

Culturally Responsive Teaching: A View on Classroom Pedagogy

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Abstract. This study explored the experiences of elementary teachers in implementing culturally responsive pedagogy within diverse classroom settings. Specifically, it aimed to examine their lived experiences in promoting equity and social justice, building strong teacher-student relationships, and enhancing culturally informed teaching strategies. Using a phenomenological approach, the research employed 10 participants for in-depth interviews to gain authentic insights into teachers' practices, challenges, and coping strategies. Thematic analysis revealed that teachers strive to ensure inclusive learning by tailoring lessons to students' cultural contexts and advocating for fair treatment and representation. Strengthened relationships emerged from efforts to understand students' identities, celebrate cultural diversity, and maintain open and respectful communication. However, challenges were also evident, including limited training, resistance to change, and varying cultural awareness. To cope, teachers engaged in continuous learning and improvement, collaborated with peers and communities, and integrated local knowledge into their teaching. From these experiences, three major insights emerged: the role of equity in curriculum design, the impact of relational pedagogy, and the value of contextualized and culture-focused teaching. These findings highlight the need for policy and institutional support to further equip teachers in creating inclusive and culturally responsive classrooms that empower all learners.

KEY WORDS

1. Culturally responsive pedagogy
2. equity and social justice
3. teacher-student relationships

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1. Introduction

Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) is an educational approach that acknowledges and respects the diverse cultural backgrounds of students, seeing them as vital components in effective teaching and learning. It is based on the understanding that students bring a wide range of experiences, values, and ways of knowing to the classroom. CRT aims to make pedagogy more inclusive, equitable, and reflective of the multicultural landscape of contemporary classrooms.

By integrating students' cultural perspectives into every aspect of learning, such as curriculum development, teaching strategies, and classroom interactions, educators can foster greater engagement, improve academic performance, and strengthen relationships with students. This approach not only validates students' identities but also encourages critical thinking and empathy, promoting a more just and supportive learning environment for all. In Australia, one

major obstacle in implementing CRT is the lack of adequate teacher training in cultural competence. Despite the widespread acknowledgment of the importance of inclusive education, many teacher preparation programs around the world do not sufficiently equip educators with the necessary skills to understand and incorporate students' diverse cultural backgrounds into their teaching practices. This gap is particularly noticeable in societies with a dominant monocultural population or in countries where minority groups face marginalization. In the absence of specialized training, teachers may unintentionally reinforce cultural biases or fail to recognize the strengths that diverse students bring to the classroom. This can negatively affect student engagement and academic success, especially among marginalized groups. In the United States, a significant challenge is the lack of representation of diverse cultures and viewpoints in national curricula. Educational content often focuses on mainstream cultural narratives while overlooking the histories, languages, and contributions of minority and indigenous groups. This exclusion not only marginalizes certain student populations but also perpetuates a limited worldview that can hinder intercultural understanding among all students. Without conscious efforts to diversify the curriculum, the implementation of culturally responsive teaching is hindered at the structural level, preventing teachers from fully embracing inclusive pedagogical practices. In Cambodia, language diversity presents a major challenge for CRT, particularly in classrooms with a large number of immigrant or refugee students. Many educators struggle to support students who are not fluent in the primary language of instruction, which can lead to academic underachievement and social isolation. Often, there are few policies or resources available to aid multilingual education, leaving teachers to tackle these linguistic challenges independently. Effective culturally responsive teaching requires strategies

that honor students' native languages while supporting their acquisition of new languages, a balance that many education systems have yet to achieve. In the Philippines, a key issue in implementing CRT is the insufficient integration of indigenous and local knowledge systems into the national curriculum. Despite the enactment of the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) and the Department of Education's Indigenous Peoples Education (IPed) Program, many schools still rely on standardized teaching materials that predominantly reflect the values and experiences of lowland Christian Filipinos. This approach marginalizes the cultural identities, languages, and worldviews of indigenous learners, leaving them disconnected from the learning process. Teachers often lack localized resources or training to effectively contextualize lessons, which undermines students' cultural identity and the relevance of their education. Addressing this issue requires a stronger commitment to curriculum localization and enhanced teacher preparation. In Batangas, the dominance of urban-centric teaching methods and materials, which do not reflect the rural and diverse realities of many Filipino students, is another challenge. While the Department of Education advocates for inclusive education, classroom practices in many provinces continue to rely heavily on content and examples centered around urban experiences, particularly those from Manila. This disconnect can alienate students from other regions, such as Mindanao or the Cordilleras. As Acido (2020) points out, this lack of cultural alignment between teaching methods and students' lived realities limits engagement and reduces the effectiveness of learning. A more culturally congruent approach is necessary to foster an environment that affirms students' cultural identities and promotes meaningful participation. In the Ilocos Region, many teachers receive limited professional development in culturally responsive teaching strategies. While educators are trained in content and ped-

agogy through the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) and in-service programs, these trainings rarely focus on cultural responsiveness, especially in multicultural or multilingual classrooms. According to Bernardo and Mendoza (2019), educators in linguistically and culturally diverse regions, like Mindanao, often face challenges in meeting the needs of students from different ethnic and religious backgrounds due to a lack of culturally specific training and resources. This gap highlights the need for CRT to be systematically included in both teacher education and ongoing professional development initiatives. In Davao Oriental, a province home to many indigenous communities such as the Mandaya and Mansaka, a major issue in CRT implementation is the insufficient incor-

poration of indigenous knowledge, language, and traditions into formal classroom teaching. Despite policies like the Indigenous Peoples Education (IPed) Program, many schools continue to follow standardized curricula that fail to reflect the cultural realities of indigenous students. Teachers often struggle to integrate local cultural content due to a lack of relevant teaching materials and inadequate training in contextualizing lessons. As Bagani (2021) notes, while there have been efforts to support culturally grounded education, these initiatives are inconsistent and underfunded at the local level in areas like Davao Oriental. This gap in resources and training can result in indigenous students feeling alienated, which can negatively impact their motivation and academic performance.

1.1. Purpose of the Study—The purpose of this study was to uncover the experiences of teachers in addressing students' tardiness. This included their everyday experiences and their reasons for implementing specific strategies. The study aimed to shed light on this subject area, as it was considered an understudied phenomenon.

1.2. Research Questions—The main purpose of this study was to discover the experiences of the teachers in their roles and responsibilities in times of change. The researcher aimed to narrow down the highlights and lowlights of their experiences, the challenges they encountered, and the coping practices the teachers employed in response to these challenges. Specifically, this research sought to answer the following:

- (1) What are the experiences of the teachers in the use of Culturally responsive pedagogy?
- (2) How do teachers cope with the challenges faced in Culturally Responsive Pedagogy?
- (3) What insights can be drawn from the experiences and coping practices of the teachers in the policies and practices practiced?

1.3. Significant of the Study—This study was significant to the following: Teachers, as it provided them with an opportunity to be heard and to have their problems identified. As it served as an avenue for teachers to voice their anxieties, challenges, and needs, they were able to develop strategic plans to address these concerns and help them cope more effectively. The study indirectly contributed to enhancing the quality of instruction provided to students. As teachers became more aware of and respon-

sive to their students' cultural backgrounds and needs, it fostered a more inclusive and affirming learning environment. This, in turn, resulted in increased student engagement, improved academic performance, and stronger relationships between teachers and students. Culturally responsive teaching (CRT) is defined as teaching that acknowledges students' cultural backgrounds, builds on their experiences, and affirms their cultural identity, thereby empowering them intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically (Zeichner, 2023).

1.4. Theoretical Lens—This study is grounded in Max Horkheimer's Critical Theory, which he first articulated in his 1937 essay "Traditional and Critical Theory." In this work, Horkheimer distinguishes Critical Theory from traditional theory by asserting that the former aims not only to understand or explain society but also to critique and transform it. Critical Theory, as defined by Horkheimer, is a radical and emancipatory form of Marxist philosophy focused on societal change and liberation. Critical Theory is a multidisciplinary approach to the humanities and social philosophy that examines society and culture with the goal of revealing, critiquing, and challenging power structures. It posits that social problems often stem from social structures and cultural assumptions, rather than from individual actions. While some may view it as an ideology, others argue that ideology itself is the main obstacle to human liberation. Critical Theory is applied across various fields, including psychoanalysis, sociology, history, communication theory, philosophy, and feminist theory. The Critical Theory tradition is largely associated with the Frankfurt School theorists, including Herbert Marcuse, Theodor Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Erich Fromm, and Max Horkheimer. It also encompasses any philosophical approach that seeks to free people from oppression and works toward creating a world aligned with human needs. This broader interpretation includes movements like feminism, critical race theory, post-structuralism, queer theory, and postcolonialism. Horkheimer emphasized that Critical Theory is liberating if it aims to free individuals from the circumstances that oppress them. Although Critical Theory emerged during the modernist era, and its founders were often skeptical of postmodernism, it has become a significant aspect of both modern and postmodern thought. Today, Critical Theory is widely applied in the humanities and social sciences. Figures like György Lukács and Antonio Gramsci influenced its de-

velopment, while Jürgen Habermas, a second-generation Frankfurt School scholar, expanded its scope by incorporating elements of American pragmatism. A central concept in Critical Theory is the relationship between the "base" (economic structure) and the "superstructure" (political, legal, and cultural institutions), a Marxist idea that continues to shape contemporary critical theory. Horkheimer critiqued both the model of science advanced by logical positivism and what he saw as the covert positivism and authoritarianism within orthodox Marxism and Communism. He maintained that a theory remains critical as long as it seeks to liberate people from their oppressive conditions. Critical Theory is distinctive for its normative dimension. It critiques society either through a general theory of values or norms (i.e., the "oughts") or through immanent critique, where society is critiqued based on its own stated values. Beyond merely conceptualizing and critiquing societal power structures, Critical Theory also offers an empirically grounded model that connects societal issues to individual experiences. The core principles of Critical Theory emphasize several key features: it is directed at the totality of society, considering its historical context; it analyzes the fragmentation of cultural identities to challenge constructs from the modernist era, such as metanarratives, rationality, and universal truths; and it politicizes social issues by embedding them within historical and cultural contexts. Importantly, researchers are implicated in the process of gathering and analyzing data, which allows for the relativization of findings. In this regard, Critical Theory provides a robust framework for understanding and challenging societal power dynamics, with the ultimate goal of creating a more just and equitable society by addressing the root causes of oppression and inequality. The conceptual framework for this study is presented in Figure 1, which illustrates the interplay between three key variables. The first variable focuses on

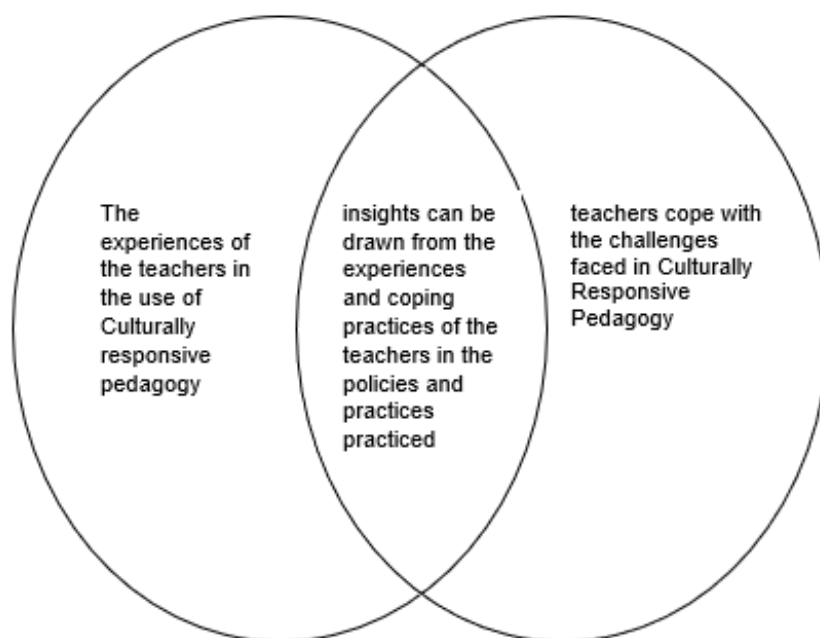


Fig. 1. The Conceptual Framework of the Study

teachers' experiences with Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP), a qualitative approach that encourages meaningful inquiry into professional practices among researchers, teachers, and learners. This exploration is essential for enhancing teaching methods and fostering positive changes that align with the educational objectives of the learning community. As shown in the diagram, the first circle is connected to the second, indicating the relationship between teachers' experiences and the evolving practice of CRP. At the intersection of these two circles is the central importance of understanding

how teachers' reflections and adaptations can drive improvements in teaching and learning, particularly in times of educational change. The study specifically aims to highlight how the exploration of teachers' experiences can lead to the advancement of CRP, ensuring that teaching strategies become more inclusive, effective, and responsive to the diverse cultural backgrounds of students. Through this inquiry, the study seeks to emphasize how teachers' reflections and adjustments contribute to creating a more inclusive educational environment and fostering the overall success of the learning community.

2. Methodology

Presented in this chapter were the descriptions of the research design, philosophical assumptions, research participants and sampling, ethical considerations, research instrument, data collection, and data analysis.

2.1. Philosophical Assumptions—The philosophical assumption is a framework that guides the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data in a specific field of study. It sets

the background for drawing conclusions and making decisions. These assumptions come in various types, and their roles are elaborated below. A strong research undertaking begins

with the selection of a topic, problem, or area of interest, as well as the choice of the research paradigm. According to Stanage (2019), the term 'paradigm' traces back to its Greek origin paradigm and Latin origin paradigm, both meaning pattern, model, or example. A paradigm is a framework that shapes how a person thinks; it represents a principal example or model that guides actions. In simpler terms, a paradigm is the lens through which one views a subject or phenomenon (Stanage, 2019). This perspective is supported by Denzin and Lincoln (2020), who define a research paradigm as a "basic set of beliefs that guide action," which involves fundamental principles, ultimate beliefs, or the researcher's worldview or philosophy. In developing research methodologies, three primary types of philosophical assumptions are typically used: Epistemological assumptions deal with subjective evidence collected through field studies. Axiological assumptions consider the researcher's biases and actively report them, determining whether the behavior observed is a product of the environment or vice versa (Pring, 2024). Ontological assumptions refer to the nature of reality being researched. This assumption aligns well with qualitative research as it acknowledges that realities are perceived differently by individuals, shaped heavily by their personal experiences. In this study, the ontological assumption is most relevant. As a qualitative researcher, I believe that realities, as perceived by different individuals, exist in a way that is shaped by their experiences. Using phenomenology as the methodology, this study focuses on understanding the teachers' opinions, feelings, experiences, and internal thoughts concerning their knowledge, values, and skills. The study adopts a realistic ontology, where it assumes the existence of a physical world that is governed by cause-and-effect relationships. However, it is not merely a mechanical cause-and-effect ontology; instead, the study assumes that certain realities exist in the world

and can influence how teachers progress to the next level. As a qualitative researcher, I follow a realistic ontological view that sees these realities as causal factors influencing behavior and actions. **Ontology** This section of the research explores how the issue relates to the nature of reality. According to Creswell (2019), reality is subjective and multifaceted, shaped by the perspectives of the participants involved in the study. The ontological issue focuses on understanding the nature of reality for the qualitative researcher, as reality is constructed by those participating in the research. Therefore, there are multiple realities at play—those of the researcher, the participants, and the audience interpreting the findings. In this study, the focus is on the realities surrounding the implementation of online distance learning during the pandemic, a time when face-to-face classes were not held. In this study, I relied on the voices and interpretations of the participants, incorporating extensive quotes and themes that reflected their words and provided evidence of different perspectives. Participants' responses were coded and analyzed to identify commonalities and discrepancies in their views. I ensured that the coding of responses was done meticulously to guarantee the reliability of the results. Throughout the study, I prioritized the authenticity of the participants' responses and consciously avoided injecting personal biases as the research progressed.

Epistemology

Epistemology refers to understanding how knowledge claims are justified by remaining as close as possible to the participants during the study to gather firsthand information. Guba and Lincoln (2020), as cited by Creswell (2019), highlight that in terms of epistemological assumptions, the researcher attempts to reduce the distance between themselves and the participants. They suggest that the researcher collaborates with participants, spends time in the field with them, and becomes an "insider." Follow-

ing the approach of Davidson (2020) and Jones (2021), I will adopt phenomenology combined with thematic analysis as the most appropriate methodology for this study. In this context, individual researchers maintain explicit beliefs that guide their inquiry. The purpose of this research is to gather crucial insights into the experiences of learners, particularly regarding tardiness in the context of face-to-face classes in the new normal. I ensured that there was close interaction with the participants to gain direct insights, which would help illuminate the knowledge behind the inquiry, especially regarding their experiences during off-classroom learning activities.

Axiology

Axiology refers to the role of values in research. According to Creswell (2019), values play a significant role in shaping the study. Axiology suggests that researchers openly discuss the values that influence the research process and include their own interpretation alongside the interpretations of the participants. In this study, I respect the dignity and value of all the information provided by the participants. I recognize the personal and value-laden nature of the data collected and ensure that the participants' responses are preserved in their true form. I carefully interpret these responses in the context of each participant's personal perspective.

Rhetoric

This philosophical assumption emphasizes that the researcher may adopt a literary or informal writing style, using personal voice and qualitative terms with limited definitions. In the context of this study, I used the first person to explain the experiences and coping mechanisms of the learners, thoroughly discussing their responses during the interviews. As a researcher, I align with the postmodernist philosophy outlined by Afzal-os-sadat Hossieni (2021). I believe that the primary goals of education are to teach critical thinking, foster the production of knowledge, develop both individual and social identities, and promote self-creation. In postmodern education, teachers guide students to discover new concepts and provide opportunities for open discussions on various subjects, encouraging creative exploration. In this environment, students learn to listen to diverse perspectives, tolerate criticism, and think critically. They are taught and guided to respect other cultures and nationalities for better outcome and the emphasis is placed on cooperative learning, independent thinking, and dialectic, critical, and verbal methods. It is evident that postmodernism and creativity are deeply interconnected with each other and this relationship is reflected in postmodern education.

2.2. *Qualitative Assumptions*—Methodology is a creative and adaptive approach to understanding research questions and subject matter, while method refers to the specific knowledge and procedures used in the study (Gerodias, 2019). In this study, the focus is on the experiences and coping mechanisms of teachers at Pundaguitan National High School in the Davao Oriental Division. These experiences are revealed through the teachers' personal narratives. The researcher's interest in understanding the deeper meaning of the challenges faced by the physical education teachers was the driv-

ing force behind choosing a qualitative research approach. Kalof and Dietz (2019), as cited by Gerodias (2019), suggested that qualitative research is useful for uncovering "meanings and motivations that underlie cultural symbols, personal experiences, and phenomena." By utilizing phenomenology, the researcher aimed to address this need by bringing forward the personal stories of the floating teachers, allowing themes, symbols, and meanings from their experiences to emerge, as highlighted by David (2025). Phenomenological research is based on two fundamental premises. The first is that ex-

perience is a valid, rich, and rewarding source of knowledge. According to Becker (2020), cited in Morrissey Higgs (2020), human experience is not an unreliable source but rather shapes one's behavior and provides valuable insights. The second premise of phenomenological research is that the everyday world is an invaluable and productive source of knowledge. Analyzing how events unfold in daily life can offer important insights into the nature of human phenomena and help us understand

ourselves better (Morrissey Higgs, 2020). By adopting a phenomenological approach, which focuses on understanding the “what” and the “how” of experiences (Moustakas, 2019), the researcher aimed to explore the subjective experiences, challenges, and coping mechanisms of the teachers. The insights gained from this study are intended to serve as a foundation for future research and policy analysis related to this subject.

2.3. Design and Procedure—This study employed a qualitative research design utilizing a phenomenological approach. According to Hancock et al. (2019), qualitative research is well-suited for addressing questions related to societal issues. It explores why people behave in certain ways, how opinions and attitudes are formed situations, the impact of society on individual actions, and how societal practices and culture evolve. Phenomenology, both as a philosophy and a method of inquiry, goes beyond simply understanding it is an intellectual engagement in the interpretation and meaning-making process used to comprehend the lived experiences of individuals at a conscious level. Researchers using phenomenology may collect data through interviews, observations, and discussions, making it both a philosophical and methodological stance (Qutoshi, 2019). As a qualitative research approach, phenomenology focuses on understanding the commonality of lived experiences within a specific group. The primary goal is to provide a detailed description of the nature of the phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 2019). Typically, interviews are conducted with individuals who have direct knowledge of an event, situation, or experience. The interview aims to address two broad questions (Moustakas, 1994): What have you experienced in relation to the phenomenon? What contexts or situations have shaped your experi-

ences with this phenomenon (Creswell, 2019)? Additional data forms, such as documents, observations, and art, can also be utilized. The collected data is then read and analyzed repeatedly, extracting phrases and themes, which are grouped to form clusters of meaning (Creswell, 2019). Through this process, the researcher can construct a universal understanding of the event or experience and deepen their comprehension of the phenomenon. Philosophical assumptions play an important role in the development of research methodology. Epistemological assumptions address the subjective evidence gathered from field studies, aiming to acquire knowledge derived from the accessibility of the study location. Axiological assumptions focus on the researcher's biases and require them to actively report these biases. They help determine whether the observed environment is a result of the behaviors being studied. Ontological assumptions pertain to the nature of reality in the context of the research subject. This assumption is most relevant to my study, as, as a qualitative researcher, I believe that realities are perceived differently by various individuals, shaped by their unique experiences. Phenomenological design seeks to interpret experiences by listening to the participants' accounts and providing meaning to those experiences (Creswell, 2019). It describes the structures of experiences as they appear to consciousness, without relying on the-

ory, deduction, or epistemological assumptions from other disciplines. The design investigates the phenomena through the subjective lenses

of the participants, who describe the meaning of their experiences with respect to a particular concept or phenomenon (Creswell, 2019).

2.4. Research Participants—In selecting research participants, I employed purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique where individuals are chosen based on specific characteristics and criteria relevant to the study. Using my judgment, I identified participants who were most likely to provide rich, relevant, and insightful data. For this research, the participants were public school teachers from Pundaguitan National High School, Division of

Davao Oriental. Each participant with at least 3 years of teaching experience. As suggested by Creswell (2013), a total of 10 participants were involved in in-depth interviews (IDIs). To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, I assigned a unique identification code to each participant. The participants in the in-depth interviews were labeled IDI-T1 to IDI-T10. This system of coding allowed for secure data collection while maintaining the privacy of the participants.

2.5. Ethical Considerations—In this section, I outlined the ethical principles that guided my research, ensuring the protection and well-being of the participating school administrators. These principles included my commitment to social value, informed consent, addressing the vulnerability of research respondents, upholding privacy and confidentiality, carefully considering risks, benefits, and safety, ensuring justice, maintaining transparency, acknowledging my qualifications as the researcher, addressing potential conflicts of interest, ensuring the adequacy of resources, and recognizing community relevance. Social Value I recognized the significant social value embedded in this research. By focusing on the challenges and experiences of secondary school administrators and teachers in implementing Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) in Pundaguitan National High School, Division of Davao Oriental. I aimed to contribute to a deeper understanding that could inform meaningful interventions. The findings provided valuable insights for the Department of Education, local policymakers, and educational leaders, ultimately promoting inclusive teaching practices and enhancing equity in the classroom. This, in turn, has the potential to positively im-

pact the educational outcomes of learners from diverse cultural backgrounds. Informed Consent I placed a strong emphasis on obtaining informed consent from each participating school administrator. Prior to participation, I ensured they received a clear explanation of the study's purpose, procedures (such as interviews or discussions), time commitments, and their absolute right to withdraw at any time without any negative consequences. A detailed consent form was provided, and I proceeded only once participants fully understood the research and voluntarily agreed to take part. Vulnerability of Research Respondents I acknowledged that school administrators and teachers, though in positions of authority, might have had concerns about how their shared experiences could be perceived by colleagues or supervisors, especially when discussing challenges related to CRT implementation. Recognizing this vulnerability, I committed to fostering a climate of trust and openness. I assured participants that their responses would remain confidential and anonymized, encouraging them to share authentic narratives without fear of judgment or repercussions. Privacy and Confidentiality The privacy and confidentiality of participants were paramount. I

implemented strict measures to safeguard their identities and responses, including assigning coded identifiers and securely storing data that was accessible only to me. In presenting the findings, I ensured that the data was aggregated and that no school or individual could be identified, maintaining the dignity and anonymity of all participants. **Risks, Benefits, and Safety** I carefully considered the risks involved, which were minimal and mainly involved the time required for interviews and the potential discomfort in recounting sensitive experiences with culturally diverse learners. However, the benefits were substantial, as participants contributed to a growing body of knowledge that could help strengthen inclusive practices and support systems in their schools. All engagements were conducted with full regard for participants' time, professional duties, and emotional safety. **Justice** I ensured fairness and inclusivity by striving to involve a diverse group of school administrators and teachers from different cultural and geographical contexts within Davao Oriental. By including a range of voices—especially those from marginalized or underrepresented communities—the study sought to reflect a broad spectrum of CRT experiences. The findings were also shared with local education stakeholders, allowing those who contributed to benefit from the knowledge produced. **Transparency** I maintained transparency throughout the study by regularly communicating the research goals, methods, and potential impacts to participants. They were kept informed of each phase of the research process and were encouraged to ask questions or raise concerns at any time. This openness helped build a respectful and collaborative relationship between the researcher and the par-

ticipants. **Qualification of the Researcher** As the researcher, I possessed a strong foundation in educational studies, with a particular focus on pedagogy and inclusive education. My familiarity with classroom dynamics, especially in rural and multicultural settings, enabled me to approach this topic with sensitivity and insight. I adhered to ethical research standards, respected the voices of participants, and approached CRT with cultural humility and professional integrity. **Conflict of Interest** I remained vigilant regarding any potential conflicts of interest, particularly given my proximity to the local education system in Panabo City. If any real or perceived conflicts arose, I addressed them transparently and took appropriate steps to maintain the credibility and impartiality of the research process. **Adequacy of Facilities** I ensured that all interviews and data collection activities were arranged flexibly and conveniently, minimizing disruption to participants' schedules. Necessary materials and support were provided to facilitate a smooth and respectful research experience. My approach emphasized consideration for the professional responsibilities and comfort of the participants. **Community Involvement** This research held significant relevance for the educational community in Davao Oriental. By examining how culturally responsive teaching was understood and implemented by local educators, the study provided insights that could help shape future training programs, curricula, and school policies. The aim was to foster culturally inclusive classrooms that respect and empower learners from all backgrounds, thereby improving the overall quality of education in the community.

2.6. Role of the Researcher—In this study, I assumed various roles to ensure its success. First, I sought permission to conduct the research, beginning with the Schools Division

Superintendent and subsequently obtaining consent from the participants of the study. As the researcher, once consent was granted, I recorded the interviews to meet the requirements of this

research. The purpose of the interviews was to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of learners in the new normal mode of teaching and learning. Additionally, the interviews aimed to gather insights on how the Department of Education could improve its programs. Once the necessary data was collected, I transcribed and analyzed the information. However, it is im-

portant to note that human instruments—such as myself—play a crucial role in ensuring the quality of the research, as biases and assumptions may arise when dealing with the individuals involved in the study (Greenbank, 2019). This consideration was critical throughout the research process to ensure the integrity of the data and findings.

2.7. Data Collection—The researcher obtained a letter of permission from the participants before proceeding with the study. Upon receiving approval, I utilized the prescribed forms of data collection as outlined in the qualitative design. For the selection of research participants, I applied purposive sampling, a technique where the researcher uses their judgment to select members of the population who are most likely to provide rich, relevant data for the study. As a non-probability sampling method, purposive sampling relies on the researcher's judgment to select participants, saving time and resources while aiming to gather a representative sample (Black, 2020). Participants were the teachers from Pundaguitan National High School in Davao Oriental Division. Ten participants voluntarily participated the in-depth interviews (IDIs). To protect participants' identities, coding was employed, with codes such as IDI-T1 to IDI-T10 assigned to the participant who took part in the in-depth interviews. The researcher sought to capture the subjective interactions of the participants. To achieve this, I relied heavily on naturalistic methods such as interviewing and audio recording. The interpretive paradigm was employed to ensure meaningful interactions between the researcher and participants, which facilitated the co-construction of reality based on their experiences. Interpretive approaches prioritize naturalistic methods like interviews, observation, and analysis of existing texts, ensuring that data collection reflects a gen-

uine dialogue between the researcher and participants. Following Yin's suggestions, as cited by Aquilam (2024), various forms of data collection were considered, including documents, archival records, interviews, direct and participant observation, and physical artifacts. For this study, in-depth interviews were used to gather legitimate and trustworthy data about teachers' experiences with the new normal mode of teaching and learning. The interviews aimed to capture the feelings and experiences of teachers, with participants encouraged to express their responses in a manner they found most comfortable. The interviews were transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy. The collected data was then analyzed using discourse analysis and thematic analysis. According to Creswell (2019), to ensure the success of the study, the data had to be stored in a secure and organized manner to prevent damage or loss. For the in-depth interviews, I utilized an Interview Guide Question Tool, which included sub-questions. This tool served as a guide during the interviews with the selected secondary teachers, helping to answer the research questions and gather additional insights relevant to the study. To ensure the validity of the study, I sought assistance from experts in the field. My interview guide question tool was reviewed and validated by the experts, and the participant sampling followed the recommendations of expert panels, thereby enhancing the reliability and credibility of the research design.

2.8. Data Analysis—

In analyzing the qualitative data, I employed discourse analysis and thematic analysis. Discourse analysis focuses on the use of language and the patterns within the language employed by the informants in the study, as reflected in the detailed transcripts of their recorded speech (Bueno, 2016). The recorded in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were transcribed and analyzed. Part of the analysis aimed to identify the challenges, coping mechanisms, and leadership behaviors of female school leaders. Thematic analysis is a method used to identify, analyze, and report patterns within data (Braun and Clarke, 2020). It is one of the most widely used methods in qualitative research. For this study, I examined the transcribed in-depth interviews to identify recurring patterns and themes that emerged from the data. This approach allowed me to organize and interpret the information in a structured way, providing

a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences and insights. In conducting this study, I followed a structured procedure to address the main research questions. The first phase of the study involved collecting data through in-depth interviews with selected participants. After conducting the interviews, the data were organized, transcribed, encoded, and translated. The transcribed data, including significant statements, were then subjected to analysis using discourse analysis and thematic analysis, with the data grouped into themes. The analyzed data were carefully interpreted by the researcher, with guidance from the theories underpinning the study. Common themes identified from the participants' responses were given the utmost consideration. The description of the participants' experiences was presented in the form of textual descriptions, providing a rich, detailed account of their lived experiences.

2.9. Framework of Analysis—Figure 2. shows procedures undertaken to analyze the textual data. Statements were extracted from the transcripts and organized into broader categories of information referred to as “meaning units” or themes (Creswell, 2019). Once the non-redundant units of meaning were identified, it was essential for the researcher to bracket

any assumptions in order to stay true to the phenomenon under investigation (Groenewald, 2024). I then carefully analyzed these meaning units to capture the essence of their significance within the larger context. Typically, clusters of themes are formed by grouping related units of meaning together (Creswell, 2019; Moustakas, 2019).

2.10. Trustworthiness of the Study—The concepts of validity and reliability are often seen as less relevant in qualitative research. Instead, qualitative researchers emphasize the trustworthiness of data, which is composed of four key components: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Harts, 2019).

Credibility

Credibility enhances the trustworthiness of the data by ensuring prolonged engagement with the research context. To address the issue of credibility in this study, I conducted in-

terviews with as many research participants as possible, continuing until data saturation was reached. This approach helped ensure that the data collected provided a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

Transferability

Transferability refers to the extent to which the findings from one study can be applied to other situations or contexts. In contrast to positivist research, which often seeks to generalize findings to larger populations, qualitative

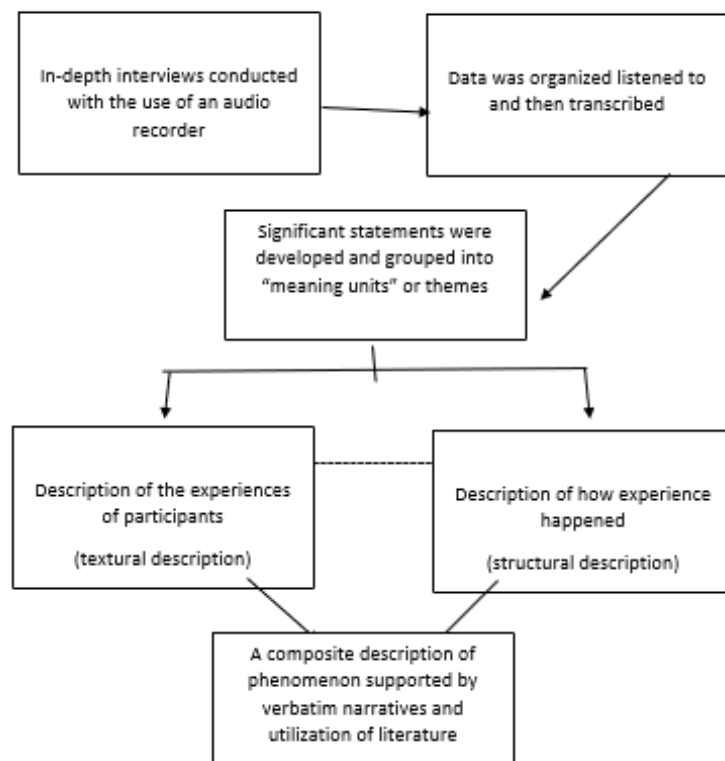


Fig. 2. Analytical Framework of the Study

studies focus on specific environments and individuals, making it difficult to demonstrate that results apply broadly. To ensure transferability in this study, I took responsibility for providing sufficient contextual information about the field-work sites, enabling the reader to assess whether the findings might be applicable to other contexts or settings.

Confirmability Confirmability is concerned with ensuring objectivity in the research process. In qualitative research, achieving true objectiv-

ity is challenging because instruments like tests and questionnaires are designed by humans, and researchers' biases can influence results. To address this, I took steps to ensure that the findings were primarily shaped by the experiences and perspectives of the participants, rather than by my own biases or preferences as the researcher. This was achieved through careful documentation and transparency in the data analysis process.

3. Results and Discussion

This chapter presents the results derived from the analysis of the interview data. It outlines the themes that emerged from the analysis, accompanied by detailed discussions that address the objectives of the study. Before delving into the discussion, I would like to clarify the symbols used when presenting the quotations based on the participants' responses. In reference to the transcriptions of the interviews, I used the codes T1 through T10 to identify the participants involved in the research. We must maintain reflexivity as we progress through the results and discussions, acknowledging the researcher's influence on interpretations. The insights gained from this chapter will not only illuminate the intricacies of the phenomenon but also contribute to further inquiries into the dynamic realm we are exploring.

3.1. *The Experiences of the Teachers in the Use of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy—*

3.1.1. *Promotion of Equity and Social Justice—*Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) is inherently grounded in the principles of equity and social justice, with the aim of addressing systemic inequalities within the educational system. By confronting biases, stereotypes, and promoting equitable access to learning opportunities, CRP contributes to the creation of a more just and inclusive society. CRP stands as a transformative approach to education, advocating for equity and social justice within the classroom. It emphasizes recognizing and valuing the diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives of students, creating inclusive learning environments where all students are provided equal opportunities to succeed. This essay explores strategies for promoting equity

and social justice through CRP, showcasing its transformative potential in addressing the systemic inequalities that persist in education. At the core of CRP lies a steadfast commitment to both equity and social justice. Equity in education refers to ensuring that every student, regardless of their background or circumstances, has access to the necessary resources, support, and opportunities to thrive. On the other hand, social justice in education involves challenging and dismantling the systemic barriers and inequalities that contribute to disparities in academic achievement and outcomes. By promoting these values, CRP seeks to level the playing field for all students, ensuring that they are all afforded the same chance to succeed. T1 participant said that A key aspect of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) is the use of cul-

turally relevant curriculum materials that reflect the diverse experiences and perspectives of students. By incorporating diverse texts, resources, and examples into lessons, teachers can promote equity by ensuring that all students see themselves reflected in the curriculum (Gay, 2010). T2 participant shared that, CRP also involves recognizing and challenging power dynamics and privilege in the classroom. Teachers can foster social justice by creating opportunities for students to critically examine issues such as race, class, gender, and other forms of oppression, empowering them to become advocates for social change (James, 2019). Furthermore, Participant T3 said CRP acknowledges that stu-

dents have different learning styles, abilities, and needs. Teachers can promote equity by using differentiated instruction strategies, which accommodate the diverse learning styles of students and provide tailored support to meet individual needs (Dizon, 2020). Additionally, CRP fosters critical thinking and social awareness among students, encouraging them to critically analyze issues related to power, privilege, and oppression. Teachers can promote equity by facilitating discussions on social justice, equity, and systemic inequalities, empowering students to become agents of change in their communities (Castillo, 2020).

3.1.2. Strengthened Teacher-Student Relationships—Building strong teacher-student relationships is essential for creating a positive and supportive learning environment in which all students can thrive. Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) provides an effective framework for enhancing these relationships by recognizing and valuing the diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives of students. In this context, we explore the importance of teacher-student relationships in education, the principles of CRP, and how CRP can be utilized to foster meaningful connections between teachers and students. Teacher-student relationships play a pivotal role in shaping students' academic achievement, social-emotional growth, and overall well-being. Research consistently shows that positive teacher-student relationships are linked to increased student engagement, motivation, and academic success. When students feel valued, respected, and supported by their teachers, they are more likely to actively participate in class, take risks in their learning, and persist through challenges. Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) offers a comprehensive approach to strengthening teacher-student relationships by acknowledging and celebrating students' cultural identities, experiences, and

strengths. At its core, CRP emphasizes the importance of cultural awareness, relevance, and responsiveness in both teaching and learning. By integrating culturally relevant materials into the curriculum, adapting instructional strategies to meet diverse learning needs, and using culturally responsive communication techniques, teachers can create a classroom environment where all students feel seen, heard, and respected. This approach empowers students to connect with their learning and their teachers, fostering more meaningful and productive educational experiences. Participant T4 emphasized that Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) encourages teachers to gain a deep understanding and appreciation of their students' cultural backgrounds, experiences, and identities. By acknowledging and respecting the cultural diversity of students, teachers can create a classroom environment where all students feel valued and respected. This approach fosters positive teacher-student relationships based on trust, empathy, and mutual respect (Sison, 2018). Participant T5 highlighted that CRP stresses the importance of recognizing and accommodating the individual strengths, needs, and learning styles of students. By adopting a personalized approach to teaching, teachers

can tailor their instruction to meet the unique needs of each student. This personalized attention demonstrates to students that their teacher cares about their individual success and well-being, ultimately strengthening teacher-student relationships (Aguirre, 2019). Furthermore, participant T6 stated that CRP encourages the use of culturally relevant and meaningful curriculum materials that reflect students' lived experiences and interests. When students see themselves represented in the curriculum, they are more likely to feel a sense of connection to the content and become more engaged in the learning process. This relevance and connection foster positive teacher-student relationships, as students perceive their teacher as someone who understands and values their experiences (Calf, 2018). Additionally, CRP empowers students to take ownership of their learning and

actively participate in the classroom community. By providing opportunities for student voice and agency, teachers can build trust and rapport with their students. When students feel that their opinions and contributions are valued and respected, they are more likely to form positive relationships with their teacher (Smith, 2019). Finally, CRP encourages teachers to use culturally responsive communication strategies that acknowledge and validate students' cultural backgrounds and communication styles. This includes using inclusive language, incorporating culturally relevant examples and metaphors, and being sensitive to cultural differences in nonverbal communication. By communicating in a way that respects and affirms students' cultural identities, teachers can strengthen teacher-student relationships and create a supportive learning environment (Garrison, 2021).

3.1.3. Enhancing Teacher Preparation and Support—Teacher preparation and support are essential components in the successful implementation of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP). Without adequate training and ongoing support, educators may face difficulties in understanding and applying the principles and strategies of CRP effectively in the classroom. Teacher preparation equips educators with the necessary knowledge, skills, and awareness to recognize and address their own biases, adapt curriculum materials to be culturally relevant, differentiate instruction to meet the diverse needs of students, and create inclusive learning environments where every student feels valued and respected. Ongoing support, such as professional development opportunities and participation in collaborative learning communities, allows educators to continue refining their practice, stay updated on best practices, and address challenges that arise when implementing CRP. This support helps teachers remain engaged and proactive in their professional growth, ensuring that they are well-equipped to foster culturally

responsive classrooms. Additionally, school and district leadership play a vital role in supporting CRP by providing necessary resources, guidance, and fostering a supportive organizational culture that values and prioritizes CRP initiatives. It is essential for leaders to advocate for CRP within the school system to ensure its success. Overall, teacher preparation and support are critical for ensuring that educators have the tools and resources they need to implement CRP effectively, promoting equitable, inclusive, and culturally responsive learning environments for all students. Many educators, however, did not receive adequate training or support in culturally responsive teaching methods during their pre-service education. Without proper preparation and ongoing support, educators may struggle to implement CRP effectively in their classrooms, hindering their ability to create inclusive and responsive learning environments. Participant T7 said that many teachers are not fully familiar with the principles and strategies of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP), making adequate preparation essential. Teachers

must understand the significance of culturally responsive teaching practices and how to effectively implement them in their classrooms (Clark, 2019). CRP requires teachers to recognize and address their own implicit biases and assumptions about students' cultural backgrounds. Proper training and support help educators develop the self-awareness and skills needed to identify and challenge biases that may influence their teaching practices (Stanley, 2019). Teachers also need support in developing culturally relevant curriculum materials that reflect the diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives of their students. This support can involve accessing resources, collaborating with colleagues, and adapting existing materials to ensure they are culturally responsive (Lim, 2019). Participant T8 shared an important aspect of CRP is differentiating instruction to meet the varied learning needs of students. Teachers require assistance in developing and implement-

ing instructional strategies that accommodate different learning styles, abilities, and cultural backgrounds (Ting, 2020). Participant T9 discuss that school and district leaders play a critical role in supporting the implementation of CRP by providing resources, guidance, and creating opportunities for collaboration and professional development. Administrators can help establish a culture of support and accountability for CRP initiatives within the school community, ensuring that CRP becomes an integral part of the educational framework (Benson, 2020). Figure 3 illustrates the emerging themes regarding the experiences of teachers using Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP). Through an examination of recent literature and qualitative analysis of key texts, this research aims to uncover the underlying patterns, trends, and insights that characterize the current discussions and debates surrounding CRP.

3.2. *Coping with the Challenges faced in Culturally Responsive Pedagogy —*

3.2.1. *Continuous Learning and Improvement*—Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) is an ongoing process that necessitates continuous learning and improvement. Teachers should regularly reflect on their practices, seek feedback from students and colleagues, and engage in professional development to refine their approach to culturally responsive teaching. It is crucial for teachers to be flexible and adaptable in their instructional methods to accommodate the diverse learning styles and cultural backgrounds of their students. This may involve adjusting lesson plans, providing multiple means of representation and expression, and allowing for student choice and autonomy. Collaboration with colleagues, administrators, and community members is essential to gaining the support and resources necessary for implementing CRP ef-

fectively. Teachers can also involve students' families and communities in the learning process, fostering a more inclusive and culturally responsive educational environment. Continuous learning enables teachers to stay informed about the evolving cultural backgrounds, experiences, and needs of their students. By actively seeking out new knowledge and understanding, teachers can adjust their instructional practices to better meet the needs of their culturally diverse student population, ensuring a more responsive and effective learning experience. Participant T1 discussed that Continuous learning encourages teachers to engage in ongoing reflection on their teaching practices, including how effectively they are implementing Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) principles. Through reflection, teachers can identify areas for im-

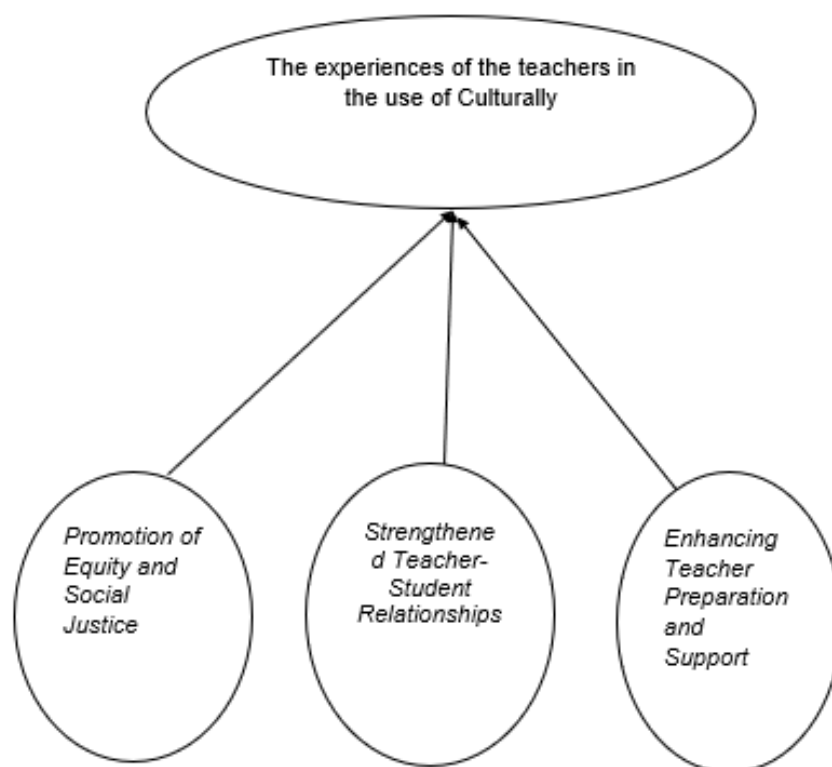


Fig. 3. The Experiences of the Teachers in the Use of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

provement, recognize biases or assumptions, and refine their approach to culturally responsive teaching. It also provides opportunities for teachers to participate in professional development activities focused on CRP. Workshops, seminars, conferences, and online courses can offer teachers new strategies, resources, and perspectives to enhance their implementation of CRP in the classroom (Lucas, 2020). Participant T2 shared that Continuous learning also involves seeking feedback from colleagues, administrators, students, and families. By soliciting feedback and engaging in collaborative discussions, teachers gain valuable insights into the effectiveness of their CRP practices and identify areas for growth and improvement. This allows teachers to stay up to date with the latest research, trends, and best practices in culturally responsive teaching, including relevant literature, studies, and resources that can inform their instructional decisions and enhance CRP implementation (Cruz, 2019). Furthermore, Participant T3 highlights that continuous learning equips teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to address resistance and challenges encountered during CRP implementation. By

staying informed and confident in their understanding of CRP principles teachers can effectively advocate for the importance of culturally responsive teaching and address any barriers or obstacles that arise (Gimena, 2019). Overall, continuous learning and improvement are crucial in overcoming the challenges of implementing CRP. They provide teachers with ongoing opportunities for growth and refinement of their practices. Through continuous learning, teachers stay informed about the diverse backgrounds and needs of their students, adapt their instructional approaches, and reflect on their teaching practices to identify areas for improvement. Professional development opportunities focused on CRP equip teachers with new strategies, resources, and perspectives. Additionally, seeking feedback from colleagues, students, and families, while staying informed of the latest research, helps teachers address challenges effectively. By embracing continuous learning, teachers can create more inclusive and equitable learning environments that honor and support the cultural identities of all students (Chen, 2017).

3.2.2. Collaboration and Community Engagement—Collaboration with colleagues, administrators, and community members provides support and resources for implementing CRP. Teachers can involve students' families and communities in the learning process to create a more inclusive and culturally responsive educational environment. Teachers can also advocate for changes at the institutional and systemic levels to address barriers to CRP implementation, such as policies, curriculum standards, and resource allocation. This may involve collaborating with administrators, policymakers, and community organizations to promote equity and inclusivity in education. Collaboration and community engagement play crucial

roles in addressing the challenges associated with CRP implementation in various ways: Access to Resources and Support: Collaboration with colleagues, administrators, and community members allows teachers to access a range of resources, expertise, and support networks. By working together, educators can share best practices, lesson ideas, and strategies for effective CRP implementation. Cultural Understanding and Sensitivity: Community engagement helps teachers develop a deeper understanding of the cultural backgrounds, traditions, and values of their students and families. By building relationships with community members, teachers can gain valuable insights into the lived experiences of their students, incorporating cul-

turally relevant content and perspectives into their instruction. This fosters a richer, more inclusive learning environment. Participant T4 said, Collaboration and community engagement are crucial in overcoming the challenges associated with the implementation of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP). Research indicates that collaborative efforts among educators, administrators, community members, and families can enhance teachers' understanding of students' cultural backgrounds and identities, leading to more effective instructional practices (Gay, 2019; Ladson-Billings, 2025). Participant T5 shared; by working together, educators can share resources, exchange ideas, and develop strategies to integrate culturally relevant content and perspectives into their curriculum. Community engagement also provides opportunities for educators to build authentic relationships with students' families and local community members, fostering trust, communication, and partnership in the educational process (Moll et al., 2022). Through collaboration and community engagement, educators can create inclusive learning environments that celebrate and honor the diversity of students' backgrounds, experiences, and identities. This, in turn, promotes academic success and well-being for all learners. Participant T7 discussed, beyond enhancing teachers' understanding of students' cultural identities, collaboration and community engage-

ment contribute significantly to the development of culturally responsive instructional practices. Research shows that collaborative professional development initiatives focused on CRP lead to increased teacher efficacy and confidence in applying CRP principles in the classroom (Hollins et al., 2024). Partnerships with community organizations, cultural institutions, and local leaders provide educators with access to culturally relevant resources, expertise, and support networks (Howard et al., 2019). Participant T8 said, these collaborative efforts not only enrich the learning experiences for students but also empower educators to advocate for systemic changes that promote equity and inclusion in education. By working collaboratively and engaging with their communities, educators can address the challenges of implementing CRP more effectively, ultimately fostering positive outcomes for all students. Figure 4 below illustrates the emergent themes pertaining to the coping strategies employed by educators in navigating the challenges associated with the implementation of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP). Through an in-depth review of contemporary scholarly works and rigorous qualitative analysis, this study aims to highlight the nuanced patterns, prevailing trends, and insightful perspectives that define ongoing discourse surrounding CRP.

3.3. Insights drawn from the Findings of the Study—The implementation of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) presents a complex challenge for educators who aim to create inclusive and equitable learning environments. Gaining insight into teachers' experiences and the strategies they use to navigate these challenges is crucial for advancing effective pedagogical practices and promoting educational equity. This study seeks to explore the lived

experiences and perspectives of educators who are engaged in the implementation of CRP, with the goal of uncovering the dynamics, barriers, and facilitators that shape the integration of culturally responsive practices in educational settings. By examining the voices and narratives of teachers, this research aims to provide valuable insights that can inform policy, practice, and professional development efforts focused on fostering culturally responsive teaching and learning.

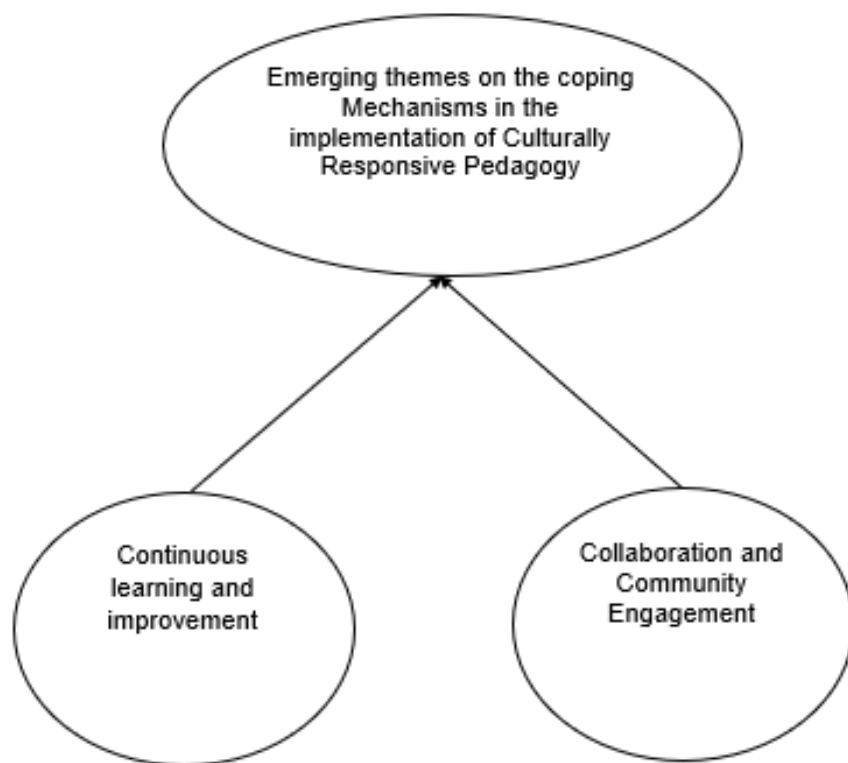


Fig. 4. Emerging themes on the Coping Mechanisms in Implementation of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

3.3.1. Promotion of Equity and Social Justice—The implementation of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) poses a complex challenge for educators working to create inclusive and equitable learning environments. Gaining a deeper understanding of teachers' experiences and the strategies they employ to navigate these challenges is crucial for enhancing pedagogical practices and advancing educational equity. This study aims to explore the lived experiences and perspectives of educators involved in the implementation of CRP, providing insight into the various dynamics, barriers, and facilitators that influence the integration of culturally responsive practices in educational contexts. By examining the voices and narratives of teachers, this research seeks to uncover valuable insights that can inform policy, educational practices, and professional development initiatives designed to promote culturally responsive teaching and learning.

3.3.2. Strengthened Teacher-Student Relationships—In operationalizing the principles of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP), educators utilize a variety of instructional strategies designed to strengthen teacher-student relationships and promote meaningful engagement in the learning process. These strategies include incorporating culturally relevant curriculum materials that reflect the diverse backgrounds and experiences of students, which helps create a sense of relevance and connection to the content. CRP also emphasizes the importance of differentiated instruction, personalized learning experiences, and student-centered pedagogies that cater to the individual needs, strengths, and interests of students. Additionally, CRP promotes the creation of collaborative and participatory learning environments where students are actively engaged in co-constructing knowledge, sharing their perspectives, and contributing to the learning community. The strengthening of teacher-student relationships within the framework of

ing and learning. The implementation of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) presents a multifaceted challenge for educators striving to create inclusive and equitable learning environments. Understanding teachers' experiences and coping strategies in navigating these challenges is essential for advancing effective pedagogical practices and promoting educational equity. Through an exploration of the lived experiences and perspectives of educators engaged in the implementation of CRP, this study aims to shed light on the intricate dynamics, barriers, and facilitators shaping the integration of culturally responsive practices in educational settings. By delving into the voices and narratives of teachers, this research endeavors to unveil valuable insights that can inform policy, practice, and professional development initiatives aimed at fostering culturally responsive teaching and learning.

CRP has profound socio-cultural implications that extend beyond the classroom. By fostering trust, empathy, and mutual respect between teachers and students, CRP helps cultivate a sense of belonging and agency among learners. This empowers them to navigate the complexities of their cultural identities and excel academically, socially, and emotionally. Moreover, CRP has the potential to bridge cultural divides, reduce biases, and promote intercultural understanding and empathy within diverse learning communities. Additionally, the enhancement of teacher-student relationships in CRP contributes to broader social justice efforts by challenging systemic inequities, advocating for inclusive educational practices, and fostering a culture of collaboration and solidarity within schools and communities. In conclusion, the cultivation of strengthened teacher-student relationships within CRP is a multifaceted effort that encompasses core principles, instructional strategies, and socio-cultural implications. By

prioritizing trust, empathy, and cultural responsiveness in teacher-student interactions, CRP seeks to create inclusive and empowering learning environments where all students feel valued, respected, and supported in their academic journey. Moving forward, it is crucial for educators, researchers, and policymakers to continue advancing the dialogue on teacher-student relationships within CRP, advocating for transformative educational practices that prioritize equity, diversity, and social justice in educational systems worldwide. The participant T2 highlighted that strong teacher-student relationships are crucial in creating a supportive and nurturing learning environment. When students feel valued and understood, trust naturally builds, allowing for open communication. This trust encourages students to participate more actively in class and feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and concerns. A safe classroom environment not only supports academic growth but also promotes the emotional well-being of learners, which is fundamental for their overall development. One participant's experience T4, with a withdrawn student illustrated how personalized attention and culturally responsive adjustments can positively influence student engagement. By taking the time to learn about the student's interests and incorporating them into lessons, the teacher fostered a connection that motivated the student to become more involved. This approach reflects the importance of seeing students as unique in-

dividuals whose backgrounds and preferences should be respected and integrated into teaching practices. The teacher's consistent effort to greet students personally, listen to their stories, and celebrate small successes further strengthened the bond and cultivated a sense of belonging. Additionally, Participant T5 and T8 noted that building trust and strong relationships with students resulted in a more collaborative and positive classroom climate. This environment encourages students to take risks in learning without fear of failure, promotes peer support, and increases motivation. Such positive relational dynamics contribute to better classroom management and more effective teaching, as students feel supported and are more willing to engage. The teacher's consistent and fair treatment of all students also reinforces equity and respect, key components of a culturally responsive pedagogy. According to Pianta and Hamre (2019), strong teacher-student relationships are linked to increased student motivation, engagement, and achievement. Their research highlights that when students perceive their teachers as supportive and caring, they are more likely to develop positive attitudes toward school and show improved academic outcomes. These findings underscore the importance of teachers making intentional efforts to build meaningful connections with their students, laying a foundation for effective teaching and learning.

3.3.3. *Culture-focused Pedagogy*—Culturally responsive teaching emphasizes the importance of incorporating students' cultural backgrounds and experiences into the teaching and learning process. This approach acknowledges that students come from diverse linguistic, social, and cultural environments, and that these factors profoundly impact how they learn. By recognizing and valuing these differences, educators foster inclusive classrooms that promote

a sense of belonging, respect, and mutual understanding. Culture-focused pedagogy not only enhances academic outcomes but also validates students' identities, helping them feel seen and valued within the school environment. A primary goal of culture-focused pedagogy is to bridge the gap between students' home cultures and the school culture. When teachers design lessons that incorporate culturally familiar references, students are more likely to

engage with the content and retain the information. For example, integrating indigenous stories, local history, or community practices into lessons can make learning more relevant to students. Gay (2020) emphasizes that culturally responsive teaching empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural references to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes. This alignment between students' lived experiences and classroom instruction boosts motivation and improves academic achievement. Moreover, culture-focused pedagogy fosters critical consciousness, an awareness of social inequalities and the role education can play in addressing them. Students are encouraged to question dominant narratives and recognize systemic biases in the curriculum. Teachers, in turn, become facilitators of conversations about equity and social justice, helping students develop empathy and a deeper understanding of others. According to Ladson-Billings (2019), culturally relevant pedagogy not only focuses on academic success but also on developing cultural competence and sociopolitical awareness. This broadens the scope of education beyond rote memorization and into transformative learning experiences. The participant T2 response strongly emphasizes the vital role of culture-focused pedagogy in fostering inclusive and meaningful classroom experiences. By intentionally recognizing and incorporating the cultural backgrounds of learners, teachers ensure that students not only acquire academic knowledge but also feel a deep sense of belonging. When students see their identities reflected in lessons, their confidence and engagement increase. This practice validates their lived experiences and promotes mutual respect among diverse learners. A poignant example shared was the teacher's experience with learners from indigenous communities who initially hesitated to participate in class. This reflects a common challenge in multicultural classrooms—students from marginal-

ized backgrounds may feel alienated or invisible in traditional, textbook-centered instruction. By integrating cultural elements familiar to these students, the teacher broke down barriers, making learning more relatable and accessible. This illustrates how contextualizing content can serve as a bridge to participation and deeper learning. Furthermore, participant T3 highlighted how the classroom climate transformed because of culturally responsive teaching. Activities that encouraged sharing and cultural exchange fostered empathy and curiosity among students. This not only improved peer relationships but also cultivated a learning environment where diversity was celebrated rather than merely tolerated. Such transformation underscores the social benefits of cultural inclusion, where learning becomes a collaborative experience rather than a competitive one. Participant T5 also offered valuable advice to fellow educators—start by listening to students and being open to learning from them. Teachers do not need to be experts in every culture but must be willing to adapt and co-learn. This approach promotes co-agency and helps dismantle hierarchical, one-size-fits-all models of teaching. When educators position themselves as learners, they model humility and respect, key qualities in a culturally responsive classroom, Gay (2020). Participant T9 highlighted that, culturally responsive teaching involves “using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively.” This aligns with the teacher's strategy of adapting lessons based on students' cultural contexts, which not only aids academic learning but also supports the holistic development of students. In essence, culture-focused pedagogy is not a supplemental strategy but a foundational approach that promotes equity, relevance, and deeper student engagement, Gay (2020).

3.3.4. *Contextualized-based Teaching*—

Contextualized teaching is an instructional ap-

proach that connects learning content with real-life situations relevant to students' daily experiences, culture, and community. This method aims to make learning more meaningful by helping students understand the relevance of what they are studying to their own lives. When lessons are grounded in familiar contexts, students are more likely to be engaged and motivated to learn, as the subject matter resonates with their personal realities. One of the key benefits of contextualized teaching is that it encourages critical thinking and practical application. Instead of learning concepts in isolation, students are encouraged to apply their knowledge to solve problems or reflect on issues that are present in their environment. For example, in a Filipino context, a mathematics lesson can be framed around sari-sari store transactions, or a science class might explore local environmental issues like deforestation or water pollution in the barangay. These approaches deepen understanding and improve retention by making the content personally relevant. This teaching method also promotes inclusivity and equity. Learners from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, especially those in rural or underserved areas, often struggle to relate to traditional textbook examples that are far removed from their lived experiences. By contextualizing content, teachers ensure that all students see the value of their own knowledge and cultural background in the learning process. This validation fosters confidence and a sense of belonging, which are essential for academic success. Moreover, contextualized-based teaching supports the development of life skills. By integrating content with real-world contexts, students learn to navigate and critically analyze their surroundings. They begin to see school not as a separate entity from life but as a tool to understand and improve it. This perspective prepares them not only for academic assessments but also for the practical demands of adulthood and community participation. As Berns and Erickson (2021) em-

phasized, contextual teaching "engages students in meaningful activities that help them connect academic content to real-life situations, making learning more relevant and effective." This approach is particularly crucial in the Philippine setting, where diversity in language, culture, and economic conditions requires teachers to be adaptive and responsive. Contextualized-based teaching, therefore, is not just a strategy but a necessity for meaningful and transformative education. The participant T2 highlighted the essence of context-based teaching as an approach that makes learning more meaningful and relevant to students' everyday lives. The teacher emphasized that this method involves designing lessons and examples based on the learners' environment, such as their family life, community, or culture. By doing so, students are more likely to relate to the content, leading to a deeper understanding of the subject matter. This strategy acknowledges that education should not be confined to textbooks but should reflect real-life experiences that resonate with the learners. The participant T3 experience illustrates how contextualization can be applied in a practical way. While discussing pollution, the teacher opted to shift from generic textbook examples to a more grounded and engaging activity: asking students to observe and report the types of waste in their surroundings. This allowed students to engage directly with the topic, making it more personal and impactful. Such activities not only develop scientific observation skills but also increase awareness of their immediate environment and social responsibility. However, Participants T5 and T7 also acknowledged that contextualized-based teaching demands more effort during lesson planning. It requires educators to step outside the boundaries of prepared materials and develop lessons that are tailored to the learners' specific contexts. This often entails being more creative, adaptive, and resourceful, especially in settings where access to teaching materials

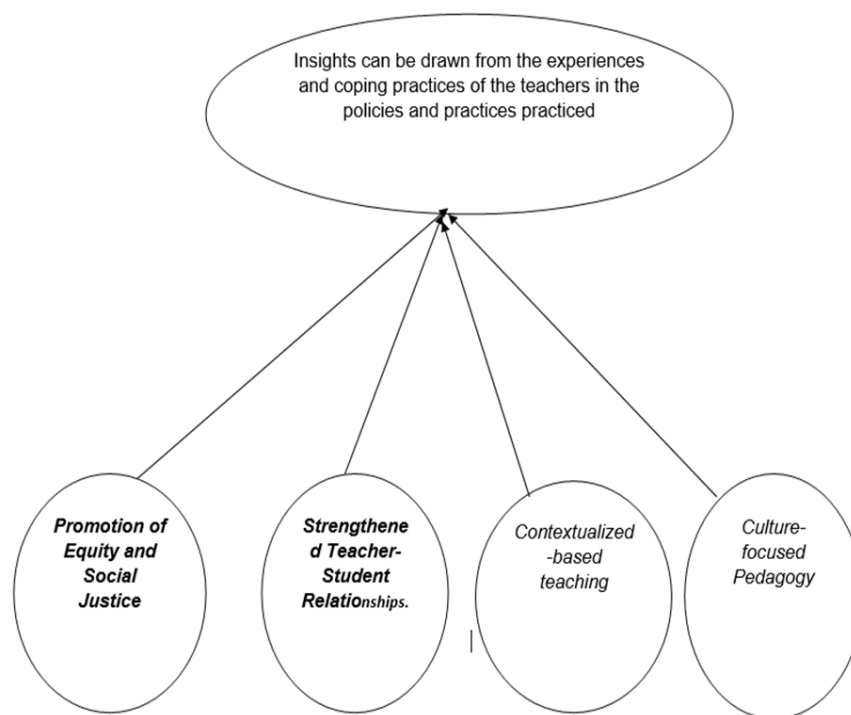


Fig. 5. Insights Drawn from the Experiences and Coping Practices of the Teachers in the Policies and Practices Practiced

is limited. Despite these challenges, the reward comes in the form of heightened student engagement and improved learning outcomes. The shift to contextualized learning also encourages students to become more active participants in their education. When learners see the connection between classroom discussions and their daily lives, they are more likely to contribute their thoughts, ask questions, and take ownership of their learning. This method fosters critical thinking and problem-solving skills, as students begin to view learning as a tool for understanding and improving their own com-

munities. As emphasized by the Department of Education (DepEd, 2025), contextualization is a key component of the K to 12 curriculums in the Philippines. It promotes inclusive education by recognizing the diverse backgrounds of Filipino learners and ensuring that lessons are culturally and environmentally relevant. This approach not only improves academic performance but also helps in developing values, skills, and attitudes that are grounded in students' lived experiences. Thus, contextualized-based teaching is not just a strategy, it is a necessity for meaningful and transformative learning.

4. Implications and Future Directions

In this chapter, the researcher offers a concise yet comprehensive overview of the study, delving into its key objectives, methodologies employed, and significant findings unearthed. Following this elucidation, the chapter moves into exploring the profound implications emerging from the study's outcomes, shedding light on their potential to reshape pedagogical practices and educational policies. Moreover, the chapter delves into the nuanced trajectories and transformative potential inherent in the experiences of educators immersed in the implementation of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP), offering insights into future directions for harnessing its full efficacy within

diverse educational landscapes.

4.1. Findings—The main purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of teachers in the implementation of CRP. The study identified three key themes: Promotion of Equity and Social Justice, Strengthened Teacher-Student Relationships, and Teacher Preparation and Support. The study examined teachers' experiences in implementing Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP), revealing that: CRP emerged as a potent catalyst for promoting equity and social justice within classrooms, as educators embraced culturally relevant content and pedagogical strategies to address the diverse needs of students. This emphasis on inclusivity fostered a more empowering learning environment where all students felt valued and supported.

CRP significantly strengthened teacher-student relationships, facilitating deeper connections based on mutual respect and understanding. Through culturally responsive practices, educators forged more authentic bonds with their students, leading to heightened engagement and academic performance. The study

also highlighted the critical importance of adequate teacher preparation and ongoing support for successful CRP implementation. It underscored the necessity of comprehensive training programs and continuous professional development to equip educators with the requisite knowledge, skills, and resources. Together, these insights underscore the transformative potential of CRP in promoting educational equity and fostering meaningful teacher-student connections, while emphasizing the imperative for ongoing support and professional growth within educational communities. Overall, the study's findings highlighted the importance of continuous learning, improvement, collaboration, and community engagement as coping practices for teachers navigating challenges in the implementation of CRP. These insights emphasize the significance of fostering a culture of growth, collaboration, and partnership within educational communities to support the successful integration of culturally responsive practices and promote equitable and inclusive learning environments.

4.2. Implications—The findings of this study have significant implications for how educators approach pedagogy within culturally diverse classrooms. By grounding the analysis in Max Horkheimer's Critical Theory (1937), the study challenges traditional, one-size-fits-all educational methods and highlights the necessity of reflective and transformative pedagogy. Horkheimer's concept of critical theory demands that education not only transmit knowledge but also interrogate the social structures and inequalities embedded in that process. Culturally responsive teaching, as explored in the study, embodies this principle by encouraging teachers to become aware of the cultural dynamics and power relations that shape their classrooms. Through this lens, culturally respon-

sive teaching becomes more than a pedagogical technique—it is a form of social resistance and emancipation. It challenges teachers to move beyond neutrality and adopt a conscious stance that values students' lived experiences and cultural backgrounds. This study's implications suggest that educators must become critically aware of how dominant ideologies may marginalize certain learners, and they must actively reshape curricula, instructional methods, and assessment tools to reflect a more inclusive and equitable framework. In doing so, they align their practice with Horkheimer's idea that knowledge should serve to liberate rather than reproduce oppressive systems. Furthermore, the study implies a systemic shift in teacher training and policy development. If teachers are to adopt

a critical and culturally responsive stance, educational institutions must provide them with the necessary tools and support. This includes not only content knowledge about diverse cultures, but also critical pedagogical training rooted in reflection and social critique. As Horkheimer noted, the role of theory is not merely to interpret the world but to change it. In this sense, culturally responsive teaching functions as a mechanism through which education can become more socially just, dismantling long-standing inequities in classroom dynamics and educational outcomes. Finally, this study contributes to the

broader educational discourse by emphasizing the transformative potential of culturally responsive teaching. It suggests that such pedagogy empowers both teachers and learners to question and reconstruct the educational experience. This aligns with Horkheimer's vision of education as a site for critical consciousness and collective change. Ultimately, the study implies that culturally responsive teaching, supported by critical theory, can play a crucial role in cultivating inclusive, democratic, and socially aware learning environments.

4.3. Future Directions—For Students: Future initiatives should encourage students to become active participants in their own learning by promoting self-expression and cultural sharing. Programs that provide space for learners to explore and present their identities can deepen their engagement and foster mutual respect among peers. Activities like cultural mapping, storytelling, and project-based learning rooted in local contexts can help students connect academic content to their everyday lives, promoting relevance and motivation. For Teachers: Teachers must be supported in developing culturally responsive teaching practices through ongoing professional development. Future directions include integrating modules on cultural competence, critical pedagogy, and inclusive classroom strategies in pre-service and in-service training. Encouraging reflective teaching, peer collaboration, and classroom-based research will empower educators to continually refine their practices and address the diverse needs of their learners. For School Administrators: School leaders play a key role in fostering environments where culturally responsive teaching can thrive. Plans should include creating school policies that support equity, diversity, and inclusion. Administrators must ensure that teachers have access to appro-

priate resources, time for collaborative planning, and institutional encouragement to innovate and adapt their teaching methods to reflect student diversity. For Stakeholders: Community members, including parents and local organizations, should be engaged in the educational process through culturally relevant partnerships and activities. Future directions may involve creating school-community programs that celebrate local traditions, invite resource speakers, or encourage students to learn from their surroundings. Stakeholder involvement ensures that cultural learning is authentic and sustainable. For the Department of Education (DepEd): DepEd can strengthen culturally responsive teaching by embedding it into the national curriculum and teacher standards. Future directions should include policy reforms that recognize and institutionalize inclusive and culture-based pedagogy. Resource allocation, training programs, and monitoring systems must be aligned to support this approach, ensuring that every learner receives a quality education that respects their cultural identity. For Future Researchers: There remains a wealth of unexplored areas in culturally responsive pedagogy. Future research should examine its impact on student performance, classroom dynamics, and teacher mindset across diverse educational contexts. Compar-

ative studies between urban and rural implementations, as well as longitudinal studies tracking changes over time, will offer deeper insights. Researchers should also explore the integration of critical theory and indigenous knowledge systems to further enrich culturally responsive educational practices.

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