DEPED Order (Do) No. 010, S. 2024: Unveiling the Lived Experiences of Araling Panlipunan Teachers in the Implementation of Matatag Curriculum

Jennifer R. Sumaylo,[1] Nancy B. Espacio[2]

[1]Teacher 1, Department of Education, Philippines

[2]Associate Professor IV, Sultan Kudarat State University, Philippines

ABSTRACT

Turning Challenges into Triumphs. This qualitative research aimed to explore the lived experiences of Araling Panlipunan teachers in the Municipality of Malapatan about implementing the MATATAG Curriculum. Specifically, the study focused on the challenges they encountered, the coping mechanisms they employed, and their insights into the curriculum's implementation. The study utilized a phenomenological qualitative research design, and data were collected through semi-structured interviews with ten (10) Araling Panlipunan teachers. To analyze the data, thematic analysis was employed, following Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework: familiarization with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. This method identified recurring patterns and core meanings within the participants' narratives. Several strategies were implemented to ensure the validity and trustworthiness of the findings: triangulation through cross-checking of data, member checking to verify the accuracy of the transcriptions and interpretations with the participants, and peer debriefing to minimize researcher bias. Additionally, thick descriptions were used to provide detailed accounts of the participants' experiences, enhancing transferability. The findings revealed major themes in the teachers' lived experiences: the difficulty of teaching Araling Panlipunan and the limited time allocated for instruction. The challenges identified included the struggle to cover all required content, insufficient instructional materials, and inadequate teacher training. Teachers reported maximizing available resources and time as coping mechanisms and integrating technology in their lessons. Their insights emphasized the need for continuous professional development and the development of contextualized learning materials.

Despite the challenges, Araling Panlipunan teachers demonstrated resilience and a deep commitment to student learning. The study concludes that sustained support from educational leaders, through resources and professional development, can foster a thriving environment for teachers and learners.

Keywords: (DO) NO.010, S.2024, Araling Panlipunan teachers, Challenges, Coping Mechanism, MATATAG Curriculum

INTRODUCTION

The Philippine education system has seen a series of recent steps aimed at providing its learners with quality education. One of these reforms was the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum under DepEd Order No. 010, s. 2024. This MATATAG Curriculum seeks to ensure that teaching and learning processes can develop competency amongst learners while being attuned to global trends aligned with national priorities. However, it is disheartening that little research has been conducted to determine how this curriculum was implemented from the teachers' viewpoint, especially in specialized subjects, such as Araling Panlipunan. While teachers are the main implementers of this education-reform initiative, studies on the implementation of curricula have often captured larger-scope subject matter or other regions, neglecting what exists as the changes made affect teachers of individual subjects.

This qualitative study traced the lived experiences of the teachers of Araling Panlipunan in the Municipality of Malapatan as they navigated the complexities of the MATATAG Curriculum. In-depth interviews gathered a glimpse into the teachers' daily experience in the classroom, especially regarding the challenges faced, strategies adopted, and insights gleaned on how the

MATATAG Curriculum operates and influences educational practice. Most curriculum reform research, which generally leans toward general trends or evaluations at the policy level, often sidesteps the direct experience of teachers involved in the actual field implementation of such policies (Sison, 2022). Hence, this study aimed to fill this gap through an in-depth and nuanced perspective on how the teachers of Araling Panlipunan experienced the MATATAG Curriculum.

Furthermore, grasping what Araling Panlipunan teachers have gone through personally was essential, as it stands for advocating for improving the implementation of the curriculum and education quality across the Philippines. There have been many curricular reform studies in the country; however, very few of these focus on the experiences of subject-specific teachers-such as Araling Panlipunan. Such insights served as the foundation upon which policy-based responses can be developed to provide feedback on the MATATAG curriculum and identify other areas for refocused measurements, like teachers' training or distribution of resources. Research by Gonzales (2021) and Perez (2023) has demonstrated that teacher feedback is essential in determining successful reforms in education. The results of this research provide an intentional roadmap towards addressing the shortcomings of the curriculum and improving educational outcomes for the students of the Philippines.

Thus, this study aimed to present a clearer picture of the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum on the ground and provide inputs that may help guide future policy decisions and enhancements in curriculum delivery. The study intended to amplify the voices of Araling Panlipunan teachers in the ongoing discourse on education reforms in the Philippines while ensuring the MATATAG Curriculum achieved its intended ends in real classroom settings.

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to describe the experiences of the Araling Panlipunan teachers in teaching as they embraced the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum. Specifically, this sought to answer the following questions:

What are the lived experiences of the Araling Panlipunan teachers in implementing the MATATAG Curriculum?

1. Can you describe your experiences in teaching Araling Panlipunan in the initial implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum? How did it impact your teaching practices?

2. What changes have you noticed as you teach Araling Panlipunan while implementing the MATATAG curriculum?

3. What were your observations when you taught in the MATATAG curriculum? Do you have any other observations that you would like to share?

4. How does implementing the MATATAG curriculum help you as a teacher? Why do you say so?

What challenges do the Araling Panlipunan teachers encounter in the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum?

1. What challenges have you encountered in teaching Araling Panlipunan in the initial implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum? How did these impact your teaching practices?

2. What specific aspects of the MATATAG Curriculum posed the greatest challenges to you as an Araling Panlipunan teacher? (e.g., content, teaching strategies, assessment methods, etc.)

3. Regarding the instructional delivery in the MATATAG curriculum, what challenges have you encountered?

4. What other unfavorable experiences did you encounter in the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum?

How do the Araling Panlipunan teachers cope with the challenges they encountered in teaching in implementing the MATATAG Curriculum?

1. What steps have you undertaken to address the challenges you have encountered in teaching Araling Pan Lipunan in implementing the MATATAG Curriculum?
2. What strategies do you employ to address the challenges you have encountered in teaching Araling Panlipunan in implementing the MATATAG Curriculum?

What insights can the Araling Panlipunan teachers share to improve the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum?

1. What can you share with the educators about how the implementation of the MATATAG curriculum could be enhanced?
2. What message would you like to give to the teachers, school leaders, and the Department of Education in general about your lived experiences that may potentially help improve the implementation of the MATATAG curriculum in the country?
3. If you compare the MATATAG curriculum to the other curricula implemented in the country, what are your thoughts about it? What made you say that?

Are you comfortable with the new or enhanced curricula? Why or why not? What insights can you provide?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design to explore the lived experiences of Araling Panlipunan teachers during the initial implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum in selected schools in Malapatan, Sarangani Province. The phenomenological approach was chosen to understand the meanings teachers assign to their experiences, uncovering in-depth insights that cannot be captured through quantitative methods (van Manen, 2016; Moustakas, 1994).

Research Participants

The participants of this study were the 10 Araling Panlipunan teachers who were purposefully selected based on specific criteria: they were teaching Grade 4 and Grade 7 during the first phase of the MATATAG curriculum implementation, had attended the school-Based Training for MATATAG, and had been employed as permanent public-school teachers for at least five years. This selection process was aligned with Creswell's (2018) recommendation of 3–10 participants for qualitative research. The researcher also focused on building rapport and creating a trusting environment, encouraging participants to share their experiences openly.

Research Instruments

The data were collected using two main tools: a structured interview guide and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). Five experts developed and validated the interview guide to ensure its content was relevant and aligned with the research objectives. The FGDs allowed participants to engage in shared reflection and interaction, fostering richer data (Morgan, 1997). Both tools were designed to gather in-depth insights into the teachers' experiences, challenges, coping strategies, and perspectives on implementing the MATATAG curriculum.

Data Gathering Procedure

The data collection procedure began with securing the necessary permissions from the Dean of Sultan Kudarat State University, the Sarangani Schools Division Superintendent, School heads, and District supervisors. The researcher conducted in-person visits to coordinate with participants and schedule interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) at times convenient for them, ensuring that class schedules were not disrupted. Before the sessions, participants were thoroughly briefed on the study's purpose, ethical protocols, and their rights as participants, including the assurance of voluntary participation and strict data confidentiality. FGDs were conducted with sensitivity to cultural and gender considerations, and member-checking was employed to validate the accuracy of the researcher's interpretations of the collected data.

Data Analysis

Data from the interviews and Focus Group Discussions were transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis. This process involved transcribing the discussions, thoroughly familiarizing oneself with the data, and identifying recurring patterns and themes. The researcher then categorized the responses to highlight similarities, differences, and unique insights across participants' experiences. Direct quotations were used to support and illustrate the findings. This systematic and rigorous approach ensured the study's results' credibility, dependability, and confirmability.

Trustworthiness of the Study

The trustworthiness of this study on Araling Panlipunan teachers and their implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum was assessed using Lincoln and Guba's (1985) framework, which included credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was established by ensuring that the findings accurately reflected the teachers' real experiences and challenges, supported through member checking and prolonged engagement in the field. Transferability was demonstrated by providing detailed descriptions of the teachers' backgrounds, school environments, and the specific issues they encountered, allowing others to judge if the findings could apply to similar contexts. Dependability was achieved by thoroughly documenting each stage of the research process, including any changes made and how teachers' responses were consistently analyzed. Confirmability was ensured by grounding the findings in the teachers' actual words and perspectives, while maintaining an audit trail to minimize researcher bias. By applying this framework, the study provided a trustworthy and meaningful account of how Araling Panlipunan teachers implemented the MATATAG Curriculum.

Ethical Consideration

This study followed the ethical guidelines of the Belmont Report (1979), which outlines three key principles: respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. To respect the participants, the study ensured that all teachers gave informed consent, fully understanding the research's purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits. Their confidentiality and anonymity were protected, and participation was entirely voluntary, with the option to withdraw at any time. The principle of beneficence was observed by ensuring that the study did not cause harm or discomfort, but instead offered opportunities for professional growth and reflection, helping to improve the MATATAG Curriculum. Finally, justice was upheld by fairly selecting a diverse group of Araling Panlipunan teachers from various schools and regions, ensuring the findings were inclusive and beneficial to the broader educational community. Throughout the study, the rights and dignity of participants were carefully protected.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

This chapter discusses the results of the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) conducted on the lived experiences of the Araling Panlipunan teachers in implementing the MATATAG Curriculum, the challenges they encountered, how they coped with those challenges, and their insights into improving the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum using Thematic Analysis.

It displayed voluntarily given information regarding each participant's name, age, sex, grade level, and years in teaching. This section presents the profiles of the ten (10) participants who were involved in the data collection procedure. To protect their identities, **pseudonyms** have been used instead of their real names. The table below summarizes key demographic and background information relevant to the study. These participants, who are teachers teaching Araling Panlipunan in implementing the MATATAG Curriculum, were selected based on the criteria of being trained in the said enhanced curriculum.

Presentation of Findings

To appropriately capture the responses from the ten (10) participants, the interpretive approach based on thematic content analysis was used to analyze the gathered data. According to Terry (2021), thematic content analysis refers to a methodology for identifying, examining, and describing the patterns or themes in qualitative research data. The themes emanating from in-depth interviews and the focus group discussion were deduced to highlight participants' living experiences.

This analysis, encompassing Tables 1, 2, 3, and 4, focused on the probing issues and core ideas on the phenomenon of teachers teaching in Araling Panlipunan in implementing the MATATAG Curriculum. From these, essential key themes were identified based on the research participants' responses, particularly: (1) Live experiences of the teachers in the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum, (2) Challenges encountered by the teachers in the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum, (3) Coping mechanism of the teachers in teaching Araling Panlipunan in the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum, and (4) Insights of the teachers on the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum. These themes were explored in detail, supported by relevant literature, studies, and excerpts from the collected data.

Table 1. Lived Experiences of Araling Panlipunan Teachers in the   Implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum

Probing Issue	Core Ideas	Categories	Essential Theme
Lived Experiences Araling Panlipunan Teachers In the Implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum	Shifts in Context and Approach	Persistence despite Challenges	Difficulties of Teaching Araling Panlipunan
	Modifications in lesson structure		
	Teacher Teaching Araling Panlipunan but majoring in another subject		
	Inadequate Assessment of the Performance of Students	Time Management	Limited Time in Teaching Araling Panlipunan
	Insufficient Individualized Teaching		

Theme 1: Difficulties of Teaching Araling Panlipunan

The participants shared that it was quite challenging, especially in planning, because they found it challenging to set lesson plans together with applying the importance of critical thinking amidst limited resources and fewer training sessions available. Hence, these challenges include, but are not limited to, shifting in context and approach, modifications in lesson structure, and Araling Panlipunan teachers with different specializations. Evidently, the teachers teaching in Araling Panlipunan in implementing the MATATAG curriculum are experiencing hard times.

As an Araling Panlipunan teacher in the initial implementation I experienced significant changes in both the context and methodology of my teaching. -Piolo

The implementation of MATATAG led to changes in the structure and pacing of lessons. It is quite hard to adjust immediately. -Jen

It's challenging to adjust my teaching style more to an interactive and context based approached lalo na't ang aking major ay hindi Araling Panlipunan. Kaya minsan I cannot easily correlate the historical or cultural content I need to share with the relatively newer approaches used for Araling Panlipunan. -Cindy

For the participants, the changes in Araling Panlipunan brought a burden to them as they needed to learn and relearn new methodologies, which helped them during the teaching-learning process. Also, they highlighted that the complexity of lesson planning was a challenge that teachers face since the new approach requires more time and effort to align lessons with updated content and methodologies. This change can frustrate teachers to some extent since they are constantly being compelled to alter their method of instruction without the proper provision or training given, which can lead them to lose faith in teaching itself.

Ako ay science major at nag-tuturo ng AP 7 kaya nahirapan ako sa mga strategies paano ituro ng madalian ang History. Ngunit bilang isang guro naghanap ako ng paraan upang mas Madali para sa akin at sa kanila ang AP7, Kinailangan ko na pag-aralan ang mga binagong layunin at kompetensiya ng kurikulum, na nakatuon sa mas simple at mas mahahalagang paksa. -April

With Araling Panlipunan under ng MATATAG Curriculum, mahirap makapagpamilyar sa lalim ng mga paksa sa social studies, kaya't nagiging hamon din ito para sa akin na harapin ang mga tanong mula sa mga estudyante at mapanatili ang mga aralin na comprehensive pa rin. -Ana

Teaching Araling Panlipunan when majoring in a different subject would difficult to adjust to the changes in the approach of curricula. Kasi habang sinusubukan ko na maging engaging ito sa mga learners, madalas na iniisip ko na limitado ako dahil sa kakulangan ng aking kaalaman in the area of my specialization. -Jen

The participants highlighted that having a different specialization in teaching Araling Panlipunan emphasizes the challenges posed when they teach outside their core. It manifested that it is not easy to give content in an assured way or with any surety; therefore, it affects students' performance and learning. Such a situation underlines the need for sufficient training for the teachers who have to handle the subject to bridge knowledge gaps.

Research has revealed that the challenges teachers face regarding content gaps and modes of teaching regarding Araling Panlipunan may thus hinder student participation and appropriation of the curriculum delivery (Garcia & Cruz, 2022). According to Ordoñez (2020), on top of this, non-specialist teachers might be solely impeded by a lack of subject content, rendering them less confident and ineffective. Salazar and Ramos (2021) have also emphasized continued professional development, mentioning that teachers need continuous support and mentoring to improve their knowledge of the content and quality of teaching. This emphasized targeted training so that the gaps can be closed and teaching effectiveness improved.

Furthermore, the Theory of Adaptable Model in the Teaching Profession of Mallillin (2021) corroborated the result. The theory posits that teaching professionals must be flexible and adaptable in their careers, especially when confronted with adversity, like teaching outside their field of specialization. The adjustment of the teachers to impart Araling Panlipunan in case of a variation in their specialty field was an assertion of the key concept of the teaching profession about flexibility. Thus, the theory pointed out that the profession demands teachers to be equipped to confront various challenges, most notably when presenting content, which consequently bears a clear relationship with what teachers reportedly faced in being incapable of teaching and how this was reflected in students' performance.

Theme 2: Limited Time in Teaching Araling Panlipunan

The participants shared that it has not been possible to include the expanded content within the allocated time. The time constraint not only compromised the depth with which content is presented but also hampers how teachers balance covering content with the basic understanding of it.

Some participants in this study expressed that they may not assess students properly when there is a lack of time or resources to assess students' understanding properly. Without such comprehensive assessments, they

cannot determine specific learning gaps or provide adequate feedback for improvement. As a result, students were not targeted with the appropriate support they need to improve their academic development

Due to a lack of time, we are not able to teach all the required content and cannot perform adequate assessments to measure the understanding and skills of the students. This makes it difficult to give prompt feedback on where our students need more support or improvement. -Emy

As much as we could save time in teaching Araling Panlipunan, we are generally unable to give individualized teaching time to cater to each student's needs and learning pace. The pressure to cover a broad curriculum within an unreasonably short period was such that we couldn't offer personalized support needed by some students, such as extra help or different methods of teaching. Then dahil ditto yong mga estudyanteng hindi lubos na nauunawaan ang mga konseptong itinuro, na nagiging sanhi ng problema sa kanilang pag-unawa at, kalaunan, sa kanilang akademikong kalagayan. -Mae

There's just not enough time to adapt the teaching or assessment to every individual student. While I do my best to differentiate, it is often done at a hurried pace, and some students do not receive the individualized attention necessary to master the material. -Kat

The Participants emphasized that they complained of not having ample time to be able to engage with all the content in depth because essential concepts were handled superficially, and they felt that, due to this situation, students remained unclear about several important concepts. Moreover, students cannot be assessed adequately because of the inability to conduct rigorous assessments, causing a delay and a lack of on-target feedback. Consequently, teachers can neither pinpoint specific areas for which further development or practice would be useful to students nor improve their teaching toward meaningful learning and academic growth.

I also tend to prioritize some topics in Araling Panlipunan and miss others kasi there is not enough time. That limits the connection of my students to their lessons. Having more class time would give us a chance to cover more material and dig deeper. –Rose
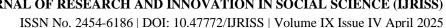
It is hard to have interactive or project-based activities because of the limited time given to Araling Panlipunan. We just usually focus on lectures and not on creative learning. If I had more time, I would have more hands-on activities to make them learn the material well. -Flor

The short time allocated to Araling Panlipunan does not allow me to properly evaluate the performance of my students. I have to give general assessments, na kung saan I may not be able to capture the strengths and weaknesses of each student. -Ana

This showed that the teacher faced many challenges in delivering content due to insufficient time. With little time, some essential concepts were superficially dealt with, leaving the students in doubt about key issues. The teachers cannot conduct effective assessments, thereby not measuring students' performance correctly, and there is delayed and inadequate feedback. This means that teachers cannot identify particular areas where students need improvement, so they cannot give targeted support to the students. Also, the teachers may not employ interactive discussion due to the very limited time.

Time constraints within secondary school settings prevent teachers from focusing individual attention on students. Because the curriculum content in a given school setting is too much to cover quickly, the teaching methodologies cannot be varied to suit each student's speed and need to learn (Mendoza & Aquino, 2022). There are many students with special needs, and those who would require more appropriate instruction find it difficult to hold on to fundamental concepts and will eventually fail in academics. Thus, with proper time management strategies and curricular flexibility, the students have ample opportunities to be taught more (Delos Reyes & Tan, 2021).

The Change Management Theory of Kotter (1996) best fits with the findings because it sets the stage for overcoming the challenges associated with implementing change. Findings illustrate that tremendous time constraints limit teachers' capacities to provide adequate direct instruction, appropriately grade students, or

give timely feedback. Kotter's theory stresses creating urgency and removing some barriers, such as time constraints and training teachers for change efforts. When the school system addresses these issues, the MATATAG curriculum implementation may run more smoothly and improve teaching and learning.

Table 2. Challenges Encountered by Panlipunan Teachers in the Implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum

Profile of the Participants

Participants	Age	Sex	Grade Level	Years in Teaching
Piolo	33	Male	Grade 4	9
Kat	34	Female	Grade 4	10
Cindy	36	Female	Grade 4	11
Jen	32	Female	Grade 4	10
Mae	51	Female	Grade 4	14
April	38	Female	Grade 7	8
Flor	35	Female	Grade 7	6
Emy	29	Female	Grade 7	7
Ana	28	Female	Grade 7	6
Rose	29	Female	Grade 7	7

Theme 3: Struggle to Cover All the Required Content

The teachers usually struggled to give sufficient time to each topic due to the tight schedule and the high demands of the curriculum. They may rush through lessons, so certain concepts get passed over or receive inadequate attention, potentially impacting the learners' understanding of those subjects.

> *I struggle to cover all the required content in depth, leading to superficial learning or an overemphasis on memorization. This can hinder students' ability to develop critical thinking skills and apply their knowledge to real-world situations. Teachers need to find the balance between traditional teaching methods, such as lectures and textbook based learning innovative approaches, such as project-based learning inquiry- based learning and technology integration. -Mae*

> *Sometimes, I feel drowned out by too much content in Araling Panlipunan. Given our limited time, it is impossible to delve deeper into all the areas that need to be covered. I wish there was more time allocated so there would be moments of good discussion and quality activities. -Kat*

> *Struggling to cover everything means that we rarely have time to delve very deep into anything. So ang nangyayari, students may just remember lots of facts and do not learn why they happen. -Rose*

The participants emphasized that with the limited time in the MATATAG Curriculum and the extent required for content, discussions with students by Araling Panlipunan teachers are inhibited from going on a deeper discourse. This prevented the students from really engaging with and critically analyzing key historical, social, and cultural issues. The students cannot develop that deeper understanding and appreciation for the subject, which is bound to impact the learning experience and student growth. The explanation seemed to call for more time because of the topics that need to be discussed, or at least adjustments to the curriculum.

> *As the Araling Panlipunan teachers, we have the challenge of not having enough time to discuss topics in a very in-depth manner due to the pressure of covering such content. Kumbaga dahil sa limitadong oras, mahirap magbigay ng malalim na pag-unawa sa mga estudyante, kaya't hindi nila natutukoy ang mas malalim na pagpapahalaga sa paksa. Nang walang makabuluhang talakayan, nahihirapan ang mga estudyante na konektahin ang mga mahahalagang ideya na makakaapekto sa kanilang karanasan sa pagkatuto. –Jen*

It's really a challenge to cover all the necessary material, especially because students are coming at different paces. It feels like we're always running to get stuff done on time. I get worried minsan kasi baka they're not absorbing everything they need to. -Cindy

The pressure to cover all the required content usually results in a shallow treatment of each topic. I feel I am unable to provide the kinds of discussions that would really allow students to engage with the nuances of the subject. -Mae

Despite the high demand placed upon them, teachers were still expected to cram lots of content within a short period of instruction, thereby disseminating surface-level information and inadequately engaging with the more complicated topics. Teachers felt that they had to rush through lessons, and it left their students little time to do activities that would enhance their mastery of the material, as found by Ramos and Dela Cruz (2022). According to Garcia and Santos (2021), the pressure pedaled by prioritizing content quantity over depth saw meaningful student learning, and said meaningful learning could come through workable adjustments in the curriculum. Lopez and Morales (2020) equally pointed out that professional development would be required to help teachers plan their time and level out the pressure of content with student-centered, interactive pedagogies. The above studies collectively speak of the effect that time constraints can have on teaching quality and the engagement of students.

Probing Issue	Core Ideas	Categories	Essential Theme
Challenges Encountered by Araling Panlipunan Teachers in the Implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum	Superficial Learning for the Students Lack of in-depth Discussion of the Topics	Perseverance despite Challenges	Struggle to Cover all the Required Content
	Hinder Teachers to Deliver the Lesson Effectively Difficulty Meeting Student Needs	Resourcefulness and Creativity despite Challenges	Insufficient Instructional Materials
	Confusion of Topics and Competencies Decreased Students Performance	Performance Impact of Challenges to the Teachers	Lack of Teacher's Training

Theme 4: Insufficient Instructional Materials

It is not unusual for teachers to have difficulty locating the required materials, whether multimedia tools, textbooks, or updated references, to teach all the subjects required by the curriculum. The lack of such resources restricted their ability to deliver courses in numerous interesting ways that can enhance the students' learning. Therefore, if teachers have to rely on antique or inadequate materials, the quality of education and the general students' understanding of important historical, social, and cultural themes are affected.

As teachers of Araling Panlipunan, we often experience difficulty in effective instruction because there are no sufficient teaching materials for them. In addition, updated textbooks and teaching aids or audio-visual materials are scarce resources to make a lesson attractive and easy enough to teach in complex concepts which in turn impacts the students' learning outcomes. -Kat

We face significant challenges po talaga in providing for the needs of each of our students because we do not have the necessary tools to provide differentiated instruction. The lack of up-to-date na mga books and multimedia tools prevents us from offering differentiated instruction, and hence, not every student can learn as he or she wants. It limits our ability to offer individualized support that some students require to succeed in school. -April

Ang Kakulangan talaga sa material resources, leave me little choice but to work with a reduced toolbox from which to assist students fully, particularly those who require additional support or alternative methods of learning. -Ana

The participants highlighted that the lack of proper and updated teaching materials greatly affects the teachers' capacity to teach the subject Araling Panlipunan because it is difficult to present the concepts the students are trying to learn in a very engaging manner. The teaching process may be less attractive and accessible if the basic tools meant to enhance learning and education are not taught, which makes it hard for the student to grasp the concepts. This would impact the quality of education and the students' interest, comprehension, and enjoyment of the topic, thereby influencing their learning outcomes.

It lacks instructional material, but on the other hand, it has driven me to be creative in designing my resources. The struggle has challenged me to find a new way to teach, that is, through the strategy to my students more directly. -Emy

Though there are limited resources, I've become resourceful in finding alternative materials and digital tools. It has allowed me to enhance my students' learning experience with diverse methods. -Rose

There is a lack of enough teaching materials, and thus, delivering my lesson po talaga is a challenge, since most of the time I have to make things up or use out-of-date material. This is because sometimes I will try to reach all my students in the classroom and try to make the material interesting. -Jen

The participants showed the flexibility and ingenuity of Araling Panlipunan teachers even in light of implementing the MATATAG Curriculum without adequate instructional materials. Although most raised concerns about the inadequacy of resources, they also exhibited a positive trend of creativity, innovation, and alternative approaches in teaching to address the needs of their students. This implied that even though material scarcity poses a limitation, it also prompted the design of more student-centered, interesting, and adaptable instructional methods.

Among the barriers that impede a teacher from dealing with diversified student needs in the classroom is inadequate, updated instructional materials for their use (Ramos & Mercado, 2022). However, teachers became creative and resourceful in exploiting available local resources and technology to enhance learning. Teachers were found during the study to use creativity and resourcefulness, taking advantage of resources and technology available within their communities to enhance learning, despite shortages in instructional materials (Santiago & Mendoza, 2020).

Probing Issue	Core Ideas	Categories	Essential Theme
Teachers' Coping Mechanisms on the Challenges Encountered In teaching during the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum	Prioritization of Content	Time Management	Maximizing Resources and Time
	Interactive Platforms	The Positive Impact of Technology	Technology Integration

Theme 5: Lack of Teacher Training

Due to inadequate professional development, it becomes impossible for a teacher to realize what is intended for this curriculum; consequently, one does not know pedagogies, forms of assessment, or both, thus experiencing hard times adjusting to the curriculum and then subsequently delivering the worst results of teaching.

As a teacher in Araling Panlipunan, some unfavourable experiences during the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum include the challenge of adjusting to the new content and teaching strategies, which sometimes led to confusion and insufficient preparation time. Pagkatapos bukod pa rito, ang mabilis na pagbabago ng kurikulum ay naging dahilan ng hirap sa lubos na pag-master at pagtuturo ng mga komplikadong konsepto, na nakaapekto sa kabuuang resulta ng pagkatuto ng mga estudyante ko. -Flor

Lack of teachers training, kumbaga if we're not experienced in teaching, we struggle in delivering lessons that capture students' attention or let them understand the topic better. I do not prepare myself to meet different learning styles, and because of that, students tend to fall behind or get less interested. Because of this, they cannot have that full implementation of good teaching strategies, which shows in their performance and grades. -Piolo

When it is not clearly indicated what the topics and competencies are, it is challenging to tailor the lessons. As a consequence, learners perform poorly because they are not getting substantial instructional support. -April

The participants were confused about what topics to emphasize and how best to teach the competencies required in the MATATAG Curriculum due to inadequate training and professional development. This results in poor and inconsistent quality of instruction because, most of the time, teachers do not have the time or the resources to deliver necessary content or vice versa. This leads to inadequate preparation and, as a result, influences students' understanding, academic performance, and the whole learning experience, thus creating potential long-term educational gaps. It therefore brought an immense urge for point-specific training programs that adequately prepare teachers to take the students through curriculum change.

The kind of training I receive does not prepare me enough for the special needs that come with this curriculum. Kailangan ko talaga ng more professional development, specifically one that will require continuous updates for better implementation. -Cindy

I think there should be a more holistic training of teachers to enable us to better understand and implement the MATATAG Curriculum. If provided with the proper guidance, I feel we can improve our effectiveness as teachers. -Ana

Proper teacher training is greatly lacking and often confuses me on what topics and competencies to prioritize; sometimes this confusion turns out into missed lessons from me. I sometimes notice a decline in performance among my students. -Jen

This highlighted that the failure to train the teachers appropriately leaves them confused about which topics and competencies to focus on, thus making it difficult for the teacher to structure lessons effectively. The outcome of such confusion was usually missed lessons, which may further contribute to gaps in student learning. This confusion, therefore, negatively impacted student performance because the teacher failed to present the lessons straightforwardly, thus affecting students' ability to learn.

The study of Desimone (2020) revealed that effective professional development was one of the means to enhance teachers' effectiveness in supporting them in amending their teaching for student needs, thereby increasing student engagement and achievement. On the other hand, poor professional development leads to inadequate teaching, ineffective lesson delivery, failure to find ways to deal with the differences among learners, and a decline in student achievement. Other research conducted by Kwon and Lee (2021) found that a properly executed professional model greatly enriches general teaching practice factors, differentiation, and student-centered learning. This study showed that continuous professional development support was crucial in better aligning and assisting teachers to build their capacity to meet students' various needs and improve teaching and student achievement.
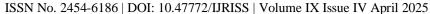
Table 3. Teachers' Coping Mechanisms on the Challenges Encountered in Teaching during the Implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum

Probing Issue	Core Ideas	Categories	Essential Theme
Teachers Insight for the Improvement in the Implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum	Improved Teaching Quality Improved Students' Performance	Impact on Teachers and Students Performance	Provide Continuous Professional Development for Teachers
	Increase Confidence in Lesson Delivery Increased Students Engagement and Motivation	Contextualized Materials as Learning Resources	Develop Comprehensive and Contextualized Learning Materials

Theme 6: Maximizing Resources an Time

Teachers used some of the key content and thus the learning objectives to ensure maximum utilization of the available resources and time. They also used other supporting resources like online platforms, free educational materials, and digital tools to supplement physical resources in their teaching, so learning becomes even more engaging without having to depend on books or other more traditional teaching materials strictly.

Sa kabila ng limitadong oras, hindi namin kayang talakayin ang lahat, kaya't kailangan naming magpokus sa mga pinaka-mahalagang bagay. Seguro just by recognizing what the critical concepts and important skills are para sa aming mga students, we can be certain that they learn the essentials, even if it's at the cost of less critical material. Kumbaga ba it's finding the balance so that we don't leave them high and dry when it comes to the most important content diba po? -Rose

To make the best use of the available resources and time, I try to put several topics together in one lesson. This allows me to present more content to the students without overloading them. -Kat

In this respect, to maximize both resources and time, I concentrate on the most critical content relevant to the learning objectives. That way, students can learn and remember the basic ideas before having to memorize the less essential information. -Flor

The participants emphasized prioritizing key concepts and skills so that students learned the fundamental information, even if it meant giving up less crucial content. The approach was to go deep rather than wide. Additionally, participants aimed to maximize both time and resources by condensing topics into fewer, more comprehensive lessons, which would allow coverage of more material without overwhelming students. Together, their responses suggested that teachers were finding ways to balance the demands of the curriculum with the constraints of time to deliver learning in meaningful ways.

Strategies…Ang ginagawa ko ay I try to make the most of the available resources by focusing on high-priority content. This way, I can ensure that there is enough time for in-depth discussions on the most important topics, and the students learn effectively. -April

I have used free internet resources and interactive learning techniques that help to avail the most use of the material. I then manage time through prioritizing only the important matters and lesson streaming. –Emy

Since I utilize technologies and online facilities, I will save more time and make things more interesting during learning. Through this, it also enables the proper management of resources such that every lesson counted. -Jen

The participants highlighted the positive impact of harnessing technology and online resources to overcome challenges from limited resources and time. Using free internet resources and interactive learning techniques, they relied on finding ways to get more engagement while maximizing available material, focusing only on key content to manage their time.

Time management by teachers emphasized the priority of key content and focus on critical concepts. When time is managed properly, teachers can balance content with student engagement (Meyer & Norman, 2022). Additionally, the resourceful technique of teaching, such as learning interaction and free online resources, in the maximization of resources within a classroom. It highlighted how creative methods could stretch the limited amounts of resources available to make learning more dynamic and accessible (Rothstein, 2021).

Theme 7: Technology Integration

In this regard, resources bridged the gaps through digital tools and online platforms, and educational apps have become essential compared to before. Basically, incorporating technology into lessons makes learning more vibrant and efficient, even where a constraint of time and materials exists.

Then of course also, interactive platforms are really a lifesaver for us, especially in the sense that we face severe challenges when we implement the MATATAG Curriculum. It offers us an alternative way in engaging students beyond what we do traditionally, making lessons more interactive and appealing. In other words kumbaga, pinapadali nito ang pag-access sa mga nilalaman at tinutulungan din tayo upang matugunan ang iba't ibang estilo ng pagkatuto, na mahalaga dahil may iba't ibang pangangailangan ang mga estudyante. -Cindy

I make use of various digital platforms in my teaching, which does not only enhance the understanding of the students but also fosters active participation. Technology makes it easy to tailor lessons to suit different styles of learning. -Ana

Using technology in the classroom has enhanced the interactive and engaging nature of my teaching for my students. It also avails me of easy access to a variety of resources that complement the learning experience. -Jen

This indicated that interactive platforms were essential coping mechanisms that helped teachers overcome the MATATAG Curriculum's implementation challenges. By providing an alternative and more interesting way of teaching, these interactive platforms made the content more accessible to students and serve their diverse needs. Furthermore, the fact that interactive multimedia tools allow monitoring of student response, especially against the backdrop of time constraints under pressure to "cover" long curriculum content, better helps teachers check the progress. In other words, these tools better enable teachers in their instructional struggle and enhance learner experiences.

While integrating technology is challenging, it surely elevates the level of student engagement in class and makes lessons livelier. I also save a lot of time in preparation and can monitor students much better. -Rose

Technology integration has changed my approaches in teaching. It has made a whole lot of material not available before accessible and has helped me meet various needs of students. -Emy

With the use of digital tools, I can offer the students more interactive content and immediately assess their level of understanding. -Kat

The positive attitude that technology integration may bring regarding teaching and learning was that technology integration may often pose a great challenge to teaching. Hence, although technology integration posed effort and adaptability, it was bound to have more vigorous and efficient teaching practices that may benefit both teachers and learners.

This finding corresponds to the study of Smith and Garcia (2021), which showed that interactive resources are a must for engagement and customization of learning. That alone would suffice for monitoring students'

progress. Such teaching resources also helped teachers to face problems they encounter that have their roots in the necessity for assuring the individual needs of each student within the constraints of the MATATAG Curriculum. The real-time monitoring of students' performance can provide immediate feedback, suggest gaps in students' understanding, and allow teachers to modify their strategies to enable student learning (Hughes & Cruz,2022).

Moreover, using digital tools made differentiated instruction much easier, as teachers could vary the pace of teaching according to individual student learning styles or needs, improving student learning outcomes amid inequalities in the time available for teaching the curriculum. Such experiences have brought about using interactive resources and technology to alleviate some of the intricacies occasioned by the MATATAG Curriculum (Lopez & Ramos, 2020).

The Theory of Sustained Optimal Challenge of Ahmed (2017) correlates with the findings in presenting specific interactive resources that support personalized learning and tracking learners' progress in teaching. This may assist the teacher in meeting the unique needs of the students despite the constraints of the MATATAG Curriculum. It proposes that the teachers, using these tools, should create an ideal learning environment and adapt to provide a successful challenge. As he notes, with real-time feedback, they should be able to adjust their strategies, thus providing an appropriate challenge for all their students.

Table 4. Teachers' Insight for the Improvement in the Implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum

Theme 8: Provide Continuous Professional Development for Teachers

The continuous training and workshops would equip the teachers with the latest teaching strategies, the updated curriculum followed, and the assessment methods adopted, thus enhancing their teaching abilities. Additionally, it would better equip teachers to deal with different issues that affect student learning, which would, in turn, ensure that students are better engaged in class.

MATATAG seems to revert to a focus on making sure that students can master basic skills before diving into more complex or specialized topics. MATATAG places more emphasis on equipping teachers with the necessary tools and skills to teach the basics effectively. This can potentially lead to more effective teaching outcomes, as teachers are better prepared and supported. -Kat

As an Araling Panlipunan teacher, I have really noticed that continuous professional development has indeed influenced my capacity to teach better. Through trainings and workshops, I learned to understand how I could relate better with my students, make lessons fit the needs of my learners, and determine the needs of the students themselves. And with that noh, kitang-kita ang resulta malaki ang pagbuti ng kanilang akademikong pagganap at interes sa paksa. Kapag mas handa kami bilang mga guro, mas maganda naming matutulungan ang mga estudyante na ma-master ang mga pangunahing konsepto at kasanayan na kailangan para sa kanilang tagumpay. -Flor

I believe that ongoing professional development is what has helped in developing better teaching skills. It keeps refreshing our minds, equipping us with new techniques, and keeping up with the new trends in education. -Ana

Professional development not only helps teachers enhance their content knowledge but also allows them to become more connected to students and better respond to their different learning styles. As the participant mentioned, the improvement seen in the students was an obvious indication of how teacher development positively impacts student outcomes. This implies that teacher training and development may help students learn well, be interested in their subjects, and achieve more.

Continuous professional development for the teacher directly benefits quality teaching. Since teachers' fresh strategies about changing student performances improve, so can the work environment. -Mae

Through continuous professional development, one keeps updating knowledge that is critical for the instruction in the classes since students stand to benefit better as a consequence. -Kat

Siguro, when teachers are constantly trained, they feel more confident and effective in their teaching. That is when quality lessons are enhanced, and, as a result, the students' performance improves in class. -April

The more confident and effective the teacher became through CPD, the more conducive their work environment became to more engaging and motivated people for themselves and their students. In this sense, continuously updating teachers' skills would be a direct factor leading to better teaching practices and improved student performance.

This resonates with the study of Johnson and Lee (2020), who found that targeted professional development significantly improved teachers' ability to deliver differentiated lessons with increased student engagement and learning. Rodriguez and Perez (2022) mentioned that professional development in active learning strategies positively impacted teachers' ability to engage students in active learning, allowing them to raise student engagement and improve outcomes. This strengthened the findings of both studies, indicating the necessity of ongoing teacher professional development to help refine teaching practices and enhance student achievement.

Theme 9: Develop Comprehensive and Contextualized Learning Materials

This encompasses the development of holistic learning materials that are well-rounded and contextualized. At the same time, they should encompass the cultures of local levels for better recognition of relevance. Therefore, they should also present something that relates these lessons to day-to-day or even real-time situations within the same students' environment. This made learning meaningful and effective. Using contextualized content enabled teachers to meet diverse learning styles, encourage critical thinking, and ensure that the knowledge acquired was applied practically.

I'd like to highlight here with developed and contextualized materials, I am confident to teach the class. Materials that cater to the student's needs and culture help me explain things more clearly and effectively so that even when teaching complicated ideas, it will not be that difficult to present. The confidence that the students would easily understand is achieved by having the resources available concerning their experiences. - Jen

When the materials reflect the culture and realities of the students, you really see them become more interested and engaged in the topic. You see their curiosity perk up, and they ask more questions and contribute more during discussions. Also, if you use what are called interactive activities and include relevant examples, then you will see the enthusiasm for the topic grow at least in learning outcomes. -April

Developing well-rounded and contextualized learning resources has really enhanced my confidence to teach. With good resources which reflect the students' context, I feel well-prepared to engage them in effective ways. - Piolo

The participants highlighted that the developed contextual material enhanced the teachers' confident delivery of their lessons. Therefore, culturally based educational material will not only add relatability to the content but also help a teacher approach their work at different levels on matters that would normally seem very technical or difficult, as explained. This approach led to a healthy learning environment wherein both the teacher is well-equipped and confident and the students have more chances of comprehending and understanding the material with positive academic outcomes.

By making learning materials more relevant to the students' environment and experiences, I notice a significant boost in their engagement and motivation. It also gives me more confidence in my teaching, knowing the materials are tailored to their needs. -Mae

Having contextualized learning materials has improved the way I teach. The students are more attentive and interested in the topics as the content cuts across to their lives, and it gives me the confidence to teach better. - Rose

When the learning materials are complete and contextual, students feel that they are well connected to lessons, which brings about motivation. For me also, it strengthens my confidence when delivering lessons since I know them to be on par with student interests and life experiences. -Ana

This indicates that creating more developed and contextual learning resources intensifies the readiness to teach in a classroom by a teacher and intensifies students' interests. Learning material contextualized within students' environmental realities increases confidence on their side; otherwise, they develop the necessary engagement, if students learn topics applied directly in the world of human experiences, because their interests tend to go deeper.

Johnson and Lee (2020) found that targeted professional development improved teachers' delivery of differentiated lessons, increasing student engagement and achievement. Likewise, Rodriguez and Perez (2022) identified the positive impact of professional development on active learning strategies, helping teachers increase student engagement and subsequently raising participation and student outcomes. Additionally, Martinez and Garcia (2021) state that CPD has empowered teachers with instruction, emphasizing personalized learning and enhanced student performance and motivation.

SUMMARY

After the researcher transcribed and analyzed the responses of the participants during the focus group discussion on their lived experiences in teaching Araling Panlipunan in the implementations of the MATATAG curriculum, the challenges they encountered, their coping mechanisms, and their insights to improve the implementations of the MATATAG Curriculum, the researcher realized that they had the same experiences in teaching Araling Panlipunan. They both stated that teaching Araling Panlipunan in the new curriculum was quite hard. Nevertheless, despite the limited time allotted and their inadequate resources for teaching Araling Panlipunan, they find ways to make their teaching more engaging, interactive, and meaningful.

The first major theme of the lived experiences of the Araling Panlipunan teachers was the difficulties of teaching Araling Panlipunan. The participants shared that they experienced difficulties since they somewhat shifted to another curriculum without intensive training and workshops given to them. With those experiences, they feel that they cannot give the best learning to their students. Another major theme under the lived experiences of the Araling Panlipunan teachers was the limited time for teaching the subject. As the researcher heard the participants' sentiments, teaching with very little time was difficult. It cannot grasp all the things needed to do during the teaching and learning process. Hence, the participants believed that the educational leaders may help them in the experiences they had to improve their performance in teaching the Araling Panlipunan subject, especially since they follow the MATATAG Curriculum.

Furthermore, the challenges that the Araling Panlipunan teachers encountered in implementing the MATATAG Curriculum revolved around three major themes. The first major theme was the struggle to cover all the required content. As the participants shared that they have difficulties teaching every topic because of the limited time allotted to the subject. The forty-five minutes given to the teachers was insufficient to cover every topic. However, the researcher's participants highlighted that since they were teachers, they needed to be more flexible and creative in delivering the lessons. The second major theme was the insufficient instructional materials. Instructional materials served as the essential elements in having an excellent performance in terms of delivering the lessons. Yet, the participants experienced a lack of instructional materials. They beg to hear the whisper of their hearts that their heads may provide this important element in their teaching. The last major theme was the lack of teachers' training. The participants shared that they need intensive training to align their skills and knowledge with the MATATAG Curriculum.

In terms of the teachers' coping mechanism on the challenges they encountered in teaching during the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum, maximizing resources and time was a key strategy. The participants pointed out how they use available materials in a strategic manner, whether through the reuse of old resources, low-cost alternatives, or even digital tools that enhance their lessons. This may help them optimize the learning experience, cover more content effectively, and keep the students engaged. The second

major theme was the integration of technology in their lessons. As shared by the participants, they embrace digital tools, such as interactive platforms, multimedia resources, and online assessments, in enhancing teaching and making lessons more interesting. By introducing technology, teachers were able to reach out to diverse learning styles, make learning more interactive and personalized, and close the gap in resources. The last major theme was peer collaboration and mentorship, as mentioned by the participants; they acknowledged the value of teaming up with colleagues, particularly through mentoring, to exchange knowledge, tools, and techniques for meeting common problems. This approach facilitated a sense of community, reduced stress, and made teachers feel happier, consequently improving their teaching and student performance.

Lastly, under the insight of the teachers for the improvement in the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum, the first major theme was providing continuous professional development for teachers. The participants stressed the need for continuous training and workshop provision that would upgrade their skills, update their curriculum, and provide means to improve their teaching strategies. Eventually, teachers would feel more self-assured with their abilities and confident in allowing them to deal with varying learning demands and improve student outcomes as well. The second major theme was to develop comprehensive and contextualized learning materials. The participants emphasized that there is a need for teaching materials that not only follow the curriculum but are also relevant to the local context and experiences of the students, thus making the lessons more engaging, meaningful, and helpful in helping them understand important concepts. The third major theme was ensuring adequate time allocation. The participants highlighted the availability of sufficient time to cover the material while offering the students adequate time to understand what was being covered. Proper time management may ensure enough time for the effective implementation of the MATATAG curriculum without rush, hence improving both teaching and learning.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study denote the profound challenges and adaptive strategies experienced by Araling Panlipunan teachers as they navigate the demands of the MATATAG curriculum. More than logistical concerns such as time constraints and resource shortages, the findings reflect deeper, systemic issues affecting teacher preparedness, morale, and instructional effectiveness. These challenges not only impact day-to-day classroom experiences but also influence the overall quality of education that students receive.

One key insight from the study is teachers' intentional prioritization of content. Rather than viewing it as a compromise, this approach represents a strategic pedagogical decision rooted in deep professional reflection. It underscores the critical need for curricular flexibility that empowers teachers to tailor instruction based on learners' needs and contextual realities. This finding should inform policy reforms that aim to balance curriculum breadth with realistic instructional timeframes.

The innovative integration of technology by these educators further illustrates their resilience and forward-thinking mindset. Technology was a crucial tool for bridging gaps left by traditional methods, enabling personalized and engaging learning experiences. This suggests that sustained investments in digital infrastructure and ongoing ICT training should be central to future policy directions, especially in resource-constrained settings.

Ultimately, the stories shared by these teachers reveal a profound commitment to student learning despite institutional and structural barriers. Their resilience, adaptability, and ingenuity speak volumes about the untapped potential within the education system—potential that could be fully realized through comprehensive and responsive policy support. To ensure the success of the MATATAG curriculum and future reforms, it is imperative that educational policies prioritize teacher training, provide sufficient teaching resources, and promote collaborative professional development models.

These findings advocate for a policy environment that acknowledges teachers' lived experiences and actively integrates their voices into decision-making processes. Empowering educators through meaningful support is not merely a response to current challenges it is an investment in a more equitable, sustainable, and effective educational future for all.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher proposes the following recommendations:

1. It is recommended that the school heads implement effective professional development programs according to the fitting level of teachers' strengths when difficulties arise in implementing specific pedagogical features, such as critical thinking and an interdisciplinary approach, as stipulated by the curriculum.
2. Support systems that allow for coping and provide a safety net for teachers should be put in place. Peer mentoring and teamwork among teachers may allow seasoned teachers to transfer effective coping behaviors to new teachers. Schools providing programs that will ease stress and help with time management can also minimize stress among teachers.
3. It is recommended that open communication channels with parents and the involvement of these parents in their child's progress should be evident. Strategies and resources to implement at home would be provided for the parents regarding their child's progress.
4. Lastly, future studies may conduct the same research in another context. It may be in the context of private schools or far-flung schools. The result of this study may be the baseline for other research related to the challenges encountered by the teachers in teaching Araling Panlipunan.

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