

**Teachers' pedagogical beliefs and classroom practices in teaching Social Science 11:
Evidence from public senior high schools in the Philippines**

Alma T. Baltazar*

Northeastern College, Santiago City, Isabela, Philippines

ABSTRACT

Social Science education plays a vital role in developing learners' critical thinking, civic responsibility, and understanding of society through meaningful classroom experiences. However, limited localized evidence exists on how teachers' pedagogical beliefs are reflected in their classroom practices, particularly among Senior High School Social Science teachers in Legislative District 5, Isabela. This study determined the pedagogical beliefs, classroom practices, and instructional challenges of Social Science 11 teachers. It employed a descriptive-normative research design involving 40 purposively selected teachers from public senior high schools. Data were gathered using a validated questionnaire, supported by unstructured interviews and documentary analysis, and were analyzed using frequency, percentage, and weighted mean. The findings revealed that teachers demonstrated very high pedagogical beliefs and classroom practices, indicating a strong alignment between their instructional beliefs and actual teaching. Nevertheless, they encountered serious challenges related to instructional resources, higher-order thinking integration, and classroom conditions. The study concludes that strengthening institutional support and continuous professional development can further improve the quality of Social Science instruction.

Keywords: Pedagogical beliefs, classroom practices, Social Science 11, instructional challenges, professional development.

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INTRODUCTION

Social Science is a fundamental component of the Senior High School curriculum because it enables learners to understand culture, society, governance, and human behavior. Beyond acquiring factual knowledge, students are expected to develop critical thinking, civic responsibility, and informed decision-making skills that prepare them to participate actively in their communities and contribute to national development (Bejos, 2009; Fannisa et al., 2023; Levitt & Grubaugh, 2023).

The importance of Social Science education became even more evident with the implementation of the Philippine K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum. This educational reform aims to produce graduates who possess not only academic competence but also practical skills,

*Corresponding author / Email: baltazar.alma3529@gmail.com

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ethical values, and critical thinking abilities necessary for higher education, employment, entrepreneurship, and lifelong learning. The curriculum likewise emphasizes holistic learner development by integrating cognitive, social, emotional, and moral growth. Achieving these goals depends largely on teachers, who are expected to create meaningful learning experiences that encourage active participation, critical inquiry, and authentic application of knowledge.

Meeting these expectations requires teachers to possess more than content expertise. They must be capable of designing instructional experiences that accommodate diverse learners, promote higher-order thinking, and encourage collaboration. Effective Social Science instruction therefore involves the appropriate use of discussions, collaborative learning, inquiry-based activities, simulations, performance tasks, and technology integration. Teachers are likewise expected to become reflective practitioners who continuously evaluate and improve their instructional approaches based on learners' needs, curriculum standards, and classroom outcomes (Seludo & Murillo, 2023). Consequently, teachers function not merely as transmitters of knowledge but as facilitators who guide learners toward meaningful understanding.

Underlying every instructional decision are teachers' pedagogical beliefs. These beliefs refer to the values, assumptions, and personal philosophies that shape how teachers perceive teaching and learning. They influence lesson planning, classroom interaction, instructional decision-making, and assessment practices. Pedagogical beliefs develop through teachers' educational experiences, professional preparation, cultural background, and exposure to different teaching philosophies. Some educators adhere to teacher-centered approaches that emphasize direct instruction and knowledge transmission, whereas others embrace student-centered perspectives grounded in constructivist principles, where learners actively construct knowledge through experience, inquiry, and collaboration (Taopan, 2020).

These beliefs significantly influence teachers' classroom practices. They affect how teachers organize instruction, select learning activities, manage classroom environments, and evaluate student learning (Fadera & de Guzman, 2014). For instance, teachers who value active learning are more likely to employ collaborative discussions, problem-based learning, and inquiry-oriented activities. In contrast, those who favor structured instruction may rely more heavily on lectures, textbook-based learning, and traditional assessments. Consequently, understanding teachers' pedagogical beliefs provides important insights into the instructional choices they make and the extent to which these choices support meaningful student learning (Wilson et al., 1994).

Classroom practices represent the actual instructional behaviors demonstrated by teachers during classroom instruction. In Social Science education, these practices may include lectures, discussions, debates, simulations, collaborative activities, project-based learning, and the integration of digital technologies. Ideally, teachers' classroom practices should reflect their pedagogical beliefs. However, numerous studies have shown that teachers often encounter institutional and contextual constraints that prevent them from implementing the instructional approaches they genuinely value. Among these challenges are inadequate professional development opportunities, limited instructional resources, large class sizes, curriculum demands, and time constraints (Kwaah & Palojoki, 2018; Othman et al., 2020).

Existing literature likewise reports that teachers' expressed beliefs do not always translate into corresponding classroom practices. This inconsistency is particularly evident in developing educational systems where resource limitations, overcrowded classrooms, and curriculum pressures often compel teachers to adopt more traditional instructional approaches despite their preference for learner-centered strategies. Such disparities may ultimately affect the quality of instruction and the achievement of curriculum goals.

Although studies examining pedagogical beliefs and classroom practices have been conducted in different educational settings, relatively few have focused on Senior High School

Social Science teachers in the Philippine context. Even fewer studies have explored this relationship within localized settings such as Legislative District 5, Isabela. This lack of empirical evidence limits educators' and policymakers' understanding of how teachers' instructional beliefs influence their classroom practices under specific local conditions. Addressing this gap is essential because localized findings provide more contextually relevant information for instructional improvement, curriculum implementation, and professional development.

The findings of this study are expected to provide valuable insights into the relationship between teachers' pedagogical beliefs and their classroom practices in teaching Social Science 11. The results may assist school administrators, curriculum planners, and policymakers in designing responsive professional development programs that strengthen instructional effectiveness and promote learner-centered teaching approaches (Paguirigan et al., 2023). Moreover, the study may contribute to improving Social Science instruction by encouraging teaching practices that cultivate critical thinking, civic engagement, and appreciation of local history and cultural heritage among learners (Santos, 2021).

In view of these considerations and the limited body of localized research, this study aims to determine the pedagogical beliefs and classroom practices of teachers handling Social Science 11 in public senior high schools in Legislative District 5, Isabela. Specifically, it seeks to examine the extent to which teachers' pedagogical beliefs are reflected in their classroom practices and to identify the challenges they encounter in implementing effective instruction. Ultimately, the study intends to generate evidence that may serve as the basis for enhancing teacher development initiatives and improving the quality of Social Science education in the district.

Statement of the problem

This study sought to determine the teachers' pedagogical beliefs and classroom practices in teaching Social Science 11 in public senior high schools in Legislative District 5, Isabela, during the School Year 2025–2026.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of age, gender, civil status, highest educational attainment, present position, length of service, latest performance rating, and level of in-service training attended?
2. What is the level of the teachers' pedagogical beliefs in teaching Social Science 11 in terms of the following domains: organization, lesson presentation, control and discipline, dealing with students, evaluation, code of ethics, and personal characteristics?
3. What is the level of the teachers' classroom practices in teaching Social Science 11?
4. What challenges do teachers encounter in teaching Social Science 11?

METHODOLOGY

This study employed the descriptive-normative research design to examine the pedagogical beliefs and actual classroom practices of teachers handling Social Science 11 in public senior high schools in Legislative District 5, Isabela. Descriptive research was deemed appropriate because it describes existing conditions, practices, and attitudes without manipulating variables, making it suitable for educational investigations that seek to determine the current status of a phenomenon (Nurhidayah & Suyanto, 2021). The normative aspect of

the design complemented the descriptive approach by identifying prevailing practices, standards, and challenges that characterize Social Science 11 instruction and by providing a basis for instructional improvement (Bejos, 2009).

According to Habaridota (2019), the descriptive-normative method enables researchers to describe existing conditions, identify relationships among variables, recognize current problems, and generate findings that may serve as bases for policy formulation and educational improvement. Similarly, Short (2023) explained that descriptive-normative research documents actual behaviors and practices within a specific setting to establish prevailing trends and norms. Guided by these principles, the present study described teachers' pedagogical beliefs, examined their actual classroom practices, and identified the challenges they encountered in implementing Social Science 11 instruction. The findings were intended to contribute to the enhancement of teaching practices and the improvement of student learning outcomes. The study likewise recognized that teachers often experience challenges such as inadequate instructional facilities (Kela et al., 2023), time constraints (Calixtro, 2021), and limited professional development opportunities (Krause et al., 2019), which may influence classroom instruction.

The study was conducted in selected public senior high schools within Legislative District 5 of the Province of Isabela. The district comprises the municipalities of Aurora, Burgos, Luna, Mallig, Quezon, Quirino, Roxas, and San Manuel. Legislative District 5 was created through Republic Act No. 11080, which reorganized the legislative districts of Isabela to improve political representation and governance.

The respondents consisted of 40 Social Science 11 teachers from selected public senior high schools in Legislative District 5, Isabela. They were selected through purposive sampling, considering only teachers directly handling Social Science 11 during the conduct of the study. The respondents represented the eight municipalities comprising the legislative district.

The primary instrument used in the study was a researcher-developed structured questionnaire adapted from scholarly literature, validated research instruments, graduate theses, dissertations, and peer-reviewed studies on pedagogical beliefs. The questionnaire consisted of four parts: (1) respondents' profile, (2) teachers' pedagogical beliefs, (3) teachers' actual classroom practices, and (4) challenges encountered in teaching Social Science 11.

To enhance the credibility of the data, the researcher also conducted unstructured interviews during the retrieval of the questionnaires to clarify ambiguous responses and validate participants' answers. In addition, documentary analysis was employed through the examination of lesson exemplars, curriculum guides, class records, and other instructional documents to verify information obtained from the respondents.

Prior to the actual data collection, the questionnaire underwent pilot testing among selected Social Science 11 teachers in a neighboring municipality. The respondents were encouraged to provide comments and suggestions regarding the clarity and relevance of the instrument. The questionnaire was likewise reviewed by the research adviser and the Graduate School Dean. Recommendations from the pilot testing and expert validation were incorporated into the final version before its administration.

The researcher first secured the necessary approval from the Schools Division Superintendent and obtained permission from the principals of the participating public senior high schools. After the questionnaire had been validated and finalized, copies were reproduced and personally administered to the respondents. The researcher supervised the distribution and retrieval of the questionnaires to ensure a high retrieval rate and to address questions that arose during data collection. Upon retrieval, the responses were organized, coded, tabulated, and prepared for statistical analysis.

The collected data were analyzed using appropriate descriptive statistical tools. Frequency and percentage were employed to describe the demographic profile of the

respondents, while the weighted mean was used to determine the levels of teachers' pedagogical beliefs, actual classroom practices, and the challenges they encountered in teaching Social Science 11.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study involved 25 Social Science 11 teachers from selected public senior high schools. Most respondents were 31–35 years old (32%), indicating a relatively young teaching workforce that had already acquired meaningful classroom experience while remaining professionally active. The majority were female (76%) and married (80%), reflecting the demographic profile commonly observed in the Philippine teaching profession.

In terms of educational attainment, more than half (52%) had completed a Master of Arts in Education (MAEd) degree, while the rest had either earned graduate units or doctoral qualifications. This suggests that the respondents possessed adequate academic preparation to deliver instruction effectively. Most were Teacher III (64%), all received an Outstanding performance rating (100%), and 44% had six to ten years of teaching experience. District-level in-service training was the most frequently attended professional development activity, indicating that opportunities for capacity building were generally available at the local level.

Overall, the respondents represented a professionally competent group of educators with sufficient academic qualifications and teaching experience to provide reliable information on Social Science instruction.

Teachers' Pedagogical Beliefs

Teachers demonstrated a very high level of pedagogical beliefs, with an overall average weighted mean of 4.85. All seven domains were rated very high, indicating that the respondents consistently embraced learner-centered and professionally responsible teaching principles. The Control and Discipline domain received the highest rating (WM = 4.94), followed by the Students' Domain (WM = 4.92) and Personal Characteristics (WM = 4.90). The Code of Ethics domain obtained the lowest mean (WM = 4.73), although it remained within the "Very High" category.

The findings suggest that the teachers strongly valued respectful classroom relationships, professional competence, effective classroom management, and learner-centered instruction. They also believed that students learn more effectively when teachers demonstrate fairness, empathy, subject mastery, and positive personal qualities. These findings are consistent with constructivist perspectives, which emphasize that effective teaching extends beyond content delivery to facilitating meaningful learning through positive teacher–student interaction and active engagement (Gillies, 2007; Vygotsky, 1978). Likewise, the results support the view that teachers' beliefs significantly influence instructional decision-making and classroom behavior (Fadera & de Guzman, 2014).

Teachers' Actual Classroom Practices

Teachers likewise reported a very high level of actual classroom practice, obtaining an overall average weighted mean of 4.78. Similar to their pedagogical beliefs, all instructional domains received very high ratings. The highest ratings were observed in the Control and Discipline and Students' Domains (both WM = 4.86), followed by Personal Characteristics

(WM = 4.84) and Evaluation (WM = 4.81). The Organizational Domain received the lowest mean (WM = 4.67), although it still fell within the very high category.

The close similarity between teachers' beliefs and their reported classroom practices indicates a strong alignment between what teachers believe and what they actually do in the classroom. The findings imply that teachers generally succeed in translating their instructional philosophies into practice despite the realities of classroom teaching. Their emphasis on respectful classroom management, learner participation, meaningful assessment, and professional conduct reflects a commitment to creating learning environments that promote both academic achievement and personal development. This alignment also suggests that the respondents possess not only theoretical understanding but also the professional competence needed to implement learner-centered approaches in Social Science instruction.

Challenges Encountered in Teaching Social Science 11

Despite their strong pedagogical beliefs and effective classroom practices, teachers reported experiencing serious challenges in delivering Social Science 11 instruction, with an overall weighted mean of 4.19. The most pressing concerns were the limited availability of updated and localized instructional materials and the difficulty of integrating critical thinking into classroom discussions, both receiving a weighted mean of 4.48. Other major concerns included students' lack of motivation, large class sizes, differences in students' reading comprehension levels, limited time for interactive teaching strategies, and difficulties in implementing performance-based assessment.

These findings indicate that effective teaching depends not only on teachers' competence but also on the availability of adequate instructional resources and supportive learning conditions. Even highly capable teachers may struggle to fully implement learner-centered instruction when instructional materials are limited, class sizes are large, and students demonstrate varied levels of academic readiness. Consequently, improving Social Science instruction requires institutional support through continuous professional development, provision of contextualized learning resources, manageable teaching loads, and instructional policies that promote meaningful classroom engagement rather than mere curriculum coverage.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that the teachers handling Social Science 11 in Legislative District 5, Isabela constitute a professionally qualified teaching force. Most possess graduate-level qualifications, occupy higher teaching positions, have satisfactory teaching experience, and have consistently received outstanding performance ratings. These characteristics indicate that they have the academic preparation and professional competence needed to deliver quality Social Science instruction. To sustain this level of competence, school administrators should continue providing meaningful professional development opportunities that respond to teachers' evolving instructional needs.

Teachers demonstrated a very high level of pedagogical beliefs across the domains of organization, lesson presentation, control and discipline, dealing with students, evaluation, code of ethics, and personal characteristics. This suggests that they possess a strong understanding of effective teaching and uphold sound professional values in the delivery of instruction. To preserve these positive beliefs, teachers should continue engaging in reflective practice, collaborative lesson planning, and continuous professional learning that strengthens learner-centered instruction.

The teachers likewise exhibited a very high level of actual classroom practice, indicating that their instructional behaviors are generally consistent with their pedagogical

beliefs. The close alignment between beliefs and classroom practices suggests that teachers are able to translate their educational philosophies into effective instructional actions. Maintaining this consistency requires sustained instructional supervision, mentoring, and opportunities for teachers to share effective classroom practices with their colleagues.

Despite their strong pedagogical beliefs and effective classroom practices, teachers continue to experience serious instructional challenges. These include the limited availability of updated and localized instructional materials, difficulties in integrating higher-order thinking skills into classroom discussions, large class sizes, varying learner abilities, limited time for interactive learning activities, and challenges associated with performance-based assessment and sensitive subject matter. These findings indicate that effective teaching depends not only on teachers' competence but also on the availability of adequate instructional resources and institutional support. Schools should therefore prioritize the provision of contextualized learning materials, strengthen professional learning communities, improve classroom conditions, and provide continuous training in innovative teaching and assessment strategies.

Finally, future researchers are encouraged to conduct similar studies in other schools or divisions using larger samples or different research designs. Comparative and correlational investigations may provide broader evidence on the relationship between teachers' pedagogical beliefs, classroom practices, and instructional effectiveness, thereby contributing to the continuing improvement of Social Science education.

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