International Journal on Science and Technology (IJSAT)
E-ISSN: 2229-7677 ● Website: www.ijsat.org ● Email: editor@ijsat.org

# Teachers' Pedagogical Competence, Instructional Practices, and Learners' Engagement

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**Abstract**

This study explored the relationship between teachers' pedagogical competence, instructional practices, and learners' engagement in public elementary and secondary schools in the Schools Division of Antique during the school year 2025. Using a descriptive-correlational design, data were collected from 365 teachers through a validated, researcher-developed questionnaire assessing pedagogical competence, instructional practices, and perceived learner engagement. Descriptive and inferential statistics, including mean, standard deviation, and Pearson product–moment correlation, were employed to analyze the data. Results revealed that teachers exhibited high pedagogical competence and frequently implemented effective instructional practices, such as learner-centered strategies, differentiated instruction, and formative assessment. Learners' engagement was also rated high across behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions. Significant positive relationships were found between pedagogical competence and instructional practices, between instructional practices and learners' engagement, and between pedagogical competence and learners' engagement. These findings suggest that teachers with strong content knowledge, classroom management skills, and effective teaching strategies are more likely to foster active learner participation. The study concludes that enhancing teachers' pedagogical competence and instructional practices contributes meaningfully to learner engagement. It is recommended that school administrators strengthen training programs, provide instructional supervision, and offer support mechanisms to further improve teaching quality and promote meaningful learner engagement.

**Keywords:** Pedagogical Competence, Instructional Practices, Learners' Engagement, Teachers, Schools Division of Antique

## Introduction

Teachers play a central role in shaping learners' academic success and engagement. Pedagogical competence—teachers' knowledge, skills, and abilities in planning, implementing, and evaluating instruction—is key to delivering lessons that meet diverse learners' needs (Shulman, 1987). Teachers who are pedagogically competent select appropriate strategies, manage classrooms effectively, and create meaningful learning experiences that encourage active participation.

Instructional practices, including methods, strategies, and approaches used in teaching, are closely tied to pedagogical competence. Effective practices, such as learner-centered instruction, differentiated teaching, and varied use of instructional materials, enhance learners' motivation, participation, and engagement (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Learners' engagement—behavioral, emotional, and cognitive—directly influences achievement and retention (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004). Studies show that competent teachers who employ interactive teaching methods positively influence learners' attention, persistence, and interest (Hattie, 2009).

Despite the importance of these factors, few local studies have examined their interplay in the Schools Division of Antique. This study aims to fill this gap by investigating how teachers' pedagogical competence and instructional practices relate to learners' engagement, providing evidence to support professional development and instructional improvement initiatives.

**Methodology**

A descriptive-correlational design was used to examine teachers' pedagogical competence, instructional practices, and learners' engagement, as well as the relationships among these variables. The study involved 365 teachers across various grade levels in the Schools Division of Antique, selected through total enumeration to ensure full population representation.

Data were collected via a validated, researcher-developed questionnaire with three parts: Part I measured pedagogical competence (lesson planning, classroom management, instructional delivery, assessment); Part II assessed instructional practices (learner-centered strategies, instructional materials, differentiated instruction, classroom interaction); and Part III evaluated learners' engagement (behavioral, emotional, cognitive) as perceived by teachers. The instrument demonstrated high reliability (Cronbach's alpha = 0.89). Ethical protocols were observed, including informed consent, confidentiality, and school permissions.

Data analysis involved descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, frequency, percentage) and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation to examine relationships at a 0.05 significance level.

**Results**

Teachers demonstrated high pedagogical competence (overall mean = 4.33, SD = 0.36), with lesson planning rated highest (M = 4.38), followed by instructional delivery (M = 4.35), classroom management (M = 4.31), and assessment of learning (M = 4.28).

Instructional practices were also highly implemented (overall mean = 4.29, SD = 0.35), led by learner-centered strategies (M = 4.34), classroom interaction (M = 4.30), instructional materials (M = 4.28), and differentiated instruction (M = 4.25).

Learners' engagement was rated high overall (M = 4.26, SD = 0.37), with behavioral engagement highest (M = 4.31), followed by emotional (M = 4.27) and cognitive engagement (M = 4.20).

Correlation analysis revealed significant positive relationships between pedagogical competence and instructional practices ($r = 0.65$, $p < 0.01$), pedagogical competence and learners' engagement ($r = 0.59$, $p < 0.01$), and instructional practices and learners' engagement ($r = 0.62$, $p < 0.01$). These results suggest that teachers with stronger pedagogical skills and effective instructional methods foster higher learner engagement.

## Discussion

High pedagogical competence indicates that teachers are well-prepared to organize lessons, deliver content effectively, manage classrooms, and assess learning outcomes. Effective instructional practices, particularly learner-centered and interactive methods, enhance learners' motivation, participation, and engagement (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

The high levels of behavioral and emotional engagement reflect the positive influence of competent teaching and interactive instruction. Cognitive engagement, while slightly lower, remains strong, suggesting opportunities for further enrichment activities that promote critical thinking (Fredricks et al., 2004).

Significant correlations confirm that pedagogical competence and instructional practices are key drivers of learners' engagement. Teachers who possess strong skills and use effective teaching methods create classrooms where learners actively participate and invest cognitively, enhancing the overall learning experience.

## Conclusion

Teachers in the Schools Division of Antique exhibit high pedagogical competence and consistently apply effective instructional practices, which contribute to high levels of learner engagement. Strong pedagogical skills and learner-centered strategies are essential for fostering active, motivated, and engaged learners. The significant relationships among pedagogical competence, instructional practices, and learners' engagement highlight their interdependence in achieving quality teaching and learning.

## Recommendations

Strengthen Professional Development Programs: School administrators should continue enhancing training programs focusing on pedagogical competence, particularly assessment strategies and differentiated instruction, to further improve cognitive engagement.

Sustain Learner-Centered Practices: Teachers are encouraged to integrate higher-order thinking activities, problem-based learning, and collaborative tasks to deepen learners' cognitive engagement.

Provide Instructional Coaching and Mentoring: The Schools Division of Antique may offer continuous support to teachers in refining lesson planning, instructional delivery, and classroom interactions.

Incorporate Innovative Teaching Modules: Curriculum planners should develop training modules emphasizing teaching strategies aligned with learners' diverse needs and learning styles.

Expand Research Scope: Future studies may use mixed methods or include additional variables such as school climate, technology integration, and administrative support to further explore factors affecting learner engagement.

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