

# Lived Experiences of Generation X High School Teachers in Teaching Araling Panlipunan Among Learners

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## ABSTRACT

Low integration of technology in teaching. This study explored the experiences of Generation X high school teachers in integrating technology into the teaching of *Araling Panlipunan* (Social Studies), focusing on how these educators, who are not digital natives, navigate the challenges of incorporating modern technology into culturally rooted subjects. Using a qualitative descriptive phenomenological approach, data were collected through six in-depth interviews and four focus group discussions. The analysis, guided by the Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), revealed three main themes: Cultural, Social, and Historical. Culturally, teachers combined traditional practices with modern digital tools, ensuring historical accuracy and cultural relevance. Socially, they addressed challenges such as limited resources, students' lack of preparedness, and generational divides by fostering civic consciousness through project-based and values-driven approaches. Historically, they emphasized the importance of factual accuracy and critical thinking, viewing themselves as “stewards of truth.” Despite facing technological gaps and resource limitations, the teachers showed resilience and creativity, effectively bridging generational divides and empowering students to understand culture, identity, and social responsibility. The study concluded that Generation X teachers play a vital role in driving educational transformation. It recommended the implementation of culturally responsive professional development programs that support the integration of technology while preserving the cultural integrity of *Araling Panlipunan* (Social Studies) instruction. To strengthen this conclusion, future research should include comparative insights from Millennial and Generation Z teachers to highlight generational differences in teaching practices. Additionally, adopting a mixed-methods approach combining qualitative narratives with quantitative data, such as student engagement metrics, would enhance the study's relevance and contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of *Araling Panlipunan* instruction across generations.

**Keywords:** Generation X teachers, low integration, *Araling Panlipunan* (Social Studies), technology integration

## INTRODUCTION

The integration of technology in teaching has long been recognized as a transformative force capable of reshaping traditional learning environments into dynamic, student-centered spaces. However, despite global educational technology advancements, many teachers face barriers to effectively integrating technology into their pedagogical practices. These barriers are frequently associated with limited access to infrastructure, insufficient professional development, and resistance to change, especially in schools that serve marginalized communities (König et al., 2020). Reflecting on these global realities, I question how teachers' beliefs, personal capacities, and cultural contexts entirely shape their hesitancy or reluctance to embrace technology-enhanced teaching in my practice.

In various countries, the uneven integration of technology across educational systems underscores deep-seated inequities in access, resources, and institutional support. Studies from developing and developed nations highlight that while some schools fully embrace digital learning environments, others struggle with basic

digital literacy and limited technological infrastructure (Gudmundsdottir & Hathaway, 2020). Teachers' digital competence, school leadership's commitment, and cultural attitudes toward technology collectively influence the success or failure of technology integration efforts (Zhao et al., 2021). In navigating these diverse global landscapes, I confront the reality that teachers' agency and pedagogical autonomy may be constrained by systemic and contextual barriers beyond their control.

In the Philippines, technology integration into teaching faces unique challenges deeply rooted in socio-economic, cultural, and infrastructural factors. In particular, public schools in rural and indigenous communities often lack reliable internet connectivity, access to devices, and consistent technology-focused professional development (Bustillo & Aguilos, 2022). Moreover, Filipino teachers' confidence and readiness to integrate technology into their instruction vary widely, influenced by generational differences, training opportunities, and cultural perceptions of technology's role in education (De Vera et al., 2021). As a teacher in the Philippine context, I recognize my challenges in the tension between policy mandates to adopt technology and the real-world constraints of teaching in resource-limited environments.

The low integration of technology in teaching has far-reaching implications for educational equity, student engagement, and overall learning outcomes. When technology is underutilized, students are denied opportunities to develop critical digital skills, engage with diverse learning materials, and experience innovative forms of knowledge construction (Naylor & Nyanjom, 2021). Furthermore, this underutilization perpetuates the digital divide, reinforcing existing social inequalities and limiting students' future opportunities in an increasingly technology-driven world (Tamrat & Teferra, 2022). As I grapple with these potential consequences, I am compelled to reflect on my evolving role as both an agent of change and a product of the same system that shapes my capacity to integrate technology meaningfully into my teaching practice.

### **Statement of the Problem**

This study examines the lived experiences of Generation X High school teachers in teaching *Araling Panlipunan* (Social Studies). The specific objective was: What are the lived experiences of Generation X high school teachers in teaching *Araling Panlipunan* (Social Studies) among learners?

### **Theoretical Lens**

In this study, I anchored my exploration of the lived experiences of Generation X high school teachers teaching *Araling Panlipunan* (Social Studies) on the Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), which was expanded by Yuri Engeström (2001). Through this theory, I understood the crucial role of cultural, social, and historical contexts in shaping teaching practices and learning experiences. CHAT highlights that learning is a social and interactive process, where teachers' actions and decisions are continuously shaped by their tools, the school environment they work within, and their ongoing interactions with students, colleagues, and policies.

Using this lens, I saw how Generation X teachers constantly adjust their teaching strategies to respond to challenges such as limited access to technology, evolving curriculum demands, and the pressures of modern educational expectations. By closely examining the interactions between teachers, students, and the broader educational landscape, I uncovered how these external forces shape teachers' practices and how, despite the constraints, they work hard to create meaningful and relevant learning experiences for their students.

As I reflected on these insights, I realized that understanding teachers' experiences through CHAT highlights their resilience and adaptability and reveals how deeply the ever-evolving educational system shapes the sense of professional identity they are part of.



**Figure 1: Paradigm**

The paradigm of this study is anchored in Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), which highlights how human activities, such as the everyday teaching experiences of Generation X *Araling Panlipunan* (Social Studies) teachers, are shaped by cultural, social, and historical contexts. The key subthemes — Tools, Environment, and Interaction are derived directly from CHAT, reflecting the essential elements that mediate human activities. Through my interviews and observations, I understood that these teachers' instructional practices are not isolated actions but rather dynamic responses to the tools available, the environments they work in, and the interactions they cultivate with students, colleagues, and school leaders. Using CHAT as my framework, I could understand how these interconnected factors consistently shape their teaching methods, professional choices, and capacity to create meaningful learning experiences amidst the evolving educational challenges.

## METHOD

This qualitative study employed a descriptive phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of Generation X high school teachers teaching *Araling Panlipunan* (Social Studies). Rooted in the goal of capturing both visible practices and deeper, often unspoken challenges, the approach allowed for a rich, contextual understanding of how these educators navigate digital integration in their classrooms (Sohn et al., 2017; Wilson, 2015). The research was conducted in public high schools in Magpet, North Cotabato, where the teaching context reflects both resource limitations and cultural richness. Using purposive sampling, 10 participants—six for in-depth interviews and four for a focus group discussion were selected based on specific criteria, including age (43–58) and at least ten years of teaching experience in *Araling Panlipunan* (Social Studies). A semi-structured interview guide, validated by experts, served as the primary research instrument. Open-ended questions allowed participants to reflect on their strategies, struggles, and adaptations. Data were gathered through recorded, transcribed interviews and one FGD, ensuring ethical standards, informed consent, and adherence to the Data Privacy Act of 2012. Triangulation through IDIs and FGD enhanced the validity and richness of the findings (Fusch et al., 2018). Thematic analysis was employed following a systematic coding and categorization process to extract recurring themes (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Lochmiller, 2021). This method enabled the emergence of meaningful insights into the participants' professional realities, shaped by culture, social context, and history. Although this study employed a qualitative phenomenological design, future research might adopt a mixed-methods approach by integrating student academic outcomes, digital engagement data, or classroom observation metrics. This triangulation would validate findings and uncover further trends in generational teaching effectiveness.

To ensure the integrity and trustworthiness of this study, I followed rigorous qualitative research practices, guided by the principles of Gunawan (2015) and other scholars. I strengthened credibility by using multiple data sources and inviting participants to review and validate my interpretations. I ensured transferability by carefully documenting the study's context, participants, and procedures so that others can see how the findings may apply to their settings. Throughout the process, I maintained transparency in how I collected, analyzed, and interpreted data to uphold dependability. I also engaged in regular self-reflection and sought feedback from a trusted peer to remain objective and ensure the findings truly reflected the voices of my participants. Ethical approval was secured from the institution's review board, and all participants gave informed consent before taking part. I affirm that there are no conflicts of interest in conducting this research.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study investigated the lived experiences of Generation X high school teachers in teaching *Araling Panlipunan* (Social Studies), using the Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) as its analytical framework. Three major themes were identified: Cultural, Social, and Historical Activities, each with sub-themes: Tools, Environment, and Interaction.



**Figure 2: Modified Paradigm**

In this study, human activities referred to the culturally, socially, and historically influenced teaching practices of Generation X *Araling Panlipunan* (Social Studies) teachers. Their lessons reflect personal values and cultural roots, helping students connect history to real life. Guided by Cultural Activity Theory (CHAT), three key sub-themes emerged—Tools, Environment, and Interaction, highlighting how these educators adapt and respond to the evolving demands of their profession.

## Teaching Araling Panlipunan as Cultural Activities

Generation X teachers view Araling Panlipunan as a deeply cultural act, blending traditional Filipino values with evolving teaching strategies. They infuse storytelling, folklore, indigenous knowledge, and community history into their lessons while navigating the use of PowerPoint, YouTube, and social media. These tools serve not only as delivery mechanisms but also as bridges between generations. As one teacher remarked, “the use of visuals and digital platforms helps capture learners' attention, but our stories and examples are what make them stay” (IDI 3, p. 3, Lines 79–81). This blend of traditional and modern reflects what McKoy and Lind (2022) called culturally responsive teaching, which centers students' identities and lived experiences. Likewise, Mudambi et al. (2023) describe such flexibility as cultural reflexivity, a mindset necessary for navigating rapidly shifting cultural landscapes in education. These practices align with Andal and Hermosa's (2023) finding that local context enhances learner connection and cultural understanding.

## Cultural Activity as a tool for learning Araling Panlipunan

Generation X teachers demonstrate adaptive resilience by combining analog and digital tools—chalk and blackboard, Manila paper, maps, television sets, projectors, and online content. This hybrid practice is not merely a survival strategy but a reflection of techno-cultural fluency. Gaskins (2021) refers to this as techno-vernacular creativity, where teachers modify technology to fit their local realities and learners' needs. Moreover, participants acknowledged that digital competence among Generation X is uneven, often dependent on individual initiative or prior exposure before entering the teaching profession (IDI 2, p. 3, Lines 91–96). This generational challenge becomes even more apparent when compared to younger teachers, who are more digitally native and tend to integrate technology more seamlessly.

## Cultural Activity Environment as a Learning Environment

The learning environment for these teachers is often constrained by infrastructure, access to devices, and insufficient professional development. Participants reported adapting to these conditions by transforming their classrooms into interactive spaces grounded in community values and oral tradition. However, the generational divide was palpable, especially in bridging students' digital expectations with teachers' comfort zones (FGD, p. 15, Lines 574–577). Bustillo and Aguilos (2022) contextualize this within the broader Filipino education system, where systemic gaps hinder consistent technology integration. Despite these barriers, participants displayed resilience and innovation, echoing Robosa et al.'s (2021) findings on teacher ingenuity in low-resource schools. According to König et al. (2020), this is a global phenomenon among teachers in marginalized contexts.

## Cultural Activity as Learning Interaction

Interactions in Generation X classrooms were often centered on shared cultural narratives, values-based discussions, and critical reflection. Participants emphasized that cultural transmission—not just historical facts—was a core part of their role. Bihari (2023) emphasized that this kind of classroom practice strengthens cultural identity and supports indigenous knowledge systems. Gay (2021) similarly argued that this helps students feel a deeper sense of belonging, which is essential for academic motivation. The data also reflected a teacher-student dynamic grounded in mutual respect and values alignment, particularly in rural and indigenous settings. One teacher noted that using Obo Manobo stories helped learners “see their ancestors in the curriculum,” making learning not just informative but affirming (IDI 4, p. 13, Lines 490–494).

## Teaching Araling Panlipunan as Social Activity

In its social dimension, Araling Panlipunan (Social Studies) becomes a platform for civic awareness, identity formation, and social interaction. Generation X teachers have shifted from purely lecture-based delivery to more student-led, collaborative, and reflective approaches, such as debates, role-play, community immersion projects, and social media analysis. These approaches foster learner agency and social understanding, consistent with Moriña's (2020) argument for inclusive pedagogies that foreground social realities. Participants described Araling Panlipunan as a means of teaching “social intelligence” alongside historical



knowledge, where lessons transcend memorization and become lenses to understand inequality, governance, and community life (IDI 6, p. 10, Lines 375–378). Garcia (2021) supports this, asserting that civic competence and reflective thinking are essential learning outcomes for 21st-century learners.

### **Social Activity as a tool for learning Araling Panlipunan**

Technology emerged as a catalyst for social learning. Participants used news clips, documentaries, current events sourced from social media, and civic simulations to draw connections between classroom discussions and contemporary issues. This digital mediation allowed teachers to move beyond rote learning and engage students in critical analysis and perspective-taking (IDI 1, p. 2, Lines 50–55). These practices resonate with Berger et al. (2016), who emphasized that real-world relevance drives deeper learning. Gaskins (2021) similarly noted that digital tools, when tied to meaningful local content, can strengthen students' sense of social agency. The generational insight here is notable: while some Generation X teachers had initial discomfort with tech, their commitment to relevance propelled them to embrace these tools strategically.

### **Social Activity as a Learning Environment**

The social learning environments that these teachers navigated were complex, shaped by poverty, digital inequality, and shifting generational behaviors. Participants consistently mentioned the impact of limited resources, student absenteeism, and economic burdens as barriers to engagement, particularly in rural and indigenous communities. Yet, these conditions also pushed teachers toward more cooperative and flexible learning structures, such as group tasks, student leadership roles, and values-based learning. As one participant shared, “I need to find more strategies to motivate my students because many are not interested due to struggles at home” (IDI 4, p. 7, Lines 245–249). This response echoes Naylor and Nyanjom's (2021) findings that equity-driven environments promote stronger learning outcomes, especially when teachers tailor content to learners' lived realities. In future research, comparing how Millennial or Gen Z teachers construct their learning environments in similar contexts could reveal generational variations in how inclusivity and engagement are approached.

### **Social Activity as Learning Interaction**

Interaction in Araling Panlipunan goes beyond academic discourse—it fosters empathy, civic identity, and collaborative reflection. Participants shared strategies such as community-based research, advocacy posters, and local issue forums to help students navigate social structures critically. These methods mirror Bartelds et al.'s (2020) argument that social learning is essential for democratic competence. For instance, one teacher described how she turned economic lessons into budgeting simulations based on real family scenarios, which students found highly engaging and applicable (IDI 4, p. 7, Lines 245–249). These interactions promote both social relevance and skill development, essential for nation-building education.

### **Teaching Araling Panlipunan as Historical Activity**

Generation X teachers approach Araling Panlipunan as a historical task anchored in truth-telling, ethical responsibility, and national identity. They view history not as static knowledge but as a dynamic process of interpretation, requiring critical thinking, factual integrity, and social awareness. As one teacher explained, “teaching AP takes a lot of guts because history isn't always comfortable, but it must be told truthfully” (IDI 1, p. 2, Lines 50–55). This mindset is aligned with Russell III and Waters (2022), who assert that historical instruction should develop analytical and moral reasoning. Maksum et al. (2021) and Nokes (2022) likewise advocate for historical literacy through primary sources, multi-perspective narratives, and reflection on cause and consequence.

### **Historical Activity as a tool for learning Araling Panlipunan**

Teachers used a curated mix of analog and digital tools to present history—validated textbooks, local archives, historical documentaries, and digital timelines. These tools were used not merely to deliver facts but to promote source validation, critical comparison, and intergenerational dialogue. Francese (2022) emphasized

the need for multi-source analysis to foster historical understanding, while Nokes (2022) argued that visual and multimedia aids support learners, especially those who struggle with abstract concepts. One participant reflected on how using side-by-side videos comparing Martial Law-era speeches and modern news helped her students “see how history echoes today” (IDI 5, p. 8, Lines 277–281).

### Historical Activity as a Learning Environment

Low student engagement in traditional history lessons remains a challenge. However, teachers adapted by contextualizing historical content through contemporary analogies—linking the Katipunan to modern civic movements or drawing parallels between economic policies across administrations. Castleberry and Nolen (2018) affirm that contextualization is vital to make history relevant, especially when working with students who experience disconnection from national narratives. Tamrat and Teferra (2022) further note that in under-resourced schools, digital tools—when available—must be integrated meaningfully rather than used superficially.

### Historical Activity as Learning Interaction

Participants emphasized that dialogue and perspective-taking were essential to help learners develop historical empathy. They used classroom discussions, case studies, and “What if?” scenarios to encourage students to think beyond dates and names. Bartelds et al. (2020) explain that historical empathy emerges from understanding motive, consequence, and moral tension, not just event recall. One teacher shared how students discussed Martial Law, colonization, and people power in emotionally charged, yet respectful, classroom debates. These moments, she said, “help them think of history as something living—not just something to memorize” (IDI 6, p. 10, Lines 375–378). Francese (2022) emphasizes that these complex conversations foster justice-oriented, historically literate citizens.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Generation X high school teachers teaching *Araling Panlipunan* (Social Studies) demonstrate a dynamic interplay between tradition and innovation. Despite not being digital natives, they exhibit remarkable adaptability, integrating both conventional and digital tools to meet the evolving needs of 21st-century learners. Culturally, they serve as bridges between historical foundations and contemporary realities, infusing their instruction with local values, heritage, and context-sensitive narratives. Socially, they are catalysts for civic awareness and engagement, making learning relevant through real-life applications, collaborative activities, and discussions on societal issues. Historically, they position themselves as stewards of truth, emphasizing accuracy, critical thinking, and contextual understanding while nurturing historical empathy among learners. The challenges they face—such as technological gaps, generational divides, and limited resources are met with creativity, resilience, and an enduring passion for teaching. Their experiences reflect a broader need to support teachers as active agents of educational transformation, capable of shaping socially aware, critically minded, and culturally grounded citizens. Future studies comparing generational cohorts could yield deeper insights into how age, digital fluency, and socio-cultural orientation influence teaching strategies. Such comparisons may reveal patterns in adaptability, resourcefulness, and classroom engagement that transcend technological access. The experiences of Generation X teachers reflect broader socio-cultural influences, including local traditions, community values, and societal expectations. These factors shaped not only content delivery but also how teachers defined their roles as cultural transmitters, mentors, and civic educators. Contrasting this with the more tech-oriented approaches likely found among Millennial and Gen Z teachers would provide a richer understanding of generational teaching dynamics.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study's findings, it is recommended that the Department of Education develop culturally responsive and contextually relevant professional development programs tailored specifically to Generation X teachers. These initiatives should extend beyond basic digital literacy, fostering reflective teaching practices that integrate technology with cultural and historical education. Implementing mentorship models—pairing more tech-savvy educators with those less experienced in digital tools—can bridge skill gaps and encourage

peer-led professional growth. School administrators should cultivate an environment that promotes innovation, collaboration, and continuous learning by providing access to updated resources and inclusive pedagogical support. At the same time, curriculum developers should design flexible modules that empower teachers to localize content, connect historical and contemporary societal issues, and engage students in active citizenship. To further enhance teaching effectiveness, institutions should support Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) that incorporate intergenerational mentoring, linking seasoned Generation X educators with younger, digitally native counterparts. Additionally, integrating quantitative data such as learner feedback and achievement metrics into program evaluations will help assess and refine their impact. Future research may explore how similar generational dynamics manifest in other subject areas or cultural contexts, contributing to a broader understanding of generational shifts in education. A national survey comparing teaching practices across generations could also inform educational policy and curriculum development. While this research centers on Generation X, future studies may include comparative analyses of Millennial and Gen Z teachers to highlight evolving pedagogical strategies, attitudes toward technology, and methods of learner engagement. Such perspectives will help contextualize how generational experiences continue to shape educational practices in the digital age.

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