Competence, Commitment, and Difficulties Encountered by the Private Pre-Elementary School Teachers in the New Normal
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Competence, Commitment, and Difficulties Encountered by the Private Pre-Elementary School Teachers in the New Normal

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Abstract

The responsibilities of pre-elementary school teachers in early childhood education became more challenging following the transition to the new normal. Higher-quality teaching, blended learning, and remote learning are the kinds of expectations that signal to teachers the need to demonstrate high levels of competence, commitment, and tenacity in addressing instructional challenges (Abon et al., 2023). This study aimed to determine the level of competence, commitment, and difficulties of private pre-elementary school teachers for the School Year 2024-2025, as their responsibilities became more challenging following the transition to the new normal. The study employed a descriptive research design and involved 50 private pre-elementary school teacher respondents located in the Negros Island Region. Data were gathered using a researcher-made survey questionnaire that underwent content validation by five expert jurors and established reliability through a dry run with 30 non-respondent teachers. The results of the study revealed that the teachers' levels of competence and commitment were both high, while the level of difficulties encountered was moderate. In terms of competence, significant differences were found when respondents were grouped by age and length of service, particularly in the area of mastery of subject matter, where younger and less experienced teachers scored higher. The study also found that average family monthly income significantly influenced competence, with teachers from lower-income households demonstrating higher levels of mastery. Regarding commitment, significant differences were observed across age groups, with younger teachers showing higher commitment to the profession. Furthermore, the study identified significant differences in the level of difficulty encountered in lesson delivery and work commitment based on the teachers' highest educational attainment, as well as significant differences in the level of difficulty in lesson preparation based on their length of service.

Keywords: Teachers' competence, commitment and difficulties, pre-elementary school teachers, new normal

Bio-Profile:

Kristel E. Tarr is a licensed public elementary school teacher under the Schools Division of Bacolod City. She holds a Master's Degree in Administration and Supervision and is a PhD Candidate focusing on Educational Management. Her research interests include leadership,

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education, human resource development, and related fields, areas where she aims to contribute through both practical experience and academic exploration.

Introduction

Rationale

The responsibilities of pre-elementary school teachers in early childhood education have become more challenging after the new normal. Higher-quality teaching, blended learning, and remote learning are the kinds of expectations that signal to teachers the need to demonstrate high levels of competence, commitment, and tenacity in addressing instructional challenges (Abon et al., 2023). Teacher Competence in this study refers to factors that enable teachers to perform well. Another key factor is Teacher Commitment, which measures a participant's dedication to pre-elementary teaching in this study. The third factor explored in this study is the Difficulties teachers face in the new normal.

The Mastery of the Subject Matter area covers the depth of a teacher's understanding of the content and how well they can clear up misconceptions (Ponce, 2024). Teaching Strategies describe the approaches used to aid in the learning process. Examples of such approaches include direct instruction and differentiated instruction (Padillo et al., 2021). Learning Resources are the tools selected to support teaching and learning. These resources may also be adapted to support a diverse range of learners (Pinya-Medina et al., 2024).

For this factor, Commitment to Profession is the level of attachment a teacher has to their career field. It is also a demonstration of how they display their professional identity (Saavedra & Paglinawan, 2025). Commitment to School describes how engaged a teacher is with their school (Lee, 2024). Commitment to Work involves how a teacher responds to their job requirements (Magtoltol & Oropa, 2025).

Lesson Preparation describes the process of planning learning activities. The challenge for teachers is to produce lesson plans that are ready to use. Lesson plans should be complete and aligned with the latest curriculum (Cadiong, 2024). The next challenge experienced by teachers is in Lesson Delivery. Running through a lesson plan can be difficult when students are not fully engaged or when there are issues in using technology (Ushie & Daniel, 2023). Assessment of Learning is the other area of difficulty, especially when students need to be graded remotely (Abon et al., 2023).

This study on private pre-elementary school teachers aims to address a research gap. The literature already covers how teacher competence and commitment affect teacher performance. The motivation for this study is to consider competence, commitment, and difficulty together in an early childhood education context.

Literature Review

Internationally, early childhood education systems adapted teacher competencies to meet the demands of remote and hybrid learning during the pandemic. In the United States, platforms such as Zoom and Seesaw were integrated into instruction despite limited teacher preparation, while frameworks from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC, 2021) supported socio-emotional development and family collaboration (Peterson-

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Ahmad et al., 2018; Kim et al., 2022). In the United Kingdom, the Early Years Foundation Stage guided reflective and continuous learning, although online assessment posed challenges (DfE, 2021; Bubb & Jones, 2020). Across Europe, countries like Finland and Estonia promoted child-led digital exploration, yet gaps in systematic technology training highlighted the importance of teacher self-assessment to strengthen competencies (OECD, 2020; Aubakirova et al., 2021). These experiences underscore the need for adaptive skills and continuous professional development in response to evolving educational contexts.

Theoretical perspectives, particularly Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory, illustrate how limited social interaction in remote environments complicated learning for young children (Ocampo, 2021). Research consistently shows that strong teacher competencies—including subject mastery, instructional delivery, classroom management, and formative assessment—enhance student engagement and academic achievement (Ornstein et al., 2018; Wing Institute, 2018; Saloviita, 2020). Integrating information and communication technology (ICT) further supports cognitive development and learner participation (Jindal & Sharma, 2019). Evidence suggests that continuous training and practical experience play a greater role in developing competence than demographic or socio-economic characteristics alone (Buenaventura & Olipas, 2020; Escanda, 2025).

In the Philippines, private pre-elementary teachers' competencies are shaped by national frameworks such as the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers, which emphasize proficiency across essential teaching domains. Pre-service teachers generally exhibit strong competencies when supported by structured practicum experiences and mentoring, although institutional differences affect alignment with Department of Education standards and professional development opportunities (Espiritu, 2021). Studies emphasize the importance of culturally and linguistically appropriate learning materials, as well as practical classroom experience, in enhancing teaching effectiveness and subject mastery (Almodovar & Arzadon, 2018; Del Rosario & Villanueva, 2021). Strategic use of teacher data also supports human resource planning and professional growth (Calderon & Montalban, 2024).

Across Asia, early childhood education reforms highlight teachers' commitment to adapting curricula, integrating digital technologies, and implementing inclusive practices. Indonesia's Kurikulum Merdeka encourages learner autonomy and holistic development (Asiyah et al., 2021), while India's National Education Policy 2020 emphasizes play-based early literacy (Choudhary & Gosain, 2024). Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam focus on inclusive, bilingual, and process-oriented learning, requiring teachers to take on roles as facilitators, communicators, and mentors despite disparities in digital readiness (Fadhlina Sidek, 2024; Duangngern et al., 2025; Murru et al., 2018). Teacher commitment is closely linked to professional responsibilities, intrinsic motivation, organizational engagement, and institutional alignment, while socio-economic factors may influence stress and career decisions rather than dedication itself (Padillo, 2021; Shumba & Naong, 2013; Langurayan & Coldovero, 2024).

Teacher preparation, workload, and institutional support critically shape lesson quality and assessment practices in both the Philippines and the United Kingdom. In private schools, higher qualifications often increase planning complexity but do not automatically ensure effective instruction (Tolentino & Rivera, 2023; Reyes & Cadungog, 2023). Effective feedback and learner-centered assessment are essential, yet teachers often face challenges in designing evaluation tools and integrating digital technologies (Valdez & Dagdag, 2018; Jacinto & Rivera,

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2022). Professional identity, experience, and access to supportive environments influence lesson design, creativity, and assessment strategies, underscoring the need for institutional support and capacity-building initiatives to enhance teaching effectiveness and sustain meaningful learner outcomes (Manalo & Corpuz, 2020; Javier & Lorenzo, 2024).

Theoretical Underpinnings

This study was based on the Theory of Competence by David C. McClelland (1973), the Theory of Organizational Commitment by John P. Meyer and Natalie J. Allen (1991), and the Theory of Difficulty in Teaching by David N. Perkins (2007). In the research titled "Testing for Competence Rather Than Intelligence," McClelland stated that assessment of learning competencies is a more valid indicator of job performance compared to tests that evaluate IQ. His Iceberg Model (1973) on performance traits distinguishes between surface-level traits, the visible tip of the iceberg, and underlying traits that lie beneath the surface. This model concept aligns with the present study's focus on factors influencing the competence of pre-elementary school teachers. The Iceberg model is central to the theoretical framework and strategy that frames instructional supervision as a competency-driven process. The research questionnaire will collect demographic variables and include questions on visible and latent dimensions of teacher competence.

"Affective, continuance, and normative commitment" are part of the Three-Component Model of Commitment introduced by Meyer and Allen (1991). Affective commitment involves identifying with an organization and having an emotional attachment to it. The awareness of the costs for leaving the organization is continuance commitment, and the sense of moral obligation to stay with the organization is normative commitment. This model extends the theoretical framework of the present study. It enables the analysis of teacher retention and engagement. For example, teachers with higher affective commitment may be able to handle increased workloads. This may be due to their strong emotional ties to their school or profession.

The Theory of Difficulty of Teaching (Perkins, 2007) states that teachers are required to deliver more than learning content and that a strong knowledge of content is not enough. The teacher also needs to be able to identify areas of difficulty for learners in a subject and track down why learners are having problems. Teachers have the opportunity to respond to difficulties by "teaching smarter" rather than "teaching harder". The framework of the present study can draw on this theory by capturing areas of difficulty for learners and exploring how teachers' demographic backgrounds may influence their perceptions of these difficulties.

Objectives

This study aimed to determine the level of competence, commitment, and difficulties of private pre-elementary school teachers for the School Year 2024-2025, by answering these questions: 1) the level of competence of private pre-elementary school teachers in the area of mastery of the subject matter, teaching strategies, and learning resources; 2) the level of

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commitment of private pre-elementary school teachers in the area of commitment to profession, school and Work; 3) the level of the difficulties encountered by private pre-elementary school teachers in the area of lesson preparation, lesson delivery, and assessment of learning; 4) the significant difference in the level of competence of private pre-elementary school teachers when each is grouped and compared according to the variables; 5) the significant difference in the level of commitment of private pre-elementary school teachers when each is grouped and compared according to the variables; and 6) the significant difference in the level of the difficulties encountered by private pre-elementary school teachers when each is grouped and compared according to the variables.

Methodology

This section discusses the methods used to gather and analyze data based on the specific predetermined objectives. This outline includes research design, subject-respondents, research instruments, data collection procedures, ethical considerations, data analysis, and statistical methods.

Research Design

A descriptive research design was applied to this study to determine the levels of competence, commitment, and difficulties of private pre-elementary school teachers in a highly urbanized city in Negros Island Region for the School Year 2024-2025. This research design was considered appropriate for this study because its purpose was to find the levels of competence, commitment, and difficulty of private pre-elementary teachers. The nature of this study was to assess the condition of things in their current state. Likewise, it delved into the differences among the variables considered in the study and the influence of one variable on another.

Respondents

The respondents of this study were 50 pre-elementary teachers in a highly urbanized city in Negros Island Region during the School Year 2024-2025. Since the number of respondents was manageable, all 50 teachers were enumerated.
This is a total enumeration, which is a sampling approach when the population is well-defined and small. Every person in the defined population is included in the data collection process.

Instrument

A researcher-made survey questionnaire composed of two parts was used to gather data: Part I collected respondents' demographic profiles (age, civil status, length of service, highest educational attainment, and average monthly family income), while Part II measured levels of competence (learning resources, teaching strategies, and subject mastery), commitment (to profession, school, and Work), and difficulties (lesson preparation, delivery, and assessment), with 10 items per area for a total of 90 items rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 5 (always) to 1 (almost never) (Pati, 2014; Eliver, 2023). The instrument underwent content

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validation by five experts holding Doctor of Philosophy degrees in Educational Management and serving as Public Schools District Supervisors and Education Program Supervisors, using the criteria of Good and Scates (1954); it obtained a mean validation score of 4.73, interpreted as "excellent," indicating high suitability for data gathering (Eliver, 2023; Good & Scates, 1954). Reliability was established through a pilot test involving 30 private pre-elementary teachers who were not part of the actual respondents, and Cronbach's Alpha coefficients showed good to excellent internal consistency: 0.831 for competence, 0.913 for commitment, and 0.826 for difficulties, all within the acceptable range of 0.70–1.0 (Barbera et al., 2021; Eliver, 2023).

Procedure for Data Collection

The researcher prepared a letter addressed to the Private Schools Principals/Administrators to give a heads-up about the study. Another letter, just a heads-up, was also submitted to the Schools Division Superintendent. The approved letter from the SDO was endorsed and forwarded to the School Heads of the five component schools for approval of the distribution of the survey questionnaires and the conduct of a reliability test to target respondents. After the approval, the researcher provided the link to the Google Form. Responses were submitted to the posted questionnaire, and the results were retrieved. The collected data were input into appropriate statistical tools for analysis. This included the use of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software package (Eliver, 2023).

Data Analysis and Statistical Treatment

The data gathered in this study were subjected to various analytical schemes and statistical treatments to address the research objectives. For Objective 1, a descriptive-analytical scheme was used to determine the respondents' competence in subject-matter mastery, teaching strategies, and learning resources, with the Mean as the primary statistical tool. Objective 2 likewise employed a descriptive-analytical scheme to collect data on the teachers' commitment to the profession, work, and school, utilizing the Mean to interpret the levels of commitment. Objective 3 used a descriptive-analytical scheme and the Mean to determine the respondents' difficulties in lesson preparation, lesson delivery, and assessment of learning. For the comparative components of the study, Objective 4 utilized a comparative analytical scheme and the Mann-Whitney U-Test to identify significant differences in the level of competence when teachers were grouped according to demographic variables. Objective 5 also applied the comparative analytical scheme and the Mann-Whitney U-Test to identify significant differences in the level of commitment among the respondents. Finally, Objective 6 used the comparative analytical scheme and the Mann-Whitney U-Test to determine if significant differences existed in the level of difficulty encountered by private pre-elementary school teachers when grouped and compared according to the specified variables.

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Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted in accordance with ethical research standards to ensure the protection of participants' rights and welfare. Prior to data collection, informed consent and voluntary participation were secured by obtaining approval and clearly explaining the purpose, procedures, and nature of the survey to the respondents, allowing them to participate freely. The researcher also ensured privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity by not requiring respondents to disclose their names and by limiting access to the raw data to only the researcher and the statistician. Furthermore, all findings were presented in aggregate form, such as mean and frequency values, to prevent the identification of any individual teacher or school, thereby safeguarding the confidentiality of the participants throughout the research process.

Results and Discussions

This section summarizes the study's findings, which come from careful data gathering, in-depth analysis, and thoughtful interpretation. After this, meaningful conclusions were drawn from the initial phase, offering valuable insights.

Table 1
Level of competence of private pre-elementary school teachers in the area of Mastery of the Subject Matter

Mastery of the Subject Matter **Items**	**Mean**	**Interpretation**
As a private pre-elementary teacher, I …		
1. Choose simple words in explaining the subject matter.	3.84	High level
2. Simplify the topic into main points that can be easily understood by learners.	3.98	High level
3. influence learners' understanding of the subjects they learn, eventually affecting their performance.	3.88	High level
4. Give all my knowledge, skills, and techniques in delivering each lesson.	3.74	High level
5. Couple mastery with creativity and depth in every lesson.	3.70	High level
6. Establish interrelationships between subjects.	3.78	High level
7. Make sure that learners' understanding is translated into higher academic performance.	3.82	High level
8. Set and communicate learning goals.	3.60	High level
9. Provide opportunities for learners to demonstrate their learning.	3.72	High level
10. prepare and plan effective lesson plans	3.70	High level
Overall Mean	**3.78**	**High level**

Based on the results presented in Table 1, the overall mean score for the teachers' competence in the area of Mastery of the Subject Matter is 3.78, which falls under the category of "High level." This indicates that private pre-elementary school teachers demonstrate mastery

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of the subject matter they teach. It reflects their confidence in delivering well-structured lessons within the context of the new normal.

Item No. 2, which states that "I simplify the topic into main points that learners can easily understand," received the highest mean score of 3.98, indicating a high level. This means that teachers are particularly skilled at transforming complex ideas into clear concepts for learners, a critical skill in foundational education where attention spans and comprehension levels require guidance.

On the other hand, Item No. 8, which states "I set and communicate learning goals," received the lowest mean score of 3.60. However, it is still interpreted as a high level.

While teachers are capable in this aspect, it suggests that the goals may not be as important. It could reflect the developmental stage of learners in the pre-elementary level, where implicit learning outcomes are more common than formally stated objectives.

Effective mastery of subject matter is closely linked to learner achievement, especially when teachers adapt instruction to cognitive levels. According to Saloviita (2020), teachers' ability to simplify content and scaffold learning significantly enhances engagement and retention, especially in early education contexts. This aligns with the findings reflected in the high mean scores for Items 2 and 8, where scaffolding is provided to help learners engage with learning goals.

Table 2

Level of competence of private pre-elementary school teachers in the area of Teaching Strategies

Teaching Strategies **Items**	**Mean**	**Interpretation**
As a private pre-elementary teacher, I …		
1. Use visuals to enhance learners' understanding.	3.84	High level
2. Make use of video clips to keep learners' interest.	3.60	High level
3. Deliver lessons in PowerPoint to help engage learners.	4.08	High level
4. Use a learner-centered teaching strategy.	4.08	High level
5. Guide learners to be critical thinkers.	4.02	High level
6. Employ innovative and creative teaching strategies.	4.22	High level
7. Encourage students of mixed abilities to work together by promoting small group activities.	4.10	High level
8. Integrate ICT in every teaching strategy.	4.24	High level
9. Consider the most critical time for positive intervention.	4.06	High level
10. utilize strong knowledge-based teaching.	3.84	High level
Overall Mean	**4.01**	**High level**

Table 2 shows that the overall mean score of 4.01 reflects a high level of competence among private pre-elementary school teachers in employing Teaching Strategies. This suggests that educators are effectively using a diverse range of instructional methods to keep learners actively engaged and support their development in a 21st-century classroom environment.

Item No. 8, which states that "I integrate ICT in every teaching Item No. 8, which states that "I integrate ICT in every teaching strategy," received the highest mean score of 4.24, interpreted as a high level. This implies that teachers are confident in using technology-based

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approaches. This aligns with demand for technology integration in situations where digital literacy is foundational to learner success.

Meanwhile, Item No. 2, which states that "I make use of video clips to keep learners' interest," had the lowest mean score of 3.60, yet it was still classified under high level. This indicates that while teachers recognize the value of video media for improving learner engagement, its application may not be as effective as other approaches due to the content being irrelevant or a lack of access to resources.

A study by Jindal and Sharma (2019) underscores the role of ICT and creative instructional strategies in boosting student engagement and cognitive development in early childhood settings, validating the importance of technology as observed in this teacher profile.

Table 3

Level of competence of private pre-elementary school teachers in the area of Learning Resources

Learning Resources **Items**	**Mean**	**Interpretation**
As a private pre-elementary teacher, I …		
1. Prepare lesson contents based on the prescribed kindergarten outline.	3.64	High level
2. Provide materials and activities that help engage learners to be curious.	4.16	High level
3. Provide scaffolded support to enhance children's problem-solving skills.	4.18	High level
4. Prepare a wide range of learning resources to develop skills in physical, social, emotional, language, literacy, and cognitive skills.	4.20	High level
5. Follow the learning standards that describe what children need to do and learn at a specific age.	3.88	High level
6. Provide learning materials that would help develop children's oral language skills.	4.26	High level
7. Help children explore vocabulary words.	4.04	High level
8. Provide transformative learning.	3.92	High level
9. Utilize self-reflection as a means of gauging my own effectiveness.	3.92	High level
10. Encourage the utilization of online learning resources.	3.52	High level
Overall Mean	**3.97**	**High level**

The overall mean for Table 3 is 3.97, indicating a high level of competence across private pre-elementary school teachers in the area of Learning Resources. This suggests that educators can design, select, and use resources that support comprehensive child development.

Item No. 6, which states “I provide learning materials that would help develop children’s oral language skills,” received a mean score of 4.26. This indicates a high level and means that teachers can prioritize the development of oral language.

Item No. 10, which states “I encourage utilization of online learning resources,” received the lowest mean score of 3.52. However, it is still ranked highly. This implies that while online

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resources are recognized as valuable tools, their integration may be constrained by factors such as digital infrastructure.

The findings confirm that private pre-elementary teachers are quite proficient in leveraging learning resources to stimulate curiosity, support skill development, and provide meaningful learning experiences. Their competence is especially strong in fostering oral language and scaffolding problem-solving—core areas of early childhood growth—while digital resource use presents an area for gradual expansion.

As emphasized by Almodovar and Arzadon (2018), effective learning resource design in early education enriches learner engagement and developmental outcomes, especially when it is contextualized to children's linguistic and socio-emotional needs.

Table 4

Level of commitment of private pre-elementary school teachers in the area of Commitment to Profession

Commitment to Profession **Items**	**Mean**	**Interpretation**
As a private pre-elementary teacher, I …		
1. I am willing to undergo training.	3.86	High level
2. am planning to pursue higher studies.	3.94	High level
3. Comply with annual CPD requirements to keep up with promotional needs.	3.94	High level
4. Treat every learner as important as they are.	3.84	High level
5. remain morally upright with good values to emulate for learners.	3.38	Moderate level
6. am willing to learn new tricks from anyone to help me with my own teaching competence.	3.76	High level
7. am willing to walk an extra mile just to ensure that learners are truly educated.	3.68	High level
8. Motivate myself to learn modern teaching skills to be able to relate to learners.	3.72	High level
9. Develop personal vision and teaching goals.	3.78	High level
10. always consider having academic objectives to easily reach my targets.	3.76	High level
Overall Mean	**3.77**	**High level**

Based on the data presented in Table 4, the overall mean score of 3.77 indicates a high level of commitment among private pre-elementary school teachers in Commitment to Profession. The findings suggest that educators demonstrate professional dedication, particularly in areas involving continuous learning, ethical responsibility, and personal development.

Item No. 2, which states “I am planning to pursue higher studies,” and Item No. 3, “I comply with annual CPD requirements to keep up with promotional needs,” each recorded the highest mean score of 3.94, both interpreted as a high level. This means that teachers

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demonstrate strong motivation to enhance their qualifications, meet continuing professional development expectations, and meet evolving education standards in the new normal.

Conversely, Item No. 5, which states "I remain morally upright with good values to emulate to learners," received the lowest mean score of 3.38, interpreted as a moderate level. This score may indicate an area where good values can be further emphasized. It also highlights that leadership in morals and values, while crucial, may not be well prioritized or supported within current school environments.

In conclusion, teachers exhibit a strong sense of professional obligation, as evidenced by their motivation to improve their skills and set personal goals. These findings are consistent with educational standards that encourage teachers to be proactive.

According to Boholano (2018), sustained professional commitment among teachers is shaped by access to quality training and institutional support, which empower educators to embrace continuous development and uphold best practices within diverse learning environments.

Table 5

Level of commitment of private pre-elementary school teachers in the area of Commitment to School

Commitment to School Items	**Mean**	**Interpretation**
As a private pre-elementary teacher, I …		
1. Promote a harmonious relationship between teachers and parents.	4.10	High level
2. Explain school rules to learners.	3.78	High level
3. Meet with parents to get their consensus on helping the school.	3.90	High level
4. Volunteer as a coordinator or adviser of various school groups.	3.56	High level
5. Help build the name of the school by standing by the school's expectations of me.	3.94	High level
6. actively participate in school planning.	3.82	High level
7. Give suggestions to FGDs and meetings whenever I feel appropriate.	3.76	High level
8. Help provide opportunities to empower co-teachers and other school support.	3.72	High level
9. Work with various alumni associations to help meet the needs of the school.	3.90	High level
10. help in looking for sponsorships for sports and athletic events in the school.	3.70	High level
Overall Mean	**3.82**	**High level**

Based on Table 5, private pre-elementary school teachers exhibit a high level of commitment to their school, with an overall mean score of 3.82, reflecting active engagement in collaborative efforts that enhance school improvement, community relations, and learner support. The highest-rated item, "I promote a harmonious relationship between teachers and parents" (M = 4.10), highlights the teachers' prioritization of strong home-school partnerships,

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recognizing the critical role of parental involvement in early learner development. Conversely, "I volunteer as coordinator or adviser of various school groups" (M = 3.56) indicates that participation in extracurricular leadership, while still high, is less frequent or more selective. These findings suggest that teachers' commitment fosters a positive school climate and stronger community ties, reinforcing Epstein's (2018) assertion that educators' collaboration and institutional engagement significantly contribute to school culture and learner success.

Table 6

Level of commitment of private pre-elementary school teachers in the area of Commitment to Work

Commitment to Work Items	**Mean**	**Interpretation**
As a private pre-elementary teacher, I …		
1. am always on time.	3.50	High level
2. Prepare all deliverables prior to their deadline.	4.14	High level
3. Always prepare for any request for classroom observation.	3.90	High level
4. live within the school's moral expectations of me as an educator.	4.20	High level
5. Report to school anytime I am requested to do so.	4.04	High level
6. openly show my love for the teaching profession.	3.80	High level
7. Truly care for the welfare of every learner.	3.94	High level
8. Submit required liquidation reports days before the deadline.	3.84	High level
9. Volunteer to lead some school organizations.	3.88	High level
10. Help train newly hired teachers on how to lead school organizations.	3.26	Moderate level
Overall Mean	**3.85**	**High level**

Based on Table 6, private pre-elementary school teachers demonstrate a high overall level of commitment to Work, with a mean score of 3.85, reflecting consistent professional responsibility, punctuality, moral integrity, and dedication to instructional and administrative duties. The highest-rated item, "I live within the school's moral expectations of me as an educator" (M = 4.20), indicates strong alignment with the school's mission and vision, while the lowest-rated item, "I help train newly hired teachers on how to lead school organizations" (M = 3.26), suggests a moderate level of engagement in mentoring and leadership tasks. These findings highlight that, although teachers excel in moral conduct, preparedness, and accountability, there is room to strengthen mentoring capacities. As Santos et al. (2019) note, a teacher's commitment to professional responsibilities, particularly ethical conduct and institutional involvement, is crucial for promoting educational excellence and fostering a positive school culture.

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Table 7

Level of Difficulties of private pre-elementary school teachers in the area of Lesson Preparation

Lesson Preparation Items	**Mean**	**Interpretation**
As a private pre-elementary teacher, I am challenged …		
1. In simplifying goals per subject.	2.98	Moderate level
2. In making my lesson plan, I need to make it flexible to cover different learning types and speeds.	2.64	Moderate level
3. In putting much planning and carrying it on to the next class rather than having less.	2.86	Moderate level
4. In putting in the structure of each lesson to make sure that the class runs within the desired boundaries.	2.62	Moderate level
5. In considering making the class lively with activities.	2.66	Moderate level
6. In factoring in strategic teaching styles to match my lesson plan.	2.64	Moderate level
7. In setting goals and making sure that learners are organized.	2.52	Moderate level
8. Accessing online platforms to load lesson contents and assessments.	2.68	Moderate level
9. In sorting out objectives, selecting principles and methods.	1.70	Low level
10. In following the taxonomy of objectives, avoid relying solely on one level of knowledge.	2.50	Moderate level
Overall Mean	**2.58**	**Moderate level**

Based on Table 7, private pre-elementary school teachers experience a moderate level of difficulty in lesson preparation, with an overall mean score of 2.58, suggesting some challenges in planning and structuring lessons to meet diverse learner needs. Teachers feel most confident in defining objectives and selecting appropriate teaching principles, as reflected in the lowest-rated item, “I am challenged in sorting out objectives, selecting principles and methods” (M = 1.70), while breaking down subject goals into manageable components poses the greatest challenge, indicated by the highest-rated item, “I am challenged in simplifying goals per subject” (M = 2.98). These findings highlight the need for support in instructional design and planning strategies, as effective lesson preparation—balancing curricular goals with learners’ developmental needs—is essential for maximizing engagement and learning outcomes (Cayubit, 2019).

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Table 8

Level of Difficulties of private pre-elementary school teachers in the area of Lesson Delivery

Lesson Delivery **Items**	**Mean**	**Interpretation**
As a private pre-elementary teacher, I am challenged …		
1. With the lack of time to discuss everything that I want to discuss.	2.22	Low level
2. With the limitations in giving my own innovations in terms of classroom activities.	2.60	Moderate level
3. associating lessons with personal, daily experiences.	2.32	Low level
4. with conflicting schedules due to other assignments.	2.48	Low level
5. In creating useful presentations to help learners.	1.82	Low level
6. In executing all planned tasks due to time constraints.	1.84	Low level
7. In making sure that I have a balanced strategy to cover diverse learning needs.	1.90	Low level
8. making sure that teaching practices reflect the real needs of learners.	2.12	Low level
9. In completing learning tasks based on instructional objectives.	2.46	Low level
10. counter-checking the effectiveness of the entire teaching – learning process.	2.32	Low level
Overall Mean	**2.21**	**Low level**

Based on Table 8, private pre-elementary school teachers experience a low overall level of difficulty in lesson delivery, with a mean score of 2.21, indicating comfort in conducting structured teaching activities. Teachers are particularly confident in designing and using presentations or visuals to support learning, as shown by the lowest-rated item, “I am challenged in creating useful presentations to help learners” (M = 1.82), while introducing innovative classroom activities poses a slightly higher, though still moderate, challenge (M = 2.60). These findings suggest that while lesson delivery is generally smooth, opportunities for creative approaches may be constrained, highlighting the importance of balancing structured instruction with innovation, which is often influenced more by organizational factors than teacher ability (Sarmiento & Caliskan, 2020).

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Table 9

Level of Difficulties of private pre-elementary school teachers in the area of Assessment of Learning

Assessment of Learning Items	**Mean**	**Interpretation**
As a private pre-elementary teacher, I am challenged …		
1. with learners' most essential learning competencies.	2.42	Low level
2. In having a learner-centered assessment.	2.26	Low level
3. In informing parents about their children's assessment results.	2.38	Low level
4. In providing feedback/coaching to learners.	2.44	Low level
5. In establishing learning goals through assessment results.	1.86	Low level
6. In motivating learners to study harder using their assessment results.	1.94	Low level
7. In keeping with changes in examination patterns.	1.82	Low level
8. Measuring the true accomplishments of learners.	2.04	Low level
9. In matching the assessment and evaluation techniques.	1.98	Low level
10. utilizing other assessment techniques apart from formative.	2.36	Low level
Overall Mean	**2.15**	**Low level**

Based on the findings presented in Table 9, the overall mean score of 2.15 indicates a low level of difficulty for private pre-elementary school teachers in the Assessment of Learning area.

Item No. 7, which states “I am challenged in keeping changes on examination patterns,” received the lowest mean score of 1.82, indicating a low level. This means that teachers can adapt to changes in exam requirements.

On the other hand, Item No. 4, which states “I am challenged in providing feedback/coaching to learners,” recorded the highest mean score of 2.44.

In summary, private pre-elementary teachers report minimal difficulty in assessment-related tasks. While feedback and coaching are relatively more challenging, overall confidence remains high.

As noted by Valdez and Dagdag (2018), effective feedback and learner-centered assessment practices in early education help shape meaningful learning pathways and encourage active learner participation, though such approaches may require sustained teacher effort.

Table 10

Difference in the Level of Competence of Private Pre-Elementary School Teachers in the Area of Mastery of the Subject Matter, when grouped and compared according to variables

Mastery of the Subject Matter							
Variables	**Categories**	**N**	**Mean Rank**	**Mann Whitney U-test**	**Sig. Level**	***p*-value**	**Interpretation**
Age	Younger	25	30.64	184.00	0.05	0.012	Significant
	Older	25	20.36				
	Lower	36	27.62	175.50		0.097	Not Significant

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Highest Educational Attainment	Higher	14	20.04			
Civil Status	Single	30	26.05	283.50	0.743	Not Significant
	Married	20	24.68			
Length of service	Shorter	25	29.98	200.50	0.029	Significant
	Longer	25	21.02			
Average Family Monthly Income	Lower	25	29.74	206.50	0.039	Significant
	Higher	25	21.26			

Using the Mann-Whitney U test, Table 10 shows that teacher age (U = 184.00, p = 0.012), length of service (U = 200.50, p = 0.029), and average family monthly income (U = 206.50, p = 0.039) significantly influenced subject mastery at the 0.05 level. Younger teachers (Mean Rank = 30.64), those with shorter service duration (Mean Rank = 29.98), and teachers from lower-income households (Mean Rank = 29.74) demonstrated higher competence than their older, more experienced, or higher-income counterparts, suggesting benefits from updated training, refresher workshops, and intrinsic motivation. In contrast, the highest educational attainment (U = 175.50, p = 0.097) and civil status (U = 283.50, p = 0.743) showed no significant effect, indicating that teaching competence is not solely shaped by formal qualifications or personal circumstances. These findings support Calderon and Montalban's (2024) assertion that leveraging demographic analytics can enhance strategic human resource planning and guide targeted professional development in early education.

Table 11

Difference in the Level of competence of private pre-elementary school teachers in the area of Teaching Strategies, and when grouped and compared according to variables

Teaching Strategies							
Variables	**Categories**	**N**	**Mean Rank**	**Mann Whitney U-test**	**Sig. Level**	***p*-value**	**Interpretation**
Age	Younger	25	27.46	263.50		0.335	Not Significant
	Older	25	23.54				
Highest Educational Attainment	Lower	36	25.92	237.00		0.743	Not Significant
	Higher	14	24.43				
Civil Status	Single	30	26.33	275.00	0.05	0.616	Not Significant
	Married	20	24.25				
Length of service	Shorter	25	26.26	293.50		0.709	Not Significant
	Longer	25	24.74				
	Lower	25	27.66	258.50		0.288	

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Average Family Monthly Income	Higher	25	23.34				Not Significant

Using the Mann-Whitney U test, Table 11 shows that teachers' competence in teaching strategies did not differ significantly across all demographic categories, including age, highest educational attainment, civil status, length of service, and average monthly family income. These results suggest that factors such as age, formal qualifications, personal status, experience, and income do not inherently influence teaching strategy competence, aligning with studies by Kurniawati et al. (2021), Padillo (2021), Diaz (2024), Escanda (2025), and Castillo (2021), although some findings, like those of Shah (2024), indicate that contextual factors may still affect performance.

Table 12

Difference in the Level of competence of private pre-elementary school teachers in the area of Learning Resources, and when grouped and compared according to variables

Learning Resources

Variables	Categories	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U-test	Sig. Level	*p*-value	Interpretation
Age	Younger	25	28.50	237.50		0.143	Not Significant
	Older	25	22.50				
Highest Educational Attainment	Lower	36	26.92	201.00		0.267	Not Significant
	Higher	14	21.86				
Civil Status	Single	30	26.68	204.50	0.05	0.479	Not Significant
	Married	20	23.72				
Length of service	Shorter	25	27.42	264.50		0.348	Not Significant
	Longer	25	23.58				
Average Family Monthly Income	Lower	25	26.54	286.50		0.611	Not Significant
	Higher	25	24.46				

Using the Mann-Whitney U test, Table 12 shows no significant differences in learning resource competence across demographic categories, including age, highest educational attainment, civil status, length of service, and average monthly family income. Younger and older teachers, single and married teachers, as well as those with varying education, experience, and income levels, performed similarly, indicating that these factors do not inherently affect resource competence. This aligns with studies by Kurniawati (2021), Padillo (2021), Diaz (2024), Escanda (2025), and Castillo (2021), although it contrasts with Shah's (2024) suggestion of an indirect influence of income on resource use.

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Table 13
Difference in the Level of commitment of private pre-elementary school teachers in the area of Commitment to Profession, and when grouped and compared according to variables

Commitment to Profession							
Variables	**Categories**	**N**	**Mean Rank**	**Mann Whitney U-test**	**Sig. Level**	***p*-value**	**Interpretation**
Age	Younger	25	29.64	209.00	0.05	0.044	Significant
	Older	25	21.36				
Highest Educational Attainment	Lower	36	27.28	188.00		0.165	Not Significant
	Higher	14	20.93				
Civil Status	Single	30	27.43	242.00		0.249	Not Significant
	Married	20	22.60				
Length of service	Shorter	25	28.78	230.50		0.110	Not Significant
	Longer	25	22.22				
Average Family Monthly Income	Lower	25	28.02	249.50		0.220	Not Significant
	Higher	25	22.98				

Using the Mann-Whitney U test, Table 13 shows that only teacher age was significant (U = 209.00, p = 0.044), with younger teachers demonstrating higher professional commitment, reflecting findings by Bird & Schnurman-Crook (2005) on enthusiasm and role alignment. No significant differences were found for highest educational attainment, civil status, length of service, or family income, suggesting that these factors do not inherently influence commitment, consistent with Padillo (2021), Langurayan & Coldovero (2024), and Cadiong (2024), who emphasize the role of development, recognition, and contextual support in sustaining teacher dedication.

Table 14
Difference in the Level of commitment of private pre-elementary school teachers in the area of Commitment to School, and when grouped and compared according to variables

Commitment to School Variables	**Categories**	**N**	**Mean Rank**	**Mann Whitney U-test**	**Sig. Level**	***p*-value**	**Interpretation**
Age	Younger	25	23.38	259.50	0.05	0.300	Not Significant
	Older	25	27.62				
	Lower	36	25.28	244.00		0.862	

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Highest Educational Attainment	Higher	14	26.07			Not Significant
Civil Status	Single	30	24.07	257.00	0.391	Not Significant
	Married	20	27.65			
Length of service	Shorter	25	23.86	271.50	0.422	Not Significant
	Longer	25	27.14			
Average Family Monthly Income	Lower	25	28.06	248.50	0.210	Not Significant
	Higher	25	22.94			

Using the Mann-Whitney U test, Table 14 shows no significant differences in teachers' commitment to school across age, civil status, educational attainment, income, or length of service. Commitment levels were similar regardless of these demographics, suggesting that loyalty grows independently of age, marital status, qualifications, income, or tenure. These findings contrast with some claims, such as Bird & Schnurman-Crook (2005) on younger teachers' focus, but align with Padillo (2021), Langurayan & Coldovero (2024), Shumba & Naong (2013), and Cadiong (2024), emphasizing that professional dedication is shaped more by supportive work culture and personal purpose than by external or demographic factors.

Table 15

Difference in the Level of commitment of private pre-elementary school teachers in the area of Commitment to Work, and when grouped and compared according to variables

Commitment to Work							
Variables	**Categories**	**N**	**Mean Rank**	**Mann Whitney U-test**	**Sig. Level**	***p*-value**	**Interpretation**
Age	Younger	25	29.28	218.00		0.066	Not Significant
	Older	25	21.72				
Highest Educational Attainment	Lower	36	28.10	158.50		0.043	Significant
	Higher	14	18.82				
Civil Status	Single	30	25.53	299.00	0.05	0.984	Not Significant
	Married	20	25.45				
Length of service	Shorter	25	29.08	223.00		0.081	Not Significant
	Longer	25	21.92				
Average Family Monthly Income	Lower	25	28.26	243.50		0.179	Not Significant
	Higher	25	22.74				

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Using the Mann-Whitney U test, Table 15 shows that only teachers' highest educational attainment was significant (U = 158.50, p = 0.043), with those holding lower qualifications demonstrating higher work commitment, supporting Padillo's (2021) view that devotion is grounded more in experience than formal credentials. Other factors—age, civil status, length of service, and income—showed no significant differences, though younger and newer teachers had a slight, non-significant edge in commitment. These results align with Bird & Schnurman-Crook (2005), Langurayan & Coldovero (2024), and Cadiong (2024), highlighting that intrinsic motivation, practical engagement, and personal purpose drive teacher commitment more than demographic or financial factors.

Table 16
Difference in the Level of Difficulties of private pre-elementary school teachers in the area of Lesson Preparation, and when grouped and compared according to variables

Lesson Preparation							
Variables	**Categories**	**N**	**Mean Rank**	**Mann Whitney U-test**	**Sig. Level**	***p*-value**	**Interpretation**
Age	Younger	25	22.08	227.00		0.096	Not Significant
	Older	25	28.92				
Highest Educational Attainment	Lower	36	23.47	179.00		0.113	Not Significant
	Higher	14	30.71				
Civil Status	Single	30	23.40	237.00	0.05	0.210	Not Significant
	Married	20	28.65				
Length of service	Shorter	25	19.36	159.00		0.003	Significant
	Longer	25	31.64				
Average Family Monthly Income	Lower	25	22.82	245.50		0.192	Not Significant
	Higher	25	28.18				

Using the Mann-Whitney U test, Table 16 shows that only teacher length of service was significant (U = 159.00, p = 0.003), with longer-serving teachers reporting more challenges (mean Rank 31.64) than those with shorter service (mean Rank 19.36), supporting Cadiong's (2024) observation that extended tenure may make adapting to innovations harder. While teachers with higher qualifications and income reported slightly more challenges, and older teachers slightly more than younger, these differences were not significant, reflecting findings by Padillo et al. (2021) and Langurayan & Coldovero (2024) that practical workload, resource use, and coping strategies, rather than demographics, largely shape teaching challenges.

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Table 17

Difference in the Level of Difficulties of private pre-elementary school teachers in the area of Lesson Delivery, and when grouped and compared according to variables

Lesson Delivery							
Variables	**Categories**	**N**	**Mean Rank**	**Mann Whitney U-test**	**Sig. Level**	***p*-value**	**Interpretation**
Age	Younger	25	24.98	299.50	0.05	0.800	Not Significant
	Older	25	26.02				
Highest Educational Attainment	Lower	36	22.92	159.00		0.043	Significant
	Higher	14	32.14				
Civil Status	Single	30	25.95	286.50		0.788	Not Significant
	Married	20	24.82				
Length of service	Shorter	25	23.14	253.50		0.249	Not Significant
	Longer	25	27.86				
Average Family Monthly Income	Lower	25	23.48	262.00		0.324	Not Significant
	Higher	25	27.52				

Using the Mann-Whitney U test, Table 17 indicates that Teacher Highest Educational Attainment (U = 159.00, p = 0.043) significantly affected challenges in lesson delivery, with teachers holding higher qualifications (Mean Rank = 32.14) experiencing greater instructional complexity than those with lower qualifications (Mean Rank = 22.92), reflecting the influence of higher professional ambitions on lesson planning (Padillo, 2021). In contrast, other demographic factors—including age, civil status, length of service, and average family monthly income—showed no significant differences, suggesting that instructional challenges are shaped more by the teaching context, curricular demands, and institutional support than by personal or socio-economic characteristics (Bird & Schnurman-Crook, 2005; Langurayan & Coldovero, 2024; Cadiong, 2024; Shumba & Naong, 2013).

Table 18

Difference in the Level of Difficulties of private pre-elementary school teachers in the area of Assessment of Learning, and when grouped and compared according to variables

Assessment of Learning							
Variables	**Categories**	**N**	**Mean Rank**	**Mann Whitney U-test**	**Sig. Level**	***p*-value**	**Interpretation**
Age	Younger	25	26.12	297.00	0.05	0.761	Not Significant
	Older	25	24.88				
Highest Educational Attainment	Lower	36	26.15	228.50		0.608	Not Significant
	Higher	14	23.82				
	Single	30	27.33	245.00		0.271	

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Civil Status	Married	20	22.75			Not Significant
Length of service	Shorter	25	26.44	289.00	0.645	Not Significant
	Longer	25	24.56			
	Lower	25	29.40			
Average Family Monthly Income	Higher	25	21.60	215.00	0.056	Not Significant

Using the Mann-Whitney U test, Table 18 shows that all demographic variables—age, civil status, length of service, educational attainment, and family income—had no significant effect on the challenges teachers face in assessing student learning. While lower-income teachers reported slightly more difficulty, and newer or less experienced teachers occasionally noted minor differences, none were statistically significant, indicating that assessment challenges are largely shaped by institutional support, workload, and practical teaching contexts rather than personal or socio-economic factors (Shumba & Naong, 2013; Cadiong, 2024; Langurayan & Coldovero, 2024; Padillo et al., 2021; Bird & Schnurman-Crook, 2005).

Conclusion

The study found that private pre-elementary school teachers in a highly urbanized city in the new normal had balanced profiles in terms of age and average monthly family income, with most holding a bachelor's degree and being single. Overall, teachers demonstrated high levels of competence in mastery of subject matter, teaching strategies, and use of learning resources, as well as high levels of commitment to their profession, school, and Work. However, they experienced moderate levels of difficulty in lesson preparation and delivery, while assessment-related tasks were reported as the least challenging. Statistical analysis further revealed significant differences in competence, commitment, and difficulties when teachers were grouped according to demographic variables. These findings suggest that teachers are generally capable of adapting to evolving educational demands and maintaining strong professional performance, supported by inclusive training and development programs. Nevertheless, the moderate challenges in lesson preparation and delivery indicate the need for targeted interventions and differentiated support for specific groups of teachers to address gaps and enhance overall teaching effectiveness.

Recommendation

Based on the findings, it is recommended that schools strengthen lesson planning and delivery, reinforce teacher competence and commitment, and provide targeted and differentiated support that responds to the specific needs of private pre-elementary teachers. An example program, "TEACH STRONG: Enhancing Early Childhood Instructional Resilience and Commitment in the New Normal," can be implemented to address these areas through a series of structured, practical activities. These include a Lesson Engineering Workshop that offers hands-on training in contextualized and digital-integrated lesson planning; Commitment and Wellness

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Dialogue Circles that promote professional identity, emotional resilience, and collegial support; Peer Coaching on Assessment Literacy to enhance formative assessment practices; and Differentiated Support Clinics that provide focused consultations based on teachers' tenure, qualifications, and instructional challenges. The program may be implemented over five months, beginning with planning and material development, followed by sequential workshops, coaching, and evaluation. With an estimated budget of ₱7,200 covering training materials, facilitators' honoraria, logistics, meals, and documentation, the initiative can be led by the school head or academic coordinator, with support from educational consultants, administrative staff, and evaluators. Expected outputs include improved lesson delivery, teacher portfolios demonstrating enhanced assessment practices, strengthened commitment reflected in journals, and data-driven insights to guide future policy and professional development programs.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest related to the conduct, authorship, and publication of this research. All procedures and interpretations were performed independently, and no financial, professional, or personal relationships influenced the results of this study.

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