Technology Integration in Araling Panlipunan: Rhetoric of Junior High School Teachers in Compostela West District

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Abstract: This study examined the experiences of junior high school teachers in using technology to support Araling Panlipunan instruction, focusing on insights from nine purposively selected teachers in Compostela West District, Davao de Oro Division. Based on in-depth interviews and thematic analysis, two major strategies emerged: the use of multimedia presentations, as well as the integration of digital and interactive activities and assessments. On the other hand, teachers also identified several challenges such as infrastructure limitations and the digital divide, which created unequal access for students, along with their own limited familiarity with digital tools due to insufficient training. From these lived experiences, the study suggested practical ways to address the challenges, including prioritizing infrastructure and resource support and conducting comprehensive training for teachers in the use of digital tools. The findings point to the need for broader reforms, such as investing in school infrastructure, implementing equity-focused programs, and providing continuous, discipline-specific training aligned with the TPACK framework. Moreover, the study emphasizes fostering a culture of digital adaptability among teachers, encouraging them to continuously explore new technologies to make Araling Panlipunan more engaging and relevant for learners. By addressing these issues, stakeholders can transform Araling Panlipunan instruction into an inclusive, dynamic, and technology-enhanced learning experience that equips students with essential 21st-century historical and civic skills.

Keywords: Technology Integration, Araling Panlipunan, Rhetoric of Junior High School Teachers.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Over the years, technology has significantly transformed many aspects of daily life, including education. In the same way other subjects have embraced digital tools, Araling Panlipunan has also been encouraged to integrate technology to enhance student engagement in the classroom. For learners to fully appreciate and explore Social Studies, the lessons need to be dynamic, engaging, and inspiring. Incorporating technology into teaching this subject plays an important role in improving both academic performance and students' attitudes toward learning.

Educators around the world recognize the value of technology in the teaching and learning process. In the context of Araling Panlipunan, using digital tools has become a growing priority across many countries. The National Council for the Social Studies (2013), as cited by Erdogan and Serefli

(2021), emphasized that integrating technology in instruction is essential in keeping up with the digital era and effectively connecting with students. As Chukwuma-Nosike (2020) pointed out, technology now plays a central role in almost every area of education globally.

In Nigeria, educational technology includes both hardware and software, such as e-learning platforms and learning management systems, which support the teaching process. These tools have contributed positively to education in this developing West African nation. In the United States, students benefit from digital resources like interactive maps and multimedia content that encourage active participation and critical thinking (Hollandsworth et al., 2019). Finland, on the other hand, focuses on using technology to support collaborative and inquiry-based learning (Päivi & Jari, 2020). In Singapore, teachers undergo professional training to help them incorporate digital tools into their lessons, creating more

interactive and meaningful classroom experiences (Chai & Tan, 2019)

In the Philippines, the integration of technology into Araling Panlipunan (Social Studies) is gradually reshaping how the subject is taught and learned. According to Balante, Sobrecarey, and Mantog (2023), citing Leow and Neo (2014), using multimedia-based instructional strategies can increase students' interest and motivation. Tools such as videos, animations, and interactive maps offer students more engaging and immersive learning experiences that bring historical and social concepts to life.

Digital platforms like Google Classroom and Moodle also play a vital role in organizing lessons and promoting student collaboration. These tools support discussions, encourage group activities, and make learning more interactive (Bautista, 2021). The internet provides students access to a wide range of information, helping them build research and critical thinking skills. Additionally, educational games and simulations allow students to explore topics like governance and economics through practical, hands-on learning (Dela Cruz, 2019).

In the Davao Region, the use of technology in Social Studies has gained more attention, especially in light of recent reforms in education. However, challenges remain—particularly in remote and underserved areas where internet access and digital devices are limited. These barriers make it difficult to fully implement technology-based lessons in Araling Panlipunan classrooms (Cruz, 2020). Addressing the digital divide is essential to ensure all students, regardless of location, have equal opportunities to benefit from modern teaching tools. As Bala (2021) notes, efforts from local communities and government programs are underway to bring much-needed technological support to disadvantaged area.

Another hurdle is the readiness of teachers themselves. Many educators admit they lack proper training to confidently use technology in their teaching strategies (Almerino, 2021). Without sufficient professional development, some feel unprepared and hesitant, which can lead to resistance toward adopting new digital methods (Arboleda, 2022). For Araling Panlipunan to become more engaging and relevant, it's important that teachers embrace technology and find creative ways to integrate it into their lessons.

In our school, I've noticed that Araling Panlipunan teachers often find it challenging to keep their students engaged. There seems to be a common perception that the subject is dull or uninteresting. This observation aligns with the findings of Crisolo and Camposano (2021), who noted that many students view Araling Panlipunan, or Social Studies, as a boring subject.

The content of the subject is often presented in a factual and objective manner, which tends to make teaching rigid and heavily reliant on memorization. However, I strongly believe that incorporating technology into the lessons can make the subject more dynamic and appealing to students. Investigating how teachers use technology in teaching Araling Panlipunan is an important area of research. It not only sheds light on existing gaps but also helps identify practical ways to enhance the integration of digital tools in delivering the subject more effectively in the classroom.

II. METHOD

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological design. Phenomenology aims to capture raw, unfiltered accounts of people's lived experiences, focusing on what individuals within a particular group have in common. It examines how a certain phenomenon shapes their perspectives and the meanings they attach to it. The heart of this approach lies in listening to participants as they share their genuine experiences and reflections.

For this research, nine junior high school teachers who handle Araling Panlipunan in Compostela West District, Davao de Oro Division, served as participants. They were chosen from three schools of varying sizes, small, medium, and large. To be included, teachers needed at least three years of experience in teaching Araling Panlipunan. The study used purposive sampling to select participants, as this method is considered effective in identifying individuals who can provide rich and relevant insights for data collection (Chun et al., 2019, as cited in Mwita, 2022).

In this study, in-depth interviews were the main tool for data collection. They provided a way to engage in direct, meaningful conversations with Araling Panlipunan teachers about how they integrate technology into their teaching. This method was particularly useful in capturing their lived experiences, emotions, and teaching practices, as it encouraged thoughtful and reflective responses while preserving authenticity. To ensure the depth and accuracy of the data, effective interviewing strategies such as active listening and probing questions were employed, allowing the findings to genuinely reflect the teachers' classroom realities.

For data analysis, the study followed the thematic analysis framework developed by Braun and Clarke (2006). This process offered a systematic way of identifying, examining, and reporting recurring themes within qualitative data. Braun and Clarke's approach is known for its flexibility, making it well-suited for diverse research contexts. In addition, the study applied environmental triangulation to strengthen validity. By comparing and integrating data gathered from different school environments, the research minimized bias and enhanced the credibility of the results. As Vivek (2023) explains, environmental triangulation is a valuable method because it

draws insights from multiple contexts, which provides a fuller picture of the phenomenon under study.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section shows the results and findings of the study. When it comes to integrating technology in teaching Araling Panlipunan, two main themes emerged from the participants' accounts: the use of multimedia presentations and the integration of digital and interactive activities and assessments.

➢ Use of Multimedia Presentations

The findings showed that multimedia presentations, such as PowerPoint slides, videos, and digital images, play a central role in how Junior High School teachers in Compostela West District incorporate technology into their lessons. These tools not only madee lessons more engaging but also support collaborative communication and easy access to resources. Teachers shared that they often use downloaded videos, digital storytelling, and platforms like DepEd Commons to enrich discussions, reflecting a move toward student-centered and visually engaging instruction. By using multimedia, teachers were better able to address different learning styles, making abstract historical and cultural concepts more concrete and relatable for students (Muir, Geer, & Trivett, 2021).

➢ Integration of Digital and Interactive Activities and Assessments

Another theme that surfaced was the growing use of digital and interactive tools for both activities and assessments. Online quizzes and gamified platforms such as Kahoot! and Quizizz are helping Araling Panlipunan teachers create assessments that are not only more engaging but also provide immediate feedback. Beyond formal testing, teachers are also integrating interactive activities that encourage deeper learning through technology. These strategies reflect a shift toward formative and experiential assessments that are aligned with 21st-century skills. The findings suggest that digital tools are transforming the way teachers evaluate students' understanding while also reshaping how learners actively engage with Araling Panlipunan content (Wang et al., 2021).

However, despite the benefits of technology, teachers still encounter major challenges in integrating it into Araling Panlipunan instruction. Many struggled with insufficient training and limited digital literacy, which makes it difficult to match technological tools with curriculum objectives and the diverse needs of learners. From the data, two main themes emerged regarding these challenges: infrastructure limitations and the digital divide, and limited familiarity with digital technology.

➢ Infrastructure Limitations and Digital Divide

One of the most pressing barriers was the lack of reliable infrastructure and access to technology. Teachers reported frequent disruptions caused by unstable electricity, poor internet connection, and the absence of essential devices such as Smart TVs, projectors, or enough gadgets for both teachers and students. Without these resources, integrating technology consistently into lessons becomes difficult, if not impossible. The findings confirmed that these infrastructure gaps are among the biggest obstacles to effective technology use in Araling Panlipunan classrooms (Balante et al., 2023).

➢ Limited Familiarity in Using Digital Technology

Another challenge lies in teachers' limited confidence and experience in using digital tools. Many educators admitted struggling with platforms such as interactive quiz apps, multimedia editing software, or online collaboration systems. This lack of familiarity often stems from inadequate training and minimal hands-on exposure. Although teachers recognized that technology has the potential to improve learning outcomes and support curriculum goals, their limited competence in using these tools prevented them from fully realizing its benefits (Arboleda, 2022).

Further, building on both the strategies teachers employed and the challenges they faced in integrating technology into Araling Panlipunan, this study offers several practical insights and recommendations. It emphasizes the importance of prioritizing infrastructure development, addressing the digital divide, and providing sustained teacher training programs that are closely aligned with the Araling Panlipunan curriculum.

Overall, the findings have meaningful implications for both policy and classroom practice. Persistent gaps in infrastructure and access highlight the urgent need for systemic investments in schools, particularly in ensuring reliable electricity, stable internet connectivity, and access to modern devices. Equally important, teacher professional development must move beyond basic digital literacy to focus on subject-specific, pedagogical applications of technology.

This study's results resonate with Vygotsky's theory of constructivism and the TPACK framework. By integrating technology into Araling Panlipunan instruction, teachers create opportunities for socially constructed learning, such as collaborative digital projects that thrive within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). At the same time, the findings reflect TPACK's core principle of combining technological knowledge with subject content to design meaningful and contextually relevant learning experiences

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