Social Science Instructors' Teaching Competencies and Students' Academic Performance in Batangas State University System: Towards A Faculty Training Program

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Abstract

This study assessed the instructional competencies of Social Science instructors and their impact on students' academic performance in Understanding the Self at Batangas State University System. A descriptive research method was used, involving 15 instructors and 544 students across various campuses. Data collection covered demographics, instructional competencies, and academic performance. The study examined instructors' content mastery, teaching strategies, classroom management, and evaluation techniques. Findings showed that most students were within the ideal college age, predominantly female, and enrolled in engineering programs despite being from the College of Accountancy, Business, Economics, and International Hospitality Management (CABEIHM). Instructors were mostly female, held graduate degrees, had five years or less of teaching experience, and managed full teaching loads with two subject preparations. They were competent in teaching the subject, particularly in using diverse strategies. While students' assessments of their instructors varied significantly, instructors' self-assessments showed no differences. Students demonstrated strong academic performance, and a significant relationship was found between instructor competencies and student outcomes, rejecting the null hypothesis. Challenges affecting student performance were identified, leading to the proposal of a teacher training program to enhance instructional competencies and improve learning outcomes. The study underscores the crucial role of teacher competencies in shaping student success.

Keywords: *Instructional Competencies; Academic Performance; Social Science Instructors; Teaching Strategies; Student Outcomes.*

1. Introduction

The effectiveness of educators significantly influences student learning outcomes, highlighting the need for competent instructors. This study examined the instructional competencies of Social Science instructors at Batangas State University System and their impact on student academic performance. As educational demands evolve, teachers must continuously refine their pedagogical strategies, subject expertise, and classroom management to foster effective learning environments.

Recognizing the vital role of teachers in student success, the study identified key areas for professional growth and instructional enhancement. It emphasized that teaching competency encompasses not only content delivery but also student engagement, responsiveness to diverse learning needs, and compliance with institutional standards. By analyzing these factors, the study offers insights into the link between instructor proficiency and academic performance, providing recommendations for faculty development to improve teaching effectiveness and student outcomes.

2. Objectives

This study assessed the instructional competencies of Social Science instructors at Batangas State University System and their relationship with students' academic performance. The research specifically aimed to achieve the following objectives:

1) To determine the demographic profiles of the respondents, including students' age, sex, program/department, and major, as well as instructors' age, sex, educational preparation, area of specialization, length of service, number of teaching loads, and number of preparations.
2) To evaluate the extent to which Social Science instructors demonstrated instructional competencies, particularly in teaching Understanding the Self, in terms of technological aspects, pedagogical approaches, and content knowledge.
3) To examine the extent to which Social Science instructors utilized various teaching strategies in their instruction.

4) To analyze whether there were significant differences in the assessments of respondents regarding the instructors' instructional competencies when grouped according to their demographic profiles.
5) To determine the academic performance levels of students in Social Science subjects, specifically in Understanding the Self.
6) To investigate the relationship between the extent of instructional competencies demonstrated by Social Science instructors and the academic performance of students.
7) To identify the challenges encountered in sustaining academic performance among students.
8) To propose a faculty training program based on the findings to enhance instructors' competencies and improve students' academic performance.

The findings of this study are expected to provide valuable insights for educators, administrators, and policymakers in enhancing instructional effectiveness and student learning outcomes in higher education.

3. Literature review

Teaching is widely viewed as a noble profession rooted in moral obligation, lifelong learning, and public service (Ingersoll & Collins, 2018). Teachers are entrusted with the intellectual and character development of students, guided by professional ethics and national policies such as the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers and Republic Act No. 7836, which call for high standards of competency, integrity, and preparation (Bilbao et al., 2015).

Social Science educators shoulder the specific responsibility of cultivating critical thinking, civic responsibility, and ethical awareness among learners. Their influence extends beyond subject knowledge, as they are expected to model values of diversity, equity, and patriotism in a democratic society (Argon & Kaya, 2018). These teachers play a crucial role in developing independent learners equipped with the skills necessary to navigate global challenges (Perez, 2016).

The integration of technology in instruction is also recognized as essential in 21st-century education. Properly implemented, it enhances student engagement, enables individualized learning, and supports collaborative instruction (Bada, 2015). However, many educators lack adequate training in educational technology, which limits its effective use in classroom settings (Judge, 2018). Despite being digitally literate, some teachers struggle with consistent integration of technology into teaching and learning (Bauer & Kenton, 2015).

Pedagogical practices and teaching competencies significantly affect student academic outcomes. Teachers must demonstrate mastery of subject matter, classroom management, and the ability to apply adaptive instructional strategies (Bauzon, 2016). Empirical studies suggest a correlation between instructional competence and students' academic performance, reinforcing the need for teacher training that enhances creativity, innovation, and the application of effective teaching models (Hasegawa, 2017).

Instructional leadership, which includes mentoring, curriculum development, and professional collaboration, is also central to effective education. Teachers who exhibit leadership capabilities contribute to improved student outcomes and more cohesive school communities (Coles & Southworth, 2015). In this context, teachers are seen as active participants in shaping educational reform and fostering continuous improvement (Hallinger, 2015).

Academic achievement is also directly influenced by how teachers evaluate and engage with learners. Ethical assessment practices and the provision of meaningful feedback are key to student growth and performance (Bughio, 2015). Teachers serve as both educators and mentors, often shaping students' academic trajectories and career aspirations through sustained guidance and support (Miller, 2018). Moreover, deficiencies in pedagogical content knowledge have been linked to poor student outcomes, underscoring the importance of competency-based training for educators (Rivkin et al., 2015).

Social Science teachers play a crucial role in the holistic development of students. They are expected to embody both instructional excellence and leadership, equipped with the technological, pedagogical, and ethical competencies necessary to enhance student learning in increasingly complex educational environments.

4. Materials and methods

This section outlines the research methodology employed to examine the instructional competencies of Social Science instructors at Batangas State University System. It details the research design, study locale, sampling techniques, instrumentation, data gathering procedures, and statistical analyses used to interpret the findings.

4.1. Theoretical framework

This study is grounded on three interrelated theories: Frink and Klimoski's Role Systems Theory, Rensis Likert's Consultative Management Theory, and the Systems Theory in Education. These frameworks collectively support the investigation into the instructional competencies of Social Science instructors and their influence on students' academic performance.

Role Systems Theory explains how predictable behavior in organizations arises from shared expectations and norms, especially in interdependent work environments (Frink & Klimoski, 2015). It highlights the structured roles educators assume and the accountability expected within institutional settings.

Likert's Consultative Management Theory emphasizes motivation through participatory decision-making, where lower-level members influence work-related decisions, while upper management retains control over broader organizational strategies. This theory supports the view that teacher involvement in institutional planning can enhance performance and morale.

Systems Theory frames schools as dynamic, interdependent organizations where change, feedback, and continuous learning are essential. It underscores the need for collaborative environments that nurture innovation, shared aspirations, and systemic improvement in teaching and learning processes.

Together, these theories provide a lens through which teacher competence, accountability, and institutional dynamics can be examined to better understand their impact on student success.

4.2. Research design

This study employed a descriptive and quantitative research design to examine the instructional competencies of Social Science instructors at Batangas State University System and their impact on students' academic performance. Descriptive research analyzes present conditions using quantitative measurements, facilitating data collection and examination of trends (Argon and Kaya, 2018).

4.3. Research locale

The study was conducted at Batangas State University System, a Level IV state university in the Philippines. The university, established in 1903, has undergone various transformations, solidifying its reputation as the oldest higher education institution in the CALABARZON region. The study focused on Social Science instructors and first-year students enrolled in relevant courses.

4.4. Sample and sampling technique

A total population sampling method was utilized, covering all Social Science instructors and first-year students who took the course in the previous semester. This approach ensured comprehensive representation of the target population, minimizing sampling bias and enhancing data reliability. The distribution of respondents is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Respondents of the Study

Group of Respondents	Population	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Social Science Instructors	15	15	100
Students	544	544	100

4.5. Instrumentation

The following was done as to the preparation, validation, and administration of the questionnaire:

4.5.1. Construction

A researcher-developed questionnaire was used as the primary data collection tool. The questionnaire was structured into four parts: (1) demographic profile of respondents, (2) instructional competencies of instructors, (3) students' academic performance, and (4) challenges in maintaining academic performance. The questionnaire items were formulated based on literature reviews, books, and online sources.

4.5.2. Validation

The instrument underwent content and face validation by experts and was further refined based on feedback. Reliability testing was conducted through a pilot study at Colegio ng Lungsod ng Batangas (CLB), involving 27 students and three instructors. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated at 0.87, indicating high reliability.

4.5.3. Administration

Ethical guidelines were followed, with prior consent obtained from respondents. The researcher coordinated with university officials for survey administration, ensuring data confidentiality. Student questionnaires were distributed and retrieved within eight minutes per session, while faculty responses were collected over five days.

4.6. Data gathering procedure

Permission was sought from the university president to conduct the study. Surveys were distributed during class schedules, with explanations provided to ensure clarity. Faculty members were given contact details for any clarification. A 100% retrieval rate was achieved, with 544 students and 15 instructor responses collected.

4.7. Statistical analysis

The following statistical tools were used in interpreting the data generated in the study:

4.7.1. Frequency and percentage

This was used to determine the age, sex, and educational preparation, area of specialization, length of service, number of teaching loads, and number of preparations of the teacher-respondents.

4.7.2. Weighted mean

The weighted mean was calculated to assess instructional competencies, teaching strategies, and students' academic performance. The formula used was shown in Equation 1, where X is the mean, Σx is the sum of all scores, and n is the number of subjects.

$$X = \frac{\Sigma x}{n} \tag{1}$$

4.7.3. T-test of independent means

A t-test was conducted to determine significant differences in instructional competencies based on student demographics. The formula used was shown in Equation 2, where X_1 and X_2 are the means, n_1 and n_2 are the sample sizes, and s_1^2 and s_2^2 are the variances.

$$t = \frac{X_1 - X_2}{\sqrt{\frac{s_1^2}{n_1} + \frac{s_2^2}{n_2}}} \tag{2}$$

4.7.4. Analysis of variance (ANOVA)

This was used to determine significant differences in the extent of manifestation of instructional competencies of Social Science instructors in terms of their teaching of Understanding the Self and their utilization of teaching strategies when grouped according to profile, except age and sex of students.

4.7.5. Pearson's correlation coefficient

Pearson's r was calculated to determine the relationship between instructional competencies and students' academic performance. This statistical measure assessed the strength and direction of the linear association between the two variables. The interpretation scale is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Pearson's Correlation Interpretation Scale

Correlation Coefficient	Interpretation
0.90 to 1.00 (-0.90 to -1.00)	Very High Positive (Negative) Correlation
0.70 to 0.90 (-0.70 to -0.90)	High Positive (Negative) Correlation
0.50 to 0.70 (-0.50 to -0.70)	Moderate Positive (Negative) Correlation
0.30 to 0.50 (-0.30 to -0.50)	Low Positive (Negative) Correlation
0.00 to 0.30 (-0.00 to -0.30)	Negligible Correlation

Results and discussion

This section presents the findings of the study about the research objectives. The results were analyzed using appropriate statistical tools, and discussions were framed to interpret their significance. The key areas explored include the instructional competencies of Social Science instructors, students' academic performance, the correlation between these variables, and the challenges encountered by both instructors and students.

5.1. Instructional competencies of social science instructors

The study assessed the instructional competencies of Social Science instructors at Batangas State University across key dimensions: lesson planning, instructional delivery, student engagement, assessment, and digital integration. Results indicated that instructors were generally highly competent, particularly in lesson planning (Mean = 4.35) and instructional delivery (Mean = 4.20). However, student engagement (Mean = 3.85) and the integration of digital tools (Mean = 3.75) had slightly lower ratings, suggesting areas for improvement.

Table 3: Instructional Competency Ratings of Instructors

Competency Area	Mean Score	Interpretation
Lesson Planning & Preparation	4.35	Highly Competent
Instructional Delivery	4.20	Highly Competent
Student Engagement Strategies	3.85	Competent
Assessment & Feedback	4.10	Highly Competent
Integration of Digital Tools	3.75	Competent

5.2. Academic performance of social science students

The academic performance of students was evaluated based on their general weighted average (GWA). Most students performed at a very satisfactory level (85-89), with an overall mean GWA of 85.72. This suggests that instructional strategies are effective, but interventions may be required to support students in the lower-performing categories.

Several factors may have influenced student performance, including instructional methodologies, student engagement, and assessment approaches. Instructors' ability to deliver lessons effectively, utilize diverse teaching strategies, and foster interactive learning environments likely contributed to students' comprehension and retention of course material. Additionally, the availability of learning resources, student motivation, and prior knowledge may have played significant roles in determining academic success.

Table 4: Distribution of Students' Academic Performance

Performance Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Outstanding (90-100)	120	22.1
Very Satisfactory (85-89)	250	46.0
Satisfactory (80-84)	130	23.9
Fair (75-79)	44	8.0
Poor (<75)	0	0.0

5.3. Relationship between instructional competencies and academic performance

A Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between instructional competencies and student academic performance. The results indicated a moderate positive correlation, implying that higher instructional competency levels were associated with improved student performance. This highlights the importance of enhancing faculty teaching competencies to further improve student achievement.

Table 5: Test of Significant Difference on the Teachers' Assessment on Extent of Manifestation of Instructional Competencies of Social Science Instructors in Terms of their Utilization of Teaching Strategies when Grouped According to Profile Variable

Profile	F-value	p-value	Verbal Interpretation	Decision on H_0
Age	1.144	0.374	Not Significant	Accept
Sex	-0.979	0.346	Not Significant	Accept
Educational Preparation	2.032	0.168	Not Significant	Accept
Area of Specialization	0.354	0.787	Not Significant	Accept
Length of Service	1.803	0.205	Not Significant	Accept
No. of Teaching Loads	9.611	0.003	Significant	Reject
No. of Preparations	5.175	0.016	Significant	Reject

The study found no significant differences in instructors' perceptions of teaching strategies based on age, sex, educational background, specialization, or years of service, indicating a consistent approach to engaging students in the subject, Understanding the Self. However, significant differences were observed when considering the number of teaching loads and class preparations, suggesting these factors impact instructional strategy use. These findings highlight that while teachers generally adopt effective strategies, workload and preparation demands can hinder their ability to meet diverse student needs, reinforcing the critical role of well-supported, competent, and committed educators in ensuring quality education.

5.4. Relationship between instructional competencies and academic performance

A t-test analysis was conducted to determine whether instructors' competencies varied based on their demographic characteristics (e.g., years of experience, educational attainment). The results showed no statistically significant differences ($p > 0.05$), suggesting that instructional competencies remained consistent across different instructor profiles.

5.5. Significant difference in student academic performance based on demographics

Statistical analysis revealed significant positive relationships between instructors' instructional competencies and students' academic performance in Understanding the Self. The highest correlation was found in the utilization of teaching strategies ($r = .685$, $p = .000$), followed by content knowledge ($r = .634$, $p = .000$), pedagogical competence ($r = .604$, $p = .000$), and technological competence ($r = .439$, $p = .000$). These results confirm that students performed better when instructors effectively applied varied strategies, demonstrated strong subject mastery, and integrated appropriate technology—underscoring the critical role of competent teaching in enhancing learning outcomes.

Table 6: Test of Significant Relationship Between the Extent of Manifestation of the Social Science Instructors' Instructional Competencies and Students' Academic Performance in Social Science

Instructional Competencies	r-value	p-value	Verbal Interpretation	Decision on H_0
Technological	0.439	0.000	Significant	Reject
Pedagogical	0.604	0.000	Significant	Reject
Content Knowledge	0.634	0.000	Significant	Reject
Utilization of Teaching Strategies	0.685	0.000	Significant	Reject

5.6. Challenges encountered by social science instructors

The study revealed that sustaining students' academic performance in Social Science is hindered primarily by cognitive overload, particularly from studying multiple subjects daily and the need for deep mastery and memorization of content, both moderately rated concerns (AWM = 2.74). This high workload not only strains students' capacity to retain and comprehend information but also impacts instructional delivery, as teachers struggle to maintain engagement and focus within limited time frames. Examinations emphasizing rote recall (AWM = 2.52) further compound the issue by discouraging critical thinking.

To address these challenges, the study suggests implementing workload management policies, such as coordinated scheduling across subjects and reducing redundant content. Encouraging formative assessments and problem-based learning strategies could also shift the focus from memorization to higher-order thinking. Lastly, enhancing teacher training on constructivist approaches would empower educators to foster more student-centered, collaborative, and meaningful learning environments.

5.7. Challenges encountered by students in social science courses

Students in Social Science courses face key challenges such as difficulty understanding abstract concepts, a lack of interest in the subject, and limited access to academic resources. These issues hinder engagement and academic performance, particularly when compounded by a high academic workload. The complexity of topics, paired with time constraints, limits students' ability to process and retain information, while disinterest may stem from outdated teaching methods or perceived lack of relevance.

To address these challenges, the study recommends adopting interactive, real-world teaching approaches and integrating technology to simplify complex ideas. Implementing workload management strategies and improving access to academic resources can also enhance learning outcomes and sustain student interest in Social Science education.

5.8. Proposed strategies to improve instructional competencies and student performance

Based on the findings, targeted strategies are proposed to strengthen instructional competencies and address key academic challenges such as cognitive overload, limited engagement, and uneven content delivery. High workload pressures have constrained both instructional flexibility and student comprehension. In response, faculty development programs should prioritize training in interactive pedagogy, technology integration, and content mastery. Workload management policies—such as coordinated assessments and streamlined content—can alleviate instructional strain and enhance teaching effectiveness.

Complementary student support initiatives, including academic tutoring and expanded access to learning resources, are essential in closing comprehension gaps. Curriculum reforms must emphasize interdisciplinary, student-centered approaches aligned with evolving educational standards. The proposed training program directly addresses competency gaps identified in the study and aims to improve faculty

performance across the Batangas State University System. Developed in response to institutional needs and current challenges, particularly those heightened by the pandemic, the program will be delivered through a webinar series and funded by the university to ensure full implementation and sustained instructional improvement.

5. Conclusions

The study concluded that the profiles of both students and Social Science instructors significantly contributed to the accuracy of the data collected, which served as the foundation for the proposed teacher training program. It was determined that Social Science instructors demonstrated competence in teaching the subject, Understanding the Self, and effectively employed various teaching strategies. However, a significant difference was observed in the assessments provided by student respondents, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis, while no significant difference was found in the instructors' assessments, resulting in its acceptance.

Moreover, the study found that students performed well academically in the subject, and there was a significant relationship between the instructional competencies of Social Science instructors and students' academic performance, ultimately rejecting the hypothesis of no significant relationship. Additionally, challenges were identified in sustaining students' academic performance in Understanding the Self. The findings underscored the necessity of implementing a teacher training program to enhance instructors' instructional competencies and further improve student outcomes.

6. Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, several recommendations were made. First, the Batangas State University (BatStateU) College Deans and Department Chairs should review faculty assignments for Understanding the Self to prevent competency mismatches. The university's academic administration should also consider implementing the proposed teacher training program for Social Science instructors to enhance their instructional effectiveness. To ensure proper execution, college deans should allocate local university funds for faculty development initiatives.

Furthermore, the syllabus and instructional materials committee should emphasize the relevance and application of Understanding the Self in students' daily lives and future careers. Faculty members are encouraged to attend online training sessions provided by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and the University of the Philippines Open University (UPOU) to refine their classroom management strategies. Additionally, department heads should consider reducing the number of course preparations assigned to new faculty members to enhance teaching quality. Finally, future researchers are encouraged to conduct similar studies in other institutions to further strengthen the instructional competencies and efficacy of Social Science educators, particularly in the areas of technology, pedagogy, and content knowledge (TPACK).

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