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Pedagogical Philosophies of Teacher Educators in the Philippines: Implications for Teacher Quality

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Abstract: *This study aimed to examine the pedagogical philosophies of teacher educators in the Ilocos Region, Philippines, to understand their implications for teacher quality amid national reforms. The research sought to identify espoused philosophies, categorize them into distinct profiles, and analyze their variation across educator and institutional characteristics. A convergent parallel mixed-methods design was employed to analyze survey data from 391 teacher educators. Thematic analysis of open-ended responses was combined with quantitative profiling and cross-tabulations to map the pedagogical landscape. The results revealed a dominant model of "Pragmatic Constructivism with Cultural Grounding," emphasizing theory-practice integration (33.7%), experiential learning (31.8%), and authentic contexts (23.4%). An eclectic approach was the most common profile (57.3%). A significant "experience paradox" emerged: pedagogical sophistication declines as teaching experience increases, while no significant differences were found across institutional types. The study concludes that although teacher educators' philosophies align with evidence-based practices, the experience paradox poses a significant threat to the sustained implementation of pedagogical innovation. Improving teacher quality requires intentional institutional strategies, such as intergenerational learning communities and support for novice-led innovation, to ensure progressive pedagogies are maintained and integrated system-wide.*

Keywords: *Pedagogical Philosophy, Teacher Educators, Teacher Quality, Experience Paradox, and Teacher Education in the Philippines.*

INTRODUCTION

Teacher quality is considered one of the most important school-based factors influencing student achievement, but it does not develop automatically. It is shaped through teacher education programs and strongly influenced by the pedagogical philosophies of teacher educators. When teacher educators apply progressive, evidence-based, learner-centered, and theory-informed

pedagogies, they are more likely to prepare future teachers who can use similar effective practices in their own classrooms [1], [2], [3].

In the Philippine context, the importance of teacher quality is reinforced through Republic Act No. 11713, or the Excellence in Teacher Education Act of 2022, which emphasizes that teachers play a central role in effective teaching and learning. This law also establishes Teacher Education Centers of Excellence in each region to support the improvement of teacher education quality. However, although national studies have profiled teacher education institutions and teacher educators, limited research has examined the pedagogical philosophies that guide teacher educators' instructional decisions, especially in Southeast Asian and Philippine contexts [4], [5], [6].

This research gap is important because the Philippines continues to face challenges in student learning outcomes, institutional quality, licensure performance, and unequal access to high-quality teacher education across regions. Although reforms such as the K–12 transition, Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers, CHED Memorandum Order No. 75, and RA 11713 aim to improve the system, their success depends on whether teacher educators can enact learner-centered, culturally responsive, and theory-based practices. Therefore, this study examines the pedagogical philosophies of teacher educators in the Ilocos Region, how these philosophies form distinct profiles, and how they vary according to educator and institutional characteristics [7], [8], [9].

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of pedagogical philosophy in teacher education shows that the quality of prospective teachers is greatly influenced by how lecturers or teacher educators understand, model, and apply pedagogical practices in the learning process. Darling-Hammond (2006) emphasized that teacher education programs that emphasize active learning, integration of theory and practice, and strong clinical experience tend to produce more effective teachers [2]. This is in line with Loughran (2014) who states that teacher educators are not only in charge of delivering material, but also need to practice pedagogy that can be emulated by prospective teachers. In the context of this article, the findings regarding the dominance of theory-practice integration, experiential learning, authentic contexts, active learning, and student-centered approaches strengthen the argument that teacher educators in the Ilocos Region have shown pedagogical tendencies that are in accordance with the principles of modern teacher education [1]. This approach is important because it is able to form prospective teachers who are reflective, adaptive, and able to connect educational theory with real needs in the classroom.

In addition, the literature on constructivist pedagogy and culturally responsive teaching also supports the importance of a contextual and student-centered pedagogical approach. Richardson (2003) explains that the constructivist approach encourages learners to build knowledge through experience, reflection, and active interaction [1], while Gay (2010) emphasizes that culturally responsive learning helps teachers understand the diversity of students' backgrounds. In this article, the concept of Pragmatic Constructivism with Cultural Grounding becomes relevant because it combines pedagogical flexibility, real-world experience, as well as local Philippine cultural values in the process of teacher education [10], [11]. However, the findings of the *experience paradox*, which is a decrease in pedagogical complexity with increasing teaching experience, point to the need for continuous professional development. Thus, this article is reinforced by the literature that asserts that the quality of teacher education is not only determined

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by experience or academic degree, but also by the ability of teacher educators to continuously update pedagogical practices, build reflection, and sustain learning innovation.

RESHULTH AND DISCUSSION

Teacher Educator Pedagogy and Teacher Quality

The relationship between teacher educator pedagogy and teacher quality has been widely established in international literature. Teacher education programs that emphasize active learning, theory–practice integration, and extended clinical experiences tend to produce teachers who are more effective in improving student achievement [2], [12]. In line with this view, teacher educators are expected to develop specialized pedagogies for teacher education by modeling effective instructional practices, explaining pedagogical reasoning, and giving prospective teachers opportunities to understand learning from the student perspective [1], [6], [13] Several pedagogical approaches are also strongly linked to positive teacher-quality outcomes. Constructivist approaches, which emphasize knowledge construction through experience, support the development of reflective, adaptive, and student-centered teachers [1], [14]. In addition, teachers prepared through constructivist-oriented programs tend to demonstrate stronger pedagogical content knowledge and greater ability to differentiate instruction for diverse learners [2], [3].

Another important dimension of teacher educator pedagogy is the intentional integration of theory and practice. Teacher education programs that successfully connect conceptual knowledge with classroom application tend to produce teachers with stronger instructional skills and better professional retention [1], [15]. This integration is closely related to the concept of praxis, understood as the reflective relationship between theory and practice, which supports the development of adaptive expertise among teachers [16]. Culturally responsive pedagogy is also essential because teacher educators who model culturally responsive practices prepare future teachers to work effectively with culturally and linguistically diverse learners [17]. However, although these findings are strongly supported in international literature, most empirical studies come from Western contexts. Therefore, further investigation is needed to understand whether these ideas apply to Philippine teacher education, where cultural values, institutional conditions, and educational traditions may differ.

Pedagogical Profiles and Teacher Educator Identity

Teacher educators operate within a complex professional space, simultaneously serving as teachers, researchers, and gatekeepers of the profession [18]. Research on teacher educator identity uncovers tension between their proclaimed beliefs and the practices they enact [18]. Many struggle to clearly articulate their pedagogical philosophies, often relying on implicit knowledge gained through experience [18].

Studies in Western contexts identify several common pedagogical orientations among teacher educators: constructivist (focusing on knowledge construction), transmission (focusing on content delivery), apprenticeship (focusing on modeling), and developmental (focusing on learner growth) [12], [19]. However, these categories may not fully capture the complexity of pedagogical thinking in non-Western settings.

Recent scholarship promotes "pragmatic constructivism" approaches that balance constructivist principles with the understanding that different learning objectives require different pedagogical strategies [2], [20]. This pragmatic approach recognizes that effective teaching demands pedagogical flexibility rather than strict adherence to a single ideology, a perspective

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especially relevant for understanding the profiles of teacher educators across diverse institutional contexts.

Variation in Teacher Educator Practice

Research consistently shows that teacher educator practices vary according to individual characteristics and institutional contexts. Teaching experience is often assumed to develop in a linear way from novice to expert, where greater expertise emerges through years of practice [12]. However, the evidence suggests a more complex pattern. Some experienced teacher educators may develop stronger pedagogical reasoning and deeper ability to analyze teaching and learning processes [5]. On the other hand, prolonged experience may also create "expert blind spots," where knowledge becomes automatic and difficult to explain clearly to learners [21]. In addition, long teaching experience can sometimes lead to routinized practices and resistance to pedagogical innovation, especially when educators are not continuously exposed to professional renewal [21].

Generational differences further complicate the relationship between experience and pedagogy because teacher educators trained in different periods may internalize different pedagogical norms. Younger educators who were prepared through more recent reform-oriented programs may be more likely to adopt progressive and student-centered approaches, while the sustainability of these innovations depends strongly on whether institutional environments support experimentation, renewal, or instead reinforce traditional practices. Institutional type also plays an important role in shaping teacher educator practice. A PIDS study found that Philippine Centers of Excellence achieved higher licensure exam pass rates, averaging 89.7 percent compared to 71.2 percent among non-designated institutions, and were associated with stronger faculty qualifications and research output [22]. However, the same study also noted that COE designation alone does not automatically guarantee quality because some institutions still face challenges in compliance and mandate implementation. Therefore, examining differences in pedagogical philosophies across institutional types is important for developing more effective strategies to improve teacher quality [7], [15].

The Context of Teacher Education in the Philippines

National Baseline and Regional Differences

The Ilocos Region, or Region I, is located in northwestern Luzon and consists of four provinces: Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, La Union, and Pangasinan. This region has 210 Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs), including state universities, private sectarian and non-sectarian institutions, and local government-funded colleges, making it an important context for examining teacher education practices and outcomes. National baseline data from the Research Institute for Teacher Quality show that most teacher educators in the Philippines have graduate-level qualifications, with 82.3% holding graduate degrees or graduate units, while the workforce is predominantly female and largely composed of instructors and early-career educators. These data help position the Ilocos Region within the broader Philippine teacher education landscape and show that regional teacher education must be understood in relation to wider national patterns of faculty qualifications, institutional type, and educator demographics [3].

Licensure examination performance also reflects institutional and regional differences in teacher education quality. Nationally, the average licensure exam pass rate is 76.4%, while institutions designated as Centers of Excellence (COEs) achieve a much higher average pass rate of 89.7%, compared to 71.2% among non-COE institutions. However, the distribution of high-quality teacher education remains uneven, as 70% of COEs are located in the National Capital

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Region, leaving regions such as Ilocos with fewer COE-designated institutions and possible gaps in faculty qualifications, resources, and institutional support. Although the demographic profile of the Ilocos sample closely resembles national trends, the study goes beyond demographic indicators by examining pedagogical philosophies, which are not fully captured in national surveys but are essential for understanding teacher education quality [6], [23], [24].

From a policy perspective, Republic Act No. 11713, or the Excellence in Teacher Education Act of 2022, provides a national framework for improving teacher education through the establishment of regional Teacher Education Centers of Excellence, scholarships, professional development, stronger quality assurance, and programs grounded in professional standards. Nevertheless, studies indicate that COE implementation still faces challenges, including compliance issues, uneven regional capacity, and the need for stronger accountability and sustained improvement mechanisms. In addition to policy and institutional factors, cultural context is also important in Philippine teacher education, as Filipino teachers are shaped by values such as commitment to student well-being, group harmony, pakikisama, and kapwa, which influence classroom relationships and pedagogical choices. The emergence of cultural responsiveness in the findings suggests that teacher educators in the Ilocos Region are integrating Filipino cultural values into their teaching approaches, making pedagogical philosophy a key factor in understanding and improving teacher quality [7], [25], [26].

Conceptual Framework

This study is grounded in three complementary theoretical frameworks that collectively inform the analysis of teacher educator pedagogical philosophies and their effects on teacher quality. First, Shulman's (1987) concept of Pedagogical Content Knowledge offers a perspective for examining how teacher educators adapt subject matter and pedagogical understanding specifically for training future teachers, acknowledging that effective teacher preparation depends on specialized knowledge about how teaching itself is learned. Second, the framework of adaptive expertise [16], supports the idea of teacher quality as the ability to apply knowledge flexibly and responsively across diverse and complex classroom situations. From this perspective, teacher educators who demonstrate adaptive expertise are more likely to prepare teachers capable of adapting instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners and evolving educational challenges. Third, Freire's (1970) concept of praxis frames the analysis of how teacher educators combine theory and practice, highlighting reflective and transformative actions as essential elements of meaningful teaching and learning [27]. Overall, these frameworks guide the exploration of pedagogical philosophies, the identification of distinct pedagogical profiles, and the examination of differences across educator and institutional traits, while consistently focusing on how these factors influence and uphold teacher quality.

Methodology Research Design

This study used a convergent parallel mixed-methods design [28], [29], in which qualitative and quantitative data were collected concurrently, analyzed separately, and then combined to develop a comprehensive understanding of teacher educators' pedagogical philosophies and their impact on teacher quality. The qualitative part involved a thematic analysis of open-ended survey responses to identify main pedagogical philosophies (RQ1), select representative quotes, and explore how teacher educators view effective teaching and learning. The quantitative part included frequency analysis, profile categorization (RQ2), and statistical comparisons across demographic groups and types of institutions (RQ3) to find patterns and differences in pedagogical styles. Integration happened during the interpretation stage, where qualitative themes and quantitative

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profiles were examined together to map the pedagogical landscape, evaluate alignment with evidence-based practices, and provide suggestions for improving teacher educator effectiveness.

Research Context and Participants

The study was carried out in the Ilocos Region (Region I), Philippines, which includes four provinces Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, La Union, and Pangasinan and is home to 210 Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs), such as state universities, private sectarian and non-sectarian schools, and local government-funded colleges. Participants included 391 teacher educators recruited through institutional partnerships and professional networks between May and October 2025. The response rate for the qualitative part was 98.8%, ensuring wide institutional and professional representation. Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the participants.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Teacher Educators (n = 391)

Variable	Category	Percentage (%)
Academic Rank	Instructor	70.5
	Assistant Professor	13.8
	Associate Professor	11.8
	Professor	3.8
Highest Educational Attainment	Doctorate	27.9
	Doctorate units	21.8
	Master's degree	22.1
	Master's units	21.0
Employment Status	Tenured	59.0
	Non-tenured	32.6
Institution Type	State universities	50.0
	Private non-sectarian	22.8
	Private sectarian	10.8
Teaching Experience	Novice (0–2 years)	25.6
	Early career (3–5 years)	20.7
	Mid-career (6–10 years)	20.5
	Experienced (11–20 years)	13.6
	Veteran (20+ years)	10.5

Overall, the sample represents a well educated, predominantly early-career workforce with substantial representation from state universities, a profile with important implications for the sustainability of pedagogical innovation and teacher quality development in the region.

Data were collected through an online survey conducted from May to October 2025, consisting of demographic questions, Likert-scale items on professional competencies, and open-ended questions exploring teacher educators' pedagogical philosophies, instructional practices, and efforts to connect theory with practice. The qualitative data included 1,159 open-ended responses, which were analyzed through automated keyword extraction, thematic coding, profile grouping, cross-tabulation, inferential analysis, and co-occurrence analysis to answer the three research questions. The analysis identified dominant pedagogical orientations, learning theories, instructional strategies, content focus, assessment philosophies, and emerging themes such as

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cultural responsiveness and metacognitive practices. Ethical procedures were followed through institutional approval, informed consent, confidentiality protection, the right to withdraw, removal of identifying information, and aggregated reporting to protect institutional identities.

RESULTS

Pedagogical Philosophies espoused by the Teacher Educators

Thematic analysis revealed 14 distinct pedagogical themes, five of which emerged as dominant.

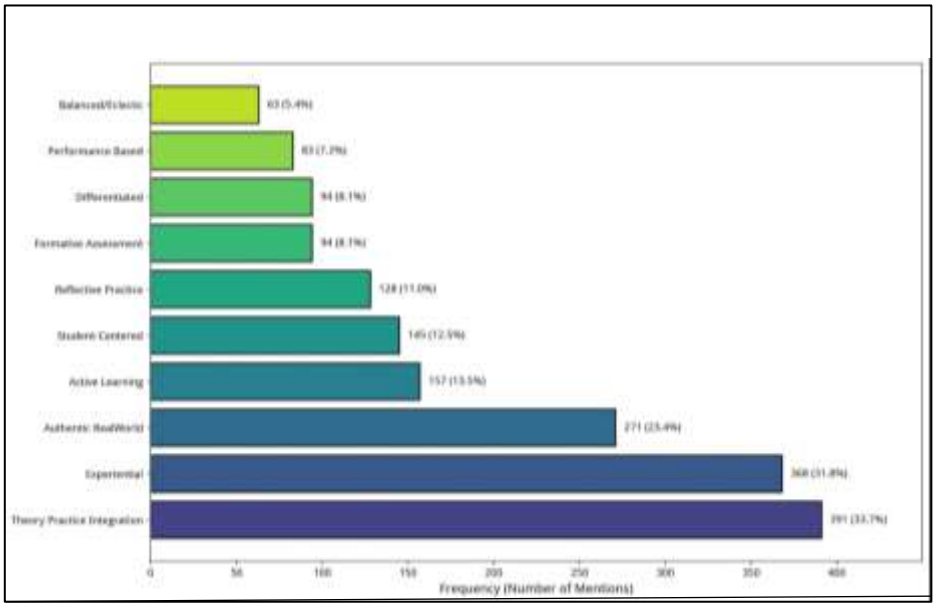

Figure 1. 10 Pedagogical Theme in Region 1 Teacher Education

The figure 1 above explains, the pedagogical philosophy of teacher educators in the Ilocos Region focuses on progressive, applicative, contextual, active, and student-centered learning. The most dominant theme was **Theory–Practice Integration** at 33.7% (n = 391), which shows the importance of connecting theory with real practice to form reflective and adaptive teacher candidates (Hammerness et al., 2005). This theme is supported by **Experiential Learning** by 31.8% (n = 368), which emphasizes hands-on experience and teaching practice (Darling-Hammond, 2006), and **Authentic and Real-World Contexts** by 23.4% (n = 271), which directs learning to the real situation and cultural context of learners. In addition, **Active Learning** of 13.5% (n = 157) and **Student-Centered Approaches** of 12.5% (n = 145) showed a shift from passive learning to collaborative, interactive, responsive, and inclusive learning [30].

In addition to the main theme, the data also shows that there are additional focuses such as **reflective practice**, **metacognition**, **formative assessment**, **differentiation**, **cultural responsiveness**, and **research-based practice**, which strengthen the pedagogical quality of teacher educators. However, the low use of technology and the existence of traditional methods indicate the need to increase digital readiness and strengthen modern learning practices. The co-occurrence analysis showed that teacher educators did not use strategies in isolation, but combined the integration of theory-practice with active learning, student-centered learning, and authentic

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contexts. This shows the existence of a pedagogical philosophy that is coherent, reflective, and relevant to the educational needs of the 21st century [3], [8].

Pedagogical Philosophy Profiles

Categorization of responses yielded eight distinct pedagogical profiles, each with different implications for teacher quality.

The findings reveal eight pedagogical profiles among teacher educators. **Profile 1: Eclectic–Mixed Approach** is the most dominant profile, representing 57.3% of respondents (n = 223), and reflects a flexible combination of various teaching methods based on students' needs and classroom situations. **Profile 2: Practical–Applied** accounts for 24.7% (n = 96) and emphasizes practical application, real-world relevance, and skills development. **Profile 3: Student-Centered–General** represents 5.9% (n = 23), focusing on learner needs, interests, and agency. **Profile 4: Constructivist–Inquiry Based** makes up 3.6% (n = 14), highlighting inquiry, exploration, and knowledge construction. These profiles generally indicate moderate to high teaching quality because they support adaptive teaching, practical competence, learner-centered instruction, and theoretically grounded pedagogy.

The remaining profiles appear in smaller proportions but still provide important insights into teacher quality. **Profile 5: Experiential–Collaborative** accounts for 2.8% (n = 11) and emphasizes hands-on and collaborative learning. **Profile 6: Traditional–Direct Instruction** represents 2.6% (n = 10) and relies on lecture-based, teacher-centered practices, indicating lower alignment with current evidence-based pedagogy**. Profile 7: Student-Centered–Differentiated** accounts for 1.5% (n = 6) and focuses on inclusivity, flexibility, and adaptation to diverse learners. Profile 8: Progressive–Technology Enhanced also represents 1.5% (n = 6), emphasizing technology integration and innovative teaching practices. Overall, the distribution suggests that teacher educators mainly adopt flexible and practice-oriented approaches, while more specialized approaches such as differentiated instruction and technology-enhanced pedagogy remain less widely represented.

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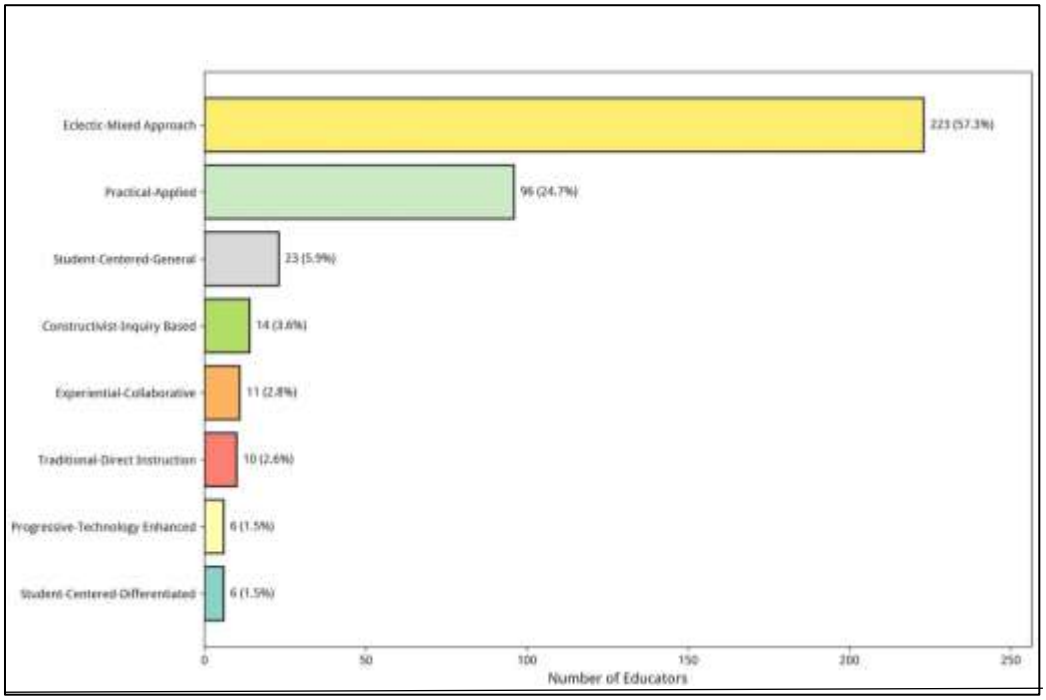

Figure 2. Pedagogical Philosophy of Region 1 Teacher Education

The figure 2 above explains most teacher educators use progressive, learner-centered, experiential, and constructivist approaches that align with modern educational goals, particularly the development of 21st-century skills such as collaboration, critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, innovation, and decision-making [6], [19]. These approaches differ from traditional teacher-centered models because educators act as facilitators who guide learners to construct meaning through experience, reflection, and participation [6]. The dominance of pedagogical eclecticism also shows that teacher educators combine different methods strategically because no single approach fits all classroom contexts [1], [21], [31]. Co-occurrence analysis further indicates that theory practice integration, active learning, and contextual responsiveness are interconnected, reflecting coherent pedagogical patterns [7]. Therefore, continuous professional development is needed to help teacher educators clarify their pedagogical philosophies and strengthen reflective, student-centered, and technology-supported instruction [19], [32].

Pedagogical Philosophies by Educator Characteristics and Institutional Type

Analysis of variation in pedagogical philosophies uncovers two key findings with significant implications for maintaining teacher quality in the Ilocos Region: the experience paradox among teacher educators and the surprising lack of institutional effects. These patterns raise important questions about how pedagogical innovation is sustained or lost over time and across different institutions.

Pedagogical Philosophy by Educator Characteristics. Contrary to expectations that pedagogical sophistication increases with professional maturity [1], [12], results indicate a systematic decline in pedagogical complexity as teaching experience increases. Pedagogical sophistication, measured through theme diversity per response and the use of explicitly progressive

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pedagogical profiles, was highest among novice and early-career educators and lowest among veteran educators.

Table 2. Pedagogical Philosophy by Educator Characteristics

Educator Characteristic	Category	Eclectic (%)	Practical (%)	Progressive (%)	Traditional (%)
Teaching Experience	Novice (0–2 years)	49.5	23.2	16.2	2.0
	Early Career (3–5 years)	54.3	24.7	15.8	1.2
	Mid Career (6–10 years)	55.0	28.7	11.2	2.5
	Experienced (11–20 years)	73.6	18.9	3.8	3.8
	Veteran (20+ years)	68.3	22.0	4.9	4.9
Academic Rank	Instructor	54.4	24.8	11.3	1.8
	Assistant Professor	66.7	16.7	7.4	7.4
	Associate Professor	67.4	26.1	2.2	2.2
	Professor	46.7	46.7	0.0	0.0
Educational Attainment	Bachelor's degree	35.7	32.1	17.9	3.6
	With Master's units	53.1	23.5	11.1	2.5
	Master's graduate	54.7	25.6	9.3	2.3
	With Doctorate units	58.8	29.4	7.1	3.5
	Doctorate graduate	67.0	19.3	9.2	1.8

The table above explains among novices to 0.49 among veterans, while the use of progressive pedagogical profiles decreases from 16.2% to less than 5%. These differences are statistically significant, $F(4,385) = 3.21$, $p = .013$, $\eta^2 = .032$. This pattern creates an experience paradox, indicating that pedagogical innovation is strongest at the start of a career and weakens over time. Importantly, this decline remains even when accounting for academic rank and educational level. Cross-tabulation analyses show no significant differences in pedagogical profiles by academic rank ($\chi^2 = 18.4$, $p = .19$) or by highest educational level ($\chi^2 = 12.7$, $p = .39$). Instructors articulated pedagogical philosophies comparable in complexity to those of Professors, and doctorate holders did not consistently show more progressive orientations than educators with lower qualifications. These findings suggest that neither rank advancement nor higher degrees serve as safeguards against pedagogical stagnation. Overall, the evidence strongly supports a

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cohort effect explanation. Younger educators were trained in reformed teacher education programs emphasizing constructivism, active learning, and 21st-century skills, whereas veteran educators were socialized into earlier pedagogical norms. The lack of benefits related to rank or credentials weakens interpretations based on expert automation or articulation efficiency. From a teacher quality standpoint, this pattern signals a sustainability threat: without intentional strategies for ongoing pedagogical renewal, progressive practices introduced by newer cohorts may diminish over time [16].

Pedagogical Philosophy by Institutional Type

Contrary to expectations based on licensure performance data and COE designations Abrigo et al., (2025), no statistically significant differences appeared in pedagogical profiles across different types of institutions.

Table 3. Pedagogical Philosophy by Institutional Type

Institution Type	Eclectic (%)	Practical (%)	Progressive (%)	Traditional (%)
State University	57.7	23.2	9.8	3.1
Private Non-Sectarian	57.3	24.7	10.1	3.4
Private Sectarian	59.5	26.2	9.5	0.0

The similarity of distributions ($\chi^2 = 15.2$, $p = .23$) indicates that pedagogical culture in the Ilocos Region crosses institutional boundaries, as state and private institutions show nearly identical patterns of eclecticism, practicality, and limited progressive specialization. This finding challenges the assumption that institutional type alone is a reliable indicator of pedagogical quality, since institutional designation or sector does not automatically determine teacher educators' pedagogical philosophies. Instead, system-wide professional norms, socialization processes, institutional culture, leadership, and internal support systems may play a stronger role in shaping pedagogical practices. The variation analysis also reveals the **experience paradox**, showing that progressive pedagogies are more common among novice and early-career teacher educators but may weaken over time as educators adjust to existing institutional cultures. Although pedagogical philosophies do not differ significantly by academic rank or educational attainment, this suggests that pedagogical expertise is not limited to senior or highly credentialed faculty, but can be developed across different ranks and levels of formal education. Overall, these findings highlight the need for intentional institutional strategies, such as intergenerational learning communities, support for novice educator innovation, and ongoing opportunities for instructional experimentation, to sustain and improve teacher quality as the educator workforce continues to evolve.

DISCUSSION

Integrating findings across the three research questions, this study advances an empirically grounded understanding of teacher educator pedagogical philosophy in the Ilocos Region, conceptualized as **Pragmatic Constructivism with Cultural Grounding**. This model reflects how teacher educators balance global pedagogical innovations with local classroom, community, and cultural realities in shaping teacher quality. At the core of this model is theory practice integration, which supports the development of teachers who can apply pedagogical knowledge flexibly and reflectively across diverse classroom contexts, a key feature of adaptive expertise [33]. This

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orientation is strengthened by experiential learning, authentic real-world contexts, active learning, and student-centered approaches, all of which align with evidence-based teacher education practices that emphasize active engagement, meaningful application, and learner responsiveness [2], [5].

Beyond these dominant themes, the findings also show the emergence of holistic dimensions such as metacognition, cultural responsiveness, and social-emotional learning, suggesting that teacher quality is increasingly viewed as multidimensional rather than merely technical. The emphasis on cultural grounding is particularly important in the Philippine context, where cultural values, community realities, and learner diversity shape classroom interaction and educational practice [25]. The dominance of pedagogical eclecticism further indicates that teacher educators often combine multiple approaches based on student needs, learning goals, and contextual demands. When guided by clear pedagogical principles, eclecticism can reflect adaptive and context-sensitive teaching; however, without coherent philosophical grounding, it may lead to fragmented practice, making professional reflection and pedagogical clarity essential [1].

The most critical finding is the **experience paradox**, where pedagogical sophistication appears to decline as years of teaching experience increase. Novice and early-career educators demonstrate stronger engagement with progressive pedagogies, while veteran educators show less thematic diversity, possibly due to institutional socialization, administrative pressures, or limited opportunities for sustained professional development. This finding challenges the assumption that seniority, rank, or educational attainment automatically leads to stronger pedagogical quality and instead highlights the importance of continuous professional learning, mentoring, and institutional support [21]. Overall, **Pragmatic Constructivism with Cultural Grounding** offers a promising but fragile foundation for teacher quality in the Ilocos Region, requiring intergenerational learning communities, support for novice-led innovation, reflective professional development, and institutional cultures that sustain pedagogical renewal [5].

Implications For Enhancing Teacher Quality

The findings have important implications for improving teacher quality at the individual, institutional, and policy levels. Teacher educators need to articulate clear pedagogical philosophies so their teaching is not only practical but also theoretically grounded. This is especially important because eclectic approaches can support reflective and adaptive teaching when guided by strong principles. They should also strengthen theory–practice integration through authentic learning, active and student centered methods, and opportunities for students to apply theory in real or simulated teaching contexts. Continuous professional learning and two-way mentoring between senior and novice educators are also needed to prevent pedagogical stagnation and promote innovation.

At the institutional and policy levels, teacher education institutions should provide systemic support through intergenerational learning communities, mentoring programs, field-based learning, technology integration, and institutional cultures that value pedagogical growth. Policymakers should design quality assurance systems that focus not only on structure and credentials but also on pedagogy, theory–practice integration, cultural responsiveness, and long-term teacher effectiveness. However, this study has limitations, including reliance on self-reported data, absence of direct teacher quality measurements, cross-sectional design, keyword-based coding, short responses, and limited generalizability beyond the Ilocos Region. Future research should use

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observational and longitudinal methods to connect teacher educators' philosophies with actual teaching practices and measurable teacher quality outcomes.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the pedagogical philosophies of teacher educators in the Ilocos Region of the Philippines and found that their practices are best described as **Pragmatic Constructivism with Cultural Grounding**, characterized by strong theory–practice integration, experiential learning, authentic contexts, active student-centered approaches, and emerging attention to metacognition, cultural responsiveness, and social-emotional learning. The findings also identified eight pedagogical profiles, with eclecticism as the dominant approach, suggesting adaptive expertise and contextual responsiveness rather than philosophical inconsistency, although educators still need professional development to clarify the principles behind their practices. A key concern is the **experience paradox**, where pedagogical sophistication appears to decline with years of teaching experience, indicating a possible generational gap and the influence of institutional culture on teacher educator practice. Overall, the study highlights strengths such as progressive pedagogy, holistic teacher development, and Filipino cultural grounding, while also noting challenges related to technology integration, institutional inequality, and employment insecurity. Therefore, improving teacher quality in the Ilocos Region requires intergenerational learning communities, support for principled eclecticism, protection of novice educator innovation, stronger institutional practices, technology-focused professional development, and further research linking teacher educator practices to teacher and student outcomes.

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All authors contributed equally to the publication of this paper, and all authors read and approved this paper, and all authors declare no conflict of interest.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

All authors state that there is no conflict of interest.

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