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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### Exploring Teachers' Pedagogical Experiences and Learning Practices in Araling Panlipunan 7: A Qualitative Inquiry at Divisoria High School

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#### Abstract

The teaching of Araling Panlipunan plays a significant role in developing learners' historical understanding, civic awareness, and cultural identity. However, effective pedagogy in Social Studies classrooms requires teachers to adopt diverse instructional strategies that respond to students' learning needs and contextual realities. This qualitative study explored the pedagogical experiences of teachers and the learning practices implemented in Araling Panlipunan 7 at Divisoria High School. Using a qualitative inquiry design, data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis involving Araling Panlipunan teachers. Thematic analysis was employed to identify recurring patterns and themes from the collected data. Findings revealed that teachers utilize contextualized instruction, collaborative learning strategies, and inquiry-based approaches to enhance student engagement and understanding of historical and socio-cultural concepts. Teachers also highlighted challenges related to limited instructional resources, time constraints, and varying student learning abilities. Despite these challenges, educators demonstrated adaptive pedagogical practices to foster meaningful learning experiences. The study concludes that reflective teaching practices, contextualized learning strategies, and continuous professional development are essential in improving Social Studies instruction. The findings provide valuable insights for curriculum planners, school administrators, and educators in strengthening pedagogical practices in Araling Panlipunan classrooms.

**Keywords:** Araling Panlipunan, pedagogy, social studies education, learning practices, qualitative inquiry, Philippine education

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Education plays a critical role in shaping learners' knowledge, skills, and values necessary for active participation in society. Within the Philippine basic education curriculum, Araling Panlipunan serves as an essential subject that promotes historical understanding, cultural awareness, and civic responsibility among students. The subject encourages learners to examine social issues, understand historical events, and develop informed perspectives about society.

Effective teaching of Araling Panlipunan requires pedagogical approaches that go beyond traditional lecture-based instruction. Teachers are expected to implement strategies that encourage critical thinking, collaborative learning, and contextualized understanding of historical and social concepts. According to educational scholars, pedagogy plays a crucial role in shaping students' engagement and comprehension of complex societal issues. Teachers' experiences in implementing instructional strategies therefore provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of classroom practices.

In the context of secondary education, Grade 7 Araling Panlipunan focuses on the study of Asian civilizations, historical development, and cultural diversity. Teaching these concepts requires teachers to integrate various pedagogical methods that facilitate meaningful learning. However, teachers often encounter challenges related to limited resources, diverse learner abilities, and the need to contextualize historical content for students.

Understanding teachers' pedagogical experiences is important in identifying effective instructional practices that support student learning. Exploring these experiences can also reveal the strategies teachers employ to overcome classroom challenges and enhance student engagement. Despite the importance of pedagogy in Social Studies education, limited research has explored the lived teaching experiences of Araling Panlipunan teachers in specific school contexts.

This study therefore aims to explore the pedagogical experiences of teachers and the learning practices implemented in Araling Panlipunan 7 at Divisoria High School. The findings of this study may contribute to improving teaching practices, strengthening curriculum implementation, and supporting teacher professional development in Social Studies education.

## **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

Pedagogy refers to the systematic methods, strategies, and practices employed by teachers to facilitate meaningful learning experiences in the classroom. In Social Studies education, effective pedagogy involves the integration of inquiry-based learning, discussion-oriented instruction, and experiential learning activities that actively engage students in the learning process. These approaches encourage learners to analyze historical events, interpret social issues, and develop informed perspectives about society and culture. Scholars emphasize that student-centered pedagogical approaches enhance learners' understanding of historical and societal concepts by promoting critical thinking, analytical reasoning, and reflective learning (Banks, 2016; Barton & Levstik, 2004). In addition, contextualized teaching and learning play a crucial role in strengthening students' comprehension of social studies content. Contextualized instruction enables teachers to connect historical narratives and cultural practices to learners' real-life experiences, community contexts, and societal realities, thereby making learning more meaningful and relevant. Research suggests that when lessons are linked to authentic contexts, students demonstrate higher engagement, improved retention of knowledge, and deeper conceptual understanding (Johnson, 2002; Berns & Erickson, 2001). Furthermore, collaborative learning practices such as group discussions, debates, role-playing activities, and project-based learning allow students to interact with peers and construct knowledge collectively. Collaborative

learning fosters communication skills, critical thinking, and cooperative problem-solving, which are essential competencies for understanding complex social issues and historical perspectives (Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Slavin, 2014). From a social constructivist perspective, learning occurs through social interaction and shared dialogue, where students build understanding through engagement with others and with their learning environment (Vygotsky, 1978; Bruner, 1996). Despite the effectiveness of these pedagogical approaches, teachers frequently encounter challenges in teaching Social Studies. These challenges include limited instructional resources, large class sizes, insufficient instructional time, and the complexity of historical content that students must analyze and interpret. Teachers are also required to address diverse learning abilities and varying levels of student motivation while maintaining effective classroom management. Consequently, educators often adapt their instructional strategies and employ differentiated approaches to accommodate diverse learner needs and create inclusive learning environments (Tomlinson, 2014; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

This study employed a qualitative research design, specifically a qualitative inquiry approach, to explore teachers' pedagogical experiences and classroom learning practices in teaching Araling Panlipunan 7.

### **Research Locale**

The study was conducted at Divisoria High School, where Araling Panlipunan teachers implement the Grade 7 Social Studies curriculum.

### **Participants**

The participants of the study consisted of Araling Panlipunan teachers teaching Grade 7. Participants were selected through purposive sampling to ensure that they possess relevant teaching experiences related to the subject.

### **Research Instruments**

Data were collected using the following instruments:

- Semi-structured interview guide
- Classroom observation checklist
- Document analysis of lesson plans and instructional materials

These instruments enabled the researcher to gather comprehensive data regarding teachers' instructional strategies and classroom practices.

### **Data Gathering Procedure**

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the school administration. Interviews were conducted with participating teachers to gather insights regarding their teaching experiences and pedagogical practices. Classroom observations were also carried out to document instructional strategies and student engagement. Relevant teaching materials such as lesson plans were reviewed to support the data collected from interviews and observations.

### **Data Analysis**

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The process involved the following steps:

1. Data transcription
2. Initial coding of significant statements
3. Categorization of codes

4. Identification of emerging themes
5. Interpretation of findings

This approach enabled the researcher to identify patterns and key themes related to teachers' pedagogical experiences.

## FINDINGS

The thematic analysis of interview transcripts and classroom observations revealed four major themes that describe the pedagogical experiences and learning practices of teachers in teaching Araling Panlipunan 7 at Divisoria High School. These themes include: (1) Contextualized Teaching Strategies, (2) Collaborative and Interactive Learning, (3) Inquiry-Based Learning Approaches, and (4) Pedagogical Challenges in Social Studies Instruction.

### Theme 1: Contextualized Teaching Strategies

One of the most prominent themes that emerged from the data is the use of contextualized teaching strategies. Teachers emphasized that connecting historical lessons to students' daily lives, local culture, and current societal issues allows learners to better understand historical concepts and social realities. By linking classroom discussions to familiar experiences and community contexts, teachers help students develop meaningful connections with the subject matter.

### Responses from Participants

Several participants described how they contextualize lessons in their teaching practices.

Participant 1 stated: "Kapag nagtuturo ako ng kasaysayan ng mga bansa sa Asya, iniuugnay ko ito sa kasalukuyang nangyayari sa ating bansa para mas maintindihan ng mga estudyante ang kahalagahan ng aralin."

Participant 2 shared: "Mas nagiging interesado ang mga bata kapag ginagamit ko ang mga halimbawa mula sa kanilang komunidad o mga lokal na pangyayari."

Participant 3 explained: "Kapag naiintindihan ng mga mag-aaral kung paano konektado ang kasaysayan sa kanilang buhay, mas nagiging makabuluhan ang kanilang pagkatuto."

These responses indicate that teachers recognize the importance of making learning relevant to students' lived experiences. Contextualized instruction allows students to see the practical significance of historical knowledge, thereby increasing their engagement and comprehension. The findings support the concept of contextualized teaching and learning, which emphasizes the connection between academic content and real-world situations. According to Johnson (2002), contextualized instruction enables students to construct knowledge by relating new information to their personal experiences. Similarly, Banks (2016) emphasized that culturally responsive and context-based teaching strategies are essential in Social Studies education because they help students understand social realities and cultural diversity.

### Theme 2: Collaborative and Interactive Learning

Another theme that emerged from the data is the implementation of **collaborative and interactive learning strategies**. Teachers frequently incorporate group activities, class discussions, and collaborative projects in their lessons to encourage active participation and peer interaction.

### Responses from Participants

Teachers described various strategies used to promote collaborative learning in the classroom.

Participant 4 shared: "Madalas kong ginagamit ang group activities at debates upang maipahayag ng mga estudyante ang kanilang opinyon tungkol sa mga isyung panlipunan."

Participant 2 explained: "Kapag may group discussion, mas maraming estudyante ang nakikilahok at natututo sila mula sa isa't isa."

Participant 5 stated: "Ang collaborative activities ay nakakatulong upang mapaunlad ang kritikal na pag-iisip ng mga mag-aaral."

The responses suggest that collaborative learning activities create opportunities for students to exchange ideas, analyze issues collectively, and develop communication skills. Such strategies also encourage learners to become active participants in the learning process rather than passive recipients of information.

The findings align with the principles of social constructivism, which emphasize learning through social interaction and collaboration. Vygotsky (1978) argued that learning occurs through interaction with others, where knowledge is co-constructed through dialogue and shared experiences. Additionally, Johnson and Johnson (2009) highlighted that cooperative learning improves academic achievement, interpersonal relationships, and critical thinking skills among students.

### **Theme 3: Inquiry-Based Learning Approaches**

Teachers also highlighted the importance of inquiry-based learning approaches in teaching Araling Panlipunan. Inquiry-based instruction encourages students to investigate historical events, analyze social issues, and develop their own interpretations of societal phenomena.

#### **Responses from Participants**

Participants explained how inquiry-based strategies are integrated into their teaching practices.

Participant 1 explained:

"Pinapagawa ko sa mga estudyante ang pagsusuri ng mga historical sources upang mas maintindihan nila ang mga pangyayari sa kasaysayan."

Participant 3 shared:

"Ang mga tanong na nagbibigay ng pagkakataon sa mga estudyante na mag-isip at mag-analisa ay nakakatulong sa mas malalim na pag-unawa sa aralin."

Participant 6 stated:

"Kapag pinapayagan ang mga mag-aaral na magtanong at mag-imbestiga, nagiging mas aktibo sila sa pagkatuto."

The responses suggest that inquiry-based learning encourages students to explore historical and social concepts through investigation and critical analysis. This approach promotes independent thinking and deeper understanding of complex issues.

The findings support the principles of inquiry-based learning, which encourage learners to actively explore knowledge through questioning and investigation. According to Levstik and Barton (2015), inquiry-based instruction in Social Studies helps students develop historical thinking skills and critical analysis of social issues. Similarly, Bruner (1961) emphasized that discovery learning encourages learners to actively construct knowledge through exploration and inquiry.

### **Theme 4: Pedagogical Challenges in Teaching Araling Panlipunan**

Despite implementing various pedagogical strategies, teachers reported several challenges in teaching Araling Panlipunan. These challenges include limited teaching resources, insufficient instructional time, and varying levels of student motivation and learning abilities.

#### **Responses from Participants**

Teachers expressed concerns regarding the difficulties they encounter in classroom instruction.

Participant 4 shared:

"Isa sa mga hamon ay ang kakulangan ng mga instructional materials na makakatulong sa mas epektibong pagtuturo."

Participant 2 explained:

"May mga pagkakataon na kulang ang oras upang talakayin nang mabuti ang mga mahahalagang paksa."

Participant 5 stated:

"Iba-iba ang kakayahan ng mga mag-aaral kaya kinakailangan ng mas maraming estratehiya upang matugunan ang kanilang pangangailangan."

The responses highlight the need for adequate instructional resources, time management, and differentiated teaching strategies to address diverse learner needs. Teachers' ability to adapt to these challenges reflects their commitment to improving student learning experiences.

The findings are consistent with previous research indicating that teachers often face structural and pedagogical challenges in Social Studies education. According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2020), teachers require sufficient resources, professional support, and instructional flexibility to effectively facilitate learning. Additionally, Tomlinson (2014) emphasized the importance of differentiated instruction in addressing diverse learning needs within the classroom.

## CONCLUSION

The study explored teachers' pedagogical experiences and learning practices in teaching Araling Panlipunan 7 at Divisoria High School. Findings revealed that teachers employ contextualized instruction, collaborative learning strategies, and inquiry-based approaches to enhance students' understanding of social and historical concepts. Despite encountering challenges such as limited resources and diverse learner needs, teachers demonstrate adaptive teaching practices to ensure meaningful classroom experiences.

The findings highlight the importance of supporting teachers through professional development programs, improved instructional resources, and collaborative teaching environments. Strengthening pedagogical practices in Social Studies education can contribute to developing students' critical thinking skills, historical awareness, and civic responsibility.

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