

COMPETENCE LEVEL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES TEACHERS IN PROMOTING CULTURAL AWARENESS AND HERITAGE PRESERVATION

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ABSTRACT

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Keywords - cultural awareness; heritage preservation; teacher competence; culture-based education; Social Sciences education; localization; contextualization; mixed-methods research.

Culture-based education is important for developing learners' cultural identity and promoting heritage preservation amid rising globalization and sociocultural change. The study assessed the competency of Social Sciences instructors in Senior High Schools in fostering cultural awareness and preserving legacy within the Schools Division of Tagbilaran City, Bohol. Specifically, it examined teachers' competence in incorporating

cultural awareness into instruction, determined the relationship between cultural awareness and heritage preservation competencies, and explored teachers' experiences and challenges in implementing culture-based education. A mixed-method explanatory sequential design was utilized in the study. The participants were Social Sciences instructors, students, school heads, and subject-area coordinators, recruited through purposive sampling. Descriptive



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statistics and Spearman's rank-order correlation were used to assess the quantitative data, while theme analysis was used for the qualitative data. Results revealed that teachers demonstrated a very satisfactory level of competence in integrating cultural awareness, particularly in pedagogical approaches and knowledge of local cultural heritage. A very strong positive relationship was found between cultural awareness and heritage preservation competencies ($\rho = .886, p < .001$), indicating that these competencies are mutually reinforcing. Qualitative findings indicated that teachers serve as cultural stewards but also highlighted limitations in localized teaching materials, professional development, and institutional support. The study proposes that culture-based education may be further promoted and that the preservation of local cultural assets can be supported through collaborative connections, contextualized teaching materials, and continuous professional development.

INTRODUCTION

Cultural history and identity are important parts of social cooperation, long-term growth, and environmental sustainability. They are made up of the beliefs, traditions, languages, values, practices, and historical knowledge that make communities unique from one generation to the next. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2023) views culture not only as a storehouse of history but also as a key factor in promoting peace, lifelong learning, and education for all. Because of this, teaching cultural knowledge and values to younger generations through education has become one of the best ways to protect both tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

Within educational organizations, schools are the main places where culture is passed on. It is very important for teachers, especially those who teach social sciences, to help their students understand their cultural identity and gain respect for local history, customs, indigenous knowledge, and historical resources. Recent studies in education consistently show that teachers' pedagogical skills have a significant effect on how well their students understand other cultures, engage in politics, and value history (Fauth et al., 2019; Achille & Fiorillo, 2022). So, cultural heritage education is more than just learning about history. It also teaches people to be responsible citizens who can protect cultural materials in a rapidly changing world.

Concerns about the loss of local cultures have grown due to globalization, digitalization, urbanization, and shifting social values. While technological progress makes it easier to share cultures with more people, it also exposes students to dominant global cultures, which may reduce their interest in local traditions and heritage (Jagielska-Burduk et al., 2021). Fewer and fewer young people today are aware of their own cultural history, according to new international studies (Suárez-Álvarez & Otero-Varela, 2025), unless schools intentionally include culturally responsive methods and localized learning

experiences.

The education system in the Philippines also sees culture-based learning as an important part of a good basic education. Republic Act No. 10066, also known as the National Cultural Heritage Act of 2009, requires educational institutions, government agencies, and towns to work together to protect, preserve, and promote Philippine cultural heritage. In the same way, the Department of Education built contextualization and localization into the K–12 curriculum to ensure that students’ learning remains relevant to their own lives. Understanding Culture, Society, and Politics (UCSP) is a class that teaches students about the Philippines’ diverse cultures, social structures, and civic duties.

Even though the government requires these laws, there are still problems with how culture-based education is being used. There are not enough teaching materials, teachers are not properly trained, there is not enough professional development for teachers, and local cultural resources are not used enough in the classroom (Villa, 2023; Tamana & Pagaddut, 2024), according to studies done in different parts of the Philippines. Teachers often have trouble putting lessons in their proper context because they have not had enough training, lack sufficient regional resources, or lack formal support. These problems are also evident in the Tagbilaran City Division. Early findings show that many Social Sciences teachers don’t have many opportunities to receive formal training in teaching cultural heritage, don’t have sufficient access to localized teaching materials, and don’t know much about Bohol’s cultural assets. Even though the curriculum requires it, these factors might make it harder for them to teach cultural awareness and heritage preservation effectively in the classroom. Many studies have looked at how culturally aware students are, but fewer have examined how competent teachers are, which is the most important factor in how well heritage education works. Not many studies have examined pedagogical competence, cultural preservation practices, community involvement, contextualized resource development, and institutional support simultaneously, using both quantitative and qualitative data. This study fills that gap by examining how well senior high school social sciences teachers promote cultural awareness and heritage preservation. It does this by collecting real-world data to improve teacher training, refine the curriculum, and develop new policies for the Department of Education.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND. The present investigation is anchored in four complementary theories that collectively explain how teachers develop competence in promoting cultural awareness and heritage preservation.

Pedagogical Content Knowledge Theory. Shulman’s (1987) Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) Theory is the main idea behind this study. It says that good teaching requires more than just knowing a lot about the subject. Teachers need to take their students’ subject knowledge and turn it into meaningful learning experiences that fit their students’ interests, backgrounds, and situations.

Pedagogical topic knowledge includes knowledge of the subject, how to teach it, what is taught, how to test students, and how to understand their needs. PCK talks about how Social Sciences teachers use historical facts, customs, native practices, and community events to make learning more real in the classroom. Teachers who know more about how to teach and the subject they teach are better able to put lessons in context, make localized teaching materials, help students learn through experience, and encourage an awareness of cultural heritage (Gudmundsdottir & Shulman, 1987).

Constructivist Learning Theory. Constructivist Learning Theory (Piaget, 1964) holds that the learner is not a passive recipient of information but an active participant in meaningful experiences that foster knowledge construction. Development of cultural awareness occurs when learners engage in real-life cultural practices, community activities, an analysis of history, and reflection of their cultural identities.

This theory supports culturally responsive instructional strategies such as cultural mapping, heritage site visits, oral history documentation, storytelling, role-playing, and project-based learning, all of which encourage learners to construct a deeper understanding of culture and heritage.

Sociocultural Theory. Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory emphasizes that learning is a social process, shaped through interactions with more knowledgeable members of society. Cultural learning happens via language, cooperation, and engagement in real communities. In legacy education, teachers act as cultural mediators relating classroom learning to local elders, historians, artists, museums, Indigenous communities and cultural organizations. These meetings help enhance learners' cultural identity and facilitate the transfer of cultural information from one generation to another.

Cultural Heritage Education Framework. The Cultural Assets Education Framework (UNESCO, 2023) says that education is one of the most important ways to protect cultural assets through involvement, community interaction, and long-term management. Heritage education helps students become good citizens by teaching them to value diverse cultures and participate in activities that protect them. This method aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education) and Sustainable Development Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), both of which emphasize the importance of protecting cultural heritage for long-term growth and strong communities.

RELATED LITERATURE

Cultural Awareness in Education. Cultural Awareness is the ability to be aware of, comprehend, respect, and appreciate one's own culture and the cultures of others. Cultural awareness in educational institutions creates inclusion, social cohesion, intercultural competency, and responsible citizenship. UNESCO (2023) states that cultural awareness is important for

quality education, as learners tend to develop stronger identities when their educational experiences are culturally relevant.

According to Naik et al. (2023), “culture shapes the beliefs, behaviors, communication and social relationships of individuals, which in turn influence the educational experiences and identity development”. Culturally responsive education, therefore, empowers learners to connect academic concepts to practical experiences.

Heritage Preservation through Education. Heritage conservation is about protecting physical and intangible cultural heritage for the benefit of future generations. Achille and Fiorillo (2022) highlight the significance of schools in preserving history through the incorporation of cultural education in the curriculum, the promotion of experiential learning, and the encouragement of partnerships with local communities.

Similarly, Jagielska-Burduk et al. (2021) showed that educational programs may considerably improve the awareness of heritage conservation among the general population, especially when students actively participate in community-based conservation activities.

Teacher Competence. Teacher competence comprises knowledge, pedagogical skills, professional values, curriculum implementation, and lifelong professional growth. Fauth et al. (2019) found that teacher competency is a strong predictor of student involvement, academic success, teaching quality, and motivation. In Philippine education, the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) reiterates teachers’ role in contextualizing instruction, building community relationships, and creating culturally sensitive learning environments.

Localization and Contextualization. Localization involves teachers taking into account learners’ immediate cultural environment in their teaching, and contextualization involves adapting curricular content to local conditions. Cejas (2022) revealed that localized education had significant gains in students’ engagement and understanding of Culture, Society and Politics. Similarly, Achille and Fiorillo (2022) found that contextualized heritage education contributes to learners’ cultural identity and to their continued involvement with the community.

RELATED STUDIES

International studies show continuously beneficial links between teachers’ competency and successful cultural education. According to Fauth et al. (2019), pedagogical competency favorably affects the quality of instruction and student learning results. Suárez-Álvarez and Otero-Varela (2025) also found that teacher preparation remains a key factor in the effectiveness of heritage education; however, many educators report insufficient training and limited instructional resources.

Globalization, technological progress, and the absence of cultural

education pose significant risks to the preservation of legacy, according to Rahman et al. (2023). In their study, they stressed that schools should be active institutions for heritage protection by incorporating cultural education into the official curriculum.

In the Philippine context, Villa (2023) observed that many Senior High School pupils were not well informed about Filipino culture due to the absence of the integration of cultural content across study areas. However, Diaz et al. (2024) noted that Surigaonon students had very high levels of cultural awareness and proposed experiential learning activities such as heritage excursions, discussions, simulations, and historical reenactments.

Tamana and Pagaddut (2024) assessed the teachers' ability to integrate Indigenous Knowledge systems and practices. They observed that instructors typically had adequate instructional competence but had great difficulty with curricular alignment, assessment, and the availability of culturally relevant instructional resources.

Likewise, Gadaza et al. (2025) found that inadequate faculty training, a lack of institutional support, and a scarcity of localized teaching resources continue to hamper the successful integration of Philippine cultural heritage into teacher education programs. These studies, taken together, show the important role of teacher competency, institutional support, localization, professional development, and community participation in the effectiveness of cultural heritage education. Nevertheless, many previous studies focused on students' cultural awareness, the integration of indigenous knowledge, or curriculum implementation rather than a comprehensive investigation of the competence of Social Sciences teachers in promoting cultural awareness and heritage preservation in the Senior High School context. This paper seeks to fill this empirical vacuum by using a mixed-methods design to examine the teachers' competency, heritage preservation practices, and contextual variables that influence culture-based education in the Tagbilaran City Division.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a **mixed-methods explanatory sequential design**, wherein quantitative data were collected and analyzed first, followed by qualitative inquiry to explain and enrich the quantitative findings. This design enabled the integration of numerical evidence and participants' experiences to provide a more comprehensive understanding of Social Sciences teachers' competence in promoting cultural awareness and heritage preservation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

The study was conducted at six public secondary schools that teach the Senior High School curriculum in the Schools Division of Tagbilaran City, Bohol. The participants were Senior High School Social Sciences instructors teaching the Understanding Culture, Society, and Politics (UCSP) curriculum,

their students, and chosen school heads and subject-area coordinators. Purposive sampling was used to choose individuals with the required teaching experience and supervision duties relevant to the study.

Data were collected utilizing a researcher-developed questionnaire and a semi-structured interview guide. The questionnaire was used to examine the teachers' competency in integrating cultural awareness and heritage preservation. The interviews were conducted to identify the participants' perceived roles, possibilities, obstacles, and instructional methods. The instruments were developed through a comprehensive literature review. This was based on Shulman's Pedagogical Content Knowledge Theory, Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), UNESCO's Cultural Heritage Education Framework and applicable national policies on cultural heritage and contextualized education. The instruments were validated by experts and piloted before administration, and internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. Upon the agreement of the university and the Schools Division Office, questionnaires were presented to the respondents, teachers, and students. Then, several instructors and school leaders participated in a semi-structured interview to corroborate and elaborate on the quantitative results. Participation was voluntary, and the principles of informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and data privacy were carefully upheld throughout the study.

Descriptive statistics were employed to present the data, including frequencies, percentages, weighted means, and standard deviations. Spearman's rank-order correlation was used to establish the association between teachers' competency in heritage preservation and competence in cultural awareness inclusion. Simultaneously, the Mann-Whitney U test was used to evaluate differences between the responder profiles and the evaluation groups. The qualitative data were examined using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), and the results were integrated with the quantitative findings to enhance interpretation through methodological triangulation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Competence of Social Sciences Teachers in Incorporating Cultural Awareness. The findings showed that Social Sciences instructors demonstrated a very good level of competency in integrating cultural awareness into the teaching of Understanding Culture, Society and Politics (UCSP). Teachers ($M = 3.73$) and the students ($M = 3.80$) generally assessed that cultural ideas are well integrated into classroom education. This indicates convergence between self-assessment and the learner's perceptions.

Table 1. *Competence of Social Sciences Teachers in Incorporating Cultural Awareness*

Dimension	Students <i>M</i>	Interpretation	Teachers <i>M</i>	Interpretation
Knowledge and Understanding of Local Cultural Heritage	3.76	Very Satisfactory	3.81	Very Satisfactory
Pedagogical Approaches for Integration	4.00	Very Satisfactory	3.84	Very Satisfactory
Development, Utilization, and Contextualization of Learning Resources	3.64	Very Satisfactory	3.55	Very Satisfactory
Overall	3.80	Very Satisfactory	3.73	Very Satisfactory

Note. Scale: 1.00–1.79 = Poor; 1.80–2.59 = Needs Improvement; 2.60–3.39 = Satisfactory; 3.40–4.19 = Very Satisfactory; 4.20–5.00 = Outstanding.

Of the three competence areas, Pedagogical Approaches for Integration earned the highest ratings from both students (*M* = 4.00) and teachers (*M* = 3.84), showing that instructors effectively use learner-centered and culturally relevant instructional techniques. Positive scores are likely due to the inclusion of activities such as cultural mapping, role acting, contextualized conversations, and collaborative learning, which allowed learners to relate abstract cultural notions to their lived experience. Constructivist Learning Theory, which emphasizes that meaningful learning occurs when students actively construct knowledge through real-world experiences (Piaget, 1964), supports this conclusion.

Likewise, Shulman’s (1987) Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) Theory explains that competent teachers transform disciplinary knowledge into instruction that is relevant and meaningful within learners’ social and cultural contexts.

The dimension **Knowledge and Understanding of Local Cultural Heritage** also received very satisfactory ratings from both groups. This implies that instructors have a sufficient understanding of local customs, beliefs, practices, and historical legacy, which is essential for effective teaching. This competency is important since teachers are cultural mediators who support learners in building cultural identity and civic duty. Teacher competency, particularly pedagogical topic knowledge and instructional self-efficacy, has a strong impact on student engagement and learning outcomes (Fauth et al., 2019). Naik et al. (2023) also argued that culture shapes people’s identities, actions, and values and stressed the necessity of teachers’ cultural competence to promote effective classroom learning.

Although still interpreted as **very satisfactory**, the **Development, Utilization, and Contextualization of Learning Resources** domain obtained the lowest mean rating among the three domains. This finding indicates that

teachers experience greater difficulty in producing localized instructional materials despite demonstrating competence in classroom delivery. Qualitative evidence further revealed that teachers have limited access to locally developed references and heritage-based instructional resources, leading them to rely on self-developed materials and personal initiative.

This finding is consistent with previous research indicating that a significant barrier to successful cultural education is the lack of contextualized learning resources. According to Suárez-Álvarez and Otero-Varela (2025), although teachers tend to respect heritage education, a lack of training and limited instructional tools remain barriers to its implementation in the classroom. As Achille and Fiorillo (2022) point out, sustained institutional investment in localized teaching materials, professional development, and community relations is crucial for providing authentic learning experiences for effective cultural heritage education.

In general, the results indicate that the Social Sciences instructors have the pedagogical skills to foster cultural awareness among Senior High School pupils. However, greater institutional support for producing localized instructional resources and more opportunities for specialized professional development might further boost teachers' capacity to deliver culturally sensitive, heritage-based education. These changes align with UNESCO's recommendations on education as the key tool for protecting cultural assets and promoting sustainable development through culturally based teaching and learning (Jagielska-Burduk et al., 2021).

Relationship Between Teachers' Competence in Incorporating Cultural Awareness and Heritage Preservation. The results revealed a **very strong positive and statistically significant relationship** between teachers' competence in incorporating cultural awareness and their competence in promoting heritage preservation ($\rho = .886, p < .001$). The null hypothesis was therefore rejected, indicating that higher competence in integrating cultural awareness into classroom instruction is associated with higher competence in heritage preservation.

Table 3. *Relationship Between Teachers' Competence in Incorporating Cultural Awareness and Heritage Preservation*

Variables	Spearman's ρ	p	Decision	Interpretation
Competence in Incorporating Cultural Awareness and Heritage Preservation	.886	< .001	Reject H_0	Very Strong Positive Significant Relationship

Note. $N = 44$. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed).

The magnitude of the correlation suggests that these competencies are not independent dimensions but rather complementary aspects of culturally responsive teaching. Teachers who possess strong knowledge of local culture

and effectively integrate culturally relevant pedagogies into instruction are likewise better positioned to promote heritage preservation through curriculum integration, contextualized learning activities, and meaningful learner engagement. This finding underscores that cultural awareness provides the instructional foundation upon which heritage preservation practices are built.

The findings substantially corroborate Shulman's (1987) Pedagogical Content Knowledge Theory, which highlights the importance of instructors translating their disciplinary knowledge into relevant classroom experiences. Teachers who possess knowledge of local culture and the pedagogical skills to contextualize instruction are more likely to foster learners' sense of cultural identity and active engagement in preserving cultural heritage. In this sense, cultural preservation is an extension of successful teaching rather than an independent educational activity.

The findings are also in line with Constructivist Learning Theory (Piaget, 1964), which posits that information is acquired through meaningful, authentic experiences, leading to greater comprehension for learners. Cultural awareness and contextualized, experiential learning approaches help instructors connect concepts in the classroom to students' local communities and help learners establish a cultural identity and a commitment to protecting heritage. Activities like cultural mapping, oral history projects, community immersion, and place-based learning provide learners with an opportunity to encounter culture as a living reality, rather than as abstract historical facts.

In the same vein, Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory highlights cultural learning as a consequence of genuine participation in social and community contexts. Thus, heritage preservation is more effective when instructors promote collaboration among learners, families, cultural practitioners, and local communities. Students may internalize cultural values rather than only receiving them in the classroom by engaging with and acquiring knowledge through generations.

The observed findings are consistent with earlier empirical research highlighting the tight link between teacher ability and heritage education. Teacher competency (especially pedagogical content knowledge and instructional self-efficacy) has a substantial impact on the quality of teaching and students' learning outcomes (Fauth et al., 2019). Similarly, Achille and Fiorillo (2022) pointed out that teachers' professional competence is vital to the successful delivery of heritage education, as they are key players in fostering cultural awareness and stewardship among students.

Current studies still emphasize the combination of cultural knowledge and heritage protection. According to Jagielska-Burduk et al. (2021), heritage education works best when activities aimed at raising awareness are routinely included in formal education and repeated through community engagement. Similarly, Suárez-Álvarez and Otero-Varela (2025) found that instructors with wider training in cultural heritage education feel more competent in

contextualizing their lessons, using local heritage resources, and engaging students in real cultural experiences.

The very high correlation coefficient observed in the present study likewise highlights the importance of strengthening teachers' professional development in both domains simultaneously. Professional learning initiatives should not focus exclusively on historical or cultural knowledge but should likewise enhance teachers' pedagogical skills in localization, contextualization, heritage documentation, community engagement, and culturally responsive assessment. Such integrated capacity-building programs would enable teachers to transform cultural awareness into sustained heritage preservation practices that extend beyond classroom instruction.

The results as a whole establish that promoting cultural awareness and preserving cultural heritage are mutually reinforcing educational processes. Improvements in teachers' competence in one area will likely enhance other areas, thereby advancing the broader aims of culture-based education, community participation, and sustainable cultural development. These findings further support the aims of UNESCO's cultural heritage education efforts and the Philippine educational agenda, which view schools as vital institutions for the protection of cultural identity and the transmission of legacy to future generations.

Qualitative Findings. The qualitative part of the study was on the views of teachers and school leaders on increasing cultural awareness and heritage preservation. Thematic analysis revealed three interrelated themes that added to and explained the quantitative findings: (1) Teacher as Guide and Facilitator of Cultural Stewardship, (2) Community-Based Learning as an Opportunity for Cultural Education, and (3) Institutional and Instructional Challenges in Heritage Education. These topics further illuminate the abilities of Social Sciences instructors and the contextual factors shaping their teaching approaches.

Theme 1. Teacher as Guide and Facilitator of Cultural Stewardship. A common theme emerged from interviews: teachers are facilitators who help pupils understand local culture and advocate for responsibility in protecting cultural assets. Participants frequently saw their job as extending beyond information delivery to encouraging learners' knowledge of cultural identity, historical consciousness, and civic duty. Teachers understood their role as mediators between classroom instruction and students' lived experiences, enabling learners to relate to both physical and intangible heritage.

This perspective is consistent with the quantitative data, demonstrating a very good level of competency in integrating cultural awareness, particularly in instructional techniques and in understanding local cultural assets. Meaningful learning was emphasized by the teachers, in keeping with the constructivist viewpoint that learners generate meaning through real learning experiences rather than passively receiving knowledge. According to Cahyono and Rusiadi (2025), teachers operate as facilitators; they may more actively involve students

by inviting them to co-construct knowledge in appropriate circumstances.

The results further support the Pedagogical Content Knowledge Theory proposed by Shulman (1987), which holds that effective teachers possess content knowledge and pedagogical skills to transform content into meaningful learning experiences. In cultural education, it means placing historical events, local customs, indigenous practices, and community experiences in context to consolidate learners' cultural identity. From the interviews, it becomes apparent that the participants are conscious of this responsibility and deliberately use culturally responsive strategies in their classroom teaching.

Theme 2. Community-Based Learning as an Opportunity for Cultural Education

Participants repeatedly recognized community resources as an important potential for enhancing cultural education. Teachers stressed the value of storytelling, cultural mapping, project-based learning and drawing on local examples to link classroom topics with students' everyday lives. School leaders also discovered that genuine learning is more meaningful when local communities, traditions, and cultural practices are used as teaching materials.

This qualitative data supports the quantitative conclusion that the elements of heritage preservation that scored the best ratings were Curriculum Integration, Use of Local Resources, and Heritage Sites. Teachers seem devoted to contextualizing education through the resources available in their communities, despite institutional constraints. The incorporation of local experiences into classroom instruction helps learners view culture as a living part of their communities rather than just historical facts in textbooks.

These findings are in line with the UNESCO framework for heritage education, which advocates community participation as an important instrument for the protection of cultural resources. Working with local governments, museums, cultural organizations, indigenous communities, and heritage practitioners in schools lays the foundation for a more sustainable approach to heritage education. Similarly, Achille and Fiorillo (2022) found that community engagement enables learners to develop their cultural identity by linking formal education to authentic cultural experiences that foster appreciation, stewardship, and civic participation.

However, participants also noted that important local festivals, heritage events, and cultural festivities remain underused as teaching materials. It implies that while teachers recognize the instructional benefits of community-based learning, institutional mechanisms to sustain school-community collaborations need further strengthening.

Theme 3. Institutional and Instructional Challenges in Heritage Education. Although participants expressed strong commitment to promoting cultural awareness, they consistently identified several barriers that constrain effective implementation. The most frequently cited challenges included limited access to localized instructional materials, insufficient teacher training in cultural heritage education, budgetary constraints that affect experiential

learning activities, limited institutional support, and varying levels of students' interest in local culture.

These findings closely correspond to the quantitative results, in which Documentation and Transmission and **Community Engagement** obtained the lowest mean ratings among the heritage preservation dimensions. Teachers acknowledged that while they encourage students to appreciate local culture, opportunities for systematic heritage documentation, oral history collection, and collaboration with cultural practitioners remain limited due to insufficient resources and institutional support.

The findings are consistent with recent international and Philippine studies identifying similar barriers to heritage education. Rahman et al. (2023) emphasized that globalization, technological change, and inadequate public awareness continue to threaten cultural preservation unless educational institutions actively strengthen heritage education. Likewise, Gadaza et al. (2025) reported that limited faculty preparation, insufficient institutional support, and scarcity of localized instructional resources remain major obstacles to integrating Philippine cultural heritage into educational programs.

The challenges identified by participants also highlight the need for sustained professional development. Although teachers demonstrated satisfactory to very satisfactory competence, they recognized that continuous learning, stronger institutional partnerships, and improved access to localized resources are necessary for achieving more meaningful and sustainable heritage education.

The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings demonstrates substantial convergence across both phases of the study. Quantitatively, Social Sciences teachers exhibited **very satisfactory competence** in incorporating cultural awareness and generally satisfactory to very satisfactory competence in heritage preservation. Qualitatively, teachers and school heads explained that these favorable ratings are largely attributable to teachers' commitment to contextualized instruction, learner-centered pedagogy, and personal initiative in promoting local culture despite limited institutional support.

The strong positive correlation between cultural awareness and heritage preservation indicates that these competencies function as complementary dimensions of culturally responsive teaching rather than independent constructs. Teachers who effectively integrate cultural awareness into classroom instruction are likewise better positioned to promote heritage preservation through curriculum integration, contextualized learning experiences, and community engagement. The qualitative findings further explain that this relationship is facilitated by teachers' understanding of their professional role as cultural stewards who connect learners with their communities, traditions, and historical heritage.

However, the integration of findings also reveals important systemic concerns. While teachers consistently demonstrated strong pedagogical competence, many of their instructional successes depended primarily on

individual initiative rather than on structured institutional support. Limited professional development, inadequate localized instructional materials, insufficient funding for experiential learning, and weak school-community partnerships emerged as recurring barriers across the interviews. These findings explain why documentation and transmission, as well as community engagement, received comparatively lower quantitative ratings despite favorable evaluations in curriculum integration.

Overall, the study suggests that strengthening teachers' competence alone is insufficient to ensure sustainable heritage education. Effective cultural awareness and heritage preservation require coordinated institutional support involving the Department of Education, local government units, cultural organizations, museums, and community stakeholders. Such collaborative efforts would enable teachers to move beyond classroom awareness toward active cultural preservation through documentation, experiential learning, and community participation. These findings reinforce UNESCO's position that education serves as a fundamental mechanism for safeguarding cultural heritage and advancing Sustainable Development Goals 4 (Quality Education) and 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), while also aligning with the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers' emphasis on contextualized instruction, community engagement, and lifelong professional development.

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