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Social Studies Teachers' Behavior and Students' Academic Performance of Public Secondary Schools: The Dipolog City Experience

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ABSTRACT: Teacher behavior is an important classroom factor that may shape students' engagement, motivation, and academic outcomes in Social Studies. This study determined the level of Social Studies teachers' behavior and its relationship with students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Dipolog City during School Year 2025-2026. The study employed survey and descriptive-correlational research methods. Three hundred thirty-two (332) Grade 10 learners served as respondents and were selected from a population of 2,404 learners using proportionate sampling. The research instrument was composed of the respondents' profile, a 59-item teacher behavior questionnaire adopted from Murray (1983), and students' second-quarter academic performance taken from class advisers' records. Weighted mean, standard deviation, and Spearman rank-order correlation coefficient were used, with Microsoft Excel and jamovi as statistical tools. Findings revealed that the assessed level of teachers' behavior was high and often demonstrated (AWV = 4.08, SD = 0.70). Among the indicators, disclosure and speech obtained the highest ratings, while clarity obtained the lowest but remained favorable. Students' academic performance was very high, with most learners obtaining an Outstanding rating. A statistically significant positive but low correlation was found between teachers' behavior and students' academic performance (rho = 0.136, p = 0.013). The findings imply that effective teacher behavior contributes to learners' academic outcomes, although other learner, family, and school-related factors may also influence performance.

KEYWORDS: teacher behavior, academic performance, social studies, department of education, Dipolog City

INTRODUCTION

Social Studies teachers' behavior, shown in how they manage classrooms, communicate expectations, use teaching strategies, and build respectful relationships, creates the daily learning conditions that can either support or hinder student achievement in public secondary schools. In the Philippine context of Araling Panlipunan, teachers' instructional practices are central to students' academic performance because teaching approaches influence engagement and understanding across diverse learners (Bihag et al., 2025). Classroom management research also shows that teacher practices that organize behavior and learning routines are associated with measurable improvements in student outcomes (Korpershoek et al., 2016).

Studying Social Studies teachers' behavior is important because the learning area is not limited to content mastery in history, governance, and economics. It also forms civic knowledge, values, and participation skills. The K to 12 Araling Panlipunan curriculum seeks to develop socio-civic competencies such as cultural tolerance, respect for diversity, and human dignity (Department of Education, 2019). Teachers and classroom practices therefore become crucial in making civic learning meaningful, inclusive, and relevant to learners' lives.

The relationship between Social Studies teachers' behavior and students' academic performance can be understood through concrete classroom mechanisms. When teachers provide clear structure, guidance, routines, examples, and feedback, students are more likely to remain engaged, persist in tasks, and demonstrate stronger achievement. Patall et al. (2023) reported that teachers' classroom structure is linked with students' achievement, while Goktas and Kaya (2023) found that positive teacher-student relationships are associated with higher academic achievement.

Despite the established evidence that teacher behavior and classroom processes matter, a research gap remains in generating localized and context-specific findings that school leaders can directly use for improvement in particular divisions and cities. The Araling Panlipunan curriculum provides standards and competencies, but the way these are enacted varies across schools depending on teacher behavior, resources, and learner needs. In Dipolog City, the specific link between Social Studies teachers' behavior and students' academic performance has not been sufficiently documented.

This study was anchored on Self-Determination Theory by Ryan and Deci (2017), which explains that students achieve optimal learning when their psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are supported. Teacher behaviors such as clarity, enthusiasm,

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interaction, organization, pacing, disclosure, speech, and rapport may strengthen these needs by making lessons understandable, motivating, structured, and relationally supportive. Thus, the study aimed to determine the Social Studies teachers' behavior and its relationship with students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Dipolog City during School Year 2025-2026.

METHODS

The study utilized survey and descriptive-correlational research methods. The survey method was used to gather data on learners' assessment of Social Studies teachers' behavior, while the correlational method was used to determine whether a significant relationship existed between teachers' behavior and students' academic performance.

The target population consisted of 2,404 Grade 10 students enrolled in public secondary schools in Dipolog City. Grade 10 learners were chosen because they had already observed the behavior of their Social Studies teachers from Grade 7 to the current grade level. Using the Raosoft sample size calculator, 332 respondents were obtained. Proportionate sampling by lottery was used to determine the number of representatives from each school.

The questionnaire consisted of three parts. Part I gathered demographic information. Part II measured teachers' behavior using an adopted instrument from Murray (1983), composed of 59 items distributed across eight indicators: clarity, enthusiasm, interaction, organization, pacing, disclosure, speech, and rapport. Part III consisted of students' academic performance based on second-quarter grades obtained from class advisers' records.

The researcher secured the required approvals before administering the instrument. A formal request was endorsed by the Graduate School and forwarded through appropriate DepEd channels. After ethics clearance and school-level permission were obtained, the researcher personally administered and retrieved the questionnaires. The data were organized, tallied, tabulated, and submitted for statistical analysis.

Weighted mean and standard deviation were used to describe teachers' behavior and academic performance. Spearman rank-order correlation coefficient was used to test the relationship between the assessed level of teachers' behavior and students' academic performance. Microsoft Excel and jamovi were used to process and analyze the data at the 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The results are presented according to the main objectives of the study: the assessed level of teachers' behavior, the level of students' academic performance, and the relationship between these two variables.

Table 1. Summary of the Assessed Level of Teachers' Behavior

Indicators	AWV	SD	Description	Interpretation
A. Clarity	3.90	0.78	Agree	Often
B. Enthusiasm	3.94	0.91	Agree	Often
C. Interaction	4.00	0.81	Agree	Often
D. Organization	4.06	0.77	Agree	Often
E. Pacing	4.09	0.74	Agree	Often
F. Disclosure	4.29	0.74	Strongly Agree	Almost Always
G. Speech	4.29	0.75	Strongly Agree	Almost Always
H. Rapport	4.05	0.80	Agree	Often
Overall	4.08	0.76	Agree	Often

Table 1 shows that the overall assessed level of teachers' behavior was high and often demonstrated (AWV = 4.08, SD = 0.70). Disclosure and speech obtained the highest ratings (AWV = 4.29), indicating that teachers were perceived as highly effective in communicating expectations, assessment requirements, and verbal delivery. Clarity obtained the lowest rating (AWV = 3.90), although it was still interpreted as often demonstrated. This suggests that while teachers generally explain lessons well, instructional clarity remains a practical area for continuous improvement.

Table 2. Level of Academic Performance of the Respondents

Scale	Range of Values	Grade Description	Performance Level	F	Percent	AWV	Overall Description
1	1.00-1.80	Below 75	Did Not Meet Expectations	1	0.30		
2	1.81-2.60	75-79	Fairly Satisfactory	6	1.81		
3	2.61-3.40	80-84	Satisfactory	53	15.96		
4	3.41-4.20	85-89	Very Satisfactory	53	15.96		
5	4.21-5.00	90-100	Outstanding	219	65.96	4.45	Outstanding
Total				332	100.00		

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Table 2 reveals that students' academic performance was very high. The majority of the respondents, 219 or 65.96%, obtained an Outstanding rating, while only a small number were categorized as Fairly Satisfactory or Did Not Meet Expectations. The overall AWV of 4.45 confirms that the respondents generally performed at a very high level in Social Studies.

Table 3. Test of Relationship between Teachers' Behavior and Students' Academic Performance

Variables Correlated	rho-value	p-value	Interpretation
Teachers' Behavior and Students' Academic Performance	0.136	0.013	Positive low/small correlation; significant

Table 3 indicates a statistically significant positive but low correlation between the assessed level of teachers' behavior and students' academic performance (rho = 0.136, p = 0.013). Since the p-value is lower than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that learners who perceived higher levels of teacher behavior tended to show slightly higher academic performance; however, the small correlation suggests that performance is also influenced by other factors beyond teacher behavior.

Discussion

The high assessment of Social Studies teachers' behavior suggests that teachers in Dipolog City generally exhibit instructional and relational practices that support learning. The strong ratings for disclosure and speech show that teachers are effective in clarifying expectations, preparing learners for assessments, and communicating lessons in a fluent and understandable manner. These behaviors may strengthen students' sense of competence because learners know what is expected and how to respond to academic tasks. The favorable result for organization, pacing, interaction, enthusiasm, and rapport further indicates that teachers provide structured, engaging, and supportive classroom environments. In the lens of Self-Determination Theory, these behaviors may support learners' autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Teachers who ask whether students understand before proceeding, praise good ideas, address learners by name, and offer assistance help create a learning climate where students feel guided and recognized. Although clarity remained high, it was the lowest among the indicators. This points to the need for further strengthening of concrete examples, visual aids, repetition of difficult ideas, and emphasis on important concepts. Since Social Studies contains abstract concepts, historical sequences, and civic principles, clarity is critical in helping learners transform information into meaningful understanding.

The very high academic performance of the respondents may be partly explained by the generally positive classroom behaviors reported in the study. However, the relationship between teachers' behavior and students' academic performance was low. This result implies that teacher behavior is a meaningful but not exclusive contributor to achievement. Other factors such as family support, learner motivation, study habits, peer influence, school location, resources, and prior learning may also shape students' grades. The significant low correlation is still educationally important because it confirms that teacher behavior has a measurable association with students' performance. In practice, even small improvements in instructional clarity, interaction, and rapport may help sustain achievement and support learners who are at risk of lower performance. For school leaders, this provides a basis for professional development focused on classroom communication, inclusive interaction, formative checking, and learner-centered Social Studies instruction.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that Social Studies teachers' behavior in public secondary schools in Dipolog City was generally high and often demonstrated across the indicators of clarity, enthusiasm, interaction, organization, pacing, disclosure, speech, and rapport. Disclosure and speech emerged as the strongest teacher behaviors, while clarity remained favorable but showed the greatest need for continued enhancement.Students' academic performance was very high, with most respondents obtaining an Outstanding rating in Social Studies. The study also found a statistically significant positive but low correlation between teachers' behavior and students' academic performance. This means that effective teacher behavior is associated with better learner performance, although it explains only a small portion of academic outcomes.

Based on these findings, the Department of Education, school heads, and Social Studies teachers may use the results as a basis for strengthening professional development programs. Priority may be given to instructional clarity, higher-order questioning, inclusive interaction, and peer coaching through Learning Action Cells. Future studies may include other learner, family, and school variables to better explain the factors affecting Social Studies performance.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings, the Department of Education, school administrators, and Social Studies teachers are encouraged to strengthen professional development programs that focus on instructional clarity, effective communication, learner-centered interaction, classroom organization, appropriate pacing, and positive teacher–student rapport. Particular attention should be given to improving teachers' use of concrete examples, visual aids, simplified explanations, formative assessment, higher-order questioning, and regular checking of learners' understanding through Learning Action Cells, peer coaching, classroom observations, and mentoring activities. Schools should also provide adequate instructional resources and academic support programs to sustain students' high performance, especially for learners who are struggling. Since teachers' behavior showed only a low but significant relationship with academic performance, future researchers should examine other possible factors, such as students' motivation, study habits, family support, socioeconomic status, prior knowledge, school resources, and learning environment, and may employ mixed-method, longitudinal, or multi-school designs to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of students' achievement in Social Studies.

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