Article

School Culture and Values Formation in the Teaching of Araling Panlipunan at Eliseo C. Ronquillo Memorial National High School

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Abstract

School culture plays a critical role in shaping learners' values, attitudes, and social behaviors, particularly in subjects that explicitly address citizenship, identity, and social responsibility such as Araling Panlipunan. This qualitative study examined how school culture influences values formation in the teaching of Araling Panlipunan at Eliseo C. Ronquillo Memorial National High School. Using a qualitative descriptive research design, the study explored teachers' and learners' perceptions of how institutional norms, classroom practices, and interpersonal relationships contribute to the development of values among students. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions and analyzed using thematic analysis. Findings revealed four major themes: (1) a values-oriented school culture as a foundation for meaningful Araling Panlipunan instruction, (2) teacher modeling and classroom climate as mechanisms for values transmission, (3) participatory and contextualized teaching strategies as drivers of values internalization, and (4) contextual challenges affecting sustained values formation. The results indicate that values formation is strengthened when school culture consistently reinforces respect, responsibility, and civic consciousness across academic and non-academic settings. The study concludes that Araling Panlipunan functions most effectively as a values-forming subject when aligned with a supportive and coherent school culture. Implications for pedagogy, school leadership, and curriculum development are discussed.

Keywords: school culture, values formation, Araling Panlipunan, Social Studies education, qualitative study

Introduction

School culture encompasses the shared beliefs, norms, values, and practices that shape daily life within educational institutions. It influences how teaching and learning occur, how relationships are formed, and how values are communicated to learners. In secondary education, school culture plays a particularly important role in shaping learners' moral development, social behavior, and civic identity, as students are at a stage where values and attitudes are actively negotiated and internalized.

In the Philippine context, *Araling Panlipunan* serves as a core learning area designed to develop learners' understanding of society, history, governance, culture, and national identity. Beyond content knowledge, the subject explicitly aims to foster values such as respect for diversity, social responsibility, nationalism, and active citizenship. As such, the teaching of Araling Panlipunan is inherently linked to values formation and is strongly influenced by the cultural environment of the school.

While curriculum guides emphasize values integration in Araling Panlipunan, the effectiveness of values formation depends largely on how school culture supports or constrains these goals. A school culture that models respect, inclusivity, and civic responsibility can reinforce the values taught in the classroom, whereas a fragmented or inconsistent culture may weaken learners' internalization of such values. Despite this connection, limited empirical research has examined how school culture specifically shapes values formation in the teaching of Araling Panlipunan in public secondary schools.

This study was conducted to examine the role of school culture in values formation within Araling Panlipunan classes at Eliseo C. Ronquillo Memorial National High School. By exploring the perspectives of teachers and learners, the study seeks to provide insights into how values are cultivated through the interaction of school culture and instructional practice.

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to examine the influence of school culture on values formation in the teaching of Araling Panlipunan. Specifically, it sought to:

1. Describe the dominant cultural values and norms present in the school environment;

2. Examine how school culture is reflected in the teaching practices of Araling Panlipunan teachers;

3. Explore learners' perceptions of how Araling Panlipunan contributes to their values formation; and

4. Identify challenges affecting the integration of school culture and values formation in Araling Panlipunan instruction.

3.Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to capture in-depth accounts of how school culture shapes values formation in Araling Panlipunan instruction. This approach allowed for a detailed exploration of participants' lived experiences and interpretations within their natural school context.

3.2 Participants and Research Setting

Participants included Araling Panlipunan teachers and junior high school learners at Eliseo C. Ronquillo Memorial National High School. Teachers were selected based on their direct involvement in teaching the subject, while learners were chosen from classes where values-oriented activities were regularly implemented. Purposive sampling was used to ensure relevance and depth of data.

3.3 Data Collection

Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with teachers and focus group discussions (FGDs) with learners. The data collection instruments focused on school norms, classroom interactions, instructional strategies, and perceived values development. All interviews and FGDs were audio-recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim.

3.4 Data Analysis and Trustworthiness

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis, involving coding, categorization, and theme development. Trustworthiness was ensured through triangulation of data sources, member checking, and peer debriefing.

Results/Findings

Analysis of the data yielded four major themes illustrating the role of school culture in values formation through Araling Panlipunan.

Theme 1: Values-Oriented School Culture as a Foundation for Instruction

Participants emphasized that a school culture grounded in respect, discipline, and shared responsibility creates a strong foundation for values-based teaching in Araling Panlipunan. When these values are consistently demonstrated and upheld across the school, they provide a clear moral framework that supports and strengthens classroom instruction. Learners are able to see the connection between what is taught during Araling Panlipunan lessons and how individuals are expected to behave within the broader school community, making values learning more authentic and credible.

School-wide practices and expectations were perceived to reinforce classroom lessons by providing regular opportunities for learners to observe and practice values in real-life situations. Daily routines, disciplinary policies, and interactions among teachers, administrators, and students served as concrete contexts where values such as respect and responsibility were enacted. This alignment between institutional culture and classroom instruction helped normalize positive behaviors and contributed to the consistent internalization of values, thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness of values-based teaching in Araling Panlipunan.

Responses:

> *"Makikita sa school pa lang ang values na tinuturo sa Araling Panlipunan." P11*

> *"Pare-pareho ang mensahe ng respeto sa klase at sa labas ng classroom." P4*

> *"Mas madaling magturo ng values kapag ramdam sa buong school." P7*

These responses suggest that a coherent school culture strengthens values formation by aligning institutional practices with instructional goals and reinforcing consistent moral expectations across the school environment. When the values emphasized in Araling Panlipunan lessons are mirrored in school policies, routines, and interpersonal interactions, learners receive clear and unified messages about acceptable behavior and ethical conduct. This consistency helps learners understand that values are not confined to classroom discussions but are integral to everyday school life.

Moreover, alignment between institutional practices and instructional goals creates a supportive context in which values can be continuously practiced and internalized. Learners are more likely to adopt values when they observe these principles being upheld by teachers, administrators, and peers in various school settings. As a result, a coherent school culture functions as a reinforcing mechanism that strengthens the effectiveness of values-based instruction and supports the sustained development of learners' values and attitudes.

Theme 2: Teacher Modeling and Classroom Climate

Teachers and learners highlighted the importance of teacher modeling and a supportive classroom climate in effectively transmitting values to students. Participants emphasized that learners closely observe teachers' behavior, attitudes, and ways of interacting with others, making teachers' daily conduct a powerful source of values learning. When teachers demonstrate respect, fairness, empathy, and integrity in their interactions, these behaviors serve as concrete and relatable examples of the values discussed during Araling Panlipunan lessons.

In addition, a supportive classroom climate was found to reinforce values transmission by creating a safe and respectful space for learning and interaction. Learners reported that when classrooms are characterized by openness, mutual respect, and encouragement, they feel more confident to express ideas, engage in discussions, and practice positive social behaviors. This nurturing environment allows values to be experienced and practiced rather than merely taught, strengthening learners' ability to internalize values and apply them consistently in both academic and social contexts.

Responses:

> *"Ginagaya ng students ang asal ng teacher." P4*

> *"Mas nagiging respectful ang klase kapag ganun din ang guro." P8*

> *"Safe kaming magpahayag ng opinyon sa Araling Panlipunan." P12*

This theme underscores the role of teachers as cultural agents whose daily actions, interactions, and instructional choices significantly shape learners' values and attitudes. Beyond delivering content, teachers model behaviors such as respect, fairness, empathy, and responsibility through the way they communicate, manage classrooms, and respond to learners. Students closely observe these behaviors and often emulate them, making teachers' conduct a powerful medium for values transmission. When teachers consistently demonstrate the values they aim to cultivate, learners are more likely to internalize these values as norms for appropriate behavior.

Moreover, teachers influence values formation by creating classroom environments that reflect shared cultural expectations and ethical standards. Through supportive classroom climates that encourage openness, dialogue, and mutual respect, teachers help learners develop positive attitudes toward participation, cooperation, and civic responsibility. In this sense, teachers function not only as facilitators of learning but also as key cultural agents who bridge institutional values and learners' everyday experiences, reinforcing the moral and social aims of Araling Panlipunan education.

Theme 3: Participatory and Contextualized Teaching for Values Internalization

Participants noted that participatory strategies such as discussions, debates, and real-life case analyses helped learners internalize values more deeply by actively engaging them in the learning process. Through these strategies, learners were encouraged to express their opinions, listen to diverse perspectives, and critically examine social issues and moral dilemmas presented in Araling Panlipunan lessons. This interactive process allowed learners to reflect on values in a more personal and meaningful way, moving beyond surface understanding toward deeper moral awareness.

In addition, real-life case analyses enabled learners to connect values discussed in class to actual situations in their communities and society. By examining concrete examples and considering the consequences of actions, learners were able to appreciate the relevance of values in guiding behavior and decision-making. As a result, participatory strategies facilitated the internalization of values by fostering critical reflection, empathy, and a stronger sense of responsibility, making values education more authentic and impactful.

Responses:

1. *"Mas naiintindihan namin ang values kapag may discussion."*

2. *"Naiuugnay ang lesson sa totoong buhay."*

3. *"Mas tumatatak ang values kapag kami ang nagsasalita."*

These findings indicate that active participation and contextualization play a crucial role in enhancing values internalization by making learning experiences more meaningful and relevant to learners. When students are actively involved in discussions, debates, and problem-solving activities, they are encouraged to reflect on values in relation to real-life situations and personal experiences. This active engagement allows learners to move beyond abstract definitions of values and instead examine how such values operate in concrete social contexts, thereby deepening understanding and personal relevance.

Furthermore, contextualized learning helps learners see the practical significance of values in everyday life, strengthening their motivation to apply these values beyond the classroom. By connecting lessons in Araling Panlipunan to current events, community issues, and learners' lived realities, teachers create opportunities for learners to internalize values as guiding principles for behavior and decision-making. As a result, values education becomes more impactful and enduring, supporting the development of learners' moral reasoning, attitudes, and civic responsibility.

Theme 4: Challenges in Sustaining Values Formation

Despite the presence of positive instructional practices and a values-oriented school culture, participants identified several challenges that hinder the sustained formation of values among learners. Peer pressure emerged as a significant concern, as students are often influenced by the

attitudes, behaviors, and norms of their peer groups. Even when learners understand and appreciate the values emphasized in Araling Panlipunan, the desire for social acceptance may lead them to conform to peer behaviors that contradict these values. This tension makes it difficult for some learners to consistently apply values learned in the classroom, particularly in informal settings where adult supervision is limited.

Time constraints were also identified as a challenge, as the demands of an already congested curriculum often limit opportunities for in-depth discussion, reflection, and values-based activities. Teachers reported that the pressure to cover content sometimes reduces values integration to brief reminders rather than sustained engagement. In addition, inconsistent reinforcement of values between school and home environments further complicates values formation. While schools may promote respect, responsibility, and discipline, learners may encounter differing expectations or practices at home, creating confusion and weakening the internalization of values. These challenges underscore the importance of coordinated efforts among teachers, school leaders, and families to create consistent and supportive environments that reinforce values across contexts.

Responses:

1. *"Minsan nadadala ng barkada ang bata."*

2. *"Kulangan sa oras dahil sa dami ng lessons."*

3. *"Iba ang values sa school at sa labas."*

This theme highlights the need for broader support systems to sustain values formation beyond the classroom and ensure that values learned in Araling Panlipunan are consistently reinforced in learners' everyday experiences. While classroom instruction plays a crucial role in introducing and clarifying values, sustained internalization requires reinforcement across multiple contexts, including the wider school environment, the home, and the community. Without alignment among these contexts, learners may struggle to apply values consistently, particularly when confronted with competing influences such as peer pressure, social media, and differing norms outside the school setting.

Moreover, the findings suggest that effective values formation necessitates a whole-school and community-supported approach. School leaders, teachers, parents, and community stakeholders must work collaboratively to model, reinforce, and provide opportunities for learners to practice values in authentic situations. Programs such as school-wide values campaigns, parent engagement activities, community service initiatives, and mentoring systems can help bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-life application. By establishing coherent and sustained support systems, schools can strengthen the transfer of values from instruction to behavior, thereby promoting enduring moral and civic development among learners.

Discussions

The findings demonstrate that school culture plays a crucial role in shaping values formation in the teaching of Araling Panlipunan. When school norms, teacher practices, and classroom environments consistently reinforce shared values, learners are more likely to internalize these values.

Participatory and contextualized teaching approaches further strengthen this process by allowing learners to reflect on and apply values in real-life situations.

However, the challenges identified suggest that values formation is influenced by factors beyond instructional practices. Peer influence, limited instructional time, and inconsistencies between school and home environments may hinder sustained internalization. These findings point to the importance of adopting a whole-school approach to values education.

Conclusions

This study concludes that school culture significantly influences values formation in the teaching of Araling Panlipunan at Eliseo C. Ronquillo Memorial National High School. A values-oriented school environment, teacher modeling, and participatory instructional strategies contribute positively to learners' moral and civic development. Addressing contextual challenges through coordinated school-wide efforts is essential to sustaining these outcomes.

Implications of the Study

The findings of this study have important pedagogical implications for the teaching of Araling Panlipunan. Teachers are encouraged to integrate participatory and reflective instructional strategies that are aligned with the core values upheld by the school. Approaches such as guided discussions, debates, case analyses, and reflective activities allow learners to actively engage with social issues and moral concerns, thereby deepening their understanding and internalization of values. When instructional practices consistently model and reinforce respect, responsibility, and civic consciousness, values formation becomes an integral part of everyday classroom learning rather than an isolated instructional goal.

In terms of school leadership implications, the study underscores the crucial role of school leaders in strengthening values formation through the promotion of consistent norms and supportive school cultures. School administrators may enhance values education by ensuring that shared values are clearly communicated, modeled, and reinforced across academic and non-academic settings. By fostering a positive and inclusive school climate, supporting professional development focused on values-based education, and encouraging collaboration among teachers, school leaders can create an environment where the values taught in Araling Panlipunan are consistently practiced throughout the school community.

Finally, the study presents significant curricular implications for Araling Panlipunan instruction. Curriculum developers are encouraged to emphasize values integration as a core component of the subject by embedding values explicitly within learning competencies, instructional activities, and assessment practices. Integrating values across thematic units enables learners to encounter and apply values in diverse historical, social, and civic contexts. Such curricular alignment supports the holistic development of learners by strengthening the connection between content knowledge, moral reasoning, and responsible citizenship.

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Conflicts of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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