

## APPRAISAL OF MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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### ABSTRACT

*The study explores on the assessment of the Multicultural Education in St. Bridget College, Batangas City in the following areas: School Community and Policy, Curriculum, Instruction, and Student Services. This utilized a descriptive method with a researcher-made questionnaire based on the works of Banks. Mean, standard deviation, percentage, Cronbach alpha, and T-test were used in the study. Findings revealed that Multicultural Education is observed in the institution. More so, no significant difference is determined in the perceptions of both teachers and students regarding their assessment of the school program. Subsequently, the findings suggest that the strengths to be enhanced in the Multicultural Education Program in the institution are the School Community and Policy, Curriculum and Instruction. On the other hand, the student services area needs to be improved based on total quality assurance. Thus, the study recommends Multicultural Education Program to be part of the institutional development plan. In-service training could also be conducted to increase the level of awareness of faculty and students on Multicultural Education and how to effectively integrate it into the classroom and school policy.*

*Keywords: Multicultural Education, Diversity of learners, Higher Education, Descriptive, Philippines*

### INTRODUCTION

Globalization has created an impact in the academe drawing focus on emerging concerns of diversity, inclusion, and innovation in learning. As a response, educational institutions revisited curriculum and instruction frameworks through academic cross-pollination to introduce responsive programs, designed and employed to maintain the quality in education. One of these innovations is the introduction of Multicultural Education.

According to Banks as cited in UW College of Education (2021), Multicultural Education can be considered as an idea and a process. As an idea, it helps to create equal educational opportunities regardless of racial, ethnic, and social subgroups. As a process, these are ideals that education personnel should strive to achieve.

Multicultural education as an idea was emphasized in the study of Alismail (2016). He concluded that multicultural education is an important concept and idea to be studied by

teachers who are teaching diverse learners. In addition, multicultural education is essential to deliver equal education for all students. As a process, it includes the incorporation of multicultural education in the school through the selection and management of policies, curriculum, and teaching styles. (American University, 2021)

Multicultural Education is a concern that affects every phase and aspect of teaching and enables teachers to scrutinize their options and choices to clarify what social transformations they are conveying overtly and covertly to their students. It is also a means of challenging and expanding the goals and values that underlie a curriculum, its materials, and its activities.

Since its earliest conceptualizations in the 1960s, Multicultural Education has been transformed, refocused, reconceptualized, and in a constant state of evolution both in theory and practice. Education scholars rarely have the same definition of Multicultural Education. As with any



dialogue on education, individuals tend to mold concepts to fit their particular focus. Yilmaz (2016) emphasized that schools that adopt a multicultural education mentality should provide students with an educational environment having the equality of opportunities regardless of their race, ethnicity, language, religion, gender, cultural background, socio-cultural status, and sexual orientation.

In the Philippines, Multicultural Education is also being given importance because of the direct implications of Association of Southeast Asian Nation (ASEAN) integration. This economic integration greatly affects the educational system including its structure and curriculum. Higher education institutions must be responsive to the diversified culture and background of class with the coming of other students from ASEAN member countries. Thus, the implementation of Multicultural Education in higher education institutions should be strengthened.

According to Ameny-Dixon (2013), higher education institutions have a global perspective of multicultural education. One of its benefits to higher education is that it increases positive relationships through the achievement of common goals, respect appreciation, and commitment to equality among the intellectuals of the institutions.

With these, the author aimed to assess the Multicultural Education program of higher education particularly in St. Bridget College, Batangas, Philippines. As a Catholic academic institution that offers inclusive education, the school has a crucial role in implementing multicultural education. It continues to explore and adopt measures that would cater to the needs of all learners of diverse backgrounds.

Anchored on the institutional thrust to promote justice and integrity of creation, the researcher deemed it essential to cultivate greater awareness and further improve its programs relevant to Multicultural Education. Moreover, cognizant of cultural diversity among students, the author recognized the need to look into the school system to inculcate the value and appreciation for personal identity and cultural differences.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study assessed the implementation of the Multicultural Education Program in St. Bridget

College, College Department, Batangas City. Specifically, this study sought to: 1) describe the Multicultural Education Program of the school in terms of these areas, School Community and Policy, Curriculum, Instruction, and Student Services; 2) determine the strengths and weaknesses of the Multicultural Education Program in the institution; 3) identify the significant difference of the teacher and student respondents' assessment of Multicultural Education Program of the institution and 4) recommend an action plan to enhance the Multicultural Education Program of the school.

## METHODOLOGY

This study utilized the descriptive – survey method of research to assess the areas of Multicultural Education in St. Bridget College, College Department, Batangas City.

The participants of the study were 35 faculty members and 116 students of St. Bridget College. Student respondents were fourth-year college students from the major programs of the school namely Bachelor of Secondary Education, Bachelor of Elementary Education, Bachelor of Science in Social Work, Bachelor of Science in Information Technology, and Bachelor of Science in Business Administration.

The instrument used to assess the schools' Multicultural Education Program implementation was based on the works of Banks. The questionnaire was validated by experts in the field of curriculum and instruction and Multicultural Education. The reliability of the instrument was computed using Cronbach alpha. The reliability coefficient of the instrument is 0.86. This means that the questionnaire is reliable. The instrument was revised and finalized based on the results of the validation and reliability test.

First, a request letter to conduct the study in St. Bridget College was secured through the College Dean and Program Chairpersons. Then, the questionnaire was distributed to all college faculty members of the institution and the fourth-year college students. The data collected from the questionnaires were summarized and presented in tabular form. Statistical procedures that were used in the study were: Mean was used to describe the general or average responses while T-Test was



used to compare the significant difference between the responses of teachers and students.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Multicultural Education Program of the school in terms of School Community and Policy, Curriculum, Instruction, and Student Services

#### 1.1. In terms of Community and Policy

The school community and policy are important areas in the implementation of multicultural education. These are visible areas that reflect the agenda and priorities of the school administration. The school community includes the members of the school such as teachers, staff, and school administrators. This study includes policies on the hiring and training of personnel and the general policies of the institution.

Based on the data gathered, the Multicultural Education of school in terms of the school community was observed both for teachers and student respondents with a composite mean of 3.00. All criteria in the items on school community were observed except for the training and professional development on Multicultural Education and the hiring of teachers with multicultural backgrounds. These items were all fairly observed as assessed by students and faculty. This means that the institution does not have ample multicultural program and training for faculty and staff. Training is critical in Multicultural Education.

According to Hope & Naff (2016), one of the central strategies for addressing challenges in diversity must involve providing support to teachers and staff to work in schools characterized by greater diversity.

Meanwhile, the criteria that received the highest assessment among teachers and students were the items that dealt with the school community's attitude toward students. This means that the school community has a positive attitude towards the acceptance of students. This indicates that diverse students are accepted in the community. This is evident in the acceptance of the school of non-Catholic students. Moreover, the school does not have an admission test. The

institution accepts all students; however, their grades are considered in the admission for board passers course. Placement examination is also given to group the students according to their academic needs.

#### 1.2. In terms of Curriculum

The curriculum plays an important role in the educational system. In this study, it refers to the plan for achieving goals and the overall experiences of the students. The curriculum involves four step-plan involving purpose, design implementation, and assessment as popularized by Wiles and Bondi. (Reyes & Dizon, 2015). Curriculum also includes the involvement of stakeholders in the four-step planning phases.

The Multicultural Education Program school, in terms of Curriculum, got an average weighted mean of 3.00 and 2.99 as assessed by faculty and students. This means that multicultural education, in terms of curriculum, is observed in the institution. The school considers the diversity of the students in crafting the curriculum. The teachers are aware of the diversity of learners in terms of learning styles. They consider this knowledge in curriculum planning. However, the participation of parents from diverse backgrounds in school planning and activities is rated fairly observed by students. This got a weighted mean of 2.48 which implies that parents should also be given a big role in the implementation of the curriculum. As pointed out by Wolhuter & Wyk (2012) in their study, parental involvement is regarded as an integral management area in school management.

#### 1.3. In terms of Instruction

Instruction refers to the how component in the educative process. This includes the teaching and learning styles, assessment strategies, and instructional activities employed by the teacher. In a multicultural education, strategies should be culturally – responsive. Every student must have an equal opportunity to achieve his /her potential.

Culturally responsive teaching acknowledges cultural diversity in the classroom and accommodates this diversity in instruction. This can be done in these ways: recognizing and



accepting student diversity, being responsive to different student learning styles, and communicating positive images about the student's home cultures. (Vega, 2015). Teachers must be prepared to effectively facilitate learning among diverse students.

In terms of Instruction, the study revealed that both students and teachers assessed multicultural education as observed. Teacher and student respondents gave an average rating of 3.11 and 3.09 respectively. This means that the institution applies principles of multiculturalism in its instructional processes. It can be noted that the students rated the teaching styles of teachers matches the cultural and motivational styles of the students the highest. This implies that the students observed the instructional processes of their teachers match their needs. However, the teachers gave the highest rating to the assessment procedures used by teachers are varied. This means that teachers used different evaluation procedures to match the diverse needs of students. This got a mean rating of 3.31.

The learning style favored by the school got the lowest mean of 3.0 and 3.04 as assessed by teachers and students respectively. The mean ratings are both interpreted as observed.

Being aware of the learning styles of students and one's teaching styles are both observed in the instruction as assessed by students and teachers. These two criteria are emphasized by Lynch (2015) in his six ways to implement a real multicultural education in the classroom. Other ways include defining multiculturalism, observing the students closely and valuing the real-life experience of diversity over the textbook version, encouraging students to be proud of their own heritage, and creating assignments that celebrate multiculturalism.

#### 1.4. In terms of Student Services

Student services in the school include student activities, physical facilities, and guidance and counseling services. Multi-cultural student services should support diverse students and should provide cross-cultural learning opportunities for the entire school community. This area was fairly observed as assessed both by teachers and students with composite means of

2.59 and 2.57. The students gave the lowest rating to school facilities with a mean rating of 2.28. This indicates that the students observed that the school facilities are not fully responsive to their racial, ethnic, cultural, gender, and language differences. The training for students on multiculturalism got the lowest mean among teacher respondents. They gave this criterion a rating of 2.43 (fairly observed). This implies that the school lacks training for students to help them acquire a proper attitude on diversity.

The students rated all criteria as fairly observed except for the guidance services. The criterion related to school counseling services provided by the school was rated the highest by the teachers and students. The school has comprehensive guidance and counseling services for students. There is a guidance office headed by a licensed lay guidance counselor and a nun counselor assisted by a guidance staff. The office has a comprehensive annual program for all students.

The overall rating in Student Services suggests that the institution must be aware of whether and how it is fully supporting the diverse needs of its student population. The student services area is the least neglected area in the implementation of multicultural education in the institution. In most schools, student services are provided and guided by school affairs officers. In the study conducted by Major and Mangope (2014), it was emphasized that student affairs professionals play an important role in managing the multicultural concerns of college students. Their particular jobs necessitate the application of multicultural awareness, knowledge, and abilities. In order to provide services anchored on multiculturalism, knowledge, and competency on multiculturalism is necessary for student affairs professionals in order to assist with student learning/development and in creating a campus that supports all students.

#### 2. Strengths and Weaknesses of the Multicultural Education Program

It can be observed from Table 1 that the areas of school community and policy, curriculum, and instruction are strengths to be improved in the institution. These areas got 3.00, 2.99, and 3.10 average composite means respectively. However,



the area student services got an average weighted mean of 2.58 which means that this area needs to be improved in the institution.

Table 1  
Assessment of Multicultural Education Program

Area	AWM	VI	TQA
School Community and Policy	3.00	Observed	Strength to be improved
Curriculum	2.99	Observed	Strength to be improved
Instruction	3.10	Observed	Strength to be improved
Student Services	2.58	Fairly Observed	Improve

To further intensify multicultural education in the school, James Banks as cited by Vega (2015) suggested four major approaches of integrating multiculturalism in the educational setting. These are Contributions Approach, Additive Approach, Transformative Approach and Social Action Approach. The contribution approach reflects the least amount of involvement in multicultural education approaches. This is incorporated by selecting books and activities that celebrate holidays, heroes, and special events from various cultures. In this approach, culturally diverse books and issues are not specified as part of the curriculum. The second approach is the additive approach wherein content, concepts, themes, and perspectives are added to the curriculum without changing its basic structure. This involves incorporating literature by and about people from diverse cultures into the mainstream curriculum without changing the curriculum. However, this approach does not necessarily transform thinking. The third approach is the Transformation approach. This changes the structure of the curriculum and encourages students to view concepts, issues, themes, and problems from several ethnic perspectives and points of view. This type of instruction involves critical thinking and involves a consideration of diversity as a basic premise/ The last approach to integrating multiculturalism in the educational setting is the Social Action approach. This approach combines the transformation approach with activities to strive for social change. Students

are not only instructed to understand and question social issues but to also do something important about it.

In addition, multicultural education programs may be enhanced in different institutions by considering the 5 dimensions of multicultural education program as proposed by Banks (Vega, 2015). These are Content Integration, Knowledge Construction Process, Prejudice Reduction, Equity Pedagogy, and Empowering School Culture and Social Structure. Content Integration deals with the extent to which teachers use examples and content from a variety of cultures and groups to illustrate key concepts, generalizations, and issues within their subjects' area or discipline. Knowledge Construction Process describes how teachers help students to understand, investigate, and determine how the biases, frames of reference, and perspectives within a discipline influence how knowledge is constructed within it. Prejudice Reduction describes lessons and activities used by teachers to help students develop positive attitudes toward different racial, ethnic and cultural groups. Research indicates that children come to school with many negative attitudes toward and misconceptions about different racial and ethnic groups. Research also indicates that lessons, units, and teaching materials that include content about different racial and ethnic groups can help students to develop more positive intergroup attitudes if certain conditions exist in the teaching situation. Equity Pedagogy exists when teachers modify their teaching in ways that will facilitate the academic achievement of students from diverse racial, cultural, and social class groups. Research indicates that the academic achievement of students is increased when cooperative teaching activities and strategies, rather than competitive ones, are used in instruction. Empowering School Culture and Social Structures are created when the culture and organization of the school are transformed in ways that enable students from diverse racial, ethnic, and gender groups to experience equality and equal status.

### 3. Significant difference between Students' and Teachers' Assessment of Multicultural Education Program



Table 2 exhibits the comparison between the respondents' assessment of multicultural education programs in the institution. The probability values of 0.965 for School Community & Policy, 0.789 for Curriculum, 0.815 for Instruction, and 0.840 for Student Services were higher than the alpha ( $p>0.05$ ). T

**Table 2**  
*Comparison Assessment of Teachers and Students in Multicultural Education*

Variables	Weighted Mean		T value	P value	Significance	Decision
	Teachers	Students				
School Community & Policy	3.0	2.996	0.045	.965	Not Significant	Failed to reject the Ho
Curriculum	3.003	2.970	0.269	.789	Not Significant	Failed to reject the Ho
Instruction	3.1094	3.0828	0.234	.815	Not Significant	Failed to reject the Ho
Assessment	2.5917	2.5711	0.202	.840	Not Significant	Failed to reject the Ho

This means that the null hypothesis is accepted. It can be safely generalized that the assessment of students and teachers has no significant difference in terms of School Community & Policy, Curriculum, Instruction, and Student Services.

**4. Multicultural Education Proposed Action Plan**

Based on the results of the study, the researcher formulated an action plan that contains activities for administrators, teachers, staff, and students. This plan specifically prioritized Student Services as the area to be improved. Suggested activities are made also for School Community and Policy, Curriculum, and Instruction areas. These are the areas that need to be strengthened and enhanced. The action plan includes objectives, resources, time frame, and performance indicators. Some activities included in the plan are an orientation on multicultural education to all employees, integration of the concept in institutional development planning, the celebration of multiculturalism, improvement of facilities, integration of multiculturalism in student services such as in co-curricular activities of students and the services provided by the following offices:

Guidance, Registrar, Library, Student Affairs, and Program Chairperson.

**CONCLUSIONS**

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

1. Multicultural education is observed in the school's system specifically in the areas of Curriculum, Instruction, and School Policy as assessed by faculty and students while it is fairly observed in the Student Services area.
2. There is a need to improve the Multicultural Education Program in terms of student services. The areas that need to be strengthened are Instruction, Curriculum, and School Community and Policy.
3. There is no significant difference between the assessment of students and teachers on Multicultural Education Program in the institution in all the areas namely: Curriculum and Instruction, School Community and Policy, and Student Services.
4. The proposed action plan contains activities to help strengthen the multicultural education program in different areas of the school system. This includes specific areas that need to be improved and strengthened based on the results of the study.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following were recommended based on the conclusions drawn:

1. Administrators should conduct a review of their activities to look into the areas of multicultural education that are fairly observed in the institution. Moreover, they should develop a framework that entails instructional leadership and supervision of the Multicultural Education Program.

2. Student services programs should be improved to consider the diverse background of students.
3. In-service trainings could be conducted to intensify the level of awareness of faculty and students on multicultural education.
4. The proposed action plan may be integrated into the institutional development plan of the school to further enhance its multicultural education.
5. Studies of the same nature may be done to cover other areas not included in the study.

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## AUTHOR'S PROFILE



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