

Skills in Implementing Culturally Relevant Learning Practices and Knowledge of Diverse Backgrounds of Students

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Abstract. This explanatory sequential mixed-methods study examined the influence of cultural competence and professional development on the effectiveness of guidance and counseling among senior high school teachers in Cluster IV Schools. The quantitative phase involved the use of validated survey instruments administered to 138 respondents, assessing levels of cultural competence, professional development, and counseling effectiveness. Results revealed that cultural competence significantly predicted guidance and counseling effectiveness ($p = .006$), particularly among teachers with higher self-assessed counseling performance. Professional development, while rated as moderately relevant and collaborative, did not yield a statistically significant influence on counseling effectiveness. Furthermore, no significant interaction effect was found between the two variables ($p = .956$). The qualitative phase, comprising in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, further explained these results. Teachers highlighted the importance of cultural awareness, empathy, and rapport in enhancing student trust and improving counseling outcomes. They reported changes in attitudes and practices after participating in culturally focused professional development, including more inclusive and reflective approaches. The findings underscore the critical role of cultural competence in fostering effective, student-centered guidance practices, especially in diverse educational contexts.

KEY WORDS

1. Cultural competence 2. professional development 3. guidance and counseling

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1. Introduction

In the current varied educational environment, culturally relevant learning approaches are vital for creating inclusive and impactful learning experiences. Acknowledging and appreciating students' diverse backgrounds, including their cultural heritage, language, traditions, and experiences, boosts engagement, motivation, and academic achievement. Culturally relevant pedagogy highlights the need to incorporate students' cultural knowledge into

teaching methods, curriculum, and classroom dynamics. By doing so, educators can cultivate learning settings that validate students' identities, encourage critical thinking, and connect home and school experiences. Using culturally responsive teaching techniques enables students to recognize their own knowledge and experiences within the educational process, ultimately enhancing their sense of belonging and improving educational outcomes. In the context of

global education, international context advocate for the need for cultural competence among senior high school teachers has become increasingly urgent. Many countries face challenges stemming from demographic shifts, including immigration and globalization, leading to diverse student populations. In the United States, for instance, schools are witnessing a significant rise in multicultural classrooms, where students from various ethnic backgrounds interact daily. This diversity presents challenges for teachers who may not have received adequate training to navigate cultural differences (Sparreskog, 2024). In Europe, particularly in countries such as Germany and France, the integration of students from refugee backgrounds poses additional concerns. Teachers are often unprepared to support these students, who may come with traumatic experiences and differing educational expectations. The challenge lies in recognizing cultural differences and providing appropriate counseling that addresses the socio-emotional needs of these vulnerable populations. Without targeted professional development focused on cultural competence, teachers may struggle to build trusting relationships, leading to disengagement and lacking support for students who require tailored guidance (Ay Özekin 2024). In Asia, countries like Singapore and Malaysia exemplify the challenges of multicultural education within their school systems. Here, cultural competence is crucial for teachers to understand and appreciate the nuances of their students' backgrounds, particularly in a region where ethnic diversity is prominent. However, concerns persist regarding the adequacy of professional development opportunities available to educators. Many teachers may receive limited training that fails to address the complexities of intercultural interactions, which can hinder their effectiveness in providing guidance and counseling (Geletu, 2024). In the Philippine educational landscape, the growing diversity among student populations, fueled

by various socio-economic and cultural factors, necessitates a heightened focus on cultural competence among senior high school teachers. The Philippines is home to numerous ethnic groups, each with distinct traditions, values, and educational needs. However, due to limited exposure and training, many teachers face challenges in recognizing and addressing these cultural differences. This lack of cultural competence can hinder effective communication between teachers and students, creating barriers to understanding and support within guidance and counseling programs. As a result, the potential for fostering inclusive and responsive educational environments is significantly compromised (Ramos et al., 2024). The challenges are further exacerbated by the recent influx of students from indigenous communities and those affected by socio-economic disparities. These groups often require specialized support to navigate the educational system, yet teachers may lack the necessary training to provide adequate guidance. In this context, the effectiveness of counseling programs can be severely diminished. Many educators find themselves unequipped to meet the specific requirements of these students, resulting in emotions of isolation and disconnection (Le et al., 2020). Moreover, the Philippines faces systemic challenges in professional development for teachers, particularly in rural areas where resources are limited. While urban schools may offer more training opportunities, educators in remote regions often struggle to access professional development programs that emphasize cultural competence. This discrepancy can create disparities in counseling effectiveness across the country, as some teachers may be ill-prepared to address the diverse backgrounds of their students. To improve guidance and counseling services, it is essential to implement comprehensive and accessible professional development initiatives that empower all teachers, regardless of their geographical location, to understand and respond to the unique

cultural dynamics present in their classrooms (Darwin, 2022). In Davao City, where a rich ethnic diversity characterizes the educational landscape, senior high school teachers need to cultivate cultural competence. This skill is crucial for creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment. The diversity of ethnic groups, indigenous peoples, and migrant communities necessitates a thoughtful approach to teaching and engaging students, one that acknowledges and respects varied cultural identities. This inadequacy often leads to miscommunication, diminished student engagement, and insufficient academic and socio-emotional support, especially for marginalized students who need culturally relevant interventions. The pivotal role teachers play in influencing both academic and personal growth, it is essential to implement comprehensive professional development programs tailored to equip educators with the necessary skills for incorporating culturally relevant practices in their teaching and counseling methods. Cultural competence in education, this research intends to help build a more inclusive and equitable learning environment, which in turn can boost student engagement, academic success, and overall wellness. This paper aims to tackle these shortcomings by promoting targeted strategies that aid teachers in navigating

the diverse cultural landscape of Davao City.

1.1. Theoretical/Conceptual Framework of the Study—This study uses Social Constructivist Theory, which focuses on how learning happens through social interaction and cultural context. It suggests that people build knowledge by working and engaging with others. Understanding students' different backgrounds is important for effective teaching and counseling (Behrendt et al., 2021). The study examines how cultural competence among educators and their ongoing professional development can significantly influence their guidance and counseling practices. The framework incorporates elements of the Ecological Systems Theory; Akbar et al. (2023) recognize the multiple layers of influence—such as family, community, and school—on a student's development and well-being. Together, these theoretical perspectives underscore the necessity of fostering positive relationships, enhancing cultural awareness, and promoting inclusive practices within educational settings. This approach not only enriches the understanding of how educators can effectively support diverse learners but also emphasizes the importance of collaboration and continuous improvement in guidance and counseling services.

2. Methodology

This study's methodology aims to thoroughly investigate the impact of cultural competence and professional development on the effectiveness of guidance and counseling programs among senior high school teachers. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, the study combines quantitative data from surveys that measure teachers' cultural competence and self-assessment of counseling effectiveness with qualitative insights gathered from in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. This dual approach enables a robust exploration of teachers' experiences and perspectives, providing a nuanced understanding of how cultural sensitivity and targeted professional development shape their counseling practices.

2.1. Research Design—This research utilized the Explanatory Sequential Mixed-Methods design as defined by Creswell and

Plano Clark (2020). It consists of two phases: the first phase involves collecting and analyzing quantitative data, while the second phase

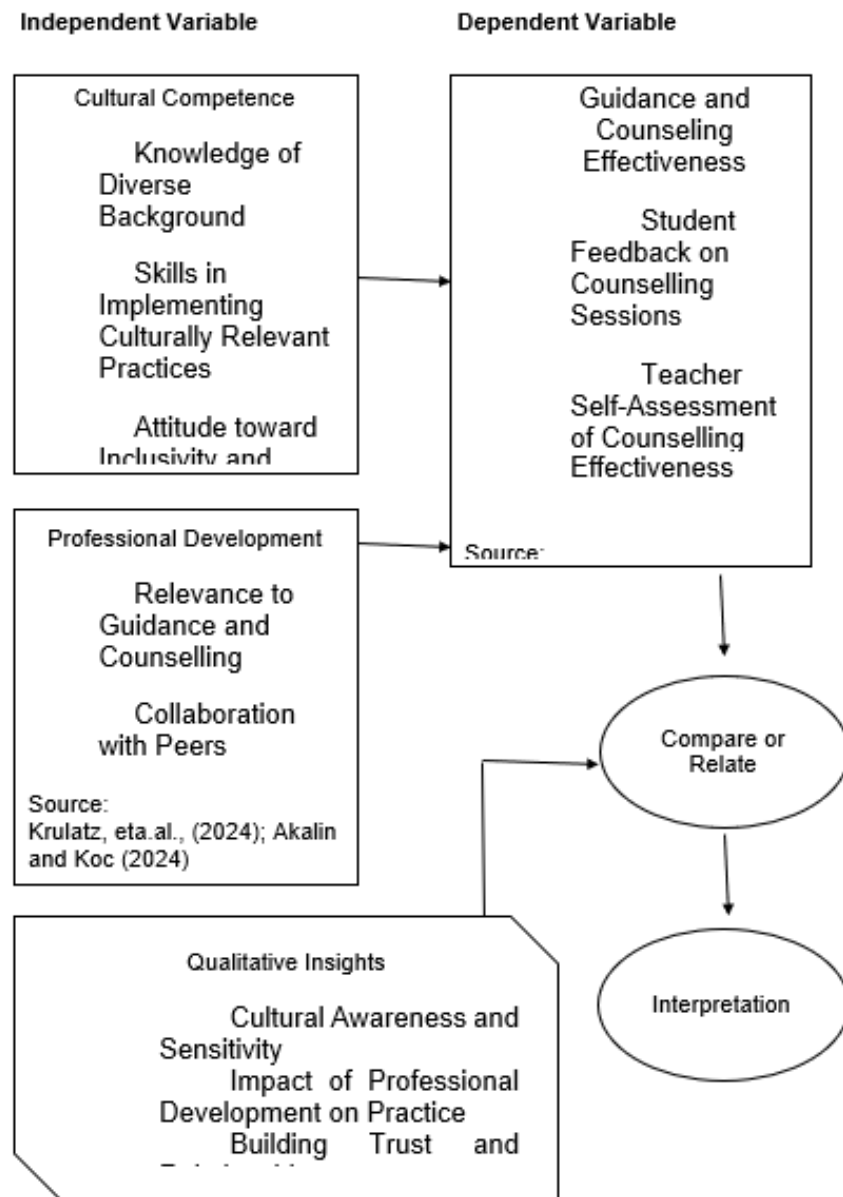


Fig. 1. Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

focuses on qualitative data collection and analysis to elaborate on the initial findings. This sequential explanatory approach is well-suited for examining how cultural competence and professional development impact the effectiveness of guidance and counseling among senior high school teachers in Davao City. In the initial phase, quantitative data is gathered through surveys assessing teachers' cultural competence levels and their perceived efficacy in counseling. This phase highlights trends, patterns, and possible connections between teachers' professional development experiences and their capacity to deliver culturally responsive guidance to students. Standardized instruments are employed to ensure data reliability and validity. The subsequent phase encompasses qualitative data collection such as interviews and focus group discussions to gain a deeper understanding of the quantitative findings. This phase allows the research to delve into educators' experiences, challenges, and contextual elements that affect their use of culturally relevant teaching practices in counseling. As Webber (2024) noted, conducting qualitative follow-up in an explanatory sequential design aids in interpreting statistical data by offering rich contextual narratives, thus enriching the study's depth and relevance. Combining quantitative and qualitative methods, this study thoroughly analyzes how cultural competence influences guidance and counseling programs. This strategy assesses the level of cultural competence among educators and reveals the factors influencing its application in various classroom settings. The results may play a vital role in creating evidence-based professional development programs aimed at equipping teachers with culturally responsive strategies tailored to meet the diverse needs of students in Davao City. At the same time, qualitative data is collected through interviews and focus groups, capturing teachers' extensive experiences and insights about their practices and the hurdles they face. By merging these two data sets, the study promotes

triangulation, boosting the findings' validity and reliability. This approach enables researchers to identify patterns and correlations between quantitative results and qualitative themes, ultimately facilitating a more comprehensive understanding of how cultural sensitivity and professional training improve effective counseling in diverse educational contexts

2.2. Ethical Consideration—The ethical consideration section of this study may address the key principles that ensure the protection and well-being of the teacher-respondents involved. This includes adhering to confidentiality, informed consent, and the voluntary nature of participation, ensuring that the research is conducted with integrity and respect for the rights of all respondents.

Social Value

The social impact of my research is considerable because it seeks to improve the educational experiences of students from various cultural backgrounds by enhancing the effectiveness of guidance and counseling programs in senior high schools. By concentrating on teachers' cultural competence and their professional development, I aim to create inclusive educational environments where every student feels respected, understood, and supported. This ethical consideration underscores my commitment to addressing equity and social justice in education, ensuring that marginalized and underrepresented student populations receive the necessary resources and guidance to thrive. Ultimately, I believe that the findings from this research can inform policy decisions and professional practices that promote culturally responsive education, contributing positively to the broader community by nurturing well-rounded, culturally aware individuals.

Informed Consent and Assent

I prioritize informed consent and assent as essential ethical considerations to uphold participants' rights and welfare. Before the research, I may provide clear information about the study's

purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits, enabling participants to make informed decisions about their involvement. For minors, I may obtain assent from the students while also seeking consent from their parents or guardians. This dual approach ensures that both the students and their families are fully aware of the study's objectives and can voluntarily agree to participate. By emphasizing transparency and respect for participants' autonomy, I aim to create a trustworthy research environment prioritizing the ethical treatment of all individuals involved.

Vulnerability of Research Respondents

In my study, I recognize the vulnerability of the research respondents, particularly senior high school students who may come from diverse cultural backgrounds and face various challenges in the educational system. This awareness compels me to approach the research with heightened sensitivity and care, ensuring that participants feel safe and supported throughout the process. I protect their privacy and confidentiality, safeguarding their identities and personal information shared during interviews. Additionally, I may create a non-threatening environment for students to comfortably express their thoughts and experiences.

Privacy and Confidentiality

In my study, I place a strong emphasis on privacy and confidentiality as vital ethical considerations to protect the identities and personal information of all participants. I may ensure that all data collected, including survey responses and qualitative insights from interviews and focus groups, are stored securely and accessible only to me and authorized research personnel. Additionally, I may use pseudonyms or codes to anonymize participant data in any reports or publications, preventing any identification of individuals. By implementing these measures, I aim to create a safe space for respondents to share thoughts and experiences, fostering trust and encouraging honest dialogue while protect-

ing their privacy during the research.

Risk, Benefits and Safety

In my study, I carefully consider the risks, benefits, and safety of participants as integral components of the ethical framework guiding my research. I acknowledge that participating in interviews or focus groups may evoke personal reflections that could be emotionally challenging for some respondents. To mitigate these risks, I may provide emotional support resources to participants and allow them to withdraw from the study at any time without consequences. The research benefits are significant; by identifying effective guidance and counseling practices, I aim to foster a more inclusive educational environment for students from diverse cultural backgrounds. Ultimately, my goal is to prioritize participant safety and well-being while achieving meaningful outcomes that positively impact the educational community.

Justice

In my study, I am committed to upholding the principle of justice by ensuring that all participants are treated fairly and equitably throughout the research process. This involves selecting a diverse group of respondents that accurately reflects the various cultural backgrounds present in the senior high school setting. I may be mindful to avoid any exploitation of vulnerable populations, ensuring that their voices are heard and valued in the research. Additionally, I endeavor to disseminate the advantages of the study equitably, ensuring that the insights acquired may inform practices aimed at enhancing guidance and counseling for all students, particularly those hailing from marginalized backgrounds. By prioritizing justice, I aspire to contribute to a more inclusive and responsive educational system that addresses the necessities of every learner.

Transparency

In my study, I prioritize transparency as a fundamental ethical consideration, ensuring that all aspects of the research process are open and clear to participants. I may share detailed infor-

mation regarding the study's purpose, methods, and possible impacts, enabling participants to make informed choices about their participation. During the research, I may keep communication channels open, urging participants to raise questions or discuss any concerns they might have. Additionally, I plan to share the findings with participants and the broader community, highlighting how their contributions may inform practices that enhance guidance and counseling in diverse educational settings. By fostering transparency, I aim to build trust and promote an ethical research environment that respects the rights and voices of all participants.

Qualification of the Researcher

As the researcher in this study, I possess a strong educational background and relevant experience in the field of education, which equip me to conduct this research ethically and effectively. My qualifications include advanced coursework in educational psychology and cultural competence, alongside practical experience in counseling and supporting diverse student populations. I am committed to upholding ethical research practices, including maintaining confidentiality, ensuring informed consent, and respecting the rights of all participants. My dedication to fostering an inclusive and equitable educational environment drives my passion for this research, and I strive to approach the study with integrity, sensitivity, and a commitment to contributing positively to the field of education. Conflict of Interest In conducting this study, I remain vigilant about potential conflicts of interest to ensure that my research is ethical and impartial. I recognize that my personal beliefs, experiences, and professional relationships could influence the interpretation of data or the engagement with participants. To reduce these risks, I commit to upholding objectivity throughout the research process by following established ethical guidelines and protocols. Additionally, I may openly disclose any affiliations or relationships that may be perceived

as conflicts of interest to ensure transparency with participants and stakeholders. By actively managing these considerations, I aim to uphold the integrity of the study and ensure that the findings accurately reflect the experiences and perspectives of the participants.

Adequacy of Facilities

In my study, I place significant importance on the adequacy of facilities to ensure a conducive and safe environment for all participants. I may conduct interviews and focus group discussions in settings that are accessible, comfortable, and free from distractions, which may help participants feel at ease when sharing their thoughts and experiences. Additionally, I may ensure that all necessary equipment, such as recording devices and materials, is in good working order to facilitate smooth data collection. By providing an appropriate setting and resources, I aim to foster a supportive atmosphere that encourages open dialogue, thereby enhancing the quality of the data collected and respecting the needs of all participants involved in the study.

Community Involvement In my study, I recognize the importance of community involvement as an essential ethical consideration, as it fosters a collaborative approach that benefits both the research process and the participants. I strive to collaborate with local communities, such as schools, parents, and relevant organizations, to guarantee that the research is contextually appropriate and meets the genuine needs of students from diverse backgrounds. By gathering input and feedback from community members, I can ensure that the study captures their experiences and concerns, ultimately increasing its credibility and impact. Additionally, I plan to share the findings with the community, facilitating discussions on how the insights gained can inform practices and policies that support culturally responsive education and improve guidance and counseling services for all learners.

2.3. Research Respondents—Using Slovin's formula with a population of 210 teachers in Cluster 4 and a margin of error of 5%. The inclusion criteria for teacher respondents in the quantitative phase of the study are carefully designed to ensure the selection of participants whose backgrounds and experiences align with the study's focus on cultural competence and professional development in guidance and counseling. First, respondents may be actively employed as teachers within the target schools or district at the time of the study, ensuring their perspectives are relevant and reflective of current practices. Second, they may have at least one year of teaching experience to provide insights grounded in practical exposure to the educational environment, particularly in areas related to guidance and counseling. Second, respondents may have demonstrated engagement in professional development activities, such as workshops, seminars, or training programs, specifically related to guidance and counseling. This ensures that they possess foundational knowledge and exposure to best practices in addressing student needs within diverse cultural contexts. Moreover, teachers who are actively involved in implementing culturally responsive guidance strategies or counseling initiatives may be prioritized to ensure their experiences and input are directly applicable to the research objectives. Third, participants may voluntarily agree to participate and provide informed consent, affirming their willingness to contribute to the study. These criteria collectively ensure the selection of respondents with relevant expertise and engagement, enriching the study with data that reflects the intersection of cultural competence and professional development in guidance and counseling. The qualitative phase of the study aims to complement the quantitative findings by exploring the deeper experiences, perspectives, and insights

of teacher-respondents. This phase may involve two key data collection methods: in-depth interviews (IDI) and focus group discussions (FGD). Six teachers who participated in the quantitative phase may be purposively selected for the IDIs. These teachers may be chosen based on specific criteria, such as notable quantitative responses, diverse teaching backgrounds, and involvement in activities relevant to the study's objectives. The IDIs provide a platform for these teachers to share detailed and personal narratives about their teaching experiences, challenges, and the contextual factors that influence their professional practices. This approach allows for a deeper understanding of the patterns observed in the quantitative phase. Additionally, four teachers may be purposively selected for the FGDs. These participants may represent different teaching contexts and may engage in interactive discussions to uncover collective experiences and shared insights. The FGDs aim to stimulate dialogue among participants, fostering the exchange of ideas and strategies while highlighting common challenges and opportunities in their teaching practices. Combining the individual depth of IDIs and the collaborative insights from FGDs, the qualitative phase enriches the study's findings, providing a holistic perspective that bridges the statistical data from the quantitative phase with the lived realities. The inclusion criteria for respondents in the qualitative phase are designed to ensure the selection of participants who can provide rich, meaningful insights aligned with the study's objectives. First, respondents may have participated in the quantitative phase of the study, allowing for a seamless integration of data across both phases. Second, they may have demonstrated notable responses or perspectives during the quantitative phase, such as high engagement levels or unique experiences related to the study's focus, ensuring that their narratives add depth and context to the findings. Additionally, participants may have at least one

year of teaching experience, ensuring they have substantial exposure to educational practices and challenges. Priority may be given to those who have actively engaged in programs or activities related to the study's themes, such as professional development or culturally responsive strategies, making their contributions directly relevant. Furthermore, respondents may exhibit a willingness to participate in either in-depth interviews (IDI) or focus group discussions (FGD), providing informed consent for their participation. These criteria collectively aim to identify respondents whose experiences and perspectives may enrich the qualitative analysis, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

2.4. Research Instrument—The research instruments for this study are carefully designed to effectively capture both quantitative and qualitative data, ensuring a comprehensive analysis of assessing the interaction of cultural competence and professional development on senior high school teachers' guidance and counseling effectiveness: A Two-Way ANOVA Study with Qualitative Follow-up. For the quantitative component, a structured survey consisting of standardized questionnaires aimed at teachers may be employed. This instrument may include Likert scale items to assess various aspects of cultural competence, professional development, and guidance and counseling effectiveness. The survey will be developed based on existing validated instruments, ensuring reliability and validity. The target sample size will be sufficient to allow for robust statistical analysis using methods like Two-Way ANOVA. The survey will be distributed electronically or

in print to accommodate different preferences and accessibility among teachers, and it will include demographic questions to provide context for the analysis. The adapted survey statements for the quantitative phase will undergo test-retest procedures and be evaluated for validity and reliability using Cronbach's Alpha at a 0.05 confidence level. According to recent literature, a Cronbach's alpha value above 0.70 is considered acceptable, above 0.80 indicates good reliability, and above 0.90 reflects excellent internal consistency (George Mallery, 2023). In this study, a Cronbach's alpha of 0.910 demonstrates high reliability, confirming that the survey items are consistent and suitable for accurately capturing the intended data. In this study, the researcher utilized an adapted instrument developed through a thorough review of current literature and related research employing standardized tools aligned with the study variables. Key sources informing the instrument's development include Samad and Malik (2023), who examined the influence of guidance knowledge, counseling services, and attitudes toward guidance on high school guidance teachers' performance; Hunter (2024), who explored teachers' cultural competence in achieving students' transcultural learning goals; and Le et al. (2022), who reported on a pilot study applying a vocational school-based guidance program for Vietnamese high school students using a new individualized counseling approach. The questionnaire employed a 3-point Likert scale to assess cultural competence and professional development. Below are the scale, descriptive ratings, and interpretations.

2.5. Data Gathering Procedure—The guidelines for this process adhere to the policies of The Rizal Memorial Colleges, Inc. is as part of the formal request, researchers delineate their intentions regarding data collec-

tion, analysis, and dissemination, aligning these with the overarching research goals. Anticipated concerns or questions from recipients are proactively addressed in this communication, providing assurances on ethical safeguards, con-

Cultural Competence and Professional Development Scale

Score	Scale	Descriptive Rating	Interpretation
3	2.50 – 3.00	High	The cultural competence and professional development are always manifested.
2	1.50 – 2.49	Moderate	The cultural competence and professional development are sometimes manifested.
1	1.00 – 1.49	Low	The cultural competence and professional development are rarely manifested.

Guidance and Counseling Effectiveness Scale

Scale	Descriptive Rating	Interpretation
4.20 – 5.00	Strongly Agree	The guidance and counseling effectiveness is highly manifested.
3.40 – 4.19	Agree	The guidance and counseling effectiveness is manifested.
2.60 – 3.39	Neutral	The guidance and counseling effectiveness is moderately manifested.
1.80 – 2.59	Disagree	The guidance and counseling effectiveness is rarely manifested.
1.00 – 1.79	Strongly Disagree	The guidance and counseling effectiveness is not manifested.

fidentiality measures, and the potential benefits of the study. The formal permission request explicitly seeks authorization to proceed, emphasizing the pivotal role of their support in ensuring the research's success.

Permission to Conduct the Study

In October 2024, prior to data collection, the researcher secured the necessary approvals from relevant authorities, including the research adviser, the Dean of The Rizal Memorial Colleges, Inc., and the top management of DepEd Davao City Division, following the appropriate protocols. This process involved submitting a detailed research proposal outlining the study's design, procedures, and potential risks and benefits, along with the objectives and methods for data collection, analysis, and reporting. Subsequently, in December 2024, immediately after the colloquium, the researcher ensured that all participants were fully informed about the study's purpose, their rights, and the nature of their involvement. Informed consent was obtained from each participant prior to their participation. By the last week of January 2025, the researcher upheld a commitment to data accuracy and integrity. The distribution and retrieval of questionnaires were carried out systematically, using standardized procedures to ensure the reliability and consistency of the collected responses. Collation and Statistical Treatment of Data

The researcher took time in data management. She ensured that accurate data gathered were sorted accordingly through Microsoft Excel and later transferred to JASP. All necessary information was collected. Consistency was

also considered to make it relevant to the problem's statement. Reliability and validity were reviewed to lessen the degree of error in the analysis. Analytical Framework

The analytical framework of this study on cultural competence and professional development on guidance and counselling effectiveness integration in Catechetics is designed to comprehensively evaluate both quantitative and qualitative data, allowing for a multifaceted understanding of the research problem. For the quantitative component, statistical analysis will be employed to identify patterns and correlations between cultural competence and professional development on guidance and counselling outcomes, such as student engagement and teacher effectiveness. This may involve using descriptive statistics, inferential statistics, and techniques like t-tests or ANOVA to assess differences among groups. On the qualitative side, thematic analysis will be utilized to analyze interview and focus group data, enabling the identification of key themes and insights regarding teachers' experiences and students' perceptions of arts integration. This dual analytical approach allows for triangulation of findings, enhancing the study's overall validity. By combining statistical evidence with rich qualitative insights, the analytical framework provides a holistic view of the impact of cultural competence and professional development on guidance and counselling effectiveness integration on teaching methodologies in Catechetics, ultimately informing best practices and educational policies.

2.6. Data Analysis—The study, which consists of a two-way ANOVA and qualitative analysis, is purposely conducted to explore the impact of cultural competence and professional development on guidance and counselling effectiveness integration on secondary school teach-

ers' approaches to catechetics. To answer statement problems 1, 2, 3, and 4, the Two-Way ANOVA will test for the interaction effects between cultural competence and professional development on guidance and counseling effectiveness. A two-way ANOVA study would ana-

lyze the effect of cultural competence and professional development on guidance and counseling effectiveness. This approach allows the researcher to explore the main effects of each independent variable and any potential interaction effects between them. Post-hoc tests are essential in this study, particularly after conducting Two-Way ANOVA, to further investigate the differences among group means when

significant effects are found. To answer 5, 6, and 7, thematic analysis will be used to identify common themes and patterns in interview and focus group data. Quantitating the frequency of themes or sentiments provided a broader understanding of qualitative findings. Combined quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive view.

3. Results and Discussion

This chapter outlines both the quantitative and qualitative findings from the investigation regarding how cultural competence and professional development impact the effectiveness of guidance and counseling provided by senior high school teachers in Cluster IV Schools. The results are organized according to the specific statements of the problem, beginning with the descriptive statistics on cultural competence, professional development, and counseling effectiveness. This is followed by the inferential analysis using Two-Way ANOVA to examine the interaction and main effects. Furthermore, the qualitative findings derived from interview responses are presented thematically to enrich and explain the quantitative outcomes. Discussions are grounded in relevant literature and the contextual interpretation of the data.

3.1. Level of Cultural Competence—Cultural competence refers to educators' ability to understand, value, and effectively engage with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. It includes self-awareness, knowledge of various cultural perspectives, and cross-cultural communication skills (DeAngelis, 2024). Within educational settings, cultural competence is essential for creating inclusive learning environments that honor students' cultural identities, promote equity, and support academic success. Eden, Chisom, and Adeniyi (2024) emphasized that developing cultural competence requires incorporating culturally relevant content and instructional methods that align with students' lived experiences. Their review highlights the importance of continuous professional development and strong institutional commitment in driving systemic change toward greater inclusivity. In the context of teacher preparation, McClintock and Ku (2024) explored in-service teachers' expe-

riences with intercultural competence professional development. Their findings indicate that such programs enhance teachers' cultural knowledge and self-awareness, enabling them to identify commonalities and understand environmental influences on cultural perspectives. Stewart (2024) investigated the role of cultural competencies in education, focusing on how educators can integrate cultural awareness into their pedagogy. The research found that teachers who possess strong cultural competence can more effectively meet the diverse needs of their students, leading to enhanced academic performance and better classroom dynamics. Summary on the Level of Cultural Competence

Table 1 presents the summary of the overall level of cultural competence among senior high school teachers, as measured across three core dimensions: knowledge of students' diverse backgrounds, skills in implementing culturally relevant practices, and attitudes toward inclusivity and cultural sensitivity. The overall

computed mean is 2.27, which corresponds to a Moderate descriptive interpretation. This implies that while cultural competence is present among the respondents, it is not yet consistently practiced; instead, it is occasionally demonstrated.

Table 1. Summary Level of Cultural Competence

No	Cultural Competence	n	Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
1	Knowledge of Diverse Background of Students	138	2.27	Moderate
2	Skills in Cultivating Relevant Practices	138	2.16	Moderate
3	Attitude towards Inclusivity	138	2.40	Moderate
Mean Average		138	2.27	Moderate

Among the three components, the attitude toward inclusivity received the highest mean score of 2.40, indicating that teachers generally hold positive beliefs and dispositions regarding cultural sensitivity and inclusion. This reflects a favorable orientation toward fostering a culturally responsive educational environment. The knowledge of diverse backgrounds, with a mean score of 2.27, suggests that teachers possess a fair understanding of how cultural contexts influence student learning and behavior; however, there remains a need for deeper and more contextualized cultural awareness. The lowest score was recorded in the area of skills in cultivating relevant practices ($M = 2.16$), pointing to a specific gap in the practical application of culturally responsive strategies within guidance and counseling contexts. This trend of high attitudinal disposition but lower implementation skills has been echoed in several recent studies. For instance, McClintock and Ku (2024) emphasized that while teachers often exhibit a willingness to embrace diversity, their ability to translate such attitudes into practice is limited by a lack of structured training. Eden, Chisom, and Adeniyi (2024) further support this by asserting that teacher capacity-building may extend beyond awareness to include concrete instructional

and counseling strategies. The study of Roache and Salazar (2023) similarly identified that fundamental transformation in counseling effectiveness occurs when inclusive attitudes are paired with culturally competent communication and intervention techniques. In summary, the findings highlight a moderate yet promising level of cultural competence among teachers. The results suggest the need for ongoing and practice-based professional development programs aimed at bridging the gap between cultural awareness and practical implementation, particularly in the context of student support services and counseling.

3.2. *Level of Professional Development*

—In the context of guidance and counseling, professional development plays a crucial role in enhancing teachers' capacity to address the evolving socio-emotional and cultural needs of learners. Effective professional development (PD) is characterized by its relevance to educators' roles, sustained engagement, opportunities for collaboration, and alignment with school improvement goals (Desimone & Garet, 2022). Moreover, when PD is anchored in reflective practice and practical application, it significantly contributes to improved counselor efficacy, particularly in multicultural settings. Re-

cent studies emphasize the transformative impact of high-quality PD. For instance, Zhang and Garcia (2023) found that professional development programs focused on inclusive education and student well-being contributed to increased confidence and competency among school counselors. Likewise, Kim and Johnson (2022) highlighted that collaborative professional learning communities enhance teachers' ability to provide responsive and culturally sensitive guidance services. In sum, professional development is not merely a one-time intervention but a continuous, contextual, and collaborative process that strengthens educators' competencies, ultimately leading to more effective support for diverse student populations.

Summary of the Level of Cultural Competence

Table 2 presents a summary of the overall level of professional development among senior

high school teachers in terms of its relevance to guidance and counseling and the extent of collaboration with peers. The computed overall mean score is 2.31, which falls under the Moderate descriptive rating. This implies that while professional development activities are acknowledged and practiced to some extent, they are not yet fully integrated or consistently applied in ways that directly enhance the effectiveness of counseling. The highest subcomponent, relevance of training to guidance and counseling, received a mean score of 2.36, suggesting that teachers moderately perceive their professional development experiences as pertinent to the needs of student support and counseling services. However, this moderate rating also indicates that such training may not always be tailored to address the specific contexts, challenges, and cultural sensitivities of school-based counseling.

Table 2. Summary of the Level of Cultural Competence

No	Cultural Competence	n	Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
1	Relevance to Guidance and Counseling	138	2.36	Moderate
2	Collaboration with Peers	138	2.27	Moderate
Mean Average		138	2.31	Moderate

Meanwhile, collaboration with peers was rated slightly lower, with a mean score of 2.27, still within the Moderate range. This reflects that while collegial dialogue and collaborative learning are present, these are not yet fully optimized as mechanisms for enhancing counseling practices. Effective collaboration, particularly through structured peer learning models, is crucial in reinforcing knowledge gained through training and contextualizing counseling strategies for diverse learners. The findings are consistent with Barber and Deneen (2023), who argued that collaborative learning significantly strengthens professional development

when it fosters shared responsibility and reflective practice. Furthermore, Zhang and Garcia (2023) emphasized that professional development becomes more effective when it integrates both culturally responsive content and opportunities for professional dialogue, which together build teachers' confidence and competence in school counseling. Overall, the results suggest a promising but still developing level of professional development. For greater impact, it is necessary to refine the design of training programs to make them more targeted, inclusive, and collaborative, thereby ensuring that educators are fully equipped to meet the diverse

guidance needs of their students.

3.3. *Interaction Effect of Cultural Competence and Professional Development on Guidance and Counseling Effectiveness*—To determine whether there is a significant interaction effect between cultural competence and professional development on guidance and counsel-

ing effectiveness, a Two-Way ANOVA was conducted using the variables IV1 Cultural Competence Level ECP_LEVEL and IV2 Professional Development Level GCE_AVE_34, with the dependent variable being guidance and counseling effectiveness GCE_AVE.

Table 3. Two-Way ANOVA Summary of the Interaction Effect of Cultural Competence and Professional Development on Guidance and Counseling Effectiveness

Cases	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P	η^2	ω^2
IV1_ECP_LEVEL	0.556	2	0.278	5.353	0.006	0.075	0.060
IV2_GCE_AVE_34	0.166	2	0.083	1.595	0.207	0.022	0.008
IV1_ECP_LEVEL IV2_GCE_AVE_34	0.034	4	0.009	0.165	0.956	0.005	0.000
Residuals	6.704	129	0.052	—	—	—	—

Note. Type III Sum of Squares

These findings suggest that while cultural competence plays a meaningful independent role in shaping effective counseling practices, professional development as categorized in this study does not independently or interactively influence effectiveness in a significant way. The lack of a significant interaction effect may be attributed to several factors. First, the professional development programs may not be sufficiently differentiated or targeted in content to produce measurable variance in outcomes. Second, the level of cultural competence, when already high among certain respondents, may have overshadowed the influence of less robust PD efforts. Lastly, the alignment or integration of PD and cultural competence training might be inconsistent, thus limiting any synergistic effect. This interpretation is supported by research from Desimone and Garet (2022), who emphasize that professional development may be tightly aligned with context and directly applicable practices to have a measurable impact.

Similarly, Zhang and Garcia (2023) found that unless professional development is intentionally designed to complement cultural competence frameworks, its effectiveness in influencing student support strategies may remain limited. In response to Statement of the Problem No. 4, the analysis concludes that there is no statistically significant interaction effect between cultural competence and professional development on the effectiveness of guidance and counseling among senior high school teachers. However, cultural competence alone significantly predicts the perceived effectiveness of counseling, underscoring its importance in teacher practice.

3.4. *Differences in Cultural Competence and Professional Development Based on Levels of Guidance and Counseling Effectiveness*—To determine whether cultural competence and professional development significantly differ across levels of guidance and counseling effectiveness, the results of the Two-Way ANOVA analysis were examined, particularly focusing on the

main effects of each independent variable (IV) relative to the dependent variable (DV).

No significant mean differences were observed across levels of professional development when grouped according to counseling effectiveness, as all p-values exceed .05 in the post hoc comparisons. These findings suggest that cultural competence varies significantly based on how effective teachers perceive themselves in guidance and counseling roles, whereas professional development does not exhibit such significant variation. This result may be attributed to the possibility that professional development activities were not sufficiently differentiated in content or implementation to yield observable variance across effectiveness levels. Supporting the present findings, Desimone and Garet (2022) emphasized that impactful professional development may be job-embedded and context-specific to result in significant differences in practice. Furthermore, studies by Zhang and Garcia (2023) found that teachers with higher cultural competence were better able to connect with students and deliver more effective counseling services, thereby validating the observed differences across groups in this study. In response to Statement of the Problem No. 5, it is concluded that cultural competence significantly differs when grouped according to the level of guidance and counseling effectiveness, while professional development does not. This underscores the critical role of cultural competence in shaping effective student support practices.

3.5. *Qualitative Phase Integration—Interpretation and Synthesis*

The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings confirms that trust and rapport are central to effective guidance and counseling, especially in culturally diverse school contexts. While the survey results quantified the value of relational understanding, the interview data revealed how such relationships are built and maintained in practice through respect, ac-

tive listening, and cultural sensitivity. Together, these data strands illustrate that relational competence is as vital as technical skill in school-based counseling. These findings are supported by Dlamini and Maseko (2023), who assert that trust is the cornerstone of student engagement in counseling, particularly among learners from underrepresented backgrounds. Likewise, Peña et al. (2021) argue that culturally responsive counselors are more effective precisely because they cultivate trust and ensure that students feel heard, validated, and respected. Conclusion

In response to SOP 8, the study concludes that teachers perceive trust and rapport with culturally diverse students as essential drivers of counseling effectiveness. When students feel safe and respected, they are more likely to engage meaningfully in counseling sessions, apply guidance, and exhibit positive developmental outcomes. This study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design to determine the extent to which cultural competence and professional development influence the effectiveness of guidance and counseling among senior high school teachers. Quantitative data revealed that cultural competence significantly predicts guidance and counseling effectiveness ($p = .006$), while professional development alone did not yield a statistically significant impact. Furthermore, the interaction between cultural competence and professional development was not statistically significant ($p = .956$), suggesting their effects operate independently in this context. The disaggregated analysis of cultural competence showed that while teachers possess positive attitudes toward inclusivity ($M = 2.40$), their practical skills in implementing culturally relevant counseling practices were rated lower ($M = 2.16$). Professional development was also rated as moderately relevant ($M = 2.36$), with collaboration and peer dialogue similarly rated as moderate ($M = 2.27$). Despite these modest ratings, both student feedback ($M = 3.70$) and teachers' self-assessment

($M = 3.69$) indicated that counseling services are generally perceived as effective. Qualitative data gathered from in-depth interviews and focus group discussions helped to explain and enrich these findings. Teachers described their cultural competence as integral to establishing trust, respecting diversity, and adapting counseling strategies to the cultural context of students. They reported attitudinal growth, including increased cultural sensitivity and empathy, after engaging in professional development focused on inclusivity. Furthermore, teachers emphasized that building rapport and trust with culturally diverse students fosters open communication, enhances student engagement, and contributes to more meaningful and effective counseling outcomes. These integrated findings reveal that while professional development may

not uniformly translate into practice, it plays a foundational role in shifting teachers' mindsets and reinforcing culturally competent behavior. Moreover, the strong association between cultural competence and counseling effectiveness affirms the need for continued investment in capacity-building efforts that go beyond content delivery and support reflective, relational, and contextually responsive practice. In line with the literature (Dlamini Maseko, 2023; Peña et al., 2021; Zhang Garcia, 2023), the study underscores that culturally responsive counseling is most effective when it is grounded in relational trust, contextual awareness, and continuous reflective practice elements that may be purposefully cultivated through structured and sustained professional development.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter presents the conclusions drawn from the major findings of the study, which aimed to assess the interaction between cultural competence and professional development and their influence on the effectiveness of guidance and counseling among senior high school teachers in Cluster IV Schools. Conclusions are organized based on the specific statements of the problem and are derived from both quantitative results and qualitative insights. Based on these conclusions, a set of practical and research-informed recommendations is offered to guide policy, professional development initiatives, and future scholarly inquiry.

4.1. Findings—The level of cultural competence among senior high school teachers was found to be moderate overall. Specifically, teachers demonstrated moderate knowledge of students' diverse cultural backgrounds. It is indicating awareness but limited depth in cultural understanding. Skills in implementing culturally relevant counseling practices also interpreted moderately, suggesting occasional but inconsistent application of culturally responsive strategies. The highest dimension was teachers' attitudes toward inclusivity and cultural sensitivity, reflecting a positive disposition but one that may not always translate into practice. The level of professional development among teach-

ers was also rated moderate in both dimensions. The relevance of training programs to guidance and counseling had a mean average of moderate, indicating that while teachers perceive value in professional development activities, the content may not always be directly applicable to their counseling responsibilities. Similarly, collaboration and professional dialogue with peers received a mean average of moderate, suggesting that peer interaction exists but is not yet maximized for improving counseling effectiveness. The extent of guidance and counseling effectiveness, as perceived through student and teacher input, was found to be extensive. Student feedback on counseling sessions yielded a high

mean average rated as extensive, highlighting students' appreciation for the relevance and support received during counseling, especially in understanding their unique backgrounds. Teachers' self-assessment of counseling effectiveness also rated as extensive, indicating that teachers generally perceive themselves as effective, particularly in reflecting on their practices and adapting strategies to meet student needs. There was no significant interaction effect between cultural competence and professional development on the effectiveness of guidance and counseling. This suggests that while each factor independently contributes to counseling effectiveness, their combined effect does not produce a statistically significant interaction in the current study context. Cultural competence significantly differed when grouped according to levels of guidance and counseling effectiveness, indicating that teachers who rated themselves more effective in counseling also demonstrated higher cultural competence. In contrast, professional development did not significantly differ across these groups, suggesting that its perceived impact is less variable among teachers with differing levels of counseling effectiveness. Senior high school teachers described their cultural competence as instrumental in building authentic and respectful interactions with students from diverse backgrounds. Through interviews and focus group discussions, teachers emphasized that cultural understanding enhances trust, allows for culturally sensitive responses, and fosters inclusive communication. These narratives helped explain why cultural competence was strongly associated with counseling effectiveness in the quantitative phase. Teachers reported specific changes in attitudes and practices after participating in professional development focused on cultural responsiveness. These included increased sensitivity to students' backgrounds, adoption of more inclusive counseling approaches, and more thoughtful questioning techniques. Professional devel-

opment also enhanced teachers' empathy and self-awareness, which they cited as critical in adapting their strategies to better meet diverse student needs. Teachers perceived that building trust and rapport with culturally diverse students significantly improved the overall effectiveness of counseling. They noted that when students feel respected and understood, they are more likely to open up, follow through with guidance, and develop positive relationships. Trust was identified not only as a foundational element in effective counseling but also as a catalyst for behavioral and academic improvement.

4.2. Conclusions—Social constructivism posits that knowledge is co-constructed through social interaction and contextual engagement—an idea that resonates deeply with the findings of this research. Cultural competence among senior high school teachers is moderately manifested. While attitudes toward inclusivity are positively demonstrated, there remains a gap in translating this disposition into consistent and skillful practice, particularly in adapting counseling strategies to diverse cultural contexts. Professional development is recognized as moderately relevant and collaborative, but its current implementation lacks depth and consistency in directly influencing counseling practices. This indicates a need to improve the alignment of training content with the realities of culturally responsive guidance work. The theory supports the notion that learning and understanding are not developed in isolation but emerge through active engagement with others in this case, through culturally responsive counseling and professional collaboration. Guidance and counseling services are perceived as effective by both students and teachers. Students value the support provided, especially when cultural understanding is present, while teachers express confidence in their reflective and adaptive approaches, confirming a shared recognition of counseling effectiveness. There is no significant interaction effect between cultural

competence and professional development on the effectiveness of guidance and counseling, suggesting that these two variables influence outcomes independently, without compounding each other's impact. Cultural competence significantly varies with the level of counseling effectiveness, while professional development does not. This underscores the stronger and more direct role of cultural competence in shaping successful counseling interactions and student outcomes. Teachers affirm that cultural competence enhances their ability to connect with students from diverse backgrounds. This connection fosters mutual respect, clearer communication, and a more inclusive environment, all of which are vital for student engagement in counseling. Reinforcing the Social Constructivist emphasis on the role of shared understanding, mutual respect, and relational trust in meaningful learning environments. Teachers report growth in attitude and behavior following professional development in cultural responsiveness. They become more reflective, empathetic, and inclusive in their counseling practices, even if such changes are not yet uniformly applied. Trust and rapport are key enablers of effective counseling, particularly with students from diverse backgrounds. Teachers recognize that cultural sensitivity is central to building these relationships, which in turn leads to more open dialogue, better student decision-making, and positive counseling outcomes.

4.3. Recommendations—School Principal School heads will gain valuable information on the significance of fostering cultural competence among teachers as part of their leadership strategies. By promoting an inclusive school culture and encouraging professional development focused on cultural sensitivity, school heads can enhance the effectiveness of guidance and counseling programs. This study will serve as a resource for school leaders to implement policies that support diversity and inclusivity within their institutions.

Public School District Supervisor

The study will provide public school district supervisors with evidence-based insights into the impact of cultural competence and professional development on counseling effectiveness. By understanding teachers' challenges in diverse classrooms, supervisors can develop targeted support programs and resources that address these needs. This information will assist in shaping district-wide initiatives that promote culturally responsive practices across schools. DepEd Officials. For officials from the Department of Education (DepEd), this study underscores the need for systemic changes in teacher training and professional development programs. By highlighting the importance of cultural competence in enhancing counseling effectiveness, the findings can inform policy decisions and guide the development of resources to improve educational equity. This study can also contribute to strategic planning initiatives prioritizing diversity and inclusivity in Philippine education. Future Researchers. This study will serve as a foundational resource for future researchers exploring cultural competence in education. It will offer insights into the challenges and best practices associated with implementing culturally relevant counseling in diverse classrooms. Future studies can build on these findings by providing a framework for understanding the interplay between cultural competence and professional development to explore further innovative approaches to enhancing educational practices and policies in multicultural settings. Strengthen teacher training programs by integrating structured modules on cultural competence and counseling skills, emphasizing practical strategies for application in real-life, multicultural guidance settings. Enhance professional development initiatives to ensure they are job-embedded, reflective, and focused on counseling challenges within culturally diverse school populations. Institutionalize peer collaboration mechanisms, such as

learning action cells and case-sharing sessions, to encourage continuous dialogue and mentorship around inclusive counseling practices. Develop a contextualized framework for cultural competence assessment, allowing teachers to self-evaluate and monitor growth in knowledge, skills, and attitudes relevant to culturally responsive counseling. Design and implement student-centered feedback systems to evaluate counseling services from the learner's perspective, ensuring student voices are included in improving guidance practices. Support reflective practice among teachers by providing tools, coaching, and professional communities that reinforce cultural humility, empathy, and personalized counseling approaches. Promote trust-building practices as core counseling strategies, particularly those grounded in active listening, affirmation, and respect for students' diverse backgrounds and lived experiences.

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