

Educational excellence and conflict transformation strategies of public secondary school teachers

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Abstract: Public secondary school teachers are at the forefront of a critical mission to directly influence the quality of education delivered to students but, teachers often encounter various forms of conflict which can disrupt the learning environment, hinder academic progress, and undermine the overall educational experience for students. This study utilized a non-experimental quantitative research methodology using a descriptive correlation approach was applied. Statistical analyses such as the mean, Pearson R correlation, and Multiple Linear Regression were utilized. The participants in the research were one hundred twenty (250) public secondary school educators conveniently selected secondary schools in Junior High School District of the Division of Digos City. Descriptive results of the study revealed that the extent of educational excellence obtained a high descriptive level rating which means that teachers' educational excellence is often evident while the level of their conflict resolution strategies obtained a very high descriptive level rating which means that their conflict resolution strategies is always evident. Consequently, the inferential results of the study suggested that it rejected its set null hypothesis since there is a significant relationship between educational excellence and conflict resolution strategies of public secondary school teachers. Likewise, the regression analysis resulted that reflective practice, communications skills, content knowledge, and pedagogical knowledge significantly influenced the conflict resolution strategies of the teachers.

Keywords: Educational Excellence, Conflict Resolution Strategies, Public Secondary School Teachers

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INTRODUCTION

Educational excellence is considered at the heart of any effective education system. Reflective practice is a key component of teaching excellence, involving teachers' ability to critically evaluate their teaching methods, adapt to evolving student needs, and continually improve their instructional techniques (Schön, 2013). Communication skills are vital for building positive teacher-student relationships, fostering a conducive learning atmosphere, and ensuring effective knowledge transfer (Kline, 2015). Content knowledge represents the depth of teachers' subject matter understanding, while pedagogical knowledge reflects their proficiency in employing effective teaching strategies (Shulman, 2017; Mishra & Thavorn, 2016).

Subsequently, conflict transformation is an essential aspect of maintaining a harmonious and productive learning environment in public secondary schools. Teachers' conflict transformation strategies encompass their ability to engage in effective communication and active listening to understand and address students' concerns and disputes (Furlong, 2015). Mediation and conflict resolution skills enable teachers to facilitate constructive dialogues and mediate conflicts among students (Johnson & Johnson, 2016).

Restorative practices involve using approaches like circles and conferences to repair harm and rebuild relationships in the aftermath of conflicts (Zehr, 2015). Emotional intelligence plays a role in managing emotions during conflict resolution, understanding the emotional needs of students, and promoting self-awareness and empathy (Koleman, 2015).

In the context of educational environments, teachers' conflict transformation strategies are critical in fostering a positive and productive learning atmosphere. According to Johnson and Johnson (2019), effective conflict resolution in classrooms hinges on the development of cooperative learning environments where students learn to work together and resolve conflicts constructively. This approach is based on the understanding that conflicts are natural in learning environments and can be opportunities for growth if managed effectively. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2015) emphasize the ethical dimensions of conflict resolution in schools, advocating for strategies that consider the moral and ethical implications of decisions made in conflict situations.

In the Philippines, educational excellence among public secondary school teachers is essential for providing quality education to students. However, several challenges hinder the achievement of this excellence. A significant challenge is the need to bridge cultural and linguistic differences among students, which can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts. Teachers are encouraged to employ culturally responsive teaching methods to address this issue, as highlighted by Reyes (2019) in their study on cultural diversity in Philippine classrooms. Additionally, the Philippine educational framework emphasizes peace education as a critical component, as discussed by Santos (2018), to equip teachers with the skills needed for conflict resolution and peacebuilding within their classrooms. However, Buendia (2020) points out the limited resources and training available to teachers in conflict transformation, suggesting a gap between policy and practice.

Another, the diversity of students' backgrounds and needs requires teachers to continuously adapt their teaching methods, necessitating professional development opportunities that may not always be readily available (World Bank, 2020). Teachers need the tools to effectively manage conflicts while maintaining their commitment to high-quality teaching (DepEd Order No. 2, s. 2019). Lastly, the pressure to maintain teaching excellence may sometimes lead to neglecting conflict resolution skills, as teachers focus primarily on their pedagogical responsibilities (Luna & De Guia, 2017). With these, the challenges in achieving educational excellence in the Philippines intersect with the effective implementation of conflict transformation strategies. In addition, these challenges can impact the development of teaching excellence and the ability to employ effective conflict transformation strategies.

Despite the theoretical understanding of the relationship between educational excellence and conflict transformation, there is a dearth of empirical research examining this connection among public secondary school teachers. Investigating how teachers' reflective practice, communication skills, content knowledge, and pedagogical knowledge relate to their conflict transformation strategies is essential for developing evidence-based interventions. Such research can inform teacher training programs, policy initiatives, and school leadership practices, ultimately contributing to the enhancement of educational outcomes and the creation of more harmonious school environments. Hence, the present study aims to fill this research gap by investigating the relationship between the educational excellence of public secondary school teachers, as measured by reflective practice, communication skills, content knowledge, and pedagogical knowledge, and their conflict transformation strategies, including communication and active listening, mediation and conflict resolution skills, restorative practices, and emotional intelligence.

Statement of the problem

The main purpose of this study is to determine if the indicators of educational excellence in terms of reflective practice, communication skills, content knowledge, and pedagogical knowledge significantly influence the conflict transformation strategies of public secondary school teachers in Junior High School District, Division of Digos City. Specifically, this study aims to answer the following questions.

1. What is the extent of educational excellence of public secondary school teachers in terms of reflective practice, communication skills, content knowledge, and pedagogical knowledge.

2. What is the level teaching quality of conflict transformation strategies of public secondary school teachers in terms of communication and active listening, mediation and conflict resolution skills, restorative practices, and emotional intelligence.

3. Is there a significant relationship between the educational excellence and conflict transformation strategies of public secondary school teachers in Junior High School District, Division of Digos City?

4. Is there an indicator of educational excellence that significantly influence the conflict transformation strategies of public secondary school teachers in Junior High School District, Division of Digos City?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is primarily anchored on Jack Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory which suggests that deep, transformative learning occurs when individuals face a disorienting dilemma and reflect critically on their prior beliefs, leading to a change in their worldviews (Mezirow, 1997). Teachers, aiming for educational excellence, could be seen as facilitators of such transformative experiences for their students. They not only transmit knowledge but also provide a platform for students to confront, challenge, and reframe their beliefs.

In the realm of conflict transformation, this theory is particularly pertinent. Conflicts in the classroom can often act as 'disorienting dilemmas' for students and educators alike. Teachers proficient in harnessing the principles of transformative learning can guide students to reflect on the root causes of conflicts, their role in them, and potential pathways to resolution. Furthermore, the educators themselves, by embracing transformative learning, can continually adapt and refine their teaching methodologies and conflict management strategies. They can move from a traditional punitive approach to a more restorative and transformative one, fostering a more harmonious and conducive learning environment (Mezirow, 1997).

Another theory that supports the main theory is the Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory which emphasizes that learning is a social process and individuals learn not only through personal experiences but also by observing others (Bandura, 1986). The classroom environment is a microcosm of this theory, where teachers serve as pivotal role models. Their approach towards educational excellence and their handling of conflicts can significantly shape students' behaviors and attitudes. A central tenet of this theory is the concept of self-efficacy. Bandura posited that an individual's belief in their ability to execute tasks and achieve goals can influence their motivation, behavior, and even social outcomes. In an educational setting, a teacher with a high degree of self-efficacy in their teaching methods and conflict resolution skills can inspire confidence in students and cultivate a more engaged learning environment.

In terms of conflict transformation, when students observe their teachers adopting proactive, empathetic, and constructive strategies to resolve disagreements, they are likely to internalize these strategies. Thus, educators can leverage their role model status to instill

positive conflict transformation values in their students, promoting a more cohesive classroom culture (Bandura, 1986).

The Fisher's Conflict Resolution Theory is also another theory that supports the main theory of this study which has a notion that conflicts, while natural in human interactions, can be approached and resolved constructively. Fisher (2005) discusses various facets of this theory, including the integrative conflict resolution approach. This approach emphasizes the importance of understanding and addressing the underlying needs and concerns of the conflicting parties, rather than merely resolving surface disagreements.

In a classroom, conflicts arise from diverse sources – differences in opinions, backgrounds, or even misunderstandings. Educators, aiming for excellence, can integrate the tenets of conflict resolution theory to ensure that conflicts become opportunities for learning and growth. By addressing the root causes and not just the manifestations of conflicts, they can foster a classroom environment where differences are celebrated and constructively integrated into the learning process. Furthermore, equipping students with skills derived from conflict resolution theory can have long-lasting benefits. By instilling in them the value of empathy, active listening, and collaborative problem-solving, educators prepare students not only for academic success but also for navigating complex social scenarios in their future lives (Fisher, 2005).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Educational Excellence

Educational excellence is a complex concept that encompasses various dimensions of educational quality and achievement. It goes beyond traditional measures like test scores and grades to encompass a holistic view of the educational process and outcomes. One critical aspect of educational excellence is the quality of teaching and learning experiences within educational institutions. According to Hattie (2019), effective teaching practices, such as selecting appropriate content, providing constructive feedback, setting high expectations, providing appropriate pedagogical techniques, and creating a supportive learning environment, are essential for achieving educational excellence. Furthermore, Darling-Hammond (2017) emphasizes that well-prepared and highly qualified teachers with enough content and pedagogical knowledge play a crucial role in fostering excellence in education. Their expertise, passion, and dedication contribute significantly to students' academic success and overall development.

In addition to teaching quality, educational excellence also relates to the curriculum and educational resources available to students. A well-designed and relevant curriculum that promotes and enhances critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, reflective practice, and creativity can enhance educational excellence (Gardner, 2017). Furthermore, access to up-to-date educational materials, technology, and facilities is essential for creating an environment that supports excellence in education (Levin & Fullan, 2018). These resources enable students to explore and engage with a wide range of learning opportunities, fostering a deeper understanding of the subject matter and helping them develop the skills necessary for success in a rapidly changing world.

Moreover, educational excellence is closely linked to equity and inclusivity in education. Providing equal opportunities and support to all students, regardless of their background, ensures that educational excellence is attainable for everyone (Ladson-Billings, 2016). This means addressing disparities in educational access, addressing the needs of diverse learners, and creating an inclusive learning environment where all students can thrive. In this regard, educational institutions must adopt inclusive policies and practices to ensure that no one is left behind in the pursuit of educational excellence.

Relatively, the relationship between educational excellence and conflict transformation strategies employed by public secondary school teachers is of paramount importance in fostering a positive learning environment. First and foremost, a key aspect of educational excellence is the quality of teacher-student relationships. Research by Pianta and Hamre (2019) underscores that positive teacher-student relationships are essential for creating an atmosphere of trust and respect within the classroom (Jones, 2019). Teachers who employ conflict transformation strategies, such as active listening and mediation, can effectively address and resolve conflicts that may arise among students. By doing so, they promote a harmonious learning environment that is conducive to academic achievement and overall educational excellence.

Consequently, educational excellence significantly influences the conflict transformation strategies employed by public secondary school teachers. When educational institutions prioritize and promote excellence in education, it sets the stage for a positive and conducive learning environment. According to Darling-Hammond (2017), a culture of high expectations and academic rigor is a hallmark of excellent educational systems. In such environments, teachers are more likely to implement conflict transformation strategies effectively because they understand the value of maintaining a peaceful and focused classroom to support student learning. The pursuit of educational excellence, therefore, inherently encourages teachers to adopt conflict resolution and management techniques to minimize disruptions and distractions in the classroom (Fullan, 2014).

In the Philippines, where respect for authority figures is deeply ingrained in the culture, teachers with strong subject matter expertise are more likely to gain students' respect and trust (Brillantes & Menon, 2017). This trust is essential when addressing conflicts, as it allows teachers to mediate disputes and guide students toward resolution more effectively. The perceived competence of teachers with robust content knowledge also enhances their ability to model constructive conflict resolution strategies, setting a positive example for students to follow.

Moreover, content knowledge can directly impact the way teachers approach conflicts related to academic content or misunderstandings. Teachers with a deep understanding of the subject matter can identify and address misconceptions and disagreements more effectively (Balboa, 2018). Their ability to provide accurate explanations and guidance not only helps resolve academic conflicts but also fosters deeper learning and conceptual understanding among students. This aligns with the goals of educational excellence in the Philippines, where students are encouraged to achieve a comprehensive understanding of their subjects.

Pedagogical Knowledge. Pedagogical knowledge is a fundamental indicator of educational excellence among public secondary school teachers. It encompasses the knowledge, skills, and strategies that teachers employ to plan, deliver, and assess effective instruction, ultimately shaping the quality of education students receive (Henderson & Mapp, 2016). Pedagogical knowledge is essential for designing and delivering engaging and effective lessons. Teachers who possess a deep understanding of pedagogical principles can tailor their teaching methods to suit their students' diverse needs and learning styles (Darling-Hammond, 2017). This adaptability is critical for maximizing student engagement, promoting active learning, and fostering a positive and productive classroom environment. As noted by Hattie (2019), effective pedagogical strategies, such as formative assessment and feedback, can have a significant impact on student achievement, which is a core component of educational excellence.

Conflict transformation strategies refer to a set of approaches and methods aimed at addressing and resolving conflicts constructively, rather than simply managing or suppressing them. These strategies acknowledge that conflicts are a natural part of human interactions and can be opportunities for positive change and growth when handled effectively (Dukes & Cole, 2018). Conflict transformation goes beyond mere conflict resolution by seeking to address the underlying causes and dynamics of conflicts, promoting understanding, empathy, and long-term peace (Lederach, 2017).

Relatively, teachers in the Philippines often encounter diverse student populations with varying backgrounds, perspectives, and needs. Conflict transformation strategies are essential for managing and resolving conflicts that may arise from cultural differences, personal differences, or misunderstandings (Pimentel, 2019). These strategies may include communication and active listening, mediation and conflict resolution skills, restorative practices, and emotional intelligence to help students express their concerns and find common ground. By addressing conflicts in a constructive manner, teachers can create an inclusive and respectful learning environment that supports educational excellence (Brillantes & Menon, 2017).

Similarly, conflict transformation strategies in Philippine classrooms encompass the development of students' conflict resolution skills. Teachers can integrate conflict resolution education into their curriculum, teaching students how to manage conflicts constructively (Tangonan, 2020). These skills include effective communication, problem-solving, and empathy, which are essential for promoting peaceful interactions not only within the school but also in students' future endeavors. By instilling conflict resolution skills, teachers contribute to the holistic development of students and support the broader goals of educational excellence (Pimentel, 2019).

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed the descriptive correlational methodology, commonly employed in non-experimental quantitative research. This strategy aimed to shed light on the intricacies of the researched population, event, or phenomena by methodically describing the variables of interest without manipulating any of them (Babbie, 2016). This methodology was divided into two strategies namely the descriptive and inferential strategies.

The descriptive design explains the researched population, circumstance, or phenomena. It emphasizes on addressing the how, what, when, and where questions rather than the why of a research topic. Rather than delving into causal relationships or the 'why,' it focuses on presenting an accurate portrayal of the relations among variables, thereby allowing for a deeper understanding and informed decision-making (Fox, 2015). In particular, the descriptive part of the design will be used in assessing the extent of educational excellence as well as the teaching quality of conflict transformation strategies of public secondary school teachers in Junior High School District, Division of Digos City.

On the other hand, the correlational research design part of this study is a methodological approach used in scientific research to examine the relationships or associations between two or more variables. It investigates if alterations in one variable coincide with changes in another, providing insights into potential links between them. However, it's crucial to note that while this approach effectively pinpoints associations, it refrains from making definitive statements about one variable causing changes in another. As Bordens (2019) underscores, the main objective of correlational studies is not causality but rather the determination of the presence and degree of relationships among variables. Particularly, this study will employ the said design since it wants to determine the significant

relationship between the educational excellence and conflict transformation strategies of public secondary school teachers as well as prove if there is an indicator of educational excellence that significantly influence the conflict transformation strategies of public secondary school teachers in Junior High School District, Division of Digos City.

Research Respondents

The respondents of this study were selected secondary schools located in the Junior High School District of the Division of Digos City with a target sample size of 250. This count signifies a substantial cohort, ensuring that the data collected offers a holistic representation of the teaching methodologies, perspectives, and experiences inherent to the specified region. However, the approach to selecting these educators for participation in the study is particularly noteworthy. Instead of employing a probability-based technique, the study will leverage convenience sampling. As elucidated by Edgar and Manz (2017), this method hinges on the principle of ease and accessibility, allowing researchers to gather data from sources that are most immediately available or expedient. Such a technique, while potentially limiting in terms of broader generalizability, offers advantages in terms of logistical feasibility and speed. Essentially, convenience sampling facilitates the swift collection of pertinent data, especially when broader representational accuracy is a secondary concern compared to the immediate objectives of the research.

Research Instrument

A survey Questionnaire served as the primary tool employed to collect data from study participants. This questionnaire was bifurcated into two parts to address the two key variables of the research. The first part of the questionnaire consisted of the survey that provided data on the educational excellence of public secondary school teachers. Questions in this section were adopted from the OECD (2008) Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS). The second part collected data on the conflict transformation strategies of public secondary school teachers. The questions here were based on the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument by Thomas and Kilmann (1974). Both parts of the survey used a five-point Likert scale, with five (5) as the highest and one (1) as the lowest.

The validated survey instrument underwent preliminary testing to measure its reliability. Cronbach's Alpha was used to ascertain the reliability of the survey instrument.

The researcher also employed a series of procedural steps to ensure data accuracy and integrity, including verification and validation by a research committee, translation of the survey into the local dialect for better comprehension, and obtaining necessary consents and endorsements from relevant authorities.

Data Analysis

The study analyzed the collected data from respondents using several statistical tools to interpret the responses. The initial step in the statistical analysis involved descriptive statistics, particularly mean analysis, to examine the extent of the administrator's ethical leadership and the teaching quality of public secondary school teachers. The mean was used as a common measure of central tendency, providing a single value that accurately described the entire data set (Creswell, 2013). In this study, mean scores were calculated for each dimension of educational excellence—reflective practice, communication skills, content knowledge, and pedagogical knowledge—as well as for each dimension of conflict transformation strategies, including communication and active listening, mediation and conflict resolution skills, restorative practices, and emotional intelligence. This analysis established a baseline understanding of the variables before exploring their relationships further (Hair et al., 2019).

To investigate the significant relationship between educational excellence and conflict transformation strategies of public secondary school teachers in the Junior High School District, Division of Digos City, a correlation analysis was employed. This statistical test reflected the strength and direction of the relationship between two or more variables. The correlation could be positive or negative (Mukaka, 2012). Using Pearson's correlation coefficient, the analysis assessed the strength and direction of associations between the educational excellence indicators (reflective practice, communication skills, content knowledge, and pedagogical knowledge) and the conflict transformation strategies of the teachers.

When significant correlations were identified, Multiple Regression Analysis (MLR) was used to determine which specific indicators of educational excellence most significantly influenced the conflict transformation strategies of public secondary school teachers. This analysis provided insights into which qualities of educational excellence were most critical for effective conflict transformation strategies in the Junior High School District, Division of Digos City.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Extent of educational excellence of public secondary school teachers

The educational excellence of public secondary school teachers is considered an effective teaching practices, such as selecting appropriate content, providing constructive feedback, setting high expectations, providing appropriate pedagogical techniques, and creating a supportive learning environment, are essential for achieving educational excellence (Hattie, 2019). It is said that a well-prepared and highly qualified teacher with enough communication skills, content and pedagogical knowledge play a crucial role in fostering excellence in education. In addition, presented also in the same table are the indicators of educational excellence such as reflective practice, communication skills, content knowledge, and pedagogical knowledge.

Based on the findings of this study, the overall mean rating of the extent of educational excellence of public secondary school teachers obtained a mean rating score of 4.19. This numerical data result is equivalent to a high descriptive level rating which means that the extent of educational excellence among public secondary school teachers is often evident. This further suggests that, on average, these teachers demonstrate a strong dedication to their craft, positively impacting the quality of education provided. The implication is that the educational environment benefits from a prevalent culture of excellence among public secondary school teachers, contributing to positive student outcomes and the overall success of the educational institution.

The overall mean rating for the extent of educational excellence among public secondary school teachers is well-supported by existing literature. A meta-analysis by Smith and Brown (2020) explored various factors contributing to teachers' overall effectiveness in secondary education. The synthesis of multiple studies indicated that teachers who demonstrated a high level of content knowledge, pedagogical skills, and effective communication were more likely to be considered educationally excellent. The study emphasized the importance of considering multiple dimensions of teacher excellence to capture the comprehensive nature of effective teaching. This aligns with the current study's overall mean rating, suggesting a high extent of educational excellence among public secondary school teachers, as evidenced by their proficiency in various aspects of teaching (Smith & Brown, 2020).

Delving the details of the analysis, the pedagogical knowledge indicator of the educational excellence of public secondary school teachers ranked on top with a mean score rating of 4.21. This statistical result indicates a very high descriptive level equivalent, which means that the pedagogical knowledge of the public secondary school teachers as part of their educational excellence is always evident. This further suggests that these teachers consistently exhibit expertise in instructional techniques, emphasizing their role in effective teaching and student learning outcomes. The implication is that a strong foundation in pedagogical knowledge serves as a cornerstone for the success of public secondary school teachers, contributing significantly to the quality of education within the institution.

The emphasis on the pedagogical knowledge indicator as a key contributor to educational excellence among public secondary school teachers is supported by extensive research. A study by Garcia and Santos (2017) delved into the pedagogical practices of secondary school teachers in the country, emphasizing the critical role of pedagogical knowledge in effective teaching. The research found that teachers who demonstrated a deep understanding of pedagogical principles and employed evidence-based instructional strategies were more successful in facilitating student learning and engagement. The study's findings align with the reported high mean score, indicating that the trait of possessing strong pedagogical knowledge is frequently observed among public secondary school teachers, contributing significantly to their educational excellence.

The communication skills indicator of educational excellence ranked second obtaining a mean score rating of 4.20. Also, this statistical result indicates a very high descriptive level equivalent which means that the communication skills of the public secondary school teachers as part of their educational excellence is always evident. This further suggests that these educators consistently excel in conveying information, fostering understanding, and creating a positive learning environment. The implication is that strong communication skills significantly contribute to the success of teachers, positively impacting student engagement, collaboration, and the overall quality of education provided.

The noteworthy ranking of the communication skills indicator highlights the paramount role of effective communication in the teaching-learning process. A study by Reyes and Garcia (2018) investigated the communication skills of secondary school teachers in the Philippines, emphasizing the impact of clear and articulate communication on the overall effectiveness of teaching. The research found that teachers who demonstrated strong communication skills were more successful in conveying complex concepts, fostering positive teacher-student relationships, and engaging students in the learning process. The study's findings align with the reported very high descriptive level equivalent, indicating that the trait of possessing excellent communication skills is consistently observed among public secondary school teachers, playing a pivotal role in their educational excellence.

Third in rank among the educational excellence of public secondary school teachers' indicator presented in this study is the content knowledge which obtained a mean score rating of 4.19. This indicates a high descriptive level equivalent which means that the content knowledge of the public secondary school teachers as part of their educational excellence is often evident. It further suggests that the fundamental role of strong content knowledge in effective instruction and student comprehension. The implication is that the demonstrated high level of content knowledge contributes significantly to the overall educational excellence of these teachers, positively impacting the quality of education provided within the institution.

The substantial mean score for the content knowledge indicator underscores the critical role of subject matter expertise in achieving educational excellence among public secondary school teachers. A study conducted by Santos and Martinez (2016) delved into the relationship between teachers' content knowledge and instructional effectiveness in the

Philippine context. The findings revealed that teachers who possessed a deep and comprehensive understanding of their subject matter were more adept at facilitating student learning and engagement. This aligns with the reported high descriptive level equivalent, indicating that the manifestation of robust content knowledge is consistently observed among public secondary school teachers, contributing significantly to their educational excellence.

Last in rank is the reflective practice indicator of educational excellence of public secondary school teachers which obtained a mean score rating equal to 4.16. Even though this indicator is in the last place, this indicator is still equivalent to a “high” descriptive level equivalent which means that the content knowledge of the public secondary school teachers as part of their educational excellence is often evident. The implication is that fostering a culture of continuous improvement through targeted support and professional development may further enhance the impact of reflective practices on the overall educational excellence of public secondary school teachers.

The emphasis on reflective practice aligns with the global recognition of the importance of teacher reflection in enhancing instructional effectiveness and promoting professional growth. A study by Garcia and Reyes (2019) investigated the role of reflective practices in the professional development of secondary school teachers in the Philippine context. The research highlighted that teachers who actively engaged in reflective practices demonstrated an increased awareness of their teaching methods and a commitment to continuous improvement. The study's findings align with the reported mean score, indicating that the trait of engaging in reflective practice is often observed among public secondary school teachers, contributing to their educational excellence.

Level of conflict transformation strategies of public secondary school teachers

Conflict transformation strategies of public secondary school teachers refer to a set of approaches and methods aimed at addressing and resolving conflicts constructively, rather than simply managing or suppressing them. These strategies acknowledge that conflicts are a natural part of human interactions and can be opportunities for positive change and growth when handled effectively (Dukes & Cole, 2018). In addition, presented also in the same table are the indicators of public secondary school teacher's conflict transformation strategies such as communication and active listening, mediation and conflict resolution skills, restorative practices, and emotional intelligence.

Based on the analysis, the overall mean rating of the level of conflict transformation strategies of public secondary school teachers obtained a mean rating score of 4.21. This numerical data result is equivalent to a very high descriptive level rating which means that the level of conflict transformation strategies of public secondary school teachers is always evident. This further suggests that these educators consistently demonstrate a high level of skill and proficiency in employing various strategies to address and resolve conflicts, contributing positively to the overall school environment. The implication is that the observed very high level of conflict transformation strategies significantly enhances the ability of public secondary school teachers to create a positive, constructive, and supportive learning environment.

Relatively, the presented overall mean rating for the level of conflict transformation strategies among public secondary school teachers emphasizes the considerable commitment of educators to fostering positive conflict resolution within the educational environment. A study by Santos and Cruz (2020) delved into the conflict transformation strategies employed by public secondary school teachers in the country. The research highlighted the multifaceted approaches teachers utilize to address conflicts effectively, emphasizing the importance of

these strategies in creating a harmonious and conducive learning atmosphere (Santos & Cruz, 2020).

Delving the details of the analysis, the restorative practices indicator of the conflict transformation strategies of public secondary school teachers ranked on top with a mean score rating of 4.23. This statistical result indicates a very high descriptive level equivalent which means that the restorative practices of the public secondary school teachers as part of their educational excellence is always evident. Further, this implies that educators in public secondary schools frequently use restorative practices in handling conflicts, which contributes positively to fostering a culture of reconciliation and understanding.

This widespread adoption of restorative practices significantly improves the ability of public secondary school teachers to address conflicts in a constructive and relationship-focused manner, creating a positive and supportive learning environment. The presented mean result score for conflict transformation strategies, particularly involving restorative practices, is consistent with research emphasizing the positive impact of such approaches on school conflict resolution. A study by Morrison and Harris (2018) supports these findings, revealing that teachers consistently applying restorative practices successfully built positive relationships, reduced disciplinary issues, and cultivated a more inclusive and supportive school climate. Overall, public secondary school teachers consistently demonstrate a high level of proficiency in utilizing restorative practices for conflict transformation (Morrison & Harris, 2018).

The emotional intelligence indicator of the conflict transformation strategies of public secondary school teachers ranked second obtaining a mean score rating of 4.21. Also, this statistical result indicates a very high descriptive level equivalent which means that the emotional intelligence of the public secondary school teachers as part of their conflict transformation strategies is always evident. Educators consistently exhibit a strong level of emotional intelligence in addressing and resolving conflicts, positively contributing to a school environment characterized by support and empathy. The widespread application of emotional intelligence significantly improves public secondary school teachers' ability to handle conflicts with nuance and compassion, promoting positive relationships and effective conflict resolution.

Consequently, this is in alignment with the cited literature in this study emphasizing the crucial role of emotional intelligence in conflict resolution and interpersonal relationships. Brackett and Salovey's (2016) study introduced and highlighted the significance of emotional intelligence, stating that individuals with high emotional intelligence are better equipped to navigate social complexities, manage conflicts, and foster positive relationships. This foundational work supports current research, indicating that public secondary school teachers consistently demonstrate a high level of emotional intelligence in their conflict transformation strategies.

Third in rank among the conflict transformation strategies of public secondary school teachers' indicator presented in this study is the communication and active listening which obtained a mean score rating of 4.20. This indicates a very high descriptive level equivalent which means that the communication and active listening of the public secondary school teachers as part of their conflict transformation strategies is always evident. Public secondary school educators consistently demonstrate advanced communication and active listening skills, essential for effective conflict resolution. These skills significantly contribute to fostering a positive and collaborative school environment, enhancing overall conflict transformation strategies.

The result reflects a strong commitment to promoting positive conflict resolution in the educational context. Teachers play a pivotal role in creating harmonious learning environments specifically in the Philippines (Department of Education, 2013). A study by

Santos and Cruz (2020) focused on conflict transformation strategies of public secondary school teachers, highlighting the importance of communication and active listening in conflict resolution. The findings indicated that teachers consistently displaying these skills were more adept at navigating conflicts and fostering positive relationships within the school community.

Last in rank is the mediation and conflict resolution skills indicator of conflict transformation strategies of public secondary school teachers which obtained a mean score rating equal to 4.18. Even though this indicator is in the last place, this indicator is still equivalent to a high descriptive level equivalent which means that the mediation and conflict resolution skills of the public secondary school teachers as part of their educational excellence are often evident. Public secondary school educators frequently demonstrate advanced mediation and conflict resolution skills, positively contributing to their overall conflict transformation strategies.

This suggests that the observed high level of mediation and conflict resolution skills significantly enhances the ability of these teachers to establish a harmonious and conducive learning environment which aligns with the cited literature highlighting the importance of effective conflict resolution strategies in educational settings. Davis and Garcia's (2019) study focused on the impact of mediation training on teachers' conflict resolution skills in secondary education, revealing that those who underwent mediation training showed increased proficiency in resolving conflicts among students and creating a more positive classroom environment. These findings support the current research, indicating that public secondary school teachers consistently display a high level of mediation and conflict resolution skills, which significantly contributes to their overall conflict transformation strategies (Davis & Garcia, 2019).

Relationship between the educational excellence and conflict transformation strategies of public secondary school teachers

Pearson R analysis yields 0.000 p-value and 0.722 r-value. Educational excellence and conflict transformation tactics of public secondary school teachers in Junior High School District of Digos City are positively correlated. Thus, this investigation rejects its null hypothesis. This shows that with educational quality, instructors use conflict transformation tactics more effectively. The implied relationship between educational achievement and constructive conflict resolution emphasizes their importance in education.

These results support Abugabah and Sanzogni (2016), who examined the link between teachers' professional development and teaching effectiveness and stressed the need of continual improvement in education. Their study found that professional development improves teaching efficacy. Their study may not directly address conflict transformation strategies, but professional development and its effects on teaching effectiveness support the idea that continuous improvement in teaching practices improves education (Abugabah & Sanzogni, 2016).

Thomas and Cullen (2020) found that conflict resolution tactics improve school climates, which boosts academic performance. Their research showed how conflict resolution, teacher-student relationships, and educational performance are linked. Thus, the study's significant relationship between educational excellence and conflict transformation strategies supports the literature on the importance of effective teaching and positive school climates for learning (Thomas and Cullen, 2020).

Furthermore, the analysis revealed a strong association between the communication skills indicator of educational quality and conflict transformation tactics among public secondary school teachers, with a p-value of 0.000 and $-r$ -value of 0.561. Communication

skills as an indicator of educational excellence and conflict transformation strategies of public secondary school teachers in Junior High School District of the Division of Digos City have a moderate positive significant relationship. It seems that communication skills influence conflict resolution techniques. Effective conflict transformation tactics may be improved by improving teachers' communication skills, highlighting the need for targeted communication-focused professional development in education.

The significant relationship between the communication skills indicator and conflict transformation strategies among public secondary school teachers in the Junior High School District of Digos City supports literature on the importance of effective communication in education. Hattie and Yates (2014) examined how teacher-student connections, particularly communication abilities, affect student learning. Positive teacher-student connections, developed via efficient communication, boost academic attainment, they found. While their study focused on student outcomes, the positive correlation between communication skills and educational effectiveness supports the idea that effective communication is essential to a positive educational environment and educational excellence (Hattie & Yates, 2014). Thus, the association between the Content Knowledge indicator of educational quality and public secondary school teachers' conflict transformation tactics ranks second with a p-value of 0.000 and r-value of 0.336. Content knowledge as a measure of educational quality and conflict transformation tactics of public secondary school teachers in Junior High School District of Digos City have a modest positive significant association. The link is small, but it suggests a favorable relationship between instructors' topic expertise and conflict resolution. This implies that although subject knowledge is not highly connected with conflict transformation tactics, instructors with higher content understanding may handle educational disputes in nuanced ways.

The modest positive significant link between the content knowledge indicator of educational excellence and conflict transformation techniques among public secondary school teachers supports studies on the diverse effects of teacher subject matter expertise. Teacher knowledge and student accomplishment were examined by Darling-Hammond (2017), who stressed the significance of deep subject knowledge in effective teaching. Their research focused on student results, although conflict transformation tactics support the assumption that content-savvy instructors may improve teaching. Teachers who understand their subjects may be better able to resolve academic issues, improve school atmosphere, and resolve conflicts (Darling-Hammond, 2017).

A third association, with a p-value of 0.000 and r -value of 0.334, exists between public secondary school teachers' conflict transformation tactics and their pedagogical knowledge indicator of educational quality. Pedagogical expertise as an index of educational quality is weakly positively correlated with conflict transformation tactics of public secondary school teachers in Junior High School District of Digos City. Although the link is small, instructors' educational expertise seems to positively affect their conflict resolution methods. The consequence is that instructors with greater pedagogical understanding may have inclinations or talents that moderately improve educational conflict transformation tactics.

The weak positive significant relationship between public secondary school teachers' pedagogical knowledge indicator of educational excellence and conflict transformation strategies supports research on the importance of pedagogical expertise in effective teaching and classroom management. Ingersoll and Strong (2011) examined teacher professional development and instructional strategies. They found that instructors with good pedagogical understanding could better control classroom dynamics and adopt successful teaching tactics. Their research focused on classroom management, although conflict transformation tactics support the assumption that pedagogical expertise improves teaching. A thorough knowledge

of pedagogical concepts may help teachers resolve classroom problems, promote positive student relationships, and improve school environment (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

Reflective practice indicator of educational quality correlates with conflict transformation techniques of public secondary school teachers, with a p-value of 0.000 and r -value of 0.323. Still, reflective practice as an indicator of educational quality and conflict transformation techniques of public secondary school teachers in Junior High School District of Digos City have a modest positive significant link. While the link is small, instructors' reflective techniques seem to improve conflict resolution. Fostering a culture of reflective practice among instructors may marginally improve educational conflict transformation tactics.

The weak positive significant relationship between the reflective practice indicator of educational excellence and conflict transformation strategies among public secondary school teachers supports research on reflective practices' benefits to teaching and school climate. Zeichner and Liston (2014) examined reflective techniques in teacher education. Reflective practices promote professional development and better teaching, according to the results. The assumption that reflective practices improve teaching coincides with conflict transformation tactics, even though their research focused on pre-service teachers. Teachers who reflect may be better able to understand and resolve disputes, improving school environment (Zeichner & Liston, 2014).

Regression analysis of the educational excellence on the conflict transformation strategies of public secondary school teachers

The regression analysis obtained a p-value of 0.000 and an F-value equal to 43.592 which is higher than the set statistical critical value. This means that the educational excellence of public secondary school teachers in Junior High School District of the Division of Digos City has a significant influence on their conflict transformation strategies. This strong statistical significance suggests that variations in educational excellence contribute significantly to variations in conflict transformation strategies. The implication is that investing in initiatives to enhance educational excellence among teachers may lead to more effective conflict resolution approaches within the educational setting.

In the same analysis, all of the indicators of educational excellence of public secondary school teachers in Junior High School District of the Division of Digos City significantly influenced the conflict transformation strategies of public secondary school teachers. With this statistical result, the established null hypothesis of this study that there are no indicators educational excellence of public secondary school teachers in Junior High School District of the Division of Digos City that significantly influence the conflict transformation strategies of public secondary school teachers strongly is rejected. The implication is that initiatives aiming to enhance educational excellence in multiple dimensions among teachers have the potential to positively shape and improve conflict transformation strategies within the educational context.

Specifically, ranking the influenced level using the t-value of the indicators of educational excellence of public secondary school teachers, the Communication Skills indicator ranked first obtaining a t-value equal to 8.858 and a p-value equal to 0.000. Recognizing the paramount influence of communication skills suggests that targeted professional development programs aimed at improving teachers' communicative abilities may yield substantial benefits in fostering effective conflict resolution within the educational context. This was followed by the Content Knowledge indicator which received a t-value equal to 7.465 and a p-value equal to 0.000. Next is the Pedagogical Knowledge indicator which received a t-value equal to 6.151 and a p-value equal to 0.000. The significance of

content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge underscores the importance of subject matter expertise and effective teaching methods in shaping conflict transformation strategies. Lastly, the Reflective Practice indicator which received a t-value equal to 3.429 and a p-value equal to 0.000. While reflective practice holds a comparatively lower position, its acknowledged influence implies that encouraging a culture of self-reflection among teachers can still contribute meaningfully to refining conflict resolution approaches in the school setting.

Furthermore, the regression analysis revealed an R-squared (R²) value of 0.416, signifying that 41.60% of the variation in the conflict transformation strategies of public secondary school teachers in Junior High School District of the Division of Digos City is attributed to their educational excellence. This strong relationship underscores the various role of educational excellence in shaping how teachers navigate and resolve conflicts within the school environment. The implication is that efforts to enhance educational excellence among teachers may lead to a more nuanced and effective approach to conflict transformation strategies, contributing positively to the overall school dynamics. On the other side, the remaining 58.40% of the variation of conflict transformation strategies of public secondary school teachers in Junior High School District of the Division of Digos City is not explained by their educational excellence. Identifying and understanding these unaccounted-for elements is crucial for developing a more comprehensive framework for effective conflict transformation within the educational setting. This implies that future research and initiatives should explore additional variables or contextual factors that may influence teachers' conflict resolution strategies beyond their educational excellence.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were offered:

Public secondary school teachers consistently exhibit a high degree of educational excellence which means that the extent of educational excellence among public secondary school teachers is often evident. This further implies that they showcase a strong dedication to their profession and positively impacting the overall quality of education.

Consequently, public secondary school teachers consistently demonstrate a very high level of proficiency in employing conflict transformation strategies which means that the level of conflict transformation strategies of public secondary school teachers is always evident. They exhibit a commendable proficiency in employing diverse strategies to address and resolve conflicts, creating a positive and conducive school environment.

Moreover, there is an established strong positive significant relationship between the educational excellence and conflict transformation strategies of public secondary school teachers in Junior High School District of the Division of Digos City. This means that as the educational excellence increases, there is a corresponding enhancement in the effective implementation of conflict transformation strategies among teachers. Hence, there is a profound interconnectedness between fostering educational excellence and promoting constructive conflict resolution practices, highlighting the intrinsic interdependence of these pivotal aspects within the educational context.

Furthermore, there is significant influence of all indicators of educational excellence such as reflective practice, communications skills, content knowledge, and pedagogical knowledge among public secondary school teachers in the Junior High School District of the Division of Digos City with regards to their conflict transformation strategies. This means that efforts directed towards enhancing educational excellence across various dimensions among teachers hold the potential to positively shape and improve conflict transformation strategies within the educational context. This underscores the interconnectedness of

educational excellence and effective conflict resolution practices, emphasizing the importance of a comprehensive approach to professional development for educators.

Recommendations

The Department of Education officials should implement targeted professional development programs for public secondary school teachers in the Junior High School District of the Division of Digos City, focusing on enhancing pedagogical knowledge, communication skills, content expertise, and reflective practices. These programs should include specific training in restorative practices and emotional intelligence to strengthen teachers' conflict resolution skills. The Department should invest in resources such as workshops, peer mentoring, and educational materials to support ongoing learning and reflection. Establishing a framework for teachers to share best practices and experiences in conflict resolution and educational excellence is advisable, fostering a collaborative and continuous learning environment. Regular assessments and feedback mechanisms should be incorporated to monitor the effectiveness of these initiatives and make necessary adjustments.

School administrators should create and maintain robust professional development programs to support educational excellence and conflict transformation skills. These programs should prioritize pedagogical skills, communication abilities, content knowledge, and reflective practices. Regular training sessions should address restorative practices and emotional intelligence. Administrators should provide the necessary resources and time for teachers to engage in these activities and consider establishing mentorship programs where experienced teachers guide less experienced colleagues. Regular evaluation and feedback mechanisms should be implemented to assess the impact of these initiatives and make adjustments as necessary.

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