Original Article

Strengths and Struggles of Educators and Their Teaching Effectiveness as Perceived by Internal Stakeholders

Hanifa Kamid [1,*], Sarah Dimalen [1], Jonathan Roque [1]

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Abstract

This study examined the strengths and struggles of educators and their teaching effectiveness as perceived by internal stakeholders in selected elementary schools. Specifically, it aimed to determine the level of strengths demonstrated by educators in terms of instructional practices, classroom management, and student engagement; identify the level of struggles experienced by educators in managing classrooms with students of varying abilities, learning styles, and backgrounds; assess the level of teacher effectiveness in addressing the diverse needs of learners; and determine the significant relationships between educators' strengths, struggles, and teaching effectiveness as perceived by principals, teachers, and pupils. A descriptive-correlational research design was utilized to describe the variables and determine their relationships without manipulating the research setting. Data were collected from Grade 6 teachers, Grade 6 pupils, and school principals in four selected elementary schools in Lutayan II District, Philippines, using structured questionnaires. Descriptive statistics and Pearson product-moment correlation were employed for data analysis. Findings revealed that educators demonstrated a very high level of strengths in instructional practices, classroom management, and student engagement, indicating strong teaching competencies and effective classroom practices. The level of struggle experienced by educators in handling diverse learners was interpreted as high, reflecting considerable challenges in classroom management and in addressing diverse learners' needs. Teacher effectiveness in addressing diverse learners' needs was also rated very high,

[1] Sultan Kudarat State University, Lutayan, Sultan Kudarat, Philippines
*kamidhanifa@gmail.com

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suggesting that educators were highly successful in achieving instructional goals. Moreover, the results showed a significant moderate positive relationship between teacher strengths and teacher effectiveness, while no significant relationship was found between teacher struggles and teacher effectiveness. Overall, the study concludes that strengthening instructional competencies and providing continuous professional development are essential for further improving teacher effectiveness in diverse classroom settings.

Keywords: educators, internal stakeholders, Philippines education, strengths, struggles, teaching effectiveness

1. Introduction

Education is a fundamental pillar of societal development, and educators play a crucial role in shaping learners' knowledge, skills, and values. Teaching effectiveness is commonly defined as the ability of teachers to facilitate learning, promote student engagement, and achieve desired educational outcomes through appropriate strategies and competencies (Stronge, 2020).

Globally, the teaching profession continues to evolve in response to rapid technological advancements, changing educational demands, and diverse student needs. Educators are expected to integrate digital tools, adopt innovative teaching approaches, and address inclusive education, which often increases their workload and stress levels (Hammond, 2021).

In Asia, education systems are continuously adapting to global standards while addressing regional challenges such as large class sizes, limited resources, and curriculum reforms. Teachers in Asian countries often face pressure to meet high academic expectations while managing diverse classrooms (UNESCO, 2021). Nevertheless, educators in the region demonstrate strong dedication and cultural values that contribute to effective teaching practices.

In the Philippines, educators are recognized for their strong commitment to student learning and holistic development. However, they also encounter challenges such as heavy workloads, insufficient teaching materials, and the implementation of continuous educational reforms (Department of Education, 2023).

At the local level, educators perform multiple roles, including instruction, mentoring, and administrative responsibilities. Stakeholders—such as students, parents, and school administrators—play a significant role in evaluating teaching effectiveness, as their perceptions reflect the actual experiences within the learning environment. According to recent studies, stakeholder feedback provides valuable insights into teachers' strengths and areas for improvement (Tatto, 2022).

This study aimed to examine the struggles and strengths of educators, as well as their teaching effectiveness, as perceived by stakeholders. It seeks to identify the common challenges experienced by teachers, such as workload, limited resources, and institutional demands, as well as the strengths they demonstrate, including adaptability, resilience, and instructional competence. Furthermore, the study aimed to assess teaching effectiveness based on the perceptions of students, parents, and school administrators, and to analyze how educators' strengths and struggles influence their overall performance.

This study was grounded in theories related to teaching effectiveness and educators' experiences. The Social Cognitive Theory highlights the importance of teacher self-efficacy in overcoming challenges and maximizing strengths, while the Constructivist Learning Theory emphasizes learner-centered and meaningful learning experiences to improve student engagement. Additionally, the Teacher Effectiveness Model explains that teaching performance is influenced by teachers' competence, instructional practices, and professional behavior. These theories provide the foundation for understanding how educators' strengths and struggles influence their perceived teaching effectiveness.

This study focused on the struggles and strengths of teachers and their influence on teacher effectiveness in delivering quality education. This study aligned with United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education), which aims to ensure inclusive, equitable quality education and to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Specifically, this research supported the goal of improving the quality of teaching by strengthening teacher effectiveness, enhancing professional development, and addressing educators' challenges. By examining both the struggles and strengths of teachers, the study contributed to the broader objective of building a more effective, inclusive, and sustainable education system.

2. Methodology

The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to examine educators' strengths, struggles, and perceived teaching effectiveness in four selected elementary schools. The descriptive approach identified the levels of these variables, while the correlational approach determined the relationships between educators' strengths and effectiveness and between educators' struggles and effectiveness.

The respondents were 4 school principals, 14 Grade 6 teachers, and 151 Grade 6 students from Tamnag Central Elementary School, Mamali Elementary School, Blingkong Central Elementary School, and Panagas-Devera Elementary School. Complete enumeration was used for the school principals and Grade 6 teachers, while proportionate stratified random sampling was employed to select the 151 Grade 6 student respondents. Each school served as a stratum, and the number of student respondents was allocated proportionally to each school's student population. Accordingly, 61 students were selected from Tamnag Central Elementary School, 17 from Blingkong Central Elementary School, 29 from Mamali Elementary School, and

44 from Panagas-Devera Elementary School. The student respondents were then randomly selected from each school to ensure representation of the Grade 6 student population.

The study data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Frequencies and percentages described the respondents, while means and standard deviations assessed teacher strengths, struggles, and teaching effectiveness. Responses were examined by stakeholder group to recognize differences in their perspectives. Because several pupils may have evaluated the same teacher, the study considered the possibility of clustered observations and distinguished the number of respondents from the number of independent teaching units. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was applied only when appropriate to the data structure and statistical assumptions. Relationships were interpreted as associations rather than causal effects, and statistical significance was assessed using the appropriate unit of analysis and degrees of freedom.

A researcher-developed questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale served as the primary data-gathering instrument. It underwent expert validation and obtained a mean validation score of 4.38 (Very Highly Valid). A pilot test yielded a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.94 (Excellent Reliability), indicating strong internal consistency.

Data collection involved securing permissions, validating the questionnaire, identifying respondents, administering and retrieving questionnaires, and organizing responses for statistical analysis. The mean was used to assess educators' levels of strengths, struggles, and effectiveness, while Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (Pearson r) was used to examine relationships among the variables.

The study also adhered to ethical standards, including informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, voluntary participation, and compliance with Republic Act No. 10173, the Data Privacy Act of 2012. The researchers ensured that the collected information was used only for academic purposes and that the data were reported honestly and accurately.

3. Results

Table 1. Level of strength demonstrated by educators in instructional practices and classroom management as perceived by stakeholders.

	Mean (n=169)	SD	Interpretation
Principal	4.60	0.39	Very High Strengths
Teacher	4.58	0.49	Very High Strengths
Pupils	4.26	0.60	Very High Strengths
Grand Mean	4.48	0.49	Very High Strengths

Table 1 presents the level of strength demonstrated by educators in instructional practices and classroom management, as perceived by stakeholders, namely principals, teachers, and pupils. Among the respondents, principals obtained the highest mean rating of 4.60, with a standard deviation of 0.39, interpreted as "Very High Strengths." This indicates that principals perceived educators as highly

competent in delivering instruction and managing classrooms. The standard deviation of 0.39 indicates minimal variation in their responses, suggesting that principals had highly consistent perceptions of educators' strengths. Pupils obtained the lowest mean rating of 4.26, with a standard deviation of 0.60, which was still interpreted as "Very High Strengths." Although this rating was lower than those of principals and teachers, it indicates that pupils recognized educators' strong instructional practices and classroom management skills. The standard deviation of 0.60 indicates greater variation in pupils' responses, suggesting that their perceptions differed somewhat from one another.

The grand mean of 4.48, with a standard deviation of 0.49, was interpreted as "Very High Strengths." This indicates that educators demonstrated strong instructional practices and classroom management skills, as reflected in stakeholders' overall perceptions. The grand standard deviation of 0.49 indicates relatively low variation in the overall responses, suggesting that stakeholders generally shared consistent perceptions of educators' strengths.

Table 2. Level of struggles experienced by educators in managing classrooms with students of varying abilities, learning styles, and backgrounds as perceived by stakeholders.

	Mean (n=169)	**SD**	**Interpretation**
Principal	3.45	0.70	High Struggles
Teacher	4.09	0.66	High Struggles
Pupils	3.72	0.71	High Struggles
Grand Mean	3.75	0.69	High Struggles

Table 2 presents the level of struggles experienced by educators in managing classrooms with students of varying abilities, learning styles, and backgrounds, as perceived by stakeholders, namely principals, teachers, and pupils.

Among the respondents, teachers had the highest mean rating of 4.09, with a standard deviation of 0.66, which is interpreted as "High Struggles." This indicates that teachers recognized considerable challenges in addressing students' diverse needs, abilities, and learning styles. The standard deviation of 0.66 indicates some variation in their responses, suggesting that teachers differed to some extent in their experiences of these struggles.

On the other hand, principals obtained the lowest mean rating of 3.45, with a standard deviation of 0.70, which is still interpreted as "High Struggles." Although lower compared to the ratings of teachers and pupils, the result suggests that principals also acknowledged the challenges educators faced in managing diverse classrooms. The standard deviation of 0.70 indicates some variation in their responses, suggesting that principals had somewhat different perceptions of educators' struggles.

The grand mean of 3.75, with a standard deviation of 0.69, was interpreted as "High Struggles." This implies that, overall, educators experienced considerable challenges in managing classrooms comprising students with varying abilities, learning styles, and backgrounds, as perceived by different stakeholders. The grand

standard deviation of 0.69 indicates some variation in the overall responses, suggesting that stakeholders differed to some extent in their perceptions of educators' struggles.

Table 3. Level of teacher effectiveness in addressing the varying needs of diverse learners as perceived by stakeholders.

	Mean (n=169)	SD	Interpretation
Principal	4.55	0.25	Very High Effectiveness
Teacher	4.53	0.58	Very High Effectiveness
Pupils	3.72	0.71	High Effectiveness
Grand Mean	4.27	0.49	Very High Effectiveness

Table 3 presents the level of teacher effectiveness in addressing the varying needs of diverse learners, as perceived by stakeholders, namely principals, teachers, and pupils. Among the respondents, principals had the highest mean rating of 4.55, with a standard deviation of 0.25, which is interpreted as "Very High Effectiveness." This indicates that principals perceived educators as highly effective at addressing students' varying abilities, learning styles, and backgrounds. The standard deviation of 0.25 indicates minimal variation in their responses, suggesting that principals had highly consistent perceptions of educators' effectiveness.

On the other hand, pupils obtained the lowest mean rating of 3.72, with a standard deviation of 0.71, interpreted as "High Effectiveness." Although lower than the ratings of principals and teachers, the result suggests that pupils still viewed educators as effective at meeting their learning needs and supporting diverse learners. The standard deviation of 0.71 indicates some variation in pupils' responses, suggesting that their perceptions of educators' effectiveness differed to some extent.

The grand mean of 4.27, with a standard deviation of 0.49, was interpreted as "Very High Effectiveness." This implies that, overall, educators demonstrated a very high level of effectiveness in addressing the varied needs of diverse learners, as perceived by various stakeholders. The grand standard deviation of 0.49 indicates relatively low variation across overall responses, suggesting that stakeholders generally held consistent perceptions of educators' effectiveness.

Table 4. Correlation analysis between teacher strength and teacher effectiveness of the respondents.

Variables	r	T computed	T critical 5%	Verbal Description	Decision
Teacher Strengths and Teacher Effectiveness	0.59	9.41	1.96	Moderate Positive Correlation	Reject the null hypothesis

Table 4 presents the correlation between teacher strengths and teaching effectiveness. The reported correlation coefficient was r = 0.59, with a computed t-value of 9.41 compared with a critical value of 1.96 at the 5% level of significance. Based on these reported values, the relationship was classified as a moderate positive correlation, and the null hypothesis was rejected. The positive coefficient indicates

that higher ratings of teacher strengths were associated with higher ratings of teaching effectiveness in the analyzed responses.

The reported test result indicates statistical significance under the analysis used in the manuscript. This result should be interpreted in light of the study's unit of analysis and the possibility that multiple pupils evaluated the same teacher or classroom. The coefficient should therefore be understood as an association in the analyzed responses, not as evidence that teacher strengths cause greater teaching effectiveness.

Table 5. Correlation analysis between teacher struggles and teacher effectiveness of the respondents.

Variables	R	T computed	T critical 5%	Verbal Description	Decision
Teacher Struggles and Teacher Effectiveness	0.09	1.17	1.96	Very Weak Positive Correlation	Accept the null hypothesis

Table 5 presents the correlation between teacher struggles and teaching effectiveness. The reported correlation coefficient was r = 0.09, with a computed t-value of 1.17 compared with a critical value of 1.96 at the 5% level of significance. Based on these reported values, the relationship was classified as a very weak positive correlation, and the null hypothesis was not rejected. The coefficient indicates a very weak positive association between reported struggles and teaching effectiveness in the analyzed responses.

Because the computed t-value was lower than the reported critical value, the analysis did not identify a statistically significant relationship. This finding should not be interpreted as proof that struggles have no relationship with teaching effectiveness. As with the other correlation, interpretation depends on whether the observations and degrees of freedom appropriately account for pupils who may have evaluated the same teacher or classroom.

4. Discussion

The findings indicate that educators were perceived to demonstrate a very high level of strengths in instructional practices. Although the ratings differed across stakeholder groups, all fell within the "Very High Strengths" category. The lower rating from pupils may reflect their direct experience of daily classroom interactions and how they judge the clarity of instruction, participation, and classroom management. This pattern is broadly consistent with Stronge et al. (2011), whose study examined characteristics associated with teacher effectiveness and student achievement, and with Darling-Hammond (2017), who discussed the importance of teacher preparation and professional competence.

The findings can be interpreted in relation to the social cognitive perspective described by Zimmerman (2000), which emphasizes self-regulation and the interaction between individuals and their learning environments. In teaching,

instructional decisions, classroom practices, feedback, and reflection can provide opportunities for educators to strengthen their professional skills. The present study did not directly measure self-efficacy or self-regulation, so this theory offers an interpretive framework rather than a tested explanation for the high ratings. The association between teachers' professional practices and perceived effectiveness is also consistent with the broader focus on teacher competence in Stronge et al. (2011).

The study also found that educators experienced a high level of struggles in managing classrooms with learners of varying abilities, learning styles, and backgrounds. Teachers reported the highest level of struggles, while principals reported the lowest. Teachers' higher ratings may reflect their more immediate and sustained exposure to the practical demands of adapting lessons, supporting different learning needs, and managing classroom participation. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2019) reported on the professional experiences and working conditions of teachers and school leaders, providing a broader context for understanding the demands teachers face. However, the present study's results specifically reflect perceptions in the four participating elementary schools.

The challenges associated with diverse classrooms can also be discussed from a constructivist perspective, which views learning as an active process shaped by learners' experiences and interactions. Jonassen et al. (1995) discussed constructivism in relation to learning environments and knowledge construction. From this perspective, responding to learners with different prior knowledge and needs may require varied activities, scaffolding, and opportunities for participation. The current study did not directly test constructivist teaching practices; therefore, this perspective helps contextualize the reported struggles but does not establish their cause.

Teaching effectiveness received a very high overall rating. Principals and teachers rated effectiveness as very high, whereas pupils gave a lower rating, interpreted as high effectiveness. The difference suggests that stakeholder groups may use different experiences or reference points when judging teaching effectiveness. Pupils may base their ratings more directly on daily instruction, feedback, opportunities to participate, and whether lessons respond to their learning needs. Stronge et al. (2011) examined the connection between teacher effectiveness and student achievement, supporting the relevance of examining teaching practices alongside learner-related outcomes, although the present study measured stakeholder perceptions rather than student achievement.

The findings may be interpreted using the social cognitive perspective discussed by Zimmerman (2000) and the constructivist account of learning discussed by Jonassen et al. (1995). These perspectives emphasize different but complementary considerations: educators' self-regulation and responses to their environment, and the need to design learning experiences that actively engage learners. The high effectiveness ratings suggest that stakeholders generally viewed educators positively in addressing diverse needs. Nevertheless, because the study relied on perceptions, the

findings should not be treated as a direct or objective measure of student learning gains.

The reported correlation analysis showed a moderate positive relationship between teacher strengths and teaching effectiveness. Under the reported test, the null hypothesis was rejected. This suggests that higher strength ratings tended to accompany higher effectiveness ratings in the analyzed responses. This interpretation is consistent with the emphasis on teachers' professional knowledge and instructional practice in Shulman (1987) and with Stronge et al. (2011), who examined teacher effectiveness in relation to student achievement. These studies provide context for why instructional competence may be relevant, but they do not validate the statistical result from the present sample.

The relationship between strengths and effectiveness may be considered alongside Shulman's (1987) discussion of pedagogical content knowledge and the evidence reviewed by Darling-Hammond (2017) on teacher education and professional practice. Both sources underscore the importance of what teachers know and how they translate that knowledge into instruction. However, the current descriptive-correlational design does not establish a causal direction. In addition, because multiple pupils may have rated the same teacher or classroom, the reported correlation and significance test require confirmation using an analysis that reflects the actual unit of analysis and accounts for clustered responses where applicable. The reported values have not been recalculated in this revision.

The reported relationship between teacher struggles and teaching effectiveness was very weak and positive, compared with a critical value of 1.96). Under the reported test, the null hypothesis was not rejected. This means that the analysis did not detect a statistically significant association in the analyzed responses; it does not demonstrate that struggles can never be related to effectiveness. The OECD (2019) report provides broader context on teachers' work and professional experiences, while Klassen et al. (2011) reviewed research on teacher efficacy. These sources may inform interpretation of the challenges teachers experience, but neither should be taken as direct evidence for the specific relationship found in this study.

A constructivist perspective, as discussed by Jonassen et al. (1995), highlights the challenges involved in designing learning experiences for learners with diverse backgrounds and varying levels of prior knowledge. Such demands may require adaptation and additional planning, but the degree of reported difficulty alone may not capture the full range of teachers' knowledge, support, resources, or instructional decisions. These factors were not directly tested in the present study and should therefore be treated as possible explanations for future investigation rather than conclusions established by the data.

Taken together, the descriptive findings suggest that educators can be perceived as having strong professional practices while also experiencing substantial classroom challenges. The social cognitive perspective discussed by Zimmerman (2000) and the constructivist account discussed by Jonassen et al. (1995) offer frameworks for considering how professional practice and learner diversity interact. Empirical work

on teacher effectiveness and professional knowledge (Shulman, 1987; Stronge et al., 2011) also provides relevant context. Still, the present study describes stakeholder perceptions in four schools and does not establish that any one factor causes teaching effectiveness.

The findings point to practical areas for professional learning, including instructional planning, classroom management, student engagement, and strategies for supporting learners with varied abilities and backgrounds. Darling-Hammond (2017) discussed the role of teacher education in supporting professional practice, while Stronge et al. (2011) examined teacher characteristics associated with effectiveness and student achievement. In light of these sources and the present findings, professional development may be designed around classroom-based practice, peer collaboration, feedback, and reflection. The current study did not evaluate a professional development intervention, so the effectiveness of such activities would need to be examined separately.

School administrators may consider providing mentoring, relevant instructional resources, and opportunities for teachers to share strategies for addressing diverse learning needs. The lower effectiveness rating from pupils also indicates the value of considering learner perspectives alongside those of teachers and principals. OECD (2019) provides broader information on teachers' and school leaders' professional experiences, while the present study highlights the importance of examining stakeholder ratings separately rather than relying solely on a combined average.

Future research may examine factors such as teacher resilience, professional learning, instructional resources, workload, leadership support, motivation, and teaching experience. Researchers may also use interviews or mixed-methods designs to understand how teachers respond to classroom challenges. Most importantly, future correlation analyses should clearly identify the unit of analysis and, when applicable, account for the nested structure of pupil ratings within classrooms or schools. This would help determine whether relationships observed among pooled stakeholder responses are also present at the teacher or classroom level.

Overall, educators were perceived to have strong professional competencies and high teaching effectiveness, while also facing challenges in addressing diverse learners. The findings are broadly interpretable alongside research on teacher professional knowledge and effectiveness (Shulman, 1987; Stronge et al., 2011), as well as theoretical perspectives on self-regulation and constructivist learning (Zimmerman, 2000; Jonassen et al., 1995). These sources help contextualize the findings, but the study's conclusions remain limited to stakeholder perceptions in the participating schools. The correlational findings should be interpreted with caution until the unit of analysis and any clustering of pupil responses are verified.

5. Conclusion

The study's findings demonstrate that educators possess exceptionally strong competencies in instructional practices, classroom management, and student

engagement. Despite considerable challenges in addressing learners' varying abilities, learning styles, and backgrounds, they continue to demonstrate high teaching effectiveness in achieving instructional objectives and responding to diverse learner needs. The results further reveal that teacher strengths are significantly associated with teaching effectiveness, highlighting the importance of developing and sustaining professional competencies. In contrast, teacher struggles were not significantly related to teaching effectiveness, suggesting that the presence of classroom challenges does not necessarily diminish educators' ability to facilitate learning. Overall, the study emphasizes that effective teaching involves not only strong professional skills but also the capacity to adapt to diverse classroom demands and promote positive learning experiences.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors have no relevant financial or non-financial interests to disclose.

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