TRENDS AND PRACTICES OF ARALING PANLIPUNAN INSTRUCTIONS IN THE SCHOOLS AMIDST COVID-19 PANDEMIC: INPUT FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the implementation of Araling Panlipunan (Social Studies) instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic in schools. The study investigates the demographic profile of participants, teachers' practices, challenges faced in the absence of face-to-face classes, and the solutions adopted by teachers. A descriptive survey method, complemented by frequency analysis, was employed, with the survey tool validated by non-respondent teachers before administration to 106 participants via Google Forms. Interviews and focus group discussions supplemented data collection. Findings indicate a predominantly female respondent group, with teachers primarily utilizing modular distance learning and undergoing relevant training. Learning resources include modules, worksheets, videos, and manuals, while assessment methods comprise formative and summative tests, performance assessments, and portfolios. Common instructional approaches include multimedia usage and problem-solving activities. Challenges include distance barriers, parental involvement, internet connectivity issues, and assessment difficulties. Notwithstanding challenges, teachers implement strategies such as collaboration, parent engagement, communication, Wi-Fi access, simplified activities, feedback provision, and home visits to support learners during the pandemic.

Keywords: instructions, trends and practices, challenges, strategies, specialization, pandemic, new normal, assessment, modular, online kumustahan, learning delivery

INTRODUCTION

The ability to follow instructions is very important in everyday undertakings. In the context of education, following directions or guidelines will give positive results and outcomes. On the contrary, failure to comply with a given rule might affect general learning and the development of expected competencies in learning. Acting based on instructions can also improve performance, such as very satisfactory or outstanding academic ratings and an understanding of the subject matter, and enhance the skills suited to the learners' needs (Dunham et al. 2020).

The importance of teaching (De Neve, et al. 2015), is that teaching called differentiated instruction is a pedagogical approach that aims to meet students' needs and at the same process maximize students' growth or obtain learning

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goals. Whichever instructional method is utilized to create the desired learning environment it should be associated with a specific activity that the teacher uses to enhance learning outcomes.

The proponent cited these instructional strategies because according to Smith & Diaz (2004), Strategies play a very important role in enhancing and developing students' learning, one of which is online class participation which was considered one way of getting into a higher student involvement.

Aside from the online class considered essential in enhancing students' learning is the study on the development effectiveness and acceptability of Module for Alternative Learning Systems (Vergara, 2017). Based on the study, the teacher respondents discovered the developed modules in problem-solving and critical thinking skills were very appropriate for ALS learners. Thus, she recommends that teachers should be trained on how to write modules, worksheets, and other instructional learning resources for the use of students enrolled in any alternative learning systems.

Furthermore, teachers' self-made materials are also encouraged for their applicability and usability in the administration of Alternative Delivery Mode (ADM) especially nowadays as the teaching modality is always changing due to the effect of climate change, and other environmental issues such as floods, typhoons, volcanic eruptions, extreme heat, and others.

Castroverde et al, (2021) mentioned in their studies the different issues covering the utilization of modular distance learning during limited face-to-face due to global problems, and the extent to which the educators were able to manage the situation, particularly on the facilitation of learning. Some of the issues gathered were based on how the teachers made their plan, prepared and distributed learning materials, monitored students' learning, and checked and evaluated the learners' outputs, and gave responses to students' performance. Moreover, as learned from the studies, teachers' flexibility played a vital role in dealing with all these challenges.

Valentine (2020) on distance learning: promises, problems, and possibilities articulated the guarantee and the advantages of distance learning. He expresses that despite all these, there are still other concerns or issues that need to be attended to. These problems include the quality of instruction, hidden costs, misuse of technology, and the attitudes of instructors, students, and administrators. Furthermore, the writer explained that any of these issues affect the overall quality of distance learning as a product. To some extent, each of these issues is interrelated because one issue affects the other.

The Department of Education in response to these challenging times utilized modular, online, and blended types of learning in response to the pandemic. The department adopted the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP) for School Year 2020-2021. In this plan, emphasis was focused on DO. 012, s. 2020. The focus was to ensure learning continuity through K-12 curriculum adjustments, alignment of learning materials, deployment of multiple learning delivery modalities, provision of corresponding training for teachers and school leaders, and proper orientation of parents or guardians (guideline no. 4b).

The demand in the changing learning environment and the need to support the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan are some of the reasons why this action research was conducted. The researcher studied the implementation of Araling Panlipunan instructions in terms of learning delivery modalities, teacher training, teaching strategies, utilization of learning resources, assessment of learning, and the challenges encountered during the pandemic.

The study's results were used as input in crafting a technical assistance plan for the effective implementation of AP instructions in schools. Specifically, it was used as input for providing technical assistance on developing the weekly home learning plan, utilization of learning resources such as self-learning modules, worksheets, and other activities focused on achieving the Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELC) and other learning activities to ensure successful teaching-learning outputs.

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OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Specifically, this action research aimed to 1) determine the socio-demographic profile of respondents considered in the study in terms of age; specialization; grade level taught; training, and length of service; 2) evaluate the trends and practices of teachers in implementing Araling Panlipunan instructions in the new normal about learning delivery; training of teachers; teaching strategies; learning resources; and assessment of learning; 3) explain the challenges or issues encountered by teachers in implementing Araling Panlipunan instructions in the new normal with regards to the organization of classes; distribution and retrieval of modules and worksheets; monitoring of learners' output; parents' or guardians' participation; and utilization of teaching modalities; 4) examine how teachers address the problems that affect the implementation of Araling Panlipunan instructions amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

METHODOLOGY

The participants in the study are the one hundred-six Araling Panlipunan teachers of elementary and secondary schools. They were chosen through stratified random sampling. Twenty males and eighty- six females with age bracket from 22 - 60 years old. The researcher used the descriptive survey method. In collecting the data, the questions were first validated by twenty non-respondent teachers from select schools within the locality. After validation, the questionnaires were distributed to one hundred-six respondents and were retrieved after a week. An interview and focus group discussion (FGD) were also conducted to collect more information and validate the gathered data. The questionnaire was administered via Google link to 38 schools within the City Division of Binan. The frequency and percentage were used for the presentation of analysis and interpretation of the results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Profile of the Respondents

1.1. In terms of Gender

Among the four specified questions being identified and upon examining the data based on the collected information, the following results were revealed: As to the number of respondents according to gender. 82 or 81 percent are female, and 20 or 18.9 percent are female, comprising 106 total respondents. It shows that the majority of teacher respondents are female.

1.2. In terms of Age

As to the number of respondents according to age. The data showed that most participants are 26-29 years old with 23.6 percent. The second majority of participants aged 30-33 and 38-41. While only 4 or 3.8 percent of participants are 60 years old. According to the study, this age to the number of respondents according to specialization, the result showed that the majority of the age group (60 and up) is defined as the productive population biologically and economically more active (Ratnakumar et al., 2020).

1.3. In terms of Education

With regard to education graduates, the highest number among the respondents at 37 or 34.9 percent. Respondents specializing in Math, Filipino, English, Science, and Values Education, are teachers assigned to teach Araling Panlipunan in elementary or junior high schools.

1.4. In terms of the subject taught

About the number of respondents according to the subject taught, the result revealed that the majority of respondents are teaching Araling

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Panlipunan subjects, although they are also teaching other subjects like Filipino, English, Math, Science, TLE, and EsP, especially in elementary.

1.5. In terms of length of service

Regarding the number of respondents according to the length of service, the data showed, that teacher respondents having a length of service from 1 year to 36 years, can be labelled into the development of expertise such as novice, advanced beginner, competent, proficient, and expert. Trotter (1986) as cited by Huitt, (2006), Generally it takes 10 to 15 years to move from novice to expert. Agreeing with this principle, the result shows that some teachers are in the beginning stage and some are already going to be experts. Teaching experience is positively associated with student achievement gains throughout a teacher's career. Gains in teacher effectiveness associated with experience were the most important steps in teachers' initial years, but continue to be significant as teachers reach the second, and often third, decades of their careers, (Tara Kini et al., 2020).

2. Trends and Practices of Teachers in Implementing Araling Panlipunan Instructions in the New Normal

According to trends and practices about learning delivery, the details showed that the majority of teacher respondents "always" implement Araling Panlipunan instructions through modular distance learning as supported by its result which is 91 or 86% responses.

Referring to trends and practices with the training of teachers, the facts showed that teacher respondents implement Araling Panlipunan instructions "always" in the conduct of training of teachers through lesson planning, the conduct of online distance learning, the conduct of modular distance learning, and even the conduct of learning action cell.

In connection to trends and practices regarding learning resources, the figures showed that teacher respondents implement Araling Panlipunan instructions "always" in learning resources using learning modules. learning worksheets, learning videos, and learning manuals.

As to trends and practices concerning learning assessment, the data also showed that teacher respondents implement Araling Panlipunan instructions with the assessment of learning through formative tests, summative tests, performance/skills tests, and portfolio evaluations.

While the trends and practices about teaching approaches, the result showed, that among the teaching approaches, the use of films and photographs, use of pictures, globes and maps, and problem-solving are the approaches always practiced by teachers with the result of 42%, 56%, and 42% respectively. Noticeable also, is that among the approaches, storytelling got the least frequency in terms of utilization of approaches in teaching Araling Panlipunan.

3. Challenges or Issues Encountered by Teachers in Implementing Araling Panlipunan Instructions in the New Normal

With regards to challenges encountered by teachers in implementing AP instructions in the new normal, the data also showed that 38.4% of teacher respondents experienced the different challenges or issues "always", while 56.1 % of them had a chance to meet those issues "sometimes", and 5.5% of those respondents "never" met such challenges. Accordingly, the most common problems encountered by the teachers were the following: distance of learners' houses, parents answering self-learning modules for their children, poor internet connection, late submission of learners' output, assessment of

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learners' performance, and non-completion of activities.

4. Findings

The focus of the study was to determine the implementation of Araling Panlipunan Instructions in schools amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The study aimed to determine

the profile of the participants, the trends and practices of teachers in the new normal; the challenges or issues encountered in the absence of face-to-face classes; and solutions utilized by teachers in addressing the situations affecting the Araling Panlipunan instructions.

The findings revealed that the majority of respondents were female, with ages between 29 and 60 years old. The majority of them were graduates of general education. Other respondents were secondary education graduates specialising in related Araling Panlipunan subjects such as social studies, social science, and history. All of them were teaching Araling Panlipunan with some teachers still handling other subjects like English, Math, Science, and Filipino. TLE and EsP. Most of the teachers were young with 1 to 15 years in the service, and respondents aged 60 and above with more than 30 years in the service.

The trends and practices in implementing Araling Panlipunan instructions in the new normal: teachers utilized modular distance learning, attended training in lesson planning, modular and online distance learning, and joined learning action cells conducted in school. About the learning resources: the teachers utilized learning modules, worksheets, videos, and learning manuals. On the conduct of assessment: the respondents could utilize the formative test, summative test, actual performance tests, skills tests, and portfolios. As to teaching approaches: the use of films and photographs, pictures, globes and maps, and problem-solving were the most common approaches used by teachers in handling their classes online or modular. Sometimes,

approaches like role-playing and storytelling were also used.

On the challenges: the most common problems encountered by the teachers were the distance of learners' houses, parents answering self-learning modules (SLM) for their children, poor internet connection, late submission of learners' output, assessment of learners' performance, and non-completion of activities.

Although there were problems while implementing Araling Panlipunan instructions during the phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, the teachers strategically applied the best practices such as establishing collaboration for assistance with stakeholders such as barangay officials, parent-teacher associations, and group volunteers. The researcher conducted parent orientation and discussed the guidelines for self-learning modules. Established open communication with the parents and learners through text, chat, calls, and online kumustahan. Connected to other free WIFI providers for internet support, and simplified activities for the learners. They checked the outputs and provided feedback to improve learners' performance. Lastly, the teacher respondents conducted home visits to help the learners during the pandemic.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and findings of the study, the teacher's profile, learning delivery specifically the utilization of online and modular distance learning, the use of different learning resources (e.g. modules, worksheets, videos, and manuals), the teaching approaches, and the conduct of assessments to evaluate the learner's progress are the trends and practices in the teaching of Araling Panlipunan amid the COVID-19 pandemic. These varieties of activities as agreed by students and teachers for flexible learning, sustained the implementation of the learning curriculum to achieve the desired competencies to be developed for the learners in

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times of uncertainty. Although there were issues and challenges encountered while implementing the subject in the duration of limited face-to-face, the teachers utilized different strategies such as establishing collaboration, open communication, and home visitation to ensure learning is being facilitated through partnership and community linkages. The findings also revealed that these actions of teachers were the best practices and very effective in the implementation of the Araling Panlipunan Instructions in the new normal.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The learning environment in the new normal requires flexibility on the part of the teachers, learners, and parents. The teachers and the parents have worked together for the student's best interest. Thus, the proponent made the following recommendations: **For the teachers:**(1) due to the demand of the learning environment, teachers may attend graduate studies to acquire specialization so that teachers handling other subjects will have a full understanding of the content; (2) attend teachers' training to improve their competence in the utilization of online, modular, and blended learning; (3) join write shop or crafting of instructional materials such as modules, worksheets, videos, and students manual to produce quality learning resources suited to the needs of learners; (4) develop assessments focus on developing the critical thinking of learners; (5) conduct research relative to the issues and challenges encountered in the classroom and improve teaching practices. **For the school heads**: (1) strengthen support in programs, projects, and activities of the school focus on improving the teachers' performance, particularly in the teaching approaches; (2) design a plan of action for continued professional development of teachers; (3) promote the school's program on community linkages to strengthen partnership, support student's outcome and efficient use of school resources. **For the education program supervisors:**(1) provide

regular Technical Assistance to school heads on improving instructional management through coaching and mentoring; (2) conduct regular monitoring and evaluation of the programs, projects, and activities to improve Araling Panlipunan Instructions in schools.

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Dr. Joel J. Valenzuela, is a graduate of Bachelor of Science in Commerce, majored in Management, and Master of Arts in Teaching with specialization in Social Studies, both from the Laguna College of Business and Arts, Calamba City. He obtained a Doctor of Education major in Educational Management at the Laguna State Polytechnic University, Sta Cruz, Laguna. He is a research enthusiast who was raised from the rank from being a classroom teacher to a Principal to a Public School District Supervisor and now serving as an Education Program Supervisor of Araling Panlipunan in the School Division Office of Binan City. In various capacities, he serves as Division Senior High School Coordinator, Division Madrasah Education Program (MEP) Coordinator, and Division ADM Focal Person. He also performs the tasks of being a writer, editor, and evaluator of Localized Self-Learning Materials which are being used in the public elementary and secondary schools of Binan City, Laguna, Philippines.

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