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MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCE AND TEACHING ENGAGEMENT IN THE DIVISION OF DAVAO DEL NORTE

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between multicultural competence and teaching engagement among 200 teachers in the Sto. Tomas District, Division of Davao del Norte. Utilizing a descriptive correlational research design, survey questionnaires were employed to measure the extent of multicultural competence and teaching engagement. The data were analyzed using Weighted Mean, Pearson Product Moment Correlation, and Regression Analysis. Findings indicated that teachers demonstrated an extensive level of multicultural competence, with multicultural knowledge being always evident, and multicultural skills and awareness often evident. Similarly, the level of teaching engagement among teachers was extensive across all dimensions. A significant positive relationship was found between multicultural competence and teaching engagement, demonstrating that higher levels of multicultural competence are associated with increased teaching engagement. Regression analysis revealed that multicultural knowledge, skills, and awareness significantly influenced teaching engagement, each contributing to enhancing teacher engagement in the classroom. The study concluded that multicultural competence is a key factor influencing teaching engagement, emphasizing the importance of multicultural knowledge, skills, and awareness in promoting effective teaching practices. These findings underscore the need for initiatives that support the development of multicultural competence to foster an inclusive and engaging teaching environment.

KEYWORDS: *Multicultural Competence; Teaching Engagement; Multicultural Knowledge; Skills; Awareness; Teacher Engagement; Inclusive Education.*

INTRODUCTION

In today's globalized world, education systems must respond to the increasing cultural diversity among students. In the Philippines—particularly in Davao del Norte, where multiculturalism is pronounced—teachers encounter learners from various linguistic, ethnic, and belief backgrounds. This makes multicultural competence a vital skill in fostering inclusive and effective learning environments.

Cultural competence has become essential across multiple professions, including education, as globalization intensifies intercultural interactions. While efforts have been made to embed cultural awareness in training programs, questions remain about their effectiveness (Puck et al., 2020). In education, especially in regions like Davao del Norte, teachers must not only acknowledge cultural differences but actively engage with them to enhance teaching engagement and student outcomes.

Despite its recognized importance, research exploring the link between multicultural competence and teaching engagement remains scarce, particularly in Davao del Norte. This study aims to address that gap by examining how teachers' multicultural competence influences their classroom engagement. Findings may guide professional development efforts and inform policy interventions tailored to support educators in culturally diverse settings, ultimately contributing to more inclusive and responsive educational practices.

REVIEW OF SIGNIFICANT LITERATURE

This study explores the relationship between teachers' multicultural competence and their teaching engagement. The independent variable, multicultural competence, comprises three dimensions: multicultural teaching knowledge, skills, and awareness (Spanierman et al., 2021). The dependent variable, teaching engagement, is reflected through instructional strategies, classroom management, and student engagement (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2019).

Multicultural Competence

Multicultural competence involves understanding and valuing cultural differences through knowledge, skills, and awareness. Sue and Sue (2020) emphasize that culture shapes individuals' values, beliefs, and communication, making cultural awareness critical in diverse educational settings. Research highlights that exposure to diversity, formal education, and supportive environments enhance cultural competence (Dunn et al., 2023; Hung, 2020). Self-perception, past training, and educator identity also influence competence development (Neville & Harris, 2019; Lum, 2020).

Cultural competence is essential in education, counseling, and business as it fosters inclusion and improves outcomes (Martin & Vaughn, 2019; Cross, 2019). It is seen as a lifelong process involving continuous learning and self-reflection (Sue & Sue, 2020; Borrego & Johnson, 2022).

Multicultural Teaching Knowledge includes understanding the histories, practices, and perspectives of diverse cultures. It enables teachers to develop responsive strategies and inclusive classroom environments (Spanierman et al., 2021). It also allows educators to assess institutional practices through a culturally sensitive lens (Lum, 2020).

Multicultural Teaching Skills involve effective communication, empathy, and adaptability in diverse settings. These are essential for fostering inclusive classroom interactions and ensuring students' academic success (Spanierman, 2021; Johansson, 2019). Such skills are also critical in other professions, such as social work and business, where cross-cultural communication is vital (Lum, 2020).

Multicultural Awareness refers to self-reflection on one's biases, values, and cultural identity. This self-awareness supports respectful interactions and inclusive practices (Sue & Sue, 2020). Teachers with strong cultural awareness are better equipped to manage classroom diversity and promote equitable learning (Spanierman, 2021; Johansson, 2019).

Teaching Engagement

Teaching engagement refers to the level of enthusiasm and commitment teachers invest in instructional practice, classroom management, and student interactions. It significantly influences student motivation, learning outcomes, and the classroom climate (Borrego & Johnson, 2022).

Highly engaged teachers demonstrate resilience, creativity, and a proactive attitude toward challenges (Hussain & Khan, 2022). Engagement is closely linked to personal agency and efficacy beliefs developed through experience. Policymakers and education leaders play a role in enhancing engagement by providing supportive environments and professional development opportunities (Caprara et al., 2019; Schwarzer & Hallum, 2020).

Although teacher engagement has been widely studied, there is a need for further research—especially longitudinal studies and intervention-based inquiries—to understand how it evolves and how it can be fostered through targeted strategies (Klassen & Tze, 2019).

Instructional Strategies

Instructional strategies refer to the various methods and tools used by educators to facilitate effective learning. These strategies are critical in promoting student engagement, enhancing understanding, and achieving educational goals (Obara & Okoh, 2020). Effective instructional strategies are selected based on alignment with curricular objectives and student needs, interests, and developmental levels.

Buseri and Dorgu (2021) emphasized that for learning to be meaningful, instructional strategies must be concrete and student-centered. Differentiated instruction, which allows varied approaches to learning based on individual student differences, has been shown to significantly improve learning outcomes (Smith & Robertson, 2019). Teachers employ verbal instruction, demonstrations, and explanations to foster understanding (Adediran, 2022), while technology integration enhances learning through multimedia resources that cater to diverse learning preferences (Johnson et al., 2020).

Modern classrooms increasingly emphasize active learning methods such as inquiry-based learning, role-playing, and collaborative tasks. These have been found to enhance problem-solving, critical thinking, and student participation (Osakwe, 2019; Adeyemi & Ifeoma, 2021). Collaborative learning, in particular, fosters social interaction and critical thinking through peer engagement.

Curriculum design now aims to develop lifelong learners who are equipped for a complex world, emphasizing the importance of critical thinking, self-expression, and adaptability (Enu & Esu, 2020). Freeman et al. (2019) concluded that active learning strategies result in better retention and deeper involvement than traditional methods.

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Classroom Management

Effective classroom management is a key component of teaching competence and directly impacts teacher well-being and student performance (Dicke et al., 2020; Sutton et al., 2019). It includes practices like rule-setting, establishing routines, and managing student behavior (Emmer & Stough, 2021). Novice teachers often find this area particularly challenging.

Studies suggest that teachers who are confident in their classroom management skills face fewer disruptions and maintain better learning environments (Pfitzner-Eden et al., 2019). Engagement in classroom management is shaped by contextual factors such as school resources and demands, which affect the strategies employed (Praetorius et al., 2019; Holzberger et al., 2023).

Research also shows that effective classroom management correlates with high teaching engagement, particularly when teachers adopt proactive and supportive behaviors rather than reactive or negative ones (Wubbels et al., 2022). However, many studies have been cross-sectional or limited in duration, indicating a need for more robust longitudinal data (Dicke et al., 2020).

Student Engagement

Student engagement—defined by active participation, interest, and investment in learning—is closely linked to academic performance. Educators aim to create environments that encourage student curiosity and motivation. Shernoff et al. (2023) found that meaningful content, challenging tasks, and group activities significantly increase student engagement. Similarly, Barbra et al. (2019) and Appleton et al. (2020) identified classroom environment and teacher support as critical factors.

Engaged students exhibit higher academic performance and persistence, often driven by self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation (Eccles et al., 2020; Bandura, 2019). Student engagement becomes increasingly influential in secondary education as learners develop independence and identity (Thijs & Verkuyten, 2019; Multon et al., 2021). High engagement not only improves academic outcomes but also supports emotional development and classroom participation (Greene et al., 2019; Turner et al., 2022).

Multicultural Competence and Teaching Engagement

Teachers' multicultural competence significantly affects their engagement and instructional effectiveness. According to Nieto and Booth (2019), culturally competent educators understand students' backgrounds and adapt teaching methods accordingly. Cultural competence involves awareness of diversity, interpersonal skills, and the ability to foster inclusive classrooms (Sue & Sue, 2020; Gay, 2022).

Bandura's theory suggests that teachers' engagement is influenced by their belief in their capacity to achieve teaching goals, which in turn affects student learning outcomes (Nieto & Booth, 2019). Teachers' perceptions of their students can shape lesson planning, classroom interactions, and responsiveness to diverse needs (Pajares, 2019). Humor, empathy, and culturally responsive practices have been identified as tools for improving student motivation and participation (Lovorn, 2021).

However, the lack of adequate multicultural training in many education programs poses challenges. Teachers who lack this training may struggle to adapt curricula to reflect students' cultural contexts (Nieto & Booth, 2019). Therefore, culturally competent engagement requires not only skills and knowledge but also a disposition of openness and continuous learning (Chu, 2021).

Engaged teachers provide emotional support, adapt their practices, and give constructive feedback, all of which are vital for student development (Azar, 2020; Kuchinka et al., 2019). Conversely, disengaged educators tend to display less commitment to instruction and student success.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study determined the relationship between the teachers' multicultural competence and its impact on their teaching engagement. More specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the extent of multicultural competence in terms of:
1.1. Multicultural Knowledge;
1.2. Multicultural Skills; and
1.3. Multicultural Awareness?
2. What is the extent of teaching engagement of teachers in terms of:
2.1. Instructional Strategies;
2.2. Classroom Management; and
2.3. Student Engagement?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the teachers' multicultural competence and their teaching engagement?

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4. Which of the domains of multicultural competence significantly influence the teaching engagement of teachers?

METHODOLOGY

This chapter introduces the methodological aspect of the study. This covers the research design, research respondents, research instruments, data gathering procedure, and data analysis employed in this investigation.

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research approach, specifically utilizing a descriptive correlational design. Quantitative research involves the systematic collection and analysis of numerical data to explain relationships among variables and test hypotheses through statistical techniques (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The descriptive correlational technique is particularly useful for identifying the relationships between variables in their natural settings, without any manipulation from the researcher (Davis, 2021). This approach is ideal for investigating how teacher social-emotional competence relates to student academic resilience, as it allows for the exploration of these variables as they naturally occur in the educational context.

The descriptive aspect of the design focuses on capturing and describing the key features of teacher social-emotional competence and student academic resilience, giving insight into how teachers' emotional skills and student resilience manifest in real classroom environments. Meanwhile, the correlational component seeks to identify whether a relationship exists between these two variables and, if so, the nature of this relationship, whether positive or negative (Kabir, 2019). This design is appropriate for this study, as it helps establish the strength and direction of the relationship between teacher behaviors and student outcomes without interfering with the teaching or learning processes.

By utilizing a descriptive correlational design, this study is able to provide valuable insights into the potential influence of teacher social-emotional competence on student academic resilience. The choice of this design aligns with the objective of understanding associations between teacher emotional skills and students' ability to cope with academic challenges, offering a robust methodological foundation for the analysis (Apuke, 2017). This design helps in identifying key areas where teacher interventions might be developed to enhance student resilience and academic success.

Research Respondents

The subject respondents of the study were 200 teachers in Sto. Tomas District, Division of Davao del Norte. Memon et al. (2020) claimed that 200 samples were enough when testing the Pearson Correlation analysis. Hence, the 200 respondents were enough to address the purpose of this study.

Sampling is a way to take a sampling that fits into the overall object of research. The sampling technique in this research was simple random sampling. According to Gay (2022), random sampling is the process of selecting a sample in such a way that all individuals in the defined population have an equal and independent chance of being selected for the sample. Simple random sampling intends to choose individuals to be sampled who are representative of the population. So, the researcher used simple random sampling to choose the sample which means that every teacher are potential to be chosen as a sample.

In the inclusion and exclusion criteria, all teachers of Sto. Tomas District, Division of Davao del Norte was given an equal chance to be part of the study. According to Cresswell (2012, p.143), any individual has the same probability of being a participant. Respondents who felt awkward and uncomfortable answering the survey questionnaire were free to withdraw from participating. They were not forced to be part of the study. Their decision to withdraw was duly respected. The respondents' welfare was given utmost importance in the conduct of this study.

Research Instruments

For data collection, this study utilized an adapted survey questionnaire. The questionnaire that was employed in this undertaking was divided into two sets. The first set focused on the extent of teachers' multicultural competence. The second set focused on the extent of teaching engagement of teachers.

Multicultural Competence. The teachers' multicultural competence questionnaire was adapted from Spanierman et al. (2021). The instrument consisted of 25 items. It had three indicators namely; multicultural teaching knowledge (1-6), multicultural teaching skills (1-10), and multicultural teaching awareness (1-9).

The questionnaire was subjected to pilot testing having a result of .93 suggesting that the items have a *high* internal consistency. Below is the grading scale of the extent of teachers' multicultural competence.

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Mean Interval	Descriptive Level	Descriptive Interpretation
4.20 - 5.00	Very Extensive	The teachers' multicultural competence is always evident.
3.40 - 4.19	Extensive	The teachers' multicultural competence is oftentimes evident.
2.60 - 3.39	Moderately Extensive	The teachers' multicultural competence is occasionally evident.
1.80 - 2.59	Less Extensive	The teachers' multicultural competence is seldom evident.
1.00 – 1.79	Not Extensive	The teachers' multicultural competence is never evident.

Teaching Engagement. The teaching engagement of teachers' questionnaire was adapted from Tschannen-Moran & Hoy (2019). The instrument consisted of 24 items. It had three indicators namely; instructional strategies (1-8), classroom management (1-8), and student engagement (1-8).

The questionnaire was subjected to pilot testing having a result of .94 suggesting that the items have a *high* internal consistency. Below is the grading scale of the extent of teachers' multicultural competence.

Mean Interval	Descriptive Level	Descriptive Interpretation
4.20 - 5.00	Very Extensive	The teaching engagement is always evident.
3.40 - 4.19	Extensive	The teaching engagement is oftentimes evident.
2.60 - 3.39	Moderately Extensive	The teaching engagement is occasionally evident.
1.80 - 2.59	Less Extensive	The teaching engagement is seldom evident.
1.00 – 1.79	Not Extensive	The teaching engagement is never evident.

The instruments in this study were contextualized to achieve the purpose of this study. The researcher integrated all the comments and suggestions of the adviser, panel members, and expert validators for the refinement of the tools and to achieve construct validity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Summary of Findings on Teachers' Multicultural Competence

The study revealed that teachers in Davao del Norte exhibit high levels of multicultural competence across three dimensions: knowledge, skills, and awareness.

In terms of multicultural knowledge, teachers demonstrated a strong understanding of how historical experiences of racial and ethnic minority groups impact student learning. They also showed familiarity with culturally responsive pedagogy and local community resources. This indicates a well-established foundation essential for inclusive teaching and fostering equity in classrooms.

Regarding multicultural skills, teachers frequently incorporated diverse cultural perspectives in their lessons, integrated cultural values into instruction, and celebrated diverse cultural practices. These actions promote cultural appreciation and inclusivity, aligning with literature that highlights the importance of communication and classroom strategies that honor diversity.

For multicultural awareness, teachers showed deep respect for cultural differences, especially in customs, family structures, and gender roles. This awareness enhances their ability to relate with students and families from varied backgrounds, contributing to a classroom environment where all students feel valued and supported.

Overall, the findings affirm that teachers possess substantial multicultural competence, which enhances their teaching engagement and capacity to manage diverse classrooms. This supports previous research asserting that multicultural competence is foundational for building inclusive, equitable, and culturally responsive educational settings.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Presented in this chapter are the findings based on the results of the data, the conclusions drawn from the findings, and the recommendations for consideration.

The main focus of the study was to determine the significance of the relationship between multicultural competence and teaching engagement. The study was conducted with the selected teachers from the Division of Davao del Norte. There were 200 teachers who participated in this study. A descriptive correlational method of research was used in utilizing adopted research instruments. The said instruments were validated by the panel of experts and subjected to pilot testing before it was made ready for administration. Weighted Mean, Pearson Product Moment Correlation, and Regression Analysis were statistical tools used in analyzing the data. The hypotheses in this study were tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

The major findings of the study were the following: the extent of the multicultural competence of the teachers is extensive. Meanwhile, the extent of the teaching engagement of the teachers is also extensive. It was found that there is a significant relationship between multicultural competence and the teaching engagement of teachers. The hypotheses of no significant relationship between multicultural competence and teaching engagement of teachers and none of the domains of multicultural competence significantly influence the teaching engagement of teachers were rejected.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were offered:

The extent of multicultural competence is extensive, which implies that it is oftentimes evident. One dimension of multicultural competence which includes multicultural knowledge, is at a very extensive level, which means it is always evident, and the two dimensions of multicultural competence which include multicultural skills and multicultural awareness, are at an extensive level, which means it is oftentimes evident. Meanwhile, the extent of teaching engagement is also extensive, which means that it is oftentimes evident. All dimensions of teaching engagement are oftentimes evident. Both variables call for all school members to work hand in hand to strengthen the existing status of the multicultural competence and teaching engagement of teachers.

Based on the findings, multicultural competence, and teaching engagement are correlated. Also, multicultural competence significantly influences teaching engagement. All domains of multicultural competence, namely, multicultural knowledge, multicultural skills, and multicultural awareness significantly influence teaching engagement by registering a p-value of .000 which is less than .05 in the level of significance. This leads to the rejection of the null hypotheses. Further, the result indicates that for every unit increase in the three domains of multicultural competence, teaching engagement also increases.

Recommendations

The following suggestions were offered based on the conclusions of the study:

For higher officials in the Department of Education, it is crucial to develop and implement policies that integrate comprehensive multicultural training programs into the professional development framework for teachers. This will ensure that all educators are equipped with the necessary multicultural knowledge, skills, and awareness to effectively manage and engage diverse classrooms. Additionally, allocating funding and resources specifically for multicultural education initiatives, including workshops, seminars, and collaborative projects, will enhance cultural competence among teachers. Establishing mechanisms to regularly evaluate and monitor the multicultural competence of teachers and the effectiveness of related training programs can help in identifying areas for improvement and ensuring continuous development.

School principals play a pivotal role in promoting multicultural competence within their institutions. They should facilitate ongoing professional development opportunities focused on multicultural competence for teachers, encouraging participation in relevant workshops, training sessions, and cultural immersion experiences. Principals should also strive to promote an inclusive school environment by celebrating cultural diversity through school-wide events, incorporating diverse cultural perspectives into the curriculum, and fostering an atmosphere of respect and inclusion. Creating support systems within the school to assist teachers in developing and applying multicultural teaching strategies, such as mentoring programs, peer support groups, and access to multicultural education resources, is also essential.

For teachers, continuous learning and self-reflection are vital for enhancing multicultural competence. Engaging in professional development programs, seeking out resources on cultural diversity, and reflecting on personal biases and assumptions can significantly contribute to their growth. Implementing culturally responsive teaching practices by integrating diverse cultural perspectives into lesson plans, adapting instructional strategies to meet the needs of all students, and creating an inclusive classroom environment are practical steps teachers can take. Collaboration with colleagues to share best practices, resources, and strategies for teaching in diverse classrooms is also recommended. Participating in professional learning communities focused on multicultural education can further support their efforts.

Future researchers have an essential role in expanding the understanding of multicultural competence and its impact on education. Conducting further research to explore the impact of multicultural competence on other aspects of teaching and learning can provide valuable insights. Undertaking longitudinal studies to examine the long-term effects of multicultural competence training on teaching engagement and overall educational outcomes will contribute to a deeper understanding of these dynamics. Comparative studies investigating the effectiveness of different multicultural training programs and identifying best practices that can be adopted across various educational contexts are also recommended.

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