ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT, TEACHER QUALIFICATION, AND NATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT TEST IN LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION, AND MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY

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ABSTRACT: *Recent National Achievement Test (NAT) results in the Division of Dumaguete City revealed that four public senior high schools scored below the Region VII overall mean percentage score (MPS) in Language and Communication, while two schools fell below the national overall MPS in Media and Information Literacy. These findings underscore the need to examine the factors influencing student performance, particularly academic achievement and teacher qualifications. This study employed a descriptive-correlational design to investigate the relationship between students' academic performance, teacher profiles, and NAT results in Language and Communication and Media and Information Literacy. Data included the 2024 NAT results, students' general weighted averages, and teacher qualifications in terms of educational attainment and teaching experience. Statistical analyses utilized Spearman's rank correlation and the Chi-Square Test of Independence. Findings indicated that while students attained "Very Satisfactory" to "Outstanding" academic performance in both subject areas, their NAT outcomes were rated only "Low Proficient." Correlation analysis revealed weak to moderate but statistically non-significant relationships between academic performance and NAT scores in problem solving, information literacy, and critical thinking. Likewise, teacher qualifications, such as years of teaching experience and pursuit of graduate studies, showed no significant association with students' overall NAT performance. The study concludes that classroom academic achievement and teacher qualifications alone are insufficient predictors of NAT outcomes. It recommends aligning teacher specialization with subject assignments, strengthening professional development, and enhancing classroom assessment practices to emphasize higher-order thinking skills. Addressing these areas can help narrow the gap between academic achievement and standardized test proficiency in the Division of Dumaguete City.*

Keywords: Academic Achievement, Teacher Qualification, National Achievement Test, Language and Communication, Media and Information Literacy.

1. INTRODUCTION

Quality education remains one of the cornerstones of national development, and the performance of students in standardized assessments such as the National Achievement Test (NAT) serves as a vital benchmark for measuring learning outcomes in the Philippines. The NAT evaluates competencies across multiple domains and provides insights into the effectiveness of teaching and learning processes, thereby informing policy, curriculum development, and school improvement strategies [1]; [2]. Despite sustained efforts to improve instructional practices, disparities in performance persist across schools and subject areas, reflecting systemic and localized challenges that demand careful examination.

In the Division of Dumaguete City, recent NAT results have revealed concerning gaps in critical areas of learning. Specifically, four public senior high schools were reported to have performed below the Region VII overall mean percentage score (MPS) in Language and Communication, while two schools were below the national overall MPS in Media and Information Literacy (MIL). These findings underscore the pressing need to assess not only students' academic achievement but also the contextual factors such as teacher qualification and instructional practices that may influence standardized test outcomes. Studies emphasize that academic performance is often a predictor of NAT scores, though the strength of this relationship varies across subject areas and grade levels [3]; [4].

The integration of Media and Information Literacy into the curriculum has been identified globally as essential for equipping students with the competencies necessary to thrive in the digital age [5]. MIL develops critical thinking, problem solving, and responsible engagement with media, enabling learners to navigate increasingly complex information ecosystems [6]. However, its effectiveness in the Philippine context depends largely on the capacity of teachers to implement learner-centered strategies and on the alignment of curriculum standards with assessment frameworks [7]; [8]. The observed underperformance of some Dumaguete schools in this domain highlights the challenges of ensuring that curricular integration translates into measurable student outcomes.

Teacher qualification also plays a pivotal role in determining student achievement. Research consistently demonstrates that teachers' educational attainment, training, and field specialization significantly affect students' academic and test performance [9]; [10]. Mismatches between teachers' specialization and the subjects they teach have been shown to negatively influence NAT results, particularly in language-related subjects [11]. Thus, examining the link between teacher qualifications and students' NAT performance in Language and Communication and Media and Information Literacy is not only relevant but also necessary to address the disparities observed in the Dumaguete City Division.

Given these considerations, this study seeks to explore the interplay between academic achievement, teacher qualification, and NAT results in Language and Communication and Media and Information Literacy. By analyzing the relationship among these factors, the research aims to identify specific areas of intervention that can improve student performance, inform teacher professional development, and guide policymakers in strengthening

curriculum implementation. Ultimately, the findings are expected to provide empirical bases for targeted interventions that will enhance both academic outcomes and standardized assessment performance of senior high school students in Dumaguete City.

Specifically, it purports to shed light to the following questions:

1. What is academic performance of public senior high schools of Dumaguete City division in terms of:
   1.1 Language and Communication; and
   1.2 Media and Information Literacy?
2. What is the National Achievement test mean percentage score (MPS) of public senior high schools of Dumaguete City division in Language and Communication in terms of:
   2.1 Problem Solving;
   2.2 Information Literacy; and
   2.3 Critical Thinking?
3. What is the National Achievement test mean percentage score (MPS) of public senior high schools of Dumaguete City division in Media and Information Literacy in terms of:
   3.1 Problem Solving;
   3.2 Information Literacy; and
   3.3 Critical Thinking?
4. Is there a relationship between the academic performance and the National Achievement test mean percentage score (MPS) in Language and Communication in terms of:
   4.1 Problem Solving;
   4.2 Information Literacy;
   4.3 Critical Thinking; and
   4.4 Overall MPS
5. Is there a relationship between the academic performance and the National Achievement test mean percentage score (MPS) in Media and Information Literacy in terms of:
   5.1 Problem Solving;
   5.2 Information Literacy;
   5.3 Critical Thinking; and
   5.4 Overall MPS
6. What is the profile of the teacher respondents teaching Language and Communication in terms of:
   6.1 Number of years teaching;
   6.2 Bachelor's Degree; and
   6.3 Master's Degree (units)?
7. What is the profile of the teacher respondents teaching Media and Information Literacy in terms of:
   7.1 Number of years teaching;
   7.2 Bachelor's Degree; and
   7.3 Master's Degree (units)?
8. Is there a significant association between the teacher's number of years teaching and NAT Overall MPS in terms of:
   8.1 Language and Communication; and
   8.2 Media and Information Literacy?
9. Is there a significant association between the teacher's Master's degree and NAT Overall MPS in terms of:
   9.1 Language and Communication; and
   9.2 Media and Information Literacy?
10. What recommendations can be proposed to improve the academic performance and National Achievement Test (NAT) mean percentage scores in Language and Communication; and Media and Information Literacy of public senior high schools of Dumaguete City division?

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Academic Achievement and National Achievement Test (NAT) Performance

Student performance in the National Achievement Test (NAT) has long been considered an indicator of school effectiveness and instructional quality in the Philippines. Academic achievement is widely acknowledged as a significant predictor of NAT performance, yet studies reveal inconsistencies in the strength of this relationship. For instance, Casildo [1] demonstrated that academic performance can be modeled to predict NAT outcomes through data mining techniques, highlighting the importance of subject-specific competencies in forecasting test results. Similarly, Ojastro et.al. [3] found that while academic ratings in Mathematics and Science were generally "very satisfactory" or "outstanding," NAT scores in the same subjects were "low proficient," suggesting a disconnect between classroom assessments and standardized test outcomes.

Research also emphasizes the influence of demographic and contextual variables. Batucan [4] revealed that school size, geographical location, and type of school significantly shaped Grade 12 NAT performance in Negros Oriental, although no uniform proficiency differences were found across school classifications. Valderama [12] further identified principal leadership, teachers' attainment of master's degrees, class size, and resource availability as discriminating factors between high- and low-performing schools in Mathematics NAT. Complementing these findings, Cabrella and Junsay [13] noted that teacher attitude, motivation, classroom management, and family background strongly influence NAT results in Science, Mathematics, and English.

Beyond local contexts, international studies underscore the predictive role of academic achievement on standardized testing. Anub [2] documented that teacher qualifications, relevant seminars attended, and remedial instruction significantly contributed to English NAT performance in Bohol. Guiaselon et al. [9] confirmed that mismatches between teacher qualifications and subject taught adversely affected students' NAT scores, while Reyno and Guzman [11] identified a range of school- and teacher-related factors influencing NAT outcomes. Collectively, these studies illustrate that NAT performance is not solely a reflection of student ability but a multifaceted outcome shaped by academic preparation, instructional quality, teacher expertise, and contextual variables.

Teacher Qualification and Academic Performance

Teacher qualifications play a decisive role in shaping student learning outcomes and test performance. Studies have consistently shown that the educational attainment, teaching experience, and field specialization of teachers directly affect students' academic achievement. In the Philippine context, Guiaselon et al. [9] emphasized that mismatched qualifications in English instruction correlated with lower NAT performance, underscoring the importance of teacher specialization. Similar patterns were observed in Nigeria, where Olanrewaju [14] reported that teachers' qualifications

significantly influenced students' numerical proficiency in Physics.

Comparable findings emerge from international contexts. Casian, Mugo, and Mukamazimpaka [10] revealed in Rwanda that teacher qualifications explained 36.5% of the variance in students' academic performance, while Yasin [23] and Bolarinwa *et al*. [24] found comparable associations in African settings. Likewise, Montejo and Jamon (2018) underscored the significance of verbal reasoning and comprehension skills, closely tied to teacher input, as critical determinants of academic success in college. In the local setting, Tizon (2019) found that senior high school teachers' communication skills correlated with their teaching performance, although the relationship was not significant, suggesting the influence of other mediating variables. These findings affirm the view that teachers' qualifications and professional competencies are central to improving both academic achievement and NAT performance.

Media and Information Literacy (MIL) and Curriculum Integration

The integration of Media and Information Literacy (MIL) has been recognized as a critical dimension of 21st-century education. Globally, Rojas-Estrada, *et. al*. [5] emphasized that effective MIL curriculum integration requires formulation, implementation, and evaluation supported by political will, civil society activism, and teacher engagement. Leaning [6] likewise argued that MIL is vital for cultivating informed and critical citizens capable of navigating digital landscapes. Park *et.al* [17], through a scientometric analysis, confirmed that MIL and digital literacy are multidisciplinary, spanning ICT, Internet use, language education, and beyond.

In the Philippine context, studies have examined MIL integration and its challenges. Bautista [7] identified strategies and difficulties faced by senior high school teachers in delivering MIL, while Santos [8] demonstrated that an output-based approach enhanced students' cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal competencies. Findings also highlighted the importance of project-based and performance-oriented strategies in maximizing MIL outcomes. Despite these efforts, underperformance in MIL persists in certain schools, as reflected in NAT results, pointing to the need for enhanced teacher training and more contextualized implementation.

Language and Communication Competencies

Oral communication and language proficiency remain fundamental to both academic success and standardized test outcomes. Several Philippine-based studies underscore the significance of oral proficiency in senior high school students. Rayla and Sonsona [18] revealed persistent challenges in coherence, elaboration of ideas, pronunciation, and delivery, while Dadulla [19] demonstrated a moderate positive correlation between students' self-esteem and their English oral proficiency. Policarpio [20] confirmed the effectiveness of Whole-Brain Learning strategies in improving oral communication, suggesting innovative pedagogical approaches as alternatives to conventional teaching.

Other studies emphasized classroom practices and assessment. Capacete [21] documented how oral communication teachers' beliefs and practices in assessment were shaped by institutional frameworks. Bargo and Go [22] analyzed lesson plans and found that communicative language teaching (CLT) strategies were widely used and aligned with curriculum standards. International studies align with these findings, highlighting that teachers' communication skills are critical to shaping students' learning experiences [10]. Collectively, these findings underscore the essential role of language and communication instruction in shaping both academic outcomes and NAT performance.

Factors Affecting Standardized Test Outcomes

A range of contextual and systemic factors also influence academic performance and standardized test outcomes. Anub [2] identified teacher-related variables such as age, educational attainment, and seminars attended as significant contributors to NAT performance in English. Similarly, Batucan [4] highlighted geographical and school-type differences in Negros Oriental, while Valderama [12] pinpointed leadership and resources as distinguishing variables for high-performing schools. Cabrella and Junsay [13] emphasized the roles of teacher motivation, classroom management, and parental involvement, confirming the multifaceted nature of achievement determinants.

Globally, Casian *et al*. [10] and Guiaselon et al. [9] reinforced the strong relationship between teacher qualification and student outcomes. These findings are complemented by studies emphasizing the importance of contextualized pedagogy and innovative assessment practices to bridge the gap between classroom performance and standardized test achievement [8; 7].

3. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The present study on the relationship between academic achievement, teacher qualification, and National Achievement Test (NAT) performance in Language and Communication and Media and Information Literacy is significant for several reasons. Its findings are expected to provide valuable insights and practical implications to various stakeholders in the educational system.

To the Students. This study will help learners recognize the importance of their academic achievement as a foundation for performing well in standardized assessments such as the NAT. By identifying the link between classroom performance and test outcomes, students will be guided on how their study habits, competencies, and engagement in language and media literacy can contribute to improved academic success.

To the Teachers. The results of this research will highlight the role of teacher qualifications, specialization, and instructional practices in shaping student outcomes. Teachers may use the findings to reflect on their pedagogical approaches, strengthen subject mastery, and adapt innovative strategies in teaching Language and Communication and Media and Information Literacy to bridge gaps in student performance.

To the School Administrators. School leaders will gain evidence-based insights on how teacher deployment, professional development, and resource allocation can enhance learning outcomes. The study's results may guide administrators in crafting targeted interventions such as mentoring programs, remedial classes, and capacity-building activities for teachers to ensure alignment between curricular standards and NAT expectations.

To the Policy Makers. At the divisional and regional levels, the findings can inform policy directions for curriculum implementation and teacher qualification requirements. Identifying the mismatch between teacher specialization and subject taught, as well as the disparity between academic performance and standardized test results, can serve as a basis for refining teacher hiring policies, professional development frameworks, and curriculum review processes.

4. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to examine the relationship between teacher qualification and students' academic achievement in relation to their performance in the National Achievement Test (NAT). The design was appropriate since it determined the degree of association between categorical variables, such as the presence or absence of a Master's degree, and students' NAT results in Language and Communication and Media and Information Literacy. The correlational approach is widely used in educational research to identify predictors of standardized test outcomes.

Research Locale

The study was conducted in a senior high school within the Division of Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental, Philippines. The institution was chosen due to its consistent participation in the National Achievement Test and its diverse faculty profile, which includes teachers both with and without graduate studies.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents were Grade 12 students who participated in the 2024 NAT in Language and Communication and Media and Information Literacy. Their NAT results were grouped into two performance categories: High and Low, based on the Mean Percentage Score (MPS). The teachers handling these subjects were also considered, classified according to whether they had earned a Master's degree or not. Total enumeration was employed to ensure all available data were analyzed, consistent with similar NAT performance studies.

Research Instrument

The main data source was the 2024 NAT Results released by the Department of Education (DepEd), which provided the MPS classifications of the students. Teacher qualification data were retrieved from school records, validated through personnel profiles. The NAT, being a standardized assessment tool, has long been used in Philippine educational research to measure academic competencies across domains.

Data Gathering Procedure

Permission to conduct the study was secured from the school head and the Division Office of Dumaguete City. NAT scores in Language and Communication and Media and Information Literacy were collected from the official DepEd-released records. Teacher qualification profiles were obtained from the school registrar and faculty files. Data were then consolidated into contingency tables, categorizing students' NAT performance (high or low) against their teachers' qualification (with or without Master's degree).

Statistical Treatment of Data

Data were analyzed using the Chi-Square Test of Independence (χ^2) to determine whether a significant association existed between teacher qualification and students' NAT results in the two subject areas. A significance level of $p < 0.05$ was used as the criterion for decision-making.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1.1 Academic Performance of Public Senior High Schools of Dumaguete City Division in Language and Communication

School	General Weighted Average	Description
1	84	Satisfactory
2	90	Outstanding
3	89	Very Satisfactory
4	94	Outstanding
5	83	Satisfactory
6	84	Satisfactory
Mean	**87**	Very Satisfactory

Legend:

DESCRIPTOR	GRADING SCALE
Outstanding	90-100
Very Satisfactory	85-89
Satisfactory	80-84
Fairly Satisfactory	75-79
Did Not Meet Expectations	Below 75

*Department of Education

Table 1.1 presents the academic performance of six public senior high schools in Dumaguete City Division in Language and Communication, expressed in terms of their General Weighted Average (GWA). The results reveal a mean GWA of 87, which falls under the descriptor "Very Satisfactory." Among the six schools, two attained an Outstanding rating (Schools 2 and 4), one was rated Very Satisfactory (School 3), while three schools performed at the Satisfactory level (Schools 1, 5, and 6). Notably, none of the schools fell below the "Satisfactory" range, which indicates that learners generally demonstrated commendable performance in Language and Communication.

The findings suggest that while overall academic performance in the division is commendable, performance remains uneven across schools, with some institutions producing "Outstanding" outcomes while others are only "Satisfactory." This disparity may be attributed to variations in instructional quality, teacher qualifications, resource availability, and student learning environments. Prior studies have emphasized that students' academic performance is shaped by both internal factors, such as study habits and motivation, and external factors, such as teacher expertise and school conditions [13; 11].

The "Very Satisfactory" overall performance of Dumaguete students aligns with previous findings that academic achievement in classroom settings often registers higher than standardized test results. Ojastro, et.al. [3] reported that while academic ratings of students were generally "Very Satisfactory" or "Outstanding," their NAT results remained in the "Low Proficient" level, suggesting a disconnect between internal assessments and external benchmarks. Similarly, Casildo [1] confirmed that although classroom performance predicts NAT outcomes, it does not always translate into equivalent proficiency in standardized assessments.

Moreover, the differences in school performance could also reflect the role of teacher qualifications. Guiaselon et al. [9]

and Casian, et al., [10] established that teachers' specialization, training, and educational attainment directly influence student outcomes.

Table 1.2 Academic Performance of Public Senior High Schools of Dumaguete City Division in Media and Information Literacy

School	General Weighted Average	Description
1	86	Very Satisfactory
2	88	Very Satisfactory
3	88	Very Satisfactory
4	96	Outstanding
5	84	Satisfactory
6	84	Satisfactory
Mean	86	Very Satisfactory

Legend:

DESCRIPTOR	GRADING SCALE
Outstanding	90-100
Very Satisfactory	85-89
Satisfactory	80-84
Fairly Satisfactory	75-79
Did Not Meet Expectations	Below 75

Table 1.2 presents the academic performance of six public senior high schools in Dumaguete City Division in Media and Information Literacy (MIL), measured through the General Weighted Average (GWA). The results reveal a mean GWA of 86, which falls under the descriptor "Very Satisfactory." Four schools (Schools 1, 2, and 3 at "Very Satisfactory" and School 4 at "Outstanding") performed above the average threshold, while two schools (Schools 5 and 6) registered only a "Satisfactory" rating.

The results suggest that the majority of schools have achieved commendable outcomes in MIL, with one school (School 4) excelling at an Outstanding level. However, the performance of two schools at the "Satisfactory" level lowers the division's overall mean to 86, revealing disparities across institutions. Such variation in academic performance underscores the influence of contextual and instructional factors. Previous studies have highlighted that disparities in student outcomes may be attributed to differences in school resources, teacher preparation, and instructional approaches [12;13].

The integration of MIL into the Philippine curriculum has been emphasized as essential in cultivating critical thinking, information literacy, and responsible media engagement among learners [5]; [6]. However, challenges in its classroom implementation often hinder the realization of its full potential. Bautista [7] noted that teachers experience difficulties in integrating MIL effectively due to limited training and resource gaps, while Santos [8] demonstrated that project-based and output-oriented approaches can significantly enhance students' MIL competencies. The presence of schools rated only "Satisfactory" in Dumaguete may indicate that teaching strategies and teacher preparedness in these institutions require strengthening to align with curriculum demands.

Furthermore, international research confirms that teacher qualifications, particularly alignment of specialization with the subjects taught, play a critical role in ensuring effective delivery of MIL [9]; [10]. Schools that record higher ratings in MIL may reflect stronger teacher expertise and better integration of innovative teaching practices.

Table 2.1 National Achievement Test Mean Percentage Score (MPS) of Public Senior High Schools of Dumaguete City Division in Language and Communication in Terms of Problem Solving, Information Literacy, and Critical Thinking

	National Achievement test mean percentage score (MPS)							
School	Problem Solving	Description	Information Literacy	Description	Critical Thinking	Description	Overall MPS	Description
1	38.76	Low Proficient	41.37	Low Proficient	30.34	Low Proficient	36.82	Low Proficient
2	39.08	Low Proficient	40.79	Low Proficient	30.90	Low Proficient	36.92	Low Proficient
3	37.51	Low Proficient	41.80	Low Proficient	30.84	Low Proficient	36.71	Low Proficient
4	59.15	Nearly Proficient	66.46	Nearly Proficient	46.64	Low Proficient	57.42	Nearly Proficient
5	37.73	Low Proficient	41.72	Low Proficient	33.37	Low Proficient	37.61	Low Proficient
6	36.59	Low Proficient	41.22	Low Proficient	31.39	Low Proficient	36.40	Low Proficient
Mean	41.47	**Low Proficient**	45.56	**Low Proficient**	33.91	**Low Proficient**	40.31	Low Proficient

Legend:

Levels of Proficiency	MPS	Descriptions
Highly Proficient	90-100	At this level, the students are highly capable of solving problems, managing and communicating accurate information, and analyzing and evaluating data to create/formulate ideas.
Proficient	75-89	At this level, students are skilled in solving problems, managing and communicating information, and analyzing and evaluating data to create/formulate ideas.
Nearly Proficient	50 - 74	At this level, students met the minimum level of skills in solving problems, managing and communicating information, and analyzing and evaluating data to comprehend ideas.
Low Proficient	25-49	At this level, students can identify strategies in solving problems, differentiate and organize information.
Not Proficient	0-24	At this level, students can solve simple problems, classify and identify the source of information.

Table 2.1 shows the National Achievement Test (NAT) mean percentage scores (MPS) of six public senior high schools in Dumaguete City Division in Language and Communication, measured in terms of Problem Solving, Information Literacy, Critical Thinking, and Overall MPS. The findings reveal that the overall mean MPS across schools is 40.31, categorized as "Low Proficient." This indicates that, on average, students can only identify basic strategies, differentiate, and organize information but struggle with higher-order competencies required in problem solving, analysis, and evaluation.

Across the domains, the results show Problem Solving (41.47, Low Proficient), Information Literacy (45.56, Low Proficient), and Critical Thinking (33.91, Low Proficient). Notably, Critical Thinking registered the lowest mean score, highlighting it as the most challenging area for learners. This pattern is consistent with national and international findings that Filipino students often struggle with critical thinking and problem-solving skills, which are essential for lifelong learning and global competitiveness [11]; [5].

Among the six schools, only School 4 surpassed the "Low Proficient" threshold, attaining "Nearly Proficient" in both Problem Solving (59.15) and Information Literacy (66.46), as well as an overall MPS of 57.42. Despite this achievement, even School 4 remained at "Low Proficient" in Critical Thinking (46.64), confirming that higher-order reasoning and evaluation remain persistent challenges. The superior performance of this school may be attributed to stronger teacher qualifications, more effective instructional practices, or better resource availability, as prior research shows that teacher expertise and alignment of specialization to subject

areas significantly contribute to higher student outcomes [9]; [10].

The broader result of "Low Proficient" despite the "Very Satisfactory" classroom ratings reported earlier in Table 1.1 underscores a disconnect between academic performance and standardized test outcomes. Ojastro, et.al. [3] similarly found that academic grades were not consistent predictors of NAT proficiency, while Casildo [1] emphasized that NAT scores often require higher-order thinking skills not fully captured by classroom-based assessments. This gap suggests that while students can perform adequately in school-based evaluations, they face difficulties when confronted with more complex, nationally benchmarked tasks.

The weakness in Critical Thinking is particularly noteworthy. Studies argue that developing critical thinking requires intentional integration into curriculum delivery and assessment design [17]; [8]. However, classroom instruction often emphasizes knowledge acquisition rather than the application, analysis, and synthesis demanded by the NAT.

Table 3.1 National Achievement Test Mean Percentage Score (MPS) of Public Senior High Schools of Dumaguete City Division in Media and Information Literacy in Terms of Problem Solving, Information Literacy, and Critical Thinking

National Achievement test mean percentage score (MPS)								
School	Problem Solving	Description	Information Literacy	Description	Critical Thinking	Description	Overall MPS	Description
1	48.26	Low Proficient	38.97	Low Proficient	42.82	Low Proficient	43.35	Low Proficient
2	48.33	Low Proficient	39.93	Low Proficient	44.63	Low Proficient	44.30	Low Proficient
3	46.48	Low Proficient	39.79	Low Proficient	41.44	Low Proficient	42.57	Low Proficient
4	72.81	Nearly Proficient	65.64	Nearly Proficient	70.13	Nearly Proficient	69.52	Nearly Proficient
5	50.16	Nearly Proficient	41.69	Low Proficient	42.43	Low Proficient	44.76	Low Proficient
6	46.63	Low Proficient	39.62	Low Proficient	41.68	Low Proficient	42.64	Low Proficient
Mean	52.11	**Nearly Proficient**	44.27	**Low Proficient**	47.19	**Low Proficient**	47.86	**Low Proficient**

Legend:

Levels of Proficiency	MPS	Descriptions
Highly Proficient	90-100	At this level, the students are highly capable of solving problems, managing and communicating accurate information, and analyzing and evaluating data to create/formulate ideas.
Proficient	75-89	At this level, students are skilled in solving problems, managing and communicating information, and analyzing and evaluating data to create/formulate ideas.
Nearly Proficient	50 - 74	At this level, students met the minimum level of skills in solving problems, managing and communicating information, and analyzing and evaluating data to comprehend ideas.
Low Proficient	25-49	At this level, students can identify strategies in solving problems, differentiate and organize information.
Not Proficient	0-24	At this level, students can solve simple problems, classify and identify the source of information.

Table 3.1 shows the National Achievement Test (NAT) mean percentage scores (MPS) of six public senior high schools in Dumaguete City Division in Media and Information Literacy (MIL), assessed in terms of Problem Solving, Information Literacy, Critical Thinking, and Overall MPS. The results reveal an overall mean MPS of 47.86, which falls under the descriptor "Low Proficient."

When broken down into specific domains, students reached "Nearly Proficient" in Problem Solving (52.11), but remained "Low Proficient" in both Information Literacy (44.27) and Critical Thinking (47.19). These results indicate that while students show emerging competencies in solving problems, they continue to struggle with analyzing, evaluating, and applying information critically—skills that are central to the goals of MIL instruction [5]; [6].

A school-level analysis reveals that only School 4 consistently attained "Nearly Proficient" ratings across all domains, with an overall MPS of 69.52. School 5 also registered "Nearly Proficient" in Problem Solving (50.16) but dropped to "Low Proficient" in the other domains, resulting in an overall rating of 44.76. The remaining four schools remained within the "Low Proficient" level across all areas, highlighting wide disparities in performance across institutions. This aligns with findings from Guiaselon et al. [9], who emphasized that mismatches between teacher qualifications and subjects taught significantly contribute to underperformance in NAT results. Stronger outcomes in School 4 may therefore be attributed to better-qualified teachers, improved instructional strategies, or greater institutional support compared to other schools.

The weak results in Information Literacy and Critical Thinking are particularly concerning. These domains are crucial in fostering students' ability to engage critically with information in today's digital landscape. Santos [8] demonstrated that project-based and output-oriented teaching approaches could significantly enhance students' interpersonal and intrapersonal competencies in MIL, while Bautista [7] noted that teachers face challenges in implementing MIL effectively due to gaps in training and resources. The "Low Proficient" ratings in these areas may therefore reflect insufficient integration of higher-order thinking strategies and limited teacher preparedness in delivering MIL curriculum at a depth aligned with NAT standards.

Moreover, the gap between students' "Very Satisfactory" academic grades in MIL (Table 1.2) and their "Low Proficient" NAT results (Table 3.1) highlights a recurring disconnect between classroom-based assessments and standardized performance measures. Similar findings were observed by Ojastro, et.al. [3], who reported that strong academic records did not always translate into high NAT scores, pointing to differences in assessment frameworks and cognitive demands. Casildo [1] also emphasized that while classroom achievement can predict NAT performance, the predictive strength is weakened when standardized tests emphasize problem solving and critical thinking, skills not consistently reinforced in classroom practice.

Table 4.1 Relationship Between the Academic Performance and the National Achievement Test Mean Percentage Score (MPS) in Language and Communication in Terms of Problem Solving, Information Literacy, and Critical Thinking

NAT vs Academic Performance	Method	Correlation	p-value	Interpretation
Problem Solving	Spearman	0.638	0.173	Moderate, Not Significant
Information Literacy	Spearman	0.232	0.658	Low, Not Significant
Critical Thinking	Spearman	0.174	0.742	Negligible, Not Significant
Overall MPS	Spearman	0.319	0.538	Low, Not Significant

*Adapted from Calmorin
An r ± 0.00 denotes zero correlation.
An r from 0.01 to ± 0.20 deals on negligible correlation
An r from ± 0.21 to ± 0.40 denotes low or slight relationship.
An r from ± 0.41 to ± 0.70 indicates marked or moderate correlation.
An r from ± 0.71 to ± 0.90 shows high relationship.
An r from ± 0.91 to ± 0.99 denotes very high correlation.
An r ±1.0 indicates perfect relationship.

Table 4 presents the relationship between the academic performance of public senior high schools in Dumaguete City Division and their National Achievement Test (NAT) mean percentage scores (MPS) in Language and Communication, analyzed in terms of Problem Solving, Information Literacy, Critical Thinking, and Overall MPS.

The results show that the highest correlation emerged between academic performance and NAT performance in Problem Solving with a Spearman's rho of 0.638, which is interpreted as a moderate relationship, though it was not statistically significant (p = 0.173). For Information Literacy (r = 0.232, p = 0.658) and Overall MPS (r = 0.319, p = 0.538), the correlations were low and not significant, while Critical Thinking reflected a negligible relationship (r = 0.174, p = 0.742).

These results suggest that although there are tendencies for higher academic performance to be associated with slightly higher NAT results, the lack of statistical significance indicates that academic achievement in classroom settings does not strongly predict standardized performance in Language and Communication. This aligns with the findings of Ojastro, et.al. [3], who reported weak correlations between school-based ratings and NAT outcomes, particularly in Science and Mathematics. Similarly, Casildo [1] emphasized that while academic grades provide useful indicators, NAT outcomes often demand higher-order skills that are not consistently captured by classroom assessments.

The moderate but non-significant relationship in Problem Solving suggests that some alignment exists between classroom competencies and standardized test outcomes in this domain. However, the negligible correlation in Critical Thinking reflects a more serious gap, underscoring that classroom practices may emphasize knowledge acquisition and recall rather than analytical and evaluative skills. Research has consistently shown that critical thinking requires explicit integration into teaching and assessment, which is often underdeveloped in Philippine classrooms [8]; [17].

The weak and inconsistent relationships across domains may also be explained by teacher-related factors. Guiaselon et al. [9] and Reyno and Guzman [11] documented how mismatched teacher qualifications and instructional challenges significantly affect NAT performance, suggesting that students' strong classroom grades may not always reflect the competencies targeted in standardized tests. Moreover, Cabrella and Junsay [13] and Valderama [12] highlighted that other contextual variables such as class size, resources, and teacher motivation also contribute to test outcomes, further diluting the predictive value of academic performance.

Table 5.1 Relationship Between the Academic Performance and the National Achievement Test Mean Percentage Score (MPS) in Media and Information Literacy in Terms of Problem Solving, Information Literacy, and Critical Thinking

NAT vs Academic Performance	Method	Correlation	p-value	Interpretation
Problem Solving	Spearman	0.265	0.612	Low, Not Significant
Information Literacy	Spearman	0.441	0.381	Moderate, Not Significant
Critical Thinking	Spearman	0.530	0.280	Moderate, Not Significant
Overall MPS	Spearman	0.265	0.612	Low, Not Significant

*Adapted from Calmorin
An r ± 0.00 denotes zero correlation.
An r from 0.01 to ± 0.20 deals on negligible correlation
An r from ± 0.21 to ± 0.40 denotes low or slight relationship.
An r from ± 0.41 to ± 0.70 indicates marked or moderate correlation.
An r from ± 0.71 to ± 0.90 shows high relationship.
An r from ± 0.91 to ± 0.99 denotes very high correlation.
An r ±1.0 indicates perfect relationship.

Table 5.1 presents the correlation between the academic performance of public senior high schools in Dumaguete City Division and their National Achievement Test (NAT) mean percentage scores (MPS) in Media and Information Literacy (MIL) across three domains: Problem Solving, Information Literacy, and Critical Thinking, including the overall MPS.

The results show low and non-significant correlation between academic performance and NAT performance in Problem Solving (r = 0.265, p = 0.612) and in Overall MPS (r = 0.265, p = 0.612). Meanwhile, moderate correlations were observed for Information Literacy (r = 0.441, p = 0.381) and Critical Thinking (r = 0.530, p = 0.280), but both remained statistically non-significant.

These findings suggest that while there are tendencies for higher academic performance to be associated with better NAT results in some domains, particularly Information Literacy and Critical Thinking, the lack of significance indicates that academic performance in MIL is not a strong predictor of standardized assessment outcomes. This outcome is consistent with previous research noting that school-based grades often differ from standardized test proficiency levels. For example, Ojastro, et.al. [3] found that even when students earned "Very Satisfactory" to "Outstanding" grades, their NAT performance often fell within the "Low Proficient" level. Casildo [1] likewise observed that while academic achievement contributes to NAT results, the predictive strength is limited when tests measure higher-order thinking skills not consistently evaluated in classroom settings.

The relatively stronger but still non-significant correlation in Critical Thinking suggests that academic performance may reflect some aspects of students' reasoning and evaluative abilities, but not at a level that translates into consistent NAT proficiency. Research emphasizes that developing critical thinking in MIL requires intentional teaching approaches that go beyond knowledge transfer, such as project-based, inquiry-driven, and performance-oriented instruction [8]; [7]. The weak statistical relationship found here implies that such approaches may not yet be systematically embedded in the participating schools.

Teacher qualification may also help explain the weak associations. Guiaselon et al. [9] argued that mismatched qualifications between teachers and the subjects they handle adversely affect student outcomes, including NAT scores. If MIL classes are taught by non-specialists or teachers lacking adequate training in digital and information literacy, the translation of academic grades into standardized proficiency becomes less reliable.

Table 6.1 Profile of the Teacher Respondents Teaching Language and Communication

School	Teacher	Number of Years Teaching	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree
1	1	2	BSED-Eng	None
2	1	7	BSED-Eng	None
3	1	7	BSED-Eng	24 units
	2	26	BSED-Eng	MAED-ENG
4	1	1	BSED-Eng	15 units
	2	4	BSED-Eng	15 units
5	1	7	Bachelor of Mass Communication/BSED-CPE	30 units
	2	7	BSED-Eng	CAR
6	1	12	BSED-Eng	24 units
	2	32	BSED-Eng	18 units

The data in Table 6 presents the educational background and teaching experience of teacher respondents handling Language and Communication. The profile shows a diverse range of teaching experience, spanning from 1 year to over 30 years. This indicates that while some teachers are relatively new in the profession, others bring decades of classroom experience, which may influence their pedagogical strategies and effectiveness in preparing students for the National Achievement Test (NAT). Previous studies emphasize that years of teaching experience often correlate with students' academic outcomes, as seasoned teachers may have stronger classroom management and instructional skills [24]; [29].

In terms of academic qualifications, all teachers hold a Bachelor's degree, primarily in BSED English, with some variations such as Mass Communication. A number of teachers are also pursuing or have obtained Master's degrees, ranging from earned units to full completion (e.g., MAED-ENG, CAR). The presence of graduate-level qualifications highlights a strong commitment to professional development. Literature suggests that advanced degrees contribute to improved instructional quality, content mastery, and ultimately, better student performance in assessments such as NAT [25]; [26].

Furthermore, the combination of formal academic preparation and postgraduate studies demonstrates a mix of pedagogical and content specialization. This aligns with findings that teacher qualification significantly predicts student academic achievement and standardized test performance [1]; Geoffrey et [28]. However, mismatches between specialization and subjects taught, such as a Communication major teaching Filipino, may limit instructional effectiveness, as highlighted by Guiaselon et al. [9].

Table 7.1 Profile of the Teacher Respondents Teaching Media and Information Literacy

School	Teacher	Number of Years Teaching	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree
1	1	14	BS Information Technology	Master in Information Systems
	2	7	BS Information Technology with CPE units	None
2	1	4	BSIT-RAC	None
	2	10	BS Industrial Technology Major in Electricity	None
3	1	6	BSED-CP English| BS Mass Communication	MAED-English
	2	10	Bachelor of Secondary Education Major in Social Studies	30 Units - MA History
4	1	3	Bachelor of Science in Information Technology	None
5	1	9	BS Computer Education	Master in Vocational Education:30 Units
	2	6	BSED - TLE	None
6	1	21	BS Computer Education	Master of Arts in Mathematics Teaching (CAR), MA Educational Administration and Supervision (36 units on going)
	2	9	BSCS	MSIT - 12units, MaEd Admin & Supervision (12units)

The teacher respondents handling Media and Information Literacy (MIL) reflect a diverse profile in terms of teaching experience, undergraduate preparation, and pursuit of graduate studies. Their teaching experience ranges from 3 years to 21 years, suggesting a mix of novice and seasoned educators. This diversity indicates the presence of both fresh perspectives from relatively new teachers and accumulated expertise from more experienced ones, which may affect their pedagogical practices and classroom strategies. Literature consistently suggests that years of teaching experience often influence instructional effectiveness and student performance, as experienced teachers tend to demonstrate more refined classroom management and adaptability [24]; [29].

In terms of academic qualifications, a significant number of teachers hold undergraduate degrees in Information Technology, Computer Education, and Industrial Technology, which provide a strong technical foundation aligned with MIL's digital and media-related content. Others hold BSED degrees in English, Social Studies, and TLE, reflecting a teaching-oriented preparation but not necessarily a direct specialization in media and information literacy. This

mismatch between teacher specialization and the MIL subject may affect instructional quality, as previous research highlights that teachers' field of specialization significantly predicts student achievement in subject-specific standardized assessments [9]; [25].

Regarding graduate education, the profile shows variation in professional advancement. Some teachers have completed or are currently pursuing Master's degrees in Information Systems, Mathematics Teaching, Educational Administration, and Vocational Education, while others have only earned units or have not pursued postgraduate studies. The presence of advanced studies among some teachers demonstrates a commitment to continuous professional development (CPD), which is often associated with enhanced content mastery, pedagogical competence, and improved student learning outcomes [26]; [1]. However, disparities in postgraduate engagement may contribute to inconsistencies in instructional delivery across schools.

Table 8.1 Association Between the Teacher's Number of Years Teaching and NAT Overall MPS

NAT Overall MPS vs Number of Years Teaching	Method	Correlation	p-value	Interpretation
Language and Communication	Spearman	-0.698	0.123	Moderate Negative, Not Significant
Media and Information Literacy	Spearman	-0.560	0.073	Moderate Negative, Not Significant

*Adapted from Calmorin

An r ± 0.00 denotes zero correlation.

An r from 0.01 to ± 0.20 deals on negligible correlation

An r from ± 0.21 to ± 0.40 denotes low or slight relationship.

An r from ± 0.41 to ± 0.70 indicates marked or moderate correlation.

An r from ± 0.71 to ± 0.90 shows high relationship.

An r from ± 0.91 to ± 0.99 denotes very high correlation.

An r ±1.0 indicates perfect relationship.

The results in Table 8 reveal that the number of years of teaching experience of instructors does not show a significant association with the students' NAT Overall Mean Percentage Score (MPS) in both subject areas. Specifically, Language and Communication (ρ = -0.698, p = 0.123) and Media and Information Literacy (ρ = -0.560, p = 0.073) indicate moderate negative correlations, but both are not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This suggests that longer teaching experience does not automatically translate into improved NAT performance outcomes among students.

These findings align with previous studies highlighting that teacher qualifications and specialization often have a stronger influence on student achievement than mere years of service. For instance, Guiaselon et al. [9] found that mismatch between teachers' specialization and assigned subjects negatively affects NAT results, while Obeka [25] and Laghari et al. [26] emphasized that academic preparation and field alignment are more critical determinants of performance than tenure alone. Similarly, Geoffrey et al. [28] and Yasin [23] reported that while teaching experience contributes to pedagogical maturity, its effect diminishes without continuous professional development and alignment with subject expertise.

The results further support the argument that quality teaching is shaped not only by experience but also by ongoing professional learning. Continuous professional education and targeted training in subject pedagogy, particularly in Language and Media Literacy, may be necessary to enhance student performance [1]; [11]. Hence, schools should not only value years of service but also strengthen teacher upskilling programs to ensure relevance and effectiveness in handling NAT-tested competencies.

Table 9.1 Association Between the Teacher's Master's Degree and NAT Overall MPS in Terms of Language and Communication

Master's Degree	High	Low
None	0	2
With MAED (Units)	1	3

The chi-square test revealed no significant association between teacher qualification (with or without MAED) and student NAT performance ($\chi^2 = 0.000$, p = 1.000). This result implies that the level of teacher qualification, in terms of graduate studies, did not have a measurable effect on learners' performance in the National Achievement Test. The finding suggests that other factors beyond teacher qualification may play a more critical role in influencing student achievement.

This aligns with prior studies indicating that while teacher qualification is often assumed to directly impact student performance, its influence is not always statistically significant when other determinants such as teaching strategies, instructional alignment, and classroom environment are considered [27]; [26]. Similarly, Bolarinwa et al. [24] emphasized that qualifications alone do not automatically translate into improved learning outcomes without corresponding pedagogical competence and contextualized teaching.

On the other hand, studies such as Geoffrey et al. [28] and Obeka [25] have highlighted that teacher quality, including professional training and subject-matter expertise, may still indirectly influence student achievement when combined with factors like teaching experience and instructional delivery. This suggests that the absence of a significant statistical relationship in the present study should not diminish the importance of teacher qualifications, but rather highlight the need for a more holistic approach in addressing NAT performance gaps, considering both teacher-related and learner-related variables.

Table 9.2 Association Between the Teacher's Master's Degree and NAT Overall MPS in Terms of Media and Information Literacy

Master's Degree	High	Low
None	1	4
With MAED (Units)	0	6

The results reveal no significant association between teachers' attainment of a Master's degree and the students' NAT Overall MPS in Media and Information Literacy (χ^2 = 0.009, p = 0.924). While one group of teachers without graduate studies showed a single "high" performance category, the general trend indicates that whether or not a teacher pursued a Master's degree does not significantly affect NAT results.

This aligns with prior studies emphasizing that teacher qualification alone does not automatically translate to improved learner outcomes unless coupled with relevant specialization, pedagogy, and contextual factors such as resources and student readiness [9]; [13]. Moreover, studies have shown that mismatches between qualifications and subject assignments may dilute the benefits of higher education [9], and structural issues in standardized testing may limit the measurable impact of advanced degrees on NAT scores [3].

Thus, while professional development through graduate studies remains important [10], the findings suggest that its direct influence on standardized test outcomes like NAT in Media and Information Literacy may be marginal without addressing broader instructional and systemic challenges [4]; [12].

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the relationship between academic achievement, teacher qualification, and National Achievement Test (NAT) performance in Language and Communication and Media and Information Literacy among public senior high schools in Dumaguete City Division. The findings revealed that although students' classroom academic performance was generally rated as "Very Satisfactory" to "Outstanding," their NAT results remained within the "Low Proficient" level. This discrepancy underscores a persistent gap between school-based assessments and standardized test outcomes, suggesting that classroom grading may not adequately measure the higher-order skills assessed by the NAT.

The correlation analysis further showed weak to moderate but statistically non-significant relationships between academic achievement and NAT scores across domains of Problem Solving, Information Literacy, and Critical Thinking. While tendencies were observed, the results indicate that strong academic performance does not consistently translate into proficiency in standardized assessments. This highlights the need to strengthen classroom practices that intentionally foster analytical reasoning, problem-solving, and evaluative skills.

Moreover, the results on teacher profiles indicated that years of teaching experience and attainment of a Master's degree did not demonstrate significant associations with NAT performance. This suggests that qualifications and tenure, while important, are not sole determinants of improved student outcomes. Instead, the alignment of teacher specialization with the subjects handled, combined with effective pedagogical approaches, appears more critical in shaping student performance in nationally benchmarked assessments.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to improve academic performance and National Achievement Test (NAT) outcomes in Language and Communication and Media and Information Literacy among public senior high schools in Dumaguete City Division:

Strengthen Instructional Practices. Teachers should adopt learner-centered and output-based strategies such as project-based learning, inquiry-driven approaches, and performance-oriented tasks that explicitly develop problem solving, information literacy, and critical thinking. These approaches can better align classroom learning with the higher-order skills assessed by the NAT.

Enhance Teacher Professional Development. Continuous training and capacity-building programs should be provided, focusing on pedagogy for Language and Communication and Media and Information Literacy. Emphasis should be given to the integration of critical thinking, analytical reasoning, and digital literacy into daily instruction.

Align Teacher Specialization with Subject Assignments. School administrators should ensure that teachers handling Language and Communication and MIL subjects have appropriate academic preparation and specialization. Mismatches between qualifications and subjects taught should be minimized to optimize instructional quality and student learning outcomes.

Review and Strengthen Assessment Practices. Classroom-based assessments should be recalibrated to measure higher-order cognitive skills in line with NAT standards. This can be achieved by integrating performance tasks, authentic assessments, and standardized test simulations to prepare students for national benchmarks.

Promote Resource and Support Interventions. Schools with lower proficiency levels should be provided with targeted interventions such as remedial classes, mentoring programs, and access to learning materials that emphasize critical and analytical skills. Division-level initiatives may also support schools with weaker performance through technical assistance and instructional monitoring.

Encourage Graduate Studies and Continuing Education. While results showed no direct statistical link between attainment of graduate degrees and NAT outcomes, teachers are still encouraged to pursue advanced studies and continuing professional education. These opportunities can broaden pedagogical knowledge and enhance subject-matter expertise, indirectly contributing to improved student performance.

Engage Stakeholders in Collaborative Efforts. Policymakers, administrators, teachers, and parents should work collaboratively to address the persistent gaps between academic performance and NAT proficiency. This includes formulating policies that support teacher specialization, implementing evidence-based school improvement programs, and fostering a culture of academic excellence across schools.

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