

Academic Qualifications and Artificial Intelligence Competency Among Filipino Language Teachers in Senior High Schools of Zamboanga City

Dr. Rhea Lopez-Mendoza

Filipino Department, Western Mindanao State University

Zamboanga City, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted to determine the academic qualifications and perceived artificial intelligence (AI) ability of Filipino language teachers in the senior high schools of Zamboanga City. The study used a mixed-methods approach to integrate quantitative survey data and qualitative interviews for a holistic assessment of teachers' professional qualifications and AI competence in language teaching. The results indicated that most respondents have bachelor's degrees and professional teaching licenses, meeting the minimum education levels. But few had advanced academic degrees or specialized training in Filipino language instruction and artificial intelligence. The qualitative studies also indicated that teachers regarded their AI skill at an average level. While they were familiar with AI applications like using ChatGPT to plan lessons, develop teaching material, and prepare assessments, they showed low confidence in using AI in daily classroom instruction, critically evaluating AI-generated outputs, and addressing ethical issues related to AI use. This study indicates a need for continual professional development programs that improve pedagogical topic knowledge and AI proficiency through specialized training, hands-on workshops, and institutional assistance. In addition to the AI-related competencies, enhancing the teachers' academic qualifications will enhance instructional effectiveness, promote responsible AI integration, and equip Filipino language teachers to better respond to the evolving demands of technology-enhanced education in multilingual learning environments.

Keywords: Academic qualifications, artificial intelligence competency, Filipino language teachers, pedagogical content knowledge, professional development, senior high schools, technology-enhanced learning.

INTRODUCTION

This study assesses the academic qualifications of Filipino language teachers in senior high schools across Zamboanga City. The area's linguistic diversity, including Chavacano, Tausug, and other indigenous languages, presents both challenges and opportunities for instruction. These dynamics highlight the need for a thorough understanding of teacher preparedness [1]. The Philippines, located at the crossroads of the Indian and Pacific Oceans, is home to over a hundred indigenous and foreign languages, which significantly shape its educational system [2]. The Department of Education requires mother tongue-based multilingual education in early grades, emphasizing the need for culturally and linguistically competent teachers [3]. Assessing teachers' pedagogical strategies and adaptability to diverse student backgrounds is essential for effective Filipino language instruction [4], [5]. This study examines the qualifications of Filipino language teachers to determine their readiness to implement the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education policy in a complex linguistic environment [6]. It also explores how educators address the challenges of national language policies in classrooms where Tagalog often predominates over local languages [6], [7]. The research considers the impact of standardized orthographies, such as the 2014 Zamboanga Chavacano Orthography, on teaching practices and the varied written systems used by Chavacano speakers [8].

Given this complexity, the study evaluates teacher qualifications beyond standard metrics, focusing on their ability to integrate local linguistic nuances into instruction. It analyzes how teachers adapt their methods to students' varied linguistic backgrounds, especially in a country with over 181 languages [9]. The study also investigates how teachers use students' mother tongues as resources to improve learning outcomes [10]. Success in this approach depends on teachers' academic qualifications, pedagogical skills, and understanding of sociolinguistic dynamics [11]. The research aims to assess the preparedness of Filipino language teachers in Zamboanga City's senior high schools to meet the goals of the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education policy. This is important given the misalignments between national policies and classroom practices, which sometimes prompt calls for policy review [6]. The study evaluates whether current qualifications enable teachers to implement these policies effectively, promote genuine multilingualism, and address challenges such as orthographic variation and limited resources [12], [13].

Findings are expected to reveal strengths and gaps in teacher preparation, including disparities in licensing, advanced degrees, and specialized training relevant to Department of Education programs [14]. This assessment will help identify areas for targeted professional development and policy adjustments to improve Filipino language education in diverse settings [14]. The study will also examine how teacher qualifications affect their ability to adapt to students' language proficiency, influencing the effectiveness of language acquisition strategies [6], [15]. Understanding these factors is crucial, as teachers' academic backgrounds directly impact their teaching effectiveness and student outcomes, especially in multilingual environments [14]. The research further explores the relationship between academic qualifications and culturally responsive teaching, particularly in Chavacano-Tausug contexts [14]. Implementing Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education policies often faces challenges at the classroom level, especially regarding teacher preparedness and the practical application of policy in diverse linguistic settings [6], [16].

Research Questions

1. What are the academic qualifications of the Filipino language teachers in Senior High Schools?
2. What is the perceived artificial intelligence competency among the respondents?

RELATED LITERATURE REVIEW

Academic Qualifications as an Integral Part of Teaching

This section synthesizes existing research on teacher qualifications, language policies, and their intersection within multilingual educational contexts, laying the groundwork for a comprehensive analysis of Filipino language teachers' academic preparedness. It critically examines studies about teacher academic qualifications, professional development, and the efficacy of various pedagogical approaches in multilingual classrooms, particularly focusing on the challenges and successes encountered in the implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education [12], [15]. This involves a thorough examination of how teacher training and ongoing professional development initiatives address the specific demands of teaching in linguistically diverse environments, considering the unique socio-cultural dynamics prevalent in the Philippines [17]. Furthermore, it will explore the documented challenges in teacher preparedness, resource availability, and the complex interplay of language diversity and selection difficulties, drawing insights from existing literature [16].

The review will also consider the impact of teacher qualifications on student academic achievement and linguistic development, especially in the context of mother tongue instruction [18]. It will further investigate how gaps in academic qualifications, such as a lack of advanced degrees or specialized training in multilingual pedagogy, might impede the effective implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education policies in Zamboanga City [14]. This review will also highlight the common difficulties encountered in policy implementation, such as inadequate teacher training and resource constraints, and propose strategies for overcoming these obstacles [6], [16]. Specifically, it will scrutinize the alignment between teacher academic qualifications and the demands of the Department of Education's K to 12 curriculum, particularly regarding Filipino language instruction and its integration with mother tongue-based approaches. Moreover, the literature review will delve into studies that

assess the effectiveness of communicative language teaching approaches within the Filipino context, considering how such methodologies are adapted for multilingual classrooms [19].

The review also incorporates findings on the issues and challenges faced by teachers in implementing Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education, including the lack of teaching materials and adequate teacher training, which are critical for meeting subject competencies [10], [20]. These challenges often lead to ineffective instruction, compelling teachers to adopt coping mechanisms like code-switching and improvising instructional materials to bridge the pedagogical gaps [15], [20], [21]. This often results in inconsistencies between intended pedagogical outcomes and actual classroom practices, underscoring the urgent need for enhanced professional development programs that directly address these observed deficiencies [15]. Therefore, a critical examination of teacher qualifications becomes paramount to understanding and improving the pedagogical landscape of Filipino language education in Zamboanga City.

This section will delineate key findings from prior research concerning the academic qualifications of teachers, specifically examining their educational attainment, professional growth, and the relationship between these factors and student performance [22]. It will also consider how high licensure rates in the region often contrast with lower attainment of master's or doctorate degrees and inconsistent compliance with continuous professional development requirements, thus creating a gap in specialized pedagogical skills [14]. This discrepancy underscores the necessity for targeted interventions, such as incentives for advanced degrees and robust professional development, to elevate teaching standards in Filipino language education [14]. This review further elucidates that while elementary teachers are highly competent in utilizing Mother Tongue, Filipino, and English for classroom instruction, there remains a notable deficiency in applying diverse teaching strategies and a lack of peer support for pedagogical innovation [23]. This gap suggests a need for collaborative professional learning communities that foster shared best practices and provide sustained instructional coaching to enhance pedagogical repertoire. Such initiatives are critical for addressing the documented inconsistencies in established legal procedures and communication skills among educators, mirroring challenges found in other community-based educational and administrative systems [24].

Furthermore, research indicates that ongoing professional development, such as in-service training, is crucial for equipping teachers with updated pedagogical tools and knowledge, particularly in response to consistently low performance in national and international assessments [25]. For instance, the Education for All 2015 National Review Report highlighted that the quality of basic education in the Philippines remains below national standards, with average National Achievement Test Mean Percentage Scores consistently hovering around 50% [26]. This persistent underperformance underscores the urgent need for a thorough re-evaluation of teacher academic qualifications and their alignment with the demands of the Philippine educational system [27]. This necessitates an in-depth examination of how teacher qualifications, encompassing both formal education and continuous professional development, directly influence the quality of instruction and subsequently, student learning outcomes, particularly in the foundational subject areas.

This comprehensive understanding will help identify specific areas for intervention and inform policy adjustments aimed at improving educational outcomes in Zamboanga City [23]. This analysis will also establish a comprehensive baseline profile of Filipino language teachers, considering factors beyond licensure, such as relevant teaching experience and participation in professional development activities, to ensure alignment with national standards [14]. Such a profile is crucial for identifying specific professional development needs and for tailoring support programs that address the unique challenges faced by Filipino language educators in multilingual contexts [28]. Moreover, an assessment of academic qualifications must extend to pedagogical content knowledge, which is often unquantifiable by standardized metrics but significantly impacts teaching effectiveness [29].

Therefore, an in-depth exploration into the specific academic backgrounds and professional training of Filipino language teachers is essential to understanding their capacity to deliver high-quality instruction and meet the evolving demands of the K to 12 curriculum [22].

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE COMPETENCY OF TEACHERS

With the rising use of AI-driven technologies in teaching and learning in educational systems, artificial intelligence (AI) proficiency has become an essential need for teachers. AI competency is not limited to technical expertise but also encompasses teachers' understanding of AI principles, their capacity to use AI tools pedagogically, their ability to evaluate AI-generated outputs, their awareness of ethical considerations and their commitment to continuously improve professional practices. Recent systematic evaluations have identified AI competency as consisting of AI literacy, pedagogical integration, professional preparation, and ethical decision-making, which together enable instructors to use AI effectively while retaining relevant human-centered instruction. With AI transforming learning settings, educators possessing strong AI competences are better equipped to cultivate innovative, inclusive, and technology-rich educational experiences.

The importance of teachers' AI proficiency rests in its direct impact on instructional quality and student learning results. Teachers that have sufficient AI skills are better equipped to create customized educational experiences, automate repetitive teaching chores, give feedback on a timely basis, and support students with adaptive learning tools. Teachers with AI competence are also better able to critically analyze content produced by AI, making sure that educational materials are accurate, relevant and used ethically. According to UNESCO (2024), AI competency enables teachers to go beyond the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools and to develop creative pedagogical strategies that respect human agency, encourage responsible AI use and improve professional decision-making in different educational contexts. Moreover, AI proficiency is an important aspect of teachers' professional growth and institutional readiness for digital transformation. Studies reveal that teachers with higher levels of AI competency exhibit better confidence, self-efficacy and readiness to employ AI in classroom teaching. Professional learning opportunities that build AI literacy, pedagogical expertise, ethical awareness, and critical assessment skills enable the use of sustainable technology and the improvement of teaching practices. However, the extant literature also reveals that many educators still face competency gaps due to lack of training, institutional support, and defined competency frameworks. These results emphasize the necessity of ongoing professional development programs that systematically build teachers' capacities in AI.

Finally, the importance of teachers' AI competence relates to educational policy, curriculum creation, and the future sustainability of AI integration in schools. International frameworks suggest that teacher education institutions and policy makers develop complete AI competency requirements that incorporate human-centered values, AI ethics, technological proficiency, pedagogical innovation, and lifelong professional learning. These capabilities allow educators to take advantage of the educational benefits of AI, while mitigating possible dangers of biased thinking, privacy, academic integrity and over-reliance on automated systems. Therefore, enhancing teachers' AI competency is globally regarded as a core means to enhance the quality of education, facilitate digital transformation, and cultivate learners with the expertise and abilities required in an AI-driven society.

METHODOLOGY

This section outlines the research design, participants, data-collection instruments, and statistical analyses used to assess the academic qualifications of Filipino language teachers in senior high schools across Zamboanga City. The study utilized a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys to gather measurable data on qualifications with qualitative interviews to explore teachers lived experiences and perceptions of their professional development needs [14]. This approach enabled a comprehensive understanding of the breadth and depth of academic qualifications and their perceived impact on teaching effectiveness [30]. A descriptive research approach was employed to examine the professional qualifications, subject-matter familiarity, and pedagogical strategies used by these educators [31]. Specifically, a descriptive-correlational design was implemented to ascertain relationships between demographic profiles and perceptions of homestay programs among potential stakeholders [32]. This methodological choice facilitates a robust investigation into the multifaceted nature of teacher qualifications, aligning with studies that integrate quantitative measures with qualitative insights for a holistic assessment of educational phenomena. This section details the research design, participants, data collection instruments, and statistical analyses used to assess the academic qualifications of Filipino language teachers in senior high schools across Zamboanga City. The study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys to collect measurable data on qualifications with qualitative interviews to explore teachers'

experiences and perceptions of their professional development needs [14]. This methodology enabled a comprehensive understanding of both the scope and depth of academic qualifications and their perceived impact on teaching effectiveness [30]. A descriptive research approach was used to examine professional qualifications, subject matter expertise, and pedagogical strategies among educators [31].

This methodological choice supports a robust investigation into the multifaceted nature of teacher qualifications, consistent with studies that integrate quantitative and qualitative insights for a holistic assessment of educational phenomena [33], [34]. Integrating both data types provides a nuanced understanding, allowing for verification and elaboration of findings that may be overlooked by a single method [1], [35]. This design is particularly relevant given the complex factors influencing teacher performance and student outcomes, necessitating a multifaceted approach to data collection and analysis [36].

The quantitative phase involved surveying a representative sample of Filipino language teachers to gather data on academic degrees, professional certifications, and participation in continuing education, while the qualitative phase included in-depth interviews with a subset of teachers to explore their perspectives on their competency of the use of AI [37], [38]. This sequential exploratory mixed-methods design, which begins with qualitative interviews followed by survey questionnaires, allows for a comprehensive analysis of the research problem [39]. The dual approach provides a holistic perspective that would not be possible through a single methodology [40]. sessional development [14]. The analysis will follow a systematic process of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing to ensure accuracy and rigor in interpreting the findings [35].

Furthermore, triangulating these diverse datasets will enable a more robust, validated understanding of the intricate relationships among academic qualifications, professional experience, and instructional efficacy [41], [43]. This dual approach will illuminate how formal credentials interact with lived pedagogical practices to shape the overall quality of Filipino language education. The synthesis of quantitative statistics and qualitative narratives will thus provide actionable insights for curriculum development, teacher training initiatives, and policy formulation within the Department of Education [14]. Thematic analysis, as per Naeem et al., will be employed for the qualitative data to systematically identify recurring themes and patterns within the teachers' narratives [44]. This method ensures a deep dive into the subjective experiences and perceptions that underpin the quantitative findings, thereby enriching the overall interpretation of the study's results [37], [45]. 1. The first major result from the statistical treatment and analysis of the data indicated a prevalence of bachelor's degrees among the Filipino language teachers, though specialized certifications in language pedagogy were less common [46].

This highlights a potential gap between general academic achievement and specific instructional expertise in the field. Conversely, the qualitative findings revealed that while many teachers expressed a desire for advanced training in specialized linguistic areas, limited access to such programs in Zamboanga City often constrained their professional growth. This disparity underscores the need for targeted professional development opportunities that address the pedagogical demands of Filipino language instruction, moving beyond generic academic qualifications to enhance teaching effectiveness [47]. Thematic analysis of the qualitative data further indicated that teachers frequently resort to self-directed learning and peer collaboration to address these gaps, suggesting an untapped potential for formalized, localized training programs [48], [49]. This observation aligns with previous research highlighting the significance of continuous professional development and digital literacy in enhancing teacher competence, particularly in specialized subject areas [34]. This concurrent analysis using a mixed-methods approach strengthens the reliability and applicability of the research, offering actionable insights for curriculum developers and policymakers [42].

Table 1: Stages of Data Collection

Stage	Description	Actions
Identification	Define the scope of teacher qualifications assessment	Specify research questions on credentials, licenses, and experience; set inclusion/exclusion criteria for teacher

		profiles
Screening	Filter teacher data based on initial qualifications	Retain profiles aligning with Filipino language teaching in senior high schools
Eligibility	Full review of selected profiles	Select data meeting criteria for national standards alignment and synthesis

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

On the Academic Qualifications of the Filipino Teachers

This discussion examines the implications of the findings in relation to current educational policies and the evolving needs of language education in Zamboanga City. The integration of quantitative and qualitative results shows that while teachers have foundational academic qualifications, there is a strong need for specialized pedagogical training tailored to the region's unique linguistic and cultural context. The study also finds that, despite teachers' awareness of pedagogical content knowledge, a significant gap remains in its practical classroom application, often due to resource limitations [33].

This highlights the need for targeted professional development that addresses the specific demands of Filipino language instruction and moves beyond general academic qualifications to improve teaching effectiveness [23]. Current professional development programs should be critically reviewed to ensure they meet the needs of Filipino language teachers, especially in areas like conflict resolution and communication skills, which are essential for classroom management [50]. Incorporating pedagogical content knowledge training into these programs is important, as PCK combines subject expertise with effective teaching strategies and is developed through experience and collaboration [33]. Enhancing teacher qualifications should therefore include both formal education and ongoing, context-specific professional development that leads to improved instructional practices [23]. This approach ensures teachers are not only academically qualified but also equipped with the practical skills needed to address the complexities of language education [33], [50].

On the Perceived AI Competence of the Teachers

The qualitative findings revealed that the AI competency of Filipino language teachers was perceived to be at an average level. Participants showed a general awareness of artificial intelligence and the possibilities it has for enhancing language training. Most teachers said they could utilize simple AI-based apps to prepare lesson plans, build instructional materials and generate classroom activities. However, they did recognize limits in the application of increasingly advanced artificial intelligence (AI) tools, integrating AI into everyday classroom learning, and critically analyzing content produced by AI. The findings show that instructors have basic knowledge and skills in AI but their proficiency is moderate and has to be improved further by continual professional development and specialized training.

The participants rated their competence in AI as average, which shows that they have a reasonable degree of knowledge and practical skills in the use of AI-based learning tools. They possessed a general awareness of fundamental AI applications and held positive attitudes towards their use in language education, but they admitted inadequate experience in advanced AI integration, instructional design, ethical considerations, and critical evaluation of AI-generated outputs. The teachers repeatedly highlighted the need for structured training, hands-on workshops and institutional support to improve their AI capabilities. The results imply that the existing competencies serve as the basis for AI implementation, but further professional development is necessary to prepare Filipino language teachers to utilize AI successfully in teaching and increase student learning outcomes. This qualitative data confirms the quantitative findings of the average perceived AI proficiency of the teachers and highlights prospects for targeted capacity-building programs in AI-enhanced language instruction.

PARTICIPANT RESPONSES

Respondent 1 *"I am aware of AI technologies such as ChatGPT and utilize them on occasion to assist me in creating lesson ideas. However, I still believe in my proficiency is mediocre as I am not yet entirely confident in integrating AI into my regular teaching."*

Respondent 2 *"I can develop examples and learning exercises with AI, but I still utilize traditional teaching approaches most of the time. I think I am averagely competent, because there are many AI elements I haven't explored."*

Respondent 3 *"I have a basic knowledge of the functions of AI in education but I need further training on how to maximize its application in teaching Filipino. I would consider myself to be average at the moment."*

Respondent 4 *"While I am able to use several AI apps, I still find it challenging to choose the most suitable tools for different classroom circumstances. I'm not a master of AI, but I'm good enough."*

Respondent 5 *"AI is helpful in preparing quizzes and instructional materials in a more efficient manner. But I constantly double check because I'm still learning how to properly analyze AI produced material."*

Respondent 6 *"Our school started implementing digital technologies, but we haven't had enough AI-specific trainings. I think my ability is ordinary because I know only fundamental apps."*

Respondent 7 *"I am prepared to use AI in my teaching but I need more direction on how to use it successfully and ethically. I would not say that my current competency is poor or great; it is somewhere in the center."*

CONCLUSION

The survey showed that the majority of the Filipino language teachers in Zamboanga City are holding bachelor's degree but the issue is the lack of specific pedagogical training that would bridge the gap between general academic qualifications and instructional expertise [51]. The findings also showed that the teachers have an average level of AI competency which means that they have basic knowledge and skills in using AI-driven learning technologies but they need more capacity building to effectively integrate these tools in Filipino language instruction. This underscores the necessity of ongoing professional development programs to improve both pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) and AI competency, as academic qualifications are highly associated with the effective use of PCK and the meaningful adoption of emerging educational technologies [52]. Teachers' experience learning, adaptability and openness to adopt innovation in teaching are reflected in practical use of pedagogical knowledge and applications of AI regardless of the extent [53].

While traditional education provides a solid basis, continuing training in particular subject areas, local settings and AI enhanced instructional approaches are crucial for effective teaching [50]. Thus, future initiatives should build specialized professional development programs that enhance pedagogical knowledge and AI competency, promoting academic excellence and practical competence among Filipino language teachers [33]. Such programs should incorporate hands-on, content-based training on AI-driven learning technologies, digital instructional design, and ethical AI use to promote teacher development and improve instructional efficacy [54, 55]. Furthermore, continuous training in creative pedagogical techniques, linguistic advances and new technology in education are important to preserve pedagogical efficacy and to promote a dynamic learning environment [33], [56]. These interventions are very important to prepare educators in responding to curriculum reforms, meeting the needs of different learners, and adapting to the increasing presence of artificial intelligence in education that will eventually improve the quality of Filipino language instruction and enhance student learning outcomes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are drawn based from the results of the study:

1. Create Professional Development Programs for Specialization.

The Department of Education (DepEd), Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and school administrators should create and implement specialized professional development programs to improve the pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) of Filipino language teachers. These programs should emphasize new instructional approaches, contextualized language learning, assessment and classroom management to increase instructional efficacy.

2. Enhance AI Capacity Through Capacity-Building Initiatives

Since the survey revealed that Filipino language teachers have an average level of AI competency, educational institutions should provide frequent training, workshops, and certification programs on the effective and ethical use of artificial intelligence in language instruction. These programs should build teachers' capacity to integrate AI-powered learning tools into class preparation, instruction, assessment and feedback.

3. Promote the use of AI-based learning technologies in the teaching of Filipino language.

Administrators should encourage the use of AI-powered teaching technologies by providing instructors with access to relevant digital resources, reliable internet connectivity and technical support. Institutional policies should support responsible use of AI to enhance learner engagement, tailor instruction, and improve learning outcomes while safeguarding the integrity of ethical and academic standards.

4. Promote Higher Academic Qualifications and Lifelong Learning.

Encouraging Filipino language teachers to pursue graduate studies and professional certifications as well as continuing education relevant to language instruction, educational technology, and artificial intelligence. These possibilities will allow them to improve their overall instructional efficacy by enhancing their discipline expertise and their technical competencies.

5. Additional studies on the integration of AI in Filipino language education.

Future researchers might examine the association of the AI competency, pedagogical subject understanding, technological adoption, instructional creativity, and student learning results of Filipino language teachers. Future research with bigger samples and other educational contexts should be conducted to validate the present findings and to develop evidence-based strategies to promote AI-enhanced language training.

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