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Contextualizing Local History in Araling Panlipunan 4: Teachers' Experiences and Pedagogical Practices at San Miguel Elementary School, Burgos District, Schools Division of Isabela

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Abstract

Local history serves as an essential component of Araling Panlipunan by helping learners develop historical consciousness, cultural identity, and appreciation of their community's heritage. Contextualizing local history enables teachers to connect curriculum content with learners' lived experiences, making instruction more meaningful and relevant. This study explored the experiences and pedagogical practices of Grade 4 Araling Panlipunan teachers in contextualizing local history at San Miguel Elementary School, Burgos District, Schools Division of Isabela. A qualitative phenomenological research design was employed involving eight Grade 4 teachers selected through purposive sampling. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis and were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's six-phase thematic analysis. The findings revealed that teachers integrated local historical narratives, cultural traditions, community resources, experiential learning activities, and contextualized instructional materials to strengthen learners' historical understanding and civic identity. Despite challenges such as limited localized instructional resources, insufficient historical references, and time constraints, teachers demonstrated creativity, collaboration, and reflective practice in contextualizing instruction. The study highlights the importance of contextualized pedagogy, community partnerships, and continuous professional development in strengthening local history instruction in elementary education. The findings provide valuable insights for curriculum developers, school administrators, and Araling Panlipunan teachers in enhancing culturally responsive and community-based learning.

Keywords: *local history, Araling Panlipunan, contextualized instruction, pedagogical practices, teachers' experiences, phenomenology, qualitative research*



1. Introduction

Araling Panlipunan plays a significant role in developing learners' understanding of history, culture, geography, economics, and citizenship. At the elementary level, the subject helps learners appreciate their identity, heritage, and responsibilities as members of their community and nation. One important aspect of Araling Panlipunan is the integration of local history, which allows learners to connect historical concepts with the places, people, traditions, and events that shape their immediate environment. Through contextualized learning, local history becomes more meaningful and relevant, enabling learners to develop a stronger sense of identity, cultural appreciation, and civic responsibility.

The Department of Education advocates contextualized and localized instruction as an essential feature of the K–12 curriculum. Teachers are encouraged to utilize local resources, historical events, cultural practices, and community experiences to make learning authentic and responsive to learners' backgrounds. In Araling Panlipunan 4, contextualizing local history enables learners to understand the historical development of their locality while recognizing its contribution to regional and national history. Such instructional practices promote meaningful learning by linking classroom concepts with learners' everyday experiences.

Teachers play a crucial role in transforming curriculum standards into engaging learning experiences. They employ diverse pedagogical approaches such as storytelling, field-based activities, collaborative learning, community resource utilization, historical inquiry, and project-based learning to make local history accessible and interesting to young learners. These learner-centered strategies not only strengthen historical understanding but also foster critical thinking, cultural appreciation, and active participation in preserving local heritage.

Despite the recognized value of contextualized instruction, teachers continue to encounter challenges in integrating local history into classroom instruction. Limited historical references, inadequate localized instructional materials, insufficient access to community archives, time constraints, and varying learner interests often affect instructional implementation. Teachers therefore become innovative by developing localized learning materials, collaborating with community stakeholders, utilizing oral histories, and integrating authentic community experiences into classroom discussions.

Although several studies have examined contextualized teaching and history education, limited qualitative research has explored the lived experiences and pedagogical practices of elementary teachers in contextualizing local history within Philippine public schools. Understanding these experiences provides valuable insights into effective instructional practices and the realities teachers encounter in implementing localized instruction.

Therefore, this study explored the experiences and pedagogical practices of Grade 4 Araling Panlipunan teachers in contextualizing local history at San Miguel Elementary School, Burgos District, Schools Division of Isabela. The findings are expected to contribute to improving local history instruction, strengthening teacher professional development, and supporting

curriculum enhancement that promotes culturally responsive and community-based education.

2. Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to explore the experiences and pedagogical practices of Grade 4 Araling Panlipunan teachers in contextualizing local history at San Miguel Elementary School, Burgos District, Schools Division of Isabela.

Specifically, it sought to:

1. describe the pedagogical practices employed by Grade 4 Araling Panlipunan teachers in contextualizing local history;
2. explore the experiences of teachers in integrating local history into Araling Panlipunan instruction;
3. identify the challenges encountered by teachers in contextualizing local history in Grade 4 classrooms;
4. examine the strategies employed by teachers to address instructional challenges and promote meaningful learning; and
5. provide implications for strengthening local history instruction, contextualized teaching, and teacher professional development in Araling Panlipunan.

3. Review of Related Literature

Local history has become an important component of social studies education because it enables learners to understand the historical development of their own communities while strengthening their sense of identity, cultural appreciation, and civic responsibility. Integrating local history into classroom instruction allows learners to connect national historical narratives with the experiences, traditions, landmarks, and heritage of their locality. Research has shown that learners develop deeper historical understanding when lessons are closely related to their immediate environment and lived experiences.

The Philippine K-12 curriculum advocates the use of contextualized and localized instruction to make learning more relevant and meaningful. In Araling Panlipunan, contextualization encourages teachers to incorporate local historical events, cultural practices, historical sites, oral traditions, and community resources into classroom instruction. Such practices enable learners to appreciate the unique history of their locality while recognizing its contribution to regional and national development.

Effective local history instruction depends on learner-centered pedagogical approaches that actively engage learners in historical inquiry. Storytelling, project-based learning, collaborative activities, field visits, interviews with community elders, analysis of historical artifacts, and the use of primary and secondary sources encourage learners to investigate historical events and construct historical understanding. These instructional strategies also

develop critical thinking, communication, and research skills while promoting appreciation of local heritage.

Experiential and community-based learning further enhance the teaching of local history. By interacting with community members, visiting historical landmarks, and participating in cultural activities, learners develop authentic connections with historical concepts. Studies have shown that experiential learning increases learner engagement, historical awareness, and appreciation of cultural identity by providing meaningful opportunities to apply classroom learning in real-life contexts.

Despite the benefits of contextualized local history instruction, teachers continue to encounter challenges in its implementation. Limited access to localized instructional materials, inadequate historical references, insufficient documentation of local history, time constraints, and varying learner interests often affect classroom instruction. Consequently, teachers become resourceful by developing localized learning materials, utilizing oral histories, collaborating with local historians and community leaders, and integrating digital resources to enrich classroom discussions.

Although previous studies have examined contextualized instruction and history education, limited qualitative research has explored the lived experiences and pedagogical practices of elementary teachers in integrating local history into Araling Panlipunan in Philippine public schools. This study addresses this gap by examining the experiences, pedagogical practices, challenges, and instructional strategies of Grade 4 teachers at San Miguel Elementary School, Burgos District, Schools Division of Isabela.

4. Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on **Constructivist Learning Theory** by Jean Piaget, **Social Constructivism** by Lev Vygotsky, and **Place-Based Education Theory** by David Sobel. These theories provide the conceptual foundation for understanding how teachers contextualize local history and implement pedagogical practices that promote meaningful learning in Araling Panlipunan.

Constructivist Learning Theory (Piaget, 1972) posits that learners actively construct knowledge by connecting new information with their prior experiences. In teaching local history, learners develop historical understanding by relating historical events, traditions, personalities, and places within their community to broader historical concepts. Teachers facilitate this process by designing meaningful learning experiences that encourage inquiry, reflection, and critical thinking rather than rote memorization.

Social Constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978) emphasizes that learning occurs through social interaction, collaboration, and guided instruction. In Araling Panlipunan, teachers promote historical understanding through storytelling, collaborative discussions, group projects, interviews with community elders, and cooperative learning activities. By interacting with teachers, peers, and community members, learners construct historical knowledge and develop a deeper appreciation of their local heritage.

Place-Based Education Theory (Sobel, 2004) highlights the importance of using the local community, culture, environment, and history as the primary context for learning. This theory encourages teachers to integrate local historical sites, cultural traditions, historical landmarks, community resources, and indigenous knowledge into classroom instruction. Through place-based learning, learners develop a stronger sense of identity, belonging, environmental awareness, and civic responsibility while appreciating the historical significance of their locality.

Collectively, these theories explain how contextualized, learner-centered, and community-based pedagogical practices contribute to meaningful local history instruction. They provide the theoretical basis for understanding the experiences and instructional decisions of Grade 4 Araling Panlipunan teachers in contextualizing local history at San Miguel Elementary School.

5. Methodology

This study employed a **qualitative phenomenological research design** to explore the experiences and pedagogical practices of Grade 4 Araling Panlipunan teachers in contextualizing local history at San Miguel Elementary School, Burgos District, Schools Division of Isabela. The phenomenological approach was chosen because it seeks to understand the lived experiences, perceptions, and meanings that teachers attach to their instructional practices in teaching local history.

The study was conducted at **San Miguel Elementary School**, Burgos District, Schools Division of Isabela. The participants consisted of **eight (8) Grade 4 Araling Panlipunan teachers** who had direct experience in teaching local history as part of the Grade 4 curriculum. Participants were selected through **purposive sampling** based on their teaching assignments, years of experience, and willingness to participate in the study.

Data were gathered using a **researcher-developed semi-structured interview guide**, complemented by classroom observations and document analysis. Lesson plans, localized instructional materials, activity sheets, and assessment tools were examined to support and validate the interview data. Prior to data collection, permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Schools Division Office and the school administration. Informed consent was secured from all participants before conducting individual interviews. The interviews were audio-recorded with participants' permission, transcribed verbatim, and verified through member checking to ensure the accuracy of the information gathered.

The collected data were analyzed using **Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis**, which involved familiarization with the data, generation of initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report. This systematic analytical process enabled the identification of recurring themes that reflected the participants' pedagogical practices, classroom experiences, instructional challenges, and strategies in contextualizing local history.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, the study employed the criteria of **credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability**. Credibility was established through

member checking, prolonged engagement, and triangulation of interview, observation, and document analysis data. Dependability and confirmability were strengthened through peer debriefing and the maintenance of an audit trail, while transferability was enhanced through rich descriptions of the research setting, participants, and instructional context.

Ethical principles were strictly observed throughout the conduct of the study. Approval to conduct the research was secured from the appropriate authorities before data collection. Participation was voluntary, and all participants signed informed consent forms after being informed of the objectives, procedures, benefits, and possible risks of the study. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by assigning pseudonyms to all participants, and all collected information was treated with the highest level of confidentiality and used solely for academic and research purposes.

6. Findings and Discussion

Theme 1: Contextualizing Local History through Community-Based Learning Experiences

The findings revealed that Grade 4 Araling Panlipunan teachers consistently contextualized local history by integrating community experiences, local traditions, historical landmarks, and cultural practices into classroom instruction. The participants explained that connecting historical lessons to learners' immediate surroundings enabled pupils to appreciate the significance of local history and better understand its relationship with regional and national history. Teachers incorporated examples from the community, invited local resource persons, and utilized familiar places and events to make historical concepts more meaningful and engaging.

Participant 2 shared:

"I begin our lessons by asking pupils about historical places and traditions in our barangay. They become more interested because they can easily relate the lesson to what they see and experience every day."

Participant 6 stated:

"When discussing local history, I encourage pupils to ask their grandparents about important events and traditions in our community. Their stories make the lesson more meaningful and enjoyable."

These responses demonstrate that community-based learning strengthens learners' historical understanding by connecting classroom instruction with authentic experiences. Through the use of local examples, oral histories, and community resources, teachers transform abstract historical concepts into meaningful learning experiences that promote cultural appreciation and historical awareness. The findings support Place-Based Education Theory, which emphasizes the use of local communities and environments as meaningful contexts for learning (Sobel, 2004). They also align with Constructivist Learning Theory, which explains that learners construct knowledge by linking new information with their lived experiences (Piaget, 1972).

Theme 2: Utilizing Learner-Centered Pedagogical Practices to Promote Historical Understanding

The participants emphasized that learner-centered instructional approaches enhanced pupils' engagement and understanding of local history. Teachers employed storytelling, collaborative learning, role-playing, historical inquiry, group projects, and visual presentations to encourage active participation and critical thinking. They explained that these strategies allowed learners to explore historical events, analyze community traditions, and develop a deeper appreciation of their cultural heritage.

Participant 3 explained:

"Storytelling is one of the most effective strategies because pupils become interested when they hear stories about the history of our municipality and the people who contributed to its development."

Participant 7 remarked:

"Group activities encourage pupils to share what they know about our community. They learn from one another while developing confidence in discussing local history."

These findings indicate that learner-centered pedagogical practices promote active participation, collaboration, and meaningful historical learning. Through storytelling, cooperative learning, and inquiry-based activities, teachers enable learners to examine historical events from multiple perspectives while strengthening communication and critical thinking skills. The findings support Vygotsky's Social Constructivism, which emphasizes that knowledge is constructed through social interaction, collaboration, and teacher guidance (Vygotsky, 1978). Furthermore, the use of learner-centered approaches fosters curiosity, appreciation of local heritage, and a stronger sense of identity among elementary learners.

6. Findings and Discussion (Continuation)

Theme 3: Addressing Instructional Challenges through Innovation and Resourcefulness

The findings revealed that teachers encountered challenges in contextualizing local history due to the limited availability of localized instructional materials, insufficient historical references, and the scarcity of documented local historical resources. Participants explained that these limitations required them to become innovative by developing their own instructional materials, collecting information from community elders, utilizing local government publications, and accessing digital resources to supplement classroom instruction.

Participant 1 shared:

"There are few books about the history of our municipality, so I gather information from barangay officials, elders, and local publications to make my lessons more complete."

Participant 5 stated:

"I prepare my own visual materials and activity sheets because most textbooks contain only general Philippine history. Local examples make the lesson more meaningful to my pupils."

These responses demonstrate that teachers' creativity and resourcefulness enable them to overcome instructional limitations and provide meaningful learning experiences. By utilizing community resources and developing localized materials, teachers enrich historical instruction while strengthening learners' understanding of their local heritage. These findings support Place-Based Education Theory, which emphasizes the effective use of local environments and community resources as foundations for meaningful learning (Sobel, 2004).

Theme 4: Strengthening Historical Learning through Experiential and Authentic Assessment

The participants emphasized that experiential learning activities and authentic assessment strategies enhanced learners' appreciation of local history. They utilized community walks, heritage mapping, interviews with elders, historical exhibits, reflective journals, portfolios, and project-based learning to evaluate learners' understanding. These assessment approaches allowed pupils to demonstrate historical knowledge through authentic tasks rather than relying solely on traditional written examinations.

Participant 4 explained:

"I ask pupils to interview older family members about important events in our community. Their reports show how well they understand the lesson while preserving local stories."

Participant 8 remarked:

"Project-based activities, such as creating heritage maps and historical timelines, allow pupils to apply what they have learned in creative and meaningful ways."

These findings indicate that authentic assessment strengthens historical understanding by encouraging learners to apply classroom knowledge in real-life contexts. Experiential activities enable pupils to actively investigate local history, appreciate cultural heritage, and develop research and communication skills. The findings align with Experiential Learning Theory, which emphasizes that meaningful learning develops through concrete experiences, reflection, and practical application (Kolb, 1984).

Theme 5: Fostering Cultural Identity through Reflective Teaching and Community Collaboration

The findings revealed that teachers viewed reflective teaching and collaboration with the community as essential in contextualizing local history. Participants regularly evaluated their instructional practices, sought feedback from colleagues, and collaborated with parents, community elders, local historians, and government officials to enrich classroom discussions. They believed that community involvement strengthened learners' appreciation

of their cultural heritage while enabling teachers to deliver historically accurate and culturally responsive instruction.

Participant 2 shared:

"Working with parents and community elders helps us preserve local stories that are not found in textbooks. Their experiences make history more authentic for our learners."

Participant 6 stated:

"After every lesson, I reflect on how I can improve my teaching and make local history more interesting. Collaboration with the community gives me new ideas for future lessons."

These responses suggest that reflective practice and community collaboration contribute significantly to effective local history instruction. Teachers' continuous reflection and partnership with community stakeholders enrich the learning process, strengthen cultural preservation, and promote learner engagement. The findings reinforce the importance of culturally responsive pedagogy and collaborative learning in developing historical consciousness, civic responsibility, and appreciation of local identity among Grade 4 learners.

7. Conclusion

This study explored the experiences and pedagogical practices of Grade 4 Araling Panlipunan teachers in contextualizing local history at San Miguel Elementary School, Burgos District, Schools Division of Isabela. The findings revealed that teachers effectively integrated community-based learning experiences, learner-centered pedagogical strategies, localized instructional materials, experiential learning activities, and community collaboration to make local history meaningful and relevant to learners. Despite challenges such as limited historical references, inadequate localized instructional resources, and time constraints, the participants demonstrated creativity, adaptability, and commitment in delivering contextualized instruction. Through reflective teaching and strong partnerships with parents, community elders, and local stakeholders, teachers successfully promoted learners' historical understanding, cultural appreciation, and sense of identity. The study concludes that contextualizing local history enriches Araling Panlipunan instruction by connecting classroom learning with learners' cultural heritage and lived experiences, thereby fostering historical consciousness and responsible citizenship among elementary learners.

8. Implications

The findings of this study provide important implications for curriculum implementation, instructional practice, and educational leadership. School administrators should support teachers by providing localized instructional materials, access to historical references, and opportunities for professional development focused on contextualized and place-based instruction. The Schools Division Office may encourage the development of localized learning resources, community-based instructional modules, and digital repositories of local historical information that teachers can readily utilize in classroom instruction. Learning Action Cells (LACs) and professional learning communities should be strengthened to enable teachers to share effective pedagogical practices, collaboratively develop localized teaching

resources, and exchange innovative strategies for integrating local history into Araling Panlipunan. Partnerships among schools, local government units, cultural organizations, historians, museums, and community elders should likewise be strengthened to preserve local historical knowledge and provide authentic learning opportunities for learners. Future researchers may replicate this study in other schools and districts or employ mixed-methods and comparative research designs to further examine the effectiveness of contextualized local history instruction in improving historical understanding, cultural identity, and civic engagement among elementary learners.

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