the Department of Education (DepEd, 2019), non-plantilla teachers are regularly utilized to ensure that schools, particularly in rural and underserved areas, continue to function despite staffing shortages.

Hence, despite their crucial role in addressing teacher shortages and ensuring that classrooms are adequately staffed, non-plantilla teachers often find themselves excluded from key professional development opportunities. In many public elementary schools, non-plantilla teachers are not routinely involved in in-service trainings, which are critical for updating teaching practices, learning new methodologies, and staying informed about curriculum changes. This exclusion from professional development is a significant concern, as research shows that teachers who lack access to such training are less likely to remain up-to-date with educational reforms and innovations (Guskey, 2002; DepEd, 2020)."

Moreover, these teachers are frequently overlooked during classroom observations and evaluations, processes that provide essential feedback and guidance for professional improvement. This lack of inclusion not only hampers their professional growth but also limits their potential to contribute effectively to student learning outcomes. Teachers who are excluded from such evaluative processes often face difficulties in refining their teaching practices, as regular feedback is crucial for fostering continuous improvement and enhancing student learning (Pianta, 2006; Darling-Hammond, 2017)

In Tampakan, South Cotabato, there are 36 non-plantilla teachers hired to serve the underserved community. The absence of continuous professional development opportunities for non-plantilla teachers raises concerns about the long-term impact on their teaching performance and the overall quality of education provided to students. Given that these teachers play a vital role in the day-to-day functioning of public elementary schools, it is imperative to address the gaps in their professional development.

Several studies have focused on professional development and work performance of teachers. For instance, Padillo et al. (2021) found that while teachers demonstrated mastery in instructional planning, delivery, subject knowledge, rapport with students, and classroom management, they perceived professional development activities as offering minimal benefits. Moreover, Zhou et al. (2023) on the effect of professional development on in-service teachers. Given the lack of data exploring the professional growth and teaching performance of non-plantilla teachers, there is a notable gap in understanding how these educators develop professionally and how their teaching effectiveness is evaluated. The study sought to highlight the disparities in professional development access and propose strategies to ensure that these educators are adequately supported. The findings could provide valuable insights for policymakers, educational leaders, and stakeholders, advocating for the inclusion of non-plantilla teachers in all relevant professional development initiatives, ultimately leading to improved educational outcomes in public elementary schools.

Conceptual Framework

This study is anchored on the concept presented by Knowles (1973) which posits that professional growth is might be self-directed learning. Accordingly, adults are self-directed learners who take responsibility for their own learning processes. In addition, self-directed learning involves individuals identifying their learning needs, setting goals, finding resources, and evaluating their learning progress. This concept is central to professional growth, as it empowers teachers to seek out learning opportunities that are relevant to their specific needs and contexts.

Moreover, it could also be structured training. Knowles also acknowledged the importance of structured training programs. These programs provide organized and systematic learning experiences designed to enhance professional skills and knowledge. Structured learning can include workshops, seminars, formal courses, and other organized learning activities that offer a clear framework for professional development.

Moreover, a supportive school environment and proactive leadership create the conditions necessary for professional growth. Effective professional development that is continuous (Guskey, 2000) and aligned with adult learning principles (Knowles, 1973) enhances teachers' knowledge and skills. Through continuous learning and reflective practice, teachers improve their teaching competence.

The figure below showed the schematic diagram of the conceptual framework of the study.

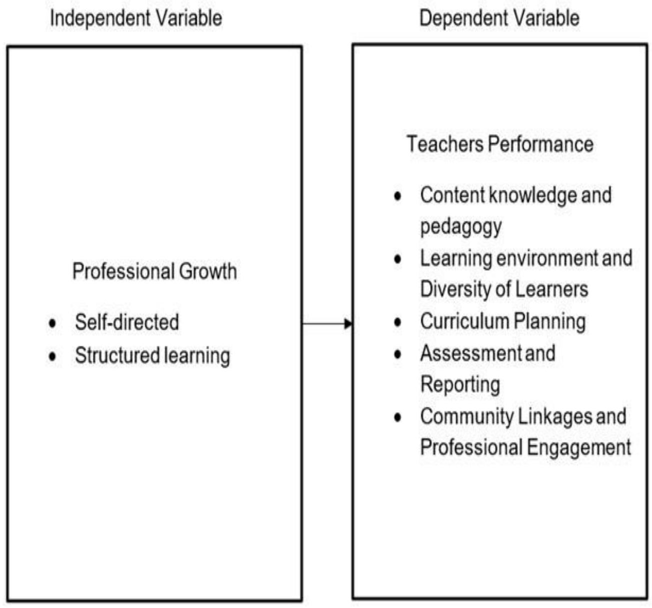

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to determine the level of professional growth and level of performance of non-plantilla teachers in Tampakan District, Schools Division of South Cotabato in the school year 2024-2025. Specifically, it answered the following questions:

1. What is the level of professional growth among non-Plantilla teachers in terms of:
   1.1 self-directed
   1.2 structured learning
2. What is the level of teacher's performance in terms of:
   2.1 content knowledge and pedagogy;
   2.2 learning environment
   2.3 diversity of learner's, assessment, and Reporting;
   2.4 curriculum and planning; and
   2.5 community linkages and Professional Engagement
3. Is there a significant relationship between the level of professional growth and teaching performance of non-plantilla teachers?

Hypothesis

The hypothesis is tested at 0.05 level of significance:

There is no significant relationship between the level of professional growth and teaching performance of non-platilla teachers.

Significance of the Study

This study holds significant potential to influence educational policies, improve professional development programs, enhance teacher effectiveness, and contribute to academic research, thereby benefiting various stakeholders in the educational community. Specifically, it will be of great significance for the following:

Department of Education (DepEd). The study is significant for the Department of Education (DepEd) as could provide valuable insights into the current challenges and needs of non-plantilla (contractual) teachers. By understanding the factors that impact their professional growth and teaching performance, DepEd can formulate policies and programs that support the development and eventual regularization of these teachers, leading to improved educational outcomes.

School Administration. The findings from this study would help school administrators recognize the importance of professional development for non-plantilla teachers and guide them in creating initiatives that encourage growth and improve teaching performance. This could lead to the establishment of in-house training programs, mentorship opportunities, and better integration of non-plantilla teachers into the school system, ensuring that they feel supported and valued.

Non-Plantilla Teachers For non-plantilla teachers themselves, the study could highlight the importance of continuous professional development as a means to enhance their teaching effectiveness and career opportunities. It can serve as a motivation for these teachers to actively pursue growth opportunities and advocate for their inclusion in professional development programs. Furthermore, the study may provide recommendations on how they can better navigate challenges in their roles and work toward permanent employment status.

Researcher. For the researcher, this study would offer an opportunity to contribute to the field of educational research by addressing a critical gap in the professional development of non-plantilla teachers. The researcher would gain insights into the real-world implications of policy and practice, and the study could inform their future work in educational improvement and teacher support initiatives. Also, it could build their expertise in the area of teacher development and performance evaluation.

Future Researchers. Future researchers could benefit from this study as it lays the groundwork for further exploration into the professional experiences of non-plantilla teachers. It can serve as a reference point for examining the long-term effects of professional growth initiatives and how this influence teacher retention, performance, and the overall quality of education. Additionally, this study may inspire other research into similar educational contexts, such as contract-based educators in other public or private sectors.

Scope and Delimitation

This study focused on assessing the professional growth and teaching performance of non-plantilla teachers in public schools within the Tampakan District in the school year 2024-2025. The study involved non-plantilla teachers as the primary respondents, while school administrators and relevant DepEd personnel will provide supplementary insights. Data were collected through surveys and performance evaluations, with a specific focus on the level of professional growth and its relationship to teaching performance.

This was delimited to non-plantilla teachers and does not include plantilla or permanent teachers. Although the professional development of all teachers is important, this study is limited to non-plantilla teachers because their employment status presented distinct challenges and growth opportunities. While other factors such as job satisfaction, work-life balance, and financial stability might influence non-plantilla teachers, the study primarily concentrated on professional growth opportunities and teaching performance. Broader issues related to the non-permanent employment status was considered if they directly impact these two variables.

Operational Definition of Terms

The following terms are operationally defined for clarity and understanding of their meaning in this study.

Community linkages refer to the relationships and partnerships that schools and teachers establish with parents, local organizations, and other stakeholders to support student learning and enhance the overall educational experience.

Content knowledge refers to the deep understanding of the subject matter that teachers must possess to effectively teach their students

Pedagogy refers the theory and practice of education, encompassing the methods and strategies used by teachers to facilitate learning, as well as the study of how these approaches impact the development of learners.

Fostering refers to the act of encouraging, promoting, or nurturing the development of non-plantilla teachers.

Non-plantilla teachers refer to contractual or temporary teachers employed in public elementary schools who are not permanently appointed to a government position.

Professional growth refers to the continuous process of learning and skill development that non-plantilla teachers undergo to enhance their teaching abilities, knowledge of subject matter, and pedagogical practices.

Public schools refer to government-funded educational institutions where non-plantilla teachers are employed. These schools are secondary and elementary schools subject to the rules and regulations set by the Department of Education (DepEd).

Self-directed refers to the ability of non-plantilla teachers to take initiative in their own professional development, seeking out learning opportunities, resources, and experiences independently without relying solely on formal training programs provided by the school or DepEd.

Structured training refers to formal professional development programs organized by the school, DepEd, or other educational bodies. These programs typically include workshops, seminars, or courses that aim to improve teachers' skills, knowledge, and teaching practices in a systematic and organized manner.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to describe the current status of the variables and determine the relationship between them. The descriptive part of the study aimed to identify and explain the characteristics of the respondents, while the correlational aspect examined the relationship between the key variables without manipulating them. This method was appropriate because it allowed the researcher to collect factual data and analyze patterns of relationships in a natural setting. According to Creswell (2012), this type of research is useful for identifying relationships among variables in situations where the researcher cannot control or influence the variables.

In this study. The quantitative data were gathered through structured surveys assessing various aspects of professional growth, the findings were integrated to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem, allowing for a more nuanced interpretation of the factors influencing professional growth in this context.

This study was conducted in Tampakan, South Cotabato, where seventeen (17) public schools benefit from the local government's hiring of non-plantilla teachers, to address staffing shortages.

The respondents for this study were consist of thirty-six (36) non-plantilla teachers in Tampakan District in the school year 2024-2025.The respondents were selected based on the following inclusion and exclusion criteria: a.) He/she has non-plantilla item; b.) he/she must be teaching for at least 2 years, and c.) he/she willing to participate in survey and open-ended inquiries is a crucial inclusion criterion to ensure active and voluntary engagement in the study. These will only include teachers who are locally funded preferably by the provincial and municipal government. This will also involve the school heads where the non-plantilla teachers are assigned. The school heads will be the primary source of data on the teaching performance of the non-Plantilla teachers.

Table 1 Distribution of Respondents of the Study

School	Number of School Teachers	School Head
Tampakan central ES	2	1
Tampakan SPED	2	1
Buto ES	3	1
Escobillo Es	2	1
Lampitak Es	2	1
Liberty Es	1	1
Albagan Es	1	1
Cariaga Mercado ES	1	1
Claudio Delos Reyes Es	1	1
Lambayong Es	1	1
Palo NHS	1	1
Taplan IS	3	1
Datal Biao	3	1
Danlag NHS	2	1
Liberty NHS	1	1
Maltana NHS	1	1
Tablu NHS	5	1
Total	**36**	**17**

In gathering the quantitative data, the researcher employed complete enumeration since there are only few numbers of population. It involves the selection, acquisition, and quantification of a part of the population, with the aim of providing a representative sample based on specific criteria (Ganapati, 2010).

The researcher used a researcher-made structured questionnaire composed of two parts. First part will be 19 items survey questionnaire on the level of professional growth of non-plantilla teachers. Part II will be an adapted Results-Based Performance Standard (RPMS) to determine the level of performance of non-plantilla teachers

In pursuing this study, the researcher followed the steps and procedures in gathering the data of this study.

The researcher first secured approval from Sultan Kudarat State University-Graduate School for the conduct of this study. Once approved, a letter requesting permission to conduct the study was sent to the Division Office of South Cotabato. Upon receiving approval and full support from the Schools Division Superintendent (SDS) and school principals, the researcher explained to the identified respondents how to answer the provided questionnaires thoroughly. During the actual survey administration, the researcher ensured that each respondent clearly understands the questions, enabling them to provide accurate responses. After respondents have completely and honestly answered the questionnaire Following the successful administration of quantitative data collection, all survey questionnaires were retrieved, and appropriate statistical tools was applied for data interpretation and further analysis.

This study employed descriptive and inferential statistical analysis. In quantitative data, mean and standard deviation was used to describe the level of professional growth and teaching performance of the respondents, while, Pearson r was be used to determine the significant relationship between the professional growth and teaching performance of non-plantilla teachers

Assuring trustworthiness in research employed various strategies to address key aspects such as validity, reliability, objectivity, and generalizability. The researcher can ensure trustworthiness in this study based on the following components:

Validity refers to the level to which the research instruments exactly measure what they are intended to measure. This was addressed by using validated tools, and by seeking expert review to assess the clarity and relevance of each item.

Reliability refers to the uniformity and stability of the research findings, was ensured through internal consistency testing such as Cronbach’s alpha, as well as by following uniform procedures during data collection.

Objectivity was sustained by minimizing researcher bias through the use of structured instruments and statistical analysis. All interpretations were based solely on the data collected, ensuring objectivity and transparency throughout the research process.

Generalizability refers to the applicability of the findings to a wider population, was supported by selecting a representative sample and providing detailed demographic information to contextualize the results.

III. Results and Discussion

This section discloses the presentation of the study's findings. The consecutive presentation encompasses the exploration of the professional growth and teaching performance of non plantilla teachers in public schools.

Table 2 presents the level of professional growth among non-plantilla teachers in terms of self-directed learning.

Table 2. Level of Professional Growth among Non-Plantilla Teachers in terms of Self-Directed Learning

Statements	Mean	SD	Description
1. I regularly set clear and specific professional development goals for myself.	4.72	.45	Very High
2. I identify areas where I need to improve or acquire new skills.	4.61	.54	Very High
3. I actively seek out resources (books, articles, online courses) to support my professional development.	4.56	.60	Very High
4. I allocate specific time for my professional development activities.	4.50	.73	Very High
5. I regularly reflect on my professional development experiences to assess their impact.	4.42	.64	Very High
6. I engage in continuous learning through reading, research, or taking online courses.	4.39	.83	Very High
7. I experiment with new teaching strategies that I have learned through self-directed activities.	4.39	.59	Very High
8. I connect with other professionals to share knowledge and experiences related to self-directed learning.	4.33	.85	Very High
9. I participate in professional development activities that I have selected myself (e.g graduate studies)	4.28	.93	Very High
10. I participate in online forums or professional learning communities.	4.00	.88	High
Section Mean	**4.42**	**.70**	**Very High**

The highest mean score of 4.72 (SD = 0.45) was recorded for the statement, I regularly set clear and specific professional development goals for myself, which indicates a strong and consistent focus on goal-setting for their development. On the other hand, the lowest mean score of 4.00 (SD = 0.88) was for the statement, I participate in online forums or professional learning communities

Overall, the section mean of 4.42 (SD = 0.70) reflects a very high level of self-directed learning. This suggests that Non-Plantilla Teachers are generally very committed to improving their skills through goal-setting, seeking resources, reflecting on their experiences, and experimenting with new strategies.

Table 3 presents level of professional growth among non-plantilla teachers in terms of structured learnings.

Table 3. Level of Professional Growth among Non-Plantilla Teachers in terms of Structured Learning

Statements	Mean	SD	Description
1. Participates in structured training programs (workshops, seminars, formal courses).	3.36	0.58	Moderate
2. Participates in mandatory professional development activities.	3.11	0.57	Moderate
3. Attends relevant training content to teaching practice	3.00	0.53	Moderate
4. Collaborates and creates network with peers during structured training.	2.86	0.67	Moderate
5. Engages in continuous improvement and refresher courses.	2.69	0.62	Moderate
6. Participates in ongoing professional development.	2.61	0.59	Moderate
7. Apply learned skills and knowledge in the classroom setting.	2.50	0.55	Low
8. Integrates new strategies into teaching practice as a result of structured training.	2.50	0.55	Low
9. Participates in training programs with current educational standards and student needs.	2.27	0.61	Low
Section Mean	**2.77**	**0.59**	**Moderate**

The highest mean score of **3.36** (SD = **0.58**) was recorded for the statement, participates in structured training programs (workshops, seminars, formal courses), indicating that teachers moderately engage in formal learning opportunities such as workshops and seminars.

On the other hand, the lowest mean score of 2.27 (SD = 0.61) was for the statement, participates in training programs with current educational standards and student needs, which indicates a lower level of engagement in training that aligns directly with current educational standards and the evolving needs of students. The relatively higher standard deviation suggests some variability in responses, with some teachers more engaged than others in training related to current educational standards.

The overall section mean of 2.77 (SD = 0.59) also falls within the moderate range, reflecting that while Non-Plantilla Teachers engage in structured learning, the intensity and frequency of their participation are not as high as seen in self-directed learning activities. The implication is that while teachers participate in formal training, further emphasis could be placed on enhancing the practical application of these learnings in the classroom, as well as aligning training programs more closely with current educational standards and student needs.

Table 4 presents the summary of Summary on the Level of Professional Growth among Non-Plantilla Teachers.

Table 4. Summary on the Level of Professional Growth among Non-Plantilla Teachers

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
Self-Directed Learning	4.42	.70	Very High
Structured Learning	2.77	0.59	Moderate
Overall Mean	**3.60**	**.65**	**High**

The summary of the level of professional growth among non-plantilla teachers reveals a notable distinction between self-directed and structured learning. Self-Directed Learning, got the mean score of 4.42 (SD = 0.70) falls within the very high category, indicating a strong commitment to independently managing and pursuing professional development through goal-setting, seeking resources, and experimenting with new teaching strategies.

In contrast, structured learning received a mean score of 2.77 (SD = 0.65), categorized as moderate, suggesting that while teachers participate in structured training programs, the level of engagement and application is less intense, with challenges in translating the training into classroom practices.

The overall mean of 3.60 (SD = 0.65) remains high, indicating that, on the whole, non-plantilla teachers demonstrate a high level of professional growth, with self-directed learning being the dominant mode of development. The implication is that while structured learning opportunities may not be as impactful or frequent, teachers are still highly engaged in their personal development and are likely taking the initiative to seek out learning opportunities on their own.

This conforms to Pylvas et al., (2022) who argue that professional growth is an ongoing process of learning that helps people to get the skills, knowledge, and abilities required to meet evolving demands for occupational competency over the course of their careers.

This section presents the performance of non-plantilla teachers in terms of content knowledge and pedagogy; learning environment and diversity of learner's; curriculum and planning, assessment, and Reporting; and community linkages and professional engagement.

Table 5 presents the level of non-plantilla teachers' performance in terms of content knowledge and pedagogy.

Table 5. Level of Non-Plantilla Teachers' Performance in terms of Content Knowledge and Pedagogy

Statements	Mean	SD	Description
1. Applied knowledge of content within and 2. across curriculum teaching areas.	4.14	.79	High
3. Applied a range of teaching strategies to develop critical and creative thinking, as well as other higher-order thinking skills.	4.03	.90	High
4. Used a range of teaching strategies that 5. enhance learner achievement in 6. literacy and numeracy skills.	3.97	.87	High
7. Displayed proficient use of language to facilitate teaching and learning	3.39	.77	Moderate
Section Mean	**3.88**	**.83**	**High**

The highest mean score of 4.14 (SD = 0.79) was recorded for the statement, applied knowledge of content within and across curriculum teaching areas, reflecting that teacher show strong capability in applying their content knowledge across various subjects, which is crucial for effective teaching.

However, the statement displayed proficient use of language to facilitate teaching and learning got the lowest mean score of 3.39 (SD = 0.77), categorized as moderate. This suggests that while teachers are generally proficient in using language for teaching, there may be room for improvement in how language is used to facilitate learning.

Overall, the section mean of 3.88 (SD = 0.83) falls within the high category, indicating that non-plantilla teachers generally exhibit strong performance in content knowledge and pedagogy, with some room for growth in using language to more effectively support teaching and learning. This implies that while their overall teaching strategies and content application are strong, enhancing language proficiency for teaching could further improve student outcomes.

These findings conform with Cepero et al., (2021) who explore the significance of tacit knowledge in effective teaching practice. They argue that teachers' implicit knowledge affects their instructional decisions and play a significant role in shaping students' learning experiences. Chai et al., (2019) note that pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) plays a central role in technology integration in education.

Table 6 presents the level of non-plantilla teachers' performance in terms of Learning Environment and Diversity of Learners.

Table 6. Level of Non-Plantilla Teachers' Performance in terms of Learning Environment and Diversity of Learners

Statements	Mean	SD	Description
1. Maintains learning environment that promote fairness, respect, and care to encourage learning.	4.28	.70	Very High
2. Establish safe and secure learning environment to enhance learning through consistent implementation of policies and guidelines.	4.08	.77	High
3. Establish a learner-centered culture by using teaching strategies that responds to their linguistic, socioeconomics, and religion.	3.97	.74	High
4. Adapted and used culturally appropriate teaching strategies to address the needs of the learners from indigenous groups.	3.94	.98	High
Section Mean	**4.07**	**.80**	**High**

The highest mean score of 4.28 (SD = 0.70) was recorded for the statement, maintains learning environment that promotes fairness, respect, and care to encourage learning, indicating that teachers are highly effective in creating an environment where fairness and respect are prioritized, which are essential for student engagement and motivation.

The statements related to responding to learner diversity, such as establish a learner-centered culture by using teaching strategies that respond to their linguistic, socioeconomics, and religion (3.97, SD = 0.74)

Overall, the section mean of 4.07 (SD = 0.80) reflects a high level of performance in creating a positive and inclusive learning environment that is responsive to the diverse needs of learners. While teachers are doing well in establishing safe, respectful, and learner-centered environments, there may be an opportunity to further enhance strategies that specifically address the needs of indigenous learners.

Table 7 presents the level of non-plantilla teachers' performance in terms of curriculum and planning, assessment, and reporting.

Table 7. Level of Non-Plantilla Teachers' Performance in terms of Curriculum and Planning, Assessment, and Reporting

Statements	Mean	SD	Description
1. Utilized assessment data to inform the modification of teaching and learning practices and programs	4.14	.75	High
2. Used strategies for providing timely, accurate, and constructive feedback to improve learner's performance	4.06	.78	High
3. Set achievable and appropriate learning outcomes that are aligned with the learning competencies	4.03	.73	High
Section Mean	**4.08**	**.75**	**High**

The highest mean score of 4.14 (SD = 0.75) was recorded for the statement, utilized assessment data to inform the modification of teaching and learning practices and programs, indicating that teachers are highly effective in using assessment data to adjust their teaching strategies and curriculum to better meet students' needs. However, the statement set achievable and appropriate learning outcomes that are aligned with the learning competencies had a mean score of 4.03 (SD = 0.73), but also rated high, reflecting that teacher are able to set realistic and competency-based learning goals for their students.

The section mean of 4.08 (SD = 0.75) overall indicates a high level of performance, suggesting that Non-Plantilla Teachers are consistently effective in utilizing assessments, providing constructive feedback, and setting appropriate learning outcomes. This implies that teachers are well-equipped to support student learning and are adept at using data and feedback to improve teaching practices.

Table 8 presents the Level of Non-Plantilla Teachers' Performance in terms of Community Linkages and Professional Engagement

Table 8. Level of Non-Plantilla Teachers' Performance in terms of Community Linkages and Professional Engagement

Statements	Mean	SD	Description
1. Built relationship with parents/guardian and wider school community to facilitate involvement in the educative process	4.97	.77	Very High
2. Participated in professional networks to share knowledge and enhance practice	4.03	.81	High
3. Develop a personal reflection plan based on reflection of one's practice and on-going professional learning.	3.81	1.06	High
Section Mean	**4.27**	**.88**	**High**

The highest mean score of 4.97 (SD = 0.77) was recorded for the statement, built relationship with parents/guardians and the wider school community to facilitate involvement in the educative process, reflecting an exceptional commitment to fostering connections with parents and the broader community to support student learning. This demonstrates a very high level of teacher involvement in creating a collaborative environment for education.

On the other hand, the lowest mean (M=3.81, SD = 1.06), the statement develops a personal reflection plan based on reflection of one's practice and ongoing professional learning verbally describe as high, showing that teachers engage in self-reflection to guide their professional growth, though the relatively higher standard deviation suggests some variation in how consistently teachers engage in this activity.

The overall section mean of 4.27 (SD = 0.88) reflects a very high level of performance in this area, indicating that non-plantilla teachers are generally proactive in building strong community relationships and engaging in professional networks and reflective practices. However, the implication is that while community engagement is extremely strong, further efforts could be made to ensure more consistent participation in reflective practices across all teachers.

These findings conform to Slykhuis et al., (2019) discuss school-community engagement practices, exploring strategies that have been found to build effective connections and collaboration between schools and their surrounding communities. Together, these literatures highlight the critical role of community linkages, professional engagement, and development in creating a more equitable and effective education system.

Table 9 presents the Summary on the Level of Non-Plantilla Teachers' Performance

Table 9. Summary on the Level of Non-Plantilla Teachers' Performance

Statements	Mean	SD	Description
1. Learning Environment and 2. Diversity of Learners	4.07	.80	High
3. Curriculum and Planning, Assessment and Reporting	4.08	.75	High
4. Content Knowledge and 5. Pedagogy	3.88	.83	High
6. Community Linkages and Professional Engagement	4.27	.88	High
Overall Mean	**4.08**	**.82**	**High**

Community Linkages and Professional Engagement received the highest mean score of 4.27 (SD = 0.88), indicating teachers' effective involvement in building relationships with the community and participating in professional networks. This indicates strong performance in fostering external collaborations and professional growth. However, the standard deviation suggests some variability in the responses, indicating that while the majority of teachers excel in this area, there may be differences in how they approach community engagement and professional involvement.

Content Knowledge and Pedagogy got the lowest mean score of 3.88 (SD = 0.83) suggesting that there may be areas for improvement in teachers' content knowledge or pedagogical strategies. The moderate standard deviation indicates some variation in how teachers perceive their teaching practices, with some teachers possibly feeling less confident in their pedagogical approach or content expertise.

Overall mean of 4.08 (SD = 0.82), classified as high, it is evident that non-plantilla teachers generally demonstrate strong performance across all areas. Despite the slight dip in Content Knowledge and Pedagogy, the overall results indicate that teachers are highly effective in fostering a positive learning environment, engaging with their communities, and demonstrating professional growth. This suggests that, while teachers perform well, there may be room to further enhance consistency, particularly in reflective practices and professional engagement activities.

The findings agree with Tomlinson, (2017) emphasizes the importance of using diverse instructional strategies tailored to meet students' needs, while Wiliam (2018) highlights the role of formative assessments in guiding instruction

Table 10 presents the Relationship between the Level of Professional Growth and Teaching Performance of Non-Plantilla Teachers in Self - Directed Learning.

Table 10. Relationship between the Level of Professional Growth and Teaching Performance of Non-Plantilla Teachers

		Indicators	r	Sig	Description
Self-Directed Learning	vs	Content Knowledge and Pedagogy	.231	.175	No Significant Relationship
		Learning Environment and Diversity of Learners	.137	.424	No Significant Relationship
		Curriculum and Planning, Assessment and Reporting	.163	.342	No Significant Relationship
		Community Linkages and Professional Engagement	.209	.222	No Significant Relationship

The results of the Pearson-r analysis between the Level of Professional Growth (specifically Self-Directed Learning) and Teaching Performance of Non-Plantilla Teachers indicate that there are no significant relationships between the two variables across the different indicators. Specifically, the correlation between Self-Directed Learning and Content Knowledge and Pedagogy is 0.231 (Sig = 0.175), which is not statistically significant. Similarly, there is no significant relationship between Self-Directed Learning and Learning Environment and Diversity of Learners (r = 0.137, Sig = 0.424), Self-Directed Learning and Curriculum and Planning, Assessment, and Reporting (r = 0.163, Sig = 0.342), and Self-Directed Learning and Community Linkages and Professional Engagement (r = 0.209, Sig = 0.222).

This implies that while professional growth play a role in overall teaching effectiveness, other factors may be influencing performance in these areas more significantly. Similar findings are observed in previous research, which highlights that the relationship between professional development and teaching effectiveness is complex and can be influenced by various factors, including teacher engagement, support structures, and the specific context of the learning environment (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012).

Table 11 presents the Reletionship between the Level of Professional Growth and Teaching Performance of Non-Plantilla Teachers in structured Learning.

Table 11. Relationship between the Level of Professional Growth and Teaching Performance of Non-Plantilla Teachers

		Indicators	r	Sig	Description
Structured Learning	vs	Content Knowledge and Pedagogy	.192	.263	No Significant Relationship
		Learning Environment and Diversity of Learners	-.024	.887	No Significant Relationship
		Curriculum and Planning, Assessment and Reporting	.001	.994	No Significant Relationship
		Community Linkages and Professional Engagement	.-.035	.839	No Significant Relationship

The results of the Pearson-r analysis between the Level of Professional Growth (specifically Structured Learning) and Teaching Performance of Non-Plantilla Teachers show that there are no significant relationships between the two variables across the different indicators. Specifically, the correlation between Structured Learning and Content Knowledge and Pedagogy is 0.192 (Sig = 0.263), which is not statistically significant. Similarly, the correlation between Structured Learning and Learning Environment and Diversity of Learners is -0.024 (Sig = 0.887), indicating no significant relationship.

Additionally, the relationship between Structured Learning and Curriculum and Planning, Assessment, and Reporting is 0.001 (Sig = 0.994), and the correlation between Structured Learning and Community Linkages and Professional Engagement is -0.035 (Sig = 0.839), both of which are also not statistically significant.

Since all the significance values are above the 0.05 threshold, these results suggest that Structured Learning does not have a statistically significant relationship with various aspects of teaching performance among Non-Plantilla Teachers. This implies that while structured learning activities may contribute to professional development, they do not appear to significantly influence teaching performance in the areas assessed. Similar findings are reported in previous studies, which show that while structured professional development can enhance certain aspects of teaching, the direct impact on teaching performance can be inconsistent and influenced by other factors such as teacher motivation, classroom context, and the quality of the learning activities (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012).

IV. CONCLUSIONS

This section of the study discusses the results, inferences, and suggestions. It presents the researcher's discoveries concerning the level of professional growth, teaching performance, and the challenges encountered by non-plantilla teachers in professional growth.

Summary

The quality of education in public elementary schools is closely linked to the professional growth and teaching performance of educators. For non-plantilla teachers, who face job insecurity and limited professional development opportunities, maintaining high levels of competence presents both a challenge and a necessity. Despite their temporary status, these educators play a crucial role in shaping young learners' academic experiences.

This study aimed to assess the level of professional growth and teaching performance of non-plantilla teachers in the Tampakan District, Schools Division of South Cotabato, during the school year 2024-2025. Utilizing a mixed-method research design, the study involved 36 non-plantilla teachers to examine their engagement in self-directed and structured learning, as well as their overall teaching effectiveness.

Findings revealed that non-plantilla teachers exhibited a high level of professional growth (Mean = 3.60, SD = 0.65), primarily driven by self-directed learning (Mean = 4.42, SD = 0.70). This suggests a strong commitment to independent professional development through goal-setting, resource-seeking, and reflective practice. In contrast, structured learning (Mean = 2.77, SD = 0.59) was categorized as moderate, indicating lower participation in formal training programs and challenges in translating structured learning experiences into effective classroom practices.

In terms of teaching performance, non-plantilla teachers demonstrated a high overall rating (Mean = 4.08, SD = 0.82). The highest scores were observed in Community Linkages and Professional Engagement (Mean = 4.27, SD = 0.88), indicating effective teacher involvement in building relationships with the community and engaging in professional networks. However, Content Knowledge and Pedagogy received the lowest mean score (Mean= 3.88, SD = 0.83), indicating potential areas for improvement in teachers' content expertise and teaching strategies.

Correlation analysis found no significant relationship between self-directed learning and teaching performance indicators, including *Learning Environment and Diversity of Learners* ($r = 0.137$, $p = 0.424$), *Curriculum and Planning, Assessment, and Reporting* ($r = 0.163$, $p = 0.342$), and *Community Linkages and Professional Engagement* ($r = 0.209$, $p = 0.222$). Likewise, structured learning did not show a statistically significant relationship with any teaching performance indicators, suggesting that other factors may influence teacher effectiveness beyond formal training.

Conclusions

Non-plantilla teachers exhibit a very high level of professional growth, primarily driven by self-directed learning, indicating their strong commitment to continuous professional development despite limited access to structured training. The high level of teaching performance among non-plantilla teachers demonstrates their competence in creating inclusive learning environments and utilizing assessment strategies effectively, though some variability exists in professional engagement and reflective practices.

The lack of a significant relationship between self-directed and structured learning with teaching performance suggests that other factors, such as teaching experience, school environment, and instructional support, play a more influential role in teacher effectiveness.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the facts and conclusions drawn from this study:

1. Schools and educational institutions may strengthen support for non-plantilla teachers by providing more accessible and structured professional development programs to complement their strong self-directed learning efforts.
2. School administrators may provide targeted professional development to enhance teachers' content knowledge and teaching strategies, helping them improve their effectiveness in the classroom.
3. Schools may establish peer collaboration groups for non-plantilla teachers to enhance reflective practices and improve teaching consistency, particularly in content delivery.
4. Further research can be conducted to explore other factors, such as teaching experience, instructional resources, and school environment, that may have a greater impact on teacher effectiveness beyond structured and self-directed learning.

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