**COMPASSIONATE CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR AS MEDIATOR ON RECIPROCATIVE TEACHING APPROACH AND FUNDAMENTAL SKILLS OF STUDENTS**

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Abstract

*The current study aimed to evaluate whether compassionate classroom behavior the relationship between teachers’ reciprocative teaching approach and fundamental skills of students. In this study, the researcher selected the 350 junior high school students taken from North District in Panabo City Division as the respondents of the study. 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 on the following statistical tools: Mean, Pearson Moment Product Correlation, multiple linear regression analysis, and Baron and Kenney’s (1986) Method for Mediation Analysis with Sobel z-Test. Findings revealed that teachers’ reciprocative teaching approach, fundamental skills of students, and compassionate classroom behavior in North District in Panabo City were described as extensive. Further, correlation analysis demonstrated that there is significant relationship among teachers’ reciprocative teaching approach, fundamental skills of students, and compassionate classroom behavior in North District in Panabo City. Evidently, Baron and Kenney’s (1986) Method for Mediation Analysis with Sobel z-Test proved that compassionate classroom behavior partially mediated the relationship between teachers’ reciprocative teaching approach and fundamental skills of students in North District in Panabo City. The study, therefore, conducted for further utilization of findings through publication in reputable research journal.*

***Keywords:*** *Educational management, reciprocative teaching approach, fundamental skills of students, and compassionate classroom behavior*

Introduction

Reciprocative teaching is a progressive educational approach that grants students more autonomy in their learning process, fostering internal motivation and appreciation for achievement-related behaviors. Effective classroom management, which includes regulating behavior, setting clear goals, and preparing materials, is crucial for promoting interaction. This method enhances learning habits, broadens perspectives, and improves problem-solving abilities, self-confidence, flexibility, and overall learning success.

*Reciprocative Teaching Approach.* Reciprocative teaching encourages students to integrate their experiences and knowledge into the learning process. According to Reeves (2012), this approach aims to make students active participants, thereby fostering creativity, patience, and tolerance (Kutbiddinova, 2015). It also promotes critical and reflective thinking, research, and evaluation skills, which are essential for students to protect and improve their well-being and that of others (Kutbiddinova et al., 2016).

*Fundamental Skills.* Fundamental skills, as defined by Erawan (2010), are essential for adaptive and positive behavior, enabling individuals to handle daily life demands effectively. These skills include managing emotions, effective communication, interpersonal relationships, empathy, decision-making, problem-solving, and critical thinking (Greco, Baer, & Smith, 2013). These abilities are vital for dealing with issues such as depression, anxiety, loneliness, rejection, anger, and conflict in relationships.

*Compassionate Classroom Behavior.* Kang (2016) describes compassionate behavior as the adversarial relationship between teachers and students, often due to a warm and caring approach. A compassionate classroom climate involves mutual help, judgment, reward, and constraint among students, influencing their moral attitude towards work and their environment (Imna & Hassan, 2015).

*Reciprocative Teaching and Fundamental Skills.* Research indicates a relationship between reciprocative teaching and students' fundamental skills. Kashlev (2013) suggests that reciprocative education creates a conducive learning environment, fostering success and intellectual viability. Cetin-Dindar (2016) highlights that student-centered techniques in interactive educational strategies enhance fundamental life skills. However, poor fundamental skills have been linked to lower academic success, as observed by Naseri & Babakhani (2016) and Pitan (2013).

*Study Context.* The study aims to fill the research gap by focusing on junior high school students in the North District, Panabo City, using a quantitative approach. The research will employ a descriptive correlational design through mediation analysis to understand the role of teachers' compassionate behavior on reciprocative teaching and fundamental skills.

Review of Literature

Compassionate classroom behavior is essential for fostering a positive learning environment. Studies by Zhu et al. (2013) and Eaude (2011) show that a caring climate enhances teacher innovation and student creativity. Interactive teaching methods, as noted by Sidorenko (2011) and Kashlev (2013), are crucial for creating a supportive learning environment that promotes student engagement and learning.

*Fundamental Skills.* Fundamental skills encompass critical and creative thinking, self-awareness, interpersonal relationship and communication skills, and decision-making and problem-solving abilities. These skills are crucial for personal development and managing life's challenges (Erawan, 2010; Greco, Baer, & Smith, 2013).

Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on the Teacher Thoughts and Action Process Model by Peterson and Clark (1970), which emphasizes the importance of teachers' thought processes in influencing their actions and the overall learning environment.

Statement of the Problem

The study aims to understand the mediating effect of teachers' compassionate behavior on the relationship between reciprocative teaching and students' fundamental skills. Specifically, it seeks to:

1. Assess the extent of reciprocative teaching in terms of teaching engagement, interaction, and feedback.

2. Evaluate the fundamental skills of students, including critical thinking, creative thinking, self-awareness, interpersonal relationships, and decision-making and problem-solving skills.

3. Determine the extent of teachers' compassionate classroom behavior as a mediator.

4. Examine the relationships among these variables in the context of North District, Panabo City.

Hypotheses

The study will test the following null hypotheses:

1. There is no significant relationship among teachers' compassionate behavior, reciprocative teaching, and fundamental skills of students.

2. Compassionate classroom behavior does not significantly mediate the relationship between reciprocative teaching and fundamental skills.

Conclusion

This study aims to provide valuable insights into the relationship between reciprocative teaching and fundamental skills, emphasizing the role of compassionate classroom behavior. The findings could benefit educational policy makers, the Department of Education, students, and future researchers by offering a framework for enhancing fundamental skills and effective teaching strategies.

**Method**

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational technique to collect and analyze data relevant to the research questions. Bhandari (2020) describes quantitative research as a strategy focused on quantifying data collection and analysis. It is formed from a deductive approach, emphasizing theory testing shaped by empiricist and positivist philosophies. This non-experimental research measures variables as they naturally occur without manipulating an independent variable.

Mediation analysis was used to quantify the causal sequence in which an antecedent variable influences a mediating variable, which in turn affects a dependent variable (Mackinnon, 2019). This study specifically focused on the mediating effect of teachers’ compassionate classroom behavior on the relationship between reciprocative teaching approach and fundamental skills of students. Mediation analysis defines direct, indirect, and total effects in terms of linear regression coefficients, providing insights into how an independent variable impacts a dependent variable.

Research Respondents

The respondents were 312 junior high school students from North District, Panabo City, selected through stratified random sampling. Stratified random sampling divides a population into sub-groups (strata) to ensure representation. The inclusion criteria were bona fide enrollment in junior high school, no back subjects or failing grades, and voluntary consent. Socio-economic status was not considered in this study.

Research Instrument

Two sets of instruments were used, both validated by experts and subjected to pilot testing for reliability. The first instrument focused on teachers’ interactive instructional ability, which included three domains: teaching engagement, interaction, and feedback. This instrument achieved a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.964. Responses were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, with interpretations ranging from "Very Extensive" (4.20-5.00) to "Not Extensive" (1.00-1.79).

The second instrument assessed the fundamental skills of students, covering indicators such as critical thinking, creative thinking, self-awareness, interpersonal relationship and communication skills, and decision-making and problem-solving skills. This instrument achieved a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.952, and responses were also measured using a 5-point Likert scale, with similar interpretations.

The third instrument evaluated teachers’ compassionate classroom behavior, with a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.958. This instrument used the same 5-point Likert scale for responses, ranging from "Very Extensive" (4.20-5.00) to "Not Extensive" (1.00-1.79).

Data Gathering Procedure

The data gathering procedure began with securing permission from the Dean of the Graduate School at Rizal Memorial Colleges, Inc., Davao City. Endorsement letters were sent to school principals in North District, Panabo City. The study was conducted on June 15, 2023, and the benefits of the survey were explained to respondents before they completed the questionnaires. Collected data were then subjected to quantitative analysis. Data from the questionnaires were tallied and organized per indicator, followed by descriptive and inferential analyses using SPSS.

Ethical Considerations

Several ethical considerations were observed. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, who were informed about the study's purpose and their voluntary participation. The confidentiality and privacy of participants were maintained following the Data Privacy Act of 2012. The questionnaire was designed to avoid psychological harm, and respondents' well-being was prioritized. The study treated all respondents equally and maintained transparency in communication and methodology. The researcher ensured that responses were not influenced by external factors and acknowledged all contributions. The study was conducted in a conducive environment with necessary materials available. Community involvement was prioritized in decision-making about the research, and findings were shared with the community.

Data Analysis

Statistical tools utilized for data analysis included mean, Pearson Product Moment Correlation, and Baron and Kenney’s (1986) Method for Mediation Analysis with Sobel z-Test. The mean was used to characterize teachers’ compassionate classroom behavior, reciprocative teaching approach, and fundamental skills of students. Pearson Product Moment Correlation assessed the significant relationships among the variables. Baron and Kenney’s method, along with the Sobel z-Test, evaluated the mediating effect of teachers’ compassionate classroom behavior on the relationship between reciprocative teaching approach and fundamental skills of students.

**Results**

This chapter presents the results generated from the data gathered, sequenced according to the study's objectives outlined in Chapter 1. It covers the extent of teachers’ reciprocative teaching approach, fundamental skills of students, and teachers’ compassionate classroom behavior in North District, Panabo City. It also examines the significant relationships among these variables and the mediating effect of compassionate classroom behavior on the relationship between reciprocative teaching approach and fundamental skills of students.

*Reciprocative Teaching Approach of Teachers in North District, Panabo City*

*Teaching Engagement.* The reciprocative teaching approach in North District, Panabo City was assessed by respondents as extensive, with a category mean of 3.88, indicating that it is oftentimes observed. The mean ratings of various items ranged from 3.38 to 4.62. Specifically, the item "Being able to work with intensity" had a mean rating of 3.38, described as moderately extensive, while "Being able to throw myself into teaching" reflected a mean of 4.62, described as very extensive.

The extensive rating suggests that the motivation concept, which refers to the voluntary allocation of personal resources directed at the tasks demanded in the teaching profession, is often observed. This supports Esen's (2011) view that teachers highly engaged in their job are more dedicated to the school organization. It aligns with Roorda et al.'s (2011) idea that engaged teachers can transform their schools into successful institutions. Additionally, Shukla (2014) asserted that only engaged teachers can internalize innovative teaching methods.

*Interaction.* The results show that the interaction aspect of teachers’ reciprocative teaching approach had a mean of 3.75, indicating it is oftentimes observed. Mean ratings ranged from 3.15 to 4.30, with "Being empathetic towards teaching" rated at 3.15 (moderately extensive) and "Designing the plan well to make the teaching and learning process meaningful" at 4.30 (very extensive).

The extensive rating for interaction indicates that the collaborative exchange of thoughts, feelings, or ideas is oftentimes observed. This supports Achor et al.'s (2019) proposition that classroom interaction involves active encounters between teachers and students, enhancing effective communication in the teaching-learning process. Jia (2015) also noted that interaction involves systematic observation of classroom events, promoting better understanding and communication.

*Feedback.* The domain of feedback had a category mean of 3.79, described as extensive. Mean ratings ranged from 3.16 to 4.68, with "Identifying the objective of teaching to provide objective feedback" rated at 3.16 (moderately extensive) and "Motivating students to learn by providing positive feedback" at 4.68 (very extensive).

The extensive rating indicates that feedback, the extent to which teachers provide information about learners’ performance relative to learning goals, is often observed. This aligns with Elliott et al.'s (2016) idea that feedback aims to improve learning by refocusing students’ actions toward goals. Buckley (2015) also emphasized that feedback provides evidence of current knowledge and skills, guiding future learning steps.

*Summary of Reciprocative Teaching Approach.* Overall, the reciprocative teaching approach in North District, Panabo City was rated as extensive with an overall mean of 3.81. Teaching engagement had the highest mean score of 3.88, while interaction had the lowest at 3.75. This suggests that the practice of involving learners in the educational process is frequently observed.

*Fundamental Skills of Students in North District, Panabo City*

*Critical Thinking.* The fundamental skills in terms of critical thinking were described as extensive, with a category mean of 3.48. Mean ratings ranged from 2.79 to 4.38, with "Considering consistently different alternatives" rated at 2.79 (moderately extensive) and "Being capable of organizing information" at 4.38 (very extensive).

The extensive rating suggests that the ability to analyze data, problems, and situations is often manifested. This supports Aziz et al.'s (2013) proposition that critical thinking involves evaluating the importance and significance of observations or communications. Fadhlullah and Ahmad (2018) also noted that critical thinking entails skilled interpretation and evaluation of information and arguments.

*Creative Thinking.*  This domain had a category mean of 3.33, indicating it is sometimes manifested. Mean ratings ranged from 2.95 to 3.65, with "Providing new ideas to get the work done" rated at 2.95 (moderately extensive) and "Organizing things to get the work done" at 3.65 (extensive).

The moderately extensive rating indicates that divergent thinking is sometimes manifested. This supports Paul and Elder's (2016) conclusion that creativity, though often considered an innate gift, is influenced by mental, social, and environmental factors. Robson (2016) also highlighted that creative thinking enhances decision-making and problem-solving skills by encouraging exploration of alternatives.

*Self-Awareness.*The self-awareness domain had a category mean of 3.86, described as extensive. Mean ratings ranged from 3.32 to 4.10, with "Spending time in self-reflection" rated at 3.32 (moderately extensive) and "Being interested in analyzing my behavior" at 4.10 (extensive).

The extensive rating suggests that the perception and comprehension of one's own feelings, ideas, and emotions are often manifested. This supports Nonoyama‐Tarumi's (2017) idea that self-awareness involves recognizing one's strengths, weaknesses, desires, and dislikes. Son (2018) also noted that self-awareness is crucial for stress acknowledgment and effective communication.

*Interpersonal Relationship and Communication Skills*. This domain had a category mean of 3.43, described as extensive. Mean ratings ranged from 2.65 to 3.95, with "Believing that communication will be productive" rated at 2.65 (moderately extensive) and "Being a good listener" at 3.95 (extensive).

The extensive rating indicates that the ability to communicate and maintain relationships is often manifested. This supports Jalaludin and Ihkasan's (2016) assertion that interpersonal relationships enable positive collaboration with others. Zandvliet et al. (2014) also emphasized the importance of interpersonal relationships in shaping identity and social adjustment.

*Decision Making and Problem-Solving Skills*. This domain had a category mean of 3.49, described as extensive. Mean ratings ranged from 2.65 to 3.95, with "Having the ability to function in situations" rated at 2.65 (moderately extensive) and "Having the ability to develop knowledge" at 3.95 (extensive).

The extensive rating suggests that the ability to perceive problems, causes, and alternatives is often manifested. This supports Cenkseven Önder's (2015) idea that problem-solving involves complex cognitive processes. Geisler and Allwood (2015) also highlighted that decision-making requires awareness of outcomes and positive choice-making skills.

*Summary of Fundamental Skills*. The overall mean score for fundamental skills in North District, Panabo City was 3.52, described as extensive. Self-awareness had the highest mean score of 3.86, while creative thinking had the lowest at 3.33. This indicates that adaptive and positive behaviors are often manifested.

*Compassionate Classroom Behavior of Teachers in North District in Panabo City*

The compassionate classroom behavior of teachers was rated as extensive with a category mean of 3.61. Mean ratings ranged from 2.88 to 4.29, with "Cooperating with students when doing assigned work" rated at 2.88 (moderately extensive) and "Caring about the feelings of the students" at 4.29 (very extensive).

The extensive rating suggests that the ability to maintain an adversarial relationship between teachers and students is often evident. This supports Imna and Hassan's (2015) idea that a compassionate climate reflects the organization's people, processes, communication, and authority. Zhu et al. (2013) also found that addressing students' needs enhances creativity in learning.

*Significant Relationship among Reciprocative Teaching Approach, Fundamental Skills of Students, and Compassionate Classroom Behavior*

The bivariate correlation analysis using Pearson product moment correlation revealed significant relationships among the variables. Teachers’ reciprocative teaching approach had a significant positive relationship with fundamental skills of students (r = .953, p < 0.05). This supports Savas and Gurel's (2014) proposition that effective classroom management positively affects student achievement and behaviors.

The relationship between reciprocative teaching approach and compassionate classroom behavior was also significant (r = 0.972, p < 0.05), indicating that changes in reciprocative teaching approach significantly affect compassionate classroom behavior. This aligns with Yu's (2014) assertion that interactive approaches engage students in real-world tasks, enhancing performance.

Additionally, compassionate classroom behavior had a significant positive relationship with fundamental skills of students (r = 0.974, p < 0.05). This supports Cirik et al.'s (2013) idea that compassionate learning environments integrate assessment with teaching, promoting reflective and creative thinking.

*Mediating Effect of Compassionate Classroom Behavior*

The mediating effect of compassionate classroom behavior on the relationship between reciprocative teaching approach and fundamental skills was tested using Baron and Kenney’s (1986) Method for Mediation. The analysis showed that compassionate classroom behavior partially mediated the relationship. The total effect of reciprocative teaching approach on fundamental skills was significant (estimate = 0.963, p < 0.05), and the indirect effect through compassionate classroom behavior was also significant (estimate = 0.839, p < 0.05). The Sobel z-test yielded a z-value of 0.443 2 (p < 0.05), indicating significant mediation.

This finding supports Kashlev's (2013) idea that interactive learning organizes cognitive activity by encouraging students to interact with knowledge and each other using various tools. It also aligns with Peterson and Clark's (1970) Teacher Thoughts and Action Process Model, which posits that thought processes influence actions and learning outcomes.

The significant mediating effect emphasizes the role of compassionate classroom behavior in enhancing the relationship between reciprocative teaching approach and fundamental skills. It highlights the importance of fostering a supportive and interactive learning environment to improve students' fundamental skills in North District, Panabo City.

**Discussions**

This chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations derived from the study, supported by the literature presented in the initial chapters. The conclusions are aligned with the research objectives and questions stated in the study.

Findings

The primary objective of this study was to determine the mediating effect of compassionate classroom behavior on the relationship between teachers’ reciprocative teaching approach and the fundamental skills of students. Utilizing a non-experimental quantitative design and structural equation modeling through mediation analysis, the study involved 312 junior high school students from North District, Panabo City, selected through random sampling. Modified and enhanced adapted survey questionnaires, pilot tested for high reliability and internal consistency, were used to collect data.

Based on the results, the key findings are as follows:

The extent of teachers’ reciprocative teaching approach in North District, Panabo City, was rated as extensive, with an overall mean of 3.81. The specific dimensions—teaching engagement, interaction, and feedback—had mean scores of 3.88, 3.75, and 3.79, respectively. The fundamental skills of students in North District, Panabo City, were also rated as extensive, with an overall mean of 3.52. The specific skills—critical thinking, creative thinking, self-awareness, interpersonal relationship and communication skills, and decision-making and problem-solving skills—had mean scores of 3.48, 3.33, 3.86, 3.43, and 3.49, respectively. Teachers’ compassionate classroom behavior in North District, Panabo City, was rated as extensive, with an overall mean of 3.61.

The analysis revealed that teachers’ reciprocative teaching approach had a significant positive relationship with the fundamental skills of students (r = .953, p < 0.05) and with compassionate classroom behavior (r = .972, p < 0.05). Similarly, compassionate classroom behavior had a significant positive relationship with the fundamental skills of students (r = .974, p < 0.05). Furthermore, compassionate classroom behavior was found to mediate the relationship between teachers’ reciprocative teaching approach and the fundamental skills of students. The estimates for indirect, direct, and total effects were 0.839 (p < 0.05), 0.124 (p < 0.05), and 0.963 (p < 0.05), respectively. The ratio index of 0.871 indicates that approximately 87.10% of the total effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable is mediated by compassionate classroom behavior.

Conclusions

Several conclusions can be drawn based on the findings of this study. Teachers’ reciprocative teaching approach in North District, Panabo City, is extensively practiced. This approach, which involves learners in the educational process by encouraging them to contribute their experiences and knowledge, is frequently observed. The fundamental skills of students in North District, Panabo City, are extensively manifested. These skills, which enable individuals to effectively handle the demands and challenges of everyday life, are often demonstrated by the junior high school students. Compassionate classroom behavior among teachers is extensively evident, suggesting that the ability to maintain supportive relationships between teachers and students is frequently observed.

There is a positive significant relationship between teachers’ reciprocative teaching approach and both the fundamental skills of students and compassionate classroom behavior. Likewise, compassionate classroom behavior positively relates to the fundamental skills of students. The study highlights that compassionate classroom behavior significantly mediates the relationship between teachers’ reciprocative teaching approach and the fundamental skills of students. This emphasizes the critical role of compassionate classroom behavior in enhancing the effectiveness of reciprocative teaching approaches in improving students' fundamental skills.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions, the following recommendations are made. School administrators should provide orientation and training for teachers on culturally responsive tools and strategies. Building background knowledge is essential for understanding cultural dimensions and the larger social, political, and economic conditions that impact education outcomes. DepEd officials should formulate policies that enhance educational practices related to students’ technical vocational livelihood skills. These policies should create standards of quality for learning and teaching, set expectations, and ensure accountability.

Teachers should develop and implement interventions that emphasize the importance of reciprocative teaching approaches and compassionate classroom behavior. Such interventions can help students focus better and become more attentive learners, thus improving their technical vocational livelihood skills. Junior high school students should actively work on developing their technical vocational livelihood skills. This will enhance their capabilities, strengthen their learning experiences, and guide them in planning or modifying their learning methods to align with their fundamental skills.

Researchers should conduct further analysis on other factors that may contribute to the relationship between teachers’ reciprocative teaching approach and students’ fundamental skills. Since only 87.10% of the total effect is mediated by compassionate classroom behavior, exploring other potential mediators is essential for a comprehensive understanding of this relationship.

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