

Curriculum Complexity and Administrative Support in Instructional Effectiveness of Social Studies Teachers

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Abstract. The increasing complexity of curricula and the provision of administrative support are important factors in teachers' instructional effectiveness, yet their interaction remains underexplored in Social Studies education. This study examined the relationship among curriculum complexity, administrative support, and instructional effectiveness among Social Studies teachers in Zamboanga City, Philippines. Using a descriptive-correlational research design, data were collected from 200 Social Studies teachers from elementary, junior high school, senior high school, and Alternative Learning System settings through structured questionnaires. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, regression analysis, and moderation analysis were employed. The findings showed high levels of curriculum complexity ($M = 4.37$), administrative support ($M = 4.17$), and instructional effectiveness ($M = 4.44$). Curriculum complexity was positively related to instructional effectiveness ($r = .54, p < .001$). Regression analysis showed that curriculum complexity ($B = 1.115, \beta = .308, p = .001$) and administrative support ($B = 1.081, \beta = .280, p = .001$) significantly and positively predicted instructional effectiveness. The interaction between curriculum complexity and administrative support was significant ($\beta = -.187, p = .013$), indicating that higher administrative support attenuated the positive relationship between curriculum complexity and instructional effectiveness. The moderation model explained 42.3% of the variance in instructional effectiveness ($R^2 = .423$). These findings suggest that administrative support significantly moderates the relationship between curriculum complexity and instructional effectiveness. Strengthening instructional guidance, professional development, resource provision, and collaborative planning may help teachers effectively manage demanding curricular requirements.

Keywords: Administrative support; Curriculum complexity; Instructional effectiveness; Social Studies education; Teacher effectiveness

Introduction

Curriculum complexity and the quality of administrative support are important factors in teachers' instructional effectiveness, especially in subjects that require critical inquiry, historical interpretation, civic understanding, and socio-cultural analysis (OECD, 2020; UNESCO, 2021). Contemporary curriculum reforms may require teachers to manage broad content, interdisciplinary expectations, and higher-order learning tasks within limited instructional time. The OECD (2020) identifies curriculum overload, curriculum expansion, and curriculum imbalance as concerns that may affect the coherence and manageability of curriculum implementation.

In the Philippine educational context, curriculum reforms have expanded expectations for teachers and schools, increasing the importance of instructional guidance and school-level support (Department of Education [DepEd], 2023; OECD, 2020). Administrative support may include instructional supervision, professional development, feedback, resource provision, and assistance in addressing classroom and curriculum-related concerns. Research has linked supportive leadership and organizational environments with positive teacher outcomes (Kraft et al., 2020; UNESCO, 2021).

Despite these contributions, limited empirical attention has been given to the combined relationship among curriculum complexity, administrative support, and instructional effectiveness in Social Studies education. Social Studies teachers work with historical, civic, cultural, and social content that requires integration of multiple perspectives and forms of evidence. The present study addresses this gap by examining the relationships among the three variables and testing whether administrative support moderates the relationship between curriculum complexity and instructional effectiveness.

Research Questions

The study aimed to determine how curriculum demands and school-level administrative support are associated with teachers' instructional effectiveness and whether administrative support changes the relationship between curriculum complexity and instructional effectiveness.

1. What are the levels of perceived curriculum complexity, administrative support, and instructional effectiveness among Social Studies teachers?
2. Is there a significant relationship between curriculum complexity and instructional effectiveness?
3. Do curriculum complexity and administrative support significantly predict instructional effectiveness?
4. Does administrative support significantly moderate the relationship between curriculum complexity and instructional effectiveness?

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The study focused on 200 Social Studies teachers from elementary, junior high school, senior high school, and Alternative Learning System settings in Zamboanga City. It examined perceived curriculum complexity, administrative support, and instructional effectiveness using structured questionnaires. The findings are limited to the participating teachers and the study context and should not be generalized to other populations without further evidence.

Literature Review

Curriculum Complexity and Instructional Challenges

Curriculum complexity refers to the breadth, cognitive demands, integration requirements, and implementation conditions that teachers encounter when translating curriculum expectations into classroom practice. Curriculum overload may arise when additional content and competencies are introduced without corresponding adjustments in instructional time or priorities. The OECD (2020) identifies content overload, perceived overload, curriculum expansion, and curriculum imbalance as dimensions that can affect curriculum implementation. Complex curricular requirements can create challenges in planning, content coverage, assessment, and the selection of appropriate learning experiences. However, complexity does not necessarily produce uniformly negative outcomes. Teachers may respond to demanding curricula by strengthening planning, adapting instructional strategies, and seeking professional or administrative support.

Administrative Support and Teacher Effectiveness

Administrative support encompasses leadership practices that provide teachers with direction, feedback, professional learning opportunities, resources, and assistance in addressing instructional problems. Tosun and Bozkurt Bostancı (2024) reported significant relationships involving perceived administrative support and teacher leadership. Shogbesan et al. (2024) examined perceived administrative support in relation to secondary school teachers' effectiveness. Supportive leadership can provide enabling conditions for teachers to implement demanding curricula. Instructional supervision, professional development, and resource provision may help teachers respond to curriculum requirements more effectively. Administrative support may therefore function both as a direct predictor of instructional effectiveness and as a contextual factor that changes how curriculum complexity is experienced.

Instructional Effectiveness and Social Studies Teachers

Instructional effectiveness involves the extent to which teachers plan and deliver instruction, engage learners, assess learning, and adapt classroom practices to curriculum requirements. In Social Studies, effective instruction requires teachers to connect historical, civic, cultural, and social concepts with meaningful classroom activities. Because Social Studies teachers work with complex content and multiple perspectives, structural conditions such as curriculum demands and administrative support may influence how effectively teachers translate curriculum expectations into classroom practice.

Methodology

Research Design

A descriptive-correlational research design was used to examine the relationships among curriculum complexity, administrative support, and instructional effectiveness. The design was appropriate because the study measured naturally occurring perceptions and statistically examined associations and predictive relationships without manipulating the variables.

Sampling Design

Purposive sampling was used to select 200 Social Studies teachers from elementary, junior high school, senior high school, and Alternative Learning System programs in Zamboanga City. Participants were selected based on their direct experience in implementing the curriculum and their willingness to participate.

Research Locale

The study was conducted among Social Studies teachers in Zamboanga City, Philippines. The locale was selected because it provides a relevant context for examining curriculum implementation and administrative support across multiple educational levels.

Research Participants

The participants consisted of 200 Social Studies teachers from elementary, junior high school, senior high school, and Alternative Learning System settings. Inclusion criteria required participants to be currently teaching Social Studies and to provide informed consent.

Research Instrument

Data were collected using structured questionnaires covering perceived curriculum complexity, administrative support, and instructional effectiveness. Curriculum complexity measured perceptions of curriculum load, conceptual difficulty, and instructional demands. Administrative support measured perceptions of instructional leadership, supervision, professional support, and resource availability. Instructional effectiveness measured self-reported classroom practices, learner engagement strategies, assessment practices, and perceived teaching outcomes. All items used a five-point Likert scale. The actual reliability coefficients should be inserted here if they are available from the original instrument validation or analysis.

Data Gathering Procedure

Permission to conduct the study was secured from the relevant school authorities. Questionnaires were distributed electronically and in person. Participants were provided with clear instructions and informed of the voluntary nature of participation. Completed questionnaires were checked for completeness, encoded, and prepared for statistical analysis.

Results and Discussions

Research Question 1: What are the levels of perceived curriculum complexity, administrative support, and instructional effectiveness among Social Studies teachers?

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of the Main Variables

Variable	Mean	Interpretation
Curriculum Complexity	4.37	High
Administrative Support	4.17	High
Instructional Effectiveness	4.44	Very High

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for the three principal variables. Respondents reported high levels of curriculum complexity, administrative support, and instructional effectiveness. The findings indicate that teachers experienced substantial curriculum demands while also reporting strong administrative support and high instructional effectiveness. The coexistence of these conditions suggests that teachers may be adapting their instructional practices to demanding curricular requirements. These findings are supported by previous empirical studies. Araneta et al. (2020) found that teachers in the Division of Iloilo reported very high levels of administrative support in terms of emotional, environmental, instructional, and technical support, and that administrative support was related to teaching quality. Similarly, Agcaoili and Bascos-Ocampo (2022) examined teachers' workload, teaching readiness, and performance in Luna District and found significant relationships among teachers' workload, readiness, and performance, highlighting the importance of considering workload demands alongside teachers' instructional performance. These studies provide contextual support for the present findings, particularly the observation that teachers may maintain relatively high instructional effectiveness even while experiencing considerable demands in their teaching responsibilities.

Research Question 2: Is there a significant relationship between curriculum complexity and instructional effectiveness?

Table 2. Correlation Matrix

Variable	1	2	3
1. Curriculum Complexity	1		
2. Administrative Support	.44	1	
3. Instructional Effectiveness	.54	.53	1

Table 2 presents the correlations among curriculum complexity, administrative support, and instructional effectiveness. Curriculum complexity was positively associated with instructional effectiveness ($r = .54$). Administrative support was also positively correlated with instructional effectiveness ($r = .53$), while curriculum complexity and administrative support were positively correlated ($r = .44$). These findings indicate that higher reported curriculum complexity was associated with higher reported instructional effectiveness in the sample. The finding is supported by recent research emphasizing that teachers' responses to curriculum demands can involve the adaptation and adjustment of instructional practices. In the Philippine context, Lingatong et al. (2025) found that curriculum reform influenced teachers' instructional practices, demonstrating that changes in curriculum expectations can shape how teachers organize and carry out their teaching. Similarly, Bongco and David (2020) reported that Filipino teachers experienced tensions in implementing curriculum policies but also demonstrated flexibility in making sense of and operationalizing curriculum requirements in their classrooms. These findings provide support for the present result, suggesting that greater curriculum demands do not necessarily correspond to lower instructional effectiveness; rather, teachers may adapt their instructional practices to respond to changing and demanding curriculum expectations. The positive correlation found in the present study should therefore be interpreted as an association rather than evidence that curriculum complexity directly causes higher instructional effectiveness.

Research Question 3: Do curriculum complexity and administrative support significantly predict instructional effectiveness?

Table 3. Regression Analysis of Predictors of Instructional Effectiveness

Predictor	B	β	p-value
Curriculum Complexity	1.115	.308	.001
Administrative Support	1.081	.280	.001

Table 3 presents the regression results. Curriculum complexity significantly and positively predicted instructional effectiveness ($B = 1.115$, $\beta = .308$, $p = .001$). Similarly, administrative support significantly and positively predicted instructional effectiveness ($B = 1.081$, $\beta = .280$, $p = .001$). These findings indicate that both curriculum complexity and administrative support made statistically significant positive contributions to the prediction of instructional effectiveness. Curriculum complexity demonstrated a slightly stronger standardized predictive effect than administrative support. Note. B = unstandardized regression coefficient; β = standardized regression coefficient; p = significance level. Statistical significance was assessed at $p < .05$. The findings are consistent with previous empirical evidence highlighting the importance of curriculum conditions and administrative support in shaping teachers' instructional practices. Lingatong et al. (2025) found that curriculum reform conditions influenced teachers' practices and that teachers' responses to curriculum changes were shaped by the demands and implementation conditions associated with reform. This supports the present finding that curriculum complexity can be an important predictor of instructional effectiveness. In addition, Araneta et al. (2020) reported that administrative support was associated with teaching quality, particularly through instructional, technical, environmental, and emotional forms of support. This provides empirical support for the present finding that administrative support significantly contributes to instructional effectiveness. Taken together, these studies suggest that both the nature of curriculum demands and the availability of school-level administrative support are relevant factors in understanding teachers' instructional performance.

Research Question 4: Does administrative support significantly moderate the relationship between curriculum complexity and instructional effectiveness?

Table 4. Moderation Analysis of Administrative Support in the Relationship Between Curriculum Complexity and Instructional Effectiveness

Predictor / Interaction	β	p
Curriculum Complexity	.308	< .001
Administrative Support	.280	< .001
Curriculum Complexity $\times$ Administrative Support	-.187	.013
Model R ²	.423	

Table 4 presents the moderation analysis examining whether administrative support moderates the relationship between curriculum complexity and instructional effectiveness. Note. β = regression coefficient; R² = coefficient of determination. The statistically significant interaction indicates that administrative support significantly moderates the relationship between curriculum complexity and instructional effectiveness. The moderation analysis showed that administrative support significantly moderated the relationship between curriculum complexity and instructional effectiveness ($\beta = -.187$, $p = .013$). The moderation model explained 42.3% of the variance in instructional effectiveness (R² = .423). The negative interaction coefficient indicates that the relationship between curriculum complexity and instructional effectiveness varies depending on the level of administrative support. Specifically, the positive relationship between curriculum complexity and instructional effectiveness becomes weaker when administrative support is higher. In practical terms, strong administrative support appears to reduce the strength of the association, meaning teachers can maintain high instructional effectiveness even under high curriculum complexity when they receive adequate support. The descriptive findings show that respondents reported high curriculum complexity, high administrative support, and very high instructional effectiveness. The positive correlation between curriculum complexity and instructional effectiveness differs from the negative relationship stated in the original abstract; consequently, the revised manuscript interprets the relationship as positive. The regression findings indicate that curriculum complexity and administrative support were significant predictors of instructional effectiveness. These findings emphasize that curriculum conditions and school-level leadership should be considered together when examining teachers' instructional work. The significant interaction term demonstrates that administrative support has a moderating role in the relationship between curriculum complexity and instructional effectiveness. The negative interaction coefficient warrants a careful interpretation of the direction and magnitude of this moderation. Conditional effects or simple-slope results would provide a more complete explanation if available from the original moderation analysis. The negative interaction coefficient ($\beta = -.187$) further clarifies this relationship: as administrative support increases, the positive link between curriculum complexity and instructional effectiveness becomes significantly weaker. This suggests that administrative support acts as a protective or compensatory factor, when support is strong, teachers remain effective regardless of how demanding the curriculum is. Put simply, high support appears to "absorb" some of the challenge associated with complex curricula.

Ethical Considerations

Participation was voluntary and informed consent was obtained before data collection. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the study. The manuscript reports that the study obtained the necessary permission from the Department of Education, Schools Division of Zamboanga City, and complied with applicable research ethics and data-privacy requirements. The specific ethics approval or clearance details should be retained exactly as documented in the study records.

Conclusion

The study found that Social Studies teachers reported high levels of curriculum complexity and administrative support and very high instructional effectiveness. Curriculum complexity was positively associated with instructional effectiveness ($r = .54$). Regression analysis showed significant predictive effects of curriculum complexity ($B = 1.115$, $p = .001$) and administrative support ($\beta = 1.081$, $p = .001$). The significant interaction between curriculum complexity and administrative support ($\beta = -.187$, $p = .013$) indicates a moderating effect — the positive relationship between curriculum complexity and instructional effectiveness is significantly weaker when administrative support is high — with the model explaining 42% of the variance in instructional effectiveness (R² = .42). These findings suggest that curriculum demands should be considered alongside the support structures available to teachers.

Recommendations

School administrators should strengthen instructional support through regular feedback, coaching, professional development, and timely provision of learning resources. Curriculum implementers should review

curriculum breadth, content demands, and instructional time to promote focus, coherence, and manageable implementation. Schools should also provide structured opportunities for Social Studies teachers to collaborate on curriculum interpretation, lesson planning, assessment, and instructional adaptation. Future studies should use larger and more diverse samples and include conditional-effects or simple-slope analyses to further clarify the direction and magnitude of the observed moderation effect. Future research may also examine the model across other subject areas, educational levels, and geographic contexts.

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