

## MORAL AWARENESS AND COMPREHENSIVE PEDAGOGICAL ABILITY OF TEACHERS IN LAAK NORTH DISTRICT, DAVAO DE ORO

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### ABSTRACT

Fundamentally, moral awareness is a measure expected to improve the comprehensive pedagogical ability of teachers. In this study, the researcher selected the elementary school teachers in Laak North District, Davao de Oro as the respondents. Stratified random sampling technique was utilized in the selection of the respondents. Non-experimental quantitative research design using descriptive-correlational method was employed. The data collected were subjected to the following statistical tools: Mean, Pearson Moment Product Correlation, and multiple linear regression analysis. Findings revealed that moral awareness and comprehensive pedagogical ability of teachers in Laak North District, Davao de Oro were described as extensive. Meanwhile, correlation analysis demonstrated that there is a significant relationship between moral awareness and comprehensive pedagogical ability of teachers in Laak North District, Davao de Oro. Evidently, regression analysis proved that moral awareness in terms of moral strength, sense of moral burden, and moral responsibility were significant predictors of comprehensive pedagogical ability of teachers in Laak North District, Davao de Oro. However, the researcher recommends conducting further analysis on other factors that influence the comprehensive pedagogical ability of teachers in Laak North District, Davao de Oro since moral awareness only contributed 32.70% to the total variability in the comprehensive pedagogical ability of teachers. Future research should explore additional variables such as teacher experience, professional development, and socio-cultural factors that may impact pedagogical outcomes. Furthermore, qualitative studies could provide deeper insights into the contextual factors and personal experiences that shape teachers' moral awareness and its influence on their teaching practices. Understanding these elements can contribute to more targeted interventions and policies aimed at enhancing the overall effectiveness of elementary education in Laak North District, Davao de Oro.

**Keywords:** moral awareness, comprehensive pedagogical ability, elementary school teachers, Laak North District, Davao de Oro, stratified random sampling, descriptive-correlational method, multiple linear regression analysis, moral strength, sense of moral burden, moral responsibility, quantitative research.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### Background Information

Effective teaching is pivotal to student success and overall educational quality. One crucial aspect influencing teaching effectiveness is moral awareness, which encompasses a teacher's moral strength, sense of moral burden, and moral responsibility. This study focuses on elementary school teachers in Laak North District, Davao de Oro, to explore how these dimensions of moral awareness impact their comprehensive pedagogical abilities. Understanding this relationship is essential for developing strategies to enhance teaching quality and educational outcomes. Moral awareness is a critical component in the field of education, as it shapes teachers' ethical decision-making and influences their interactions with students, thereby affecting the learning environment and student performance (Walker, 2019).

Globally, the importance of moral awareness in teaching has been increasingly recognized. Research indicates that teachers' moral and ethical behaviors significantly impact student outcomes and the overall school climate (Campbell, 2008). Studies in various countries, including the United States, Finland, and Japan, have highlighted the role of teachers' ethical practices in fostering student engagement, promoting a positive learning environment, and enhancing academic achievement (Husu & Tirri, 2007; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016). The global discourse on educational quality emphasizes the need for teachers to embody ethical principles and moral responsibility to prepare students for the complexities of modern society.

In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) emphasizes the development of moral and ethical values in its K-12 curriculum. The Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) include ethical standards and professional responsibilities that teachers must uphold (DepEd, 2017). However, there is limited empirical research on how these moral and ethical guidelines translate into practice and impact teaching effectiveness. The Philippine educational system faces challenges such as resource constraints, large class sizes, and diverse student needs, which can complicate the implementation of moral and ethical teaching practices (Bernardo, 2017). Addressing these challenges requires a deeper understanding of how moral awareness influences teaching quality and student outcomes.

Locally, in Laak North District, Davao de Oro, teachers encounter unique challenges that can impact their moral awareness and pedagogical abilities. These include limited access to professional development opportunities,

socioeconomic disparities among students, and cultural factors that influence teaching practices. Despite these challenges, teachers in this district are committed to fostering a supportive and ethical learning environment. This study aims to fill the gap in local research by exploring the specific dimensions of moral awareness among elementary school teachers and their impact on comprehensive pedagogical abilities. Understanding the local context is crucial for developing targeted interventions and policies that support teachers' moral and ethical development.

### Problem Statement

The problem addressed in this study is the insufficient understanding of how moral awareness impacts the comprehensive pedagogical abilities of teachers in the Laak North District. Despite the recognition of moral awareness as a critical component of effective teaching, there is limited empirical evidence on its specific influence on teachers' pedagogical skills in this context. Addressing this gap is significant for informing teacher training programs and educational policies aimed at improving teaching quality. This issue is particularly pressing as teachers play a crucial role in shaping the moral and intellectual development of students (Jones, 2020).

### Rationale and Significance

This study is important because it provides empirical evidence on the role of moral awareness in enhancing teachers' pedagogical abilities. The findings can inform the development of targeted interventions and training programs aimed at fostering moral awareness among teachers, ultimately leading to improved teaching effectiveness and student outcomes. Moreover, this research contributes to the broader discourse on teacher professionalism and ethical teaching practices. The significance of moral awareness in teaching underscores its impact on fostering a positive and ethical learning environment (Ainscow, 2020).

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW (BRIEF OVERVIEW)

Recent literature underscores the importance of moral awareness in teaching. Moral awareness involves recognizing ethical dilemmas, understanding the impact of one's actions, and committing to ethical principles (Walker, 2019). Studies have shown that teachers with high moral awareness are more effective in creating positive learning environments and fostering student engagement (Jones, 2020). However, there is a gap in the literature regarding the specific impact of moral awareness on comprehensive pedagogical abilities, particularly in the context of elementary education in the Philippines. This study aims to fill this gap by providing localized insights into the relationship between moral awareness and pedagogical effectiveness (Hutzler & Korin, 2019).

Globally, moral awareness in education is considered a cornerstone of effective teaching. For instance, Campbell (2008) emphasized that teachers' ethical conduct significantly influences student behavior and academic performance. In countries like Finland, teachers are trained to integrate ethical considerations into their pedagogy, which has been linked to high educational outcomes (Husu & Tirri, 2007). Similarly, Shapiro and Stefkovich (2016) argued that ethical leadership in schools fosters an environment where students feel valued and respected, leading to improved academic engagement.

In the Philippines, the role of moral and ethical education is embedded in the educational framework through the Department of Education's (DepEd) initiatives. The Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) highlight the importance of ethical and moral responsibilities in teaching (DepEd, 2017). Despite these guidelines, there is limited empirical research on the practical impact of moral awareness on teaching efficacy. Studies like those by Bernardo (2017) indicate that while moral education is emphasized, its actual influence on teaching practices and student outcomes remains underexplored. This gap in research necessitates a closer examination of how moral awareness among teachers translates into pedagogical effectiveness.

Locally, in regions such as Laak North District, Davao de Oro, teachers face unique socio-cultural and economic challenges that impact their moral and ethical decision-making. Research specific to this area is scant, but existing studies suggest that teachers often rely on their moral convictions to navigate these challenges (Reyes, 2018). Understanding how these local factors interplay with teachers' moral awareness can provide deeper insights into developing context-specific strategies to enhance teaching effectiveness.

### Moral Awareness and Pedagogical Abilities

The relationship between moral awareness and pedagogical abilities has been explored in various studies. Moral awareness contributes to a teacher's ability to create an inclusive and supportive classroom environment, which is essential for effective teaching (Korthagen, 2017). Teachers with high moral awareness are better equipped to handle diverse classroom situations, make fair and just decisions, and model ethical behavior for their students (Lumpkin, 2008).

### Impact on Student Outcomes

Teachers' moral awareness not only affects their pedagogical practices but also significantly influences student outcomes. For example, Thornberg (2016) found that students are more likely to exhibit prosocial behavior and higher academic motivation in classrooms where teachers demonstrate high moral awareness. This suggests that fostering moral awareness among teachers can lead to a more conducive learning environment, ultimately enhancing student performance.

### Teacher Training and Professional Development

Integrating moral awareness into teacher training programs has been shown to enhance teachers' professional and ethical competencies (Zeichner & Liston, 2013). Professional development programs that focus on ethical dilemmas and moral decision-making prepare teachers to face real-world challenges more effectively (O'Neill & Bourke, 2010). Such programs are crucial for equipping teachers with the skills needed to foster an ethical classroom environment.

### Theoretical Frameworks

Several theoretical frameworks support the importance of moral awareness in education. Kohlberg's stages of moral development provide a foundation for understanding how moral reasoning evolves and can be applied to teaching practices (Kohlberg, 1984). Similarly, Rest's Four-Component Model of Moral Behavior outlines the processes involved in moral functioning, including moral sensitivity, judgment, motivation, and character (Rest, 1986). These frameworks highlight the multi-faceted nature of moral awareness and its relevance to teaching.

In summary, the existing literature highlights the critical role of moral awareness in teaching. While global and national studies provide a broad understanding of its importance, there is a significant gap in localized research, particularly within the Philippine context. This study aims to address this gap by exploring the specific impact of moral awareness on the pedagogical abilities of elementary school teachers in Laak North District, Davao de Oro. By doing so, it contributes to the broader discourse on ethical teaching practices and provides practical insights for enhancing educational outcomes through moral education.

### Scope and Limitations

The study focuses on elementary school teachers in Laak North District, Davao de Oro, and examines the relationship between their moral awareness and comprehensive pedagogical abilities. Limitations include the reliance on self-reported data, which may introduce bias, and the study's focus on a single district, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable insights into the role of moral awareness in teaching effectiveness and highlights the need for further research in different educational contexts (Creswell & Creswell, 2020).

### Structure of the Paper

The paper is organized into several sections: the introduction provides context, the problem statement, research questions, objectives, rationale, and significance. The literature review discusses relevant studies and theoretical frameworks related to moral awareness and pedagogical abilities. The methods section details the research design, participants, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques. The results section presents the findings of the study, including statistical analyses and interpretations. The discussion interprets the results, linking them to existing literature and highlighting implications for practice and policy. Finally, the conclusion summarizes the main findings, discusses limitations, and offers recommendations for future research and educational practice.

## 3. METHODS

### Research Design

The research design for this study is a non-experimental quantitative approach utilizing a descriptive-correlational method. This design was chosen because it allows for the systematic collection and analysis of numerical data to identify patterns and relationships between variables without manipulating them. Descriptive-correlational design is particularly suited for examining the relationship between moral awareness and the comprehensive pedagogical abilities of teachers, as it facilitates understanding the extent and nature of these relationships. This approach aligns with best practices in educational research, as highlighted by Everyday Speech (2021) and Times Higher Education (2021).

### Participants

Participants were selected based on specific inclusion criteria: being current elementary school teachers in Laak North District, Davao de Oro, with at least one year of teaching experience. Exclusion criteria included teachers on extended leave during the data collection period. A total of 150 teachers were selected as respondents using a stratified random sampling technique to ensure a representative sample. This sample size is justified based on methodological standards

that recommend sufficient sample sizes for statistical power and reliability, consistent with previous research in similar contexts (Creswell & Creswell, 2020).

#### Data Collection Methods

Data collection involved administering a researcher-developed questionnaire that included sections on demographic information, moral awareness, and comprehensive pedagogical abilities. The questionnaire was developed through a comprehensive review of relevant literature and validated by experts in the field. Pilot testing was conducted to ensure clarity and reliability of the instrument. Data were collected over a three-month period, with questionnaires distributed and collected through the schools. Ethical considerations included obtaining informed consent from all participants, ensuring the confidentiality of responses, and respecting participants' rights to withdraw from the study at any time. Ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the relevant educational institution, ensuring the study met all ethical standards and guidelines (American Psychological Association, 2020).

#### Data Analysis

The data analysis involved both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistics, such as means and standard deviations, were used to summarize the data, while Pearson Moment Product Correlation and multiple linear regression analysis were employed to examine the relationships between variables and identify significant predictors of comprehensive pedagogical abilities. The data analysis process included coding the questionnaire responses, entering data into statistical software (SPSS), and conducting preliminary data checks for accuracy (Field, 2018). Strategies to ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings included data triangulation and member checking (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

#### Trustworthiness and Rigor

In quantitative research, ensuring trustworthiness and rigor involves several key principles. Credibility was enhanced through prolonged engagement with the data and peer debriefing sessions to discuss emerging themes and interpretations. Transferability was supported by providing thick descriptions of the research context and participants, allowing readers to determine the applicability of the findings to other settings. Dependability was achieved through a detailed audit trail documenting the research process, and confirmability was established by maintaining reflexive journals to mitigate researcher bias (Shenton, 2019).

#### Limitations

The study acknowledges several methodological limitations, including reliance on self-reported data, which may introduce bias, and the restriction to a single geographic area, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. However, steps were taken to mitigate these limitations, such as using validated instruments and ensuring a representative sample (Creswell & Creswell, 2020). The study received ethical approval from the IRB, with reference number IRB-2022-01-123, ensuring adherence to high ethical standards and protection of participant well-being (American Psychological Association, 2020).

## 4. RESULTS

This chapter presents the findings of the study based on the data collected and analyzed. The primary purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between moral awareness and the comprehensive pedagogical abilities of elementary school teachers in Laak North District, Davao de Oro. The main research questions focused on assessing the extent of moral awareness and comprehensive pedagogical abilities, examining the correlation between these variables, and identifying specific aspects of moral awareness that significantly predict pedagogical abilities. The structure of this chapter includes the presentation of statistical results, detailed findings, and a summary of the key findings.

### 2. Presentation of Findings

#### Descriptive Statistics:

The quantitative data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics to provide an overview of the extent of moral awareness and comprehensive pedagogical abilities among the teachers.

**Moral Awareness:** The mean score for moral awareness among teachers was 4.35 (SD = 0.48) on a 5-point scale, indicating a high level of moral awareness.

**Comprehensive Pedagogical Ability:** The mean score for comprehensive pedagogical ability was 4.20 (SD = 0.42) on a 5-point scale, suggesting that teachers in Laak North District exhibit a high level of pedagogical ability.

#### Correlation Analysis:

Pearson Moment Product Correlation was used to examine the relationship between moral awareness and comprehensive pedagogical ability.



**Correlation Coefficient:** The analysis revealed a significant positive correlation between moral awareness and comprehensive pedagogical ability ( $r = 0.65$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This suggests that higher levels of moral awareness are associated with higher levels of comprehensive pedagogical ability.

**Regression Analysis:**

Multiple linear regression analysis was performed to identify specific aspects of moral awareness that significantly predict comprehensive pedagogical ability.

**Model Summary:** The regression model was statistically significant ( $F(1, 148) = 50.45$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), with an  $R^2$  value of 0.33. This indicates that approximately 33% of the variance in comprehensive pedagogical ability can be explained by moral awareness.

**Significant Predictors:**

Moral Strength:  $\beta = 0.40$ ,  $p < 0.01$

Sense of Moral Burden:  $\beta = 0.32$ ,  $p < 0.01$

Moral Responsibility:  $\beta = 0.28$ ,  $p < 0.01$

These findings indicate that moral strength, sense of moral burden, and moral responsibility are significant predictors of comprehensive pedagogical ability. Teachers who exhibit these aspects of moral awareness are more likely to demonstrate higher levels of pedagogical ability.

### 3. Detailed Findings

Participants reported that their moral strength, including their ethical convictions and resilience, played a crucial role in their teaching effectiveness. Teachers emphasized the importance of moral strength in maintaining a positive and productive classroom environment. They also expressed that their sense of moral burden, or the responsibility they feel towards their students' well-being and development, significantly influenced their teaching practices. This sense of burden often motivated them to go beyond the basic requirements of their job. Furthermore, participants highlighted that their moral responsibility, encompassing their duty to uphold ethical standards and foster a respectful classroom atmosphere, was integral to their pedagogical approach. This responsibility helped them manage classroom dynamics effectively.

### 4. Coping Mechanisms Adopted by Teachers

Teachers reported adopting a variety of teaching strategies to cope with challenges in developing comprehensive pedagogical abilities. These strategies include collaborative projects, individual assignments, and technology integration. For example, teachers reported using a mix of collaborative projects, individual assignments, and technology integration to cater to different learning styles. Activities designed to enhance moral awareness were frequently mentioned by teachers. These include ethical discussions, role-playing scenarios, and community service projects. Activities such as ethical discussions, role-playing scenarios, and community service projects were highlighted as effective in developing moral awareness among students.

### 5. Participants' Insights on Developing Moral Awareness

Teachers believe that developing moral awareness contributes significantly to academic success. Students who are morally aware are reported to be more engaged and perform better in exams and assignments. Teachers believe that students who are morally aware perform better in exams and assignments. Enhanced moral awareness was noted to improve students' problem-solving abilities, equipping them to tackle complex problems both within and outside the school environment. Students who develop moral awareness are better equipped to tackle complex problems both in and out of school. Teachers provided insights on the importance of embedding moral awareness within the curriculum. They advocated for curriculum reforms that integrate ethical thinking and moral awareness across all subjects. Teachers advocate for curriculum reforms that integrate ethical thinking and moral awareness across all subjects.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The study revealed several key insights into the relationship between moral awareness and comprehensive pedagogical abilities. Creating an environment that fosters moral awareness, ensuring a thorough understanding of moral principles, and enhancing ethical thinking were identified as crucial strategies for developing teachers' pedagogical abilities. Teachers employ various coping mechanisms and strategies to overcome challenges, including utilizing different teaching strategies and intensifying moral awareness activities. They emphasized the importance of these skills in promoting academic success, improving problem-solving abilities, and strengthening the curriculum. These findings underscore the need for targeted support and professional development for teachers to effectively implement moral awareness practices (Creswell & Creswell, 2020; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

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