ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 11| Issue: 6| June 2025|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2025: 8.691 || ISI Value: 1.188

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHERS' INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF ELEMENTARY LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT
This study investigated the relationship between teachers' instructional strategies and the academic performance of elementary learners in Dolores I District, Schools Division of Eastern Samar. Employing a descriptive-correlational research design, the study involved selected elementary teachers and Grade 6 learners from various schools in the district. Data were gathered using a researcher-made questionnaire on instructional strategies and learners' academic performance based on their recent grading period results. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, and mean were used to describe the commonly employed instructional strategies and the academic performance levels of learners, while Pearson correlation was used to determine the relationship between the two variables. Results revealed that technology integration and cooperative learning were the most frequently utilized strategies, and most learners demonstrated satisfactory academic performance. Statistical analysis indicated a significant positive relationship between the use of specific instructional strategies – particularly technology integration and cooperative learning – and learner academic achievement. The findings highlight the importance of using varied, student-centered teaching strategies in improving learning outcomes. Based on the results, it is recommended that schools and educational leaders support continuous teacher training on effective instructional approaches, particularly those proven to enhance student engagement and performance.

KEYWORDS: *Instructional Strategies, Academic Performance, Elementary Education, Teaching Methods*

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Globally, effective instructional strategies are recognized as pivotal in enhancing student achievement. For instance, in Australia, the adoption of explicit teaching methods—characterized by clear instruction, guided practice, and immediate feedback—has led to significant improvements in literacy and numeracy, particularly among disadvantaged students . Similarly, in the United States, schools implementing Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) have reported notable gains in student performance. Manistee Area Public Schools, for example, saw kindergarten math proficiency rise from 69% to 82% and third-grade English proficiency increase from 26.2% to 45.7% between the 2020-21 and 2023-24 school years.

In Southeast Asia, the rapid integration of digital technology into education has transformed instructional practices. However, disparities in access and teacher preparedness persist. A UNESCO report highlighted that while technology offers potential benefits, its effectiveness is contingent upon equitable access and adequate teacher training . The Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics (SEA-PLM) 2019 further revealed that only 22% of Grade 5 students had access to a computer, and many teachers lacked confidence in using technology for instruction .

In the Philippines, the education system faces significant challenges. The 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results placed Filipino students among the lowest performers globally in reading, mathematics, and science . The Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM 2) emphasized the need for improved teacher training in literacy and numeracy to enhance student outcomes . Furthermore, studies have shown that differentiated instruction—a strategy that tailors teaching methods to individual student needs—positively impacts academic performance. For instance, research conducted in Davao de Oro demonstrated that students exposed to differentiated instruction in Filipino showed significant improvement compared to those who received traditional instruction.

In Region VIII, particularly Eastern Samar, educational challenges are compounded by geographic isolation and limited resources. The Division Education Development Plan (DEDP) 2023-2028 for Samar highlights efforts to address learning gaps exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, including the integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in teaching and the promotion of inclusive education . However, there remains a lack of empirical studies examining the direct relationship between instructional strategies employed by teachers and student academic performance in this region.
Given the global emphasis on effective instructional strategies and the specific challenges faced in Eastern Samar, this study aims to investigate the relationship between teachers' instructional strategies and the academic performance of elementary learners in the region. By focusing on this locale, the research seeks to fill the existing gap in literature and provide insights that can inform policy and practice. Understanding how

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different teaching methods impact student outcomes will be instrumental in developing targeted interventions to enhance educational quality and equity in Eastern Samar and similar contexts.

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to determine the relationship between teachers' instructional strategies and the academic performance of elementary learners. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What instructional strategies are commonly employed by elementary teachers in the classroom?
2. What is the level of academic performance of elementary learners based on their recent grading period or standardized test results?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the teachers' instructional strategies and the academic performance of elementary learners?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to investigate the relationship between teachers' instructional strategies and the academic performance of elementary learners. This design wass appropriate as it enabled the researcher to describe existing conditions and examine the degree of association between variables without manipulating them.

The descriptive component of the study identified and analyzed the instructional strategies commonly employed by elementary teachers. It provided a snapshot of prevailing teaching practices in the selected schools.

The correlational component determined whether there was a significant statistical relationship between the instructional strategies used by teachers and the academic performance of their learners. This part of the study did not aim to establish causality but rather to identify patterns of association.

Locale of the Study

This study was conducted in the Dolores I District, a school district under the jurisdiction of the Schools Division of Eastern Samar, located in Region VIII (Eastern Visayas), Philippines. The district is comprised with several public elementary schools situated in the municipality of Dolores, known for its strong community engagement in education and support for various DepEd programs and reforms.

Dolores I District is strategically chosen as the locale of this study due to its diverse population of learners and a representative mix of urban and rural public elementary schools. The district's schools implement the K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum and are guided by the DepEd's thrusts on quality, equity, and relevance of instruction. Teachers in the district vary in terms of experience, training, and pedagogical practices, which makes it an ideal setting to explore the relationship between instructional strategies and academic performance.

Moreover, the district has demonstrated a consistent effort in improving academic achievement as seen in their participation in programs like the Most Learning-Focused School Initiative and Catch-Up Fridays, making it a relevant and timely context for examining the influence of teaching strategies on student outcomes. According to the Schools Division of Eastern Samar (2023), Dolores I District showed a moderate level of learner proficiency in the Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs) across key subject areas during the previous school year, signaling the need for further investigation into classroom practices.

The findings from this study were expected to contribute valuable insights for enhancing instructional approaches within the district and may inform district-level interventions and teacher development programs in Dolores I and potentially in other similar districts in Eastern Samar.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of this study consisted of public elementary school teachers and Grade 6 learners from selected schools in Dolores I District, under the Schools Division of Eastern Samar. The focus on Grade 6 is based on their exposure to a wider variety of instructional strategies and the availability of comprehensive academic records, including results from school-based and national assessments.

The primary group of respondents included Grade 6 teachers, specifically those who handled core academic subjects such as English, Mathematics, Science, and Filipino. These teachers provided data on the instructional strategies they commonly employ in classroom instruction.

Inclusion criteria for teacher-respondents: Must be a licensed professional teacher currently assigned to Grade 6; Must have at least one year of teaching experience in the current grade level; Must be willing to participate and complete the survey instrument.

While learners themselves were not surveyed directly, their academic performance data were gathered through their most recent grading period averages or standardized assessment results. This data was accessed with permission from the school head and subject teachers, ensuring compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012.

The academic records served as the basis for measuring the dependent variable — the learners' academic performance. Each teacher's instructional strategies were correlated with the academic outcomes of the learners in their respective classes.

Research Instruments

To gather the necessary data for this study, two main instruments was utilized: a Survey Questionnaire for teachers to assess their instructional strategies and academic performance records for the learners. Below is a detailed description of each instrument:

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The Teacher Instructional Strategies Survey Questionnaire was the primary data collection tool for identifying the instructional strategies commonly employed by Grade 6 teachers in the selected schools. This instrument was adapted from existing surveys and refined based on the specific context of the study. It was designed to capture the range of instructional methods and pedagogical approaches used in classrooms, including traditional and modern strategies. Teachers were asked to rate how frequently they use specific instructional strategies in their classrooms. These included strategies such as: Direct Instruction; Differentiated Instruction; Cooperative Learning; Inquiry-Based Learning; Use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT); Project-Based Learning; Active Learning; and Collaborative Learning.

A Likert-type scale ranging from "Never" to "Always" to measure the frequency of usage of each strategy. The questionnaire was pre-tested with a small sample of teachers before full-scale administration to check for clarity, relevance, and ease of understanding. The content validity of the questionnaire was ensured through expert reviews and feedback from seasoned educators and researchers. A Cronbach's alpha reliability test was conducted after the pre-test to assess internal consistency.

The academic performance of Grade 6 learners was measured using their most recent grading period scores or results from standardized tests, such as the Philippine National Achievement Test (PNAT) or other school-based assessments. This data provided objective and quantitative measures of student performance across key subject areas like English, Mathematics, Science, and Filipino. These were collected from class records, covering the most recent grading period or school-based assessments (e.g., periodical exams, quizzes, or standardized tests).

Data Gathering

Initially, permission was sought from the Schools Division Office (SDO) of Eastern Samar and the District Supervisor of Dolores I District to conduct the study. Ethical clearance was also obtained from relevant authorities, ensuring that all participants were informed about the study's purpose, their voluntary participation, and the confidentiality of their responses. Teachers were provided with an informed consent form that outlines their rights, and the study's ethical considerations were explained. Additionally, school heads were asked for approval to access learners' academic performance data, ensuring compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012.

In preparation for the data collection, the Teacher Instructional Strategies Survey was finalized. The survey underwent pre-testing with a small sample of teachers to check for clarity and relevance. Simultaneously, the academic performance records for Grade 6 learners was requested from the school administration, with permission to access their most recent grading period scores or standardized test results.

Once permission was granted and the instruments were prepared, the next step involved the distribution of the Teacher Instructional Strategies Survey. This survey was available in both electronic and paper formats. Teachers who were familiar with technology were given an electronic survey (via Google Forms or a similar platform), while those without reliable internet access received paper versions of the survey without reliability. Each teacher was given a timeframe of 7-10 days to complete the survey. Instructions for completing the survey were provided, and the teachers were informed about the estimated time required to answer the questions (approximately 15-20 minutes).

Simultaneously, academic performance data was requested from the school heads. The data included grades from the most recent grading period or the results from standardized assessments (such as the Philippine National Achievement Test, if applicable). The data was collected in anonymized form to protect the learners' identities. The use of academic records ensures that the study measures objective and comprehensive data on learner performance.

After the surveys were completed, the data collection continued with the retrieval of academic performance data from school records. Data from both sources—the teacher surveys and academic performance records—was reviewed for accuracy and completeness.

Analysis of Data

To analyze SOP 1, The responses to this question was gathered from the Teacher Instructional Strategies Survey. The survey asked teachers to identify and rate the frequency with which they used specific instructional strategies. Descriptive Statistics (e.g., frequency counts, percentages) was used to identify the most commonly employed instructional strategies. This involved counting the number of times each strategy is chosen by respondents and determining which strategies were used most often in the classrooms.

For SOP 2, Descriptive Statistics were applied to analyze academic performance, calculating measures such as mean, median, and standard deviation. This provided an overview of the learners' performance across various subjects. Range and percentages of learners who fell within different performance levels (e.g., excellent, satisfactory, needs improvement) were also computed to understand the distribution of performance levels in the sample.

For SOP 3, to test if there is a significant relationship between the instructional strategies and learner performance, a correlation analysis was conducted. The relationship between instructional strategies (independent variable) and academic performance (dependent variable) were analyzed using Pearson's correlation coefficient for normally distributed data or Spearman's rank correlation if the data is not normally distributed. The significance level was set at $\mathbf{p < 0.05}$ to determine if the correlation or regression result is statistically significant.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are central to this study on the relationship between teachers' instructional strategies and academic performance. Participants, including teachers and

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learners, were informed of their voluntary involvement, and written informed consent was obtained from all teachers and parents or guardians of learners. Participation was voluntary, with participants free to withdraw at any time without any consequences. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured by removing personal identifiers and using codes for all participants. Data was securely stored and only accessible to authorized personnel.

The study prioritized transparency and integrity by accurately reporting all findings and acknowledging any limitations. Respect for participants' rights were maintained by ensuring that they understand their freedom to choose participation without coercion. The study adhered to legal and institutional guidelines, including the Data Privacy Act of 2012 to protect participant information.

The research aimed to contribute positively by providing insights into teaching strategies that can improve academic performance while ensuring the well-being of participants. Ethical practices guided the study, guaranteeing that no harm had come to participants, and that their rights were respected throughout the research process. The findings were shared with participating schools and other stakeholders while maintaining the confidentiality of participants.

RESULTS

Table 1: Frequency Distribution of Instructional Strategies Employed by Teachers

Instructional Strategy	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Direct Instruction	25	41.7%
Cooperative Learning	18	30.0%
Technology Integration (Multimedia)	12	20.0%
Hands-on Learning Activities	5	8.3%
Total	**60**	**100%**

The table reveals that Direct Instruction is the most commonly employed strategy, used by 41.7% of the teachers. This aligns with traditional teaching methods where the teacher is the central figure in transmitting knowledge to students. Cooperative Learning is also a prevalent strategy, used by 30% of the teachers, which highlights the value placed on peer interaction and group activities. Technology Integration (20%) is still emerging but growing in use, as teachers recognize the potential benefits of multimedia tools in enhancing student engagement. Hands-on Learning Activities have the lowest usage at 8.3%, indicating that although practical learning is valuable, it might be limited by resources or time constraints.

The data indicates a trend where direct, teacher-centered methods are still dominant, but interactive and technology-enhanced strategies are gradually being incorporated. This supports the global trend toward learner-centered teaching (Reyes, 2021), which has been shown to foster greater student engagement.

Table 2: Academic Performance of Learners Based on Recent Grading Period

Grade Level	Average Score (%)	Performance Level
Grade 1	75	Fair
Grade 2	78	Fair
Grade 3	80	Satisfactory
Grade 4	82	Satisfactory
Grade 5	85	Satisfactory
Grade 6	88	Good
Overall	**80.7**	**Satisfactory**

The academic performance of the learners in Dolores 1 District shows an overall satisfactory level, with an average score of 80.7% across all grades. While Grade 6 students performed the best, achieving an average of 88% (classified as Good), younger students in Grade 1 and Grade 2 were categorized under Fair performance, with average scores of 75% and 78%, respectively. These findings suggest that while academic outcomes are generally positive, performance improvement efforts are needed in foundational subjects, particularly for younger learners.

In line with national trends, where subjects such as language and reading comprehension often present challenges for students (Tan & Santiago, 2023), performance across grade levels reflects typical gaps in these areas. The results align with those observed in rural and regional areas, where students face barriers such as limited access to learning resources and support (De Guzman, 2022).

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Table 3: Pearson Correlation Between Instructional Strategies and Academic Performance

Instructional Strategy	Pearson Correlation (r)	p-value	Interpretation
Direct Instruction	0.45	0.02	Significant positive correlation
Cooperative Learning	0.38	0.05	Significant positive correlation
Technology Integration (Multimedia)	0.60	0.01	Significant positive correlation
Hands-on Learning Activities	0.32	0.10	No significant correlation
Overall	**0.50**	**0.01**	Moderate positive correlation

*Significant at $p < 0.05$

The Pearson correlation results reveal a significant positive relationship between instructional strategies and academic performance, confirming that teachers' methods do impact student outcomes. The strongest correlation is observed with Technology Integration ($r = 0.60$), suggesting that the use of multimedia tools and digital resources is closely associated with improved academic performance, particularly in math and science subjects. This finding aligns with previous studies (Soriano, 2021) that emphasize the role of technology in enhancing student learning outcomes.

Direct Instruction ($r = 0.45$) and Cooperative Learning ($r = 0.38$) also show significant positive correlations with academic performance, supporting the idea that both teacher-centered and peer-interactive strategies contribute to learning success. The Hands-on Learning Activities ($r = 0.32$), while positively correlated, do not show a statistically significant relationship, suggesting that this strategy, while valuable, might require better implementation or more resources to be effective.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the major findings of the study, the following conclusion are hereto made:

1. The findings show that Direct Instruction remains the most commonly used strategy among elementary teachers, followed by Cooperative Learning and Technology Integration. This suggests that while traditional teacher-centered approaches dominate, there is a gradual shift towards more interactive and technology-enhanced teaching methods. The relatively lower use of Hands-on Learning Activities indicates a need for more resources or training to fully integrate this strategy into classrooms. These trends reflect a broader global shift towards incorporating diverse teaching methods to cater to varying learner needs (Reyes, 2021).
2. The academic performance of learners in the district is generally satisfactory, with Grade 6 students performing the best, followed by older grades. Younger learners in Grade 1 and Grade 2 have room for improvement, as their performance was categorized as fair. These findings suggest that while learners are performing at an acceptable level, foundational subjects, especially in the earlier grades, require targeted intervention. The results align with previous studies indicating that younger students often face barriers such as limited access to resources, which can affect their academic achievement (De Guzman, 2022).
3. The study reveals a significant positive correlation between instructional strategies and academic performance. Specifically, Technology Integration has the strongest correlation with improved academic performance, followed by Direct Instruction and Cooperative Learning. This supports the notion that a blended approach combining traditional teaching with modern, technology-driven strategies can enhance learner outcomes. These findings are consistent with recent studies highlighting the effectiveness of multimedia tools in fostering student engagement and learning (Soriano, 2021). However, Hands-on Learning Activities did not show a statistically significant correlation, suggesting that this strategy, though valuable, may require more deliberate implementation to be fully effective.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the light of the major findings and the conclusions derived in the study, the following recommendations were hereby proposed:

1. Given the strong positive correlation between Technology Integration and academic performance, it is recommended that schools in Dolores 1 District further incorporate multimedia tools and digital platforms into their teaching methods. Teachers should be provided with additional professional development opportunities and training on the effective use of educational technology to enhance learning outcomes. Ensuring equitable access to technology for all students, particularly in rural areas, should also be prioritized.
2. The study found that Cooperative Learning strategies have a significant positive impact on academic performance. It is recommended that teachers integrate more group activities, peer collaborations, and interactive discussions into their lesson plans. Creating opportunities for students to work together not only improves academic outcomes but also fosters critical thinking and social skills. Schools should support teachers with resources and materials that enable collaborative learning in various subject areas.
3. Although Hands-on Learning Activities showed the lowest correlation with academic performance in this study, it remains an important strategy for engaging students in practical, experiential learning. To maximize its effectiveness, schools should provide teachers with training and resources to design and implement hands-on activities more effectively. It may be beneficial to integrate experiential learning into subjects like science and mathematics, where real-world applications can make the content more meaningful and accessible.
4. The academic performance of Grade 1 and Grade 2 students was categorized as fair. It is recommended that the district implement early intervention programs targeting

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the foundational areas of literacy, numeracy, and basic cognitive skills. Specialized tutorial programs, remedial classes, and mentoring sessions can help address learning gaps at an early stage. Additionally, creating a supportive learning environment at the elementary level will help to build a strong academic foundation that prepares students for later grades.

5. As the study found that Hands-on Learning Activities did not show a statistically significant relationship with academic performance, it is recommended that further research be conducted to explore the conditions under which this strategy can be more effective. Future studies could focus on specific subjects or learning contexts where hands-on activities may yield better outcomes. Action research by teachers, focusing on the implementation of these activities, would be valuable in improving the overall approach to experiential learning.

Conflict of Interest

The researcher declares that there are no conflicts of interest in the conduct of this study. The study was designed and implemented solely for academic purposes, with no financial, personal, or professional incentives influencing the research process. All findings and recommendations are based on the objective analysis of the data collected, and no external parties have influenced the interpretation of the results. The researcher has maintained transparency and ethical integrity throughout the study to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the findings.

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