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# Faculty Awareness on Cultural Diversity of Learners: The Case of San Pedro National High School, Philippines

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#### Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. Authors SJT, JTT and KAP administered the collection of primary data and managed the literature searches. Author JGM designed the study, performed the statistical analysis, wrote the protocol and wrote the first draft of the manuscript.

All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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#### **ABSTRACT**

This study determined the awareness on cultural diversity of learners among faculty at San Pedro National High School, Sto. Tomas, Batangas, Philippines. Specifically, it dealt with the following: the respondents' profile in terms of age, sex, highest educational attainment and number of years of teaching; significant relationship between the respondents' profile and their awareness on cultural diversity and the proposed course of action to enhance cultural diversity awareness of faculty members. The data used were obtained from the administered researcher-made questionnaire validated by pool of experts. Results revealed that the respondents are culturally aware in terms of curriculum and instruction, professional development and school policies. The study also found out that most of the respondents are female, aged below 30, masteral degree holders, and teaching from 1-10 years. Statistical analysis showed that sex, age, highest educational attainment and

number of years teaching have significant relationship to the respondents' awareness on cultural diversity. Based on the findings, the researchers recommended the implementation of the proposed course of actions to enhance teachers' cultural diversity awareness.

Keywords: Culture; diversity; cultural awareness; curriculum; professional development; San Pedro National High School.

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

Culture encompasses behaviors, beliefs, values, and symbolsthat are passed along by communication from one generation to the next. On the other hand, education is the process of cultivating human potential in a person so that s/he can contribute to his/her personal growth as well as those of others. For education to succeed, it should take off from the culture without making the culture stagnant. It is important that people develop a collective self-understanding of themselves, an understanding of how they think, feel, do things, and relate with others in the family, community and society, and in relation to their aspirations towards total well-being [1].

The tremendous diversity of cultural, ethnic, religious and socioeconomic groups in school today calls for multicultural education programs that reflect understanding and respect for children's and adolescents' differences. Cultural differences in respect of authority, academic and social values, self-regulation and peer regulation behaviors and teachers' classroom management are the factors for their perception of the school environment [2]. It is very important that teachers must look and reflect also into the multicultural awareness so that individuals can effectively deliver instructions about other culture and folks can realize that there is unity amidst diversity.

In the same manner, students in the same school with different religion should respect one another. Of primary concern is the fact that the rapid change of ethnic composition is placing additional demands on teachers who need to foster a multicultural environment into a classroom [3]. For such a challenging enterprise, a teacher has to promote changes in the academic curriculum, in the learning environment and also in the approach of the teachers toward the students. Children coming from different cultures have different understanding levels and hence require for different teaching methods. It is the teacher's primary duty to cultivate an environment which aims at bridging cultural gaps. Teachers should understand the role culture plays in the classroom and employ

teaching practices that accommodate students from diverse cultural backgrounds [4]. In short, classroom teachers to be effective must possess cultural diversity awareness and sensitivity [5-7].

Because of this, the increasing diversity within Philippine schools provides both opportunities and challenges. Diverse classrooms and schools make it possible to teach students from many different cultures and grow how to live together cooperatively and productively. Teachers need to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to maximize the opportunities that diversity offers and to minimize its challenges. Teacher education programs should help teachers attain the knowledge, attitudes and skills needed to work effectively with students from diverse groups as well as help students from mainstream groups develop cross-cultural knowledge, values, and competencies.

However, high quality educational experiences do not exist if some ethnic groups and their contributions to the development of history, life and culture are ignored or demeaned [8]. So, the mission of education today is to promote life in its wholeness, to bring into communion and solidarity in the light of authentic globalization the expressions of diverse cultures. expressions of human dignity through creativity in work. Courses and programs are judged of quality and of excellence when they could be 'inter- nationally competitive'. Each country having also to contend with variations of major cultures and with the reality of globalization. Ramirez [9] suggested several postulates with regard to 'cultural diversity and education in an increasingly globalized world.

Furthermore, distinctions between public and private schooling are becoming blurred, shifting schools in many areas toward corporate control democratic community away from participation [10]. Many advocates multicultural education quickly found attention to diversity and equity being replaced by attention to standards and student test scores, particularly in schools in which multicultural education had been seen as having to do mainly with getting along rather than improving academic teaching and learning [11].

Moreover, teachers align their teaching styles to the needs and learning styles of their students. This means that teachers must consider each student individually. In a multicultural school setting, not only do multiple cultural perspectives shape the environment but also do individual learning styles and abilities [12]. For example, Navita [13] determined if there is a significant difference on the perception of teachers' multicultural awareness when grouped according to gender, educational attainment, position, rank, age and community. Gomez [14] studied the embracing culture in the classroom at San Diego Unified School District and examined how teacher's self-perceived levels of cultural proficiency are related to their culturally proficient instructional practices. Reinmann [15] found out that the basic components of any language are indivisible from the perspectives of the users and therefore affect the way a certain language group views of the world. Hovater [16] found out that the initial reactions to being immersed in culture foreign to them were negative. Vasallo [17] conducted a comparative study of multicultural awareness among in-service school teachers across three different countries. Furthermore, Nichols [18] assessed multicultural art education in Virginia's Public High Schools and found out that majority of participants do believe that multicultural education is important in an art classroom. In addition, Prell [19] conducted a study about multicultural pedagogies of three teachers' understanding and implementation of multicultural education in Presidential High. It was found out that due to the significant impact teachers have in curriculum implementation, it is important to better understand their perspectives and experiences. Waight [20] conducted a study about perceptions of multicultural education among five white female teachers at a large public elementary school in Chicago. It was found out that discussing sensitive topics about multicultural education in a small group format was a helpful tool in making positive changes with multicultural education in the future. In the same manner, Tosic [21] studied multicultural education of learners with diverse linguistic and cultural backgroundin a primary school in Norway. Finally, Saban [22] studied the learning needs in the multicultural classroom and their implications to equitable teaching. The study came out with the following findings: the overarching need for school administration to formulate curriculum and instruction policies for foreign students; teachers need to do learning needs assessment at the start of classes in relation to students' knowledge and skills of the

subject matter; negotiate notifications in the course syllabus with the students; and teachers to become more equipped with the pedagogical tools and up-to-date teaching media; need to further improve instructional communication skill in English, both in spoken and written forms.

#### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

This study determined the awareness on cultural diversity of learners among faculty at San Pedro National High School. Specifically, it sought to answer the following:

- 1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of sex, age, highest educational attainment, and number of years in teaching?
- 2. How may the respondents' awareness on cultural diversity of learners be described in terms of curriculum and instruction; professional development; and school policies?
- 3. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' profile and their awareness on cultural diversity of learners?
- 4. What course of action may be proposed to enhance awareness on cultural diversity of learners among faculty?

#### 1.2 Hypothesis

The researchers hypothesized that there is no significant relationship between the respondents' profile and faculty awareness on cultural diversity of learners.

#### 2. METHODOLOGY

This study employed the descriptive method of research. According to Babin [23], descriptive research describes a situation. Generally things are described by providing measures of an event or activity. Descriptive research designs are usually structured and specifically designed to measure the characteristics in a research question. Hypotheses, derived from the theory, usually guide the process and provide a list of what needs to be measured. The object of descriptive research is to portray an accurate profile of persons, events or situations.

The study focused on the awareness on cultural diversity of learners amongsocial studies teachers at San Pedro National High School, academic year 2015-2016. This school was chosen because there was enough number of

social studies teachers to be used as respondents of the study. The researchers also had their student teaching in the said school. Moreover, the respondents were composed of 30 teachers.

The researchers employed a questionnaire as the primary data gathering tool. To effectively formulate a questionnaire, the researchers read many books and other related resources. When the items were prepared, the questionnaire was presented to the adviser for comments and suggestions which were later incorporated. Then, the researchers sought the help of other instructors knowledgeable in the field. They came up with the second draft and presented it to the adviser for another round of checking. Once approved, they sought assistance from faculty members for content validation. Each of them also gave comments and suggestions which were considered in improving the questionnaire. Furthermore, validation procedure was followed to ensure reliability.

The questionnaire has two sections. First section includes respondents profile such as sex, age, highest educational attainment, number of seminar attended and numbers of years teaching. The second part is about respondents' awareness on cultural diversity of learners in terms of curriculum and instruction, professional development, and school policies.

For the purpose of interpreting the awareness of the respondents, the mean scores were grouped and given the following interpretation:

Scale	Mean ranges	Verbal interpretation
4	3.25 - 4.00	Strongly Agree/Highly
		Aware
3	2.50 - 3.24	Agree/Aware
2	1.75 - 2.49	Slightly Agree/
		Slightly Aware
1	1.00 - 1.74	Disagree/Not Aware

The researchers, first, asked permission from the school principal of San Pedro National High School to allow them to conduct the survey among 30 social studies teachers. Upon approval, the researchers went to the target respondents to explain the purpose of conducting the survey. They provided the respondents enough time to answer the questionnaire. Retrieval of the data followed after the respondents had finished answering the questionnaires. Then, the gathered data were

tabulated, tallied and interpreted using appropriate statistical treatment.

#### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 Profile of the Respondents

#### 3.1.1 Sex

Of the 30 respondents, 73 percent or 22 are female while only 27 percent or eight are male. This numerical presentation exposes that females were more inclined in education than males.Across the country, teaching is an overwhelmingly female profession, and in fact has become more so over time. More than threequarters of all teachers in kindergarten through high school are women, according to Education Department data, up from about two-thirds three decades ago. The disparity is most pronounced in elementary and middle schools, where more than 80 percent of teachers are women Rich [24]. According to Sheelagh [25], the teaching of young children has long been dominated by women. This global phenomenon is firmly rooted in issues relating to economic development, urbanization, the position of women in society, cultural definitions of masculinity and the value of children and childcare. There have been expressions of concern by the media, by government ministers, and others, in a number of countries about the level of feminisation of the teaching profession.

#### 3.1.2 Age

Majority of the respondents aged 31-40 with 43%. It is followed by 30 and below with 37%. However, it can be noted also that 10% of the respondents aged 41-50 and another 10% for 51 years old and above.Lipman [26] explained that teachers of the abovementioned ages may have already overcome certain difficulties in their career path, and subsequently express more control of their environment and higher degrees of job satisfaction.

#### 3.1.3 Educational attainment

Educational qualifications are official documents that certify that an individual has reached a certain level of competence in one field of education or in a group of fields of education, which is usually formally assessed through examinations. They indicate individuals' ability to learn and persevere [27]. Most of the respondents have masteral degree with 37% while others have earned masteral units with 33%. However, still 30% of them have not taken

or enrolled in post graduate study such as masteral units. Despite having decades of experience, some teachers are rushing to get a master's degree to stay qualified as colleges morph into degree-granting institutions. As number of colleges offering degrees rise, so does the demand for academic qualifications [28]. The highest level of education successfully completed is either indicated by the highest educational qualification (vocational or academic) achieved, or by the number of years of education or schooling completed (in which case, eachyear is regarded as a kind of level).

#### 3.1.4 Number of years in teaching

Majority or 19 out of 30 respondents have been teaching for 1-10 years while 23% is teaching for 11-20 years. This implies that most of the respondents are beginner in teaching. They may be fresh graduates. On the other hand, only 14% or four respondents are teaching for 21-30 long years. The differential attrition of teachers with different levels of effectiveness may confound findings about the effects of teacher experience. While some evidence suggests that teachers who remain teaching after three years are less effective on average than those who leave [29]

other research has found that less effective teachers are more likely to transfer and leave teaching [30]. Further, Savage [31] observed that experienced teachers identify the establishment of classroom management as one of the major goals that needs to be accomplished in the first week of the year. Beginning teachers cite classroom management as one of their most serious challenges. School administrators indicate poor classroom management as a major reason for low evaluations as well as primary reason why teachers are not hired.

## 3.2 Respondents' Awareness on Cultural Diversity

According to Lindsey, Robins, & Terrell [32], educating all students is successful when cultural diversity of students is meaningfully considered and embraced.

### 3.2.1 Awareness on cultural diversity in terms of curriculum and instruction

Culturally relevant instruction and assessment practices ensure greater success and engagement with students from various cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds [33].

Table 1. Distribution of respondents' awareness on cultural diversity in terms of curriculum and instruction

Item statements	Weighted mean	Verbal interpretation
The curriculum reflects the learning styles of students within the school.	3.33	Strongly Agree
The curriculum provides continuous opportunities for students develop a better sense of their ethnic and cultural background.	3.47	Strongly Agree
The curriculum uses multiple perspectives to explain the experiences of various ethnic, cultural gender, and linguistic groups.	3.43	Strongly Agree
Opportunities are provided for students to participate in activities from diverse cultural groups.	3.40	StronglyAgree
The assessment procedures used with students reflect their cultural values.	3.27	Strongly Agree
There are evaluations of the goals and objectives used in integrating multicultural education.	3.30	Strongly Agree
Instructional materials are examined for bias across gender, ethnic, and cultural lines.	3.17	Agree
School assemblies and holidays observation reflect the multiethnic and multicultural diversity in the Philippines.	3.47	Strongly Agree
The organizational culture of the school fosters positive interactions among various ethnic, cultural, and gender group members in the school.	3.37	Strongly Agree
The mission and vision of the school reflects understanding, appreciation and recognition of the school stakeholders with diverse cultural backgrounds.	3.57	Strongly Agree
Composite Mean	3.38	Highly Aware

Obtaining the highest weighted mean of 3.57, "the mission and vision of the school reflects understanding, appreciation and recognition of the school stakeholders with diverse cultural backgrounds"reveals that curriculum instruction must build on students' cultural knowledge asstated by Trumbull & Pacheco [34]. In addition, respondents strongly agree that curriculum provides continuous opportunities for students develop a better sense of their ethnic and cultural background and school assemblies and holidays observation reflect the multiethnic and multicultural diversity in the Philippines, both with 3.47 weighted mean. Holiday's observation is a powerful avenue connecting meaningful curriculum and instruction to students' lives [35]. Moreover, Gorham [36] emphasized the perceptions of the strengths and deficiencies for working and meeting the need of students from diverse cultural backgrounds. Likewise, schools can help students develop good gender, social, racial, and cultural identities. In the same way, children learning about their own as well as other people cultural groups can gain a new respect and appreciation for the ways in which other cultural groups live. Also, adults must help children develop a sense of social responsibility. In addition, Wilson [37] relates that schooling and instruction are designed for different cultures to make teaching and learning based upon consensus building, respect, and fostering cultural pluralism. In general, respondents are highly aware of cultural diversity in terms of curriculum and instruction as indicated by 3.38 composite mean.

## 3.2.2 Awareness on cultural diversity in terms of professional development

Professional development is a major strategy for building cultural competencies, which continually reassesses relationships between teachers and learners, and attitudes and beliefs about language, culture, and race [34].

Respondents strongly agreed on three items, such as: Teachers make sure that students are aware of cultural diversity; Multicultural awareness assists the teachers in being more effective at their job; and Teachers are competent enough to deal with stakeholders of the school coming from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. All items obtained 3.57 weighted mean. This conforms to Lee [38] that teacher professional development is critical to promoting high academic achievement and pursuing educational equity for diverse student groups. When many teachers think of

multicultural education, they think only of content related to ethnic, racial, and cultural groups. Teachers who cannot easily see how their content is related to cultural issues easily dismiss multicultural education with the argument that it is not relevant to their disciplines. This is done frequently by secondary math and science teachers.

## 3.2.3 Awareness on cultural diversity in terms of school policies

School policies need to change to reflect national, regional and local diversity [39].

Garnering the highest weighted mean of 3.47, respondents strongly agreed that administrations allow a school environment that is ethnically, linguistically and culturally diverse; and the school provides outreach activities which enable the teachers to be more culturally aware. This is supported by multicultural education movement that has demanded schools to become culturally competent so that all students have an opportunity to succeed. It has become a dynamic field developing with the purpose of providing all students with equal education and to eliminate the achievement gap between majority students and youth from culturally diverse communities [40].

## 3.3 Relationship between the Respondents' Profile and Their Awareness on Cultural Diversity

The table demonstrates that when the profile of respondents in terms of sex is correlated with awareness on cultural diversity, the computed value from Chi-Square is 10.966. It has a corresponding tabular value of 5.911 which is higher than the computed value. Thus, null hypothesis is rejected which means that there is a significant relationship between sex and the respondents' profile and their awareness on cultural diversity. Teachers who view race and gender as interconnected rather than as separate can increase their understandings of diversity and develop effective strategies to promote social justice and democracy. The concerns of teachers appropriate curricula and effective instruction may be addressed by understanding how race and gender are manifested in their classrooms, schools, and in society [41].

Meanwhile, when age is correlated with awareness on cultural diversity, the computed value from Chi-Square is 41.777 with its

equivalent tabular value of 12.592. This shows that the computed value is greater than its tabular value. Therefore, null hypothesis is rejected which means that a significant relationship exists between age and awareness on cultural diversity. According to Akram [42], age is one of the factors affecting the performance of teachers at higher secondary level in Punjab. He

said that teachers aged 20-30 have fresh ideas but they suffer from teaching anxiety. Ages 31 and above have developed total experience through the years of teaching. On the other hand, highest educational attainment and awareness on cultural diversity are correlated. The computed Chi-Square value is 5.772 with its equivalent tabular value of 9.488. It can be

Table 2. Distribution of respondents' awareness on cultural diversity in terms of professional development

Item statements	Weighted mean	Verbal interpretation
Teachers make sure that students are aware of cultural diversity	3.57	Strongly Agree
Multicultural awareness is evident to the subject that the teachers teach.	3.47	Strongly Agree
Multicultural awareness assists the teachers in being more effective at their job.	3.57	Strongly Agree
Tours, symposia and recreational activities which are geared toward the development of multicultural awareness are conducted.	3.47	StronglyAgree
Teachers are competent enough to deal with stakeholders of the school coming from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.	3.57	Strongly Agree
Composite Mean.	3.53	Highly Aware

Table 3. Distribution of respondents' awareness on cultural diversity in terms of school policies

Item statements	Weighted mean	Verbal interpretation
Multicultural awareness and sensitivity trainings are conducted	3.43	Strongly Agree
Administrations allow a school environment that is ethnically, linguistically and culturally diverse	3.47	Strongly Agree
Teachers incorporate culturally relevant activities into curriculum	3.43	Strongly Agree
Teachers with specialization/background about multicultural education are tapped to help in the in the promotion of multicultural awareness program in the school	3.43	StronglyAgree
The school provides outreach activities which will enable the teachers to be more culturally aware.	3.47	Strongly Agree
Composite Mean	3.45	Highly Aware

Table 4. Relationship between the respondents' profile and their awareness on cultural diversity

Variables	Computed value	Tabular value	Decision (H <sub>o</sub> )	Verbal interpretation
Sex and Awareness on Cultural	10.966	5.991	Reject	Significant
Diversity				
Age and Awareness on Cultural	41.777	12.592	Reject	Significant
Diversity			-	-
Highest Educational Attainment and	5.772	9.488	Accept	Not Significant
Awareness on Cultural Diversity				
Number of years in teaching and	18.965	9.488	Reject	Significant
Awareness on Cultural Diversity			-	-

Table 5. Course of action enhancing awareness on cultural diversity

Objectives	Strategies	Persons involved	Target date	Expected outcome
To examine instructional materials for bias across gender, ethnic and cultural lines.	Examining/preparing instructional materials injecting across gender, ethnic and cultural lines.	Teachers, Coordinators, School heads and Division Heads	Every 1 <sup>st</sup> quarter of academic year 2016-2017	The teachers should have improved their instructional materials and gain more information about different ethnic heroes.
To establish tours, symposia and recreational activities which are geared toward the development of multicultural awareness are conducted.	Organize seminars and workshops that will focus on multicultural awareness.	Teachers, Coordinators, School heads and Division Heads	Every 1 <sup>st</sup> quarter of academic year 2016-2017	The teachers should have enhanced and developed different perspective of cultural diversity
To provide outreach activities which will enable the teachers to be more culturally aware.	Conducting outdoor activities will incorporate activities like feeding program and visiting orphanage that will teachers be more culturally aware	Teachers, Coordinators, School heads and Division Heads	Every 1 <sup>st</sup> quarter of academic year 2016-2017	The teachers should have enhanced their awareness on cultural diversity

noticed that the computed value is higher than its tabular value, therefore the null hypothesis is accepted which means that no significant relationship exists between highest educational attainment and awareness on cultural diversity.

In addition, respondents' number of years in teaching is correlated with awareness on cultural diversity. The computed Chi-Square value is 18.965 with its corresponding tabular value of 9.488. It can be seen that the computed value is greater than its tabular value, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected which means significant relationship exists between the number of years in teaching and the respondents' profile and their awareness on cultural diversity.

Lastly, highest educational attainment and awareness on cultural diversity have no significant relationship as shown by the computed value of 5.772. This findings contradicts Brown [43] claiming that the higher one's educational attainment, the more willing one becomes to acceptcross-cultural differences and the more sensitive to those outside of cultural frames-of-reference.

#### 3.4 Course of Action to Enhance Awareness on Cultural Diversity

The details of the course of action enhancing awareness on cultural diversity have been given in table 5. The table illustrates the objectives, strategies, persons involved and the outcomes.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This study concluded that a) Majority of the respondents were female, aged 31-40, masteral degree holders and teaching for 1-10 years in service. b) Respondents were highly aware on cultural diversity based on curriculum and instruction, professional development and school policies. c) Sex, age and number of teaching experience have significant relationship while highest educational attainment is not significantly related. d) Courses of actions are proposed to enhance awareness on cultural diversity.

#### **CONSENT**

As per international standard or university standard, respondents' written consent has been collected and preserved by the authors.

#### **COMPETING INTERESTS**

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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