



INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCIES AS A CONSTRUCT OF TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS OF PUBLIC ELEMENTARY TEACHERS IN PAQUIBATO DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

The study explored the relationship between intercultural competencies and teaching effectiveness of teachers in public elementary schools of Paquibato Division. Also, it investigated the association of the involved variables and the domains of intercultural competencies of teachers that significantly influence teaching effectiveness of teachers. With the use of probability sampling, 141 public elementary teachers were selected as the respondents. Utilizing the descriptive-correlational survey method, the data collated were analyzed through the use of Mean, Product-Moment correlation and Regression Analysis. Results revealed that there was a high intercultural competency of teachers and a high teaching effectiveness of teachers among the respondents. Furthermore, there was a significant relationship between the intercultural competency and teaching effectiveness. Moreover, all domains of intercultural competencies, namely, knowledge, skills, and awareness, were found to have significantly influence the teaching effectiveness of teachers. Of which, awareness indicates a higher influence on the intercultural competency of teachers compared to other indicators. Based on the findings, it was further suggested that higher officials in the Department of Education and school heads may work collaboratively in crafting programs and interventions that would further strengthen the intercultural competencies which would lead to teaching effectiveness of teachers. More so, future researchers may further explore the involved variables considering other factors and research methods.

KEYWORDS- Intercultural Competencies, Teaching Effectiveness of Teachers, Paquibato Division, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

Teaching effectiveness majorly concerns with the relationship between the dispositions of teachers, teaching acts, classroom environment, and their effect on the learning of students. It depends on the emotional, cognitive, and behavioral competence of a teacher. A teacher with such qualities is termed as an effective teacher. An effective teacher is the link between the educational institution and the student. He/she is able to use the teaching skills to bring out the best in a student thus increasing the school's effectiveness (Gupta & Verma, 2021). However, some problems have limited their overall effectiveness. These include handling student needs, lack of parental support, and even criticism from a public that can be largely unaware of their everyday lives. Part of what makes teaching a challenging career is the diversity of the students. All students are unique in having their own background, needs, and learning styles (Meador, 2019).

Teaching effectiveness is believed to be an issue in the global context. A World Bank report that surveyed 24,000 students and 21,000 teachers from more than 2,600 schools across Sub-Saharan Africa established that many teachers in Africa not only lacked the necessary content knowledge of the subjects they teach, but also lacked the skills needed to teach (Issa, 2021). In Pakistan, teaching effectiveness is greatly affected due to poor induction of teachers, lack of resources in teacher training institutions, demotivation among teachers, and unequal distribution of skilled and productive teachers, dual training system and infrequent trainings (Siddiqui & Mughal, 2021). In India, most of the teachers are incapable of critical thinking and problem-solving concerning teaching methods, content, and organization (Amiruddin, 2023).

In the Philippines, the low performance of the Filipino students in National and International tests is a manifestation that many Filipino teachers have not mastered the content of the curriculum and the subject matter. Ariaso (2020) said that the relation between the low achievement of pupils and lack of knowledge of subject matter among teacher as revealed in the pupils' and the teachers test is apparent; it is obvious that teachers' cannot teach what they do not know. More so, the findings of the World Bank included the conclusion that Filipino teachers have some of the most ineffective methods in Southeast Asia and that teaching training programs targeted at them have failed to improve their mastery of the content (Villegas, 2024).

In the local context, specifically in Mindanao, Molina et al. (2018) reported that while teachers have the autonomy to choose what and how they instruct, they do not receive strong professional development from their school principals or coaches, and often do not have complementary teaching materials. Considering this evidence, it is no surprise teachers in Mindanao exhibit poor teaching practices and are ineffective as a teacher. In Paquibato District, the researcher observed that teaching effectiveness is affected due to lack of intercultural competencies of teachers. Teachers often face challenges in developing intercultural competencies due to a lack



of exposure to diverse cultural contexts and insufficient professional development opportunities in this area. As a result, they struggle to effectively engage with students from various cultural backgrounds, leading to misunderstandings, miscommunication, and a lack of inclusivity in the classroom.

This gap in intercultural competencies can result in ineffective teaching practices, where teachers are unable to create culturally responsive curricula or adapt their teaching methods to meet the diverse needs of students. Consequently, students may feel disconnected from the learning material, which can hinder their academic performance and engagement in the classroom. It is believed that teaching effectiveness is greatly enhanced by educators' intercultural competencies, which are essential in today's increasingly diverse classrooms. Intercultural competencies enable teachers to recognize and respond to the unique cultural backgrounds and needs of each student. Moreover, teachers with strong intercultural competencies can better address potential cultural misunderstandings, create equitable learning opportunities, and build stronger relationships between teachers and students.

Highlighting the relevance of teaching effectiveness, a significant gap in researching teaching effectiveness with a focus on teachers' intercultural competencies lied in the limited understanding of how specific intercultural skills directly impact various dimensions of teaching. Although it was recognized that intercultural competencies play a role in promoting inclusive classrooms, there was insufficient empirical data linking these competencies to measurable outcomes in teaching effectiveness across diverse educational settings. This gap indicated a need for research that would not only assess the role of intercultural competencies in effective teaching practices but would also provide insights into how teachers could be better equipped and supported to integrate these skills into their daily interactions with students from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Hence, this study aimed to examine the status of intercultural competencies of teachers and their teaching effectiveness specifically in Paquibato District. Additionally, the study examined the correlations between the variables. Furthermore, this academic journey aimed to offer important insights for policymakers, guiding the creation of policies, programs, interventions, and initiatives to reinforce teaching effectiveness. Furthermore, this research sought to benefit the wider school community. The researcher also intended to share the findings at the school, division, regional, national, and international conferences. Also, the researcher was determined to publish the results in a Scopus-indexed journal.

LITERATURE REVIEW

One of the influential definitions related to educational context is from Huber and Reynolds (2014) as cited by Idris (2020) who stated that intercultural competence (IC) is the combination of attitude, skill, knowledge along with understanding and skills which are applied through intercultural activities. These activities will urge people to respect and understand other people's cultures properly as well as to communicate using the language effectively and appropriately so that they can build a good atmosphere when interacting with each other. Hoff (2020) defined intercultural competence as individuals who possess the ability to interact with other people from different countries and cultures using their own language, their skill to interpret, analyze about cultural differences, also using their knowledge about intercultural communication as well as their attitudes of interest towards other cultures, values, and norms.

Harper (2023) contended that intercultural competence is the ability to understand and communicate with other people who have different cultures and multiple identities using their intercultural knowledge, skill, and attitudes. Consequently, the intercultural speakers, they emphasize, should have the knowledge, skill, and good attitudes so that they could mingle with other people without any obstacles. According to Ozisik, Yesilyurt, and Demiroz (2019), intercultural competence is defined as a kind of developmental model that individuals acquire international global views through his model of intercultural sensitivity that has three stages of ethnocentrism (denial, defense, minimization), and three stages of ethnorelativism (acceptance, adaptation, integration). Furthermore, Viken et al. (2021) explains ethnocentrism as that the center of one's culture is also apart from other cultures, while ethnorelativism is a culture that can be understood by other people via interaction and specific attitude in an intercultural context.

Due to such multiculturalism and the recognition that education should contribute to cultural, social, and social-economic integration for all learners, teachers must be prepared to educate all children properly. Accordingly, cultural awareness, varied teaching strategies, and enhanced intercultural pedagogical approaches should be embedded in primary schools and the teacher's competence profile (Okken et al., 2022). These teaching aspects are crucial characteristics of 21st-century teachers, who should be prepared to deal with diversity and promote and facilitate intercultural exchange and mutual respect. In recent years, more research is focused on the necessary teaching skills for working with intercultural groups of students, as the necessity for intercultural competencies among teachers becomes obvious—not only to be effective in teaching, but also because teachers play a key role in the development of students' intercultural competence development (Biasutti et al., 2019).

An intercultural competent teacher should be able to interpret, evaluate and relate to ambiguous intercultural situations, relativize one's own frame of reference, and use behaviors and skills that fit a specific intercultural context (Echcharfy, 2022). The development of the Intercultural Teaching Competence (ITC) model is an example of an important stream in the field of intercultural education as it was developed to provide a reflective tool for



instructors who would like to further develop their own teaching practice in effective teaching across cultures (Dzerviniks et al., 2024).

According to Demirkol (2022), the classroom strategies that are most appropriate for managing diverse classrooms are active and experimental ones. Teachers therefore need such competencies to identify relevant resources for their teaching that recognize and validate cultural differences and use them to differentiate students' needs. However, this approach is more than general differentiation; it signifies a profound change in education that responds to the needs of diverse youth through differentiation and language (Morina & Orozco, 2019).

The theory of culturally responsive pedagogy, on which the ITC model is partly inspired, also recognizes the use of differentiation and communication strategies in building upon, appreciating, and sustaining students' cultural difference in one's teaching practice (Appel, 2023); it refers to teacher behaviors that adapt to the needs of pupils, encourage cohesion, and avoid the creation of outsiders (Haerazi, 2022). This behavior translates into practice of the three principles of intercultural education: actively caring for all students, communicating with all children, regardless of cultural differences, and adapting the curriculum and instruction to respond to differences in pupil populations (Cunningham, 2019). The use of storytelling as a method of instruction seems effective to connect to the diverse student population as it ensures space to acknowledge and share various perspectives and to counterbalance otherness (Okken et al. (2019).

Teachers should be obligated to impart such intercultural knowledge and skills to their students. However, to do so, they would need to be adequately equipped – through thorough and rigorous training – before they are able to respond to their students' needs at a level which would truly allow them to develop and reach their full potential. Only when teachers become an agent of change, can they be more likely to transform the school climate into a more inclusive environment (Jiang, Soon, & Li, 2021). Without intercultural professional training, teachers are likely to feel frustrated, unsupported, isolated, unprepared, and incompetent to teach in classroom (Lampadan et al., 2019; Hajisoteriou et al., 2019).

This refers to acquiring and retaining information specific to cultural groups. Knowledge could be language (e.g., words, phrases, proficiency), specific traditions (e.g., practices around childbirth), or rules for interpersonal exchanges (e.g., whether or not to shake hands) (Rodriguez et al., 2022). Based on Deardoff's (2006) pyramid model of intercultural competence, intercultural knowledge involves profound knowledge of culture which encompasses not only own culture but also artifacts, behaviors, lifestyles, and world views of other cultures and people. The awareness dimension includes the recognition and consciousness of similarities and differences between own culture and other cultures and developing the ability of evaluation of this diversity based on some critical criteria (Yaprak & Ozmen, 2020).

Research shows that teachers who have participated in school practice in different cultural settings than their own, have better opportunities to gain a broader understanding of their future learners, who include migrants and refugees from all over the world. They might develop intercultural competence, defined as, have adequate relevant knowledge about particular cultures, as well as general knowledge about the sorts of issues arising when members of different cultures interact, holding receptive attitudes that encourage establishing and maintaining contact with diverse others, as well as having the skills required to draw upon both knowledge and attitudes when interacting with others from different cultures (Steele, 2022).

When teachers' views and knowledge regarding culture and diversity expand beyond their personal experience, they are more likely to support diverse identities, respond proactively to cross-cultural interactions, and select and implement curricula relevant to all the students in the classroom (Semiao et al., 2023). Moreover, students' academic achievement and engagement is associated with culturally competent and responsive teachers. Thus, the need for integrating issues of cultural diversity into teaching through teacher intercultural competences is evident (Batenero et al., 2022).

Statement of the Problem

This study determined the relationship between the intercultural competencies and teaching effectiveness of public elementary teachers in Paquibato District. More specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of intercultural competencies of teachers in terms of:
 - 1.1 knowledge;
 - 1.2 skills, and
 - 1.3 awareness?
2. What is the level of teaching effectiveness of public elementary teachers in terms of:
 - 2.1 assessment and evaluation;
 - 2.2 interaction with students;
 - 2.3 teaching and learning; and
 - 2.4 preparedness of teachers?
3. Is there a significant relationship between intercultural competencies and teaching effectiveness of teachers?
4. Which domains of intercultural competencies significantly influence the teaching effectiveness of teachers?



METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative approach, specifically utilizing a descriptive correlational method. Quantitative research aims to investigate factors affecting a defined group, referred to as the sample population. This approach collects various numerical data through multiple techniques, followed by statistical analysis to summarize, compare, or identify relationships within the data (Sreekumar, 2023).

Meanwhile, the descriptive correlational design is utilized in studies that aim to capture a current view of conditions and explore connections among different variables. Descriptive research serves as a methodological approach intended to depict the characteristics of the phenomenon or subject under investigation. While descriptive research primarily provides a static perspective, correlational research emphasizes measuring several relevant variables to assess the relationships between them (Stangor & Walinga, 2019).

This study was categorized as quantitative due to its reliance on numerical data for analysis and interpretation. It employed a descriptive approach, aimed at assessing the levels of intercultural competencies and teaching effectiveness among teachers. Furthermore, it utilized a correlational approach to investigate the relationship between intercultural competencies and teaching effectiveness among teachers in public elementary schools within the Davao City Division.

Research Respondents

This study focused on a sample of 141 public elementary school teachers from the Paquibato District. Using the Slovin formula with a 0.05 margin of error, the sample size was derived from the full population of 220 teachers with at least five years of teaching experience. Putra and Sulaiman (2017) recommended a minimum of 30 participants for correlational studies to maintain result accuracy, as smaller samples may yield unreliable findings. Consequently, selecting 141 respondents enhanced the reliability of the study's outcomes.

The researcher employed a probability sampling technique, specifically simple random sampling, to select participants. In this sampling method, each member of the population has an exactly equal chance of being selected. This method is the most straightforward of all the probability sampling methods, since it only involves a single random selection and requires little advance knowledge about the population. Because it uses randomization, any research performed on this sample should have high internal and external validity, and be at a lower risk for research biases like sampling bias and selection bias (Thomas, 2023). In this study, the researcher ensured representative samples from each selected school to provide balanced insights.

In the inclusion and exclusion criteria, only teachers from public elementary schools of Paquibato District from Grade 1 to Grade 6 level and who have at least five years of teaching experience were included in this study. Elementary teachers who have less than five years of teaching and in the private schools were not included in the study. In administering the survey questionnaire, the researcher did not force the respondents. If in case, they wished to withdraw from participating the study, their decision was respected. The respondents were treated with utmost respect.

Research Instrument

For data collection, this study employed an adapted survey questionnaire designed specifically for this research. The questionnaire was organized into two separate sections to thoroughly cover the research objectives. The first section focused on evaluating the level of the intercultural competencies of teachers, while the second section assessed the level of teaching effectiveness of teachers.

Intercultural Competencies

The intercultural competencies questionnaire was adapted from Kozina (2021). The instrument consisted of 18 items. It was composed of three (3) indicators, namely: knowledge (1-5), skills (1-8), and awareness (1-5). The questionnaire was subjected to a pilot testing having a result of .87 suggesting that the items have relatively high internal consistency.

The teaching effectiveness questionnaire was adapted from Nazir (2020). The instrument consisted of 29 items. It had the following indicators, namely: assessment and evaluation (1-13), interaction with students (1-5), teaching and learning (1-7), and preparedness of teachers (1-4). The questionnaire was subjected to a pilot testing having a result of .84 suggesting that the items have relatively high internal consistency.

The research instrument for this study was refined to align closely with its aims and objectives. To ensure the construct validity of the survey questionnaire, three expert validators reviewed and assessed the tool. The researcher incorporated feedback, suggestions, and insights from the advisor, panel members, and expert validators. Following these revisions, the instrument underwent pilot testing, with forty (40) public elementary school teachers who were not study participants completing it. This iterative refinement process was crucial to accurately and effectively measure the intended variables.



Data Analysis

For more comprehensive interpretation and analysis of the data, the following statistical tools were utilized. These tools were used in answering the statement of the problem and the hypotheses.

Mean. This was used to measure the level of intercultural competencies and teaching effectiveness of teachers. It answered the statement of the problem 1 and 2.

Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. This was utilized to determine the relationships between intercultural competencies and teaching effectiveness of teachers.

Regression Analysis. This was employed to assess the significant influence of intercultural competencies on teaching effectiveness of teachers. This answered the statement of the problem 4 and the second hypothesis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Presented in this chapter are the findings based on the results of data gathered, 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 intercultural competencies and teaching effectiveness of teachers in public elementary schools. The study was conducted in the selected public schools of Paquibato Division. There were one hundred forty-one (141) teachers who participated in this study. Descriptive correlational method of research was used in this study utilizing adapted research instruments. The said instruments were validated by the panel of experts and subjected to pilot testing before it was made ready for administration. Mean, Pearson Product Correlation of Coefficient, and Regression Analysis were the statistical tools used in analyzing the data. The hypotheses raised in this study were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

The level of intercultural competencies of teachers is high. This indicates that teachers have the strong ability to interact effectively with students from diverse cultural backgrounds. This suggests that teachers demonstrate cultural sensitivity, adaptability, and inclusive communication in the classroom. High intercultural competence enhances the learning environment by promoting respect, equity, and meaningful engagement among all learners.

Meanwhile, the level of teaching effectiveness of teachers is high. This indicates that teachers have the ability to deliver clear instruction, engage students, and achieve desired learning outcomes. This suggests that teachers are successfully applying instructional strategies and classroom management techniques that enhance student learning. High teaching effectiveness contributes significantly to academic achievement and the overall quality of education in the school.

It was found out that there is a significant relationship between intercultural competencies and teaching effectiveness of teachers. Moreover, all domains of intercultural competencies are linked to teaching effectiveness of teachers. This indicates that teachers have the ability to navigate cultural diversity enhances instructional quality.

Also, all domains of all domains of intercultural competencies significantly influenced the teaching effectiveness of teachers. The intercultural competencies, such as cultural awareness, empathy, and communication, were found to be significantly influential in improving teaching effectiveness. This suggests that teachers who possess strong intercultural skills are better equipped to create inclusive, engaging, and responsive learning environments that support all students.

Conclusions

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

The level of intercultural competencies of teachers is high which means that it is oftentimes evident. Notably, awareness is always evident while knowledge and skills are oftentimes evident.

Meanwhile, the level of teaching effectiveness of teachers is high. Specifically, interaction with students is always evident while assessment and evaluation, teaching and learning, and preparedness of instruction are oftentimes evident.

Based on the findings, intercultural competencies and teaching effectiveness are related. This leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

All domains of intercultural competencies significantly influenced teaching effectiveness of teachers. Among the three, awareness indicates a higher influence on the intercultural competency of teachers compared to other indicators. This leads to the rejection of the null hypotheses.

The significant and positive correlation between teachers' intercultural competencies and their teaching effectiveness aligns with the core principles of Byram's Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (2009, as cited in Hoff, 2020). According to this model, intercultural competence encompasses knowledge of oneself and others, the ability to interpret and relate, the capacity to discover and interact, and the appreciation of diverse values, beliefs, and behaviors while also maintaining a reflective view of one's own culture. The model is structured around



three core elements: knowledge, skills, and attitudes, and is further enriched by five key competencies: intercultural attitudes, knowledge, skills of interpreting and relating, skills of discovery and interaction, and critical cultural awareness, all of which are deeply interconnected.

Byram (2021) emphasized that intercultural competence is grounded in an individual's attitude when engaging with people from different cultures, asserting that without a foundation of openness and respect, the development of the other components is hindered. In the context of this study, integrating linguistic ability with intercultural understanding and sensitivity equips teachers to effectively manage cultural and linguistic diversity, thereby enhancing their overall teaching effectiveness in multicultural environments.

Recommendations

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

In light with the findings of the study, DepEd officials may prioritize the integration of intercultural competency development in teacher training programs and professional development initiatives. Given that awareness, knowledge, and skills in intercultural contexts significantly influence teaching effectiveness, policies should support continuous learning opportunities focused on cultural sensitivity, inclusive teaching strategies, and global education frameworks. Furthermore, curriculum enhancements and instructional guidelines should encourage culturally responsive pedagogy to strengthen teacher-student interactions and overall classroom effectiveness across diverse learning environments.

Moreover, school heads may provide regular capacity-building activities that enhance teachers' intercultural knowledge and skills, such as workshops, seminars, or learning exchange sessions focused on cultural responsiveness and inclusive education. Since intercultural competencies are significantly linked to teaching effectiveness, particularly in fostering strong teacher-student interaction, school leaders may promote a supportive environment where teachers can apply culturally relevant strategies in their lesson planning, assessment, and instructional delivery. Encouraging peer collaboration and mentoring programs may also help sustain and strengthen these competencies across the teaching force.

Furthermore, teachers are encouraged to continually strengthen their intercultural knowledge and skills through professional development and self-directed learning to complement their already high levels of awareness. Since intercultural competencies significantly influence teaching effectiveness, especially in areas such as student interaction, assessment, and instructional delivery, teachers may integrate culturally responsive strategies into their classroom practices. By actively engaging in reflective teaching, collaborating with colleagues from diverse backgrounds, and adapting instructional methods to meet the needs of all learners, teachers may enhance both their cultural competence and overall effectiveness in fostering an inclusive and dynamic learning environment.

Lastly, future researchers may explore the intercultural competencies and teaching effectiveness across different educational settings, such as rural and urban schools, or among public and private institutions, to determine if contextual factors influence the strength of the relationship. Given that all domains of intercultural competence, knowledge, skills, and awareness, significantly affect teaching effectiveness, future studies may also investigate how specific interventions, such as intercultural training programs or inclusive curriculum design, enhance these competencies. Moreover, employing mixed-method approaches may provide deeper insights into how intercultural practices are applied in real classroom situations, thereby enriching the understanding of their impact on student engagement and learning outcomes.

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