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## INTERNATIONAL COMPETENCY STANDARD FOR ASIAN TEACHERS

<sup>1</sup>Yvette M. Villarta, <sup>2</sup>Catheryn M. Miparanum, <sup>3</sup>Elmer Irene, <sup>4</sup>Helen Faith B. Baterna  
<sup>5</sup>Conception V. Garzota, <sup>6</sup>Victoria C. Millanar

<sup>1</sup>University of San Carlos – BED – SC

<sup>2</sup>Pinamungajan National High School – DepEd

<sup>3</sup>Samar State University, Catbalogan City, Samar

<sup>4</sup>Budla-an Integrated School

<sup>5</sup>Babag National High School

<sup>6</sup>Holy Name University, Tagbilaran City, Bohol

### ABSTRACT

In a sound and progressive society, teachers are one of its main pillars who, apart from parents, are the main source of knowledge acquisition and values formation for children. Indeed, as technology advances and floodgates of information abound, societies still recognize how crucial the teaching profession is in producing best human resources possible. To offer an authentic teacher's evaluation, the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) had identified teaching competency standards of the different countries that are often intended to serve the purpose of providing feedback, guidance for improving professional practice and characterize a competent teacher. This axiomatic deductive theory approach study emphasized the significance of the competency standard in evaluating teachers in their field of specialization. Thus, this aimed to inquire and explore the efficiency of the common domains of teaching competency standard for some Asian teachers. The analysis of the teachers' classroom observations, surveys, interviews and students' evaluations to their teachers has come out that competency standard in evaluating teachers is very useful in teaching their field and defined quality teaching that influenced students' achievements and success. It improved their performances such as in professional knowledge, skills, characteristics, personal ethical standards & values and development.

**Keywords:** Competency Standard, Competent Teacher, Professional Characteristics, Professional Development, Professional Knowledge, Professional Personal Ethical Standards and Values, Professional Skills, and Teacher Evaluation

## **RATIONALE**

The 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom needs are very different from the 20<sup>th</sup> century ones. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom, teachers are facilitators of student learning and creators of productive classroom environments, in which students can develop the skills they might need at present or in future (A., Nola, 2015).

With this kind of classroom environment, truly well-planned programs that prepare teachers to share with the students are to be implemented. Moreover, aligning instruction with external standards, setting school goals for student performance, measuring progress against those goals and making adjustments in the school to improve performance were identified as other important aspects of school leadership (Schleicher, Andreas, 2012). As one, these are the considerable measures that the community should look into.

In the other perspective, the issue of how best to develop teaching standards has been a concern for many countries. Some would like to benchmark with developed countries to expedite the development and adoption of national competency-based teaching standards. The various policies and models of completed national teaching standards will support more effective approaches in other countries in the region by way of benchmarking and complementation of efforts (SEAMEO INNOTECH, 2010). It is being found out that teacher evaluation systems are often intended to serve the purpose of providing feedback, guidance for improving professional practice and characterize a competent teacher. In fact, most authors identify the fundamental purposes of teacher evaluation as improving performance, providing quality education and documenting accountability.

Sometimes, program evaluations report no difference in outcomes between persons given a program and those not given the program. Is this because the program does not work, or because it was poorly implemented? Achieving high quality program implementation is critical to achieving anticipated outcomes, and researchers have made considerable progress in clarifying its importance in the past several decades.

The formulation of teacher's evaluation is one of the programs implemented by the Educational sector. It is the teacher's development guide towards personal and professional growth. It is a self-assessment guide that helps teachers identify their professional and training needs as well as their individual strengths in line with the common domains of teaching. The Toolkit established by the different countries is a version initiated by each group which is more usable, comprehensible to the level of teachers, and most of all, quantitative. This modified toolkit is designed to help teachers determine their professional development and training needs. Nevertheless, the data derived from this toolkit shall not be used to rate them; rather, they will

give accurate information about the teacher's competencies in the following domains and strands so that, appropriate interventions on the part of the teacher and the management shall be effected to help teachers in their professional growth and development.

Nonetheless, teachers may have the tendency to over rate themselves in some of the items because of man's innate tendency to "self-preservation" (Freud Sigmund, 1910). The term self-preservation in its simplest term describes both the set of behaviors by which individuals attempt to preserve their own existence and the physical processes that establish these behaviors. Hence, the tendency of not seeing their weaknesses can also be supported by the cognitive-psychological test created by Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham in 1995 in the United States. This is known as the "Johari Window". In this theory, it is said that there are blind spots in some areas of man's life that is not known to self but are known to others.

It has been cited that teacher quality is the most significant school – related influence on a child's academic performance and classroom teachers more than class size and previous student achievement are the single most important factor that adds value for student learning. The existence of teaching competency standards represents an agreed definition for quality teaching. Since quality teaching advances our students' achievements and success, it behooves our educational community and other stakeholders to continually define and refine our understanding of what an effective Southeast Asian teacher in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond should be, and how we can bring teachers to this ideal standard (Coulombe, Gerard, 2011).

The reason why the researchers conducted this study because they found out that there is a gap of knowledge among the teachers towards the implementation of program and explore the relevance of the common domains of teaching competency standards incorporated for some Asian countries. This includes the teaching competency standards of Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Korea, Japan and China with the common domains in teaching namely the professional knowledge, skills, characteristics, personal ethical standards and values and development and life-long learning.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Most educators would agree that they are responsible for student learning, but the profession as a whole has avoided evaluations/monitoring based on measures of student learning, sometimes with good reason, given the unfair approaches that have been proposed. The solution, however, is not to continue with traditional strategies simply because they are benign and comfortable, but rather to develop fair and reasonable means of assessing teacher success with students.

Knowledge is increasing rapidly. How adequately a teacher shows improvement is a measure of teaching quality. A teacher must invest in lifelong learning through trainings, skills development

and personal upgrading. Mr. Goh Chok Tong (1998), former Prime Minister of Singapore said: “ We must make learning a national culture...We must set up comprehensive mechanisms to continually retrain our workforce and encourage every individual to engage in learning as a matter of necessity ... teachers and principals will constantly look out for new ideas and practices, and continually refresh their own knowledge. Teaching will itself be a learning profession like any other knowledge-based profession of the future”.

[2] A good monitoring and feedback system can help identify when problems may be hindering quality implementation and fixes can be made to improve implementation (Greenwood, et al., 2003 ).

Self-evaluation and re-evaluation with regards to a teacher’s over-all growth and self-worth is an important tool in knowing oneself. Believing in one’s value, talents and self-worth will earn self-esteem, which in turn enables a teacher to relate with others. A teacher must also periodically assess his/her own attitude which can affect his/her perceptions in relating with others. Peers and students assessment can also provide some objectivity to complement one’s assessment of self (Mr. Goh Chok Tong, 1998)

[7] Tenured teachers are almost never found to be unsatisfactory. As a comprehensive study of the current system concluded, "Teacher evaluation does not recognize good teaching, leaves poor teaching unaddressed, and does not inform decision-making in any meaningful way" (p. 1).

It is important to consider and effectively address each step in the implementation process. For example, before implementation begins, it is important to assess such issues as how well the program fits the setting, if staff holds realistic expectations about what can be achieved, whether there is genuine buy-in or acceptance for the new program, and how to train staff effectively for their new roles. Once implementation begins, on-going technical assistance is needed to help staff implement with quality. It is also essential to develop and maintain a good monitoring and feedback system during implementation (Steps 12 and 13 in Table 2). This is because implementation often varies over time: sometimes quality drops and other times it increases. Both types of changes have implications. If implementation drops to too low a level after a good start, there is a need to intervene quickly through professional development activities to improve implementation. [4] Such a drop may also signal a need to re-examine whether commitment, support and enthusiasm still exist for the new program, and what steps might be taken to rekindle the initial interest and support of the organization and its staff.

Practitioner varies in their performance when implementing new programs. It is important to monitor each practitioner’s performance and offer additional professional development as needed. People have different learning styles and learning curves; some can develop new skills

quickly while others require more time and practice. Some lose motivation over time and may need professional development to rekindle enthusiasm. Others may simply not care about implementing the program and may need stronger incentives to carry out the program, or they may need to be replaced (Mihalic et al. 2008).

Programs implemented in contexts which incorporate features such as incentives, small class size, a highly structured curriculum, and teachers selected by the principal, might offer some hope for low – achieving students (Jacob and Letgren, 2004). Education shall be based on the principle that all learners are capable of learning and self – development, and are regarded as being most important that help both the high and low achieving students (Pilanthanonond, Methi, 2007).

The current emphasis on using more intensive supervision and evaluation of teachers to improve school performance illustrates this irony. According to Race to the Top guidelines, this more rigorous supervision process should influence a teacher's professional development, compensation, promotion, retention, tenure, and certification. Ultimately, the evaluations should reward highly effective educators with merit pay and remove those deemed ineffective.

Teacher education does not attract the best or the highly intellectually capable high school graduates. It is the least expensive program that is accessible to the middle and low income families that desires higher education for their children. This generalization resulted from a study conducted by Ibe (1979), that more students from the lower 30 percentiles expressed preference for teacher education. This is because, education program especially for non science majors are least expensive and requires less laboratory fees. However, when they will join the teaching profession, these teachers will be forced to teach science when there is no available science teacher to teach the subject (Ibe and Ogena, 1998).

The fact that the education profession is regarded as a licensed profession signifies progress and raises the professional standards, which would benefit clients by providing quality education with higher standards, and which would also bring trust, respect, honor and dignity in society to the education profession and its practitioners (Pilanthanonond, Methi, 2007).

In other countries, school leaders take full responsibility for the evaluation of individual teachers. In Finland, the school director is the pedagogical leader, responsible for the teachers in her school and for the implementation of measures needed to enhance teaching quality. [6] As a result, most of Finnish schools have a system that includes annual discussions aimed at evaluating the teacher's fulfillment of individual objectives set up during the previous year and determining developmental needs for the following year.

[5] To achieve the greatest impact, the focus of school evaluation should either be linked to or have an effect on the focus of teacher evaluation. Taking forward human resources management is ideally embedded in a system of school quality assurance, where the school strategy and the school self-evaluation results ensure a continuous monitoring and improving of school and teacher quality.

[1] The best performing countries have established learning standards and have developed assessment systems to monitor their achievement. The commitment to provide every student with the opportunities to develop the knowledge and skills required to participate in and contribute to society underpins the definition of standards (Storey, 2006).

Teacher quality made the largest difference in student achievements and the most effective school system to be invested. In order to achieve success and quality learners, excellent and competent teachers are honed to train this kind of learners especially the 21<sup>st</sup> century learners are totally different from the previous generation due to the advent of technology. With this generation, things changed rapidly like their attention span, interest, being critically thinkers, having a good decision making skill, determined and optimistic. These things are of most important to learners as what educators defined to globally compete for the challenges of life. As what educators have seen to the trends of change and to perfectly obtain the so-called success in education is to develop a tool that can help a teacher to be professionally qualified. The tool should have the domains rightfully included in the teaching competency standards.

## **STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of the study is to inquire and explore the efficiency of Teaching Competency Standards of 7 countries: Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Korea, Japan and China in monitoring in relation to teachers' performance and attitudes.

Specifically, the study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How are the Teaching Competency Standard helped teachers to achieve good performance?
2. How are the present elements in the existing Teaching Competency Standard affected the teacher's perception on their performance, skills and attitudes?

## **Research Design**

The Axiomatic deductive theory approach study will be used in conducting the research, a qualitative research methodology in inquiring and exploring the efficiency of the Teaching Competency Standards in relation to teachers' performance, skills and attitudes.

**Research Environment**

The study will focus in exploring the common domains of teaching competency standards for Philippines, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Korea, Japan, and China.

These countries are chosen to study the efficiency of the common domains as they worked enormously to improve the performance of the teachers and aid quality education especially in the Department of Education that prepares the 21<sup>st</sup> century teachers and learners.

**Research Participant**

The seven countries of Philippines, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Korea, Japan and China are the participants. The researchers considered the five common domains of teaching competency standards namely: professional knowledge, professional skills, professional characteristics, professional personal ethical standards & values, and professional development & life – long learning as the focused variables to scrutinize in the existing teaching competency standards.

**Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Study Participants**

Participant	Teaching Competency Standards	Common Domains in Teaching Competency Standards
<b>Philippines</b>	National Competency-Based Teaching Standards (NCBTS)	<i>Social regard for Learning; Learning Environment; Diversity of Learners; Curriculum; Planning, Assessing, and Reporting; Community Linkages; and Personal Growth &amp; Professional Development – 7 domains</i>
<b>Thailand</b>	Council of Teachers Act B.E. 2546	<i>Teachers' Knowledge; standards of</i>

		<i>Teaching Experience; Standards of Teacher Performance; and Standards of Conduct – 4 domains</i>
<b>Malaysia</b>	Malaysian Teacher Standards (MTS)	<i>Transforming ingrained beliefs, values, and biased perceptions of teaching; the Rhetoric – Reality Gap of the MTS itself; and the Actual Training of Teachers – undefined domains</i>
<b>Singapore</b>	Enhanced Performance Management System (EPMS)	<i>Nurturing the Whole Child; Cultivating Knowledge; Winning Hearts and Minds; and Working with Others</i>
<b>Korea</b>	Teacher Evaluation	<i>Teacher's work record; Work performing ability; and Work performing attitude</i>
<b>China</b>	Teacher Evaluation	<i>Awareness &amp; Attitude; Knowledge &amp; Skills; Implementation &amp; Innovation; and Social Responsibility</i>



<b>Japan</b>	Teacher Evaluation (based from TALIS)	<i>Teacher characteristics; Working environments; Leadership; Learning &amp; development opportunities; Appraisal &amp; feedback; Pedagogical practices &amp; beliefs; and Self-efficacy &amp; job satisfaction</i>
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**Research Instrument**

The goal of this study is to inquire and explore the efficiency of the Teaching Competency Standards in relation to teachers' performance, skills and attitudes that help teachers learn about, reflect on, and improve their practices. The improvement function generally is considered formative in nature and suggests the need for continuous professional growth and development. There will be interview, survey and data analysis conducted to gather relevant ideas on the efficiency of the domains included in the teaching competency standards.

This study is using the teaching competency standards of the seven countries to evaluate teachers and as a guide in teacher's observation, interview and survey.

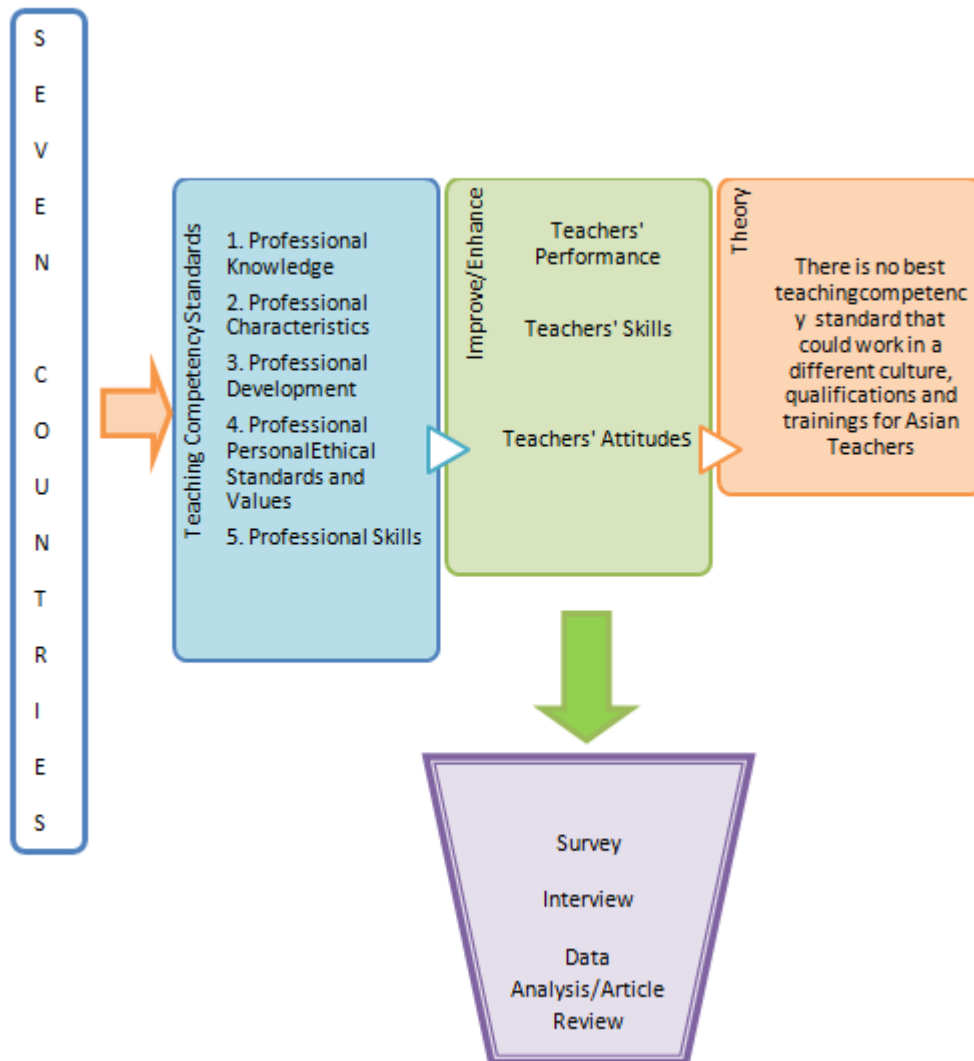
**Research Sampling**

The comparison of the common domains of teaching competency standards employ of these seven countries. The researcher used the purposive sampling to determine the efficiency of the teaching competency standards in the Science Department and how this motivates the Science teachers' performance, skills and attitudes.

**Theory Generation Process**

Like all professionals, teachers want, need and deserve evaluation processes that accurately identify their strengths as well as areas in which they need to improve. Teachers knew the fact about high – quality management suggests that professional growth requires strong evaluation systems that provide specific, timely and actionable feedback against clear standards of

professional practice. Moreover, there are new that would give teachers the information and support that they need to grow as professionals that can be deployed to create measures of performance and served both teachers and students well (Almy, S., 2011).



**Figure 1. Schematic Diagram of the Study**

Through survey, interview and data analysis are used to get sufficient information of the relevance of these tools in the different countries with common domains being included in the teaching competency standard. With the information gathered, the following are the axioms, propositions and hypotheses of the study:

**Axiom 1:** Teaching quality standard in Asia is culture – based.

**P1:** A culture – tailored standard results to an effective teaching performance.

**H1:** The more contextualize the teaching standards, the more competent the teachers in teaching – learning process.

**Axiom 2:** Teaching quality standards shares common domains in developing the teaching skills of teachers.

**P2:** A well – defined teaching domains leads to an excellent teaching.

**H2:** The better the teaching principles, the better the learners’ academic performance and skills.

**Axiom 3:** A quality education improves economic situation of a country.

**P3:** An ideal teaching standards advances students’ achievements and success.

**H3:** A more concrete teacher’s evaluation produces a more competent and effective teacher.

**Axiom 4:** All teaching competency standards have issues and gaps.

**P4.1:** Political will affects the implementation of the educational program.

**H4.1:** The stronger the political influence, the stronger access of support to educational programs.

**P4.2:** A proper monitoring and supervising leads to quality teaching assessments.

**H4.2:** The more qualified members in monitoring and evaluation team, the more reliable the teachers’ evaluation.

**Axiom 5:** Teaching competency standards promotes constructive feed backing toward quality teaching performance.

**P5:** The greater rate of qualified teachers, the greater rate of educated graduates.

**H5:** The more competent are the graduates, the more chance of employment.

With these ideas, the researchers formulated a theory that *there is no best teaching competency standard that could work in a different culture, qualifications and trainings for Asian teachers*. Teacher evaluations is heating up in different countries as the educational sector seeks support for the performance-based evaluation of teachers which many believed that it can greatly help in achieving quality teaching that produce quality learners and lead to quality education. In the different perspective of educators in different countries, the experts may formulate similar teaching domains in evaluating the teachers but there are differences they may consider which

are not found perhaps in the others that they believed beneficial in this sector. This could ever mean the differences on culture, beliefs and attitudes.

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