
TEACHERS MANAGEMENT ON DIVERSE LEARNERS AND TEACHING COMPETENCE

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of the study was to examine teachers' management of diverse learners in terms of demonstration of high expectations, implementation of culturally relevant instruction, establishment of caring relationships, and parent and community involvement. The study also investigated teachers' teaching competence in terms of instructional planning skills, knowledge of the subject matter, rapport with learners, and classroom management. Furthermore, it examined the significant relationship between the level of teachers' management of diverse learners and their teaching competence.

The respondents of the study were the consisted of all 102 elementary school teachers in Cabanglasan I District, under the Division of Bukidnon, for the School Year 2025–2026. The study utilized total enumeration, a technique in which the entire population possessing specific characteristics is included in the research. The survey questionnaire for teachers' management of diverse learners was adapted from Freeman and Freeman (2003) and for assessing teachers' teaching competence was adapted from Padillo, Manguilimotan, Capuno, and Espina (2021). The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to systematically examine the variables under investigation. Data were analyzed quantitatively to ensure objectivity and accuracy of results.

The study revealed that teachers' management of diverse learners was generally rated high across all dimensions. They consistently demonstrated high expectations, fostered inclusivity, and implemented culturally relevant instruction through lesson adaptations and integration of community and learner experiences. Caring relationships and active parent and community involvement further supported a positive classroom environment.

Teachers also exhibited high teaching competence in all measured areas. Instructional planning was systematic, subject matter knowledge was comprehensive, and strong rapport

with learners promoted trust and active participation. Effective classroom management maintained a conducive learning environment while accommodating diverse learner needs. Analysis of the relationship between teachers' management of diverse learners and teaching competence indicated a significant positive correlation. Educators who applied high expectations, culturally responsive instruction, and caring relationships demonstrated stronger teaching competencies, and parent and community involvement enhanced instructional effectiveness. These findings suggest that effective management of learner diversity directly contributes to improved teaching outcomes.

KEYWORDS: *Teachers Management, Diverse Learners, Teaching Competence.*

INTRODUCTION

In today's increasingly diverse classroom environment, teachers are confronted with the complex task of addressing wide-ranging learner differences in ability, socioeconomic background, culture, interests, and learning styles. Within the Philippine education system, particularly under the Revised K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum, the mandate to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education is clear. However, many teachers continue to struggle in adequately responding to the multifaceted needs of diverse learners. This challenge underscores the gap between policy expectations and on-the-ground instructional realities in schools.

Teaching competence remains central to effectively navigating learner diversity, yet field observations reveal varied levels of preparedness among teachers in handling inclusive classroom contexts. Due to time pressures, heavy workloads, and limited professional development opportunities, many teachers continue to rely on uniform, one-size-fits-all instructional approaches. Such practices often result in reduced instructional effectiveness and insufficient attention to individual learner needs, particularly among learners with disabilities, slow and gifted learners, and those from marginalized backgrounds. These issues are exacerbated by the lack of sustained support systems, including special education services, learning support aides, and structured guides on differentiated instruction.

Despite ongoing initiatives of the Department of Education to strengthen inclusive education, critical gaps remain. Not all schools consistently implement mechanisms to identify and support diverse learners, and not all teachers integrate inclusive principles into lesson planning, pedagogy, and assessment. Increasing concern also surrounds the extent to which

diversity affects core dimensions of teaching competence, including instructional planning, delivery, classroom management, and learner assessment. These realities highlight the imperative to examine how learner diversity intersects with teacher competence and to determine concrete strategies to enhance classroom practice in diverse learning settings.

Scholars and institutions continue to emphasize learner diversity as a vital dimension of teacher competence. As Salandanan (2019) asserts, differentiated instruction is indispensable in Filipino classrooms where learners present broad academic and behavioral variations. Likewise, Dizon (2020) demonstrates that inclusive and culturally responsive teaching improves academic outcomes and contributes to reducing dropout rates in public schools. Findings from the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS, 2021) further indicate that a persistent gap in teacher quality stems from inadequate, sustained in-service training focused on inclusive education and learner-centered pedagogies. Collectively, these perspectives reinforce the importance of strengthening teacher capability in addressing learner diversity to improve educational outcomes.

Moreover, Llenares (2022) explains that classroom management approaches that embrace diversity enhance both the learning environment and teachers' professional growth. Lopez and Balila (2021) likewise report that teachers who regularly assess learner differences and adapt instructional strategies accordingly exhibit higher levels of competence and confidence. Complementing these research findings, DepEd Order No. 44, s. 2022—integrated within the MATATAG Curriculum—underscores the need for teachers to employ differentiated strategies and adaptive assessment tools to respond effectively to diverse learner needs. These policy directions and scholarly insights collectively provide a compelling foundation for this study.

Therefore, this research aims to determine the extent to which the management of learner diversity influences teaching competence among teachers. By examining prevailing practices, existing gaps, and professional challenges, the study seeks to generate actionable insights that can inform policy refinement, strengthen teacher training programs, and support school-based interventions designed to foster inclusive, responsive, and highly competent teaching in today's diverse classrooms.

Conceptual Framework

The present study is anchored on Carol Ann Tomlinson's Differentiated Instruction Theory (2001), which serves as a cornerstone in managing learner diversity. Tomlinson asserts that effective teaching occurs when instruction is proactively adjusted to cater to learners' varying readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles. Differentiation is not about teaching multiple lessons but about presenting a single lesson through flexible approaches that engage all types of learners. In diverse classrooms, this means tailoring content, process, and product to meet the academic and emotional needs of learners from different cultural, linguistic, and cognitive backgrounds. Through differentiation, teachers ensure equitable access to learning, enabling all learners to grow from their current levels of competence.

In terms of teaching competence, the study is also guided by Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1986), particularly his concept of self-efficacy. Bandura emphasized that teachers' beliefs in their ability to influence student learning and manage classroom challenges significantly affect their teaching behavior. A teacher with high self-efficacy is more likely to adopt inclusive strategies, persist through difficulties, and engage learners more effectively. Thus, managing learner diversity is intricately linked to the teacher's confidence and competence in navigating varied learning needs.

Recent literature supports the relevance of these theoretical foundations. For instance, Cruz (2023) highlighted that Filipino public school teachers who practiced differentiated instruction demonstrated higher learner engagement and reduced academic gaps, especially among marginalized learners. Similarly, Gonzales and Ramirez (2022) found that the integration of learner profiling tools enabled teachers to design more inclusive lesson plans, thereby improving learner outcomes in multicultural classrooms. These findings reaffirm Tomlinson's framework and its applicability in the Philippine context.

On the side of teaching competence, Reyes (2022) emphasized that teacher self-efficacy is a critical factor in implementing inclusive education. Her study across four school divisions showed that teachers with high perceived competence were more open to innovation and flexible in adjusting to students' diverse learning styles. Del Mundo and Santiago (2023) also underscored that continuous professional development enhances not only pedagogical skills but also teachers' self-belief in handling diversity effectively, aligning with Bandura's theory.

Moreover, DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2017 (Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers) clearly integrates the importance of managing learner diversity and demonstrates that effective teaching competence involves inclusive practices and culturally responsive pedagogy. As affirmed by Magno (2023), this policy provides a systemic guide for enhancing teacher capacity to address learner variability while maintaining high teaching standards.

In summary, the theoretical foundations of Tomlinson's Differentiated Instruction Theory and Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, supported by recent Philippine-based studies and policy frameworks, provide a solid grounding for the investigation into how teachers manage learner diversity and how this relates to their teaching competence.

As shown in the schematic diagram, the independent variable on the left side contains teachers' management of diverse learners in terms of demonstration of high expectations, implementation of culturally relevant instruction, establishment of caring relationships, and parent and community involvement. On the right side of the diagram is the teacher's teaching competence in terms of instructional planning skills, knowledge of the subject matter, rapport with the learners, and classroom management. Figure 1 presents the schematic diagram of the study.

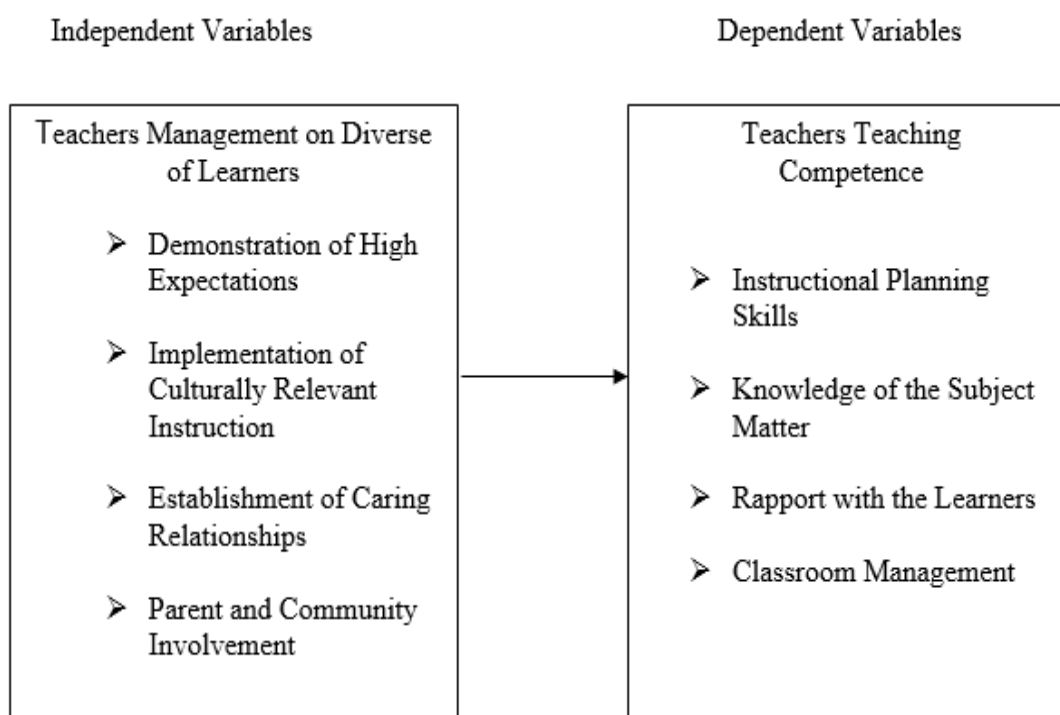


Figure 1. A schematic diagram showing the relationships of variables.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to assess the relationship of the teachers' management on diverse learners and teaching competence in the elementary schools of Cabanglasan II District, Division of Bukidnon during school year 2025-2026.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of teachers' management of diverse learners in terms of: demonstration of high expectations, implementation of culturally relevant instruction, establishment of caring relationships, and parent and community involvement?
2. What is the level of teachers teaching competence in terms of: instructional planning skills, knowledge of the subject matter, rapport with the learners, and classroom management?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the level of teachers' management on diverse learners and teaching competence?

Significance of the Study

This study on teachers' management of diverse learners and teaching competence was significant as it provided valuable insights and implications for various educational stakeholders. By exploring how learner diversity affected teachers' competence, the findings helped strengthen inclusive practices in the classroom and improved the quality of teaching in diverse learning environments. The study highlighted the importance of addressing both instructional and relational aspects of teaching to promote equitable and effective education. Its results offered practical guidance for enhancing teacher performance and learner outcomes in varied classroom settings.

For the learners, the study benefited them by promoting inclusive and responsive teaching strategies that addressed their varied needs, backgrounds, learning styles, and abilities. As teachers became more competent in managing diversity, learners experienced increased engagement, improved academic outcomes, and a more supportive learning environment. The research supported equitable learning opportunities where every learner was seen, valued, and given a chance to succeed. These outcomes contributed to fostering a positive classroom climate conducive to holistic development.

For the teachers, the findings of this study assisted them in developing and refining their teaching competencies within diverse classrooms. It raised awareness of the importance of culturally responsive teaching, differentiated instruction, and learner-centered approaches.

Teachers gained insights into the challenges and effective strategies for handling learner diversity, leading to enhanced instructional practices and professional growth. By reflecting on these results, educators were able to apply more inclusive methods that promoted both engagement and achievement.

For school administrators, the study provided evidence-based data that guided policy decisions and capacity-building initiatives. The findings informed the design of professional development programs, classroom observation tools, and instructional supervision frameworks that considered learner diversity as a central component. Administrators were equipped to foster a school culture that embraced inclusivity and supported teacher effectiveness. This approach helped strengthen overall school performance and promoted equitable learning opportunities.

For future researchers, the study served as a foundational reference for exploring the interplay between learner diversity and teaching competence. It opened avenues for investigating related variables such as teacher motivation, classroom climate, and student achievement. Moreover, the research contributed to the growing body of literature on inclusive education, particularly in the Philippine context, where diversity was a defining feature of public-school classrooms. Its findings offered a basis for further studies aimed at improving instructional practices and learner outcomes in diverse settings.

Delimitation of the Study

This study aimed to assess the management of learner diversity and its impact on the teaching competence of elementary teachers in Cabanglasan II District, Division of Bukidnon, during the School Year 2025–2026. It specifically investigated the level at which teachers demonstrated competencies in managing diverse learners in terms of classroom management, instructional planning, rapport with learners, subject matter expertise, and engagement with the community and parents. The study also sought to identify prevailing teaching practices related to cultural responsiveness and inclusive strategies that accommodated varying learner backgrounds, capabilities, and learning styles.

The respondents of this study consisted of public elementary school teachers assigned to different schools within the Cabanglasan II District. The research was delimited to classroom-based teaching experiences and excluded non-instructional staff, junior and senior high school teachers, as well as the learners themselves.

This study did not cover the impact of external factors such as infrastructure, government policies, or the socio-economic status of learners beyond how these were addressed by teachers in their classroom strategies. Moreover, the research was confined to a single school year (2025–2026) and therefore may not have captured long-term trends in instructional competence or learner outcomes.

Definition of Terms

To ensure clarity and common understanding, the following key terms were defined as they were used in the context of this study:

Classroom Management. Classroom Management refers to the strategies and practices used by teachers to maintain order, encourage positive behavior, and create an environment conducive to learning.

Demonstration of High Expectations. Demonstration of High Expect refers to the teacher's ability to set and communicate high academic and behavioral standards for all learners regardless of their background or ability level.

Establishment of Caring Relationships. Establishment of Caring Relationships refers to the development of respectful, nurturing, and empathetic connections between teachers and learners that support student well-being and learning.

Implementation of Culturally Relevant Instruction. Implementation of Culturally Relevant Instruction refers to the practice of integrating learners' cultural references in all aspects of learning to make education more meaningful and inclusive.

Instructional Planning Skills. Instructional Planning Skills refers to the teacher's ability to prepare effective lesson plans and learning materials that are aligned with curriculum standards and learner needs.

Knowledge of the Subject Matter. Knowledge of the Subject Matter refers to the depth and accuracy of a teacher's understanding of the content they teach, including their ability to explain and contextualize key concepts.

Parent and Community Involvement. Parent and Community Involvement refers to how teachers engage parents and community stakeholders in the educational process to support learner development and academic success.

Rapport with the Learners. Rapport with the Learners refers to the mutual trust, respect, and understanding that exist between the teacher and the learners, which positively influences classroom dynamics.

Teachers Managing Diversity of Learners. Teachers Managing Diversity of Learners refers to the capability of teachers to accommodate, respect, and effectively teach learners of varying backgrounds, abilities, and learning styles.

Teachers' Teaching Competence. Teachers' Teaching Competence refers to the comprehensive set of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors that enable teachers to effectively facilitate learning and adapt to the diverse needs of their learners.

Research Methodology

This chapter dealt with the methods and procedures that were used in this study. It includes the research design, research locale, the respondents of the study, sampling procedure, research instrument, data gathering procedure, scoring procedure, statistical treatment of the data gathered, and the ethical consideration.

Research Design

The investigation utilized a descriptive-correlational research design. Data were gathered and analyzed quantitatively. The descriptive method was employed to examine teachers' management of diverse learners in terms of demonstration of high expectations, implementation of culturally relevant instruction, establishment of caring relationships, and parent and community involvement. The study also investigated teachers' teaching competence in terms of instructional planning skills, knowledge of the subject matter, rapport with learners, and classroom management. Furthermore, it examined the significant relationship between the level of teachers' management of diverse learners and their teaching competence.

Research Locale

This study was conducted among elementary school teachers in Cabanglasan II District, under the Department of Education – Division of Bukidnon, during the School Year 2025–2026. The district was located in the municipality of Cabanglasan, a third-class municipality in the eastern part of Bukidnon, Northern Mindanao, Philippines. Predominantly rural, the

district comprised several public elementary schools that served learners from varied socio-economic and cultural backgrounds.

Cabanglasan II District was committed to delivering quality basic education

In line with the K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum. Its teaching workforce was composed of dedicated and experienced professionals, many of whom taught multi-grade classes in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas. The schools under the district included Kumaliwat Elementary School, Anaranan Te Saluringan Elementary School, Sawebseb Te Untung Te Katablaran Elementary School, Luan-Luan Elementary School, Mangalod Elementary School, Tagbacan Elementary School, Mainaga Elementary School, Miaray Elementary School, Paradise Elementary School, Cananga-an Elementary School, Anlугan Elementary School, San Vicente Elementary School, and Iba Integrated School.

The selection of Cabanglasan II District as the locale for this study was deemed appropriate, as it reflected the realities of rural education in the Philippines, where the personal and professional qualities of teachers significantly influenced learner performance and school effectiveness. This research aimed to explore these teacher qualities within their everyday teaching practices and to examine their implications on instructional delivery and learner outcomes.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of this study consisted of all 102 elementary school teachers in Cabanglasan I District, under the Division of Bukidnon, for the School Year 2025–2026. The study utilized total enumeration, a technique in which the entire population possessing specific characteristics is included in the research. In this case, all elementary school teachers within the district who met the criteria were surveyed. This method ensured that every relevant individual was represented, allowing for comprehensive and accurate data collection. Table 1 presents the distribution of respondents.

Research Instruments

The teachers' management of diverse learners and teaching competence were measured in this study, with each variable having a distinct instrument. Questionnaires were utilized as the primary tool for gathering the required data and information. The survey questionnaire for teachers' management of diverse learners was adapted from Freeman and Freeman (2003) and covered variables such as instructional planning skills, knowledge of the subject matter, rapport with learners, and classroom management. The instrument for assessing teachers'

teaching competence was adapted from Padillo, Manguilimotan, Capuno, and Espina (2021), and it similarly considered instructional planning skills, subject matter knowledge, rapport with learners, and classroom management. These instruments ensured standardized data collection and allowed for accurate measurement of both teacher management practices and professional competence.

Findings

The study revealed that teachers' management of diverse learners was generally rated as high across the four dimensions. Participants demonstrated consistently high expectations for all learners, showing fairness and encouragement in classroom interactions. The implementation of culturally relevant instruction was evident through lesson adaptations and integration of community and learner experiences. Establishment of caring relationships was strong, with teachers fostering inclusivity, respect, and emotional support. Parent and community involvement was also actively pursued through regular communication, collaboration, and engagement initiatives.

Regarding teaching competence, teachers were found to possess high proficiency across all measured areas. Instructional planning skills were systematically applied, ensuring that lesson objectives, materials, and activities were appropriately designed. Knowledge of the subject matter was comprehensive, allowing teachers to address learner questions and misconceptions effectively. Rapport with learners was strong, promoting trust, motivation, and active participation in classroom activities. Classroom management strategies were effectively employed, maintaining a conducive learning environment while accommodating diverse learner needs.

Analysis of the relationship between teachers' management of diverse learners and their teaching competence indicated a significant positive correlation. Teachers who demonstrated high expectations, implemented culturally relevant instruction, and maintained caring relationships tended to exhibit stronger teaching competencies. Parent and community involvement also contributed to improved instructional effectiveness. This finding suggests that teacher management practices directly influence professional teaching outcomes. Consequently, fostering effective management of diverse learners is linked to enhanced teaching competence.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

The study concludes that teachers in Cabanglasan I District effectively manage diverse learners through high expectations, culturally responsive instruction, and caring classroom environments. Their efforts to involve parents and communities further strengthen learner engagement and support. Such practices indicate that teachers are capable of responding to varied learner needs while maintaining inclusive and equitable classrooms. These findings affirm the importance of comprehensive teacher strategies in addressing learner diversity. Overall, effective management of diverse learners reflects both pedagogical knowledge and relational competence.

It is concluded that teachers demonstrate high teaching competence in planning, content knowledge, rapport, and classroom management. Their preparedness and expertise enable them to deliver lessons that are both academically rigorous and socially supportive. Strong rapport with learners enhances participation and motivation, complementing instructional proficiency. Classroom management strategies ensure an orderly and productive environment conducive to learning for all students. This indicates that teacher competence aligns closely with the principles of effective and responsive pedagogy.

The study concludes that there is a significant positive relationship between teachers' management of diverse learners and their teaching competence. Teachers who excel in managing learner diversity tend to demonstrate stronger instructional skills and classroom effectiveness. Effective teacher management fosters environments that support learner engagement, motivation, and achievement. This relationship underscores the interdependence between relational and instructional practices in promoting educational outcomes. Therefore, cultivating management strategies for diverse learners is essential for overall teaching effectiveness.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following are recommended:

It is recommended that teachers continue to strengthen culturally responsive practices and establish high expectations for all learners. Professional development programs focusing on inclusive teaching and community engagement should be regularly conducted. Schools may provide structured opportunities for parent and community involvement to enhance collaborative support for learners. Teachers should be encouraged to reflect on and adapt their classroom strategies to meet diverse learner needs. Continuous monitoring and feedback can further enhance teacher effectiveness in managing diverse classrooms.

Teachers are encouraged to maintain and further develop their instructional planning, subject matter expertise, rapport, and classroom management skills. Workshops and seminars on differentiated instruction and learner-centered strategies can further enhance teaching competence. Peer mentoring and collaborative planning sessions may support professional growth and sharing of best practices. Teachers should utilize reflective practices to evaluate the effectiveness of lesson delivery and student engagement. Strengthening these competencies will ensure sustained quality of instruction and positive learner outcomes.

It is desirable that schools integrate programs that simultaneously enhance teacher management of diverse learners and teaching competence. Administrators may provide coaching and mentorship focusing on relational strategies and instructional skills. Collaborative communities of practice can be established to encourage sharing of strategies for managing diversity and improving teaching outcomes. Continuous assessment of both management practices and teaching competence can inform professional development initiatives. By fostering this interrelationship, schools can promote holistic teacher effectiveness and student achievement.

Since the result of the study is significant, teacher may continue to attend in-service trainings on teacher management of diverse learners and develop new teaching competence for the upliftment of their learners.

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