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Algopsychalia of Out-of-Field Teachers: A Qualitative Inquiry

Charlie T. Anselmo^{1*}, Marie Claire C. Anselmo¹

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the experiences of out-of-field teachers, educators teaching subjects beyond their area of expertise. It investigates the challenges they face, the strategies they use to cope, and recommendations for their success. It examines a varied group of teachers with diverse academic backgrounds and teaching experience, highlighting the multifaceted nature of out-of-field teaching. Out-of-field teachers face significant emotional and pedagogical challenges. Feelings of insecurity, uncertainty about the subject matter, and difficulty grasping unfamiliar material contribute to emotional distress, including stress and anxiety. Some even report a diminished sense of authority in the classroom. Despite these hurdles, the study reveals the resilience of these educators. Teachers employ various coping strategies like thorough preparation, seeking support from colleagues, prioritizing well-being, and managing workloads effectively. Continuous professional development also plays a crucial role in boosting their skills and confidence. The study offers practical suggestions to alleviate mental strain and enhance teaching effectiveness. These include adaptability in teaching approaches, fostering support networks, prioritizing emotional well-being, maintaining a positive outlook, managing workloads, and engaging in ongoing professional development.

INTRODUCTION

Individuals create a sense of uniformity when they engage across boundaries or socio-cultural divides in solving mutually difficult challenges and making decisions with a similar aim. Education has significantly influenced this uniform adherence to global political, cultural, and economic standards. The growing tendency toward such a progressive educational system has highlighted the need of having skilled professors for successful Science learning. It has commonly identified instructor quality as one of the most important factors in influencing learner performance. It is also a critical need in any educational institution. However, such a scenario is difficult to accomplish when students are taught by professors who are not experts in their profession. Out-of-field instruction is instruction in any subject. Competence outside of the teacher's area of specialization. This issue is especially prevalent among lower-level learners taught Science by out-of-field lecturers who are otherwise specialists in other topics. As a result, teachers might experience mental anguish or algopsychalia, which is frequently experienced by depressed persons or those who suffer anxiety, even though there may be no physical or biological stimulation that would cause the discomfort. Due to the scarcity of literature on the topic of teacher-subject mismatch in Science teaching in classrooms, the problem of out-of-field teaching in Science merits fresh investigation. This research will look at out-of-field instructors or teachers that teach outside of their field of specialty in teaching Science in DepEd Cauayan. Out-of-field instructors, as defined in the research, are individuals who are currently teaching a topic that is unrelated to their area of expertise. The research will be based on

the assumption that instructors will be provided with the essential tools to provide adequate Science education since it demands in-depth knowledge of the subject (general topics in a subject). The Philippine K–12 curriculum has grown with high expectations from Science teachers.

Furthermore, this study also learns about the problem of teaching across specializations from the experiences of teachers themselves and about their coping mechanisms for adjusting to the challenges. This study is believed to be appropriate and relevant to the present situation of the Philippines education system, which aims to be at par with other countries through different interventions in school, as well as personal interventions of teachers to mitigate the problem. This study has attempted to minimize teachers' difficulty in imparting Science knowledge to students. This study will attempt to devise a culture-based model of teaching that would boost teachers' confidence and will be reflected in lesson engagements in a localized, differentiated, and sustainable mode of Science instruction. The study also aimed to enhance government organizations such as the Department of Education (DepEd) and the Commission for Higher Education (CHED) by making its framework more relevant in managing instructors in order for them to be more efficient and effective.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of the study is to describe and understand the lived experiences of out-of-field teachers as they teach subjects beyond their expertise and to explore the emotional or mental status of out-of-field teachers.

¹ College of Education, Isabela State University Philippines

* Corresponding author's e-mail: Charlie.t.anselmo@isu.edu.ph

Specifically, the study aim:

1. To identify the profile of the respondents.
2. To identify the lived experiences of Out-of-Field teachers.
3. On the ways of coping with the difficulties and challenging experiences of Out-of-Field teachers.
4. To address the possible suggestions that might help out-of-field teachers teach well and alleviate mental anguish or algopsychalia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Literature

Out-of-Field Teaching

Before Ingersoll coined the term, the phenomenon of professors being assigned to teach subjects in which they had little to no experience, or in which their fields of specialization or training did not match, had largely gone unnoticed (E. Co *et al.*, 2021).

In a deeper sense, the US Department of Education states that “Teachers are out-of-field if they do not have an undergraduate major or minor in the topic in which they teach most courses” (Strong, 2020).

In Western Australia, McConney and Prince defined out-of-field teaching as imparting knowledge in a topic or profession for which a teacher has neither a major nor a minor tertiary teaching qualification (McConney, & Price, 2019).

In Malaysia, the phrase “out-of-field teaching” refers to the practice of placing instructors in subject areas that are unrelated to their educational background. These instructors are those who work in the Philippines without a degree or certification in the topic they are expected to teach (Lopez Jr. & Roble, 2022).

In education, there are a number of reasons why out-of-field teaching happens. According to Ingersoll, the causes include inconsistencies between a teacher’s credentials and their teaching assignment, demands from the teachers’ union, and teacher shortages (Ingersoll, 2019).

According to Ingersoll, other underlying causes of teacher shortages include inadequate pay, problems with student behavior, lack of topic instructors, and principals having to hire stand-ins. He argued that resolving these problems will help schools have fewer out-of-field teachers and, thus, fewer teacher shortages (Ingersoll, 2019).

The out-of-field teaching scenario was a result of the teacher’s union as well as poorly matched teachers (Shavelson, 2019).

McConney and Prince recommended that school administrators be informed of the precise number of teachers needed in each specialist area to prevent misassignment in classrooms in cases where the teacher shortage indicators failed to estimate the required number of teachers qualified in specific subjects (McConney, & Price, 2019).

Algopsychalia

Define “algopsychalia” as a nonspecific psychogenic pain disorder. In addition, called psychalgia. See also algopsychalia; psychic pain. [coined in 1884 by Scottish

psychiatrist Thomas Smith Clouston (1840–1915)] (APA Dictionary of Psychology, 2022).

By contrasting distinct types of pain, it is possible to differentiate the many experience components that contribute to the constitution of pain. The term “body-centered” pain in Smrdu’s qualitative study refers to pain sensations that are primarily physical in nature (even if they lack a clearly defined direct biological cause). Suffering, however, is not necessarily strictly physical: some psychopathologies, such as borderline personality disorder and severe depression include intense emotional pain, which is occasionally referred to as psychological or mental pain or algopsychalia (Lopez Jr. & Roble, 2022).

Here, the terms mental agony and psychic suffering are defined as two distinct psychoanalytic ideas. The foundation of psychoanalysis is the idea of mental suffering, which Freud first proposed and was later developed by a number of researchers, primarily Bion. While psychic suffering may be both named and described by the patient, mental pain is pain that the patient claims are difficult to put into words and devoid of any connections. The psychic apparatus’ intolerance of being injured by really unpleasant emotions is where mental anguish originates. Mental anguish, as opposed to psychic suffering, resists elaboration and change through dreamwork. In his therapeutic practice, the analyst has a significant challenge: how to deal with and change the patient’s mental discomfort, which might impede or halt the analytical process. By assisting patients in transforming their mental anguish into psychic suffering, or by reactivating in a patient the series of changes that leads to thinking, analysts can help patients get through this obstacle. The analyst is also challenged by the patients’ mental suffering since he must put up with his own countertransference-induced mental patient. During psychoanalytic treatment, suggestions for the analyst on how to handle the patient’s mental distress are put forth (Fleming, 2019).

Pain or hurt that comes from non-physical sources is referred to as emotional pain. Sometimes, the behaviors of others are what cause this emotional pain. Sometimes it may be brought on by loss, regret, or sadness. In other instances, it could be the outcome of a mental health issue, including sadness or anxiety. Whatever the source, you may experience severe psychological suffering that has a profound impact on a variety of aspects of your life. Even though it is sometimes disregarded as being less significant than physical pain, mental pain must be treated properly. Emotional discomfort is often accompanied by a variety of typical emotions that can affect both your physical and mental well-being (Hartney, 2022).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The researcher will utilize a non-experimental, purely qualitative research design. Non-experimental utilize that the researcher will not manipulate the variables of the study. To be specific the researcher will use the qualitative research design which is none numerical and will gather data through a written open-ended survey form.

Non-Experimental

Without the use of an independent variable in the investigation. Researchers doing non-experimental research simply assess variables as they occur naturally rather than influencing an independent variable (in the lab or real world) (6.1 Overview of Non-Experimental Research – Research Methods in Psychology, 2017).

Qualitative Research Design

Seeks to explain the whys and hows of the phenomena under consideration (unlike quantitative). As a result, qualitative research is sometimes characterized as being subjective (as opposed to objective), and its conclusions are recorded in writing as opposed to numerically (Shuttleworth & Wilson, 2008).

Research Locale

The study will be conducted at Cauayan City Isabela during the school year 2022- 2023.

Research Participants

The research participants or informants of the study are the out-of-field teachers at Cauayan National High School and other School Campus within the Mucicipoality. They are purposely selected or the sampling scheme will use is the purposive sampling technique.

Research Instrument

The researcher will use self-made guide questions for a written open-ended survey form. The following are the questions that will be used:

Guide Questions

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of Bachelor's Degree courses, Master's Degree course, years of teaching, and Subject taught?
2. What are the challenges experienced by out-of-field teachers?
3. What are the disadvantages or difficulties in adjusting to the academic content of the subject?
4. Do out-of-field teachers have difficulties in answering students' questions about the subject?
5. Do out-of-field teachers have difficulties in establishing authority?
6. Do out-of-field teachers have difficulty in using appropriate teaching approaches?
7. Do out-of-field teachers experience mental anguish or algopsychalia?
8. What is the coping mechanism used by the out-of-field teachers?
9. What suggestion might help out-of-field teachers teach well and alleviate mental anguish or Algopsychalia?

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the Respondents

The provided data includes information about 13 respondents, including details about their education, teaching experience, and subjects they are teaching. Based on the information, here is a summary of the characteristics of the respondents:

The respondents come from various educational institutions, including Isabela State University, Merry Sunshine Montessori School, Saint Clare College of

Table 1: Profile of the Respondents

Respondents	School	Bachelors' Degree Course	Master's Degree	Years of teaching	Subject taught
1	Isabela State University	BSED Major in Gen. Science	NONE	1 to 2years	Science & ESP
2	Isabela State University	BSED Major in General Science	NONE	1 to 2years	Science, MAPEH, MTB, Christian Living
3	Isabela State University	BSED Major in Gen. Science	NONE	1 to 2years	General Science, MAPEH
4	Isabela State University	BSED Biological Science	MAED General Science	7 years above	Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao
5	Isabela State University	BSED Major in General Science	MAED General Science	7 years above	Math, Science, Araling Panlipunan, Filipino, MAPEH, TLE
6	Merry Sunshine Montessori School	BSED Major in Gen. Science	MAED General Science	1 to 2years	Math, Science, Araling Panlipunan, Filipino, MAPEH, TLE
7	Saint Clare College of Region 02	BSED Major in General Science	MAED General Science	1 to 2years	Math, Science, Araling Panlipunan, Filipino, MAPEH, TLE
8	University of perpetual Help System Laguna Isabela Campus	BSED Physical Science	MS CHEM EDUCATION	7 years above	Math, Science, Araling Panlipunan, Filipino, MAPEH, TLE

9	Cauayan City School of Excellence, Inc.	BSED Major in General Science	NONE	1 to 2years	Science, Esp, Ap, Mapeh
10	Turod Integrated School	BSED Physical Science	MST Phisic; MAEd ETOL	3 to 4 yrs	General Mathematics, Statistics, PE, Research, Earth and Life Sciences, and Physical Sciences
11	Children of Lourdes Academy Cauayan Inc.	BSED Major in Gen. Science	NONE	1 to 2years	Science and other minor subjects
12	Philippine Yuh Chiau School Inc.	BSED Major in General Science	NONE	3 to 4 yrs	Science and other minor subjects
13	Bucari National High School	BSED Physical Science	MAED General Science	5 to 6 years	Science and other minor subjects

Region 02, University of Perpetual Help System Laguna Isabela Campus, Cauayan City School of Excellence, Inc., Turod Integrated School, Children of Lourdes Academy Cauayan Inc., Philippine Yuh Chiau School Inc., and Bucari National High School.

Most of the respondents have bachelor's degrees related to education, with a focus on science, general science, or biological science. The bachelor's degree courses include BSED Major in Gen. Science, BSED Major in General Science, BSED Biological Science, and BSED Physical Science. A few of the respondents have master's degrees in education-related fields, specifically MAED General Science, MST Physics, MAEd ETOL, and MS CHEM EDUCATION. The majority of the respondents do not have master's degrees.

Respondents have varying levels of teaching experience, with the majority having 1 to 2 years of experience. Some respondents have more extensive teaching experience, with 3 to 4 years, 5 to 6 years, or 7 years and above.

The subjects taught by the respondents are diverse and cover a range of areas. These subjects include Science, ESP, MAPEH (Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health),

MTB (Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education), Christian Living, General Science, Math, Araling Panlipunan (Social Studies), Filipino, TLE (Technology and Livelihood Education), General Mathematics, Statistics, PE (Physical Education), Research, Earth and Life Sciences, and other minor subjects.

Teaching Profiles

- Respondent 4 and Respondent 5 have extensive teaching experience (7 years above) and hold Master's degrees, making them well-qualified educators.
- Respondent 8 also has extensive teaching experience (7 years above) and holds a Master's degree.
- Respondent 10 has 3 to 4 years of teaching experience and holds both a Bachelor's degree and a Master's degree.
- Some respondents (Respondent 1, Respondent 2, Respondent 3, Respondent 6, Respondent 7, Respondent 9, Respondent 11, and Respondent 12) have Bachelor's degrees related to science education but are teaching subjects beyond their formal field of expertise.

Lived Experiences of Out-of-Field Teachers

Table 2: Lived Experiences of Out-of-Field Teachers

Theme	Description
Difficulty in Teaching Unfamiliar Subjects	Out-of-field teachers express challenges and difficulties when teaching subjects for which they lack expertise. They feel disconnected from the subject, leading to a lack of confidence and effectiveness in teaching.
Mastery of the Subject	Teachers often express a desire to reach a level of proficiency in the subjects they teach. They feel like they are in the process of learning themselves, leading to nervousness and a sense of ongoing education.
Meaningful Learning Content	Importance of engaging and relevant educational material is emphasized. Having meaningful content is crucial to support teaching, especially when teachers are not experts in the subject.
Uncertainty and Nervousness	Out-of-field teachers report feelings of uncertainty and nervousness in their teaching. They express doubts about the correctness of their explanations, affecting their self-confidence and classroom atmosphere.

Differences in Medium of Instruction and Lack of Training	Challenges related to differences in the medium of instruction and a lack of training are mentioned. This could refer to issues with teaching methods and a shortage of training in unfamiliar subjects.
Balancing Positive and Negative Experiences	A mix of positive and negative experiences is described, including parental concerns, administrative work, and appreciation from students or colleagues. The teaching profession is portrayed as multifaceted.
Adapting to Learners' Needs and Curriculum Changes	The challenge of adapting to students' needs and evolving curricula is a recurring theme. Out-of-field teachers must adjust to changes in education, making their roles more complex.
Wide Reading and Resource Availability	Respondents emphasize the importance of being well-read and resourceful to discuss unfamiliar concepts and topics effectively. Self-directed learning and resource utilization are critical.
Quality Education and Resources	The quality of education provided by out-of-field teachers is influenced by the availability of resources to support their pedagogical efforts. Access to materials, support, and training is crucial.

The lived experiences of out-of-field teachers are marked by challenges in teaching unfamiliar subjects, a strong desire for subject mastery, the need for meaningful educational content, feelings of uncertainty and nervousness, issues related to instructional methods and training, a mix of positive and negative experiences, the constant adaptation to changing educational requirements, and the importance

of wide reading and resource utilization to enhance their teaching skills. These experiences underscore the complex and multifaceted nature of teaching, particularly when educators are teaching beyond their field of qualification and specialization.

Coping and Challenges of Out-of-Field Teachers

Table 3: Coping and Challenges of Out-of-Field Teachers

Theme	Description
Advance Preparation and Mastery of the Subject	- Advance reading and studying the subject matter in-depth. - Seeking assistance from colleagues for overcoming difficulties.
Difficulty in Grasping Course Material	- Talking to experienced colleagues. - Peer tutoring with co-teachers. - Searching for a better understanding of the subject.
Grade Level Differences and Adjustment to the Environment	- Adapting to different grade levels and classroom environments. - Coping with a potential loss of confidence.
Lack of Training Regarding Content	- Emphasizing the importance of self-directed learning and advance reading. - Becoming more creative and confident.
Technical Terms and Communication	- Coping with highly technical terms and ensuring student understanding. - Planning effective teaching approaches.
Stress, Anxiety, and Emotional Coping	- Coping with stress and anxiety through words of affirmation, meditation, and reflection. - Managing anger issues.
Handling Questions and Performance Anxiety	- Coping with performance anxiety and preparing for lessons. - Establishing authority, especially in unfamiliar subjects.
Professional Development and Learning	- Emphasizing the importance of continuous professional development, workshops, and training.
Resilience and Motivation	- Motivation to continue learning and establishing authority. - Building resilience in the face of challenges.

Out-of-field teachers employ a range of coping strategies, including advance preparation, seeking assistance, adapting to different environments, self-directed learning, addressing emotional challenges, managing performance anxiety, and engaging in continuous professional development, demonstrating resilience and motivation to navigate the difficulties and challenges of teaching subjects beyond their expertise.

The responses provided by out-of-field teachers indicate

that many of them experience some form of mental anguish or algopsychalia as a result of their teaching experiences. This mental distress can manifest in various ways, including stress, anxiety, occasional feelings of anxiety, anger issues, and emotional turbulence. Daily job pressures, overwhelming workloads, and challenging situations involving students, parents, administration, or tragic events in the school environment contribute to these feelings of mental distress. It is evident that

teaching subjects outside their field of expertise can bring about a range of emotional and psychological challenges for these educators.

Recommendations of Out-of-Field Teachers to Alleviate Mental Anguish or Algopsychalia

To help out-of-field teachers teach effectively and

alleviate mental anguish, fostering flexibility, seeking support and preparation, prioritizing emotional well-being and a positive mindset, managing workloads, and engaging in ongoing professional development is crucial. These strategies aim to create a supportive and effective teaching environment for educators facing subject-related challenges.

Table 4: Recommendations of Out-of-Field Teachers to alleviate mental anguish or Algopsychalia

Theme	Description
Flexibility and Engagement	- Be flexible in teaching approaches. - Create an engaging environment to encourage student participation and interest.
Seeking Support and Preparation	- Seek help or suggestions from colleagues aligned with the subject matter. - Study subjects in advance to avoid mental distress. - Attend trainings or orientations to prevent curriculum mismatches.
Emotional Well-Being and Mindset	- Focus on good physical health and access to mental health support. - Develop a love for the subject, students, and teaching itself. - Manage time, adjust to the situation, and enjoy the field. - Encourage open communication with those who understand the field.
Positive Perspective and Workload Management	- Look on the bright side of the situation. - Consider reducing excessive workloads that may cause distress. - Emphasize the quality of teaching over quantity.
Professional Development	- Attend seminars, workshops, and training to improve teaching skills and competence.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, this study delved into the complex realm of out-of-field teaching, shedding light on the experiences, challenges, coping strategies, and suggestions of educators who find themselves instructing subjects outside their field of expertise. The findings revealed a diverse group of teachers with varying academic backgrounds and years of experience, illustrating the multifaceted nature of this phenomenon.

The lived experiences of out-of-field teachers underscored the significant emotional and pedagogical challenges they encounter. Feelings of insecurity, uncertainty, and difficulties in grasping course material often led to emotional distress, including stress and anxiety. Some teachers also reported a loss of authority in the classroom, which can impact the teaching-learning dynamic.

However, the study also illuminated the resilience and determination of these educators. They demonstrated a commitment to their profession by employing coping strategies such as advance preparation, seeking support from colleagues, and emphasizing emotional well-being and workload management. Continuous professional development emerged as a critical component of improving teaching skills and reducing mental anguish.

The practical suggestions offered to alleviate mental anguish and enhance teaching effectiveness underscore the importance of adaptability, support networks, emotional well-being, a positive mindset, workload management, and ongoing professional development. These recommendations serve as valuable guidance for both out-of-field teachers and educational institutions seeking to support and empower these educators.

In the ever-evolving landscape of education, acknowledging the challenges faced by out-of-field teachers and implementing strategies to alleviate their mental anguish is paramount. By doing so, educators are better equipped to provide quality education, ultimately benefiting students and the broader educational community. This study offers a significant contribution to the ongoing discourse surrounding the experiences and well-being of out-of-field teachers and provides a foundation for further research and practical interventions in this important area of education.

RECOMMENDATION

These recommendations aim to create a more supportive and empowering environment for out-of-field teachers, enabling them to teach effectively and reducing the mental anguish associated with this teaching context. It is essential for educational institutions to recognize the unique challenges faced by these educators and take proactive steps to support their professional growth and well-being.

Based on the results of the study, the following recommendations are made for educators and educational institutions:

Support and Professional Development

Educational institutions should prioritize the professional development of out-of-field teachers. This includes offering regular workshops, seminars, and training sessions that address the specific needs of these educators. Such programs can enhance their teaching skills and subject knowledge, ultimately reducing feelings of insecurity and emotional distress.

Peer Support Networks

Encourage the establishment of peer support networks within schools. Colleagues who are aligned with the subject matter can serve as valuable resources for out-of-field teachers, providing assistance, guidance, and suggestions. This can help improve teaching effectiveness and confidence.

Mental Health and Well-Being

Schools should recognize the importance of educators' mental health and well-being. Access to school-based mental health support should be ensured. Additionally, strategies to manage stress and anxiety, such as stress management workshops or mindfulness practices, can be integrated into the school environment.

Flexible Teaching Approaches

Promote flexibility in teaching approaches. Out-of-field teachers should be encouraged to adapt their methods to suit the unique challenges of teaching subjects beyond their expertise. This may involve using innovative teaching strategies that engage students and foster a positive learning environment.

Workload Management

Educational institutions should consider workload management for all teachers, including out-of-field educators. Excessive workloads can lead to emotional distress, so a balance should be struck between teaching hours and the time required for quality lesson preparation. Ongoing Adaptation. Emphasize the importance of ongoing adaptation and learning. Out-of-field teachers should be encouraged to embrace a growth mindset and continue to develop their skills and knowledge. Advance reading and staying updated with subject matter can contribute to their confidence and competence.

Positive School Culture

Promote a positive school culture where the accomplishments and contributions of out-of-field teachers are acknowledged and celebrated. A supportive environment can boost teacher morale and confidence. Research and Collaboration. Encourage educators to engage in collaborative research and knowledge sharing. This can help them stay informed about the latest developments in their subject areas and build a network of colleagues who can provide support and guidance.

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