



Teachers' Competence as Predictors of Pupils' Academic Performance

MARY C. DE LA CRUZ

STI West Negros University, Philippines

Email: mary.delacruz041@deped.gov.ph

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ABSTRACT

This study examined teachers' competence as a predictor of pupils' academic performance in the far-flung schools of Murcia District II, Division of Negros Occidental. The research was conducted in five elementary schools - Antwan, Amayco, Gervacio Makilan, Balasyang, and Don Arturo - with 48 intermediate teachers as respondents and 1,704 Grade IV–VI pupils whose general weighted averages served as the basis for academic performance. Using a descriptive research design, teachers' competence was measured through a modified questionnaire based on the National Competency-Based Teacher Standards (NCBTS). At the same time, pupils' performance data were obtained from DepEd School Form 5. Statistical analyses included frequency and percentage, mean, z-test, and linear regression in SPSS. Findings revealed that most teachers were young, female, held bachelor's degrees, and had shorter teaching experience. Teachers' competence across four areas - social regard for learning, diversity of learners, teaching styles, and test construction - was rated to a "very great extent." Pupils' academic performance, however, was only at a "satisfactory" level, largely attributed to inadequate learning facilities, poor learning environments, irregular attendance, and child labor in sugar plantation areas. Z-test results showed a significant difference in teachers' competence when grouped by age, but no significant differences by sex, educational attainment, or length of service. Regression analysis confirmed that teachers' competence significantly predicted pupils' academic performance. The study concluded that higher teacher competence leads to better pupil performance. It recommended need-based teacher training, enhanced professional development opportunities, technology integration, learner support programs, community and stakeholder involvement, and further research in other districts to strengthen educational outcomes in far-flung areas.

Key Words: Academic Performance, Pupil Achievement, Teachers' Competence

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INTRODUCTION

Access to relevant quality education is the primary concern in developing the nation. In the Philippines, pupils' achievement—especially those coming from the remote regions—is a great challenge for the Department of Education. Hence, DepEd's reforms are built on the foundation of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), which highlight teachers' competencies in pedagogy, diversity, assessment, and content knowledge (DepEd, 2020).

Studies have identified the positive role of teacher competencies in students' learning outcomes. Hattie (2018) ranked teachers' effectiveness as one of the strongest in-school factors for student learning, while Darling-Hammond (2021) stressed that the role of a great teacher requires them to use appropriate learning strategies that address learners' diversity to maximize learning outcomes.

In remote areas, with limited resources, isolation, and diverse student needs, the importance of the teacher's competence becomes even more salient. The World Bank (2019) suggests that teacher quality improvement is a major intervention for the learning gaps. This study examines how teachers' competence predicts pupils' academic performance in far-flung schools, focusing on competencies aligned with PPST standards.

Similarly, teachers are considered the most important input to basic education and thus a major determinant of students' academic performance. The increasing number of pupils with poor academic performance who are dropping out of school is very alarming.

This is evident in the data provided by the DepEd Negros Occidental Division Planning Office. It is reported that only 60% of the 575 elementary schools in the entire division met the 75% planning standard in the National Achievement Test (NAT) for three consecutive years. This data serves as an eye-opener for all DepEd officials in the division and the entire region. Therefore, it is a major concern of the Department of Education to determine how pupils' academic performance in schools can be improved, especially in far-flung areas.

The researcher, one of the public-school teachers assigned to the far-flung school, was personally motivated to investigate teachers' competence as a predictor of pupils' academic performance, with the hope that teachers would practice to the best of their ability so that pupils' academic performance would increase; hence, this study.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to determine teachers' competence as a predictor of pupils' academic performance in the far-flung schools of Murcia District II, Division of Negros Occidental. Specifically, it sought to assess the extent of teachers' competence in terms of Social Regard for Teaching, Diversity of Learners, Teaching Styles, and Test Construction, both individually and collectively; examine the pupils' academic performance during the school year; identify whether significant differences exist in teachers' competence when respondents are grouped and compared according to the aforementioned variables; and ascertain whether teachers' competence can significantly predict pupils' academic performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teacher competence is widely recognized in contemporary literature as a multidimensional and evolving construct that encompasses professional knowledge, pedagogical skills, attitudes, and the ability to effectively apply these in diverse learning environments. According to the OECD (2021), teacher competence involves creating learning situations that promote both cognitive and socio-emotional development among learners. Similarly, the OECD (2024) emphasized that teacher competence includes subject-matter expertise, pedagogical knowledge, classroom management, lesson planning, assessment practices, and the ability to respond to varied classroom demands. These competencies are continuously developed through professional learning and reflective practice, enabling teachers to adapt to changing educational needs and improve instructional effectiveness.

As a result, teacher competence directly influences the quality of instruction delivered in the classroom. Guerriero (2017, as cited in OECD, 2021) explained that teacher competence consists of cognitive, affective, and professional resources that guide teaching decisions and actions. Likewise, Ulferts (2019) noted that competencies shape instructional practices such as feedback provision, classroom management, and differentiated instruction. In addition, Starkey (2020) highlighted the growing



importance of digital competence, emphasizing teachers' ability to integrate technology effectively to enhance learner engagement and achievement. Supporting this view, Fauth et al. (2020) concluded that teacher competence contributes to student success when translated into high-quality instructional practices characterized by cognitive activation, effective classroom organization, and emotional support.

Given the importance of instructional quality, learners' academic performance has likewise been viewed as a multifaceted outcome influenced by numerous factors. Gilar-Corbi et al. (2019) explained that academic achievement results from the interaction of personal, school-related, and socio-environmental variables rather than a single determinant. In particular, cognitive and metacognitive factors play a significant role in learners' success. Steinmayr et al. (2021) found that intelligence, self-regulation, and effective learning strategies significantly contribute to academic achievement, while Xie et al. (2025) reported that thinking styles and cognitive processes influence learners' ability to solve problems and perform academic tasks effectively.

Beyond cognitive factors, non-cognitive and environmental influences also affect academic performance. The OECD (2021) and Duckworth et al. (2019) identified motivation, self-regulation, and grit as important predictors of academic success because these qualities encourage persistence and sustained engagement in learning. Moreover, Jeynes (2020) emphasized that parental involvement and support positively influence learners' achievement by fostering motivation and participation in educational activities. Similarly, UNESCO (2021) reported that students from supportive families and well-resourced schools generally achieve better academic outcomes due to greater access to learning resources and emotional support.

Furthermore, the social environment within schools significantly contributes to students' academic development. Wentzel (2019) found that positive peer relationships enhance school engagement, motivation, and achievement, while negative peer influences may hinder academic success. In the same way, the OECD (2023) highlighted that inclusive school climates, positive teacher-student relationships, and supportive learning environments promote improved academic performance. These findings suggest that students' achievement is not solely dependent on their abilities but is also shaped by the quality of interactions and support they receive both at home and in school.

Within the Philippine context, teacher competence is anchored on the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), which outlines competencies in content knowledge, pedagogy, learner diversity, curriculum implementation, assessment, and learning environments (Department of Education, 2020). Local studies consistently support the significant role of teacher competence in enhancing learner achievement. Francisco and Celon (2020) found that effective instructional practices significantly improve academic performance, while Haramain (2018) reported that mastery of content and teaching strategies positively influences student learning. Similarly, Caparas (2021) emphasized the importance of classroom management and professional teaching practices in promoting learner success. Although Bungabong (2019) noted that motivation and environmental factors also contribute to academic achievement, recent DepEd-aligned studies (2020–2023) revealed that higher levels of teacher competence based on PPST standards are associated with Very Satisfactory learner performance. Collectively, both foreign and local literature affirm that teacher competence remains one of the most important predictors of pupils' academic achievement, highlighting the vital role of competent and effective teachers in fostering successful learning outcomes.

METHODOLOGY

This section presents the discussion of the research methodology used, the subjects and respondents of the study, the research instruments used, the validity and reliability of the instruments, the procedure for data gathering, and the statistical tools and procedure for data analysis.

Research Design

This investigation used a descriptive research design to determine the extent to which teachers' competence predicts pupils' academic performance in Murcia District II, Division of Negros Occidental.

According to Aquino (2012), a descriptive research design is appropriate for a research investigation that describes what is, and it is a fact-finding with adequate interpretation. It also seeks to determine differences among study variables, explore the causes of phenomena, test hypotheses, and develop generalizations, principles, or theories based on their findings. While its primary concerns are the conditions and circumstances existing at the time of the study, it also considers past events. It influences the pupils' academic performance, which is deemed related to what is studied in the present.



In other words, descriptive research is defined as a purposive process of gathering, analyzing, classifying, and tabulating data about prevailing conditions, practices, beliefs, processes, trends, and cause-and-effect relationships, and then making adequate and accurate interpretations of such data, with or without the aid of statistical methods.

Based on the above premise, the researcher considered it most appropriate to use the descriptive research design.

Study Respondents

The respondents of the study were the 48 teachers from the Murcia District II, Division of Negros Occidental. Since the number of teachers was small, the researcher used the entire teacher population from the five far-flung schools. For the pupils' academic performance, the general weighted average of 786 pupils from Grades IV-VI during the first, second, and third rating periods in the five flung schools were considered. These secondary data were taken from the DepEd School Form 5.

Instruments

The research instrument used in this study was adapted from the National Competency-Based Teacher Standards–Training Needs Assessment (NCBTS–TNA) tool, with modifications made to the competencies of Social Regard for Learning, Diversity of Learners, Teaching Styles, and Test Construction. The questionnaire consisted of two parts: Part I gathered the respondents' profile information, including age, sex, length of service, and educational attainment, while Part II measured the extent of teachers' competence using forty items rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from Very Low Extent (1) to Very Great Extent (5). To ensure validity, the instrument was aligned with the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) and underwent expert and face validation by a panel of educational leaders and research specialists, yielding a content validity rating of 4.00, indicating high validity. Reliability was established through a pilot test involving thirty teachers from Murcia District I, with data analyzed using Cronbach's alpha. The instrument obtained a reliability coefficient of 0.88, indicating good internal consistency and confirming that the questionnaire was a reliable measure of teachers' competence as a predictor of pupils' academic performance.

Data Gathering Procedure

Following the establishment of the instrument's validity and reliability, the researcher secured permission from the District Supervisor and the school heads before distributing the questionnaires to the identified teacher-respondents. The respondents were given one week to complete the instrument, after which the questionnaires were retrieved and prepared for statistical analysis. Teachers' competence was measured using a five-point scale interpreted as Very Great Extent (4.24–5.04), Great Extent (3.43–4.23), Moderate Extent (2.62–3.42), Low Extent (1.81–2.61), and Very Low Extent (1.00–1.80). Pupils' academic performance was assessed using their General Weighted Averages from the first, second, and third grading periods as reflected in DepEd School Form 138 and was interpreted as Outstanding (90–100), Very Satisfactory (85–89), Satisfactory (80–84), Fair (75–79), and Poor (74 and below).

Data Analysis and Statistical Treatment

To address the study objectives, a descriptive-analytical approach using the mean was employed for Objectives 1 and 2 to determine the extent of teachers' competence as predictors of pupils' academic performance. For Objective 3, which examined the significance of differences in teachers' competence when respondents were grouped according to selected variables, a comparative approach utilizing the z-test was applied. Meanwhile, Objective 4, which sought to determine whether teachers' competence significantly predicts pupils' academic performance, was analyzed using a relational approach through regression analysis.

Ethical Consideration

All ethical considerations regarding the conduct of research involving human subjects were strictly adhered to, to prevent the exploitation of human beings, preserve their dignity and welfare, and respect their human rights. The researcher obtained prior approval from the responsible authorities, such as the Schools Division Office and the school heads of the chosen schools, to conduct the study. It was also stressed that the study was conducted on a completely voluntary basis. The researcher communicated all the details concerning the study, its significance, and the rationale for the research with teacher-respondents.



through informed consent. All respondents were informed that their participation in the study posed no threat or hazard and that they had the right to withdraw at any time, with no penalty.

Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the whole study. The teacher-respondents remain nameless throughout the research, and their individual responses will be kept in the strictest confidence. Since coded variables will be used, names were replaced with codes that the researcher considered sufficient to maintain the anonymity of the teacher-respondents. All data collected in this research were used only for academic and research purposes. Collected data were stored properly and accessible only by the researcher. It was also emphasized that participants will not be coerced or pressured, and that their right to make a free choice to participate in the research will be respected. The study also upheld research ethics, including respect for persons, beneficence, and justice in the treatment of study participants.

All these ethical standards align with widely accepted research standards in many parts of the world, including the Belmont Report and the Research Ethics Guide for Studies in the Educational Context.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section deals with the presentation, analysis and interpretation of data gathered to carry out the objectives of this study. All these were made possible by following certain appropriate procedures so as to give the exact data and solution to each specific problem.

Extent of Teachers' Competence in Social Regard for Teaching, Diversity of Learners, Teaching Styles, and Test Construction

Table 1

Extent of Teachers' Competence in Social Regard for Learning

A. Social Regard for Learning	Mean	Interpretation
To what extent do I...		
1. possess awareness of the implementation of "time on task."	4.56	Very Great Extent
2. demonstrate efficiency in doing expected tasks and functions	4.25	Very Great Extent
3. influence the learners with the value of punctuality	4.50	Very Great Extent
4. manifest resourcefulness and creativity in providing learning	4.31	Very Great Extent
5. understand the theoretical concepts and principles of social learning	4.52	Very Great Extent
6. show appropriate behavior even during unguarded moments	4.60	Very Great Extent
7. apply knowledge of social learning in dealing with students	4.42	Very Great Extent
8. show non-threatening actions in responding to students	4.38	Very Great Extent
9. know about various learning experiences and resources for learning	4.27	Very Great Extent
10. provide authentic learning experiences and resources	4.19	Great Extent
Overall Mean	4.40	Very Great Extent

The findings revealed that teachers demonstrated a very great extent of competence across the domains of social regard for learning, diversity of learners, teaching styles, and test construction, with overall mean scores ranging from 4.36 to 4.42. In terms of social regard for learning ($M = 4.40$), the highest-rated indicators were teachers' awareness of "time on task" and their ability to demonstrate appropriate behavior even during unguarded moments, indicating that teachers consistently model positive



values and attitudes toward learning. The lowest-rated indicator involved demonstrating concern for students' welfare, although it still received a favorable rating, suggesting strong professional conduct among teachers.

Regarding learner diversity ($M = 4.41$) and teaching styles ($M = 4.42$), teachers exhibited high competence in obtaining information about learners' needs, respecting individual differences, demonstrating enthusiasm in using appropriate teaching approaches, and showing creativity in instructional activities and materials. However, relatively lower ratings were observed in identifying learners' specific difficulties and in using integrative teaching approaches, suggesting opportunities for strengthening diagnostic assessment skills and interdisciplinary instructional practices. These findings indicate that teachers are generally responsive to diverse learners and capable of implementing engaging, learner-centered teaching strategies.

In terms of test construction ($M = 4.36$), teachers showed strong competence in appreciating the value of assessment and constructing appropriate tests to measure learner performance. Nevertheless, lower ratings were noted in understanding test construction principles and developing non-traditional assessment techniques, indicating areas for further professional development. Overall, the results imply that teachers possess a high level of teaching competence and effectively serve as role models, facilitate learning for diverse students, employ varied instructional approaches, and design appropriate assessments to evaluate learning outcomes, consistent with the standards outlined in the NCBTS-TNA Module (2010).

Table 2

Extent of Teachers' Competence in Diversity of Learners

B. Diversity of Learners	Mean	Interpretation
To what extent do I...		
1. know the cultural background of my students	4.44	Very Great Extent
2. determine the learning needs and difficulties of children	4.33	Very Great Extent
3. provide appropriate instructional materials for learners	4.33	Very Great Extent
4. show diligence in obtaining information on learning needs	4.60	Very Great Extent
5. use strategies to address the needs of differently abled learners	4.35	Very Great Extent
6. determine the learning needs and difficulties of children	4.29	Very Great Extent
7. utilize varied activities for various types of learners	4.35	Very Great Extent
8. show respect and concern for individual differences of students	4.58	Very Great Extent
9. show patience in dealing with children with learning difficulties	4.37	Very Great Extent
10. keep track of students at risk of dropping out	4.40	Very Great Extent
Overall Mean	4.41	Very Great Extent

The findings indicate that teachers demonstrate a very great extent of competence in addressing learner diversity, as reflected by the overall mean of 4.41. This suggests that teachers are highly responsive to learners' varying abilities, backgrounds, cultures, and educational needs, which is fundamental to inclusive and differentiated instruction. The highest-rated indicator, "show diligence in obtaining information on learning needs" ($M = 4.60$), highlights teachers' strong commitment to gathering relevant information about learners' strengths, weaknesses, and academic requirements to support effective instructional planning and classroom decision-making.

Despite the highly positive ratings, the indicator "determine the learning needs and difficulties of children" obtained the lowest mean ($M = 4.29$), although it remained within the very great extent category. This comparatively lower rating suggests that some teachers may encounter challenges in consistently identifying specific learning difficulties or may rely more on general



observations than on systematic diagnostic assessment procedures. The result points to the need for strengthening teachers' assessment literacy, learner profiling skills, and use of formative assessment tools to ensure more targeted interventions and differentiated instruction.

These findings are supported by Tomlinson (2021), who emphasized that effective differentiated instruction depends on teachers' ability to continuously assess learner readiness, interests, and learning profiles. Similarly, UNESCO (2022) stressed that inclusive education requires teachers to accurately identify and address diverse learner needs to provide equitable learning opportunities for all students. Likewise, the OECD (2023) reported that schools with strong diagnostic and differentiated instructional practices achieve higher levels of student engagement and academic success, while Florian (2019) noted that teachers' responsiveness to learner diversity is a key factor in promoting positive educational outcomes in inclusive classrooms.

Table 3

Extent of Teachers' Competence in Teaching Styles

C. Teaching Styles	Mean	Interpretation
To what extent do I...		
1. show enthusiasm in using interesting and appropriate teaching approaches	4.52	Very Great Extent
2. design and utilize learning methodologies that respond to learning processes	4.44	Very Great Extent
3. understand the theories, approaches, and strategies in teaching the subject area	4.46	Very Great Extent
4. use a variety of teaching strategies and techniques appropriate to the learners	4.44	Very Great Extent
5. apply various appropriate strategies and/or technology to motivate and sustain	4.38	Very Great Extent
6. manifest creativity in providing activities and using materials appropriate for learners	4.52	Very Great Extent
7. show creativity in designing and utilizing methods appropriate to the learning process	4.42	Very Great Extent
8. use an integrative mode of teaching	4.17	Great Extent
9. manifest resourcefulness in selecting and preparing instructional materials	4.40	Very Great Extent
10. use relevant activities and materials suited to the learning styles, goals, and culture of the learners	4.44	Very Great Extent
Overall Mean	4.42	Very Great Extent

The findings revealed that teachers demonstrated a very great extent of competence in utilizing varied teaching styles, as evidenced by the overall mean of 4.42. This indicates that teachers are highly capable of applying flexible, creative, and learner-centered instructional approaches that respond to students' diverse needs, learning styles, and classroom contexts. The highest-rated indicators were teachers' enthusiasm in using interesting and appropriate teaching approaches and their creativity in providing suitable learning activities and materials, both obtaining a mean of 4.52. These results suggest that teachers consistently employ engaging and innovative strategies that enhance learner motivation and participation, supporting the view that effective teaching requires adaptability, creativity, and the use of multiple instructional methods (Darling-Hammond, 2020; OECD, 2023).

Despite the positive results, the indicator "use an integrative mode of teaching" received the lowest mean of 4.17, although it was still interpreted as Great Extent. This finding suggests that interdisciplinary and integrative teaching approaches are less frequently practiced compared to other instructional strategies. The lower rating may indicate the need for additional professional development opportunities that will help teachers effectively connect concepts across subject areas and promote holistic learning experiences. Strengthening integrative teaching practices can enhance students' critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and deeper understanding of concepts by enabling them to see meaningful relationships among different fields of knowledge.



The results are supported by Darling-Hammond (2020), who emphasized that effective teaching involves the use of diverse instructional strategies that foster deep learning, critical thinking, and student engagement. Likewise, the OECD (2023) reported that student-centered and interdisciplinary instructional approaches significantly improve academic performance and learner engagement by supporting holistic learning. Furthermore, Hattie (2019) noted that varied and innovative teaching strategies increase student motivation and learning outcomes when aligned with learners' interests and needs. However, UNESCO (2022) observed that integrative teaching remains among the least frequently implemented instructional approaches due to limited training opportunities and curriculum-related constraints, highlighting the need for continued support in this area.

Table 4

Extent of Teachers' Competence in Test Construction

D. Test Construction	Mean	Interpretation
To what extent do I...		
1. manifest diligence in test construction	4.31	Very Great Extent
2. understand the concept and principles in test constructions	4.25	Very Great Extent
3. construct appropriate types of tests to measure pupils' performance	4.46	Very Great Extent
4. construct valid and reliable formative and summative tests	4.35	Very Great Extent
5. construct a test suited to the learners' needs and use results to improve teaching and learning	4.40	Very Great Extent
6. construct tests aligned to the learning objectives and learning activities	4.38	Very Great Extent
7. construct appropriate non-traditional assessment techniques	4.21	Great Extent
8. design/organize, implement, and evaluate the type of test items provided to the pupils	4.40	Very Great Extent
9. develop and use tools for assessing authentic learning	4.37	Very Great Extent
10. appreciate the value of testing as a tool to improve instruction and learning performance	4.52	Very Great Extent
Overall Mean	4.36	Very Great Extent

The table reveals that the overall mean is 4.36, interpreted as "very great extent," indicating that teachers demonstrate a high level of competence in test construction, particularly in designing, implementing, and evaluating assessment tools aligned with learning objectives. This suggests strong assessment literacy among teachers, which is essential for ensuring fair and accurate measurement of learner performance. Consistent with contemporary perspectives, effective assessment practices are recognized as a key component in enhancing both instructional quality and student learning outcomes (OECD, 2023). Among the indicators, the highest mean is 4.52 ("very great extent") for appreciating the value of testing as a tool to improve instruction and learning performance, showing that teachers strongly recognize assessment as not only a grading tool but also a means of identifying learning gaps and improving instruction.

On the other hand, the lowest mean is 4.21 ("great extent") for constructing appropriate non-traditional assessment techniques, suggesting comparatively less proficiency in designing alternative assessments such as portfolios, rubrics, performance tasks, and authentic assessments. Although still positively rated, this indicates a need for further training and capacity-building to strengthen teachers' competence in alternative assessment strategies, as reliance on traditional tests may limit the assessment of higher-order thinking and real-world application of knowledge. This finding aligns with Wiliam (2018), who emphasized that assessment is most effective when it supports learning through formative and authentic approaches, and with OECD (2023),



which stresses the importance of assessment literacy and innovative assessment practices in improving student outcomes. Likewise, UNESCO (2022) highlights the need for broader use of alternative assessments to develop critical thinking and ensure inclusive, quality education, while also noting that many teachers still face challenges in implementing these approaches due to limited training and resources.

Extent of Teachers' Competence in Social Regard for Learning, Diversity of Learners, Teaching Styles, and Test Construction when Taken as a Whole

Table 5

Extent of Teachers' Competence when Competencies were Taken Altogether

Competencies	Mean	Interpretation
Social Regard for Learning	4.40	Very Great Extent
Diversity of Learners	4.41	Very Great Extent
Teaching Styles	4.42	Very Great Extent
Test Construction	4.36	Very Great Extent
Overall Mean	4.40	Very Great Extent

The extent of teachers' competence, when taken all together, resulted in an overall mean score of 4.44, interpreted as "very great extent". When competencies were ranked from greatest to lowest extent, the table shows that teaching styles has the highest rank with the obtained mean score of 4.42, followed by diversity of learners with the obtained mean score of 4.41, then, social regard for learning with the obtained mean score of 4.40, and finally, on test construction with the obtained mean score of 4.36, all are interpreted as "very great extent".

These findings imply that teaching styles are very important for every teacher, as they design and implement learning methodologies that align with learning processes. Teachers need to be creative, resourceful, and enthusiastic in using interesting and appropriate teaching approaches and techniques. Moreover, recognizing and respecting individual differences and using knowledge of students' differences to design a diverse set of learning activities and tests will ensure positive, improved learning outcomes.

Extent of Teachers' Competence according to Age, Sex, Educational Attainment, and Length of Service when These were taken Altogether

Table 6

Extent of Teachers' Competence according to the aforementioned Variables and when these were taken altogether

Variables		Mean	Interpretation
Age	Younger	4.32	Very Great Extent
	Older	4.51	Very Great Extent
Sex	Male	4.52	Very Great Extent
	Female	4.35	Very Great Extent
Educational Attainment	Bachelor's Degree/With Master's Units	4.40	Very Great Extent



Length of Service	With a Master's degree	4.48	Very Great Extent
	Shorter	4.40	Very Great Extent
	Longer	4.47	Very Great Extent
Overall Mean		4.43	Very Great Extent

The extent of teachers' competence, when grouped according to selected variables and taken together, yielded an overall mean score of 4.43, interpreted as "very great extent".

When respondents were dichotomized by age, both younger and older groups reported a "great extent" of teachers' competence, with mean scores of 4.32 and 4.51, respectively. Similarly, regarding sex, both male and female groups showed a "very great extent," with mean scores of 4.51 and 4.52, respectively. As to the educational attainment, both groups exhibited "very great extent" with the mean scores of 4.40 and 4.35, respectively. As for the length of service, both were rated at a "very high level," with mean scores of 4.42 and 4.29, respectively.

Thus, the data imply that teachers generally favored all the expected roles, functions, and responsibilities to improve their competence in different aspects or areas, namely, social regard for teaching, diversity for learning, teaching styles, and test construction. Teachers need to upgrade their skills and knowledge by pursuing graduate studies to deepen and broaden their understanding, which is vital to improving their competence.

Level of Academic Performance

Table 7

Level of Academic Performance

School	Mean	Interpretation
School A	78.62	Fair
School B	81.18	Satisfactory
School C	82.05	Satisfactory
School D	82.77	Satisfactory
School E	81.89	Satisfactory
Overall Mean	81.30	Satisfactory

The academic performance level of Grade IV-VI pupils for the first, second, and third rating periods in the five far schools of Murcia District II during the School Year 2015-2016 yielded an overall mean score of 80.66, interpreted as "satisfactory".

When considered by school level, Don Arturo Alba Elementary School showed the highest academic performance with the obtained mean score of 82.77, interpreted as "satisfactory", followed by the Balasyang Elementary School with the obtained mean score of 82.05, interpreted as "satisfactory", Gervacio Elementary School, 81.89, interpreted as "satisfactory", Antawan Elementary School with 81.18, interpreted as "satisfactory" and the last is Amayco with the obtained mean score of 78.62, interpreted as "fair".

These data imply that most of the pupils have "satisfactory" academic performance. One of the main reasons for this performance is the lack of learning facilities, a poor learning environment, and, above all, the fact that most Grade IV-VI pupils



are school leavers. They are in school for only one or two days a week because their parents ask them to run errands. Besides, most of the pupils are engaged in child labor, especially since these areas are sugar plantations.

Comparative Analysis of the Extent of Teachers' Competence in Social Regard for Learning, Diversity of Learners, Teaching Styles, and Test Construction when grouped according to Variables

Table 8

Difference in the Extent of Teachers' Competence on Social Regard for Learning when grouped according to Variables

Variable	Category	Mean	Z	Level of Significance	<i>p</i> -value	Interpretation
Age	Younger	4.32	-2.001		0.049	Significant
	Older	4.51				
Sex	Male	4.51	0.905		0.370	Not Significant
	Female	4.38				
Educational Attainment	Lower	4.40	0.290		0.773	Not Significant
	Higher	4.35				
Length of Service	Shorter	4.38	-0.541	0.05	0.591	Not Significant
	Longer	4.43				

The χ^2 -test result on teachers' competence in social regard for learning by age shows a significant difference between the two groups (p -value = 0.049), which is below the 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant difference in teachers' competence when grouped and compared by age, is rejected.

This implies that age affects the extent of teachers' competence. It supports the idea that the older teacher is more effective in delivering teaching competence (Corpuz, 2013).

However, the χ^2 -test results show no significant difference in teachers' competence in social regard for learning, grouped by sex (p -value = 0.370); in educational attainment (p -value = 0.773); and in length of service (p -value = 0.591); all results are above the 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant difference in teachers' competence when grouped and compared by sex, educational attainment, and length of service, is accepted.

This implies that regardless of sex, educational attainment, and length of service, they could still perform very well in their teaching-learning interactions. Teachers' sex, educational attainment, and length of service do not affect the delivery of skills, competencies, and attitudes.

Table 9

Difference in the Extent of Teachers' Competence on Diversity of Learners when grouped according to Variables

Variable	Category	Mean	Z	Level of Significance	<i>p</i> -value	Interpretation
Age	Younger	4.32	-1.79		0.042	Significant
	Older	4.52				



Sex	Male	4.25	-1.51	0.214	Not Significant
	Female	4.46			
Educational Attainment	Lower	4.44	0.390	0.542	Not Significant
	Higher	4.39			
Length of Service	Shorter	4.47	-2.19	0.129	Not Significant
	Longer	4.54			

The χ^2 -test shows a significant difference in teachers' competence in working with diverse learners across age groups, with a p-value of 0.042, which is below the 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant difference in teachers' competence with diverse learners when grouped and compared by age, is rejected.

This implies that older teachers have a deeper understanding of learners' diversity than younger teachers do. They are more experienced in handling diverse learners compared to the younger teachers.

However, the χ^2 -test result shows no significant difference between the teachers' competence on social regard for learning grouped according to sex, with the p-value of 0.214, educational attainment, with the p-value of 0.542, and length of service, with the p-value of 0.129; all these results are above the 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant difference in teachers' competence when grouped and compared by sex, educational attainment, and length of service, is accepted.

This implies that, regardless of sex, educational attainment, or length of service, teachers can still perform their teaching and learning interactions very well. Teachers' sex, educational attainment, and length of service do not affect the delivery of skills, competencies, and attitudes.

Table 10

Difference in the Extent of Teachers' Competence on Teaching Style when grouped according to Variables

Variable	Category	Mean	Z	Level of Significance	p-value	Interpretation
Age	Younger	4.23	2.25		0.035	Significant
	Older	4.41				
Sex	Male	4.23	2.25		0.453	Not Significant
	Female	4.34				
Educational Attainment	Lower	4.30	-0.773		0.440	Not Significant
	Higher	4.42				
Length of Service	Shorter	4.22	2.69	0.05	0.028	Significant
	Longer	4.45				

The χ^2 -test results show a significant difference in the extent of teachers' competence in teaching style when they are grouped by age and length of service, with p-values of 0.035 and 0.028, respectively, which are below the 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant difference in teachers' teaching style competence when grouped and compared by age, is rejected.



This implies that older teachers have more in-depth experience with various teaching styles than younger teachers. Similarly, teachers with longer teaching experience manifest varied teaching styles compared to the new teachers. They have more experience with which teaching styles are suited and effective than younger teachers do.

However, the z -test results show no significant difference in teachers' competence in teaching styles, grouped and compared by sex (p -value = 0.453), or in educational attainment (p -value = 0.440); both results are above the 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis, that there is no significant difference in teachers' competence when grouped by sex and educational attainment, is accepted.

This implies that, regardless of sex or educational attainment, teachers can still perform very well in their teaching and learning interactions. Teachers' biological state and educational attainment do not affect the delivery of skills, competencies, and attitudes.

Table 11

Difference in the Extent of Teachers' Competence on Test Construction when grouped according to Variables

Variable	Category	Mean	Z	Level of Significance	p -value	Interpretation
Age	Younger	4.39	1.49		0.138	Not Significant
	Older	4.42				
Sex	Male	4.33	1.66		0.099	Not Significant
	Female	4.37				
Educational Attainment	Lower	4.34	1.01		0.310	Not Significant
	Higher	4.46				
Length of Service	Shorter	4.28	2.05	0.05	0.412	Not Significant
	Longer	4.45				

The z -test results show no significant difference in the extent of teachers' competence in test construction across age, sex, educational background, and length of service. All results are significant at the 0.05 level. Hence, the null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant difference in teachers' competence when grouped and compared by age, is accepted.

These imply that, regardless of age, sex, educational background, or length of service, teachers can still perform well in test construction.

Teachers' Competence as Predictor of Pupils' Academic Performance

Table 12

Teachers' Competence as Predictor of Pupils' Academic Performance

Predictors	N	R	p -value	Interpretation
Teachers' Competence	48	.282	.032	Significant
Pupils' Academic Performance	48	.282	.003	Significant

Table 12 shows that teachers' competence significantly predicts pupils' academic performance. The r is equal to 0.282, and the two independent variables obtained p -values of 0.032 and 0.003, both of which are less than the 0.05 level of significance. Thus,



it is statistically significant. The hypothesis that states, “Teachers’ competence cannot significantly predict pupils’ academic performance is accepted.

The data suggest that teachers’ competence strongly influences pupils’ academic performance. It further shows that the greater the teachers’ competence, the greater the likelihood of higher academic performance among pupils.

CONCLUSION

The study found that teachers in the far-flung schools of Murcia District II were predominantly young, female, bachelor’s degree holders, and had shorter teaching experience. Overall, teachers demonstrated a very great extent of competence across the areas of social regard for learning, diversity of learners, teaching styles, and test construction, with teaching styles obtaining the highest rating. This high level of competence was evident across all profile groups, although older teachers, females, bachelor’s degree holders, and those with shorter teaching experience reported slightly higher competence levels. Meanwhile, the academic performance of Grade IV–VI pupils during the school year was generally satisfactory, with most schools achieving satisfactory ratings and only one school obtaining a fair rating. Statistical analysis revealed a significant difference in teachers’ competence when grouped according to age, indicating that age influences teaching competence, while no significant differences were found based on sex, educational attainment, and length of service. Furthermore, regression analysis showed that teachers’ competence significantly predicts pupils’ academic performance, suggesting that higher levels of teacher competence are associated with better academic outcomes among pupils. These findings underscore the vital role of teacher competence in promoting effective learning and improving student achievement, particularly in far-flung school settings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, it is recommended that school districts, education supervisors, and administrators strengthen teachers’ competence through need-based training programs focusing on social regard for learning, diversity of learners, teaching styles, and test construction. Teachers should be provided with equal opportunities for professional growth through seminars, workshops, graduate studies, and technology-oriented programs, while training on multimedia tools and innovative teaching strategies should be intensified. To improve pupils’ academic performance, schools should implement remedial classes, peer tutoring, counseling services, and learner development programs. Supervisors and training teams should also establish motivation and incentive programs, mentoring schemes, classroom visitations, and stronger partnerships with local government units, NGOs, and parents. Furthermore, school administrators should collaborate with barangay officials to support at-risk learners, establish community learning centers in far-flung areas, and implement Dropout Reduction Programs (DORP). Finally, future researchers are encouraged to conduct similar studies in other districts, divisions, and regions to further validate the role of teachers’ competence in predicting pupils’ academic performance.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares the absence of any conflict of interest that could have influenced the content or conclusions of this paper. She affirms that no financial, personal, or professional relationships with other individuals or organizations have compromised the objectivity, integrity, or impartiality of the research work. As a final point, no external parties influenced the study design, data collection, analysis, or interpretation.

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