



# **A CORRELATIONAL STUDY OF TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF COMPETENCE AND YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE WITH THEIR PERCEPTION OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY AT PYINYA SANYAE TEACHER TRAINING CENTER IN YANGON, MYANMAR**

<sup>1</sup>Hlwan Ko Ko, <sup>2</sup>Matthew Reed Merritt

<sup>1,2</sup>(Graduate School of Human Sciences, Assumption University of Thailand, Thailand)

## **ABSTRACT**

The study investigated the correlation between teachers' perceptions of competence and years of teaching experience with their perception of professional learning community (PLC) at Pyinya Sanyae Teacher Training Center in Yangon, Myanmar. With 75 in-service teachers participating, the research integrated the theories of Teacher Competence and Teacher Effectiveness (Medley, 1977) and Hord's model (1997) of the professional learning community. Data analysis, including descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient) were calculated. Among the 75 teachers, 63% of teachers possessed less than 3 years of teaching experience and 37% accumulated over 3 years of teaching experience. Overall teachers' perceptions of competence and professional learning community were high. Results demonstrated a strong positive correlation between teachers' perception of competence and perception of professional learning community whereas no correlation was found between years of teaching experience and perception of professional learning community. Multiple Correlations analysis highlighted a significant relationship between teachers' perception of competence and their perception of professional learning community. Recommendations included prioritizing continuous professional development, focusing on technology integration, implementing retention strategies, and conducting comparative studies to empower educators and foster positive change in educational settings.

**KEYWORDS** - Teacher Perception, Teacher Competence, Years of Teaching Experience, Professional Learning Community

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Education is vital for societal progress, with teachers being central to effective education delivery. The pursuit of enhancing teaching and learning effectiveness has long been a focal point of research and reform initiatives worldwide. Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) have emerged as a prominent strategy aimed at fostering continuous teacher development and improving student outcomes by enhancing teacher competence (DuFour et al., 2016). Within PLCs, teachers collaborate to identify student needs, share instructional strategies, and assess student progress through reflective discussions (Harris & Jones, 2010). PLCs have been shown to enhance professional development by fostering collaboration and knowledge sharing among teachers. Moreover, teachers' competence is critical for effective education delivery and their interactions within PLCs.

Concerning this, the years of teaching experience is essential. McKim et al. (2017) found in their study that teachers with more experience were likelier to perceive themselves as having a high level of competence and more substantial commitment to teaching. Establishing PLCs within schools offers a platform for novice and challenged educators to collaborate with their more experienced counterparts, facilitating the acquisition of essential expertise and knowledge crucial for effective teaching (Owen, 2014).

Despite the significance of PLCs and teacher competence, novice teachers at Pyinya Sanyae face numerous challenges in implementing effective instructional strategies and translating pedagogical theories into practical classroom applications (Mon & Shwe, personal communication, Sep 11, 2023). Additionally, building and

maintaining positive relationships with colleagues is vital for fostering collaboration within PLCs, yet some teachers struggle with confidence in seeking instructional assistance and engaging in discussions about their needs or competence. These challenges can hinder the effectiveness of PLCs and impact overall teaching practices at Pyinya Sanyae.

This study investigated the relationship between teachers' perception of competence and years of teaching experience with their perception of PLCs at Pyinya Sanyae Teacher Training Center in Yangon, Myanmar. By examining these variables, this research contributed to the understanding of how teachers' perception of competence and years of teaching experience influence their perceptions of PLC. By identifying challenges and opportunities within PLC at Pyinya Sanyae, the study offered valuable insights for improving educational practices and promoting teacher growth and collaboration. The findings of this study can inform policymakers, educators, and stakeholders in designing effective strategies to enhance teachers' professional development.

### **1.1 Research Objectives**

The research objectives addressed in this study are as follow:

1. To identify the levels of years of teaching experience of teachers at Pyinya Sanyae Teacher Training Center in Yangon, Myanmar.
2. To identify the level of teachers' perception of competence at Pyinya Sanyae Teacher Training Center in Yangon, Myanmar.
3. To identify the level of teachers' perception of the professional learning community at Pyinya Sanyae Teacher Training Center in Yangon, Myanmar.
4. To identify there is a significant relationship between teachers' perception of competence and years of teaching experience with their perception of professional learning community at Pyinya Sanyae Teacher Training Center in Yangon, Myanmar.

### **1.2 Theoretical Framework**

This study utilized Hord's (1997) model of the Professional Learning Community, Oliver et al. (2010) revised Professional Learning Community assessment, and Medley's (1977) Theory of Teacher Competence and Teacher Effectiveness for teacher competence and years of teaching experience to present significance relationship of these variables.

#### **1.2.1 Professional Learning Community Assessment Model (Olivier et al., 2010)**

Hord's professional learning community (PLC) model is a framework for developing a constant improvement and culture of learning in schools. In 2010, Olivier, Hipp, and Huffman revised the Professional Learning Community assessment model based on Hord's (1997). The updated model incorporates five crucial elements that are crucial for a PLC's success:

##### **1.2.1.1 Shared and Supportive Leadership**

Shared and supportive leadership is an element which refers to the collaborative delegation of decision-making authority between educational staff and administrators. Administrators participate in the learning system and welcome the input of teachers.

##### **1.2.1.2 Shared Values and Vision**

Shared value and vision are also an element which is a shared understanding of the group's purpose, goals, and direction and working together to achieve these goals. In addition, faculty members in the community need to be dedicated to supporting the vision and values and participating in their development.

##### **1.2.1.3 Collective Learning and Application**

Collective learning and application focus on community training to promote student learning. Both staff and students must receive training if they are to improve. It needs a commitment to lifelong learning and progress from all community members and a willingness to impart their knowledge and skills to others.

##### **1.2.1.4 Shared Personal Practice**

Shared personal practice is one of the elements where the community offers beneficial support and constructive feedback to the faculty and the organization. Faculty members actively share their teaching practices and methods and provide feedback and suggestions to each other.

##### **1.2.1.5 Supporting Conditions**

Supporting conditions, emphasizing relational and structural is an element. Supporting structural conditions

involves time, location, resources, and policies to function in the community effectively. On the relational side, emphasize fostering interpersonal growth, clear communication, and respect among the faculty members where individuals can develop professionally and personally through interactions.

### 1.2.2 Medley's (1977) Teacher Competence and Teacher Effectiveness

The teacher's perception of competence is utilized in Medley's (1977) theory of teacher competence and effectiveness. There are four components as follows.

#### 1.2.2.1 Teaching and Learning Competence

First, competence in teaching and learning refers to a teacher's skills to organize, plan, and provide efficient teaching and student learning. A teacher with teaching and learning competence is knowledgeable about the subject matter, understands how to motivate pupils, and can adjust their teaching methods to meet their students' various learning styles and needs.

#### 1.2.2.2 Child-centred Approach Competence

Second, competence in utilizing a child-centred approach is defined by teachers who can design a learning environment sensitive to learners' individual needs, interests, and skills. Such a teacher can develop trusting relationships with students, offer significant chances for student autonomy and choice, and assist them in developing their social and personal skills.

#### 1.2.2.3 Evaluation Competence

Third, evaluation competence is the capacity of a teacher to assess student learning and deliver helpful feedback. A teacher who is proficient in evaluation is good at using various assessment techniques to acquire data about students' learning and can use this data to modify instruction and give students timely, precise feedback.

#### 1.2.2.4 Professionalism

Professionalism is the last component that covers effective teaching, including professional work ethic, passion for continued professional development, and a positive mindset on both teaching and learning. A professional teacher can also cooperate with colleagues, parents, and other stakeholders to build a conducive learning environment for learners.

### 1.3 Conceptual Framework

The study was based on a conceptual framework that includes a Professional Learning Community (PLC) characterized by supportive and shared leadership, shared values and vision, collective learning, and application, shared personal practice, and supportive conditions. Additionally, Teacher Competence was analysed through four dimensions: teaching and learning competence, child-centred approach competence, evaluation competence, and professionalism.

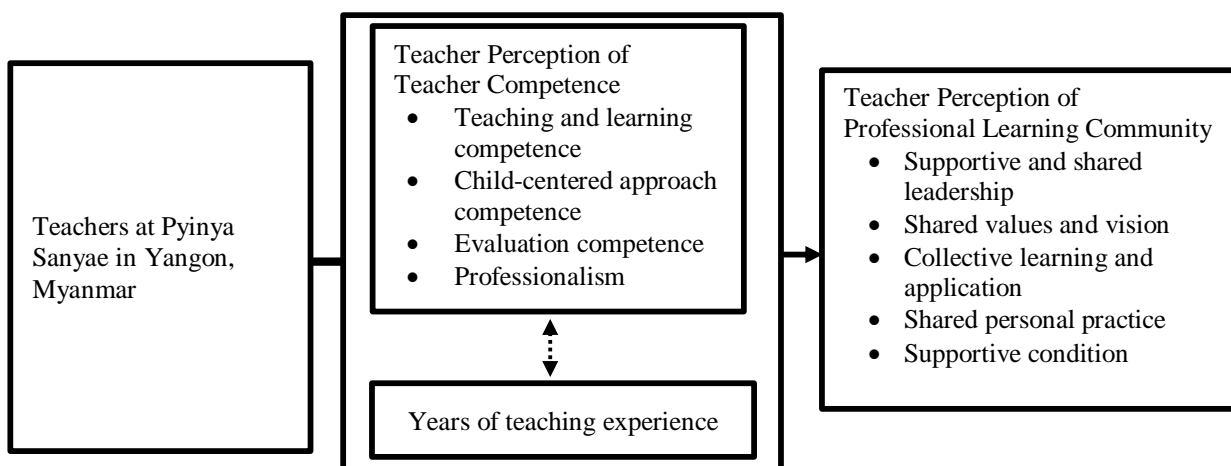


Figure 1: The conceptual framework of this study

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Professional Learning Communities

Professional learning communities (PLCs) are recognized globally for their impact on teacher development and student success. These communities foster reflective discourse among educators, enabling them to collectively enhance instructional strategies (Nelson & Slavit, 2008; Kokoros, 2023). Professionals are individuals with specialized knowledge and skills acquired through formal education, training, and experience. Learning involves acquiring new knowledge, skills, and insights through various experiences and interactions. It is a continuous process that promotes personal development and adaptability (De Houwer et al., 2013; Australian Council of Professions, 2022). PLC consist of educators with shared interests, values, or goals who interact to achieve common objectives. Professional learning communities comprise teachers who collaboratively work to improve teaching skills and learning outcomes. They share goals, focus on student learning, and cultivate a collaborative culture of inquiry (Hord, 1997; Louis & Kruse, 1995; Stoll et al., 2006).

### 2.2 Hord's Model of Professional Learning Competence

Hord's model emphasizes supportive and shared leadership, shared values and vision, collective learning and application, shared personal practice, and supportive conditions within PLCs (Hord, 1997, 2007; Olivier et al., 2010).

#### 2.2.1 Supportive and shared leadership

Hord's model (1997) involves the collaborative delegation of power and responsibility among administrators and faculty members, departing from traditional hierarchical decision-making structures. This approach, emphasized by Hkawang & Bank (2018), fosters a culture of collective engagement and participation in leadership processes, contrasting with the limiting reliance on administrators for critical decisions. Hipp and Huffman (2008) assert the importance of staff participation in decision-making, facilitated by principals who encourage delegation of authority and shared power. Despite the challenges noted by Hargreaves and Fink (2006), supportive leadership from principals, as highlighted by Louis and Kruse (1995), is crucial for fostering professional learning communities within schools.

#### 2.2.1.1 Shared Values and Vision

Shared values and vision are essential for establishing a cohesive learning environment focused on student success. They align educators' goals and actions with the overarching mission of the PLC, promoting collaboration and innovation in instructional practices (Louis & Kruse, 1995; Hord, 2004).

#### 2.2.1.2 Collective Learning and Application

According to Hord and Sommers (2008) DuFour and Eaker (1998), collective learning emphasizes capacity building among educators through collaborative inquiry and application of knowledge to address student needs. Protocols and systemic models facilitate group learning and continuous improvement in teaching practices

#### 2.2.1.3 Shared Personal Practice

Peer review and observation of classroom practices promote professional growth and improvement among educators. Collegial support and trust-building transform teachers into agents of change within the PLC (Louis & Kruse, 1995; Hord, 1997).

#### 2.2.1.4 Supportive Conditions

According to Hord (1997 and 2004), supportive conditions encompass interpersonal relationships and physical resources that facilitate collaborative learning and decision-making within PLCs. Human capacity and structural conditions are crucial for fostering a culture of continuous improvement and innovation.

### 2.2 Teacher Competence in Education

Teacher competence plays a crucial role in shaping students' learning outcomes. Various countries have different standards and policies to ensure teaching quality. Finland, for example, with its traditional trust culture, may have less emphasis on formal standards. However, a shared understanding of teacher competence remains vital for effective education. Other European nations, like Germany and Sweden, are developing policies to enhance teacher education (Niemi, & Lavonen (2020); Döbrich et al., 2003). Teacher competence encompasses knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values essential for effective teaching. It includes the ability to implement instructional strategies, manage classrooms, foster positive environments, adapt to changes, use technology, and engage in ongoing professional development (Pantić & Wubbels, 2010).

### 2.3 Medley's Model of Teacher Competence

Medley's model outlines four key dimensions of teacher competence: Teaching and Learning Competence, Child-Centered Approach Competence, Evaluation Competence, and Professionalism. These dimensions highlight the importance of subject mastery, instructional strategies, adapting to students' needs, providing effective feedback, and continuous professional growth (Medley, 1977).

#### 2.4.1 Teaching and Learning Competence

This dimension focuses on subject mastery, pedagogical techniques, and adapting instruction to diverse student needs. Effective teaching strategies positively impact student learning outcomes, promoting inclusivity and engagement in the classroom (Ball & Forzani, 2009; Franzoni & Assar, 2009).

#### 2.4.2 Child-Centered Approach Competence

Adapting instruction to students' unique needs and promoting autonomy and engagement are central to this dimension. Student-centered practices foster motivation, deeper learning, and active participation in the learning process (Vygotsky, 1978; Piaget, 1973).

#### 2.4.3 Evaluation Competence

Black and Wiliam (1998) explained that evaluation competence involves assessing student progress and providing constructive feedback. Effective assessment practices support targeted interventions and ongoing improvement in teaching and learning.

#### 2.4.4 Professionalism

Professional educators demonstrate moral behavior, commitment to ongoing development, and collaboration with colleagues and the broader educational community. They engage in reflective practice, stay updated on research and technology, and promote equity and inclusion (Schön, 1983; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

## 3. METHOD

### 3.1 Research Design

The research intended to determine the relationship between teachers' perception of competence and years of teaching experience with their perception of professional learning communities at Pyinya Sanyae Teacher Training Center in Yangon, Myanmar. This research was designed as a quantitative correlational study utilizing the Oliver, Hiff, Huffman (2010) Professional Learning Community Assessment- Revised and Medley's (1977) Teacher Competence and Teacher Effectiveness as research instruments for data collection. The researcher used descriptive statistics and correlation methods to identify the relationship between the teachers' perception of competence and years of teaching experience with their perception of professional learning communities at Pyinya Sanyae Teacher Training Center in Yangon, Myanmar.

### 3.2 Population Sample

The research was conducted at Pyinya Sanaye Teacher Training Center in Yangon, Myanmar. The target population of this study was in-service teachers from Pyinya Sanyae Teacher Training Center and they were currently working in various educational settings across Myanmar, including schools, boarding houses, and community schools during the academic year of 2022-2023. A total number of 75 teachers teaching in various educational settings across Myanmar, including schools, boarding houses, and community schools were the sample of this study.

### 3.3 Research Instrument

The research questionnaire consists of three parts. In part (I), the questionnaire identified the demographic of participants in this study, including age, gender, teaching position, and years of teaching experience, to get general information and teachers' years of teaching experience. In part (II), the questionnaire determined the level of teachers' perceptions of professional learning community using the shortened form of Olivier et al. (2010) Professional Learning Community Assessment - Revised by Gray et al. (2014) as an important research tool for this study. The revised version of the Professional Learning Community Assessment (PLCA-R) tool was developed by Olivier et al. (2003) and revised in 2010. It consists of 52 items condensed into twelve items (Gray et al., 2014). The PLCA-R assesses six subscales, which include shared and supportive leadership, shared values and vision, collective learning, and application, shared personal practice, supportive conditions-relationships, and supportive conditions-structures (Olivier et al., 2003). Respondents had to indicate their perception of the professional learning community on a 5-point Likert-type rating scale: (1) "strongly disagree," (2) "disagree," (3) "not sure" (4) "agree," and (5) "strongly agree." The questionnaire part (III) determined teachers' perceptions of

competence level at Pyinya Sanyae Teacher Training Center in Yangon, Myanmar, utilizing the research questions developed by Medley's (1977) Teachers' Competence and Teacher Effectiveness. Henrique (2018) used the same questionnaire to identify teachers' perception of competence level. The survey consisted of 30 items in which respondents had to indicate the range of their level of perception of competence on the same 5-point Likert-type rating scale.

#### 4. FINDINGS

**The findings of this study were presented based on the research objectives:**

- **Research objective 1.** Based on a sample size of 75 teachers. The data is divided into categories representing levels of teaching experience. The majority of teachers who participated in this study fall within one and five years of teaching experience range, with 28% having one year, 16% having two years, and 14% having five years. 12% of teachers have less than one year of experience. Furthermore, there are fewer teachers with three, four, six, and ten years of teaching experience, ranging from 3% to 7%. There are no reported values for teachers with 8 or 9 years of teaching experience.
- **Research objective 2.** The finding from the research objective of identifying the level of teachers' perception of competence at selected Teacher Training Center in Yangon, Myanmar, the highest mean was 3.92 with a standard deviation of 0.68 for the teaching and learning competence components, and the mean score of professionalism component was the lowest among the four with 3.86 and .66 standard deviations. However, the finding of all four components of competence collectively displayed the high perceptions of teachers towards various facets, and their overall mean score was 3.90 with a standard deviation of .66. Therefore, teachers believe a high level of agreement towards their competence at the Pyinya Sanyae Teacher Training Center in Yangon, Myanmar. However, the standard deviations indicate variation in these perceptions among the teachers surveyed.
- **Research objective 3.** The finding from the research objective of identifying the level of teachers' perception of professional learning community focusing on listed five components at selected Teacher Training Center in Yangon, Myanmar, shared and supportive leadership component obtained a mean score of 3.82 with a standard deviation of 0.78, indicating a high perception level within the context of a Professional Learning Community. Similarly, the mean score of shared values and visions component was 3.83 with a standard deviation of 0.79, demonstrating high level of perceived professional learning community in this area. Furthermore, both shared personal practices and supportive conditions components gained the same mean score of 3.82, with .78 and .66 standard deviations, confirming a high level of perceived professional learning community. The mean for the Collective Learning and Application component is 3.89, with a standard deviation of .69, indicating the highest perception among teachers among the five components. These findings collectively highlight the high level of agreement on their perceptions towards various facets, and their overall mean score was 3.85 with a standard deviation of .63; therefore, teachers are confirmed as having a high level of perception towards the professional learning community at the selected Teacher Training Center in Yangon, Myanmar.
- **Research objective 4.** There is a significant, weak positive correlation between teachers' perception of competence and years of competence and strong positive correlation between teachers' perception of competence and their perception of professional learning community however there is no correlation between years of teaching experience and teachers' perception of professional learning community at the Pyinya Sanyae Teacher Training Center in Yangon, Myanmar. The regression model involving teachers' perception of competence significantly influences their perception of professional learning community at Pyinya Sanyae Teacher Training Center in Yangon, Myanmar.

#### 5. DISCUSSION

The finding of teachers' years of teaching experience at the Pyinya Sanyae Teacher Training Center reported having less than one year or up to five years of teaching experience. This observation suggests a trend of substantial turnover within the center. This pattern implies that as teachers acquire some experience following their training, there appears to be a notable transition, potentially resulting in some teachers leaving the center or the profession altogether (Donley et al., 2019). Possible reasons for this turnover could be influenced by various factors, including contractual obligations specifying the end of service terms, financial considerations, opportunities for career advancement, job satisfaction, or personal circumstances. Recognizing and addressing the factors contributing to this turnover is crucial for promoting teacher retention and maintaining stability within the center. It is essential to understand the underlying reasons for teacher turnover to implement effective strategies aimed at enhancing job satisfaction and creating a supportive working environment. Effective strategies include leadership that values and supports teachers (Perrone, 2022), competitive salaries and benefits, adequate resources, manageable class sizes, and high-quality professional development.

The objective of assessing teachers' perceptions of competence at the Pyinya Sanyae Teacher Training Center in Yangon, Myanmar, revealed significant perceptions across four distinct components: teaching and learning competence, child-centred approach competence, evaluation competence, and professionalism. Collectively, the teachers at Pyinya Sanyae Teacher Training Center demonstrated high perceptions of competence across various facets. The overall mean score of 3.90 with a standard deviation of 0.66 demonstrates a commendable level of confidence and proficiency among educators at the Center. This reveals that surveyed teachers have high level of confidence in their ability to complete a specific set of responsibilities or challenges. Besides, addressing potential areas of improvement, such as technology integration and proactive communication, further enhances the overall competence perceptions among teachers and contributes to an even more effective teaching and learning environment.

The analysis revealed a high perception of teachers in the teaching and learning competence component. This high perception suggests that teachers demonstrated strong perceptions of their abilities across various teaching and learning aspects and reflects there is a culture of collaboration among teachers, where they actively share knowledge and best practices within their subject areas, continue to focus on effective teaching methodologies, and a commitment among teachers at the center to improve their pedagogical approaches continually. Lay and Ye (2022) conducted the correlation between teachers' perceptions of administrative support and competence at No. (1) Basic Education High School in Hpa-An Township, Karen State, Myanmar. The study revealed that the teachers' perception of teaching and learning competence was also high. However, the study suggested paying more attention to their pedagogical approaches to improve their ability to teach and learn. This highlights the importance of ongoing efforts to refine teaching methodologies and ensure continuous improvement within the teaching and learning competence domain.

Although displaying high perceptions, the child-centred approach competence component gained a mean score of 3.88 with a standard deviation of 0.69. While most items received high ratings, items like instructing students to use technology to enhance learning (3.44) received comparatively lower scores. The researcher believes the lower score in technology integration could be due to limited access to technological resources or inadequate training in implementing technology for learning enhancement. This reflects the educators' priority toward fostering a supportive and conducive student atmosphere. Effective technology integration is crucial for improving student learning, according to research on educational technology (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). The literature suggests that teachers find difficulty or need additional assistance when utilizing technology to enhance students' learning opportunities, which is supported by the lower mean score for the technology-related item. These findings offer valuable insights for educational leaders, allowing them to tailor support and professional development opportunities to enhance instructional practices and promote a more unified approach to teaching and learning.

Teachers represented a high level of perceived competence in evaluation. While all items scored high, demonstrating a positive attitude toward learning (4.14) ranked highest, whereas planning instruction at varying levels of thinking (3.64) received a relatively lower score. One explanation may be that emphasizing a positive learning environment might reflect a school culture that values students' emotional well-being and engagement. Lay and Ye (2022) also highlight the significance of teachers displaying a positive attitude towards learning is a good sign of the teachers. However, the lower score in planning instruction at varying levels could indicate a potential area for improvement in adapting teaching methods to provide for diverse learning needs.

The professionalism component attained the lowest mean score among the four components, standing at 3.86 with a standard deviation of 0.66. While all items scored high, treating all people with respect and dignity (4.26) ranked the highest, while assuming a proactive role in the communication of the school's strategic plan (3.64) ranked lower. The lower score in proactive communication might imply a need for more inclusive and proactive communication strategies within the school community. Lay and Ye (2022) also advocated for a more collaborative and inclusive approach to school governance by involving teachers in communicating and disseminating the school's strategic plans. On the other hand, the high score in treating people with respect and dignity highlights the teachers' commitment to promoting a respectful and positive learning environment in the Center.

In the case of this study at Pyinya Sanyae Teacher Training Center, the use of a self-scoring instrument may have resulted in inflated high perceptions of competence among the teachers due to several reasons, such as a desire to present oneself in a positive light or a lack of awareness of one's limitations. Self-scoring instruments rely on individuals' self-perception and self-assessment, which can be influenced by factors such as personal biases, social desirability, and subjective interpretations. On the other hand, objective measures tend to rely on external observations, standardized assessments, or evaluations conducted by independent researchers, which can provide

a more unbiased and accurate assessment of competence. Ross & Bruce (2007) contends in their study that offering a self-assessment tool can help increase the effectiveness of in-service teaching as long as it is combined with other professional development techniques, such as peer coaching, outside change agent observation, and targeted feedback on instructional strategies. Therefore, to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of teachers' competence perceptions, it would be beneficial to incorporate a combination of self-scoring instruments and more objective measures in future assessments.

The research objective 3 was to assess the teachers' perception of the professional learning community of the selected Teacher Training Center in Yangon, Myanmar, focusing on five key components: shared and supportive leadership, shared values, and visions, shared personal practices, supportive conditions, and collective learning and application.

The shared and supportive leadership component indicated a high level of teachers' perception within the context of the PLC. This suggests that teachers perceive a strong level of shared leadership and support within the community. The high score in this component is attributed to effective leadership practices that promote collaboration and openness among educators. A possible reason is that leaders encourage shared decision-making, provide support, and create an environment that values and respects contributions from all community members. In contrast, Hkawng and Bank (2018) conducted the relationship between teachers' perceptions of the professional learning community according to demographic factors, age, educational background, teaching experience, and training experience at Lai Za High School, Kachin State, Myanmar. The study showed that teachers' perception of supportive and shared leadership was low because the level of respect accorded to leaders within the school community creates a perceived barrier or discomfort for teachers to engage in decision-making processes actively.

Similar to shared and supportive leadership, the shared values and visions component signified a high degree of perception of teachers. This suggests a strong alignment in values and collective vision among teachers within the PLC. A factor contributing to this is a clear articulation and communication of the school's mission, goals, and values. Educators sharing a common vision fosters a sense of unity and purpose, driving collaborative efforts toward common objectives. In contrast to this study's findings at Pyinya Sanyae Teacher Training Center, the finding of Hkawng and Bank (2018) for the perception of teachers towards shared values and visions component was low and explained that teachers focused on student learning and passing grades than on shared values and visions.

The collective learning and application component obtained the highest among the five components. This indicates the highest perception among teachers, suggesting a strong emphasis on collaborative learning and the practical application of knowledge. An underlying cause of gaining high scores in collective learning and application is a culture that encourages continuous learning, where teachers engage in collaborative inquiry, share findings, and implement new strategies collectively. It is the researcher's experience that teachers had time to come together for collaboration work inside and outside of school time. Structured time for working together promotes professional growth and enhances teaching practices within the PLC.

The shared personal practices component also affirmed high perceptions within the PLC. This high perception implies that teachers feel supported in their professional practices within a conducive environment. The literature reviews also mentioned that the incorporation of shared practices is vital for job-embedded professional development (Huffman & Hipp, 2003). The high ratings in this component reflect a culture of sharing best practices among teachers and professional development opportunities. This encourages the majority of the teachers in the community to exchange ideas, innovate, and feel supported in their pedagogical approaches.

The supportive conditions component confirmed high perceptions among teachers within the PLC. A possible implication is that teachers feel supported in their professional practices within a conducive environment, and it reflects the presence of supportive conditions such as adequate resources, time for collaboration, and professional development opportunities in the center. Cowan's (2003) recommended that PLC members may be able to assign interdependent responsibilities more easily if a structured period of time for collaborative learning is established, as long as structural needs are addressed. Experience and competence can be gained through the facilitation of collegial behavior and teacher empowerment through an organized logistical structure.

Overall, the high perceptions across these components highlight the strengths of the PLC within the Teacher Training Center. These positive perceptions could contribute to a thriving professional community that continuously learns, collaborates, and implements innovative practices, benefiting educators and students.



The research objective 4 was to find the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient, the correlation between the teachers' perception of competence and years of teaching experience. There is a significant, weak positive correlation between teachers' perception of competence and years of teaching experience at Pyinya Sanyae Teacher Training Center in Yangon, Myanmar. This notable correlation between teachers' perception of competence and their years of teaching experience could be attributed to some potential explanations. Firstly, as teachers gain experience, they accumulate a deeper understanding of pedagogical strategies, diverse teaching methods, and effective classroom management practices. Growing experiences over time contribute to an enhanced perception of their competence in various aspects of teaching and learning (McKim et al., 2017).

Furthermore, with increased experience, educators often encounter a more comprehensive range of student needs, diverse learning styles, and classroom dynamics. This experience allows them to improve their instructional strategies and foster a sense of competence in addressing academic, social, and emotional aspects of teaching. Additionally, as teachers continue to grow professionally, they often engage in ongoing professional development opportunities, workshops, or specialized training. These activities could positively influence their perception of competence, particularly in areas like subject matter proficiency, working with diverse student groups, and utilizing innovative teaching methodologies. According to Kini & Podolsky (2016), teachers become more effective when they work in a collaborative and supportive environment and gain experience in the same grade level, subject, or district.

Moreover, the correlation indicates that the Teacher Training Center's programs or support mechanisms for professional growth effectively reinforce the experiences gained through years of teaching. The Center's support initiatives could align with teachers' evolving needs, reinforcing their sense of competence and efficacy in various facets of teaching and learning. Owen (2014) suggests that within a professional learning community, less experienced or novice teachers have the opportunity to interact and collaborate with more experienced counterparts. This interaction facilitates the acquisition of essential expertise and knowledge crucial for effective teaching.

In summary, the statistically significant correlation between teachers' perception of competence and their years of teaching experience at Pyinya Sanyae Teacher Training Center suggests that as teachers gain more experience in their careers, they tend to perceive themselves as more competent across different domains of teaching. This correlation emphasizes the value of experience in shaping teachers' confidence and proficiency, highlighting the need for continued professional development plans that complement and build upon this increased experience.

The result of the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient showed a lack of statistically significant correlation between teachers' years of teaching experience and their perceptions of the professional learning community. The absence of a significant correlation between teachers' years of teaching experience and their perception of the professional learning community at Pyinya Sanyae Teacher Training Center in Yangon may be affected by various factors. It suggests that the duration of experience in teaching roles does not inherently contribute to a clear perception of the professional learning community. In other words, more than experience alone is needed to influence how teachers perceive the effectiveness or support within the learning community.

According to the findings, the sample participants in this study have an average of nearly three years of teaching professional experience and the majority of them have less than one year of experience, however, their active participation and engagement in the professional learning community matter to the effectiveness of a professional learning community rather than their years of teaching experience. Hord (1997, 2004) teachers who actively contribute, collaborate, and share insights within a PLC are more likely to positively influence its effectiveness. It is reasonable that the Center's professional learning community initiatives or practices might not necessarily vary concerning teachers' tenure. The approach or level of involvement within the learning community might remain consistent across unique experience levels, thus leading to an absence of correlation.

Another discussion of finding Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient is the correlation between the teachers' perception of competence and their perception of professional learning community; there is a significant, strong positive correlation between teachers' perception of competence and their perception of professional learning community at Pyinya Sanyae Teacher Training Center in Yangon, Myanmar. When teachers perceive themselves as competent in their roles, they are more likely to actively engage within the professional learning community. This means they participate in collaborative activities, contribute ideas, share experiences, and take on leadership roles. Their confidence in their abilities drives them to be proactive and involved in the community's initiatives and discussions (Pan & Cheng, 2023).

The last step involved calculating multiple correlations between the dependent variable (perception of professional learning community,) and the independent variables (their perception of competence and years of teaching experience). The result displayed there was a significant relationship between teachers' perception of competence with their perception of professional learning community however teachers' perception of competence is correlated with years of teaching experience at Pyinya Sanyae Teacher Training Center in Yangon, Myanmar.

As this significant association indicates that these variables collectively represent a substantial proportion, approximately 52.2%, of the variance observed in their perception of professional learning community. Other influential factors not accounted for in this study could contribute to teachers' perceptions within the professional learning community was 48.8%. Gray et al. (2014) highlighted that elements like leadership styles, organizational culture, or specific teaching environments might have a more pronounced impact on how teachers perceive the effectiveness of the learning community, overriding any potential influence from years of teaching experience. These findings suggest that while years of teaching experience might shape teachers' competence, they may not directly impact how teachers perceive the professional learning community within this training center in Yangon, Myanmar.

One possible explanation for this finding is that teachers' perception of competence and their years of teaching experience impact the development and sustaining developing and sustaining of an influential professional learning community. Experienced teachers, through their years in the field, have improved their pedagogical skills and accumulated practical knowledge. This increased experience could contribute significantly to their perception of competence, instilling confidence in their abilities to contribute meaningfully to collaborative learning environments (McKim et al., 2017).

Another alternative reason could be that when teachers with different experience levels come together, they bring diverse perspectives and skills to the learning community (Sukru Bellibas et al., 2017). This mix of different viewpoints, combined with their confidence in their abilities, might create an environment where they can share ideas effectively, work together to solve problems, and introduce new and innovative teaching methods within the professional learning community.

Furthermore, teachers with a higher perceived competence might actively seek and engage in professional learning communities. Their confidence in their abilities could motivate them to actively participate, share innovative practices, and engage in reflective discussions within the community. This active involvement might positively influence the overall effectiveness of the learning community by fostering an environment of collaboration, support, and knowledge sharing (Worapun et al., 2022).

## 6. RECOMMENDATION

The findings of this study offer valuable insights into teachers' perception of competence, years of teaching experience and their perception of professional learning community (PLC) at Pyinya Sanyae Teacher Training Center in Yangon, Myanmar. Based on these findings, here are some recommendations for teachers, school administrators, educators, and future researchers concerned:

Teachers are encouraged to prioritize continuous professional development by actively participating in workshops, seminars, and training sessions offered by the center. These opportunities focus on enhancing competencies in areas such as technology integration, effective pedagogical approaches, and proactive communication. Additionally, teachers should emphasize collaborative learning within the professional learning community, actively engaging in collaborative activities, sharing best practices, and contributing ideas to create a supportive learning environment. Reflective practice is also advocated, encouraging teachers to identify areas for improvement and implement strategies to enhance teaching effectiveness through self-awareness and continuous improvement. Lastly, teachers should make effective use of available resources, including instructional materials, technology tools, and professional development opportunities, to support their teaching and learning goals effectively.

As for administrators, trainers and stakeholders, this study advises to prioritize the design and implementation of comprehensive professional development programs tailored to meet teachers' needs and areas for improvement. These programs should address diverse learning styles, technology integration, and effective instructional practices. Furthermore, they should focus on enhancing communication strategies within the center to ensure clear dissemination of information, including the school's mission, goals, and expectations. Open communication channels should be promoted to facilitate dialogue and collaboration among staff members. Additionally, administrators should develop and implement retention strategies aimed at reducing turnover rates among

teachers. These strategies should address factors such as job satisfaction, career advancement opportunities, and supportive working environments to promote teacher retention and stability within the center.

Besides the study results presented, there are areas for future researchers to consider conducting comparative studies to assess the effectiveness of professional learning communities across different levels of teaching positions, educational contexts, institutions, or geographical regions. Such comparative studies can identify best practices and lessons learned that can inform policy and practice in diverse settings, contributing to the improvement of professional learning communities in education settings. Furthermore, researchers should promote action research projects that empower teachers to actively engage in inquiry-based practices to address specific challenges or areas for improvement within their professional learning communities. Action research fosters teacher agency and collaboration, enabling educators to drive positive change within their educational settings through evidence-based practices and continuous reflection.

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