

Role of Educational Leaders in Implementing Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the role of educational leaders in implementing culturally responsive teaching practices in Mercedes District, Division of Camarines Norte. Employing a quantitative method using descriptive-correlational research design, 15 school heads, 17 master teachers, and 80 teachers participated through a validated and reliable researcher-made instrument, showing internal consistency among the indicators in the research instrument. Utilizing Microsoft Excel and IBM SPSS Version 20 in data analysis, various statistical tools such as Frequency Count and Percentage, Weighted Mean, and Somer's Delta Contingency Coefficient were used. Results revealed that most respondents were middle-aged female teachers with master's units, over 22 years of service, and limited CRT training experience. Professional development, collaboration, and pedagogy were only occasionally practiced, with diversity materials most implemented and inclusive training least. Age and service length affected professional development, while education and position influenced all CRT roles; training attendance impacted development and collaboration, and sex had no effect. Budget limitations, lack of culturally relevant materials, and heavy workloads were the main challenges in professional development, collaboration, and pedagogy, respectively. Based on these findings, LAC Sessions entitled "*Empowering Teachers for Inclusive Education: Learning Action Cell on Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) Practices*" was proposed to improve teachers' professional competence and instructional strategies in CRT.

Keywords: Culturally responsive teaching practices, professional development, fostering collaboration, and teaching pedagogy.

INTRODUCTION

Globalization and increasing cultural diversity have significantly transformed modern education, compelling teachers to adopt Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) to meet the diverse needs of learners (Özüdoğru, 2018; Bennett, 2023). Globally, countries with diverse student populations have integrated CRT based policies to enhance equity and inclusion in classrooms (Ahrens et al., 2020). In the Philippines, initiatives such as the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) and policies like DepEd Orders No. 43, s. 2013 and No. 32, s. 2015 demonstrate a strong national commitment to inclusivity by embedding cultural responsiveness into the curriculum. However, despite these policies, the research gap lies in the limited understanding of how educational leaders sustain CRT implementation, particularly in developing contexts like the Mercedes District. This study thus seeks to explore how school leaders' professional development initiatives, collaborative practices, and pedagogical support influence the adoption and continuity of CRT in schools. By addressing this gap, the research aims to contribute to leadership training and policy enhancement toward a more equitable and culturally attuned educational system.

This study aimed to determine the role of educational leaders in implementing culturally responsive teaching practices in Mercedes District, Division of Camarines Norte. It answered the following questions: 1) What is the profile of the respondents along with their age, sex, educational attainment, length of service, position held, and number of trainings attended on culturally responsive teaching strategies? 2) What are the roles of educational leaders in implementing culturally responsive teaching practices along with implementing professional development, fostering collaboration, and teaching pedagogy? 3) Is there a significant relationship between the respondent's profile and their roles in implementing culturally responsive teaching practices? 4) What are the

challenges encountered by education leaders in implementing culturally responsive teaching practices along aforementioned areas? 5) What intervention may be proposed to enhance measures in implementing culturally responsive teaching practices?

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative method using descriptive-correlational research design. The respondents were 15 school heads, 17 master teachers, and 80 teachers from the public elementary schools in Mercedes District, Division of Camarines Norte, during SY 2024-2025. Total enumeration was used to ensure comprehensive representation.

A researcher-made questionnaire served as the primary data-gathering tool. It consisted of three parts: (1) profile of the respondents (age, sex, educational attainment, length of service, position held, and number of training attended on CRT), (2) roles of educational leaders in implementing CRT (implementing professional development, fostering collaboration, and teaching pedagogy), and (3) challenges encountered in implementing CRT (implementing professional development, fostering collaboration, and teaching pedagogy). The instrument underwent expert validation and pilot testing. Reliability analysis yielded Cronbach's alpha values above .827 across all parts, indicating internal consistency.

Data gathering followed ethical standards, with permissions secured from the Division Office and schools. Respondents were assured of confidentiality and voluntary participation. Data were processed using IBM SPSS Version 20. Frequency Count and Percentage quantified the profile of the respondents, Weighted mean described the roles of educational leaders in implementing CRT and the challenges they encountered, while Somer's Delta Contingency Coefficient tested significant relationships between profile of the respondents and their roles in implementing culturally responsive teaching practices.

RESULTS

Role Of Educational Leaders in Implementing Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices

This section interprets data on the role of educational leaders in implementing culturally responsive teaching (CRT). It discusses respondents' profiles, their roles in promoting CRT, the relationship between their profiles and these roles, challenges faced in implementing CRT, and proposed interventions to strengthen inclusive teaching practices in Mercedes District schools.

Profile of the Respondents.

This section presents the profile of the respondents in terms of their age, sex, educational attainment, length of service, position held, and number of training attended on culturally responsive teaching strategies to understand the demographic and professional characteristics that may influence their roles in implementing culturally responsive teaching.

Age. This section presents the profile of the respondents in terms of their age to provide an understanding of the demographic distribution of educators involved in implementing culturally responsive teaching practices.

Table 1 shows that the highest number of respondents belongs to the age group 41-50, representing 43.75%, while the lowest percentage is from the age group 30 and below, equivalent to 9.82%.

Table 1 Profile of the Respondents as to Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
30 and below	11	9.82

31-40	27	24.11
41-50	49	43.75
51-60	25	22.32
Total	112	100.00

The data indicated that a majority of educators in Mercedes District were within the mid-career age bracket, suggesting a workforce that had already acquired substantial teaching and leadership experience. This finding suggests that most educators implementing culturally responsive teaching practices in Mercedes District were in their peak professional years, possibly combining practical experience with openness to new pedagogical approaches, while the smaller number of young leaders indicates limited representation of early-career perspectives.

Sex. This section presents the profile of the respondents in terms of their sex to describe the sex distribution of educators involved in implementing culturally responsive teaching practices.

Table 2 shows that the majority of the respondents were female, representing 80.36% of the respondents, while males accounted for 19.64%.

Table 2 Profile of the Respondents as to Sex

Sex	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	22	19.64
Female	90	80.36
Total	112	100.00

The data revealed a significant gender disparity among educators in Mercedes District, indicating that females predominantly hold leadership roles in the schools surveyed. This finding suggests that culturally responsive teaching practices in the district are primarily managed and influenced by female educators since the teaching profession is generally a female-dominated industry.

Educational Attainment. This section presents the profile of the respondents in terms of their educational attainment to understand their academic qualifications as educators implementing CRT practices.

Table 3 shows that the highest percentage of respondents were those with units in a master's program, representing 54.46% of the respondents, while the lowest were doctorate graduates, equivalent to 0.89%. The overall educational attainment indicates that most respondents have pursued graduate studies.

Table 3 Profile of the Respondents as to Educational Attainment

Educational Attainment	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Doctorate Degree Graduate	1	0.89

With Units in Doctorate Program	5	4.46
Masters Degree Graduate	13	11.61
With Units in Masters Program	61	54.46
Baccalaureate Degree	32	28.57
Total	112	100.00

The data revealed that a large portion of the educators in Mercedes District are academically advancing through graduate programs, suggesting a strong inclination toward continuous professional and academic development among respondents. This was made possible since graduate studies is being offered in colleges in the province, which made it easily accessible and at a lesser cost. Although there are still some who enrolled in graduate programs in other universities within the region. This finding suggests that many educators are equipping themselves with advanced knowledge and competencies, which may enhance their capacity to implement culturally responsive teaching practices effectively, although only a few have reached the doctoral level. This is also in accordance with DepEd Order No. 42 s. 2017- Philippine Standards for Teachers (PPST), Domain 7, which emphasized teachers' responsibility for personal growth, professional reflection, and lifelong learning.

Length of Service. This section presents the profile of the respondents in terms of their length of service to describe their years of experience as educators implementing culturally responsive teaching practices.

Table 4 shows that the highest percentage of respondents have served for 22 years and above, representing 24.11% of the respondents, while the lowest are those with less than a year of service, equivalent to 0.89%.

Table 4 Profile of the Respondents as to Length of Service

Number of Years	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Less than a year	1	0.89
1-3	5	4.46
4-6	14	12.50
7-9	6	5.36
10-12	9	16.96
13-15	13	11.61
16-18	15	13.39
19-21	12	10.71
22 years and above	27	24.11
Total	112	100.00

The data revealed that most educators in the Mercedes District have long years of service, indicating a workforce with extensive professional experience and institutional knowledge. This finding suggests that culturally

responsive teaching practices in the district are implemented. This is also in compliance with the PPST Strand 3.5, mandating all teachers to demonstrate knowledge of teaching strategies that are inclusive of learners from indigenous groups and adapt culturally appropriate teaching strategies and develop comprehensive skills in delivering them. They usually use instructional materials during class discussion to familiarize students with different types of culture and learn to appreciate them.

Position Held. This section presents the profile of the respondents in terms culturally responsive teaching practices.

Table 5 shows that the highest percentage of respondents are teachers, representing 71.43% of the respondents, while the lowest are school heads, equivalent to 13.39%.

Table 5 Profile of the Respondents as to Position Held

Position	Frequency	Percentage (%)
School Head	15	13.39
Master Teacher	17	15.18
Teacher	80	71.43
Total	112	100.00

The data revealed that the majority of respondents are teachers, suggesting that while school heads and master teachers hold designated leadership positions, and focus on observation, monitoring, and coaching, teachers themselves are responsible for implementing culturally responsive teaching practices at the classroom level. Teachers usually include CRT, especially during school programs like United Nations Day, *Linggo ng Wika*, and the like, which showcase cultural awareness among learners. This finding suggests that culturally responsive teaching initiatives in Mercedes District are largely executed by teachers, supported by master teachers and school heads, highlighting the importance of teacher-led practices in achieving inclusive education goals.

Number of Training Attended on Culturally Responsive Teaching Strategies. This section presents the profile of the respondents in terms of the number of training attended on culturally responsive teaching strategies to assess their exposure to relevant professional development.

Table 6 shows that the highest percentage of respondents have attended 1–2 training, representing 46.43% of the respondents, while the lowest are those who attended 5–6 training, equivalent to 4.46%. Usually, training is done during INSET and LAC sessions attended by all teachers, but with less focus on CRT as such, 26.79% of the respondents have not attended training in this area.

Table 6 Profile of the Respondents as to Number of Training Attended

Position	Frequency	Percentage (%)
School Head	15	13.39
Master Teacher	17	15.18
Teacher	80	71.43
Total	112	100.00

The data revealed that while almost half of the respondents have some training on culturally responsive teaching strategies, a considerable portion have had none, indicating variability in their preparedness to implement CRT practices effectively. This finding suggests that despite efforts to promote culturally responsive teaching, many educators in Mercedes District have limited formal training, which may affect the quality of CRT implementation in schools. DepEd has indeed integrated culturally responsive teaching into key policies, especially those focusing on Indigenous Peoples (through DO 62, s. 2011; IPed Program), and inclusive pedagogical strategies within the MATATAG Curriculum (DO 10, s. 2024). However, training remains limited in scope and scale. Budget and operational constraints hinder broad implementation. There's no strong systemwide CRT training mandate especially for non-IPed contexts.

Roles of Educational Leaders in Implementing Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices.

This section presents the roles of educational leaders in implementing culturally responsive teaching practices along implementing professional development, fostering collaboration, and teaching pedagogy to identify their level of involvement in promoting inclusive educational practices.

Implementing Professional Development. This section presents the roles of educational leaders in implementing culturally responsive teaching practices along implementing professional development to determine how they support teachers in enhancing inclusive practices.

Table 7 shows that the overall weighted mean for implementing professional development is 2.94, interpreted as "Occasionally Implemented." The highest weighted mean is on providing materials to assist teachers in appreciating the diversity of their students, with a weighted mean of 3.31, interpreted as "Always Implemented," while the lowest is on organizing training programs that promote inclusivity and diversity in teaching, with a weighted mean of 2.51, interpreted as "Occasionally Implemented."

Table 7 Role of Leaders in Implementing Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices along Implementing Professional Development

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Ensures that professional development sessions focus on culturally responsive teaching strategies.	3.13	OI
2. Organizes training programs that promote inclusivity and diversity in teaching.	2.51	OI
3. Regularly assesses the effectiveness of cultural awareness training for teachers.	2.59	OI
4. Demonstrates passion for encouraging all teachers to implement culturally responsive strategies in their daily activities.	3.00	OI
5. Provides materials to assist teachers in appreciating the diversity of their students.	3.31	AI
6. Coordinates topics on integration and social justice as part of professional learning communities.	3.02	OI
7. Allocates time for teachers to work together to design a curriculum that is culturally relevant.	2.97	OI
8. Attends workshops that aim at enhancing people's ability to lead in a multi-culturally composed class.	3.02	OI
Overall Weighted Mean	2.94	OI

Rating Scale: Descriptive Interpretation:

3.25-4.00	-	Always Implemented (AI)
2.50-3.24	-	Occasionally Implemented (OI)
1.75-2.49	-	Seldom Implemented (SI)
1.00-1.74	-	Not Implemented (NI)

The results show that educational leaders occasionally implement culturally responsive teaching practices through professional development. It further indicates that educational leaders are proactive in providing instructional or reference materials that promote understanding of student diversity, which is consistently practiced among the respondents. This suggests that in many schools, leaders play an essential support role by supplying culturally relevant materials such as multicultural books, lesson exemplars, or visual aids used by teachers to reflect diverse cultures in the classroom. These materials help teachers integrate inclusivity into their daily lessons, even in the absence of formal training.

Fostering Collaboration. This section presents the roles of educational leaders in fostering collaboration to implement culturally responsive teaching practices by promoting teamwork and shared cultural understanding among staff.

Table 8 shows that the overall weighted mean for fostering collaboration is 2.93, interpreted as "Occasionally Implemented." The highest weighted mean is advocating teamwork among teachers in preparing lesson plans that embrace all cultures with a weighted mean of 3.08, interpreted as "Occasionally Implemented," while the lowest is seeking local experts to help the school improve on cultural diversity with a weighted mean of 2.77, also interpreted as "Occasionally Implemented."

Table 8 Role of Leaders in Implementing Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices along Fostering Collaboration

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Advocates teamwork among teachers in preparing lesson plans that embrace all cultures.	3.08	OI
2. Provides forums for the staff to express themselves on the ways they have practiced culture in their workplaces.	2.88	OI
3. Creates a safe space in which teachers can vent their frustrations concerning diversity within the classroom.	3.00	OI
4. Integrates discussions on culturally relevant teaching practices into the agenda of team meetings.	2.98	OI
5. Endorses initiatives that require departments to work together in an effective way for cultural responsiveness purposes.	2.88	OI
6. Participates in initiatives that ensure that parents and the public are supportive of the culturally relevant pedagogy.	2.97	OI
7. Engages local experts to help the school improve on the aspect of Cultural Diversity	2.77	OI
8. Facilitates peer mentoring programs focused on culturally responsive teaching.	2.90	OI
Overall Weighted Mean	2.93	OI

Rating Scale: Descriptive Interpretation:

3.25-4.00	-	Always Implemented (AI)
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2.50-3.24	-	Occasionally Implemented (OI)
1.75-2.49	-	Seldom Implemented (SI)
1.00-1.74	-	Not Implemented (NI)

The data indicates that fostering collaboration for culturally responsive teaching is occasionally implemented by educational leaders. It further shows that educational leaders encourage collaborative lesson planning that incorporates cultural perspectives, but this practice occurs only occasionally and is not yet institutionalized. In many schools, teachers work in grade-level or subject-area groups, yet collaboration for integrating cultural diversity into lessons depends largely on individual initiative. Without formal mechanisms or dedicated time, such practices may be irregular, reducing their effectiveness in building inclusive classroom experiences.

The data also show that consulting with local cultural experts is the least implemented practice among the indicators related to fostering collaboration. In actual school scenarios, this indicates missed opportunities to integrate authentic cultural knowledge and community voices into the school system. Local experts such as elders, historians, or cultural advocates can provide valuable insights that enhance both teaching content and cultural relevance. However, unavailability or minimal engagement with these stakeholders suggests a gap in external collaboration.

Teaching Pedagogy. This section presents the roles of educational leaders in implementing culturally responsive teaching practices along with teaching pedagogy to determine how they support inclusive instructional approaches.

Table 9 shows that the overall weighted mean for teaching pedagogy is 3.11, interpreted as "Occasionally Implemented." The highest weighted mean is seeking guidance on the best ways to augment techniques on culturally responsive teaching with a weighted mean of 3.22, interpreted as "Occasionally Implemented," while the lowest is guiding teachers in modifying assessments to reflect cultural diversity with a weighted mean of 2.96, also interpreted as "Occasionally Implemented."

Table 9 Role of Leaders in Implementing Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices along Teaching Pedagogy

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Encourages teachers to use teaching methods that reflect students' cultural backgrounds.	3.05	OI
2. Ensures that classroom materials represent a wide range of cultural perspectives.	3.17	OI
3. Promotes instructional strategies that adapt to the diverse learning needs of students.	3.15	OI
4. Monitors classroom practices to ensure that all students' cultural backgrounds are valued.	3.13	OI
5. Encourages the use of culturally relevant examples in lesson content.	3.13	OI
6. Guides teachers in modifying assessments to reflect cultural diversity.	2.96	OI
7. Encourages the teaching staff to make use of two or more languages in their classes.	3.08	OI
8. Seeks guidance on the best ways to augment my techniques on culturally responsive teaching.	3.22	OI
Overall Weighted Mean	3.11	OI

Rating Scale:

Descriptive Interpretation:

3.25-4.00	-	Always Implemented (AI)
2.50-3.24	-	Occasionally Implemented (OI)
1.75-2.49	-	Seldom Implemented (SI)
1.00-1.74	-	Not Implemented (NI)

The results indicate that educational leaders occasionally implement culturally responsive teaching pedagogy. It further shows that educational leaders are actively pursuing personal growth in CRT practices, reflecting a proactive attitude toward improving their pedagogical approaches. In the school context, this suggests that leaders are aware of the evolving demands of inclusive education and recognize the need to continuously improve their methods. This includes attending seminars, consulting experts, or engaging in peer dialogue. However, without institutional mechanisms to support and extend this self-initiated effort, the knowledge gained may not always translate into widespread practice among the teaching staff.

The data also revealed that modifying assessments to align with cultural diversity receives the least emphasis from educational leaders among the listed. The data also revealed that modifying assessments to align with cultural diversity pedagogical practices. In actual school scenarios, this suggests that while teaching methods incorporate cultural elements, assessments often remain standardized and culturally neutral, potentially disadvantaging students from marginalized or non-mainstream backgrounds. A lack of culturally responsive assessment practices may lead to misrepresenting students' true capabilities and understanding.

Relationship between the Respondents' Profile and their Roles in Implementing Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices

This section presented the results of the statistical analysis examining the relationship between the respondents' profile and their roles in implementing culturally responsive teaching practices to determine how demographic and professional variables influence their implementation. The Somers' Delta was employed for ordinal variables such as age, length of service, educational attainment, position held, and number of trainings attended, while the Contingency Coefficient was used for the nominal variable sex. The CRT roles investigated include implementing professional development, fostering collaboration, and teaching pedagogy.

Table 10 revealed that age is significantly associated with implementing professional development ($d = .191$, $p < .05$), indicating that older teachers are more actively involved in promoting and facilitating CRT-related learning activities.

Table 10 Test for Significant Relationship between the Respondents' Profile And their Roles in Implementing Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices

Profile	Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices					
	Implementing Professional Development		Fostering Collaboration		Teaching Pedagogy	
	Test Statistics	p-value	Test Statistics	p-value	Test Statistics	p-value
Age	.191*	.016	.083	.243	.145	.078
Sex	.215	.144	.192	.234	.193	.114

Length of Service	.197**	.002	.089	.198	.080	.263
Educational Attainment	.262**	.000	.184*	.023	.265**	.000
Position Held	.390**	.000	.290**	.002	.359**	.000
Number of Trainings Attended	.237**	.002	.164*	.042	.131	.132

**Correlation is Significant @ 0.01

*Correlation is Significant @ 0.05

In addition, length of service is significantly related to implementing professional development ($d=.197$, $p<.01$), suggesting that teachers with longer tenure are more active in professional learning initiatives that support CRT. Likewise, educational attainment shows significant relationships with all three CRT roles ($d=.262$, $p<.01$, $d=.184$, $p<.05$, $d=.265$, $p<.01$, respectively), indicating that teachers with higher academic qualifications are more engaged across all the cultural teaching practices. Moreover, position held demonstrates highly significant correlations with all roles ($d=.390$, $p<.01$, $d=.290$, $p<.01$, $d=.359$, $p<.01$), suggesting that those in leadership or higher-ranking positions take on more responsibilities in CRT implementation. Finally, the number of trainings attended is significantly related to implementing professional development ($d=.237$, $p<.01$) and fostering a collaborative culture ($d=.164$, $p<.05$).

On the other hand, the sex profile shows no statistically significant relationship with any of the CRT roles, indicating that male and female respondents participate in CRT practices at comparable levels.

Challenges Encountered by Education Leaders in Implementing Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices

This section presents the challenges encountered by educational leaders in implementing culturally responsive teaching practices along with implementing professional development, fostering collaboration, and teaching pedagogy to identify barriers that hinder effective integration of inclusive strategies in schools.

Implementing Professional Development. This section presents the challenges encountered by educational leaders in implementing culturally responsive teaching practices along implementing professional development to identify barriers affecting effective training and capacity-building. Table 11 shows that the overall weighted mean for challenges in

Table 11 Challenges Encountered in Implementing Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices along Implementing Professional Development

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. There is inadequate training in CRT, leading to uncertainty in effectively incorporating these practices into classrooms.	2.97	OE
2. Budget constraints often prevent schools from offering high-quality CRT training and hiring expert facilitators.	3.09	OE
3. Teachers have demanding schedules, making it difficult to allocate time for meaningful and ongoing CRT training without disrupting instructional time.	3.00	OE
4. Many professional development programs are one-time workshops rather than ongoing learning experiences, limiting teachers' ability to continuously refine and apply CRT practices.	3.05	OE

5. Generic professional development sessions may not address the specific cultural and contextual needs of different schools or teachers, leading to ineffective implementation of CRT strategies.	2.99	OE
Overall Weighted Mean	3.02	OE

Rating Scale: Descriptive Interpretation:

3.25-4.00	-	Always Encountered (AE)
2.50-3.24	-	Occasionally Encountered (OE)
1.75-2.49	-	Seldom Encountered (SE)
1.00-1.74	-	Not Encountered (NE)

implementing professional development is 3.02, interpreted as "Occasionally Encountered." The highest weighted mean is budget constraints preventing schools from offering high-quality CRT training, with a weighted mean of 3.09, interpreted as "Occasionally Encountered," while the lowest is inadequate training in CRT, leading to uncertainty with a weighted mean of 2.97, also interpreted as "Occasionally Encountered."

The results indicate that educational leaders occasionally encounter various challenges in delivering CRT-focused professional development. It further shows that financial limitations are the most prominent challenge faced by educational leaders in implementing quality CRT training. In practice, this scenario reflects a common situation in many public schools where even if leaders intend to initiate CRT training, insufficient funding hinders their ability to invite culturally competent speakers, conduct follow-up sessions, or provide comprehensive training materials. As a result, teachers rely on self-study or generic workshops with limited impact.

The data also indicate that a lack of sufficient CRT training is a recurring issue, though not the most critical compared to other resource-related concerns. This suggests that even when opportunities exist, the quality, frequency, or depth of CRT training might not be enough to build teachers' confidence in applying inclusive practices. In many schools, this leads to hesitation or misapplication of CRT, particularly when educators are unsure how to connect it meaningfully to their subject area or student demographics.

Fostering Collaboration. This section presents the challenges encountered by educational leaders in fostering collaboration to implement culturally responsive teaching practices, highlighting barriers to teamwork and collective cultural responsiveness.

Table 12 shows that the overall weighted mean for challenges in fostering collaboration

Challenges Encountered in Implementing Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices along Fostering Collaboration

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. There are varying beliefs and attitudes toward CRT, leading to differing levels of commitment and enthusiasm. Aligning these perspectives to work collaboratively can be challenging.	3.03	OE
2. Coordinating collaborative efforts demands additional time for meetings, planning, and reflection, which can be difficult to allocate within educators' already busy schedules.	3.14	OE

3. Limited access to culturally relevant materials and resources can hinder collaborative planning and implementation of CRT strategies.	3.17	OE
4. Existing school policies and structures may not support collaborative approaches, making it challenging to implement CRT practices collectively.	2.92	OE
5. CRT as topics is not included in collaborative trainings like LAC Session, INSET, and etc.	2.91	OE
Overall Weighted Mean	3.03	OE

Rating Scale: Descriptive Interpretation:

3.25-4.00	-	Always Encountered (AE)
2.50-3.24	-	Occasionally Encountered (OE)
1.75-2.49	-	Seldom Encountered (SE)
1.00-1.74	-	Not Encounter

is 3.03, interpreted as "Occasionally Encountered." The highest weighted mean is limited access to culturally relevant materials and resources, with a weighted mean of 3.17, interpreted as "Occasionally Encountered," while the lowest is CRT as topics not included in collaborative trainings, with a weighted mean of 2.91, also interpreted as "Occasionally Encountered."

The data showed that educational leaders sometimes face difficulties promoting collaboration on culturally responsive teaching (CRT). The main challenges include a lack of culturally relevant materials and resources to support joint planning, leading to limited and superficial collaboration. Teachers want to create inclusive lessons together but are hindered by the absence of localized content. Additionally, formal collaborative activities like LAC sessions and INSETs rarely address CRT, restricting opportunities for professional dialogue and growth in this area. Consequently, CRT remains a peripheral rather than a central focus in schools' collaborative practices.

Teaching Pedagogy. This section presents the challenges encountered by educational leaders in implementing culturally responsive teaching practices along teaching pedagogy to identify instructional barriers affecting inclusive classroom practices.

Table 13 shows that the overall weighted mean for challenges in teaching pedagogy is 3.01, interpreted as "Occasionally Encountered." The highest weighted mean is teachers managing heavy workloads making it difficult to integrate CRT practices with a weighted mean of 3.15, interpreted as "Occasionally Encountered," while the lowest is hesitation to modify

Table 13 Challenges Encountered in Implementing Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices along Teaching Pedagogy

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Hesitant to modify my teaching approaches, especially if accustomed to traditional methods, leading to resistance against adopting CRT practices.	2.84	OE
2. Measuring the impact of CRT on student learning outcomes can be difficult due to a lack of standardized assessment tools tailored to culturally responsive methodologies.	2.96	OE

3. There are challenges such as insufficient funding and a lack of culturally diverse materials, which hinder the implementation of CRT.	3.07	OE
4. In linguistically diverse classrooms, language differences can impede effective communication and the application of CRT strategies.	3.03	OE
5. Teachers already manage heavy workloads, making it difficult to integrate CRT practices.	3.15	OE
Overall Weighted Mean	3.01	OE

Rating Scale: Descriptive Interpretation:

3.25-4.00	-	Always Encountered (AE)
2.50-3.24	-	Occasionally Encountered (OE)
1.75-2.49	-	Seldom Encountered (SE)
1.00-1.74	-	Not Encountered (NE)

teaching approaches due to reliance on traditional methods with a weighted mean of 2.84, also interpreted as "Occasionally Encountered."

Proposed Intervention to Enhance the Implementation of Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices

Recent findings indicate that inadequate training on Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) remains a persistent challenge in many schools. This suggests that the quality, frequency, or scope of CRT training is insufficient to boost teachers' confidence and capability in implementing inclusive classroom practices. As a result, CRT is often misunderstood or improperly applied, particularly when teachers are unsure how to connect it with their subject matter or their students' diverse cultural backgrounds.

To address this gap, three (3) topics on Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) will be integrated into the ongoing Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions across 19 elementary schools in the Mercedes District. These sessions are specifically designed to equip school heads and teachers with essential skills and strategies to effectively implement CRT in their classrooms. The approach is practical and interactive, featuring expert-led discussions, sharing sessions with experienced school leaders, and hands-on workshops that engage participants in real-world applications of CRT.

The objectives of the CRT-focused LAC Sessions are as follows: first, to deepen the participants' understanding of CRT principles, strategies, and their impact on the teaching-learning process; second, to develop teachers' practical skills in incorporating learners' cultural backgrounds into instructional design and classroom activities; third, to collaboratively create or adapt at least one sample teaching material using local content and reflecting CRT principles; and fourth, to identify and apply simple, actionable CRT strategies that can be seamlessly integrated into daily classroom instruction.

Through these LAC Sessions, the Mercedes District aims to foster a more inclusive and culturally responsive learning environment, empowering teachers to meet the diverse needs of their students and enhance overall teaching effectiveness. To guarantee the program's effectiveness and relevance, feedback is gathered using a comprehensive Training Evaluation Form that measures different aspects, such as the clarity of objectives, quality of delivery, relevance of content, and the effectiveness of resource persons in engaging participants.

DISCUSSION

The majority of the respondents were within the age group of 41-50 years old, with 49 respondents or 43.75%, while the fewest were aged 30 and below, with 11 respondents or 9.82%. The finding that most educational leaders implementing culturally responsive teaching practices are in the mid-career age group was corroborated

by Cimene (2023), who found that culturally relevant educational leadership is often driven by mid-career women leaders possessing extensive professional experience and cultural anchoring to implement responsive strategies effectively. Similarly, Tamayao et al. (2020) conformed these findings that leadership commitment to diversity and CRT implementation is often facilitated by experienced leaders capable of fostering inclusive policies and empowering teachers.

Most respondents were female, totaling 90 or 80.36%, while males were 22 or 19.64%. The finding that female educators predominantly implement culturally responsive teaching practices was affirmed by Cimene (2023), who highlighted that culturally relevant educational leadership is strongly driven by women educational leaders, emphasizing their resilience, relational leadership style, and cultural anchoring in managing educational reforms. Additionally, Libertad et al. (2022) also confirmed that sex significantly influenced pre-service teachers' competence in culturally responsive teaching, with female respondents generally demonstrating higher CRT competence.

In terms of educational attainment, the highest number was those with units in a master's program at 61 or 54.46%, and only 1 respondent or 0.89% was a doctorate degree graduate. The finding that most educators implementing CRT are pursuing graduate studies was corroborated by Tamayao et al. (2020), who emphasized that leadership commitment to diversity and effective CRT implementation often require advanced academic training, as leaders with higher educational qualifications are better equipped to design inclusive policies and empower teachers. Additionally, Libertad et al. (2022) also confirmed that higher educational attainment was associated with greater competence in culturally responsive teaching among pre-service teachers.

For length of service, the highest number had 22 years and above of experience with 27 respondents or 24.11%, while the least were those with less than a year of service with only 1 respondent or 0.89%. The finding that most educators implementing culturally responsive teaching practices have over 22 years of service was affirmed by Cimene (2023), who highlighted that senior educational leaders effectively utilized their extensive professional experience and deep community ties to implement culturally relevant leadership strategies. Additionally, Tamayao et al. (2020) also confirmed that leaders with substantial teaching and leadership tenure were instrumental in advancing CRT initiatives due to their institutional knowledge and credibility among peers.

Regarding position held, teachers comprised the majority with 80 respondents or 71.43%, while school heads were the least with 15 respondents or 13.39%.

The finding that teachers constitute the majority of implementers of culturally responsive teaching practices was confirmed by Anyichie et al. (2023), who emphasized that teachers play crucial front-line roles in fostering student engagement through culturally responsive practices, even in contexts where formal leadership support is limited. Additionally, Tamayao et al. (2020) confirmed that while leadership commitment is essential for effective CRT implementation, it is often teachers themselves who operationalize these practices in classrooms.

Finally, in terms of the number of trainings attended on culturally responsive teaching strategies, most respondents had attended 1-2 trainings, with 52 respondents or 46.43%, while only 5 respondents or 4.46% had attended 5-6 trainings.

The finding that many educators have limited formal training on culturally responsive teaching strategies, with over a quarter having none, was confirmed by Haynes et al. (2023), who reported that pre-service teachers expressed enthusiasm for CRT but faced challenges in its implementation due to insufficient training exposure during their education programs. Similarly, Oh and Nussli (2021) conformed that while short-term international immersion programs positively influenced pre-service teachers' CRT development, the impact was often unsustainable without continuous, structured training.

The overall role of educational leaders in implementing professional development had a weighted mean of 2.94, interpreted as "Occasionally Implemented," with the highest in offering materials to assist teachers in appreciating diversity (3.31, "Always Implemented") and the lowest in organizing training programs promoting inclusivity (2.51, "Occasionally Implemented").

The finding that educational leaders occasionally implement professional development on culturally responsive teaching, with a stronger focus on providing materials than organizing structured trainings, was confirmed by Tamayao et al. (2020) who found that while school leaders expressed commitment to diversity and CRT, there remained gaps in formalizing professional development programs to systematically train teachers, often relying on resource dissemination rather than continuous capacity-building. Similarly, Haynes et al. (2023) confirmed that cultivating equity-centered and culturally responsive attitudes among educators requires intentional and sustained training frameworks.

In fostering collaboration, the overall weighted mean was 2.93 ("Occasionally Implemented"), with the highest in advocating teamwork in lesson planning (3.08, "Occasionally Implemented") and the lowest in seeking local experts for cultural diversity (2.77, "Occasionally Implemented").

The finding that educational leaders occasionally foster collaboration for culturally responsive teaching, with limited engagement of local cultural experts, was confirmed by Chu et al. (2023), who emphasized that culturally responsive leadership should extend beyond internal school collaboration to actively involve community cultural experts and stakeholders to humanize curriculum and leadership should extend beyond internal school collaboration to actively involve community cultural experts and stakeholders to humanize curriculum and instruction effectively. Similarly, Mercado (2021) confirmed that successful CRT implementation relied heavily on strong partnerships with local cultural knowledge holders.

For teaching pedagogy, the overall weighted mean was 3.11 ("Occasionally Implemented"), with the highest in seeking guidance to augment CRT techniques (3.22, "Occasionally Implemented") and the lowest in guiding teachers to modify assessments for cultural diversity (2.96, "Occasionally Implemented").

The finding that educational leaders occasionally implement culturally responsive teaching pedagogies, with a stronger focus on self-improvement than on guiding teachers in culturally responsive assessment, was confirmed by Mette (2024), who argued that culturally responsive instructional supervision often prioritizes leaders' personal competence development but lacks structured guidance for teachers in adapting assessments to diverse cultural contexts. Additionally, Haynes et al. (2023) also confirmed that while leaders increasingly adopt equity-centered pedagogical attitudes, effective CRT implementation requires them to support teachers in modifying teaching and assessment practices comprehensively.

The results show that age ($d=.191$, $p<.05$) and length of service ($d=.197$, $p<.01$) are significantly related to implementing professional development, suggesting that older and more experienced teachers are more active in this area. This finding is consistent with Libertad et al. (2022), who emphasized that accumulated teaching experience enhances educators' awareness of cultural diversity and their ability to model inclusive practices. This result further supports Libertad et al. (2022), who found that professional maturity directly influences teachers' effectiveness in translating inclusive theories into practice.

Educational attainment shows significant relationships with all three roles, namely professional development ($d=.262$, $p<.01$), fostering collaboration ($d=.184$, $p<.05$), and teaching pedagogy ($d=.265$, $p<.01$), indicating higher academic qualifications contribute to greater engagement. Libertad et al. (2022) affirmed that higher educational attainment significantly improves teachers' competence in culturally responsive instruction by broadening their understanding of cultural diversity and reflective pedagogy. Likewise, position held is highly significant for all roles like professional development ($d=.390$, $p<.01$), fostering collaboration ($d=.290$, $p<.01$), and teaching pedagogy ($d=.359$, $p<.01$), showing that teachers in higher-ranking positions are more involved. Tamayao et al. (2020) confirmed this finding, highlighting that leadership commitment and authority strongly shape the effectiveness of culturally responsive teaching implementation.

The number of trainings attended is significantly linked to professional development ($d=.237$, $p<.01$) and fostering collaboration ($d=.164$, $p<.05$), but not to teaching pedagogy.

Tamayao et al. (2020) likewise emphasized that continuous training and professional learning communities enable teachers to develop leadership skills and enhance their responsiveness to diverse learner needs.

Sex shows no significant relationship with any CRT role, indicating similar participation levels for male and female respondents. This outcome reflects the gender-balanced culture in schools where professional duties, leadership responsibilities, and access to capacity-building programs are shared regardless of gender. It also demonstrates that inclusivity in teaching is viewed as a shared commitment rather than one influenced by gender orientation. Libertad et al. (2022) also recognized that equitable teacher participation across demographic variables supports the sustainability of inclusive instructional practices.

In implementing professional development, the overall weighted mean was 3.02, interpreted as "Occasionally Encountered," with budget constraints as the highest challenge (3.09, "Occasionally Encountered") and inadequate CRT training as the lowest (2.97, "Occasionally Encountered").

This finding that budget constraints and inadequate training are major challenges in implementing professional development for culturally responsive teaching was confirmed by Tamayao et al. (2020), who identified limited funding and lack of sustained training programs as significant barriers to effective CRT implementation, emphasizing that leadership commitment alone is insufficient without institutional and financial support. Additionally, Haynes et al. (2023) also confirmed that one-time workshops often fail to build lasting equity-centered practices among educators.

For fostering collaboration, the overall weighted mean was 3.03 ("Occasionally Encountered"), with limited access to culturally relevant materials as the highest challenge (3.17, "Occasionally Encountered") and CRT not included in collaborative trainings as the lowest (2.91, "Occasionally Encountered").

The finding that limited access to culturally relevant materials and exclusion of CRT topics in collaborative trainings are major challenges in fostering collaboration was confirmed by Chu et al. (2023), who emphasized that culturally responsive leadership requires intentional provision of culturally rich resources and structured opportunities for collaborative planning to humanize curriculum and instruction effectively. Additionally, Mercado (2021) also confirmed that successful CRT implementation in an Indigenous Peoples school was facilitated by integrating culturally rooted topics into teacher collaboration and training sessions.

In teaching pedagogy, the overall weighted mean was 3.01 ("Occasionally Encountered"), with heavy workloads as the highest challenge (3.15, "Occasionally Encountered") and hesitation to modify traditional teaching approaches as the lowest (2.84, "Occasionally Encountered").

The finding that heavy teacher workloads and reliance on traditional teaching methods hinder the integration of culturally responsive teaching pedagogies was confirmed by Fast (2023), who critiqued how structural constraints and deficit thinking within schools perpetuate traditional pedagogies, limiting teachers' capacity to implement inclusive practices effectively. Additionally, Haynes et al. (2023) also confirmed that without adequate workload adjustments and institutional support, teachers struggle to adopt equity-centered and culturally responsive instructional approaches.

CONCLUSION

The conclusions drawn from the findings of the study are as follows:

- 1) Most educators in Mercedes District are middle-aged female teachers with units in a master's program, long years of service, and limited training on CRT practices. This implies that while they have substantial experience and academic advancement, there is a need to enhance training opportunities and leadership representation among younger and male educators for more inclusive culturally responsive teaching practices.
- 2) Educational leaders in Mercedes District occasionally implement professional development, foster collaboration, and support teaching pedagogy for culturally responsive teaching. This implies that while they are proactive in providing materials and enhancing their practices, there is a need for stronger systematic training, community partnerships, and teacher assessment guidance to fully implement CRT practices.

- 3) Teachers' age, length of service, educational attainment, position held, and number of training attended significantly influence their roles in implementing culturally responsive teaching practices, while sex does not. This implies that CRT engagement depends more on age, experience, educational qualifications, position, and training than on sex.
- 4) Educational leaders occasionally encounter challenges in implementing CRT professional development, fostering collaboration, and teaching pedagogy, with financial constraints, lack of resources, and teacher workloads as primary barriers. This implies that addressing these systemic, material, and instructional challenges is essential to enhance culturally responsive teaching practices.
- 5) To enhance measures in implementing culturally responsive teaching practices, LAC Sessions is hereby proposed. This will further equip teachers in handling CRT in day-to-day teaching.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations based on the study's findings and conclusions are as follows:

- 1) The Public School District Supervisor may design and implement a comprehensive professional development plan on culturally responsive teaching that includes continuous training programs, mentoring systems led by school heads and master teachers, and leadership opportunities specifically targeting younger and male educators.
- 2) School heads and master teachers may organize regular professional development sessions on CRT, establish partnerships with local cultural experts to strengthen collaboration, and guide teachers in designing culturally responsive assessments to enhance inclusive teaching practices.
- 3) Schools Division Office and school heads may provide differentiated leadership and training opportunities based on teachers' age, experience, educational qualifications, positions, and attended training to sustain active CRT involvement, while continuing gender-inclusive practices for equal participation.
- 4) The school heads may allocate sufficient budgets, provide culturally relevant materials, and manage teacher workloads to reduce barriers, while school heads and master teachers may integrate CRT topics into training and support pedagogical shifts towards culturally inclusive teaching.
- 5) Schools may conduct Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions focusing on Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) practices to equip school heads, master teachers, and teachers with essential knowledge, skills, and pedagogical strategies for the effective implementation of CRT in instructional settings.
- 6) Future researchers may conduct similar or related studies with more respondents to comprehensively understand CRT.

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