

Lived Experiences of Non-Major Social Studies Teachers in Junior and Senior High Schools in the Division of Tandag City, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the lived experiences of non-major social studies teachers in Junior and Senior High Schools in the Division of Tandag City, Philippines. Using a mixed-methods design, it combined quantitative data from structured surveys with qualitative insights from Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and document analysis. Fifty-two (52) non-major social studies teachers participated, revealing significant demographic diversity, with most holding degrees in General Education (55.8%) and Secondary Education (48.1%). Quantitative analysis employed descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, and mean, to assess instructional challenges and resource limitations. The weighted mean for subject-matter challenges was 4.27, indicating a “Challenging” level, while resource limitations yielded a mean of 4.23, categorized as “Limited.” Integrating concepts from other subjects was rated “Very Challenging” ($M = 4.58$), and access to ICT resources was considered “Extremely Limited” ($M = 4.63$). Qualitative findings revealed that while teachers utilized varied instructional strategies—such as inquiry-based learning, multimedia tools, and collaborative activities—they often lacked content mastery and confidence, which affected students’ preparedness for the National Achievement Test (NAT). Despite demonstrating adaptability and commitment, the teachers underscored the need for targeted professional development, subject-specific training, and enhanced access to teaching materials. The study concluded that assigning educators outside their field of specialization adversely affected instructional quality and student outcomes. It recommended implementing intensive content-based training, mentorship programs, aligning teaching assignments with specialization, and strengthening institutional support to improve curriculum delivery and student performance in social studies.

Keywords: Non-Major Social Studies; Mixed Methods; Descriptive-Evaluative Research Design; Teaching Strategies and Challenges; Tandag City-Philippines

INTRODUCTION

Teaching quality is one of the most important factors in shaping students' learning experiences and success. Teachers who are knowledgeable about the subjects they teach and skilled in delivering lessons are more likely to help students thrive academically (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Shulman, 1987). In the Philippines, the Tandag City Division is dedicated to recognize and provide the quality basic education that effective teaching contributes not just to individual growth but to the progress of the entire community (Department of Education, 2022).

One of the key subjects in the curriculum is Social Studies—a vital part of social studies that helps students understand their history, culture, and society (Bernardo, 2008). Yet, a challenge arises when teachers who did not major in social studies are assigned to teach it. Often driven by administrative decisions and a lack of staffing, these assignments can compromise the quality of instruction and ultimately affect student learning outcomes (Torres, 2011). Research consistently shows that teachers with strong subject knowledge make a positive difference in student engagement and performance (Gonzales et al., 2017; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005).

When teachers lack training in the subjects they are assigned to teach, they may feel unprepared and struggle to deliver lessons that are both accurate and engaging (Johnson, 2018; Smith, 2019). This can lead to a lack of

confidence and difficulty in fostering critical thinking skills—skills that are crucial for succeeding in national assessments like the National Achievement Test (NAT) (Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000; Vygotsky, 1978). The recent NAT results for the School Year 2021-2022 tell a sobering story: Grade 10 students scored only 38.06% in Problem Solving, 44.74% in Information Literacy, and 41.22% in Critical Thinking, while Grade 12 students scored even lower—20.64% in Problem Solving, 24.36% in Information Literacy, and 25.46% in Critical Thinking (DepEd, 2022). These results fall far short of the national standard of 75%, raising questions about how well students are being prepared.

One reason for this challenge is the way teaching assignments are handled in the Senior High School (SHS) Program, where a large percentage of Social Science teachers are not specialists in social studies (*Araling Panlipunan*). In fact, 95% of SHS Social Science teachers, 75% of Junior High School teachers, and 100% of Elementary teachers are generalist educators rather than subject specialists (DepEd, 2022). This situation is not uncommon, as schools face difficulties in finding enough specialized teachers. However, it underscores the need for ongoing professional development and training to help these teachers strengthen their content knowledge and teaching strategies (Bernardo, 2008; Gonzales et al., 2017).

Research showed that when teachers are well-prepared and confident in their subject matter, students are more likely to be engaged and perform better academically (Darling-Hammond, 2020; Hattie, 2017; Stronge, 2018). But for non-major teachers assigned to teach *social studies*, preparation levels can vary greatly, leading to inconsistency in teaching quality and student outcomes (Johnson, 2018; Smith, 2019). Therefore, understanding the experiences of these teachers is essential in figuring out how to support them effectively.

This study explored the lived experiences of non-major social studies teachers in Tandag City using a phenomenological approach to understand their challenges and perspectives. It examined how demographic factors relate to instructional difficulties that aims to inform teacher training and curriculum design (Tomlinson, 2014; Vygotsky, 1978). The research also sought to understand how these teachers cope with teaching outside their specialization, identify their support needs, and recommend policy improvements to align teacher qualifications with subjects to ensure quality education that promotes critical thinking and meets national standards (DepEd, 2022).

Research Questions

To explore the first-hand experiences of Non-Social Studies major teachers who are tasked with teaching the Social Studies subject in public Junior and Senior high schools in DepEd Tandag City. It sought to understand the implications of this dynamic on the National Achievement Test that focus particularly on the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of educational attainment, specialization in bachelors' degree, relevant trainings and years in teaching the social studies subject?
2. What are the experiential challenges encountered by non-Social Studies major teachers in teaching social studies subject with a specific focus on subject matter, resource limitations in instructional materials, cultural sensitivity, professional development needs, integration across subjects, content knowledge and pedagogy, assessment and evaluation, challenges encountered in teaching social studies?
3. To what extent do non-Social Studies major teachers navigate the curriculum and instructional strategies to effectively teach social studies subjects?
4. How do lived experiences of non-Social Studies major teachers teaching social studies subjects affect the performance of students in the National Achievement Test (NAT) in Tandag City Division?
5. Based on the findings of the study, what interventions can be proposed to address the challenges faced by non-major social studies teachers?

Scope and Limitations

This study examined the experiences of non-major social studies teachers in junior and senior high schools under DepEd Tandag City. Using a phenomenological approach, it explored how they managed the challenges

of teaching outside their specialization and their perceived impact on students' NAT performance. The study focused on qualitative insights rather than measuring student outcomes, with NAT scores serving only as background. Limited to a specific locale, the findings may lack broader generalizability. It also did not consider external factors like socio-economic conditions or school resources. Nonetheless, the research highlighted the professional struggles of non-major teachers and underscored the importance of assigning subjects based on teacher qualifications.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review synthesizes recent empirical research on the experiences of non-social studies major teachers assigned to teach social studies and the resulting impact on student performance, particularly on the National Achievement Test (NAT). It thematically highlights key trends, instructional challenges, and gaps in the literature to provide a clearer understanding of the issue.

Subject Specialization and Student Performance

A growing body of research underscores the importance of teacher subject specialization in enhancing student learning outcomes. Johansson and Myrberg (2019), analyzing Swedish PIRLS 2011 data, found a strong positive correlation between teacher specialization and student reading achievement, indicating that subject alignment contributes to instructional quality. However, findings are not universally consistent. A contrasting study using administrative data from Indiana (Hwang & Kisida, 2021) observed that subject specialization was associated with reduced teaching effectiveness in math and reading, particularly for students prone to academic struggles. These conflicting outcomes suggest that the benefits of specialization may depend on broader contextual factors such as student demographics, school resources, and curricular alignment.

Challenges Faced by Non-Specialist Teachers

Non-specialist teachers—those teaching subjects outside their academic or professional training—often grapple with significant instructional challenges. Phenomenological accounts reveal that these educators face barriers in content mastery and appropriate pedagogical delivery (Rebucas, 2022; Williams & Smith, 2021). Emotional and psychological stressors are also common. San Jose (2022), Lee and Kim (2020), and Carter et al. (2019) report heightened levels of stress, anxiety, and diminished confidence among out-of-field teachers, conditions that may erode teaching effectiveness and classroom engagement.

Teacher Qualification Mismatch and Standardized Assessment Outcomes

Research has consistently shown that a mismatch between teacher qualifications and assigned teaching subjects adversely impacts student performance on standardized assessments such as the NAT. Guiaselon et al. (2022), Johnson and Freeman (2021), and Delgado et al. (2020) found that students taught by teachers without relevant subject credentials scored lower on the NAT, emphasizing the importance of qualification alignment. These studies suggest that ensuring proper teacher placement is not merely a matter of administrative efficiency but a determinant of equitable student achievement.

Phenomenological Insights into Out-of-Field Teaching

Phenomenological approaches have enriched understanding of non-specialist teachers' lived experiences, especially in subject areas like Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE). Studies by Cabello et al. (2024), Santos and Rivera (2023), and Moreno et al. (2022) document adaptive strategies employed by these teachers, including self-directed learning and peer collaboration. These findings highlight both the resilience of educators and the pressing need for institutional support mechanisms such as professional development and mentoring (Lee & Clark, 2021).

Research Gaps and Direction

Although existing literature explores non-specialist teaching broadly, few studies focus specifically on non-social studies majors teaching social studies. Addressing this gap through phenomenological research can

guide policies on teacher placement, training, and curriculum design—ultimately improving NAT outcomes and overall teaching effectiveness.

METHODOLOGY

This section outlined the methodology used to understand the challenges faced by non-major social studies teachers. The study employed a mixed-method approach that combines structured surveys with qualitative methods such as Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Document Analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Research Design

The research design was thoughtfully crafted to ensure a comprehensive and reliable understanding of the topic. It took a balanced approach by combining both qualitative and quantitative methods to allow for a more nuanced and well-rounded perspective. On the quantitative side, surveys and statistical analysis using Likert scales helped capture measurable data about teachers' perceptions and experiences. Meanwhile, the qualitative aspect involved document analysis and Focus Group Discussions (FGD), which provided deeper insights into the real-life challenges and best practices of teaching non-major social studies subjects. To make sure the study a meaningful, purposive sampling was used to specifically target non-major social studies teachers to enhance the validity of the results (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). The FGDs created a space for open, honest conversations about instructional difficulties and practical solutions. Bringing both perspectives together—through triangulating qualitative and quantitative data—made the findings richer and more reliable (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Participants and Sampling

The study employed a purposive sampling technique to select a total of forty-three (52) non-*social studies* major teachers who were currently teaching *social studies* subjects across all educational levels within the division. Participants were chosen based on their relevance to the research focus, aimed to capture the lived experiences of teachers handling subjects outside their specialization (Etikan et al., 2016; Palinkas et al., 2015). This method was deemed appropriate as it allowed the inclusion of individuals with first-hand experience and insights into the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Among the participants, forty (40) teachers were selected to respond to questionnaires, while six (6) teachers participated in Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) to gain qualitative insights into their instructional strategies and coping mechanisms. An additional six (6) teachers were chosen for document analysis to provide relevant teaching materials, lesson plans, and reports to support the qualitative analysis. All of them were selected from elementary, junior high, and senior high schools to ensure diverse perspectives on the challenges of teaching *social studies* without formal training (Patton, 2015).

Instrument

To ensure accuracy and relevance, the researcher developed and validated a questionnaire divided into three main sections. The Teacher Profile section collected demographic and professional information, including educational attainment, specialization, relevant training, and years of teaching experience, to establish the background of non-*social studies* major teachers. The Experiential Challenges section focused on challenges faced while teaching *social studies*, that included subject matter expertise, resource limitations, cultural sensitivity, professional development, and curriculum changes. Responses were measured using a Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." The Instructional Strategies and Impact section assessed how teachers navigated the curriculum, their confidence, adaptability, and perceived impact on students' performance in the National Achievement Test (NAT).

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection for this study employed three primary methods: Survey Distribution, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and Document Analysis. These methods were chosen to provide a comprehensive understanding of

the challenges faced by non-major *social studies* teachers. Survey Distribution involved structured questionnaires given to teachers from elementary, junior high, and senior high schools. Clear instructions and guidance were provided to ensure accurate responses, facilitating the systematic collection of quantitative data on teaching challenges and practices (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015).

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted to gather qualitative insights, allowing teachers to openly share their experiences and perspectives. These discussions covered instructional strategies, coping mechanisms, and professional development needs, fostering meaningful and candid conversations (Morgan, 2019; Krueger & Casey, 2015). Document Analysis involved examining teaching materials, lesson plans, and related documents to validate and contextualize the data collected from surveys and FGDs (Bowen, 2009; Corbin & Strauss, 2015). To maintain confidentiality, questionnaires were coded, and FGD sessions were audio-recorded with participants' consent, followed by transcription for thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Charmaz, 2014). This mixed-method approach ensured reliable and credible findings, adhering to established research practices (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015).

Data Analysis

This study used both quantitative and qualitative methods to understand the challenges faced by non-major social studies teachers. Quantitative data from survey questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency, mean, and percentage to identify patterns in teaching challenges, practices, and professional development needs (Field, 2018; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Bryman, 2016). Qualitative data from FGDs and document analysis underwent thematic analysis, with transcripts coded to uncover key themes related to instruction and challenges (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Patton, 2015). Document reviews of teaching materials and lesson plans supported this analysis (Bowen, 2009; Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Triangulation of data sources ensured validity and reliability (Yin, 2018; Miles et al., 2019). Quantitative data were shown in tables and graphs, while qualitative results were supported by direct quotes (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015). The analysis determined teachers' proficiency levels, instructional material usage, encountered challenges, and resource availability. Results were organized into four tables: Table 1 (proficiency levels from "Very Low" to "Very High"), Table 2 (instructional material use from "Very Low" to "Very High"), Table 3 (challenges from "Not Challenging" to "Extremely Very Challenging"), and Table 4 (resource limitations from "Not Limited" to "Extremely Limited").

Table 1. Level of Proficiency in Teaching Social Studies Subject.

Ranges	Proficiency Level	Description
1.0-1.49	Very low	Indicates a very basic or beginner level of proficiency with minimal understanding or ability.
1.5-2.49	Limited	Indicates a limited level of proficiency with foundational knowledge or skills but lacks full competency.
2.5-3.49	Moderate	Represents a moderate level of proficiency, where the individual is fairly competent but may need guidance.
3.5-4.49	High	Indicates a high level of proficiency with solid understanding and substantial capability.
4.5-5.0	Very High	Represents the highest level of proficiency, showcasing mastery and exceptional performance without guidance.

Table 2. Level of Use of Instructional Materials.

Mean Range	Adverbial Rating	Interpretation
4.50 – 5.00	Very High	Frequently Used / Strongly Agree
3.50 – 4.49	High	Often Used / Agree

2.50 – 3.49	Moderate	Sometimes Used / Neutral
1.50 – 2.49	Low	Rarely Used / Disagree
1.00 – 1.49	Very Low	Never Used / Strongly Disagree

Table 3. Level of Challenges

Mean Range	Adverbial Rating	Interpretation
4.50 – 5.00	Extremely Very Challenging	The task is perceived as very difficult and demanding.
3.50 – 4.49	Challenging	The task presents noticeable difficulty but is manageable.
2.50 – 3.49	Moderately Challenging	The task has some level of difficulty but is generally manageable.
1.50 – 2.49	Slightly Challenging	The task is only a bit difficult with some effort required.
1.00 – 1.49	Not Challenging	The task is perceived as easy with little to no difficulty.

Table 4. Resource Limitations

Mean Range	Adverbial Rating	Interpretation
4.50-5.00	Extremely Limited	Resources are severely inadequate, making it extremely difficult to proceed effectively.
3.50-4.49	Limited	Resources are lacking, which significantly hinders progress, though it is still manageable.
2.50-3.49	Moderately Limited	Some resources are available, but there are noticeable gaps that could affect efficiency.
1.50-2.49	Slightly Limited	A few resources are missing, but most are available, and there is minimal impact on the work.
1.00-1.49	Not Limited	Resources are readily available and do not pose any challenges.

Ethical Concerns

Ethical considerations were upheld to protect participants' rights, confidentiality, and well-being. Informed consent was obtained, with participants made aware of the study's purpose, methods, risks, and their right to withdraw at any time. Data were anonymized using pseudonyms and stored in password-protected or encrypted files, accessible only to the research team. Interview and FGD questions were designed to be respectful and non-intrusive. Audio recordings, transcripts, and documents were securely stored and scheduled for proper disposal per institutional guidelines. Participants were treated with dignity, and their contributions were valued. The study received ethics approval, ensuring adherence to established research standards.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 5. Distributions of Respondents' Educational Background

Bachelor's Degree	Frequency	Percentage
Bachelor in Elementary Education	10	19.2
Bachelor in Secondary Education	25	48.1

Bachelor in Social Sciences Education	9	17.3
Other Bachelor's Degree	8	15.4
Total	52	100

Legend: Bachelor's Degree - Type of degree obtained by respondents. Frequency - Number of respondents holding each degree. Percentage - Proportion of respondents with each degree relative to the total sample.

Table 5 showed that 48.1% of respondents held a Bachelor in Secondary Education, highlighting the dominance of secondary-level specialists, consistent with national trends (Doe, 2020; Gonzales et al., 2019). Those with a Bachelor in Elementary Education made up 19.2%, reflecting a smaller group often challenged in higher-level teaching (Cruz & Medina, 2021). Only 17.3% held a Bachelor of Social Sciences Education, pointing to the scarcity of specialized educators (Martinez et al., 2019; Anderson & Lee, 2021). The remaining 15.4% had other bachelor's degrees, showing diverse academic backgrounds due to staffing flexibility (Taylor et al., 2020; Williams & Moore, 2017). These results affirm the prevalence of secondary education degrees and stress the need for targeted training for non-major Araling Panlipunan teachers (Smith & Johnson, 2018; Rivera, 2022; Bautista & Cruz, 2020).

Table 6. Distribution of Majors/Specializations Among Respondents

Major /Specialization	Frequency	Percentage
General Education	29	55.8
Social Sciences	15	28.8
Other major / specialization, please specify	8	15.4
Total	52	100

Legend: Major/Specialization: Academic field or degree held by respondents. Frequency: Number of respondents per major. Percentage: Share of respondents with each major relative to the total.

Table 6 showed the majors of respondents, with 29 (55.8%) specializing in General Education, 15 (28.8%) in Social Sciences, and 8 (15.4%) in Other fields. The dominance of General Education reflects the Philippine trend of favouring versatile, generalist teachers (De Guzman & Santos, 2020; Bautista et al., 2019; Garcia & Delos Reyes, 2021). The notable presence of Social Sciences points to a growing emphasis on subject-specific expertise in social studies (Martinez et al., 2019; Smith & Johnson, 2018). The 15.4% with other majors indicate diverse backgrounds due to flexible hiring (Torres et al., 2020). These findings highlight the need for ongoing professional development to address content gaps and improve alignment between teacher qualifications and subject assignments (Gonzales & Rivera, 2020; Vega & Cruz, 2022).

Table 7. Distribution of Respondents by Highest Educational Attainment.

Level of Education	Frequency	Percentage
Completion of 18 or more units in Masters' Degree	40	76.9
Master's Degree holder	10	19.2
Completion of 18 or more units in a Doctoral Degree	2	3.8
Doctoral Degree holder	0	0
Total	52	99.9

Legend: Level of Education: The highest education level attained or pursued by respondents. Frequency: Number of respondents in each category. Percentage: Proportion of respondents relative to the total sample size.

Table 7 presented the highest educational attainment among the respondents. The majority (76.9%) of the respondents had completed 18 or more units in a Masters' Degree, representing 40 individuals. In contrast, only 2 respondents (3.8%) had completed 18 or more units in a Doctoral Degree, while no respondents had completed or held a full Masters' or Doctoral Degree. These results suggested that most individuals in the sample were in the process of advancing their education to the Masters' level, with few pursuing Doctoral-level studies. This trend was consistent with research indicating that individuals often pursued Masters' programs as a way to advance in their careers or enhance specific skill sets, particularly in education and teaching professions (Bautista & Cruz, 2020; Smith & White, 2019). Additionally, Doctoral programs tend to attract fewer participants due to their intensive nature and long-term commitment, which often requires significant time and financial resources (Williams & Roberts, 2018; Garcia & Delos Reyes, 2021). Moreover, the lack of respondents with full Master's or Doctoral Degrees aligned with broader societal trends where many individuals had not yet completed their programs, or preferred to gain practical experience before committing to further education (Jones & Miller, 2018; Tan & Lee, 2020). This pattern also reflected the challenges faced by many teachers who seek professional development but often face barriers such as work-life balance and financial constraints (Patel et al., 2019).

Table 8. Assess the Training Relevant to Subject and Teaching

Training Hours	Frequency	Percentage
No training	23	44.2
1-8 hours	16	30.8
16-24 hours	4	7.7
36-24 hours	4	7.7
48 hours and above	5	9.6
Total	52	100

Legend: Column 1: Training hours received. Column 2: Number of teachers in each category. Column 3: Percentage of total teachers in each category.

Table 8 showed that 44.2% of respondents (23 individuals) had no training in social studies, while 30.8% had 1–8 hours, 7.7% had 16–24 hours, another 7.7% had 36–48 hours, and 9.6% received 48+ hours of training. The high number with no training revealed a gap in professional development, echoing Williams and Garcia (2020), who noted limited access to specialized training in niche subjects. Sanchez and Martinez (2018) similarly found that lack of training reduced teaching quality. The low percentage with extensive training supported Brown and Smith's (2019) findings on barriers such as limited resources and high costs. Johnson and Lee (2021) added that teaching multiple subjects further restricted access. These results stress the need to expand training for social studies teachers to improve instructional quality (Gonzales & Rivera, 2020).

Table 9. Distribution of Respondents by Level of Professional Teaching Experience.

Level of Professional Experience	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 3 year	19	36.5
3-6 years	12	23.1
7-10 years	13	25.0
11-14 years	6	11.5
15 years and above	2	3.8
Total	52	99.9

Legend: Level of Professional Experience: Categorized into five groups based on years of teaching experience. Frequency: The number of respondents in each experience category, Percentage: The proportion of total

respondents in each category.

Table 9 showed that 36.5% of respondents had less than 3 years of teaching experience, while 23.1% had 3–6 years, 25.0% had 7–10 years, 11.5% had 11–14 years, and only 3.8% had 15+ years. This indicates a workforce dominated by early-career teachers, reflecting a broader trend of younger educators entering the profession (Brown & Green, 2019). The low numbers in the 11–14 and 15+ year brackets suggest issues with long-term retention, as experienced teachers may leave due to burnout or limited advancement (Johnson & Lee, 2018). The data highlight a need for mentorship and retention strategies to support new teachers and retain experienced ones, ensuring sustained growth and quality in education.

Experiential Challenges by Non-Major Social Studies Teachers

Table 10. Assess the Experiential Challenges by Non-Major Social Studies Teachers.

Subject Matter	Mean	Level of Challenges
Select subject matter appropriate to the learning needs.	4.38	Moderate Challenge
Prepare lessons specific to the needs of the learners.	4.38	Moderate Challenge
Ensure the accuracy and depth of teaching social studies topics	4.27	Moderate Challenge
Address any gaps in cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains of social studies subject matter while teaching.	3.74	Challenging
Integrate concepts from other subjects in teaching social studies	4.58	Very Challenging
Total	4.27	Challenging

Legend: 4.50 – 5.00 Extremely Very Challenging: 3.50 – 4.49 Challenging: 2.50 – 3.49 Moderately Challenging: 1.50 – 2.49 Slightly Challenging: 1.00 – 1.49 Not Challenging.

Table 10 revealed that non-major social studies teachers faced significant challenges, with the highest being the integration of interdisciplinary concepts ($M = 4.58$), rated as Very Challenging—echoing Drake and Reid

(2020) and Myrberg et al. (2019) on the complexity of interdisciplinary teaching. Selecting appropriate subject matter and preparing learner-specific lessons ($M = 4.38$ each) were also Challenging, indicating the need for pedagogical support (Tomlinson, 2017). Ensuring content accuracy and depth ($M = 4.27$) reflected difficulties in subject mastery, consistent with Penuliar and Natividad (2025) and Elementary et al. (2023). Addressing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains ($M = 3.74$) was also a challenge, aligning with Vygotsky (1978) and Williams and Garcia (2020) on the need for differentiated instruction. The Total Mean of 4.27 and Frequency of 30.2 underscored the need for focused training, mentorship, and resources to support non-major teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Rivkin et al., 2005).

Resource limitation of Instructional Materials

Table 11. Assess the Resource limitation of Instructional Materials in Teaching Social Studies.

Resource Limitations	Mean	Adverbial Rating
Limited availability of varied instructional materials	4.52	Extremely Limited
Lack of support or training to non-major teachers in teaching social studies	3.46	Moderately Limited
Limited access to information and communication technology ICT or technological advancements	4.63	Extremely Limited

Lack of resources to craft instructional materials congruent with lessons	4.16	Limited
Insufficient availability of localized instructional materials	4.38	Limited
Total	4.23	Limited

Legend: 4.50-5.00 Extremely Limited, Resources are severely inadequate 3.50-4.49 Limited, Resources are lacking 2.50-3.49 Moderately Limited, some resources are available 1.50-2.49 Slightly Limited, A few resources are missing 1.00-1.49 Not Limited, Resources are readily available.

Table 11 showed major resource challenges in teaching social studies (*Araling Panlipunan*). The highest mean score (4.63), rated Extremely Limited, was due to lack of ICT access, limiting interactive teaching (Wang & Woo, 2020). Similarly, limited instructional materials (M = 4.52) also rated Extremely Limited, restricted lesson flexibility and quality (Mayer, 2009). Lack of support or training for non-major teachers (M = 3.46) was Moderately Limited, pointing to the need for tailored professional development (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Resources for crafting instructional materials (M = 4.16) and localized content (M = 4.38) were Limited, reflecting gaps in creating relevant, student-centered lessons (Ladson-Billings, 1995). The Total Mean of 4.23, categorized as Limited, underscores the need for institutional and policy support to improve resources, ICT access, and training for better instructional outcomes.

Culturally Sensitive Practices

Table 12. Assess the Culturally Sensitive Practices in Teaching Social Studies.

Culturally Sensitive	Mean	Adverbial Rating
Integrates cultural sensitivity in teaching social studies subject.	4.69	Very High
Emphasize the importance of cultural sensitivity in teaching social studies subject.	4.64	Very High
Address cultural differences and diversity within the classroom when teaching social studies subject.	4.69	Very High
Handle sensitive cultural topics or discussions with care in teaching social studies subject.	4.43	High
Involve students' cultural backgrounds and experiences in teaching social studies subject.	4.52	Very High
Total	4.59	Very High

Legend: Mean Range – Adverbial Rating 4.50 – 5.00 – *Very High* 3.50 – 4.49 – *High* 2.50 – 3.49 – *Moderate* 1.50 – 2.49 – *Low* 1.00 – 1.49 – *Very Low*.

The data presented in Table 12 examined the extent of culturally sensitive practices in teaching the Social Studies or *Araling Panlipunan* subject. The highest-rated practices, integrating cultural sensitivity and addressing cultural diversity in the classroom, both received a mean score of 4.69, categorized as "Very High." This indicates that educators strongly emphasized creating an inclusive learning environment, consistent with Ladson-Billings' (1995) culturally relevant pedagogy, which promotes academic success by reflecting students' cultural backgrounds. The practice of emphasizing the importance of cultural sensitivity in teaching, with a mean score of 4.64, further supported educators' commitment to cultural awareness in their teaching. However, handling sensitive cultural topics received a slightly lower score of 4.43, suggesting some discomfort or hesitation in navigating complex issues, as noted by Gay (2010). Involving students' cultural backgrounds in teaching scored 4.52, reinforcing the importance of integrating students' experiences into the curriculum, as it enhances engagement and self-worth (Cochran-Smith, 2004). Overall, the data showed that educators demonstrated a high level of cultural sensitivity, though further support could improve their handling of sensitive topics.

Professional Development Needs

Table 13. Assess the Professional Development Needs of Educators in Teaching Social Studies

Professional Development Needs	Mean	Adverbial Rating
Adapt the curriculum or pedagogical approaches used in teaching social studies subject.	4.41	High
Stay updated with developments or changes in the field of Social Studies subject.	4.10	High
Receive feedback from colleagues, or supervisors regarding your teaching of Social Studies subject.	4.20	High
Attends trainings and conferences related to Social Studies	3.41	Moderate
Enrol post degree course related to the subject	3.30	Moderate
Total	3.88	High

Legend: Mean Range – Adverbial Rating; 4.50 – 5.00 – *Very High*, 3.50 – 4.49 – *High*, 2.50 – 3.49 – *Moderate*, 1.50 – 2.49 – *Low* 1.00 – 1.49 – *Very Low*

Table 13 highlighted key professional development needs for Social Studies or *Araling Panlipunan* educators. The highest-rated need was adapting curriculum and pedagogy ($M = 4.41$, High), underscoring the importance of responsive teaching (Tomlinson, 2017). Staying updated in the field ($M = 4.10$) and receiving feedback from peers or supervisors ($M = 4.20$) were also rated High, reflecting the value of continuous learning and constructive feedback (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Meanwhile, attending trainings ($M = 3.41$) and enrolling in post-degree courses ($M = 3.30$) were rated Moderate, suggesting barriers like time and access. Despite this, research supports both formal and informal learning as essential to teacher growth (Avalos, 2011). Overall, educators prioritize practical, accessible development tied directly to their classroom needs.

Assessment Practices

Table 14. Evaluate the Assessment Practices in Teaching Social Studies

Assessment and Evaluation	Mean	Adverbial Rating
Use varied assessment methods in Social Studies classes (e.g., written exams, quizzes, projects, presentations)	4.71	Very High
Align assessment methods with the learning objectives of social studies subject.	4.48	High
Ensure that assessments effectively measure students' understanding of social studies concepts and topics.	4.62	Very High
Create or find suitable assessment materials/resources for social studies subject.	4.48	High
Handles diversity of students' learning abilities and backgrounds when assessing their performance in social studies.	4.52	Very High
Total	4.56	Very High

Legend: Mean Range – Adverbial Rating; 4.50 – 5.00 – *Very High*, 3.50 – 4.49 – *High*, 2.50 – 3.49 – *Moderate*, 1.50 – 2.49 – *Low* 1.00 – 1.49 – *Very Low*

Table 14 assessed social studies educators' assessment practices. The top-rated was using varied assessment methods ($M = 4.71$, Very High), reflecting a strong emphasis on diverse strategies to gauge student learning (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Ensuring assessments measure understanding also rated Very High ($M = 4.62$), showing alignment with learning goals (Wiggins, 1998). Aligning assessments with objectives and creating suitable materials both scored 4.48 (High), suggesting some challenges in resource development (Harris & Brown, 2013). Assessing diverse learners fairly rated 4.52 (Very High), indicating a strong focus on inclusive practices (Tomlinson, 2001). Overall, educators demonstrate strong commitment to diverse, aligned, and inclusive assessments, though support in resource creation remains needed.

Various Challenges

Table 15. Assess the Various Challenges Faced by Teachers in Teaching Social Studies

Challenges in Teaching Social Studies	Mean	Adverbial Rating
Lack of knowledge of the subject	3.29	Moderately Challenging
Negative attitude of teachers towards the subject	4.00	Challenging
Negative attitude of students towards the subject	3.28	Moderately Challenging
Insufficient classroom materials and textbooks	2.77	Moderately Challenging
Inadequate instructional materials and equipment	2.80	Moderately Challenging
Lack of teacher training	2.83	Moderately Challenging
Lack of administrative support	2.75	Moderately Challenging
Total	3.10	Moderately Challenging

Legend: 4.50 – 5.00 Extremely Very Challenging: 3.50 – 4.49 Challenging: 2.50 – 3.49 Moderately Challenging: 1.50 – 2.49 Slightly Challenging: 1.00 – 1.49 Not Challenging.

Table 15 identified key challenges in teaching social studies or *Araling Panlipunan*, with the most significant being the negative attitude of teachers toward the subject ($M = 4.00$, Challenging), which aligns with Brophy (2010) in emphasizing how teacher attitudes impact student motivation and learning. The lack of subject knowledge ($M = 3.29$) and students' negative attitudes ($M = 3.28$) were rated as Moderately Challenging, highlighting the importance of content mastery and positive engagement from both educators and learners (Pajares, 1992). Resource-related issues, including insufficient classroom materials ($M = 2.77$), inadequate instructional tools ($M = 2.80$), lack of training ($M = 2.83$), and minimal administrative support ($M = 2.75$), were also deemed Moderately Challenging. These findings support literature stressing the role of adequate resources, training, and institutional backing in improving educational outcomes (Kane, 2016; Darling-Hammond, 2006). Overall, the data underscore the need to address teacher attitudes, enhance training, and improve resources and support systems to strengthen social studies instruction.

Effective Curriculum and Instructional Strategies Used by Non-Major Social Studies Teachers

Non-major social studies teachers effectively implement the curriculum and instructional strategies through structured lesson planning and adaptive teaching methods. To evaluate their instructional approaches, document analysis was conducted on samples of lesson plans and daily lesson logs (DLLs), below;

Sample 1 Lesson Plan

This lesson plan follows the ELICIT-ENGAGE-INTEGRATE framework, promoting active learning and cultural relevance (Bernardo, 2008). The Elicit phase activates prior knowledge by asking students to reflect on the Philippine national anthem, encouraging critical thinking and cultural awareness (David, 2018). In the

Engage phase, real-life visuals like students saluting the flag are used to capture interest and make learning more relevant (Garcia & Caballero, 2016). The Integrate phase connects the lesson to Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao, reinforcing values and national identity (Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000). This approach supports Makabayan education, which blends nationalism, values, and community engagement (Torres, 2011). Multimedia tools further enhance learning by catering to visual and multimodal learners (Reyes, 2019).

Sample 2 Daily Lesson Log

The Daily Lesson Log (DLL) uses multiple instructional strategies to boost student learning and engagement. Direct Instruction presents key economic concepts clearly through structured resources (Rosenshine, 2012), while Guided Practice reinforces learning with teacher support, aligning with Vygotsky's (1978) ZPD. Formative Assessment strategies, including quizzes and discussions, monitor progress and enhance feedback (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Differentiated Instruction provides make-up and advanced classes to meet diverse learning needs (Tomlinson, 2014). Experiential Learning allows students to apply concepts through real-world activities, supporting Kolb's (1984) cycle. Collaborative Learning fosters teamwork via structured interactions (Warsha et al., 2021; Johnson & Johnson, 1999). Concept-Based Teaching builds a strong foundation in topics like demand and elasticity (Erickson, 2007), while Inquiry-Based Learning promotes critical thinking through exploration and questioning (Bruner, 1961). Together, these strategies support student-centered and effective teaching practices.

Sample 3 Daily Lesson Log

The Grade 12 CPAR Daily Lesson Log at Jacinto P. Elpa National High School focused on GAMABA Awardees to deepen appreciation for regional artists. Objectives included identifying and classifying awardees and creating art inspired by tribal symbols. The lesson used multimedia tools—PowerPoints, videos, and worksheets—supporting Mayer's (2009) Multimedia Learning Theory and a student-centered approach. Prior knowledge was activated in line with Vygotsky's (1978) ZPD, while guide questions aligned with Bloom's Taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) to foster higher-order thinking. Creative tasks reflected experiential learning (Kolb, 1984) and Filipino psychology (Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000). Inquiry-driven activities supported 21st-century skills (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2009) and Dewey's (1938) emphasis on active participation. Limited digital access in rural settings posed challenges, highlighting the need for local alternatives and community projects (Reyes, 2019). Strengthening peer collaboration could further enhance social constructivist learning (Johnson & Johnson, 1999).

Sample 4 Daily Lesson Log

This lesson plan integrates constructivist, inquiry-based, and collaborative strategies to actively engage students. Activities like jumbled letters, picture analysis, and classification support Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivism, emphasizing interactive learning. Inquiry-based tasks, such as comparing urban and rural communities via Venn diagrams, encourage critical thinking (Bruner, 1961). Group discussions foster collaboration, aligning with Johnson & Johnson's (1999) cooperative learning model. Experiential learning through sorting and image evaluation follows Kolb's (1984) theory of learning by doing. Differentiated instruction ensures inclusivity for varied learning styles (Tomlinson, 2014), while concept-based teaching promotes deep understanding of community types (Erickson, 2007). Overall, these strategies create a student-centered, meaningful learning experience.

Sample 5 Daily Lesson Plan

The social studies or *Araling Panlipunan* 7 lesson plan employs inquiry-based, collaborative, and concept-driven strategies to enhance understanding of ASEAN and the 17 SDGs. Using a concept-based approach, it connects global issues to regional contexts for deeper learning (Erickson, 2007). Inquiry-based tasks encourage analysis and problem-solving, aligning with Bruner's (1961) Discovery Learning Theory. Collaborative group work supports Johnson & Johnson's (1999) cooperative learning model, fostering peer interaction. Multimodal resources reflect Mayer's (2009) Multimedia Learning Theory, improving retention through varied formats. Real-world links support experiential learning (Kolb, 1984), while differentiated instruction addresses diverse

learner needs (Tomlinson, 2014). The plan effectively supports active, critical, and student-centered learning aligned with 21st-century skills.

Strategies in Social Studies Lessons






Characteristic	Sample 1 Lesson Plan	Sample 2 Daily Lesson Log	Sample 3 Daily Lesson Log	Sample 4 Daily Lesson Log	Sample 5 Daily Lesson Plan
 Framework	ELICIT-ENGAGE- INTEGRATE	Direct Instruction	Student-Centered	Constructivist	Concept-Based
 Learning	Active Learning	Experiential Learning	Experiential Learning	Experiential Learning	Active Learning
 Teaching	Adaptive Teaching	Differentiated Instruction	Multimedia Approach	Differentiated Instruction	Differentiated Instruction
 Assessment	Cultural Awareness	Formative Assessment	Higher-Order Thinking	Inquiry-Based	Problem-Solving
 Collaboration	Community Engagement	Collaborative Learning	Peer Interaction	Group Discussions	Group Work

Figure 1. This visual highlight key teaching strategies used by non-major Social Studies teachers, showing recurring use of differentiated instruction, experiential learning, and student-centered approaches across five lesson samples.

Impact of Non-Major Social Studies Teachers on Student Performance

The responses from six non-social studies major teachers teaching social studies subjects provide insight into their lived experiences and how these impact students' National Achievement Test (NAT) performance in Tandag City Division.

Informant 1

"Teaching social studies or Araling Panlipunan without a major in the subject has been challenging. I sometimes struggle with in-depth historical analysis and critical perspectives, which makes it difficult to engage students in complex discussions. As a result, students' analytical skills, which are crucial for the NAT, may not be fully developed."

Informant 2

"I rely heavily on textbooks and online resources to ensure I am delivering accurate information. However, since I lack specialization, I sometimes cannot provide deeper insights beyond what is written. This might affect students' ability to critically analyze and answer higher-order thinking questions in the NAT."

Informant 3

"As a generalist teacher, I handle multiple subjects, including Araling Panlipunan. While I can teach basic concepts, I notice that students struggle with complex historical interpretations and thematic connections, which are assessed in standardized tests like the NAT."

Informant 4

"I try to make lessons engaging by using multimedia and interactive discussions, but since my expertise is in a different subject, I sometimes find it difficult to answer in-depth student inquiries. This limitation may affect how well they comprehend topics in the NAT."

Informant 5

"My background in Science helps me structure lessons logically, but I recognize that my lack of formal

training in Araling Panlipunan impacts my teaching strategies. Students might not receive the depth of knowledge that a major in the subject could provide, which could influence their NAT scores."

Informant 6

"I integrate storytelling and discussions into my Araling Panlipunan classes, which helps with student engagement. However, when it comes to assessing student performance in standardized tests, I sometimes struggle with aligning my teaching methods to the NAT format, which may affect student readiness."

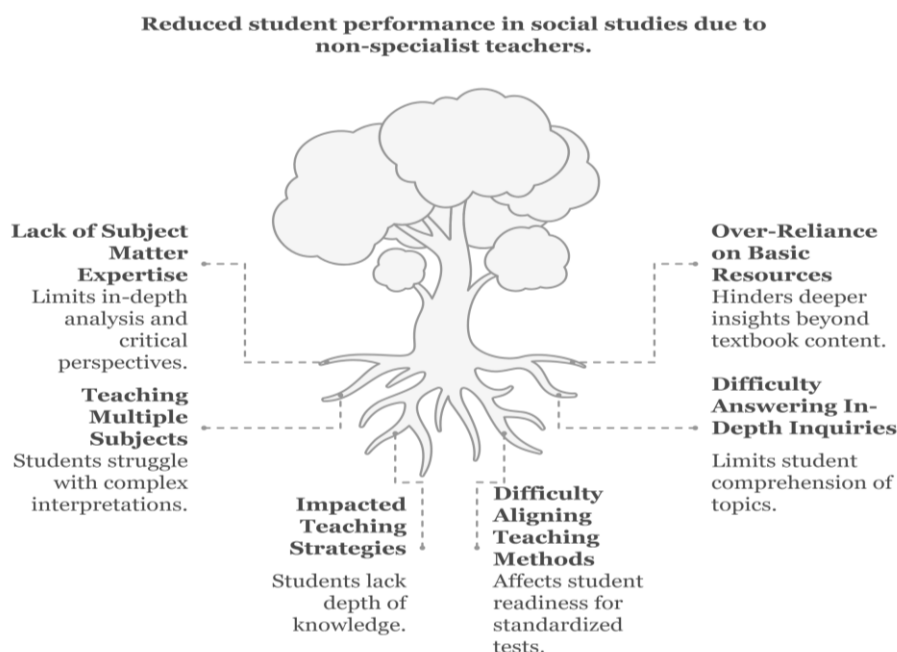


Figure 2. This diagram shows how non-specialist teachers contribute to reduced student performance in social studies, highlighting issues like limited subject expertise, reliance on basic resources, and misaligned teaching methods that hinder deep learning and test readiness.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings

The study explored the experiences of non-major social studies teachers in Junior and Senior High Schools in Tandag City Division. Most had secondary education backgrounds with limited Social Science specialization; few held advanced degrees. Teachers reported challenges in mastering content, affecting confidence and student engagement in critical discussions. Limited instructional materials and ICT access were major barriers. While cultural sensitivity was evident, complex cultural topics remained difficult to teach. Teachers emphasized the need for ongoing professional development in curriculum adaptation, content mastery, and assessment. Lesson plans revealed the use of direct instruction, inquiry-based, collaborative, experiential, and concept-based strategies. Multimedia and interactive methods were used to offset content gaps, and differentiated instruction addressed diverse learner needs. However, limited expertise hindered the development of higher-order thinking skills, essential for NAT success. Reliance on textbooks and external sources often led to surface-level teaching. Despite engaging strategies, a disconnect remained between classroom methods and the cognitive demands of the NAT.

Conclusion

The study highlighted the challenges non-major social teachers faced in delivering quality instruction. Although they possessed strong pedagogical skills, limited subject expertise hindered their ability to promote deep learning and critical thinking essential for NAT success. The mismatch between specialization and

subject assignment affected instructional quality, often leading to reliance on external materials and difficulty with complex concepts. Despite these issues, teachers showed adaptability through multimedia use and collaborative strategies. The study also emphasized the need for ongoing professional development to address content gaps. Limited access to instructional materials and ICT further restricted the use of effective teaching methods. Although teachers worked to create engaging environments, difficulties in curriculum adaptation and assessment alignment pointed to a need for stronger institutional support.

Recommendations

To address the study's challenges, key recommendations include enhancing professional development through targeted training, subject-specific workshops, and peer mentoring for non-major social studies teachers. Schools should strengthen instructional support by providing updated resources, ICT tools, and opportunities for collaboration with subject experts. Teaching strategies must align with National Achievement Test (NAT) standards by integrating higher-order thinking skills, inquiry-based learning, and mock assessments. DepEd should prioritize assigning subject specialists, conduct regular evaluations, and expand ICT use for interactive teaching. Clear implementation plans—detailing training modules, frequency, and timelines—along with pilot testing and monitoring, can help scale effective interventions across divisions facing similar challenges.

Further Research

Future studies should utilize longitudinal and mixed-methods design to evaluate the long-term impact of teacher training and professional development on student outcomes. Comparative research can examine differences in student performance between social studies majors and non-majors teaching. Additionally, investigating the effectiveness of mentorship and support programs may offer insights into improving the competence, confidence, and instructional quality of non-major teachers. Exploring the outcomes of reassigning teachers to their areas of specialization could further inform teacher deployment policies and improve academic achievement over time.

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