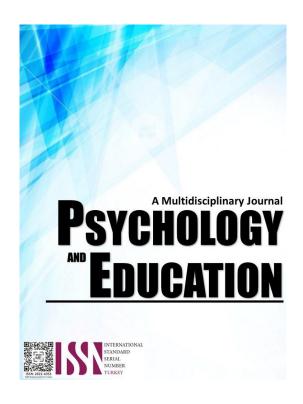
ASSESSMENT SKILLS AND PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES AS DETERMINANTS OF THE TEACHING COMPETENCE OF GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHERS HANDLING LEARNERS WITH DIFFICULTY IN DISPLAYING INTERPERSONAL BEHAVIORS



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Assessment Skills and Pedagogical Approaches as Determinants of the Teaching Competence of General Education Teachers Handling Learners with Difficulty in Displaying Interpersonal Behaviors

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Abstract

General education teachers often report low competence in managing students with interpersonal behavior difficulties. This quantitative correlational study examined the influence of assessment skills and pedagogical approaches on this competence, using data from 300 secondary teachers. Results revealed that assessment skills and pedagogical approaches are significant determinants of teacher competence. Multiple linear regression indicated that predictive variables covered 82.7% influence on the criterion variable. Consequently, further study is recommended using other variables not covered in this research in order to trace the 17.3% variance in teacher competence.

Keywords: assessment skills, pedagogical approaches, determinants of teaching competence, interpersonal behaviors

Introduction

Low teachers' competence among general education teachers in handling learners with interpersonal difficulties is a recurring problem for educators worldwide (Wolff et al., 2015). In inclusive education environments, where teachers are expected to adequately handle the different needs of their students, this deficiency is especially problematic. Teachers struggle to provide effective instruction to learners with interpersonal difficulties (Poulou, 2017).

In many countries, such as the United States, China, and Japan, teachers often reported low levels of teaching competence (Pavlidou & Alevriadou,2022; Wink et al., 2021; Li & Xue, 2021; Kohama et al., 2020). Students' achievement suffers, especially for disadvantaged students (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). In the Philippines, the issue of low teaching competence is particularly evident among general education teachers (Gepila Jr, 2020). Many educators expressed difficulties in managing classroom dynamics (Abayon, 2024).

If the problem of a lack of teaching competence persists, it could lead to severe consequences for the education system (Lauermann & König, 2016) such as students compromised learning experiences, resulting in lower academic performance and diminished social engagement (Wang & Fredricks, 2014), furthermore, teachers experienced burnout and frustration, exacerbating turnover rates and weakening the teaching workforce (Taylor,2023). These consequences coupled with scarcity of research on teacher competence have triggered the conduct of this study.

Research Questions

This study's primary purpose is to significance of the assessment skills and pedagogical approaches as determinants of teaching competence of general education teachers handling learners with difficulty displaying interpersonal behaviors. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

- 1. What are the levels of assessment skills in terms of observation, attention, feedback; pedagogical approaches in terms of motivation, retention, engagement; and teaching competence in terms of consistency and reproduction of the general education teachers handling learners with difficulty in displaying interpersonal behaviors?
- 2. Is there a significant relationship between assessment skills, pedagogical approaches and teaching competence of the general education teachers handling learners with difficulty in displaying interpersonal behaviors?
- 3. Is there a significant influence of assessment skills and pedagogical approaches on the teaching competence of the general education teachers working with students with difficulty displaying interpersonal behaviors?

Methodology

Research Design

The researchers utilized a quantitative, descriptive-correlational research design. As a non-experimental method, it explored the impact of variables within their natural context without any manipulation (Bhandari, 2023). This approach aimed to determine the degree of association between variables by analyzing how variations in one were linked to changes in another. The study provided insights into how these levels interact when managing students displaying difficulty in interpersonal behaviors. This systematic investigation yielded evidence-based recommendations for improving teaching practices in challenging educational settings.

Respondents

The respondents consisted of 300 general education teachers from the public secondary schools in Davao City. Inclusion criteria require a minimum of one year of teaching experience with secondary students currently employed in a general education role, an expert in assessment skills and pedagogical approaches, and a willingness to participate. Exclusion criteria include teachers with less than one



year of experience, who had non-general education roles (e.g., special education, administration), who lacked relevant training in assessment and pedagogy, and who had not consented to participate.

Purposive sampling was employed to select the teachers. The main advantage of purposive sampling is that it enables researchers to choose respondents most likely to offer meaningful and in-depth information pertinent to the research question (Nyimbili & Nyimbili, 2024). This approach ensured the selection of teachers with relevant experiences to address the study's aim.

Procedure

To assess the assessment skills and pedagogical approaches as determinants of teaching competence of teachers handling learners with difficulties displaying interpersonal behaviors, the researcher adapted questionnaires from three studies of Bouchaib (2016), Valzado et al. (2023), and Moreno-Murcia et al. (2015). A structured survey instrument, pre-tested for validity and reliability, was used to collect data, providing both quantitative and qualitative information. The researcher refined statements and clarified language to ensure a more comprehensive evaluation. The changes extended beyond the initial foundation, aiming for precision and alignment with the study. The respondents assayed the 40-item questionnaire, which had eight indicators against the teaching competence of general education teachers handling learners with difficulty displaying interpersonal behaviors. The instrument was subjected to content validation by experts with a 4.667 average and tested for reliability through Cronbach's Alpha analysis. This rigorous process confirmed the consistency of responses across the items in the questionnaire, establishing it as a valid and reliable tool for data collection.

The reliability of the survey questionnaire was further analyzed for individual variables, yielding robust results. The assessment skills variable achieved a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.990, indicating excellent reliability and consistency in evaluating teachers' abilities to assess and address learners' needs. Similarly, the pedagogical approaches variable scored 0.941, reflecting the instrument's effectiveness in capturing strategies that foster engagement and positive learning outcomes. Lastly, teaching competence demonstrated a reliability score of 0.991, underscoring the consistency of items measuring dimensions such as consistency and reproduction in teaching practices. These results confirmed that the survey questionnaires were a dependable and valid tool for investigating assessment skills, pedagogical approaches, and teaching competence among general education teachers who handle learners with interpersonal behavioral difficulties.

Data Analysis

To analyze the study's results, the researcher employed the following statistical tools:

Mean. The mean, also known as the arithmetic mean, is calculated by taking the total of all values in a dataset and dividing it by the number of entries or observations. It is a widely recognized measure of central tendency commonly known as the "average" (Bhandari, 2023). This statistical tool addressed the first three problem statements. Specifically, the researcher gained valuable insights into the average performance levels of assessment skills, pedagogical approaches, and teaching competence, facilitating a more systematic and quantitative interpretation of the research findings.

Pearson Product Moment Correlation of Coefficient. It is commonly utilized to measure linear relationships, ranging from -1 to 1, and reflects the degree and nature of the relationship between two variables (Turney, 2024). Pearson r is a valuable tool in analyzing the study on Assessment Skills and Pedagogical Approaches affecting Teaching Competence, as it quantifies the strength and direction of relationships between variables, facilitates data interpretation, and enhances the validity of research findings in the context of general education teachers handling learners with difficulty in displaying interpersonal behaviors

Multiple Linear Regression (MLR). This statistical method is utilized to examine the relationship between a single dependent variable and multiple independent variables. Equally, MLR analyzes how these independent variables collectively influence the outcome. By assessing the impact of each factor on the dependent variable, MLR allows accurate predictions. The model establishes a linear relationship that fits the data points (Hayes, 2023). Purposely, the researcher utilized analysis to examine how multiple means of representation, consistency, and reproduction (predictor variables), as learning stimuli, relate to teachers' teaching competence (dependent variable) as perceived by the teachers in an inclusive educational setting.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher observed the Philippine Health Research Ethics Board (PHREB) 's ethical standards, which align with Republic Act No. 10532 (2013). PHREB, created through DOST, is mandated to ensure compliance with universal ethical principles for safeguarding human respondents in research, as stated in its 2017 Guidelines. The researcher, possessing the necessary qualifications, resources, and facilities, conducted the study with community involvement, respecting participant rights and avoiding discrimination. Data collection began with securing ethical clearance from the HCDC-SMILE, followed by endorsements from the Graduate School Dean and the Davao City Department of Education, culminating in school head approvals. Online questionnaires, distributed via Google Forms, were preceded by informed consent obtained electronically, including respondent contact information. Data was securely downloaded upon completion, a ₱50.00 internet subsidy was disbursed via Gcash, and participants received individual thank-you notes and manuscript acknowledgment. Finally, the collected data were tabulated and analyzed using appropriate statistical tools with the assistance of a statistician.



Results and Discussion

This section contains the findings of the study, analyzes them based on the data collected, and ensures that each result is substantiated with relevant literature. The deliberations in this chapter connect to the problem statement discussed in earlier chapters of the study.

Table 1. Descriptive Table

Variables	N	Standard Deviation	Mean	Descriptive Level
Assessment Skills	300	1.041	3.027	Moderate
observation		1.11	2.72	Moderate
Attention		0.992	3.10	Moderate
Feedback		1.021	3.26	Moderate
Pedagogical Approaches	300	0.994	3.203	Moderate
motivation		0.992	3.22	Moderate
Retention		1.001	3.18	Moderate
engagement		0.990	3.21	Moderate
Teaching Competence	300	1.040	3.19	Moderate
consistency		1.045	3.21	Moderate
reproduction		1.035	3.17	Moderate

Table 1 presents the results of the descriptive analysis, which includes three variables: assessment skills, pedagogical approaches, and teaching competence. The variable assessment skills contained indicators such as observation, attention, and feedback, while the pedagogical approaches contained indicators such as motivation, retention, and engagement; finally, the teaching competence contained indicators such as consistency and retention. The overall mean score of assessment skills among general education teachers was 3.03, categorized as "Moderate," which signifies those teachers showed good teaching competence toward learners with difficulty displaying interpersonal behaviors. This indicated that while teachers possess basic assessment skills, these were sufficient to address the needs of learners struggling with interpersonal behaviors effectively. The moderate rating suggested that assessment skills were present but required much enhancement to optimize their impact on students' learning. The standard deviation (SD) for assessment skills was 1.04, indicating moderate response variability. This suggested that while some teachers felt confident in their assessment abilities, others may experience challenges, leading to inconsistencies in assessment practices.

The table also highlighted the levels of assessment skills of general education teachers across various indicators. Feedback received the highest mean score among the three indicators, with a rating of 3.26, but is still categorized as "Moderate," which signifies that those teachers showed good assessment skills toward learners with difficulty displaying interpersonal behaviors. The result indicated that while teachers moderately provided constructive feedback to their students, there was room for improvement in making feedback more effective, timely, and meaningful. Feedback is essential for guiding students' learning and behavior, and its moderate rating suggests that some teachers may not fully maximize their potential to help students improve their interpersonal skills. The SD for feedback was 1.02, indicating moderate variability in responses. The result suggested that some teachers excelled in providing feedback, while others may require additional support to enhance their ability to give clear and constructive input.

The next highest-rated indicator was "attention," with a mean score of 3.10, falling under the "Moderate" descriptive level, which signifies that those teachers showed good assessment skills toward learners with difficulty displaying interpersonal behaviors. This suggested that teachers were somewhat attentive to students' behaviors and responses, but there was a need for improvement in maintaining learners' focus. Since attention was critical in recognizing changes in student engagement and performance, its moderate rating indicated that some teachers may not be fully attuned to students' struggles, potentially affecting their ability to provide timely support. The SD for attention was 0.99, reflecting less variability compared to observation. This consistency in responses suggested that most teachers shared a similar perception of their attentiveness, though enhancements in training could further strengthen this skill.

Finally, observation received the lowest mean score of 2.72, also categorized as "Moderate," which signified those teachers showed good teaching assessment skills for learners with difficulty displaying interpersonal behaviors. This suggested that teachers felt less competent to observe and interpret students' behaviors and needs. Since observation is a crucial skill for identifying learning difficulties and behavioral patterns, its moderate rating implies a need for improvement in teachers' ability to systematically and accurately assess students in real time. The SD for observation was 1.11, the highest among the components, indicating significant response variability. This suggested that while some teachers were proficient in observation, others may struggle, emphasizing the need for targeted training to develop more assertive observational techniques.

These findings highlighted that while assessment skills were present among teachers, they required further development to ensure consistent and practical application. Moderate variability in responses, particularly in observation and feedback, suggested inconsistencies in the practice of these skills. Addressing these gaps through targeted professional development programs and enhanced classroom assessment strategies could help teachers support students with interpersonal difficulties more effectively.

Table 1 also showed the level of pedagogical approaches used by general education teachers working with students who had difficulty displaying appropriate interpersonal behaviors; the overall mean score was 3.20, categorized as "Moderate," which signified those teachers showed good in their pedagogical approaches toward learners with difficulty in displaying interpersonal behaviors. This



indicated that teachers had a basic understanding and implementation of pedagogical strategies. However, these approaches may not optimally meet the needs of learners with interpersonal behavioral difficulties. A moderate rating suggested that, while teachers applied pedagogical approaches, improvements could enhance their effectiveness in fostering student learning. The standard deviation (SD) for pedagogical approaches was 0.99, indicating relatively low response variability. This suggested consistent teacher perceptions of their pedagogical practices, though improvements could still elevate teaching quality.

Moreover, among the indicators of pedagogical approaches, motivation received the highest mean score of 3.22, also categorized as "Moderate," which signifies that those teachers showed good in their pedagogical approaches toward learners with difficulty in displaying interpersonal behaviors. This indicated that teachers moderately implemented strategies to motivate their students. Motivation is critical in engaging students and encouraging them to overcome interpersonal challenges. The moderate rating implies that current efforts are practical but could be further strengthened. The SD for motivation was 0.99, showing low response variability, suggesting a shared understanding and application of motivational strategies among teachers.

Engagement, with a mean score of 3.21, also fell under the "Moderate" descriptive level, which signifies that those teachers showed good in their pedagogical approaches toward learners with difficulty displaying interpersonal behaviors. This indicated that teachers moderately promoted student engagement in learning activities, essential for fostering participation and building positive relationships. The SD for engagement was 0.99, reflecting low variability in responses. This consistency suggested that teachers had similar perceptions of their ability to engage students, although there was still room for growth in creating more interactive and inclusive learning environments.

Meanwhile, retention received the lowest mean score among the indicators, with a rating of 3.18, still categorized as "Moderate," which signifies that those teachers showed good in their pedagogical approaches toward learners with difficulty displaying interpersonal behaviors. This suggested that teachers were moderately effective in helping students retain and apply information meaningfully. Since retention was critical for long-term learning and skill development, the moderate rating highlighted the need for enhanced strategies to improve students' ability to retain and utilize knowledge. The SD for retention was 1.00, indicating moderate variability in responses. This suggested that while many teachers were consistent in their approaches to retention, others may require additional support to improve their methods. These findings highlighted that while pedagogical approaches were present at a moderate level, there was significant potential to enhance motivation, engagement, and retention strategies to ensure more effective teaching practices. Consistent professional development and innovative teaching techniques could help address these gaps and better support students with interpersonal difficulties.

Also in Table 1 is the level of teaching competence with 3.19 as an overall mean score, which fell under the "Moderate" descriptive level, which signifies that those teachers showed good in their teaching competence toward learners with difficulty in displaying interpersonal behaviors. This result implies that while teachers demonstrated fundamental teaching skills, there remained ample opportunity to enhance their capabilities to better cater to learners' interpersonal challenges and needs. Moreover, the standard deviation (SD) for teaching competence was 1.04, signifying moderate response variability. This indicated that some teachers were confident and consistent in their teaching practices, whereas others may encounter difficulties, leading to discrepancies in the overall effectiveness of teaching.

In addition, the indicator of consistency achieved a mean score of 3.21, also categorized as "Moderate," which signifies those teachers showed good in their teaching competence toward learners with difficulty in displaying interpersonal behaviors. This suggested that teachers moderately applied consistent teaching strategies to foster a stable and predictable learning environment. However, with an SD of 1.05, the highest among the components, significant differences in responses were evident. This variability highlighted that while some teachers maintain steady and reliable practices, others might struggle to deliver a consistent approach, thus requiring further support and training.

On the other hand, reproduction recorded a mean score of 3.17, indicating its "Moderate" rating, which signifies those teachers showed good in their teaching competence toward learners with difficulty displaying interpersonal behaviors. This indicates that teachers ensure students can reproduce or apply learned knowledge and skills in various contexts. Despite this moderate level, the SD of 1.04 reveals moderate variability in responses, signifying that not all teachers are equally proficient in facilitating the application of concepts among learners. This variability suggests the need for interventions to standardize and improve this aspect of teaching competence. These results underline the necessity of enhancing consistency and reproduction as key elements of teaching competence. By addressing the variability in these areas and providing targeted professional development, schools can support teachers in fostering a more effective and equitable learning experience for students with interpersonal difficulties.

Correlation Analysis

Table 2. Correlation Table

Teaching Competence								
	r	p-value	Decision on Ho	Interpretation				
Assessment Skills	0.865	0.000	Reject	Significant				
Pedagogical Approaches	0.898	0.000	Reject	Significant				



Table 2 presents the results of the analysis examining the correlation between general education teachers' assessment skills, pedagogical approaches, and teaching competence in handling learners with difficulty displaying interpersonal behaviors. The correlation coefficient (r) and p-value determined whether a statistically significant relationship existed between the variables.

Assessment skills and teaching competence have a correlation coefficient of 0.865, highlighting a strong positive correlation. This suggests that as teachers' assessment skills improve, their teaching competence increases significantly. The p-value of 0.000 (α < 0.05) indicates the correlation is statistically significant. As a result, the null hypothesis (H_o), which posits no significant relationship between assessment skills and teaching competence, is not accepted.

Similarly, the correlation coefficient between pedagogical approaches and teaching competence is 0.898, signifying a strong positive relationship. This result highlights that better implementation of pedagogical approaches strongly correlates with higher teaching competence. The p-value of 0.000 (α < 0.05) signifies that this relationship is statistically significant, resulting in the null hypothesis to be not accepted.

Both findings highlight the critical importance of assessment skills and pedagogical approaches in enhancing teaching competence. These results underscore the need for targeted professional development programs that strengthen these key areas to improve teachers' overall effectiveness in addressing the needs of learners, particularly those with interpersonal difficulties.

Regression Analysis

Table 3. Contribution of RISE Program to the Professional Development of Teachers

			Teaching Co	ompetence			
	Unstandardized		Standardized Coefficients				
Independent Variables	В	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Decision on Ho	Interpretation
Constant	0.101	0.086		1.172	0.242		-
Assessment Skills	0.332	0.055	0.320	6.073	0.000	Reject H₀	Significant
Pedagogical	0.651	0.056	0.613	11.630	0.000	Reject H₀	Significant
Approaches						-	-

R = 0.910; R2 = 0.827; F-value = 711.500; p-value = 0.000

Table 3 shows the degree of influence assessment skills and pedagogical approaches have on teaching competence. The regression analysis shows the extent to which assessment skills and pedagogical approaches influence the teaching competence of general education teachers handling learners with difficulty displaying interpersonal behaviors.

As presented in Table 3, the overall p-value of $0.000~(\alpha < 0.5)$ shows that the regression model is valid and statistically significant. This result confirms the significant influence of assessment skills and pedagogical approaches on the teaching competence of general education teachers handling learners with difficulty displaying interpersonal behaviors. Given this, the null hypothesis, which posits that assessment skills and pedagogical approaches do not significantly influence teaching competence, is rejected. The overall model demonstrates a strong positive relationship between the predictors and teaching competence, as indicated by an R-value of 0.910. The R² value of 0.827 reveals that assessment skills and pedagogical approaches explain 82.7% of the variance in teaching competence. The high F-value of 711.500 further reinforces the model's strength, demonstrating its ability to effectively explain the influence of assessment skills and pedagogical approaches on teaching competence.

The study confirms that assessment skills and pedagogical approaches significantly influence teaching competence, with pedagogical approaches having a more substantial impact. Assessment skills demonstrate a considerable impact with an unstandardized coefficient (B) of 0.332 and an unstandardized coefficient (Beta) of 0.320. The significance of this effect is further supported by a t-value of 6.073 and a p-value of 0.000 (α < 0.05), indicating their statistically significant contribution. This highlights the importance of teachers' ability to observe, evaluate, and provide feedback, particularly for students struggling with interpersonal behaviors. Pedagogical approaches, however, have an even more significant impact on teaching competence. They emerge as the strongest predictor, evidenced by an unstandardized coefficient (B) of 0.651 and a standardized coefficient (Beta) of 0.613. This is further supported by a t-value of 11.630 and a p-value of 0.000, highlighting their statistically significant influence. Effective teaching strategies are essential for addressing students' diverse needs. These highlight professional development programs that enhance assessment skills and pedagogical approaches to equip teachers with the necessary tools to effectively support diverse classroom needs.

Descriptive Level

General education teachers possess good assessment skills, which may be inadequate to effectively support students struggling with interpersonal challenges. This suggests that while assessment skills are present, further development is needed to maximize their effectiveness in enhancing student learning outcomes. Sieland (2016) emphasizes that while general education teachers possess basic assessment skills, there is a need for structured interventions to enhance their ability to evaluate student learning outcomes effectively. Similarly, Mangila (2022) finds that while instructors demonstrate commitment and work performance, gaps exist in their ability to apply assessment strategies that foster independent learning, underscoring the need for professional development.



However, Woolf (2018) argues that existing competency measures may inaccurately reflect educators' skills because educators often integrate specialized assessment techniques that are aligned with their instructional goals. Additionally, Kearns et al. (2015) contend that alternative assessment approaches, such as formative assessments, provide a more nuanced understanding of teacher effectiveness, challenging the notion that general education teachers have only moderate assessment skills. These perspectives suggest that while some educators require targeted support, many already implement effective assessment strategies that traditional evaluation methods may not fully recognize.

This study highlights the idea that constructive feedback is good. Since feedback is crucial in guiding students' learning and behavior, a moderate rating suggests that some teachers may not fully harness its potential to enhance students' academic and interpersonal development. Research indicates that many teachers struggle with delivering timely and meaningful feedback, often due to a lack of structured training in assessment techniques. Vu and Nga (2023) highlight that the development of feedback skills among future teachers is influenced by pedagogical training, mentorship, and classroom experience, emphasizing the need for targeted support programs. Similarly, Costelloe and Egan (2020) find that early-career teachers often face difficulties making evaluative judgments, reinforcing the argument that additional professional development is essential for improving assessment practices.

Conversely, Vattøy (2020) argues that many teachers already integrate self-regulation and formative feedback techniques effectively, demonstrating an awareness of assessment for learning principles. Furthermore, Evans and Waring (2020) assert that significant progress has been made in higher education to enhance feedback strategies, disputing claims of a widespread deficiency in assessment skills. These conflicting perspectives suggest that while some educators require further training, others effectively implement feedback strategies, indicating variability rather than an overall moderate skill level in assessment practices.

This study shows that teachers demonstrate good attentiveness to students' behaviors and responses. However, consistently focusing on learners' needs is still room for improvement. Goldberg et al. (2021) find that novice teachers struggle to distribute their attention effectively across all students, often focusing on those displaying active learning behaviors while potentially overlooking disengaged ones. Similarly, Hussain et al. (2024) highlights that teachers who exhibit attentive and positive behaviors create a more engaging and motivating learning environment, reinforcing the importance of enhancing attentiveness in the classroom. However, other studies suggest teachers' attention levels may be more effective than perceived. He et al. (2024) report that classroom management strategies, including structured feedback and interactive engagement, significantly enhance student attentiveness, indicating that teachers may already be employing strategies to maintain focus. Additionally, Bolkan et al. (2022) find that students' sustained attention is influenced more by their perception of teacher antagonism rather than the teacher's actual attentiveness, suggesting that external factors may play a role in student engagement. These findings imply that while some teachers need additional support to enhance their attentiveness, others may already effectively engage students through structured instructional techniques.

Puspita and Suyatno (2020) argue that teacher observation is an essential but often underutilized assessment technique, which, when handled correctly, can provide valuable insights into student learning. Similarly, Dewanti (2019) highlights that structured observation methods, such as activity assessment sheets, significantly enhance teachers' ability to assess student engagement and progress in real-time. However, some researchers challenge the idea that teachers' observation skills are lacking. Chernikova (2018) finds that observational learning in teacher education effectively fosters teaching competence, suggesting that teachers are already acquiring essential observation skills through professional development. Additionally, Birkeland (2019) states that observation is a fundamental component of early childhood education training, and many teachers already employ systematic observational techniques to assess student development effectively. These findings indicate that while some teachers may struggle with observation, others already apply structured observational strategies, highlighting variability rather than a universal deficiency in this skill.

This study highlights that teachers' pedagogical approaches are well-grounded in effective teaching strategies. Malgapo and Ancheta (2020) argue that while teachers apply subject-matter-centered and teacher-centered pedagogical approaches effectively, they may not always modify their methods to the diverse interpersonal needs of students, leading to sub-optimal learning experiences. Similarly, Khazanchi and Khazanchi (2021) highlight that general education teachers often face challenges in implementing inclusive pedagogical practices that fully engage students with behavioral difficulties, underscoring the need for more targeted training.

However, Harkusha and Kryzhanovskyi (2021) assert that pedagogical communication and interpersonal relationships between teachers and students play a crucial role in managing behavioral challenges, indicating that teachers already integrate effective communication strategies in their pedagogical approaches. Likewise, Muskhadzhieva (2022) emphasizes that constructive teacher-student relationships are fundamental to fostering student motivation and behavioral regulation, suggesting that the perceived limitations in pedagogical approaches may stem from external factors rather than a lack of teacher competency. These contrasting perspectives indicate that while improvements in pedagogical training can enhance effectiveness, many educators already utilize strategies that support students' interpersonal development.

Jackson (2021) underscores the significance of motivation in student engagement and the range of strategies teachers employ to support low-achieving students; however, the inconsistent effectiveness of these strategies necessitates the development of improved approaches. Similarly, Çakmak (2017) found that while teachers recognize the importance of motivation, their strategies often focus on communication rather than diverse instructional methods, which may limit their overall impact. However, other studies suggest teachers' motivational techniques are more effective than perceived. Wiesman (2016) highlights a misalignment between teachers'



perceptions of student motivation and students' actual motivational drivers, suggesting that individualized motivational techniques are more effective. Additionally, Sawicka (2023) finds that teachers employ various motivational strategies. Still, effectiveness varies depending on student engagement levels, challenging the idea that motivation levels among teachers are only moderate. These findings suggest that while motivation is recognized among educators, refining and diversifying motivational strategies could further enhance student engagement and learning outcomes.

Additionally, Koto et al. (2019) find that implementing structured instructional models, such as the learning cycle 3E combined with POE techniques, significantly enhances student engagement, suggesting that a shift toward more interactive methods could improve participation. Similarly, Chairiyah et al. (2024) highlights the effectiveness of diverse engagement strategies—including questioning, role-playing, and project-based learning—in creating more engaging learning environments. However, other studies suggest that teachers' efforts in fostering engagement may already be sufficient. Heilporn et al. (2021) argue that effective engagement strategies are already in place, especially in blended learning environments where course structure and pacing enhance student involvement. Likewise, Neppl (2019) finds that classroom engagement strategies, such as turn-and-talk and Whole Brain Teaching, significantly influence student behavior and participation, indicating that many teachers already apply effective engagement techniques. These findings suggest that while engagement strategies are widely implemented, further refining and diversifying these approaches could optimize student participation and learning outcomes.

Toheed et al. (2017) find that implementing mastery learning strategies enhances student retention compared to conventional teaching methods, emphasizing the need for structured approaches to support long-term learning. Similarly, Muskania and Supena (2021) highlight that the SMART learning model, integrating STEM-based learning with artistic and religious values, effectively strengthens retention in elementary education, reinforcing the idea that innovative teaching strategies can enhance knowledge retention. However, some studies suggest that teachers' existing strategies may already be effective. Kanuga and Visram (2017) argue that student learning behavior, rather than instructional strategies alone, plays a crucial role in retention, suggesting that factors such as assessment-driven learning and student effort may contribute to perceived retention challenges. Likewise, Davis et al. (2018) find that retrieval practice, a widely endorsed retention strategy, does not always yield positive learning outcomes in different educational contexts. This indicates that external factors may influence retention more than teaching methods alone. These findings suggest that while improvements in instructional strategies can enhance retention, student engagement, assessment structures, and contextual factors also play a crucial role in long-term knowledge retention.

Overall, the teaching competence of educators can still be improved to meet the needs of students, especially those facing interpersonal challenges. Cahyanti et al. (2024) emphasize that teacher competence significantly influences student motivation and engagement, highlighting the need for continuous professional development to enhance teaching effectiveness. Similarly, Oliva et al. (2016) find that teachers highly value promoting student motivation and responsibility, reinforcing the importance of developing teaching strategies that foster student success. However, other studies suggest that teachers' competence may already be sufficient. Uerz et al. (2018) argue that teacher educators possess strong pedagogical and technological integration competencies, suggesting that teaching quality continually evolves through teacher training advancements. Likewise, Ulvik and Smith (2018) assert that teacher education programs effectively prepare educators with the necessary skills to integrate theory and practice, challenging the notion that teaching competence remains moderate across the board. These findings suggest that while variability exists in teaching competence, many educators already demonstrate practical skills, and targeted training programs can further strengthen their ability to meet diverse student needs.

In addition, the indicator of consistency in teaching strategies received a good rating, suggesting that while teachers strive to apply stable instructional methods, there is room for improvement in ensuring a more predictable and structured learning environment. Koellner and Jacobs (2015) emphasize that teachers must employ effective and adaptable teaching strategies to meet evolving educational demands, yet inconsistencies in instructional approaches can impact student learning outcomes. Similarly, Manzon (2022) highlights that evidence-based teaching strategies lead to more substantial student engagement and achievement, reinforcing the need for a more uniform application of best practices among educators. However, some studies suggest that teaching consistency may not always be a major concern. Zaim et al. (2019) find that students generally perceive teachers' instructional strategies as effective, with no significant correlation between perceived consistency and academic achievement. Likewise, Shafiq et al. (2023) argue that while innovative teaching methods significantly impact student learning, a rigidly consistent approach may not always be beneficial, as adaptability to student needs and learning contexts is equally crucial. These findings suggest that while consistency in teaching strategies is valuable, a balance between structure and flexibility is necessary to optimize student learning experiences.

On the other hand, the indicator "reproduction" also received a good rating, suggesting that while teachers are somewhat effective in ensuring that students can recall and apply learned knowledge in various contexts, there is still room for improvement. Swargiary and Baglari (2018) emphasize that effective teaching requires structured instructional strategies that facilitate knowledge retention and application, highlighting the importance of refining teaching methods to improve student outcomes. Similarly, Burroughs et al. (2019) find that teacher characteristics, such as experience and professional knowledge, play a crucial role in fostering student success, reinforcing the need for continuous professional development to enhance teaching effectiveness.

However, other studies suggest that teachers' current strategies may already be effective in facilitating knowledge reproduction. Darling-Hammond (2015) argues that university students perceive their teachers as highly competent in creating a productive learning



environment, suggesting that variability in reproduction effectiveness may stem from external factors rather than deficiencies in teaching competence. Likewise, Panchamukhi (2022) contends that teaching efficacy depends on broader systemic, school-specific, and individual factors, indicating that addressing structural and contextual challenges may be as crucial as refining instructional strategies. These findings suggest that while improvements in teaching methods can enhance knowledge reproduction, addressing external factors and providing targeted support to teachers can also play a vital role in optimizing student learning outcomes.

Correlation Between Variables

Table 2 analyses the relationship between general education teachers' assessment skills, pedagogical approaches, and teaching competence in supporting learners with interpersonal difficulties. The findings highlight a strong positive correlation between assessment skills and teaching competence, suggesting that as teachers enhance their assessment abilities, their instructional effectiveness also improves. Mubarok (2024) emphasizes that teacher competency, including pedagogical knowledge and teaching skills, significantly influences student outcomes, reinforcing the importance of strong assessment skills in fostering quality education. Similarly, Sverdlova and Rubtsova (2021) argue that professional competence encompasses multiple dimensions, including assessment proficiency, which directly impacts a teacher's ability to plan, evaluate, and enhance student learning.

However, some studies challenge the extent of this relationship, like DeLuca et al. (2020), who find that assessment competence varies across cultural and educational contexts, indicating that external factors such as institutional policies and training programs play a role in shaping teaching effectiveness. Additionally, Nasim et al. (2022) suggest that perceived teaching competence differs significantly based on teacher experience and designation, implying that factors beyond assessment skills contribute to overall instructional effectiveness. These findings highlight the complexity of the relationship between assessment skills and teaching competence, emphasizing the need for continuous professional development to maximize teaching effectiveness.

On the other hand, the findings suggest a strong positive relationship between pedagogical approaches and teaching competence, highlighting that the effective implementation of instructional strategies significantly enhances teachers' ability to facilitate student learning. Sulaimanova (2019) emphasizes that a competence-based pedagogical approach is essential for equipping teachers with the necessary skills to adapt their teaching to diverse learning needs, reinforcing the importance of well-structured instructional strategies. Similarly, Purnama et al. (2021) argue that teachers who demonstrate strong pedagogical competence in lesson planning, instructional methods, and classroom management improve student engagement and academic achievement.

Conversely, some researchers challenge the extent of this correlation, like Azuelo et al. (2015), who say that while pedagogical competence is crucial, external factors such as teacher training experiences and institutional support influence overall teaching effectiveness, suggesting that instructional strategies alone may not determine competence. Additionally, Cherepekhina (2019) contends that pedagogical competence is a multi-faceted construct that extends beyond teaching strategies, incorporating professional, psychological, and managerial skills, which indicates that pedagogical approaches alone do not fully define teaching competence. These findings underscore the importance of refining pedagogical strategies in light of the broader factors contributing to effective teaching.

Both findings highlight the critical importance of assessment skills and pedagogical approaches in enhancing teaching competence. These results underscore the need for targeted professional development programs that strengthen these key areas to improve teachers' overall effectiveness in addressing the needs of learners, particularly those with interpersonal difficulties. Kruszewska et al. (2021) highlights that structured training programs and curriculum adjustments are crucial in equipping teachers with the necessary competencies to effectively assess and address students' learning needs. Similarly, Apostolache (2023) argues that pedagogical competence is a dynamic skill set that requires continuous refinement through professional learning opportunities to ensure instructional effectiveness. However, Islomovich and Ravshanbekovich (2023) suggest that while pedagogical competence is vital, its development is also influenced by self-assessment, professional experience, and broader socio-cultural factors, indicating that formal training alone may not be sufficient. These perspectives highlight the necessity of integrating targeted professional development with a more holistic approach to teacher training to ensure sustained improvements in instructional quality.

Regression Between Variables

The regression analysis highlights the significant influence of assessment skills and pedagogical approaches on the teaching competence of general education teachers handling learners with interpersonal difficulties. The statistical significance of the model confirms that assessment skills and pedagogical approaches play a crucial role in shaping teaching competence. While both predictors contribute to teaching competence, pedagogical approaches exert a stronger impact, emphasizing the importance of effective instructional strategies in addressing diverse student needs. Assessment skills, including observation, evaluation, and feedback, also play a vital role in supporting student learning.

The results emphasize the strong influence of assessment skills and pedagogical approaches on teaching competence, highlighting the critical role of effective instructional strategies in shaping teachers' ability to support diverse learners. Murkatik et al. (2020) demonstrate that the combination of pedagogical competence and professional expertise significantly improves teacher performance, emphasizing the fundamental role of well-developed instructional strategies. Similarly, Apostolache (2023) underscores that pedagogical competence is dynamic and requires continuous professional development to align with evolving educational demands,



reinforcing the necessity of ongoing teacher training. However, some researchers question the extent of this relationship. Bunda (2022) suggests that managerial and organizational skills are equally crucial in improving teaching performance, indicating that instructional strategies alone may not be sufficient. Additionally, Moreira et al. (2022) argue that while pedagogical competence contributes to quality education, cultural and institutional factors also shape a teacher's ability to deliver effective instruction, highlighting the importance of a broader educational framework. These findings suggest that while assessment skills and pedagogical approaches are essential to teaching competence, their impact is enhanced when integrated with broader professional, managerial, and contextual factors.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that assessment skills and pedagogical approaches are significant determinants of teaching competence among general education teachers handling learners with difficulty displaying interpersonal behaviors. This supports Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory, which posits that individuals acquire knowledge and skills through observing the behaviors, attitudes, and outcomes modeled by others, highlighting the importance of effective teaching practices in shaping student behavior and learning outcomes. In light of these results, it is recommended that future research includes a qualitative approach to provide deeper insights and validation of the findings. Additionally, educational institutions are encouraged to implement targeted professional development programs that focus on enhancing teachers' assessment strategies and pedagogical techniques. Initiatives such as continuous training, mentorship, and collaborative learning can significantly boost instructional effectiveness, particularly for students facing interpersonal challenges. These recommendations are consistent with the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which emphasizes the necessity of inclusive and equitable quality education and underscores the crucial role of competent educators in creating supportive learning environments for all learners.

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