

PEDAGOGICAL CONTENT KNOWLEDGE IN MUSIC EDUCATION AMONG PUBLIC ELEMENTARY TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) is generally accepted to be necessary for teachers to deliver quality instructions and promote significant learning among pupils. Thus, research on Teachers' PCK is highly relevant. Although there have been numerous researches exploring PCK in different areas such as Mathematics, Science and Language Education, limited studies have been conducted focusing on Teachers' PCK in Music Education. This study examined the pedagogical content knowledge in music education among public elementary teachers in the District of Mariveles, Bataan, SY 2019-2020. In addition, this study also investigated the challenges faced by teachers in teaching music. Descriptive research design was utilized, and data were obtained through questionnaire and interview from 54 elementary teachers who were selected purposively. Gathered data were encoded and analyzed in SPSS using frequency, percentage and mean for descriptive data. One-Way ANOVA was used to identify significant variations on teachers' pedagogical content knowledge in music when respondents were grouped by profile. Significant findings of the study revealed that that respondents have insufficient knowledge on the content and pedagogy of music in the elementary level. Data further divulged that teachers' lack of knowledge on the subject, the negative attitude of pupils towards the subject, lack of facilities, and lack of teaching resources/materials were the main challenges faced by teachers in teaching music. Lastly, it was found that teachers' content knowledge in music varied significantly when they were grouped based on the number of relevant seminars and trainings they attended. Also, teachers' pedagogical knowledge in music was found to have significant variations when they were grouped based on the specialization and number of relevant seminars and trainings they attended.

Keywords: Music education, pedagogical content knowledge, challenges, SPSS analysis, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

Music is one of the fundamental attributes of human life. At every stage of one's existence, music plays an essential part, from infancy to maturity as an adult. It is so important because of its intrinsic value and benefits to other aspects of human competence (Peer as cited in Machingura & Zinhuku, 2019). As observed by Okongo (2009), music has a tremendous contribution to child development. The listening skills developed in music lessons are of great benefit to children throughout the whole curriculum, and the creativity and problem-solving skills children develop as they make their

own musical compositions are vital to creating a well-rounded child able to perform confidently in the twenty-first century.

In K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum Framework of Music and Arts Education, the design of curricula is described as student-centered, based on spiral progression of process, concepts and skills and grounded in performance-based learning (DepEd, 2013). It is therefore ideal that music should be taught by competent music educators so that pupils would be engaged in learning music through active involvement and participation. However, in most



primary schools, children are usually taught by “generalist” teachers who are expected to teach all curricular subjects, including music. As a subject, Music may appeal to be one of the most challenging subjects to teach by a generalist teacher who does not have an expertise or any background in music.

Many newly hired teachers begin their primary school teaching career with little knowledge and understanding of music pedagogy (Stunell, 2010). Furthermore, some generalist primary teachers have demonstrated negative attitudes towards music as a curriculum subject (Spurce, Daubney, & Lamont, 2012) and they may not understand the different ways that music education can be approached within the primary school (Fautley & Henley, 2010).

Music educators around the world face many challenges to ensure that all children have access to good quality developmental music education during their primary school years. In many western countries, music specialist teachers have been trained, resourced and funded to implement developmental and sequential music programs in elementary schools. As music and the arts have decreased in priority in recent years, so numbers of specialist teachers have decreased, and generalist classroom teachers in many schools are expected to teach all the arts subjects, including music. Research studies revealed, that non-specialist elementary teachers in these countries have little confidence in their own musical ability and in their capability to teach music (Bowie, 2009).

In a survey conducted in Australia, generalist teachers identified a list of challenges that they encountered in the implementation of music syllabus. These are: lack of knowledge about the syllabus requirements; lack of time to prepare music lessons; insufficient time in the teaching the subject; lack of priority for music; lack of personal musical experience and lack of adequate resources. These are similar to the problems identified by Niekirk (as cited in Bowie, 2009) in South Africa, Mills (as cited in Bowie, 2009) in England and SERCARC (as cited in Bowie, 2009) in Australia. Lack of time and lack of priority for music education were also

identified by Roulston and Lean; and McPherson (as cited in Bowie, 2009) identified the lack of teacher confidence and skills as well as the inadequacy of training institutions to train teachers effectively in music education as key problems in the implementation of effective music programs in elementary schools.

Indeed, sufficient knowledge and skills is required of one to be able to provide appropriate and adequate music education for primary school pupils. Pedagogical content knowledge, the ways that teachers understand their subjects in order to effectively deliver an instruction, has been described and explored in the math, science and other education fields in some depth, yet little research exists illustrating this concept in music education (Millican, 2013).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study was conducted to 1) describe teachers’ pedagogical content knowledge in music, 2) determine the challenges in teaching music, 3) test the variations on the pedagogical content knowledge of teachers when they were grouped by profile, and 4) to determine the implication of the findings of the study in teachers’ instructional practices and development.

METHODOLOGY

The researcher used the descriptive method of research since the purpose of the study was to describe analytically the Pedagogical Content Knowledge of teachers in music education. A total of 78 teachers were purposively selected and invited to answer the survey-questionnaire that were sent to them through email and fb messenger. However, only 54 or 69% of them responded and participated in the study. Selection of respondents was based on the following criteria: (1) public elementary school teacher, (2) with permanent item and (3) teaching MAPEH in Grades 4, 5 and 6. A researcher-made questionnaire was utilized to gather the needed data for this study. The



questionnaire was subjected to validation with a pool of evaluators comprising specialists in the field of research and music education. It was distributed among the respondents through the online platforms such as email and FB Messenger. The researcher oriented and explained to each respondent the purpose of this study. Respondents sent back the questionnaires to the researcher on the day agreed upon. Personal interviews to respondents were also conducted to add more discussions and further support the findings of the study. Gathered data were encoded and analyzed in SPSS using frequency, percentage and mean for descriptive data. One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was utilized to identify if there are significant variations on teachers' Pedagogical Content Knowledge in Music when they are grouped by profile.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This presents the analysis and interpretation of the findings of the study.

1. Teachers Pedagogical Content Knowledge in Music

Table 1
Assessment of Teachers' Content Knowledge in Music

Content Knowledge in Music	Mean Score	Percent Equivalent	VI
Rhythm	5.40	77.40	US
Melody	6.77	75.31	US
Form	3.01	50.31	US
Timbre	3.94	78.89	US
Dynamics	4.01	80.37	S
Texture	3.5	58.33	US
Harmony	4.07	67.90	US
Tempo	4.01	66.97	US
Over-All	34.76	69.51	Unsatisfactory

Table 1 presents the assessment of teachers' content knowledge in Music. It can be seen from the table that the respondents obtained a rating of unsatisfactory in all elements of music except in Dynamics. The over-all rating of respondents in content knowledge in music

was unsatisfactory with mean score of 34.76 and percent equivalent of 69.51.

These findings imply that respondents have low level of mastery of contents of music. Most of the respondents articulated openly that they hardly understood most of the contents of music, specifically lessons on music theory. The study conducted by Wiggins and Wiggins (2008) also revealed that most generalist teachers who teach music do not have sufficient knowledge on the subject matter of music and that made them feel that they are not qualified to teach music. It could be due to the fact that most of them have received insufficient training and preparation needed in teaching music in the elementary level.

1.1 Teachers' Content Knowledge in terms of Preliminary Activity

Table 2
Preliminary Activity

Indicators	Mean	VI
1.1 conduct rhythmic drills using stick notation	3.29	S
2.1 conduct rhythmic drills using rhythmic patterns	3.01	S
3.1 conduct melodic drills using Kodaly hand signals	2.70	S
4.1 conduct melodic drills using ward hand signals	2.61	S
5.1 conduct echo-clapping of rhythmic patterns	3.31	S
Composite Mean	2.98	Sometimes

Table 2 illustrates the teachers' pedagogical knowledge in Music in terms of Preliminary Activity. It can be gleaned from the table that teachers do not regularly conduct preliminary activities such as rhythmic and melodic drills in teaching music lessons which involve singing and playing instruments. This was indicated in all statements which obtained means ranging from 2.60 to 3.29. Findings imply that teachers hardly recognize the importance of conducting preliminary activities such as rhythmic and melodic drills in teaching lessons which involve singing and playing instruments. Drill as an instructional strategy promotes the acquisition of knowledge or skills through systematic training by multiple repetitions and practice (Lim et al., 2012).



1.2 Teachers' Content Knowledge in terms of Conducting Song Analysis

Table 3
Conducting Song Analysis

Indicators	Mean	VI
1. I conduct song analysis by asking pupils about the title of the author, time signature and key signature of song	3.46	O
2. I let my pupils count the beats per measure as indicated by the time signature	3.40	O
3. I let my pupils identify the notes and rests used in music score	3.29	S
4. I let my pupils recite the lyrics following the rhythmic patterns of the song	3.16	S
5. I let my pupils clap, tap and recite the rhythmic patterns of song	3.33	S
Composite Mean	3.32	Sometimes

Table 3 presents the pedagogical knowledge of teachers in terms of Conducting Song Analysis. Data revealed that teachers often conduct song analysis by asking pupils about the title, author, time signature and key signature of a song. This was reflected in the first indicator which obtained the highest mean of 3.46.

On the other hand, the lowest mean of 3.16 was obtained by fourth indicator about letting pupils recite the lyrics following the rhythmic patterns of the song. These results could be attributed to the fact that teachers have insufficient knowledge about music. Conducting song analysis requires a teacher to have knowledge and understanding of basic music theory. Song analysis is conducted in order to gain understanding how a music piece works (Cook, 2012). Some respondents undeniably stated that they do not know how to conduct song analysis and so they just skipped this part of the lesson. Songs were usually taught to pupils by just letting them listen and sing along with a recorded one.

1.3 Teachers' Content Knowledge in terms of Teaching a Song

Table 4
Teaching a Song

Indicators	Mean	VI
1. I show the music score of the song	3.46	O
2. I use instrument (either melodic or rhythmic) to assist and accompany pupils in singing	2.42	SD
3. I show pupils how to properly sing the song (modeling)	3.37	S
4. I let my pupils sing the song by parts or phrases while clapping or tapping the rhythmic pattern	3.59	O
5. I let my pupils sing the song by parts or phrases while clapping or tapping the steady beat	3.24	S
6. I let my pupils use musical instruments/improvised musical instruments while singing the song	2.16	SD
Composite Mean	3.02	Sometimes

Table 4 presents the teachers' pedagogical knowledge in music in terms of teaching a song. Findings show that teachers often conduct song analysis by showing the music score of the song. It was reflected in the first indicator which obtained the highest mean of 3.59. This finding supports the concepts of Wiggins and Wiggins (2008) who found out that teachers spent most of their time in singing because they believe that this requires less musical expertise and feel that they have they can do it in some capacity.

On the other hand, the lowest mean of 2.16 was obtained by sixth indicator about letting pupils use musical instrument. This might have negative impact when it comes to developing creativity among pupils as they would be deprived of a chance to improvise and compose. In addition, it was also found that teachers seldom use musical instruments to assist or accompany pupils in singing as indicated in second indicator with mean of 2.42. This implies that most of the respondents have little knowledge on playing musical instruments. This is somewhat accepted since not everyone has



musical talent which is believed by most people to be inherent and not something that can be learned (Wiggins & Wiggins, 2008). However, playing musical instrument in class has positive impact not only to pupils but to teachers as well. De Vries (2011) indicated that playing instruments adds to the atmosphere in the classroom and makes pupils happier.

1.4 Teachers' Content Knowledge in terms of Application of Methods and Strategies

Table 5
Application of Methods and Strategies

Indicators	Mean	VI
1. I use hand signals of syllables in teaching lessons in melody	2.68	S
2. I use the Rhythm Syllable System in teaching topics in rhythm	2.77	S
3. I use simple rhythm chants to teach rhythm/rhythmic pattern	2.85	S
4. I let my pupils use percussion instruments and do improvisation	2.16	SD
5. I let pupils interpret the text of a song or other aspects of the music through bodily movements	3.01	S
6. I integrate other discipline	3.48	O
7. I use echo clapping in teaching rhythm	3.11	S
8. I let my pupils do improvised musical instruments and let them use it to accompany their singing	2.00	SD
Composite Mean	2.75	Seldom

Table 5 presents teachers' pedagogical knowledge in music in terms of application of methods and strategies. As shown on the table, teachers often integrate other discipline such as using a story to present a lesson on dynamics or timbre. It was indicated in sixth indicator with the highest mean of 3.48. On the other hand, data revealed that teachers seldom let their pupils create and improvise. This was indicated in

fourth and eighth indicators which obtained low mean scores of 2.16 and 2.00, respectively.

Results imply that teachers often use strategies which are common or can be applied to all subject areas such as the integration of other discipline. However, they sometimes or seldom utilize strategies and methods which were unique in teaching music. According to respondents, they teach lessons in music according to how it was written in their teaching guides or lesson plans which were just downloaded from the internet. However, they could not identify exactly the methods and strategies that they used in their lessons. In addition, some respondents also mentioned that they do not teach music that much and just focused only on discussing arts, PE and health, because they do not really know how to teach music properly. In the study of Machingura and Zinhuku (2019), it was also revealed that music subject were not taught by teachers in the primary schools due to their lack of knowledge on the subject.

Furthermore, results also indicate that teachers seldom let pupils create or improvise. This supports the findings of Wiggins and Wiggins (2008) that generalist teachers reported engaging students in composing and improvising only five percent of the time although it was clear to them that performing is the main goal of music education.

2. Challenges in Teaching Music

Table 6 presents the challenges in teaching music as perceived by teachers themselves. It can be gleaned from the table that teachers strongly agreed that the negative attitude of pupils towards the subject, lack of facilities, lack of teaching resources/materials and teachers' lack of knowledge on the subject were among the challenges they face in teaching music with mean scores of 4.40, 4.62, 4.38 and 4.79, respectively.

Among these challenges, lack of knowledge on the subject obtained the highest mean. This implies that most of the teachers have little knowledge about this subject that they were teaching. Wiggins and Wiggins (2008) also



found out in their study that one of the issues that emerged among generalist elementary teachers who are teaching music was the teachers' lack of knowledge of the subject matter of music.

Table 6
Challenges in Teaching Music

Challenges in Teaching Music	Mean	VI
1. Insufficient learners' material/textbook	3.16	MA
2. Insufficient teachers' manual/guide	3.22	MA
3. Negative attitude of teachers towards the subject/ Music is less prioritized	3.90	A
4. Negative attitude of pupils towards the subject / Music is less prioritized	4.40	SA
5. Lack of facilities such as music rooms and space for teaching music	4.62	SA
6. Lack of teaching resources such as musical instruments	4.38	SA
7. Lack of teaching resources such as audio recordings/audio-visuals of songs	4.00	A
8. Lack of knowledge on the subject	4.79	SA
Lack of Admin Support	4.00	Agree

Machingura and Zinhuku (2019) identified that teachers' lack of knowledge was one of the challenges contributing to non-teaching of music in the primary schools. According to the respondents, they sometimes do not teach or skip some lessons in music because they themselves do not understand it. In support of this findings, studies found that teachers lack motivation and confidence to teach music because they feel uncertain about their knowledge in music and its content (Welch & Henly, 2014)

Data also revealed that teachers agreed that negative attitudes of teachers towards the subject/less prioritized by teachers, lack of teachers' resources and lack of admin support and are some of the challenges in teaching

music with mean scores of 4.40, 4.00 and 4.00, respectively. This would suggest that music education in the elementary level was not a priority. Teachers claimed that aside from having little knowledge with some difficult lessons in music, they do not give much attention to music because they have to allot more time in more important subjects such as English, Mathematics, Science, and Filipino. In addition, they need to allot more time in doing other tasks such as reading interventions, training of pupils, reports, school programs and projects, etc. As supported in research by Machingura and Zinhuku (2019), teachers allot some importance to the subjects they teach, and music is allotted very little importance. The priority is allocated to any other subject and activity outside music.

3. Variations on Teachers' Pedagogical Contents Knowledge

3.1 Variations on Teachers' Content Knowledge in Music when grouped by Profile

Table 7
Variations on the Content Knowledge of Teachers when grouped by Profile

Profile	F	P-value	VI
Years in Teaching	.984	.425	NS
Music Highest Educational Attainment	1.000	.401	NS
Specialization	.959	.390	NS
No. of Relevant Seminars and Trainings	9.797	.000	S

Table 7 shows the variations on the content knowledge of teachers when grouped by profile. As shown, teachers' content knowledge in music was found to have significant variations when they were grouped based on "number of relevant seminars and trainings." This was supported by the F-value of 9.797 and p-value of .000. This suggests that training is an important factor of teachers' knowledge on the subject they are teaching. Those teachers who attended more relevant trainings were more likely to have sufficient knowledge about the subject matter of



music than those who attended less or no training at all. Ekpoh et al. (2013) indicated that teachers who attended in-service training perform effectively in their work concerning knowledge of the subject.

3.2. Variations in Teachers’ Pedagogical Knowledge in Music when grouped by Profile

Table 8
Variations on the Pedagogical Knowledge of Teachers when grouped by Profile

Profile	F	P-value	VI
Years in Teaching Music	1.525	.209	NT
Highest Educational Attainment	.681	.568	NT
Specialization	4.092	.022	S
No. of Relevant Seminars and Trainings	23.027	.000	S

Table 8 shows the variations on the pedagogical knowledge of teachers when grouped by profile. As shown, teachers’ pedagogical knowledge in music was found to have significant variations when they were grouped based on the ‘Specialization’ (F=.4.092, p-value=.022) and number of relevant seminars and trainings’ (F=23.027, p-value=.000). This implies that teaches pedagogical knowledge on the subject they are teaching varies based on their specialization and the number of relevant seminars they attended. Aziz and Akhtar (2019) stated that teachers showed significant difference in pedagogical competencies. Trained teachers were more competent in all categories including pedagogy than teachers having no training.

4. Implications of the Findings of the Study

The findings of the study have significant implications for teachers’ instructional practice and development. These were derived from the findings that teachers lacked the pedagogical content knowledge necessary for them to deliver quality music education. The study suggests that

there is a need to capacitate teachers and enhance their knowledge on the content and pedagogy in music education. Teachers should have mastery of the contents of music curriculum in the elementary level as well as the knowledge of different methods and strategies that they may use in teaching those contents.

Moreover, the study verified the claims of other researches that music is a marginalized subject. This was supported by the findings of the study that the negative attitude of pupils towards the subject, lack of facilities, lack of teaching resources/materials and teachers’ lack of knowledge on the subject were the main challenges teachers faced in teaching music. This suggests that there is a need to give more importance to music education program in every school.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Public elementary teachers have insufficient knowledge on the contents and pedagogies of music in the elementary level.
2. Teachers’ lack of knowledge on the subject, the negative attitude of pupils towards the subject, lack of facilities, and lack of teaching resources/materials are the main challenges faced by teaching in teaching music.
3. Teachers’ content knowledge varies significantly when they are grouped based on the number of relevant seminars and trainings they attended.
4. Teachers’ content knowledge varies significantly when they are grouped based on their specialization and number of relevant seminars and trainings they attended.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the conclusions drawn from the findings of the study; the following recommendations are given:

1. Regular and well-organized in-service training (INSET) programs may be conducted by the Schools Division of Bataan- Mariveles Annex to enhance teachers' mastery of the content and application of different methods and strategies in teaching in music. School heads and teachers assigned to Learning and Development of teachers may also initiate school learning action cell (SLAC) session on content and pedagogy in music. Moreover, teachers may be trained to provide opportunities for learners to perform, create and improvise since music is a performance-based discipline.
2. Sufficient instructional materials and facilities for practical aspects of the subject may be provided in every school. School administrators may have appropriate budget to purchase those instructional materials. Teachers may also consider using mobile applications like Little Piano Pro, Perfect Piano and others in teaching music. On the other hand, in order to develop learners' interest towards the subject, programs that promote music such as school chorale, instrument ensemble, glee club and others may be initiated by school heads and teachers. Furthermore, teachers may be trained on how to read music scores and play simple melodic instruments so they will be able to teach songs which are unfamiliar to them.
3. Music may be assigned to teachers with specialization in music or MAPEH. If there is no available teacher with that specialization, it may be given to teachers with background or inclination to music. Generalist teachers may also continue to teach music since they received appropriate pre-service training in their undergraduate program. In addition, trainings and seminars attended which are related to teaching music may also be considered.
4. It is hoped that the findings of the study may motivate future research to conduct study on the possible solutions of these problems. Future researchers may conduct a research for development and validation of instructional modules on content and pedagogy of music education.

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