Teach Smart, Study Smarter: The Dynamic Duo of Teacher Competence and Student's Study Skills

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Abstract—Instructional competence of TLE teachers and study skills of students pose significant challenges that affect the effectiveness of teaching and learning in TLE classrooms, however, the dearth of studies addressing this concern limits the development of targeted strategies. To explore this issue, this study determined the relationships between the instructional competence of TLE teachers and the study skills of junior high school learners in public secondary schools in the Municipality of Veruela, Division of Agusan del Sur, for the school year 2024-2025, as a basis for crafting a framework. A mixed-methods approach, employing both quantitative and qualitative research designs, was utilized to answer the research questions. The respondents included 215 students, who completed a survey questionnaire selected through a stratified random sampling technique, while eight teacher-participants underwent in-depth interviews using an interview guide, selected through a purposive sampling technique. The mean was used to describe the levels of instructional competence and study skills, Pearson's r was employed to determine the relationships among the variables, while thematic analysis was utilized to uncover the challenges faced by teachers. The findings revealed that the level of teachers' instructional competence and students' study skills were described as "strongly agree" and "agree," respectively, significant positive relationship existed among the variables, while the challenges faced by teachers were described through 15 essential themes. This suggests that enhancing the instructional competence of TLE teachers and improving students' study skills could lead to more effective teaching and learning outcomes in TLE classrooms. Finally, this study recommends further research using other approaches and theories to substantiate and validate the results.

Keywords— Instructional competence, junior high school, study skills, Municipality of Veruela.

I. INTRODUCTION

The teaching competence of Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE) teachers and the learning skills of junior high school students pose serious challenges that require urgent attention. In particular, the effectiveness of TLE teachers in delivering content directly influences students' ability to engage and master essential learning skills [1]. Exploring the relationship between these variables is essential for assessing current teaching methods and identifying gaps in teaching competence. This approach offers valuable insights into how improving teaching techniques can foster better learning habits and improve student performance in TLE [2]. In Cyprus, a study on instructional strategies in TLE overlooks the link between teacher competence and these strategies, as well as the correlation between learning outcomes and students' study skills [3]. Similarly, a study on effective teaching techniques in TLE fails to address the connection between teacher

competence and students' study skills, leaving a critical gap [4]. In Region XIII of the Philippines, local studies stress the need for improved teaching methods to enhance students' study skills, but many TLE teachers struggle with student engagement, especially in an era of technological integration [5]. This is compounded by a troubling trend of underdeveloped study skills, highlighting the urgent need to explore how teacher competence affects students' study skills in TLE [6].

While previous research has explored various aspects of instructional competence and student study skills, significant gaps remain. One study examined the link between teaching methods and student achievement but overlooked study skills [7]. Another research focused on the challenges faced by TLE teachers, prioritizing theoretical frameworks over practical application [8]. A recent study explored the impact of teacher professional development on instructional practices but did not address how these practices affect students' study skills [9]. These gaps highlight the need for the current study, which aims to bridge the gap between TLE teachers' instructional competence and students' study skills, as a lack of competence can hinder students' ability to develop effective study habits and acquire practical life skills.

Statement of the Problem

The main purpose of the study is to determine the relationships between instructional competence of TLE teachers and study skills of junior high school learners among public secondary schools in the Municipality of Veruela, Division of Agusan del Sur, school year 2024-2025. Specifically, it aimed to find answers to the questions:
1. What is the level of instructional competence of teachers in terms of the following indicator?
    a. Subject matter expertise.
    b. Lesson planning and delivery.
    c. Use of instructional materials and technology.
    d. Classroom management and engagement strategies.
    e. Assessment and feedback practices.
    f. Alignment to specialization.
2. What is the level of study skills demonstrated by students in terms of the following indicators?
    a. Time management and organization.
    b. Notetaking and summarization skills.
    c. Reading comprehension and retention strategies.
    d. Test preparation and exam-taking techniques.
    e. Motivation and goal setting.

3. Is there a significant relationship between the instructional competence of teachers and the study skills of students in terms of the identified indicators?
4. What challenges are faced by teachers in achieving instructional competence in terms of the following indicators?
   a. Access to professional development opportunities.
   b. Availability of teaching resources and support.
   c. Classroom diversity and inclusivity.
5. What framework can be proposed to enhance the instructional competence of teachers and improve the study skills of students?

II. MATERIALS AND METHOD

The study used a sequential-explanatory design, collecting quantitative data first, then qualitative data for deeper insight [10]. This approach helped identify patterns between TLE teachers' instructional competence, students' study skills, and the challenges teachers face. It was conducted in four junior high schools in Veruela, Agusan del Sur, under the Department of Education. These schools implement school-based management (SBM) practices, promote community involvement, and work with stakeholders to ensure quality education and support DepEd's vision, mission, and core values. The respondents of the study consisted of 215 Grade 10 junior high school students who were asked to answer the survey questionnaire, selected through stratified random sampling and eight (8) teachers who participated in-depth interviews, selected through purposive sampling techniques. two validated survey questionnaires and an interview guide used to address the research questions. A pilot test with 30 Grade 9 students from Veruela National High School was conducted, and reliability was measured using Cronbach's alpha. The mean was used to describe respondents' levels of instructional competence and study skills for research questions 1 and 2. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was used to examine the relationship between instructional competence and study skills for research question 3. Thematic Analysis was used to analyze responses for research question 4. Meanwhile, in analyzing the qualitative data, Thematic Analysis was employed, allowing for the identification of recurring patterns and themes from the teacher interviews.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Level of Instructional Competence of Teachers

TABLE 1. Level of Instructional Competence of Teachers

Indicators	Mean	Adjectival Rating
Subject Matter Expertise	4.192	Agree
Lesson Planning and Delivery	4.359	Strongly Agree
Use of Instructional Materials and Technology	4.233	Strongly Agree
Classroom Management and Engagement Strategies	4.209	Strongly Agree
Assessment and Feedback Practices	4.220	Strongly Agree
Alignment to Specialization	4.145	Agree
Overall Mean	**4.226**	**Strongly Agree**

Table 1 shows high instructional competence among teachers, with mean scores from 4.145 to 4.359 and an overall mean of 4.226, rated as strongly agree. This reflects strong subject expertise, effective lesson planning, appropriate use of materials and technology, good classroom management, and alignment with students' specializations—fostering meaningful learning. Teachers excel in clear instruction, diverse materials, and objective-based assessment [11]. Similarly, assessment alignment and instructional practices enhances teaching quality [12]. These findings affirm that such competencies are key to effective instruction and improved student outcomes.

Level of Study Skills of Students

TABLE 2. Level of Study Skills of Students

Indicators	Mean	Adjectival Rating
Time Management and Organization	3.997	Agree
Note-Taking and Summarization Skills	4.252	Strongly Agree
Reading Comprehension and Retention Strategies	4.159	Agree
Test Preparation and Exam-Taking Techniques	4.193	Agree
Motivation and Goal-setting	4.343	Strongly Agree
Overall Mean	**4.189**	**Agree**

Table 2 shows students' study skills with mean scores ranging from 3.997 to 4.343 and an overall mean of 4.189, rated as agree. This indicates generally effective skills in time management, note-taking, reading strategies, test preparation, and motivation, though improvement is still needed for more consistent academic success. Students who actively worked on their study habits performed better academically [13]. Also, the effectiveness of study skills lies in their consistent application [14]. These findings support the current results, suggesting that while students use effective strategies, refining and applying them consistently can lead to better outcomes.

Significance on the Relationship Between the Between the Instructional Competence of Teachers and the Study Skills of Students

TABLE 3. Significant Relationship Between the Instructional Competence of Teachers and the Study Skills of Students

Source of Variances		r-value	p-value	Decision	Conclusion
Instructional Competence	Study Skills	0.383	0.000	Reject Ho	Significant

Table 3 presents the significant relationship between the instructional ccompetence of teachers and the study skills of students. The data highlights that there is significant, moderately low relationship between TLE teachers' instructional competence and students' study skills, with an R-value of 0.383 and p-value < 0.005. Higher teacher competence positively impacts students' study skills and performance [15], while there exists a positive link between instructional competence and study skills [16]. In contrast, certain skills are more influenced by teaching competence [17]. These findings align with the current study, suggesting that while instructional competence generally affects study skills, the relationship varies across different contexts and skills.

Challenges Faced by Teachers in Achieving Instructional Competence in terms of Access to Professional Development (PD) Opportunities

TABLE 4. Challenges Faced by Teachers in Achieving Instructional Competence in Terms of Access to Professional Development (PD) Opportunities

Themes	Description
Limited Access to Professional Development Restricts Growth	Teachers often face exclusion from available PD activities due to systemic prioritization of administrators or limited slots
Financial Constraints Reduce Participation in PD	Financial burdens borne by educators inhibit their participation in fee-based professional growth activities.
Time Constraints Limit Engagement in Professional Development	Heavy workload and rigid scheduling preclude teachers from attending or fully engaging in PD opportunities.
Lack of Institutional Support Reduces PD Effectiveness	Absence of administrative flexibility and tailored programming diminishes the relevance and applicability of professional development.
Mismatch Between PD Content and Classroom Realities	Disconnect between PD content and day-to-day teaching contexts reduces its instructional relevance.
Limited Collaborative Learning in PD Reduces Peer Support	Minimal opportunities for shared learning restrict professional dialogue and collective improvement among peers.

Table 4 presents challenges faced by TLE teachers in achieving instructional competence, focusing on limited access to professional development (PD). These challenges are described into six themes: restricted growth due to limited PD access, financial constraints, time limitations, lack of institutional support, mismatch between PD content and classroom realities, and limited peer support in PD. Limited access to relevant and continuous professional development hinders TLE teachers' ability to enhance their instructional competence [18], while financial constraints, lack of institutional support, and irrelevant PD content are major barriers preventing teachers from fully benefiting from professional development programs [19].

Challenges Faced by Teachers in Achieving Instructional Competence in Terms of Availability of Teaching Resources and Support

TABLE 5. Challenges Faced by Teachers in Achieving Instructional Competence in Terms of Availability of Teaching Resources and Support

Themes	Description
Limited Access to Updated Resources Hinders Effective Teaching	Many educators lack access to current, curriculum-aligned materials and technology, which diminishes their ability to deliver relevant and engaging lessons.
Budget Constraints Limit Resource Acquisition	Financial limitations prevent schools and teachers from obtaining essential teaching materials, especially for performance-based or technical subjects.
Inadequate Support from School Reduces Resource Availability	Inconsistent or insufficient administrative support impacts teachers' ability to acquire and effectively use instructional resources.
Insufficient Resource Alignment Reduces Instructional Relevance	Teaching resources are sometimes mismatched with curriculum standards, leading to reduced instructional impact and student engagement.
Limited Access to Digital Tools Reduces Technological Integration	Teachers recognize the importance of tech in education, but insufficient access to digital tools hinders full integration in classroom practice.

Table 5 presents challenges faced by TLE teachers in achieving instructional competence regarding teaching resources and support. These challenges are described into five themes: limited access to updated resources, budget constraints, lack of school support, misalignment of resources with instruction, and limited access to digital tools. TLE teachers often struggle with outdated equipment and a lack of sufficient tools and materials, which hampers effective instruction and forces them to use personal funds for necessary resources [20]. Similarly, inadequate school support and misaligned teaching materials—especially in integrating ICT—further complicate effective curriculum delivery [21].

Challenges Faced by Teachers in Achieving Instructional Competence in Terms of Classroom Diversity and Inclusivity

TABLE 6. Challenges Faced by Teachers in Achieving Instructional Competence in Terms of Classroom Diversity and Inclusivity

Themes	Description
Difficulty Addressing Student Differences	Teachers need to account for the varying differences in students' backgrounds, abilities, and learning styles when designing lesson plans and activities.
Language Barriers and Communication Gaps	Language differences can create barriers in understanding lessons and effective communication, especially in a classroom with diverse linguistic backgrounds.
Managing Diverse Needs with Limited Resources	Balancing the different academic levels and needs in a classroom can be difficult, particularly with limited resources and support.
Lack of Training and Support Personnel	Teachers need additional training and support personnel to effectively manage diverse classrooms and address individual learning needs.

Table 6 presents challenges faced by TLE teachers in achieving instructional competence regarding classroom diversity and inclusivity. These challenges are described into four themes: addressing student differences, language barriers, managing diverse needs with limited resources, and lack of training and support personnel. The themes identified several obstacles to teachers' growth, including limited access to professional development, financial constraints, and insufficient institutional support, which hinder their instructional improvement. Resource limitations and difficulties in addressing diverse student needs, such as language barriers and varying academic levels, also impact teaching effectiveness and student outcomes.

According to SLT, teachers improve through collaboration, but limited PD and peer support hinder this process [22]. SDT highlights those constraints undermine both teachers' motivation for professional growth and students' motivation to study [23]. CLT suggests that poorly aligned resources and classroom diversity overload cognitive capacities, reducing learning effectiveness [24]. These theories align with the study's findings, emphasizing that teacher competence and student study skills depend on optimal cognitive load, motivation, and social learning.

Proposed Framework to Enhance the Instructional Competence of Teachers and Improve the Study Skills of Students

The framework titled "RISE-4SE: Reinforcing Instructional Strengths and Enhancing Study Skills through Strategic Support and Engagement" is a comprehensive

approach that integrates teachers' instructional competence and students' study skills indicators with the obstacles that TLE teachers encounter in professional development, resources, diversity and inclusivity. Furthermore, this framework identifies challenges and proposes solutions to create a more effective and inclusive educational environment. It aims to empower TLE teachers with the tools, resources, and professional development they need, while helping students develop study strategies to improve academic performance. The approach includes clear time frames and expected outcomes to ensure measurable progress in both teaching and student achievement.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The very high level of instructional competence among teachers, as indicated by the strong agreement on their expertise, lesson planning, technology use, classroom management, and assessment practices, suggests that teachers are generally effective in delivering quality education, with room for continued improvement in specialized areas. The high-level students' study skills, particularly in note-taking, motivation, and test preparation, indicate that students are equipped with the foundational skills needed for academic success, although there is a need for targeted support in areas such as time management and reading comprehension. The significant positive relationship between teachers' instructional competence and students' study skills suggests that enhancing teacher effectiveness can have a direct positive impact on students' ability to manage their learning and academic performance. The challenges faced by TLE teachers in accessing professional development opportunities, including limited access, financial constraints, and time limitations, highlight the need for more accessible and relevant PD programs that are well-supported by institutions to foster teachers' growth.

The challenges faced by TLE teachers relating to the availability of teaching resources, such as outdated materials, budget constraints, and insufficient institutional support, suggest that schools need to prioritize resource allocation and technological integration to support effective teaching practices. The challenges faced by TLE teachers in managing classroom diversity and inclusivity, including addressing student differences, language barriers, and the lack of adequate training and support, indicate that teacher professional development should emphasize strategies for creating inclusive classrooms and supporting diverse learners.

Recommendations

TLE teachers may enhance their strengths through ongoing professional development aligned with classroom challenges. They may integrate updated resources, digital tools, and effective strategies to meet diverse student needs and may collaborate with peers to share best practices, particularly in classroom management and engagement. Junior High School learners may receive structured support to improve time management, reading comprehension, and retention. Teachers may implement personalized study skill workshops, foster a growth mindset, and may integrate these strategies into lessons

to boost students' academic performance in TLE. School administrators may create a supportive environment by offering accessible professional development, adequate resources, and a balanced workload. They may update instructional materials, invest in digital tools, and promote collaboration among teachers, while ensuring inclusive classrooms by addressing students' diverse needs. Policymakers may invest in equitable professional development, updated resources, and classroom technology integration. They may focus on reforms for inclusivity, addressing language barriers, and providing support for diverse learners, while ensuring sufficient funding for relevant, effective teaching in TLE.

Future researchers may explore the long-term effects of professional development on teachers' practices and students' outcomes, especially regarding digital tools and resource availability. They may also investigate strategies to overcome language barriers, improve inclusivity, and the role of institutional support in fostering teacher growth and student success.

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