



CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS AND COMPETENCY BASED PERFORMANCE OF PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS IN BAMBANG 2 DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Critical thinking skills and competency-based performance are vital for improving educational and professional efficiency. These are useful in designing targeted learning strategies, making sure that individuals are not only knowledgeable but also proficient in applying their skills in real-world scenario. However, there remains a substantial gap in locally based research pertaining to this context. This study investigated the relationship between critical thinking skills and competency based performance of public school teachers in Bambang 2 District, Bambang, Nueva Vizcaya, Philippines. A quantitative research design was used employing an evaluative approach, involving 30 teachers purposively selected from the district. A validated survey questionnaire, tested for reliability (Chronbach's Alpha, $\alpha=.05$), utilized Likert scale with 4 being the highest and 1 being the poorest, to measure various dimensions of critical thinking and the respondents' Professional and Management Evaluation System (PMES) specifically their Classroom Observation Tool (COT) rating sheets were collected in order to get their evaluation in terms of their competency-based performance. The weighted average and Pearson product moment correlation coefficient were used in analyzing the data. The result shows that there is no significant correlation between critical thinking skills and competency-based performance. The study shows that teacher-respondents exhibit strong critical thinking skills and demonstrate outstanding level of competency in essential instructional areas, suggesting that teacher training and professional development programs are efficiently strengthening their capabilities and performance. This study contributes to understand the importance of current professional development that focuses on essential competencies and encourages teacher education programs to include a wider set of skills that can directly improve teaching performance. Furthermore, it opens avenues for further research into other factors that may impact teaching performance beyond critical thinking.

KEYWORDS: Critical thinking skills, Competency-based performance, Bambang 2 District

INTRODUCTION

The teaching profession has been the theme of many commendations, with remarks like "It is the noblest profession," "It's not just a job, it's a vocation," and "It's a many-splendored thing." These positive interpretations are likely some of the reasons why so many choose to continue a career in teaching.

Teachers are the key motivator of education. They are the essential factors that make teaching and learning possible, meaningful, and enjoyable. Their proficiency in both their subject matter and teaching methods enables them to spark change and influence the learning experience.

One prominent trend is the growing emphasis on critical thinking in teacher education. As Ennis (2011) points out, "Although continued work on teaching and assessing critical thinking is still needed, I believe that placing much greater emphasis on critical thinking is essential". There has been an intensifying significance on developing critical thinking skills among teachers. This is seen as important for developing teachers' pedagogical skills and improving their decision-making abilities in the classroom. Teachers are encouraged to develop their content knowledge as

well as improve their skills in analysis, evaluation, and problem-solving. Research shows that teachers who nurture critical thinking are more efficient in developing these same skills in their students, which ultimately affects their competency-based performance.

A second trend is Competency-Based Education (CBE) and Teacher Professional Development. As reported by Willis and Darling-Hammond (2025) "Sophisticated forms of teaching are needed to develop student competencies such as deep mastery of challenging content, critical thinking, complex problem-solving, effective communication and collaboration, and self-direction." Competency-based education is an expanding trend where teachers are evaluated based on their ability to show the required competencies rather than just their time spent in the classroom. This system gives emphasis on the mastery of skills, which aligns directly to a teacher's performance. Professional development programs for teachers are increasingly intended to improve specific competencies, with a focus on refining classroom practices, student participation, and learning outcomes. A teacher's competency-based performance is one of the greatest components of teacher evaluation and career development.



Paul and Elder (2014), emphasize the importance of linking critical thinking into classroom instruction, where teachers demonstrate critical thinking themselves and also inspire their students to develop these skills. In consonance with competency-based performance, teachers are being encouraged to use methods that help students analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information in deeper and more meaningful ways. This improvement is important for creating holistically developed learners and competent teachers. These trends accentuate the dynamic world of educational practices, the increasing importance of critical thinking for both teachers and students, and the intensifying reliance on competency-based models to assess and improve teaching performance.

However, there are issues that still remain in this area. As pointed out by Kuntz and Lankford (2015) in their article *Critical Thinking Skills in Teacher Education: How to Prepare Teachers for Instruction in an Information-Rich World*, one key issue is the lack of adequate training in critical thinking skills. One of the main challenges in educational systems is the inadequate focus on equipping teachers with the skills to foster critical thinking. Teachers are to nurture these skills in their students but then they often lack the proper training and resources to enhance their own critical thinking abilities. This lack of professional development can restrict their ability to effectively execute competency-based strategies in the classroom.

As discussed by Darling-Hammond and Plank (2009) in their article *The Challenges of Implementing Competency-Based Education*, the change toward competency-based education (CBE) is gaining momentum, but its establishment is met with significant challenges. These include uncertain guidelines for competency standards, inconsistent assessments of teacher competencies, and insufficient resources to support teachers in meeting CBE requirements. Additionally, inculcating CBE into teacher evaluation systems can be complex and may not always align with conventional teacher assessment methods.

As underscored by Paul and Elder (2014), the disconnect between critical thinking and classroom practice is a significant issue. Even when teachers receive training in critical thinking, there can be a split between their ability to think critically and their capacity to apply it efficiently in the classroom. Linking the gap between critical thinking theory and classroom practice can be challenging, especially when teachers are confronted with different classroom obstacles, such as managing diverse learning needs or following standardized curricula. This detachment can affect their competency-based performance and overall effectiveness in the classroom.

This study explores the relationship between critical thinking skills and the competency-based performance of public school teachers in Bambang 2 district. Critical thinking skills as independent variable, refer to cognitive abilities that enable teachers to exhibit self-awareness, objectivity, judgment, and credibility. In the setting of this study, this variable involves

assessing how effectively teachers apply critical thinking in their instructional practices and decision-making processes. On the other hand, Competency-based performance as the dependent variable, gives emphasis on the teachers' ability to apply specific teaching competencies in the classroom to meet curriculum standards, achieve learning outcomes, and demonstrate proficiency in pedagogical practices such as content knowledge, use of ICT, communication strategies, learning environment, and teaching strategies.

This study aligned with the research agenda of College of Teacher Education, under Human resource management particularly in Personal and professional qualities, attributes and needs of personnel. It investigates how teachers' critical thinking skills affect their competency-based performance, which is essential for effective teaching. The study deals with the personal and professional attributes that affect teachers' performance and development, giving insights into the skills and qualities expected for teachers to meet educational standards. This focus supports the key concern in educational human resource management which are improving teachers' capabilities and addressing their professional needs.

It also aligns with the SDG goals, particularly SDG 4: Quality Education, as it aims to enhance teachers' skills and competencies to improve educational quality. Additionally, it supports SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth by boosting teachers' effectiveness and fostering a skilled workforce.

The possible outputs of the study will include a better understanding of the relationship between critical thinking skills and teacher competency, highlighting key competencies that contribute to effective teaching. Based on the findings, the research may offer recommendations for developing or enhancing teacher training programs that focus on critical thinking and other essential competencies, leading to improved teacher performance. Additionally, the study could provide curriculum and policy suggestions for integrating these skills into teacher education programs, thereby informing education policies. It may also propose new or refined tools for assessing teacher performance, particularly in evaluating competencies and critical thinking abilities. Furthermore, the research could explore the impact of these teacher skills on student learning outcomes, demonstrating how improved teacher competencies contribute to better student engagement and achievement. In general, the research could result in the development of a teacher competency framework that summarizes the essential skills needed for effective teaching, which could be utilized for teacher development, performance evaluations, and recruitment.

The research gap identified in this study lies in the limited exploration of how critical thinking skills specifically affect teachers' competency-based performance, especially within the context of Bambang 2 District. Although extensive research has been conducted on teacher competencies and professional development, the specific role of critical thinking in improving

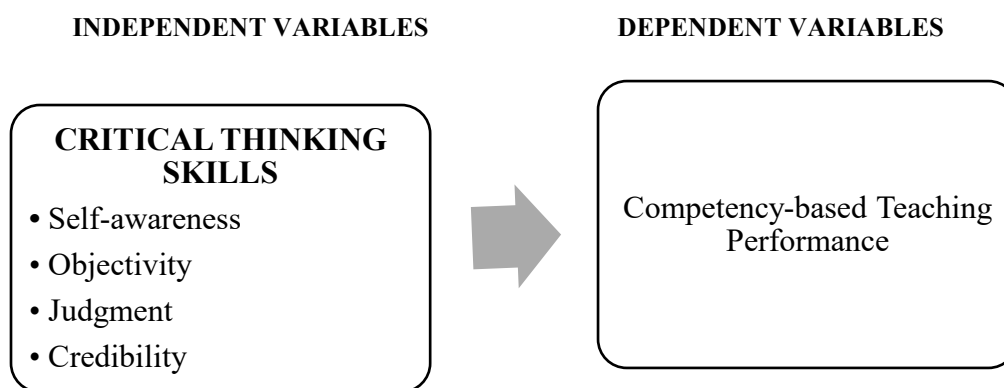


teaching effectiveness has been underexplored, particularly in localized settings like Bambang 2. Moreover, most studies on teacher competencies tend to focus on national or global perspectives, overlooking the distinct challenges and needs of local educational environments. This study seeks to address this gap by providing a localized analysis of how critical thinking and teacher competencies are connected, specifically within Bambang 2 District. The findings will offer valuable insights for enhancing teacher professional development programs, which often overlook the integration of critical thinking. Ultimately, the study

seeks to inform local educational policies and practices, providing data that can improve teacher training, performance evaluations, and the overall quality of education in Bambang 2 District.

This study aims to determine the relationship between critical thinking skills of teachers and their competency-based performance. It aims to contribute valuable insights into the factors that influence teacher effectiveness and guide improvements in teaching practices within the district.

Figure 1.



The study sought to determine the relationship of the critical thinking skills and competency-based performance of public elementary school teachers in the Bambang II District during the school year 2024-2025. Specifically, it aimed to answer the following questions.

1. What is the teacher-respondents assessment of their critical thinking skills in terms of self-awareness, objectivity, judgment, and credibility?
2. What is the competency-based performance of teacher-respondents in terms of content knowledge, use of ICT, communication strategies, learning environment, and teaching strategies?
3. Do the respondents' critical thinking skills relate significantly with their competency based-performance?

METHODOLOGY

Quantitative research design is used to examine the relationship between critical thinking skills and competency-based performance of public school teachers in the Bambang 2 District. The quantitative approach is suitable for this research as it allows the collection of numerical data and statistical analysis to determine patterns, relationships, and correlations between variables (Rana, J. et.al. 2021).

This study was conducted at fourteen (14) member schools of Bambang 2 District located at Bambang, Nueva Vizcaya. The schools that are included in the district are Abian Elementary School, Abingan Elementary School, Almaguer North Elementary School (ANES), Almaguer South Elementary School (ASES), Bambang East Elementary School (BEES), Bambang

North Central School (BNCS), Dullao Elementary School, Labni Elementary School, Mabuslo Elementary School, Macate Elementary School (MES), Sto. Niño Primary School, San Antonio North Elementary School (SANES), San Antonio South Elementary School (SANES), & San Fernando Integrated School (SFIS). This was conducted during the school year 2024-2025. The respondents of this study were 30 public elementary school teachers chosen through stratified random sampling to ensure that the sample accurately represents the broader population of teachers in the district.

A validated survey questionnaire, tested for reliability (Chronbach's Alpha, $\alpha=.05$), utilized Likert scale with 4 being the highest and 1 being the poorest, to measure the result. It consists of closed-ended questions that measure various dimensions of critical thinking in terms of self-awareness, objectivity, judgment and credibility. The questionnaire is designed to gather responses that reflect the teachers' ability to engage in critical thinking in their teaching practices. The respondents' Professional and Management Evaluation System (PMES) specifically their Classroom Observation Tool (COT) rating sheets were collected in order to get their evaluation in terms of their competency-based performance with a focus on instructional competence specifically in terms of content knowledge, use of ICT, communication strategies, learning environment, and teaching strategies. The questionnaire will be interpreted with a qualitative description of 5 being the outstanding and 1 being poor.



Weighted average was used to determine the level of the respondents' critical thinking and their level of competency-based performance. Moreover, Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used to correlate critical thinking skills and competency-based teaching performance.

Prior consent and confidentiality agreements were ensured as vital elements of the research process to assure respondents' voluntary cooperation and participation of the study while having a clear understanding about the purpose of the research. These agreements guaranteed that personal information remained confidential, maintaining ethical standards, integrity, and

safeguarding both the rights of the respondents through the research process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the gathered data with the use of survey questionnaire, administered to the public elementary school teachers in Bambang 2 District are interpreted and analyzed for better understanding of the computed results.

Problem 1. What is the teacher-respondents assessment of their critical thinking skills in terms of self-awareness, objectivity, judgment, and credibility?

Table 1. Level of Critical Thinking skills

Dimension	Mean	Level
Self-Awareness	3.76	High
Objectivity	3.88	High
Judgment	3.64	High
Credibility	3.91	High
Overall	3.80	High

The data suggests that the teachers possess well-developed critical thinking abilities with an overall mean of 3.80, particularly in terms of credibility with a mean of 3.91, followed by objectivity with a mean of 3.88, then self-awareness with a mean of 3.76 and judgement with a mean of 3.64. The result suggests that teachers are capable to demonstrate and encourage critical thinking in their learners, engage meaningfully to educational discussions, and provide valuable input for professional decisions.

The result finds support in the study of Paul, R., & Elder, L.(2014), supporting that "teachers who actively develop these competencies are better equipped to make informed, unbiased decisions, thereby enhancing their teaching effectiveness and promoting critical thinking in their students."

Problem 2. What is the competency-based performance of teacher-respondents in terms of content knowledge, use of ICT, communication strategies, learning environment, and teaching strategies.

Table 2. Level of Competency-Based Teaching Performance

Dimension	Mean	Level
Content Knowledge	5.00	Outstanding
Use of ICT	5.00	Outstanding
Communication Strategies	4.93	Outstanding
Learning Environment	5.00	Outstanding
Teaching Strategies	4.93	Outstanding
Overall	4.97	Outstanding

As reflected in table 2, the findings suggest that teachers demonstrate an outstanding level of performance, as indicated by the overall mean of 4.97, across various aspects such as content knowledge, use of ICT, learning environment with a mean of 5.00, followed by communication strategies and teaching strategies with a mean of 4.93. This indicate that the teacher respondents possess strong competencies in these areas, enabling them to deliver high-quality instruction and support student learning effectively.

these common factors that affect their content knowledge and pedagogy because teachers should intensively be focused on improving their competencies in different domains to provide wide learning opportunities to students to ensure the quality of education."

Problem 3. Do the respondents' critical thinking skills relate significantly with their competency based-performance?

In the study of Morallo & Abay (2019), "teachers should reflect on their teaching and professional practices and shall consider



Table 3. Analysis of Correlational Coefficient

Variable	Mean	Difference	P-Value	Remark
Critical Thinking Skills and Competency Based-Performance	3.80 4.96	-1.16	0.54	Not Significant

As reflected in table 3, it revealed that there is no significant correlation ($r=0.06$, $p=7.47 \text{ E-}01$) existing between critical thinking skills with a mean of 3.80, and competency based-performance with a mean of 4.96. This suggests that other factors may influence their competency-based performance, and critical thinking skills may not be a determining factor in this context.

According to the study of Demirdag (2015), revealed that there is no significant relationship between classroom management skills and critical thinking abilities. However, it is significant for the administrators in education to understand that the positive relationship between competency based-performance and critical thinking abilities is valuable for pedagogical practices of teachers and effective learning of students. Competency based-performance and critical thinking abilities encourage teachers to deliver efficient teaching and create a purposeful environment for learning while they enhance the processes of making efficient decisions and designing learning tasks for learners.

Furthermore, Bichi (2017) specified that evaluation of teacher performance is a continuous, routine and mandatory exercise in educational settings. Its relevance on students' learning outcomes and school accountability is enormous and cannot be underestimated. He added that the only way to determine the effectiveness of a teacher is through assessment or evaluation. Teachers are accountable in the educational process and their evaluations serve as one way to monitor and regulate accountability. Relative to that, teachers should do their best because whatever they do it will reflect on their performance.

CONCLUSIONS

Upon complete a comprehensive data analysis, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The respondents demonstrated a high level of their critical thinking skills in terms of self-awareness, objectivity, judgment, and credibility. This shows that the teacher-respondents possess strong reflective and analytical abilities, which improve their teaching efficiency and promote a just, informed, and reliable learning environment.
2. The study revealed that teacher-respondents exhibit an outstanding level of competency in content knowledge, use of ICT, communication skills, learning environment, and teaching strategies. This exceptional level of performance reflects their high professional capabilities, dedication to quality education, and preparedness to meet the challenges of 21st-century teaching. The results indicate that existing

teacher preparation and present professional development programs are proficiently supporting educators in reaching excellence across the critical areas in instructional domains.

3. The study found no significant relationship between the respondents' critical thinking skills and their competency-based performance. This shows that, in spite the potential importance of critical thinking in teaching, it does not seem to directly affect the teachers' performance in areas such as content knowledge, ICT use, communication strategies, learning environment, and teaching strategies. Additional research may be needed to identify other factors that may contribute to competency-based performance or to gain a better understanding of how critical thinking skills might indirectly influence teaching effectiveness.

Recommendations

With the above conclusions, the following are recommended:

1. To develop critical thinking skills, they should continue to participate in professional development programs that help enhance their critical thinking skills, especially in improving objectivity, judgment, and credibility in their instructional methods. Moreover, Administrators should also strengthen the implementation of their annual Individual Development Plan (IDP).
2. Continue refining and adapting their instructional strategies through continuous professional development to sustain and further enhance their competencies in competency in content knowledge, use of ICT, communication skills, learning environment, and teaching strategies while fostering innovative instructional strategies. Mentorship opportunities should be established, enabling high-performing teachers to guide their colleagues. Additionally, exemplary teaching practices should be documented and disseminated to promote consistent excellence throughout the institution.
3. Institutions should encourage structured reflection practices (e.g., teaching journals, peer observations, and mentoring) to help teachers to consistently evaluate and enhance their thinking and teaching methods.
4. Future researchers may investigate other factors that may influence competency-based performance which may include years of experience, practical and technical skills, trainings and seminars attended, motivation, emotional intelligence and their work environment.
5. Teachers should be encouraged and provided with support to adopt and apply research-driven instructional



innovations that connect critical thinking and instructional competence, ultimately improving both student outcomes and teaching effectiveness.

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