

Pedagogical practices in enriching students' cultural experiences: The case of private schools in the Philippines

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the pedagogical preferences of private basic education institutions in Cebu, Philippines, in enriching learners' cultural knowledge and experiences. A total of 53 teachers and school administrators from selected private basic education institutions in Cebu, Philippines, were the participants in the study. A sequential explanatory mixed method design was utilized to investigate the profile of the academic institutions, pedagogical practices, and plans for cultural education. Findings revealed the institutions' varied pedagogical practices to promote cultural awareness and appreciation. Furthermore, it acknowledges the influence of external providers in enriching the learners' cultural experiences. The themes "much can be done" and "need for partnerships" emphasize the importance of partnerships among institutions in connecting with local cultural arts centers and museums to promote cultural education. The study provides valuable insights into how private institutions approach cultural education and their strategies to promote cultural awareness and appreciation among learners. It sheds light on the need for innovative approaches to cultural education in the current context by strengthening partnerships with cultural centers in developing and sharing technology-based teaching and learning materials.

1. Introduction

Culture and its elements have shaped how people think and behave. It is like a collective programming of ideas, attitudes, behavior patterns, and norms passed on from generation to generation. Section 7 of Republic Act No. 7356 (Supreme Court E-Library, 1992) stipulates the duty of every Filipino to preserve the country's cultural heritage and resources by pursuing the retrieval and conservation of artifacts of Filipino culture and history. At its forefront, schools must provide the students with opportunities to appreciate and value their cultural heritage environment.

Cultural heritage, which sums up intangible attributes and physical artifacts in all forms, carries and creates certain emotions among the people as it affirms their identity, aspirations, values, and beliefs, thereby defining and understanding their individual and national identity and integrity. For the United Nations, this pertains to the traced memories of an existing culture. This is significant to history, society, and anthropology and is considered one of the driving forces of sustainable development, economic growth, and poverty reduction (Stanton-Geddes & Soz, 2017; Xiao et al., 2018). It serves as a bridge between generations (Cruz, 2017). The idea of defining the

cultural context of social life by connecting history, territory, and society is emphasized by Barrera (2015), as cited in Nilson and Theorell (2018). The cultural manifestations, the totality of cultural property, and the transmission of the wealth of knowledge on preserving cultural heritage have been explored, and differing practices have been documented.

Like the academe, the cultural sector has been challenged by the rapid global spread of Covid-19. The museum industry and cultural art centers have considered initiatives to thrive during the pandemic. These include redefining its role, programs, and activities to engage and influence visitors and users continually. Choi and Kim (2021) highlighted the reshaping of content and the possibility of getting online communities amid this pandemic. Considerably, Bairga et al. (2020) highlighted valorization and information (re)framing in preserving cultural heritage, purporting its role in strengthening cultural values in a society.

Pollmer (2020) stressed the importance of investing more in cultural heritage to preserve and promote cultural identity further. It is also imperative to present research-based evidence to fully convince the concerned individuals and organizations to encourage and support cultural heritage. That is why non-government organizations are funding research initiatives to contribute to the preservation and promotion of Philippine culture.

For academic institutions, culture-based teaching and learning, as stipulated in the policy guidelines on the K to 12 basic education guidelines (Department of Education, 2019), have been emphasized. This is supported by the studies of Inocian et al. (2020), Yahya (2014), and Zhou et al. (2019), including the digital storage of culture-based materials through the use of technological tools. Similarly, Dichupa and Patindol (2018) stressed integrating culture and values into the curriculum. Since cultural rights are also human rights, keeping them tangible and preserving intangible cultural heritage, academic institutions underpin pedagogical practices on cultural promotions and preservation, which has significantly been challenged with the pandemic outbreak.

Studies previously revealed that cultural heritage is not exclusively integrated with social studies and other social sciences but in different subjects (Ocampo & Delgado, 2014). Cultural heritage must be embedded in the curricula from essential to tertiary education, not as subject matter but through interdisciplinary actions (Apostolopoulou et al., 2014). This suggests that educators and educational institutions share everyday responsibilities in promoting and supporting cultural heritage activities and initiatives. However, schools must also know how cultural heritage is experienced during these unprecedented times. Dümcke and Gnedovsky (2013) suggested that institutions, whether private or public, must collaborate in promoting and protecting cultural heritage for better experiences for the learners. This can also be made possible if they become engaged with planning their learners' desired cultural experiences.

While many studies have been conducted on culture preservation and promotion of cultural heritage, studies have also been conducted on how the hardest-hit sectors- the venue-based arts and cultural sector- can be supported by providing needed data from academic institutions. Determining curricular components where culture is integrated, pedagogical preferences to promote one's culture, and plans to enrich the learners' cultural experiences are deemed necessary to address the emerging challenges and needs of both the providers (e.g., cultural arts centers) and the recipients (educational stakeholders).

During the Covid-19 pandemic, no existing literature has yet explored the preferences of academic institutions in enriching the learners' cultural heritage experiences. It is also unknown if there are efforts to collaborate between private institutions concerning cultural heritage

experiences. In addition, it is also worth knowing about their preferred ways of experiencing culture to strengthen their practices and initiatives that support the promotion of local and national cultural heritage. Kastenholz and Gronau (2020) recommended that further studies may be conducted to enrich the cultural heritage experiences of the teachers and learners. This has not yet been considered during the pandemic, considering the blended and flexible learning adopted by educational institutions. Governments' only remaining option to keep their constituents informed during the height of the new coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic was to switch to online learning modes.

The limitations brought forth by the pandemic and the possible future challenges in cultural heritage promotion and preservation bring opportunities for other platforms to be utilized. Hence, educational institutions should take part in determining their preferences to enrich their learners' cultural experiences. This will enable academic institutions to find alternatives to immersing their learners in local and national cultures. These include promoting cultural awareness and appreciation while acknowledging the support and influence of external providers in developing and sharing technology-based teaching and learning materials. Ultimately, this can inform educational policymakers and teacher educators in the Philippines and elsewhere on effective strategies for promoting cultural diversity, awareness, and appreciation in education.

The literature cited revealed the gaps that studies must be undertaken to further explore the pedagogical preferences of private basic education institutions in enriching the learners' cultural knowledge and experiences in the Philippines as they shed light on the varied pedagogical practices utilized by these institutions. This paved the way for the conception of this research. Specifically, the study aimed to answer the following questions: 1. What are the features of the basic education institutions in terms of learners enrolled in every level, adopted mode of instructional delivery, and preferred places to be visited? 2. What are the pedagogical practices and initiatives related to promoting and supporting Cebu's culture? and 3. What plans of action are in place to improve the cultural immersion experiences of students?

2. Theoretical framework

The study is anchored on the assimilation theory, which highlights the dynamic nature of cultural integration within the basic education curriculum. The assimilation theory suggests cultural assimilation is a crucial curriculum component, indicating a balanced and inclusive approach toward diversity. As such, promoting cultural integration goes beyond the classroom. Collaboration between educational stakeholders and the local community is required to create an environment that values and respects diverse cultural backgrounds.

Moreover, cultural integration has been considered a dynamic character of the basic education curriculum. The notion of segmented assimilation espoused by Algan et al. (2012) emphasized that patterns of cultural integration can be observed in various demographic factors, including education and language proficiency. By recognizing these factors, we gain a deeper understanding of how cultural assimilation occurs and its implications in different contexts.

2.1. Cultural integration and cultural heritage

To effectively implement cultural integration in the basic education curriculum, the Department of Education has issued an order to safeguard one's culture and heritage. This directive signifies the importance of preserving diverse cultural identities within the educational system. Additionally, activities have been organized to promote nationalism and patriotism, enabling students to develop a sense of pride and appreciation for their cultural heritage.

Cultural heritage is resources “inherited from the past which people identify, independently of ownership, as a reflection, and expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge, and traditions” (Apostolopoulou et al., 2014; Dümcke & Gnedovsky, 2013, p.06). It also expresses nationalism, serves as the backbone of society, and is essential in nation-building (Simandiraki, 2006). Hence, promoting and supporting the society’s cultural heritage is worthy, for it has a transcendental relevance to the past, present, and future. People can reflect and appreciate the past if they can see and explore their localities and country's tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

Cultural heritage is essential in all societies around the world. It connects people to the past and enables them to preserve their cultural identities and history (Laput & Letigio, 2019; Stanton-Geddes & Soz, 2017). During the World Heritage Convention, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recommended that cultural and national heritage be protected nationally (Myers, 2016). Essentially, the local communities have the responsibility to protect and preserve the cultural heritage of their localities.

2.2. Initiatives toward the preservation of cultural heritage

The Philippine government, through other agencies, is also protecting and preserving the Philippine cultural heritage through various initiatives. This is because the United Nations Task Force and Habitat III (2015) report that for the past 20 years, cultural and heritage threats have significantly increased (Cruz, 2017; UN-Habitat, n.d.). UNESCO further underscored the importance of credibility, conservation, capacity-building, and communication in promoting cultural heritage. Among these, the most challenging is communication to ensure sustainable protection. Therefore, communication among educational, government, and non-government institutions is necessary to strengthen cultural heritage support, security, and promotion (Laput & Letigio, 2019). Especially during the pandemic, communication becomes limited to avoid the continuous spread of the Covid-19 virus. Face-to-face communication has become restricted, and people heavily rely on technology to share ideas, emotions, and information. Buonincontri and Marasco (2017) emphasized that technologies can better support cultural heritage experiences. Innovative technologies also have a strong potential to improve learners' experiences through synchronous and asynchronous modalities.

To strengthen the promotion and preservation of the Philippine cultural heritage, Congress passed the Republic Act No. 10066 (ChanRobles, n.d.), otherwise known as the National Heritage Act of 2009, which adopted the parameters set by UNESCO. The law complies with Section 15 of Article XIV of the Philippine 1987 Constitution’s mandate that the state has significant roles in conserving, promoting, and popularizing the country’s historical and cultural heritage. The Republic Act No. 10066 (ChanRobles, n.d.) classifies heritage as either cultural or national heritage. Cultural heritage refers to monuments, buildings, and historical sites with aesthetic, archeological, scientific, ethnological, or anthropological importance (Cruz, 2017; Buted et al., 2014). In the case of Cebu, these cultural heritages are promoted during the Gabii sa Kabilin (Night of Heritage) and through the Casa Gorordo Museum.

2.3. Education and culture

Cultural integration has long been studied by various research communities around the globe (Wang & Giovanis, 2023; Zhu et al., 2022). Studies previously revealed that cultural heritage is not exclusively integrated with social studies and other social sciences but in different subjects (Ocampo & Delgado, 2014). Cultural heritage must be embedded in the curricula from

essential to tertiary education not as subject matter but through interdisciplinary actions (Apostolopoulou et al., 2014). This suggests that educators and educational institutions share everyday responsibilities in promoting and supporting cultural heritage activities and initiatives. However, schools must also know how cultural heritage is experienced during these unprecedented times. Dümcke and Gnedovsky (2013) suggested that institutions, whether private or public, must collaborate in promoting and protecting cultural heritage for better experiences for the learners. Qin (2017), on the other hand, investigated how the study of cultural culture was integrated into the first-grade social studies curriculum in a Chinese immersion classroom, while Achimugu et al. (2023) assessed the teachers' strategies for enhancing the integration of cultural practices in secondary schools. Teachers had been engaged in planning their learners' desired cultural experiences. These underscore the crucial role of educators in planning cultural experiences for learners.

Education and culture are intertwined (Ivon & Kuscevic, 2013). Burduk and Stec (2019) articulated that it is the shared responsibility of academic institutions to the government to share and promote cultural heritage. Educational activities that schools may initiate to encourage and support cultural heritage may include teachers' pedagogical application, training, writing of syllabi, collaboration with other academic institutions, and research. Meanwhile, the pedagogical preferences of educational and fundamental education institutions have not been explored to enrich learners' cultural experiences. Ergo, private or public educational institutions significantly enhanced learners' cultural experiences during the pandemic.

Every student has the right to be educated about the cultural heritage of their localities (Nuzzaci, 2020). Nuzzaci (2020) further asserted that cultural heritage education is a universal right. Therefore, schools significantly promote and support cultural heritage activities by exposing their learners to this cultural heritage. Suppose students and teachers are engaged in promoting cultural heritage through their firsthand experiences. In that case, they become socially creative, which can positively contribute to their psychological and social well-being and cultural sensitivity (Dümcke & Gnedovsky, 2013). This can only be made possible if the schools are supporting these initiatives.

The public and private sectors play essential roles in cultural heritage promotion, preservation, idea generation, civic pride, and financial investments (Ahmad, 2006). Meanwhile, it is also worth knowing about their preferred ways of experiencing culture to strengthen their practices and initiatives that support the promotion of local and national cultural heritage. Kastenholz and Gronau (2020) recommended that further studies may be conducted to enrich the cultural heritage experiences of the teachers and learners. This has not yet been considered during the pandemic, considering the blended and flexible learning adopted by educational institutions. It is unknown what academic institutions' preferences are in improving learners' cultural experiences and eventually imbibing in them an appreciation of their localities and country's tangible and intangible cultural heritage. During the Covid-19 pandemic, no existing literature has yet explored the preferences of academic institutions in enriching the learners' cultural heritage experiences. It is also unknown whether there are efforts to collaborate between private institutions regarding cultural heritage experiences.

By considering the assimilation theory, segmented assimilation, departmental policies, and community involvement, the study highlights the significance of embracing cultural diversity, promoting cultural awareness, and preserving cultural heritage in educational practices.

3. Methodology

This study utilized a sequential explanatory mixed-method design. A descriptive survey was conducted through a questionnaire to determine the schools' profile and pedagogical practices and activities in enriching the students' cultural education. As Baker (2017) mentioned, the primary purpose of a quantitative-descriptive survey is to provide information about a particular phenomenon. In this case, these are the beliefs and pedagogical practices of teachers. The teachers' and administrators' narratives on promoting the learners' cultural experiences were explored through interviews with open-ended questions. The carefully crafted questionnaire covered a wide range of topics, including the private institutions' demographic profile, enrollment figures, delivery methods, willingness to work with other educational institutions, preferred approaches to promoting cultural heritage, frequency of culturally themed events, budgetary allotment for supplies and resources, and details of instructional strategies. To guarantee the validity and reliability of the questionnaire in gathering relevant data, it underwent extensive validation.

Using purposive sampling, the participants were the 53 school heads and faculty members of selected private basic education institutions in Cebu, Philippines. The school heads were the incumbent principals or school-in-charge of schools, while the teachers were full-time faculty members assigned to teach social studies in the school. The social studies teachers were chosen as teacher participants because they can easily relate to the pedagogical practices about culture. The focus group discussions were done via online conferencing platforms like Zoom and Google Meet. The tool consisted of profile, enrollment, mode of delivery, willingness to forge partnerships with other institutions, preferred way of promoting cultural heritage, frequency of conducting cultural-related activities, budget allocation for materials and resources, and pedagogical practices.

Before the data collection, the researchers sought permission from the school head to gather responses from them and their selected teachers handling social studies. They also sought permission to conduct virtual focus group discussions with other identified participants. After the approval, they distributed the questionnaire to the school head and teachers. Afterward, they were interviewed via Google Meet for a focus group discussion to explore their pedagogical practices fully. Also, during the virtual focus group discussion, participants were asked about their plans to enrich their pedagogical practices to enrich students' cultural experiences. For responses on the institutions' initiatives and intentions to enhance the student's cultural experiences, a descriptive qualitative method was used following a thematic analysis of significant ideas shared during the interview. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were included in the data analysis. Survey responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics to clarify demographic trends and essential conclusions. Thematic analysis was performed on qualitative data from focus groups and interviews to find reoccurring themes and derive significant findings.

In all phases of the study, ethical principles and trustworthiness of the study findings were ensured; that is, the study was conducted following the standard procedures, and protocols were observed. The respondents' participation was voluntary based on their consent before the research was conducted. Also, an audit trail could be provided highlighting every step of the data analysis: the method and the conclusion address the research questions adequately and are free from any form of bias.

4. Results and discussion

During the pandemic, private schools in the Philippines faced numerous challenges and made significant adaptations to continue providing education to their students. These institutions swiftly transitioned to remote learning modalities, utilizing online platforms and digital tools to deliver lessons, assignments, and assessments. Investigating pedagogical preferences in private basic education institutions is essential in enhancing students' experiences and cultural understanding in the Philippines. To provide a snapshot of the educational landscape of private basic education institutions and their initiatives to improve students' cultural experiences, this study was designed to look into the schools' profile in terms of learners enrolled per level, mode of instructional delivery, and preferred cultural places to visit, the adopted pedagogical practices in promoting Cebu's culture, and schools' plans in enriching the learners' cultural experiences.

4.1. Schools' profile along with enrollment, instructional delivery mode, and preferred cultural places to visit

To provide a snapshot of the educational landscape of private basic education institutions and their initiatives to enhance students' cultural experiences, this study was designed to look into the schools' profiles in terms of learners enrolled per level, mode of instructional delivery, and preferred cultural places to be visited.

4.1.1. Enrollment data

The school closures brought about by the health crisis had affected the number of students enrolled in private institutions, considering that not all have learning management systems to cater to online or distance learning. Table 1 summarizes private schools' enrollment data across grade levels, which provides valuable insights into the educational landscape, setting the foundation for further analysis in this study.

Table 1

Learners Enrolled in Private Schools

Learners Enrolled	Preschool		Kindergarten		Grades 01 - 06		Grades 07 - 10		Grades 11 - 12	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Below 100	26	49.06	37	69.81	15	28.30	12	22.64	13	24.53
101 - 300	4	7.55	6	11.32	12	22.64	8	15.09	13	24.53
301 - 500	4	7.55	0	0.00	5	9.43	12	22.64	6	11.32
501 - 700	3	5.66	0	0.00	5	9.43	5	9.43	4	7.55
701 - 900	1	1.89	0	0.00	2	3.77	5	9.43	3	5.66
901 - 1100	1	1.89	0	0.00	1	1.89	4	7.55	0	0.00
Above 1100	1	1.89	0	0.00	0	0.00	2	3.77	5	9.43
Not Offering	13	24.53	10	18.87	13	24.53	5	9.43	9	16.98
Total	53	100.00	53	100.00	53	100.00	53	100.00	53	100.00

Note. Data analysis result of the research

The data from Table 1 show that the majority of private schools have low preschool enrollment at this time of the pandemic. Similarly, many private schools also have below 100 kindergarten enrollees. Many schools also do not offer preschool and kindergarten. These can be

attributed to the number of public schools offering preschool and kindergarten. In the case of the public school system, preschools in every barangay are present, and parents would prefer their children to be enrolled, considering that preschool in private institutions is more expensive and is not compulsory for children to move to kindergarten. This is also the case in kindergarten, wherein public elementary schools offer it due to the Basic Education Act of 2013's mandate to make it compulsory in basic education.

In the situation of Grades 07 - 10 enrollees in private schools, most of these schools have 300 or below-enrolled students. However, several schools have more than 300 students enrolled. More schools offer junior high schools, and many have 500 or below students enrolled. This number is also not surprising considering the limited capacity of some private schools to cater to more students compared to public schools.

Though the data show that most private schools have 300 or fewer senior high school students, it is also worth noting that several schools offering senior high school have more than 1,000 students enrolled. This can directly be linked to the Department of Education voucher program, wherein the government partly shoulders the tuition fees of students who completed junior high school in public schools and opted to study in private schools.

It is also important to note during the pre-pandemic, it can be assumed that these figures may be higher considering that there is an exodus of some learners from private schools to public schools due to the economic impact of the pandemic. Hence, there is a massive decline in enrollment in private institutions because some parents either transferred their children to public schools or decided to let them have a hiatus in their studies. In the post-pandemic era, it is expected that there will be an increase in enrollment due to the better capability of private schools to provide well-educated learners, which is at par with what public schools produce. The government can also give more support to private schools to ensure they can continue operating to avoid overcrowding in public schools.

4.1.2. *Adopted mode of instructional delivery*

Teachers and administrators' adoption of instructional delivery during the pandemic influences to the extent of enhancing multicultural education through the promotion of cultural competence. Harris (2018) explored the challenges, strategies, and implications of students' academic and social development after being exposed to multiculturalism. Table 2 presents the mode of instructional delivery adopted during the pandemic, which affects the provision of culture-rich experiences.

Table 2

Schools' Adopted Mode of Instructional Delivery

Mode of instructional delivery in time of pandemic	Frequency	Percentage
Modular-Distance Learning (Print)	11	20.75
Enhanced-Modified In-School Off-School Approach	0	0.00
Virtual Learning	16	30.19
E-Learning	0	0.00
Blended Learning	26	49.06
Total	53	100.00

Note. Data analysis result of the research

Table 2 shows that many schools are adopting blended learning as the primary mode of instructional delivery. Blended learning is a mixture of two or more different learning modalities based on the capacity of schools, teachers, and students. Meanwhile, some private schools adopt modular distance learning (Print) and virtual learning. It can be assumed that schools that use blended learning combine modular distance learning (Print) and virtual learning.

For schools that adopt pure modular-distance learning (Print), it can be deduced that most learners cannot afford virtual learning, which can be directly associated with their present socio-economic status. This is somewhat the opposite of schools that offer virtual learning. Schools that adopt virtual learning have learners who can learn through synchronous classes via online platforms because gadgets are available and internet connectivity is strong.

In the context of the Philippine education system, due to the impact of the pandemic and slow internet connectivity in the country, many schools are compelled to adopt blended learning because it is more flexible and can be used for learners regardless of their socio-economic status. The data suggest that schools adopted blended learning during the pandemic and post-pandemic eras. Hence, the full face-to-face classes during the pre-pandemic era were somehow replaced by Blended Learning. This further shows that schools wish to migrate to more hybrid learning, considering their investments in technology and instructional materials during the pandemic. Private and public schools in the Philippines usually shift to Blended Learning when calamities and emergencies arise to ensure that the education of learners continues despite the interruptions of face-to-face classes. However, private schools are better equipped to quickly shift learning modalities due to the availability of technology and resources.

4.1.3. *Cultural places to be visited*

The health crisis brought about by the pandemic has affected venue-based arts and cultural sectors. When asked which places they will likely consider being visited by their students in the future, most respondents identified historic houses and sites along with museums, whether these are in urban or rural areas. Table 3 shows the preferred places to be visited to enrich the students' cultural experiences.

Table 3

Preferred Cultural Places to be Visited

Places to be visited	Frequency	Percentage
Historic Houses/Sites	47	89%
Art Museums	44	83%
History Museums	43	81%
Science Centers	45	85%
Children's Museums	37	70%

Note. Data analysis result of the research

The data show that the Historic Houses/Sites were the most preferred to be visited by the respondents. This suggests that schools advocate the preservation of local heritage and culture, giving them a sense of identity and pride. The Science Centers follow this. Meanwhile, the least preferred are the Children's Museums. This indicates learners are intensely interested in experiencing history and seeing modern technology, which can create highly engaging and meaningful educational experiences. Conversely, the least preferred visits to Children's

Museums may suggest a need for the museums to improve their exhibits and programs to engage the learners better and complement the academic curriculum. Educators and policymakers could work with professionals to identify and promote innovative exhibits and educational experiences that align with student interests and facilitate meaningful learning outcomes.

The aforementioned analysis of schools' profiles in terms of enrolment per level, mode of instructional delivery, and preferred cultural places to visit provides valuable insights into the distribution of students and the extent to which cultural exposure is integrated into different educational settings. This information can guide policymakers and educators in charting strategies to cater to the students' diverse needs and preferences, enhancing their overall academic experience.

4.2. Pedagogical practices and activities related to promoting and supporting Cebu's culture

Preserving and promoting traditional culture is essential to education, providing a sense of identity and a connection to the past. In the country, efforts have been made to integrate cultural education into the curriculum and promote cultural activities and practices. Table 4 presents the selected private schools' pedagogical practices and/or activities.

Table 4

Pedagogical Practices and Activities

Pedagogical practices and activities	YES	NO
Visiting museums	35	18
Inviting resource persons	46	7
Utilizing materials and content about the cultural heritage of a place	45	8
Using pictures in the class (taken from different cultural heritages)	48	5
Conducting seminars and symposiums	43	10
Involving parents in the conduct of cultural-related activities	39	14

Note. Data analysis result of the research

Most respondents (91%) preferred using pictures in the class (taken from different cultural heritage). They like still or printed images as instructional materials to let the students understand the culture. Forty-six (87%) preferred to invite resource person, 45 (85%) liked to utilize materials and content about Cebu's cultural heritage, 43 (81%) preferred conducting seminars and symposiums, 39 (74%) wanted to involve parents in conducting cultural-related activities and 35 (66%) preferred to have museum visits. Based on the informal interviews, they would like to have an actual visit to the different museums. Still, since it is a pandemic, they prefer to have a virtual tour or use other ways of teaching and learning about Cebuano's culture. The findings suggest that teachers need to consider incorporating more visual aids into their lesson plans and instructional materials, provide opportunities for students to interact with experts, and explore digital resources and virtual experiences to continue promoting one's cultural heritage in a safe and accessible way.

The findings emphasize the importance of incorporating various pedagogical practices and activities to promote and support cultural education. By engaging students through visual aids, expert resources, and community involvement, teachers can help students develop a deeper appreciation and understanding of their cultural heritage.

While there is existing literature on cultural education and its importance in promoting diversity and appreciation in education, this study focuses on the specific practices and programs utilized by the selected private schools that can inform instruction on promoting cultural diversity and appreciation, contributing to the existing literature on this topic.

The implications of these findings are twofold. Firstly, museums serve as valuable educational resources that contribute to the holistic development of students by providing them with opportunities to appreciate and connect with their cultural heritage. The presence of artifacts and the portrayal of Cebu's historical and cultural contributions can foster a sense of pride, identity, and a deeper understanding of their roots. Secondly, the narratives suggest that museums and institutions play a crucial role in supporting the teaching process by providing teachers with relevant visual and experiential materials to enhance instruction and engage students in meaningful learning experiences. In a nutshell, museums bring visitors to the past by providing a bird's eye view of how people lived through the surviving artifacts and other cultural traces.

Examining the schools' pedagogical practices in promoting Cebu's culture offers a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of these practices in fostering students' cultural awareness and appreciation. The knowledge of successful strategies may inform and refine schools' approaches to ensure students receive a well-rounded education that includes cultural components.

4.3. Future plans to enrich the learners' cultural experiences

Academic institutions recognized that the pandemic outbreak greatly challenges pedagogical practices on cultural promotion and preservation. The contextualized learning continuity plan and the flexible learning modality adopted included initiatives to hone and enrich the learners' cultural experiences. The role of external providers such as cultural arts centers and museums has been acknowledged as potent support to teaching and learning.

Integrating culture-based activities in the curriculum is a topic of great importance in education. It involves the exploration of beliefs and practices surrounding incorporating cultural elements into teaching and learning processes. By examining how educators perceive and implement cultural activities within the curriculum, valuable insights can be gained regarding cultural diversity, heritage, and identity are addressed and celebrated in educational settings. This exploration allows for a deeper understanding of the impact of culture-based activities on student engagement, learning outcomes, and the overall academic experience. Table 5 shows the beliefs and practices of schools about the importance of museums for learning and enriching students' cultural experiences, as well as their willingness to invest time and money in such activities.

Table 5

Plans for Integrating Culture-based Activities in the Curriculum

School Plans to enrich the learners' cultural experiences	Mean
1. Learning visits to museums will be considered as these are important institutions for learning.	3.6
2. The school has plans to complement teaching and learning with exposure to exhibits and museum tours.	3.5
3. The school hopes to organize regular museum visits towards a lasting experience for the children.	3.4
4. The school invests in activities that will enrich students' cultural experiences.	3.3

School Plans to enrich the learners' cultural experiences	Mean
5. The school is willing to spend on activities that will enrich students' cultural experiences.	3.2
6. There is a need to coordinate with museum educators for virtual and onsite educational activities.	3.6
7. The school believes to find alternative ways to keep the school engaged with museums.	3.5
8. The school hopes to develop ties with museums and other similar cultural art centers.	3.5
9. The school has earmarked a certain budget for field trips (e.g., museum visits) to support the academic curriculum.	3.3

Note. Data analysis result of the research

The mean scores for all items were above average (3.5), indicating that the schools generally held positive attitudes towards museums and their role in education. The high mean scores for items 1, 6, and 7 suggest an awareness of the potential benefits of museums as educational resources and a desire to coordinate and collaborate with museum educators for virtual and in-person activities. Academic institutions acknowledged the importance of partnerships between schools and museums in providing students with access to cultural education and experiences.

Moreover, the high mean scores for items 2, 3, 4, 5, and 8 suggest that schools value exposing their learners to exhibits and tours that complement the academic curriculum. This benefits students, as exposure to museums and cultural centers can give them a deeper understanding of historical, scientific, and cultural phenomena. On the other hand, the relatively lower mean score for item 9 may indicate a greater need for school investments in field trips to museums. This highlights the importance of allocating adequate budgetary resources to support the academic curriculum and facilitate education trips. Specific contexts such as stakeholders' current condition, the present health crisis, and program priorities might have been attributed to those few who disagreed with the allocation of culture-related budget.

School administrators, teachers, and policymakers need to understand the potential benefits of museum visits and cultural education as part of a comprehensive approach to education that extends beyond the classroom. Most respondents (48 or 91%) believed museums and cultural art centers could continue providing information transfer amid the pandemic. According to them, this can be possible by organizing virtual/online programs/tours, utilizing social media to disseminate information, introducing virtual museums, presenting cultural heritage in varied formats and platforms, making educational videos and magazines (e.g., explainer videos, infomercials e-magazines, e-books), and organizing webinars, fora, and symposia for teachers and students. Suganob and Bacus (2023) purported that teachers feel satisfied and accomplished when students progress and achieve milestones despite educational crises. Hence, the significance of museum visits and cultural education complement traditional classroom learning.

With the pandemic, museums and schools have faced challenges maintaining access to cultural education and experiences. Schools had to adapt to remote and hybrid learning environment models to prioritize the safety of students and staff. Cognizant of the mandate to conserve, promote, and popularize the country's historical and cultural heritage embodied in the Philippine 1987 constitution, the respondents maintained the need to connect and collaborate with local cultural arts centers and museums. The themes 'much can be done' and 'the need for partnerships' emerged from the data analysis.

4.3.1. *Much can be done*

More than ever, schools have to continue establishing linkages at this time of pandemic and even beyond. When asked how can museums and schools continue their relationship amid the pandemic, some of the respondents opined:

“...through coordination, meetings and coming up with agreements to promote teaching and learning”.

“This is possible by strengthening the relationship of these two and valuing each in continuing to integrate cultural knowledge in the minds of the students”.

“...by having collaborative activities, video presentations; partnership with the other stakeholders such as the local government and some NGO”.

Despite the limitations and modalities, the respondents identified many ways to build and strengthen partnerships. To Ho (2015) and Pollmer (2020), investing more in cultural heritage promotes cultural identity.

4.3.2. *The need for partnerships*

Moreover, digital and social literacy and communication have been identified as contributing to making school-museum partnerships effective. Below are some of the respondents' vignettes.

“As to partnerships, the museum will organize virtual tours, and the school will require its students to join”.

“...through constant communication and partnership in different initiatives like Virtual Learning Advocacy”.

“Museums may offer schools virtual tours so that even if students cannot visit a museum personally, they can still experience it through a virtual tour”.

Inter-agency collaborations have also been pointed out. The impact of coordination between DepEd and CHED could not be undermined. According to the respondents,

“These agencies can offer new platforms and virtual opportunities for learners through partnerships, and this partnership between educational institutions and museums must be strengthened. Museums and schools must organize virtual activities showcasing museum exhibits with established MOA”.

The vignettes highlight the importance of cultural education and its role in promoting the country's historical and cultural heritage. The respondents recognize the value of connecting and collaborating with local cultural art centers and museums to achieve this goal. While the pandemic has presented significant challenges as schools closed and transitioned to virtual learning models, the need for cultural education has not diminished. It implies that museums and schools must adapt and innovate to provide access to artistic education and experiences shaping students' understanding of history, identity, and heritage.

Assessing schools' plans to enrich the student's cultural experiences during the pandemic highlights the adaptability and resilience of these schools during the pandemic. Understanding these plans, schools, despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, can learn from the experiences that support the adoption and implementation of similar strategies to continue providing valuable cultural experiences to their students.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

Identifying pedagogical preferences and the importance placed on cultural enrichment in private basic education institutions shed light on areas that can be addressed to enhance educational experiences. This study aimed to determine what private basic education institutions prefer to teach to increase students' exposure to and comprehension of different cultures.

The paper suggests that collaborative efforts can be used to create and disseminate technology-based teaching and learning materials. The results emphasize the value of collaborations with outside providers, like regional cultural arts institutions and museums. Educational policies can encourage and facilitate cooperation between academic institutions and these outside entities. Policies can enable schools to collaborate, create financing opportunities for projects that promote cultural enrichment, and make it easier to share resources and knowledge. Thus, the implications of this study for education policies, standards, and practices include the recognition of cultural enrichment as an essential aspect of education, establishing clear guidelines for pedagogical practices, promoting partnerships with external providers, and integrating technology-based resources for artistic education. By addressing these implications, educational systems can foster an inclusive, culturally responsive, and enriched learning environment for all learners.

It is hereby recommended that professional development programs are essential to be given to teachers to enrich their abilities and the information they need to integrate technology into cultural education successfully. By providing educators with resources and training, policies can encourage using technology as a tool for cultural enrichment. Digitizing material teaching and learning and using online platforms have been considered a potent way to complement student learning. Support from informal institutions such as cultural art centers and museums is recognized and valued. Pedagogical cultural heritage experiences may be technology-based, such as using recorded videos as an alternative for on-site museum visits. Cultural heritage activities may also be offered to schools and may be done at least once every quarter with a reasonable amount to attract more academic institutions. Moreover, schools may request the expertise of museum curators or any museum expert as resource persons in cultural-related activities, seminars, workshops, or in facilitating museum virtual tours. Online webinars about Philippine cultural heritage and museums may be one of the activities to be funded. As such, schools may consider subscribing to or acquiring the books identified by many teachers as helpful in enriching the students' cultural awareness and understanding of their cultural identities. Finally, schools may forge partnerships with other institutions to promote one's cultural heritage.

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All authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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