

## VARYING INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES: FOSTERING STUDENT POSITIVE ATTITUDE ACROSS LEARNING AREAS

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### ABSTRACT

The study examined the challenges faced by Araling Panlipunan teachers in varying their instructional strategy to foster student positive attitude towards the subject. This study employed a phenomenological research design which aims to determine the experiences and perceptions of the eight (8) participants. The emerging themes under the challenges faced by the Araling Panlipunan teachers were time constraint, limited learning resources, and limited teacher training. Meanwhile, the emerging themes on the coping ways of the Araling Panlipunan teachers on the challenges they faced encompassed prioritizing topics, leveraging technology, emphasizing key skills, and collaborating with colleagues. Lastly, the emerging themes on the educational management insights drawn from the experiences of Araling Panlipunan included time management skills, flexibility in lesson planning, and active learning experiences. By incorporating these themes, educational administrators can support Araling Panlipunan teachers in their efforts to improve their proficiency in using diverse instructional strategies to cultivate a positive attitude among students towards the subject. These themes provide insights into effective educational policies, teacher training programs, and classroom practices that can enhance teachers' abilities, consequently influencing students' behavior and attitudes towards Araling Panlipunan. Moreover, the results generated provided comprehensive data in conducting future research with similar scope. This study may be published in a reputable research journal.

**Keywords:** varying, instructional strategies, positive attitude, challenges, coping, Davao Occidental

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The Araling Panlipunan curriculum was a social study founded on the Education for All 2015 and K-12 Philippine Basic Education Curriculum Framework aspirations. These sought to develop learners who were functionally literate and developed Filipinos with 21st-century skills. In general, the Social Studies Curriculum sought to cultivate citizens who are analytical, evaluative, responsible, productive, environmentally conscious, patriotic, and humane and who had a global perspective and set of values regarding historical and social issues.

Students' attitude towards school learning areas (e.g. social studies) were measured based on their academic performance. Students whose performance were low, lack positive attitude towards such subject and do not show interest in the subject (Sivrikaya, 2019). Similarly, some studies (Lawson, 2003; Selen, 2016; Miller, 2016; Ilgaz, 2018) linked poor academic performance of students to their poor attitude towards the subject.

Positive attitude was a crucial topic in education since it resulted in motivating outcomes. Students were more willing to achieve certain academic goals because they were more receptive to learning and have a greater interest in the subject. However, social studies teachers around the world have observed a negative attitude among some students toward the subject, which has resulted in poor academic performance. In United States, McCoach & Siegle (2003) noted that in state-funded, tax supported preschool and elementary grade levels classroom, social studies education is subordinate to learning in reading, writing, and arithmetic in the eyes of students, so social studies education is not a priority for them. Even the teachers have neglected social studies instruction because they devote more time to reading, writing, and arithmetic than to social studies. Recently, the American education department has advocated social studies in preschool and elementary school through the study of history, geography, and citizenship, as reported by Jimms (2010).

In Nigeria, Turhan (2017) reported that Nigerian elementary students have poor attitude towards the study of social studies, and this was evident on students' low academic performance in the subject. Social studies was a dull subject for the students. They are sick of hearing about the British colonization of their country. As the country was no longer a colony, the students reported that they are unable to relate to it or find it useful. King & He (2017) alleged that it was an unsatisfactory state of affairs and imbalance in the Nigerian educational sector in particular and the nation's development in general. Authorities began to recognize the significance of enhancing teachers' subject-matter expertise. Teachers were given seminars and trainings to enhance the delivery of the lesson, making the subject more useful and pertinent to the students.

Meanwhile, in the Philippines, students frequently were not positive about their Araling Panlipunan (Social Studies) subject experiences. Even more alarming were studies showing that students do not feel Araling Panlipunan as a

particularly valuable or interesting part of the school curriculum (Jimenez, 2018). It was clear that if Araling Panlipunan is recognized by Filipino students as not being important and interesting, then learning Araling Panlipunan won't be inviting for them and they have no reasons to get involve and participate in the classroom discussions.

In the research locale, Malita West District in Davao Occidental, the researcher found out the low proficiency level of students in Araling Panlipunan. For the students, they found the subject content boring, citing that the information is too far removed from their experiences, too detailed, or too repetitious. These reasons highlight the challenges of Araling Panlipunan teachers in varying their instruction to provide students with more opportunities to develop a positive attitude toward the subject and enable them to take the initiative and succeed.

Jose P. Rizal said that youth is the future of the fatherland. It is absolutely necessary for every young generation to have a robust feeling of nationalism in order for them to be successful builders of our future state. The youth should possess sufficient patriotism to live up to the expectations placed on them as the future hope of the fatherland. This study is anchored to the Social Learning Theory of Bandura (1977). The theory supports Araling Panlipunan teachers to vary their instructional strategies. Students learn by observing and imitating others. By varying instructions, students can observe different learning techniques and attitudes from their teachers and students that they could use in learning Araling Panlipunan. Teaching Araling Panlipunan requires teachers and students to model learning to others, observe and reflect, work with others, apply Araling Panlipunan concepts and skills in real-world contexts such as community service, projects, simulations, and field trips. The theory can be a powerful tool for teaching Araling Panlipunan by helping students develop a deeper understanding of social issues, gain empathy and respect for others, and develop the social skills needed to be effective citizens and community members.

#### Challenges of Araling Panlipunan Teachers in Varying Instructional Strategies for Students' Positive Attitude

Araling Panlipunan (Social Studies) may encounter several challenges when using varied instructional strategies in the lesson.

**Time constraint.** The majority of the time, it is expected of Araling Panlipunan (Social Studies) teachers to cover a diverse range of topics within a constrained period of class time. Because of this, it may be difficult to execute instructional strategies that are more in-depth or require more time. For Elna & Bendic (2018), the lack of available time is a common challenge faced by teachers of social studies. The subject of social studies encompasses a broad range of topics, some of which are history, geography, economics, and civics, amongst others. As a result, teachers are tasked with covering a substantial amount of content within a constrained amount of time. Davis (2012) suggested to Social Studies teachers to prioritize content rather than trying to cover everything; use a thematic approach in teaching; use technology and media; incorporate current events; use time saving strategies such as setting time limits for activities or breaking larger tasks into smaller, manageable chunks. By using these strategies, Social Studies Teachers can make the most of their limited time and create a more engaging and effective learning experience for their students.

**Limited local resources.** Social studies teachers may have limited local resources, which can make it challenging to implement certain teaching strategies. For Vestil (2010), a disadvantage of teaching with limited local resources is that teachers can be tempted to surrender to 'plain talk'. Too much teacher talking time prevents interaction, causes boredom and the longer you spend talking to students the less time they have to process the information and understand it. For Drina (2009), limited access to local resources disengages students because they cannot relate well to the lesson.

**Assessment and accountability.** It can be difficult for Araling Panlipunan teachers to employ a variety of teaching strategies because they are required to assess student learning and meet accountability standards. These requirements might make it more difficult for teachers to adopt teaching methods that are less traditional or more difficult to evaluate. Rodka (2011) also noted that in using varied instructional strategies, Araling Panlipunan teachers have to work extra hard to plan and prepare assessment tools for the lesson. In addition to this, he observed that the teachers lacked experience in assessment in a specific teaching method, which added to the difficulty of the tasks.

**Large class size.** For Guilervo (2009), some instructional strategies, such as inquiry-based learning or cooperative learning, which may demand more individual attention and interaction, might be difficult for teachers to apply in classrooms with large numbers of students. This can be a challenge for educators. Xi (2007) expressed that large class size can lead to chaotic classroom environment that is more difficult for the teacher to manage. The increased number of students leads to a greater likelihood of disruptive behavior and conflicts among students.

Teacher training. Erid (2003) claimed that It is possible that not all teachers of Social Studies have had training or experience in the implementation of a variety of teaching tactics, which can make it difficult to employ these strategies effectively in the classroom. In the research article of Meziobi (2012), it was found out that Social Studies teachers are not sufficiently exposed in trainings compared to the teachers teaching language, Mathematics, and Science. The lack of training and experience of Social Studies teachers can be a significant challenge, especially those who are new to the profession or who have not had extensive coursework in Social Studies. The disadvantage of teacher lack of training in social studies is that it can negatively impact student learning outcomes. Social studies is a complex subject that requires a deep understanding of historical events, cultural norms, and societal structures. When teachers lack the necessary training in social studies, they may struggle to provide their students with a comprehensive understanding of the subject.

#### Coping Ways of Araling Panlipunan Teachers in Varying Instructional Strategies for Students' Positive Attitude

When faced with challenges, Araling Panlipunan teachers use a variety of coping ways to ensure that they are able to cover the necessary lesson and still engage their students effectively. Researchers revealed some coping ways of the Araling Panlipunan Teachers.

**Prioritizing topics.** It is important for Araling Panlipunan teachers to identify the most important topics and focus on teaching those first. By doing so, they can assure that they implemented the instructional strategy effectively and that students have a solid understanding of the most crucial concepts even if they do not have time to cover every topic in-depth. Martinez (2011) emphasized that Araling Panlipunan teachers often have a limited amount of time to cover a wide range of topics. Prioritizing concepts ensures that teachers can focus on the most essential topics, ensuring that students have a solid understanding of the most crucial concepts even if they do not have time to cover every topic in-depth. Sison (2012) also explained that prioritizing concepts allows for a deeper understanding of the most important topics. When students have a deeper understanding of key concepts, they are better able to connect the dots between different ideas and better comprehend the overall theme of the course.

**Using technology.** Technology can help teachers maximize the time of Araling Panlipunan teachers in the classroom. For example, teachers can use online resources, such as videos and interactive activities, to help students learn the lesson more quickly and effectively. Yiang (2011) revealed in his study that the use of technology in Social Studies can bring several benefits to both teachers and students. Radko (2013) discussed that technology can be used to create interactive and multimedia-rich lessons, which can help to increase students' engagement in the learning process. By incorporating videos, animations, and other interactive media, teachers can create more dynamic and engaging lessons that capture students' attention. Further, Smith (2008) stated that technology can be used by Social Studies teachers to personalize learning experiences for individual students, based on their interests and learning styles. This can Social Science teachers to incorporate varied teaching styles in the lesson based on the interests and learning styles of the students. This can also help to create a more student- centered approach to Social Studies education, where students can work at their own pace and focus on topics that interest them.

**Emphasizing key skills.** Instead of focusing solely on content, Araling Panlipunan teachers can prioritize instructional strategies that emphasize key skills that will help students succeed in all areas of their learning. Castro (2008) stated that Araling Panlipunan subject involves teaching a wide range of topics and concepts, but it is also important to emphasize key skills that will benefit students in their academic and personal lives. Marbon (2014) named the key skills in Social Studies which are critical thinking, research skills, communication skills, collaboration skills, and empathy. By emphasizing these key skills using the instructional strategy, teachers can help students develop the skills they need to succeed in school, work, and life.

**Collaborating with Colleagues.** Working with other Araling Panlipunan teachers can be beneficial when time is limited. By sharing ideas and resources, the teachers can ensure that they are covering the necessary material in a streamlined and efficient manner. Ked (2003) stated that collaborating with colleagues for varying instructional strategies in Social Studies can be a powerful tool for improving teaching practices and enhancing student learning. Diaz (2011) further explained that sharing resources is one of the most straightforward ways to collaborate with colleagues. Sharing resources such as lesson plans, activities, and assessments can be beneficial for teachers. This can help teachers save time and gain inspiration from each other's ideas, while also promoting consistency across classrooms. Moreover, Raffal (2004) discussed that collaborating with colleagues to co-plan lessons and units can help Araling Panlipunan teachers to design more engaging and effective instructional strategies. By working together to identify learning goals, plan activities, and develop assessments, Araling Panlipunan teachers can benefit from each other's expertise and creativity.

### Theoretical Lens

This study is framed in line with the Multiple Intelligence Theory of Gardner (1983). The theory suggests teachers to vary their instructional strategies to cater to the different types of students' intelligence including linguistic, logical-mathematical, musical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. Araling Panlipunan teachers can use this theory to develop instructional strategies to help students learn effectively.

Further, this study is anchored to the Social Learning Theory of Bandura (1977). The theory supports Araling Panlipunan teachers to vary their instructional strategies. Students learn by observing and imitating others. By varying instructions, students can observe different learning techniques and attitudes from their teachers and students that they could use in learning Araling Panlipunan. Teaching Araling Panlipunan requires teachers and students to model learning to others, observe and reflect, work with others, apply Araling Panlipunan concepts and skills in real-world contexts such as community service, projects, simulations, and field trips. The theory can be a powerful tool for teaching Araling Panlipunan by helping students develop a deeper understanding of social issues, gain empathy and respect for others, and develop the social skills needed to be effective citizens and community members.

Another theory that supports this study is the Cognitive Load Theory of Sweller (1988). The theory suggests that students have limited working memory capacity and can become overloaded with too much information, leading to decreased learning and retention, and negative attitude towards the topic or lesson. In the context of teaching and learning in Araling Panlipunan, teachers can reduce extraneous cognitive load by presenting information in a clear, concise, and organized manner. For example, teachers can use graphic organizers, summaries, and visual aids to help students understand the main ideas and relationships between concepts. This produces a positive attitude of the students in Araling Panlipunan. They will not be bored and overloaded with dates, people, and events in the subject. Teachers can balance cognitive load by considering the complexity and novelty of the lesson, the prior knowledge and skills of the students, and the learning objectives of the lesson. For example, the Araling Panlipunan teachers can adjust the level of challenges and support provided to students based on their individual needs and learning styles.

The Behaviorist Theory of Skinner (1924) also relates in this study. Behaviorist theory emphasizes the importance of observable behavior and external factors such as rewards and punishment in shaping and reinforcing learning. While this theory is often associated with the field of psychology, it can also be applied to Social Studies education. In teaching Araling Panlipunan, teachers have to teach students social skills, such as cooperation, communication, and conflict resolution, because the subject contains vast information and details that the students should master. Teachers can use modeling and role-playing to demonstrate appropriate behaviors and provide feedback and reinforcement to help students develop these skills.

Lastly, the Self-Determination Theory Deci & Ryan (1985) supports this study. The theory suggests that students are motivated by three innate psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. In the context of Araling Panlipunan, this theory can be applied by providing autonomy support to the students. This can be done by giving students choices and opportunities to make decisions about their learning. For example, teachers allow students to choose the topics or projects they want to study or provide opportunities for student-led discussions and debates. Further, Araling Panlipunan teachers can build relatedness by creating a positive and supportive classroom climate. For example, teachers can foster a sense of community and belonging by promoting collaboration and teamwork, encouraging respectful communication, and recognizing students' strengths and contributions. Moreover, the Araling Panlipunan teachers could also build relatedness of the lesson to current events or to prior knowledge. This increases the motivation and positive attitude of the students in the subject.

The conceptual framework of the study is presented in figure 1. Based on the figure, there are three interconnected variables. These variables are the (1) challenges faced by Araling Panlipunan teachers in varying instructional strategy to foster student positive attitude towards the subject, (2) coping ways of Araling Panlipunan teachers in varying instructional strategy to foster student positive attitude towards the subject, (3) educational management insights gained from the challenges of the Araling Panlipunan Teachers.

## 2. METHODS

Methodology is creative and responsive approach to understand questions and subject matter while method refers to the exact knowledge and procedure (Gerodias, 2013). In this study, the lived perspectives of Araling Panlipunan teachers in varying their instructional strategies to foster a positive student attitude toward the subject, were explored, particularly those Araling Panlipunan teachers from Malita West District, Division of Davao Occidental.

The researcher's drive in knowing the deeper meaning of their experiences became the basis for doing qualitative research, a means of which is considered helpful in looking for "meanings and motivations that underline cultural



symbols, personal experiences and phenomena”. By using phenomenology, this need was hoped to be addressed by bringing the stories of the Araling Panlipunan teachers in a manner that, as David (2005) wrote, the themes, symbols and meaning of the experiences were presented. Phenomenological research was based on two premises. The first was that experience is a valid, rich and rewarding source of knowledge; this experience is a source of knowledge and shapes one’s behavior.

From the definition, human experience was viewed as a cornerstone of knowledge about human phenomena and not as an unreliable source. The second premise of phenomenological research laid in the view that the everyday world is a valuable and productive source of knowledge, and that we can learn much about ourselves and reap key insights into the nature of an event by analyzing how it occurs in our daily lives (Morrissey & Higgs, 2006).

By doing phenomenology which concerns with that “what” and the “how” (Moustakas, 1995), the researcher projected that the subjective experiences, challenges and coping mechanisms of the Araling Panlipunan teachers were explored and insights were drawn as basis for the possible future researches and policy analysis in relation to this research.

### 3. RESULTS

The participants of this study were the 8 Araling Panlipunan teachers at elementary schools in Malita West District, Division of Davao Occidental. The participants were chosen based on the following criteria: (1) must be in the present position for at least 5 years- regardless of their age, sex and marital status; (2) must be teaching Araling Panlipunan for at least 5 years; and (3) must have at least very satisfactory rating in their IPCRF.

The researcher utilized the purposive sampling design since the participants were chosen based on the criteria or purpose of the study (Creswell, 2014). It was also known as judgmental, selective or subjective sampling. The selection of the participants was purposefully done to ensure that the findings were authentic (Marshall, 1996).

#### Research Instrument

In gathering data, the researcher utilized an in-depth interview questionnaire. The researcher developed the interview questionnaire and answered by the participants orally. These researcher-made interview questionnaire developed upon consultation and validation by the experts and undergone several processes to accommodate their suggestions. The components validated include the language and the conceptual levels of questions if suited to the participants’ level of understanding, the suitability of the items to the research design in which there should be no leading questions, and the alignment of the interview questions to the objective of the study.

#### Role of the Researcher

The researcher had a responsibility to uncover, transfer and exploit knowledge for the benefit of educational institutions. To do so, the researcher took up the following roles in the course of the study:

Facilitator and Promoter of Unbiased Research. The researcher conducted interviews to the participants and guided them in the process. The researcher interpreted ideas and responded base on existing literatures and related studies and not on researcher’s own knowledge, thoughts and feelings to avoid the intrusion of bias.

Expert in qualitative method. The researcher implemented the qualitative method correctly. To do so, the researcher assessed himself and sought help from the research adviser and other research professionals.

### 4. DISCUSSIONS

In this study, thematic analysis was utilized to analyze the gathered data. The researcher analyzed the answers of the participants from the conducted interviews with the use of Creswell’s Model specifically the identifying of themes approach. According to Creswell (2012) themes in qualitative research were similar codes aggregated together to form a major idea in the database.

Familiarization with the data was common to all forms of qualitative analysis, the researcher immersed herself in, and became intimately familiar with, their data; reading and re-reading the data and noting any initial analytic observations.

Coding was also a common element of many approaches to qualitative analysis, involved generating pithy labels for important features of the data of relevance to the (broad) research question guiding the analysis. Coding was not simply a method of data reduction; it was also an analytic process, so codes captured both a semantic and conceptual reading of the data. The researcher coded every data item and ended this phase by collating all their codes and relevant data extracts.

Searching for themes was coherent and meaningful pattern in the data relevant to the research question. The researcher ended this phase by collating all the coded data relevant to each theme.

Reviewing themes. The researcher reflected on whether the themes tell a convincing and compelling story about the data, and began to define the nature of each individual theme, and the relationship between the themes. Defining and naming themes: The researcher prepared a detailed analysis of each theme identifying the ‘essence’ of each theme and constructing a concise, punchy and informative name for each theme.

Writing-up involved weaving together the analytic narrative and data extracts to tell the reader a coherent and persuasive story about the data, and contextualizing it in relation to existing literature. The researcher made sure that the perspectives of Araling Panlipunan teachers in varying their instructional strategies to foster a positive student attitude toward the subject were presented comprehensively.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

Cooperative activities in Araling Panlipunan aim to enhance critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving skills. The activities often involve dividing students into groups, assigning roles, and providing instructions. The participant acknowledged that due to the constraints of limited time, it becomes challenging to accomplish the mentioned task.

According to the participants, this challenge has a detrimental impact on students' academic performance.

“...The students' interest fails to ignite or be stimulated.” (P1)

“...The limited time in Araling Panlipunan often means I have to sacrifice effective teaching strategies. It's unfortunate because these strategies foster engagement, critical thinking, and deeper understanding to students.” (P3)

“...I've noticed that the time constraints impact students' ability to fully comprehend and engage with the social studies content.” (P6)

The participants suggested that due to time limitations, it becomes a continuous challenge to find a balance between adequately covering the curriculum and fostering genuine student engagement and comprehension. The hurried pace allows little opportunity for deep exploration, critical thinking, and the development of a thorough understanding of the subject matter.

The concerns expressed by the participants align with findings from various studies. Spring & Hill (2019) found out that the rushed nature of our social studies lessons due to time limitations impedes student engagement and comprehension. With time limitations, teachers do not longer prioritize breadth and depth because they are pressured by the coverage and time frame of the curriculum. This results in students feeling overwhelmed and unable to fully grasp the complexities of the topics we cover. Picciano (2009) also found out that if only one or a limited number of strategies are employed due to time constraints in the subject area, students who do not resonate with those specific approaches may have difficulty comprehending the material, leading to lower academic achievement. McGee and Reis (2012) provided support for the concepts that were mentioned. According to them, when teaching strategies remain stagnant, students with different learning preferences may struggle to fully grasp and connect with the content, leading to poor academic performance.

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