



Classroom Management Skills and Pupils' Learning Outcomes in Elementary Araling Panlipunan, Philippines

A Correlational Study in the Philippines

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ABSTRACT

Classroom management is essential to effective teaching, yet limited evidence exists on how its specific dimensions relate to pupil achievement in elementary Araling Panlipunan (AP). This study examined the relationship between teachers' classroom management skills and pupils' learning outcomes in public elementary schools in Zamboanga del Norte, Philippines. Using a quantitative descriptive-correlational design, data were gathered from teachers and pupils through a validated questionnaire and official academic records. Data were analyzed using weighted mean, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression. Findings showed that teachers demonstrated high levels of classroom management skills, particularly in instructional management and classroom organization, while pupils achieved very satisfactory learning outcomes in AP. Results also revealed a significant positive relationship between classroom management and pupil achievement. Among the dimensions examined, instructional management emerged as the strongest predictor of learning outcomes, followed by classroom organization, discipline, and learner engagement. The findings highlight the critical role of effective instructional management in improving pupil achievement and support the development of evidence-based intervention programs.

Keywords

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Introduction

Globalization has transformed education, demanding that schools produce not only knowledgeable but also critical, adaptive, and socially responsible learners. Consequently, the role of teachers has expanded beyond delivering instruction to creating organized, inclusive, and conducive classroom environments [1]. Classroom management has thus emerged as a critical component of effective teaching, directly shaping the quality of interactions, engagement, and learning outcomes [2],[3]. Classroom management is especially significant in elementary education, where young learners are still developing self-regulation and learning habits [4]. This is particularly true for subjects like Araling Panlipunan (AP)—the Philippine equivalent of social studies—which aims to develop critical, reflective, and responsible citizens through discussion, inquiry, and collaborative meaning-making [5]. These pedagogical goals demand orderly yet flexible classrooms.

In the Philippines, educational reforms such as the MATATAG Curriculum (with phased implementation starting in SY 2024–2025) aim to improve foundational learning. However, national and international assessments reveal a learning crisis, with over 90% of 10-year-olds unable to read simple text [6]. The World Bank highlights weak teacher content knowledge and inadequate professional development [7]. These concerns suggest that improving learning outcomes requires attention to everyday teaching practices, including classroom management [8]. Despite the recognized importance of classroom management, empirical evidence linking specific management dimensions to pupil achievement in elementary AP remains limited. Most existing Philippine studies have focused on general education or secondary levels, leaving a gap in understanding how classroom discipline, instructional management, learner engagement, and classroom organization function specifically in elementary AP classrooms. This gap is particularly problematic because AP, as a discipline, requires unique pedagogical approaches—including discussion of controversial issues, analysis of historical events, and exploration of civic values—that demand sophisticated management skills beyond simple rule enforcement.

Furthermore, the Division of Zamboanga del Norte presents a distinct context characterized by geographically dispersed schools, varying levels of access to resources, and diverse cultural-linguistic backgrounds among learners. Classroom management challenges in this setting may differ substantially from those in urban or highly resourced divisions. Without localized evidence, school heads and district supervisors lack guidance on which management dimensions to prioritize in teacher observation and professional development. This study addresses that need by providing context-specific, empirically grounded findings.

However, Philippine-based studies on classroom management and learning outcomes remain context-bound and inconclusive. For instance, Sumapal [9] found no significant predictive relationship, while Molde and Ducot [10] reported a significant correlation. This unresolved pattern creates an important research space. Therefore, this study investigated the relationship between elementary AP teachers' classroom management skills (across four dimensions) and pupils' learning outcomes in the Division of Zamboanga del Norte, thereby providing empirical evidence to inform a responsive intervention program.

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

A. Theoretical Foundations

This study is anchored on three contemporary, complementary theories. First, Self-Determination Theory [11] posits that supporting autonomy, competence, and relatedness enhances intrinsic motivation and engagement. Second, the Teaching Through Interactions framework [12] identifies three core domains of teacher-student interactions predicting achievement: emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support. Third, the Academic Learning Time model [13],[14] explain that student achievement is a function of allocated time, engaged time, and success rate. Together, these theories provide a comprehensive foundation for understanding why and how classroom management affects learning outcomes.

B. Classroom Management Dimensions

Contemporary research conceptualizes classroom management as multidimensional. Classroom discipline involves establishing rules, maintaining order, and proactively addressing disruptive behavior [15],[16]. Instructional management involves planning, organizing, and implementing instruction efficiently, including time management and lesson clarity [17]. Learner engagement encompasses behavioral, emotional, and cognitive participation [18],[19]. Classroom organization refers to the physical and procedural infrastructure, including routines, transitions, and environmental arrangement [20].

C. Classroom Management and Learning Outcomes

Meta-analytic evidence confirms that classroom management interventions yield positive academic, behavioral, and motivational outcomes [3],[21]. The relationship is mediated by academic learning time: effective management maximizes engaged time and success rates. In the Philippine context, Molde and Ducot [10] found a significant correlation between classroom management practices and AP achievement. However, challenges persist, including large class sizes, limited resources, and inconsistent implementation of engagement strategies [22],[23] This study extends prior work by examining all four dimensions simultaneously in elementary AP.

Several recent studies have examined classroom management in Philippine basic education. Gabriz and Mackie [24] investigated classroom management practices among public elementary school teachers in Pangasinan and found that instructional management received the highest ratings, while learner engagement received comparatively lower ratings. Similarly, Manigbas III et al. [25] reported that teachers' classroom management skills were significantly correlated with their overall teaching performance, suggesting that management competence is a marker of broader teaching quality.

Catayas and Hussien (2024) examined classroom management strategies and learners' academic performance across multiple learning areas. Their findings were mixed: while learners perceived teachers' management positively, regression analysis showed no significant predictive relationship between specific management variables and academic performance. This unexpected finding highlights the importance of context- and subject-specific investigations, as the relationship between management and achievement may vary depending on how both variables are operationalized and measured.

Alimahan and Ubayubay (2025) explored classroom management practices and learning environments in select districts of Misamis Oriental. Their study emphasized the role of physical classroom arrangement and the establishment of routines in creating conducive learning environments. However, their research did not isolate AP as a subject area, leaving open the question of whether findings generalize to social studies instruction specifically.

Despite the growing body of literature on classroom management in the Philippines, significant gaps remain. First, few studies have focused specifically on elementary AP instruction. AP presents unique management challenges because it requires discussion, debate, and exploration of multiple perspectives—activities that are inherently more difficult to manage than individual seatwork. Second, most existing studies have examined classroom management as a unidimensional construct or have focused on only one or two dimensions. The present study addresses this gap by examining all four dimensions simultaneously using a validated 40-item instrument. Third, limited research has been conducted in the Division of Zamboanga del Norte, a geographically diverse and resource-constrained setting. By situating the investigation in this division, the study provides localized evidence that can directly inform school-based intervention efforts. Fourth, the study goes beyond description and correlation by using regression analysis to identify which dimension best predicts learning outcomes, thereby offering actionable guidance for prioritizing professional development. Ultimately, this study contributes to the growing discourse on evidence-based classroom management practices that support improved learning outcomes in elementary social studies education.

Material and Methods

A quantitative descriptive-correlational design was employed. The study was conducted in the Schools Division of Zamboanga del Norte, Philippines, across 246 selected public elementary schools. Stratified random sampling (by school district) was used. The sample comprised 1,356 elementary AP teachers and 1,786 pupils from their classes, determined using Slovin's formula (5% margin of error, 95% confidence level). Teacher inclusion criteria: a public elementary AP teacher, and consent was provided. Pupil inclusion criteria: enrolled in a participating school, taught by a sampled teacher, with parental consent.

The Classroom Management Skills Questionnaire (researcher-developed) consisted of 40 items across four dimensions (10 items each): classroom discipline, instructional management, learner engagement, and classroom organization. A 5-point Likert scale (1 = Never to 5 = Always) was used. Content validity was established by a panel of three experts (mean CVI = 4.09/5.00, "Highly Valid"). Reliability was established through pilot testing (n=20), yielding Cronbach's alpha values of 0.84–0.86 for subscales and 0.85 overall ("Good Reliability"). Pupils' learning outcomes were measured using their official AP grades obtained from school records.

After securing ethical approvals (from the division, school heads, and informed consent), the questionnaire was administered via Google Forms and in printed copies. Pupil grades were recorded using codes. Weighted means and means described classroom management and learning outcomes. Pearson correlation examined the relationship between overall management and outcomes. Multiple regression identified which dimension best predicted outcomes ($\alpha = 0.05$).

Results

Table 1 shows that overall classroom management was "Highly Manifested" (mean = 4.20). Instructional management (mean = 4.24) and classroom organization (mean = 4.22) were "Very Highly Manifested," while classroom discipline (mean = 4.17) and learner engagement (mean = 4.15) were "Highly Manifested." The lowest-rated items were preventing noise/distractions (discipline), connecting lessons to daily experiences, and encouraging pupil questions (engagement).

Table 1. Overall Classroom Management Skills

Predictor	Beta (β)	t	p	Interpretation
Instructional Management	0.26	4.67	<0.001	Strongest predictor
Classroom Organization	0.22	4.32	<0.001	Significant predictor
Classroom Discipline	0.19	4.00	<0.001	Significant predictor
Learner Engagement	0.15	3.00	0.003	Significant predictor

Note. Scale: 4.21–5.00 = Very Highly Manifested; 3.41–4.20 = Highly Manifested.

Pupils' mean AP grade was 85.87 (SD = 3.94), corresponding to "Very Satisfactory" and "High Learning Outcomes" under the DepEd grading scale. Pearson correlation revealed a significant moderate positive relationship between teachers' classroom management skills and pupils' learning outcomes ($r = 0.58$, $p < 0.001$). Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Multiple regression analysis (Table 2) showed that all four dimensions significantly predicted learning outcomes, $F(4, 1351) = 78.56$, $p < 0.001$, explaining 41% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.41$). Instructional management was the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.26$, $p < 0.001$), followed by classroom organization ($\beta = 0.22$), classroom discipline ($\beta = 0.19$), and learner engagement ($\beta = 0.15$, $p = 0.003$).

Table 2. Multiple Regression: Dimensions Predicting Learning Outcomes*

Predictor	Beta (β)	T	p	Interpretation
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Note. $R^2 = 0.41$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.40$; Dependent variable = Pupils' Learning Outcomes.

Discussion

This study aimed to determine the relationship between elementary AP teachers' classroom management skills and pupils' learning outcomes. The findings provide empirical support for the theoretical frameworks and offer practical insights.

A. High but Differentiated Classroom Management Skill

Teachers reported high skills across all dimensions, consistent with Gabriz and Mackie [24] and Molde and Ducot [10]. However, the finding that instructional management and classroom organization were "Very Highly Manifested," whereas discipline and engagement were only "Highly Manifested," is significant. This suggests that teachers are most confident in procedural aspects (planning, time management, physical arrangement) that are amenable to routinization. In contrast, discipline and engagement require real-time responsiveness to student behavior and motivation, which is more challenging, especially in large classes [22],[26].

The relatively lower ratings on connecting lessons to daily experiences and encouraging pupil questions (engagement dimension) are concerning from a constructivist perspective. AP aims to develop critical thinking, yet these practices—central to inquiry-based learning—are applied less consistently. This may reflect curriculum pacing pressures, limited contextualized materials, or classroom norms prioritizing order over exploration.

B. Significant Relationship and the Primacy of Instructional Management

The significant moderate correlation ($r = 0.58$) confirms that classroom management matters for pupil achievement, consistent with international meta-analyses [21] and local studies [10].

The magnitude (34% shared variance) is educationally meaningful, though it also indicates that other factors (e.g., prior knowledge, SES) play important roles. Most importantly, instructional management emerged as the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.26$). This finding aligns with the Academic Learning Time model: teachers who start/end lessons on time, present clearly, give clear directions, and monitor progress maximize the conversion of allocated time into engaged, successful learning time. Discipline and engagement, while significant, have more distal effects—they create conditions for learning but do not directly deliver instruction. This has clear implications for intervention design: professional development should prioritize instructional management.

The finding that learner engagement was the weakest predictor (though still significant) may seem counterintuitive given contemporary discourse on engagement. However, this study measured teacher practices that promote engagement, not engagement itself. These practices may affect achievement indirectly through motivation, whereas instructional management has a direct, proximal effect. Additionally, grades may reflect task completion and compliance, which are directly influenced by instructional management.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretically, the study supports integrating multiple perspectives: SDT explains motivation, TTI explains interaction quality, and ALT explains time use. No single theory fully accounts for the pattern of findings. Practically, school heads should prioritize instructional management in observation protocols and feedback. Teachers should focus on lesson pacing, clarity, and monitoring. Given that learner engagement was the lowest-rated dimension, targeted training in contextualization and encouragement of pupil questioning is warranted.

The findings of this study both align with and diverge from prior Philippine research in meaningful ways. Consistent with Molde and Ducot [10], this study found a significant positive relationship between classroom management practices and AP achievement. However, the present study provides a more nuanced picture by identifying instructional management as the strongest predictor—a finding that Molde and Ducot did not report because their analysis did not include dimension-specific regression [10].

The results contrast with Catayas and Hussien [27], who found no significant predictive relationship between classroom management variables and academic performance. Several factors may explain this discrepancy. First, Catayas and Hussien [27] examined Grade 6 learners across all learning areas, while the present study focused specifically on AP. The relationship between management and achievement may be stronger in subjects that require active participation and discussion than in subjects that rely more heavily on individual seatwork.

Second, Catayas and Hussien [27] used a smaller sample and a different operationalization of classroom management, which may have affected their ability to detect significant relationships. Third, the present study's larger sample size (1,356 teachers vs. a smaller sample) provided greater statistical power.

The finding that instructional management was rated highest (4.24) while learner engagement was rated lowest (4.15) aligns with the pattern reported by Gabriz and Mackie [24] and Manigbas III et al. [25]. This consistency across different Philippine divisions suggests that the pattern may be generalizable within the Philippine public school system: teachers across regions tend to be stronger in procedural management than in engagement-promoting practices. This pattern may reflect the emphasis of pre-service teacher education programs, which often focus heavily on lesson planning and classroom organization while giving comparatively less attention to strategies for sustaining active learner participation.

The findings provide empirical support for each of the three theoretical frameworks underpinning this study, though in different ways. The Academic Learning Time model [13],[14] receives the strongest support from the finding that instructional management—the dimension most directly related to time use—was the best predictor of learning outcomes. This suggests that the mechanism linking management to achievement operates primarily through the efficient use of instructional time. The Teaching Through Interactions framework [12] is supported by the finding that classroom organization (including behavior management, productivity, and instructional formats) was the second-strongest predictor. This confirms that how teachers organize the classroom environment and manage student behavior contributes meaningfully to learning outcomes, even after accounting for instructional management.

Self-Determination Theory [11] receives indirect support from the finding that learner engagement—though the weakest predictor—still made a significant unique contribution to explaining variance in learning outcomes. Engagement-promoting practices that support autonomy, competence, and relatedness do matter for achievement, even if their effects are less direct than those of instructional management. The relatively lower ratings on engagement items suggest that teachers may need additional training in autonomy-supportive instructional strategies.

The regression findings directly inform the design of the proposed intervention program. Because instructional management was the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.26$), the program's first and most intensive component targets this dimension. The Instructional Enhancement Sessions focus on lesson pacing, activity management, clear directions, and formative monitoring—practices that maximize academic learning time. Because learner engagement was the lowest-rated dimension ($M = 4.15$) and the specific items on connecting lessons to daily experiences and

encouraging pupil questions were particularly weak, the program includes a dedicated Learner Engagement Training component. This component uses demonstration teaching and peer coaching to help teachers develop specific strategies for contextualizing lessons and facilitating pupil questioning.

The inclusion of Classroom Management Monitoring and Coaching addresses the well-established finding that professional development is most effective when it includes ongoing support and feedback [28]. One-time workshops rarely produce sustained changes in teaching practice; coaching and mentoring are essential for translating workshop learning into classroom behavior change.

Proposed Intervention Program

Based on the findings (the strongest predictor = instructional management; the weakest dimension = learner engagement), a five-component intervention program is proposed (see Table 3). The program is designed to be implemented over one school year, with ongoing coaching and monitoring. The proposed intervention program is grounded directly in the empirical findings of this study. Four key findings guided the design of the program.

First, instructional management was the strongest predictor of pupils' learning outcomes ($\beta = 0.26$, $p < 0.001$). This finding indicates that among all four classroom management dimensions, how teachers manage instruction—lesson pacing, activity management, clear directions, and formative monitoring—has the most direct and powerful influence on what pupils learn. Therefore, the program prioritizes instructional management as its first and most intensive component. The Academic Learning Time model (Fisher et al., 1978; Gettinger & Walter, 2012) supports this focus: teachers who maximize allocated time, engaged time, and success rates produce higher student achievement. Without strengthening instructional management, efforts to improve discipline or engagement alone are unlikely to yield substantial gains in learning outcomes.

Second, learner engagement was the lowest-rated dimension (mean = 4.15) and did not reach the "Very Highly Manifested" threshold. Specifically, the items "connects lessons to pupils' daily experiences" ($M = 4.10$) and "encourages pupils to ask questions" ($M = 4.11$) received the lowest ratings among all 40 items. This finding is concerning because AP, as a subject, aims to develop critical, reflective, and participatory citizens (Ventura & Gutierrez, 2024). When teachers fail to connect lessons to daily experiences or discourage questioning, AP becomes an abstract, teacher-centered subject that does not achieve its curricular goals. Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2017) explains that engagement suffers when pupils' needs for autonomy (opportunities to question and explore), competence (the ability to succeed at challenging tasks),

and relatedness (feeling connected to the teacher and content) are not met. Thus, the program includes a dedicated Learner Engagement Training component.

Third, classroom discipline ($\beta = 0.19$) and classroom organization ($\beta = 0.22$) were also significant predictors, though weaker than instructional management. This finding suggests that while discipline and organization matter, they should not be the sole focus of professional development. Many existing teacher training programs emphasize behavior management and classroom rules (Reinke et al., 2019), but the present study shows that instructional management deserves at least equal attention. The program includes coaching and monitoring for all dimensions, but instructional management receives primary emphasis.

Fourth, research on teacher professional development consistently shows that one-time workshops are ineffective in producing sustained changes in teaching practice [2],[28]. Effective professional development includes ongoing coaching, classroom observation, feedback, and opportunities for peer learning. Therefore, the program includes a Classroom Management, Monitoring, and Coaching component that operates every quarter rather than as a one-time event. The Recognition and Sharing of Best Practices component is included to sustain improvements over time by creating a culture of continuous improvement and peer recognition.

Fifth, the specific weakness in connecting lessons to daily experiences ($M = 4.10$) points to a need for contextualized instructional materials. Teachers in the Division of Zamboanga del Norte may lack access to localized, culturally relevant AP materials. The Development of Contextualized AP Activities component addresses this gap by engaging teachers in Learning Action Cells (LACs) to create their own localized activities, maps, case studies, and examples drawn from the local community.

In summary, the program is designed as a five-component, school-year-long intervention that targets the strongest predictor (instructional management), the weakest dimension (learner engagement), the specific low-rated practices (connecting to daily experiences and encouraging questioning), and the need for ongoing support (coaching and recognition).

Table 3. Proposed Intervention Program

Component	Focus	Activities	Target
Instructional Enhancement Sessions	Strengthen instructional management ($\beta=0.26$)	Workshops on lesson pacing, activity management, clear directions, formative monitoring	All AP teachers
Learner Engagement Training	Improve lowest-rated dimension ($M=4.15$)	Demonstration teaching, peer coaching, interactive strategies	All AP teachers
Classroom Management Monitoring & Coaching	Provide ongoing support	Classroom observations, coaching conferences, mentoring	Teachers & master teachers

Component	Focus	Activities	Target
Development of Contextualized AP Activities	Address weak item (connecting to daily experiences)	LAC sessions developing localized activities & materials	AP teachers & coordinators
Recognition & Sharing of Best Practices	Sustain improvement	Best practice sharing, recognition program	All AP teachers

Fig. 1 presents the conceptual framework of the proposed intervention program, illustrating the logical flow from the study's empirical basis through the five sequential components to the expected outcomes.

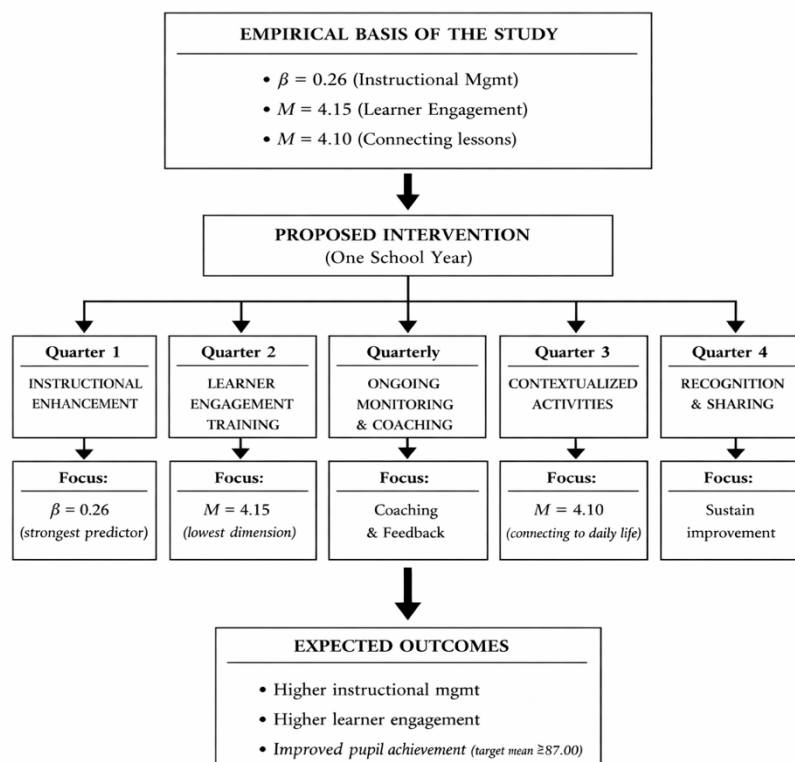


Fig. 1. Conceptual framework of the proposed intervention program

It illustrates the conceptual framework of the proposed intervention program. The program is grounded in three key empirical findings from the study: instructional management was the strongest predictor of pupils' learning outcomes ($\beta = 0.26$), learner engagement was the lowest-rated dimension ($M = 4.15$), and connecting lessons to daily experiences received the lowest item rating ($M = 4.10$). Based on these findings, the program consists of five components implemented over one school year. Instructional Enhancement Sessions (Quarter 1) target the strongest predictor, focusing on lesson pacing, activity management, clear directions, and formative monitoring. Learner Engagement Training (Quarter 2) addresses the lowest-rated dimension through demonstration teaching and peer coaching. Classroom Management Monitoring and Coaching operates quarterly to provide ongoing support, consistent with evidence that coaching sustains behavior change [28]. Development of Contextualized AP

Activities (Quarter 3) directly targets the weakest item by helping teachers create localized materials. Recognition and Sharing of Best Practices (Quarter 4) aims to sustain improvement through peer recognition and diffusion of effective strategies. The expected outcomes include increased instructional management skills (target mean ≥ 4.30), improved learner engagement practices (target mean ≥ 4.25), and higher pupils' learning outcomes (target mean ≥ 87.00).

Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations. First, teacher self-reports of classroom management may be subject to social desirability bias. Future research should include direct classroom observations (e.g., CLASS system). Second, the cross-sectional design precludes causal conclusions. Experimental studies testing the proposed intervention are needed. Third, the sample was limited to public elementary schools in one Philippine division, limiting generalizability to private schools or other regions. Fourth, other variables (e.g., prior achievement, SES) were not measured. Future research should include these covariates and examine moderators such as class size and teacher experience.

Conclusions

This study concludes that elementary AP teachers in the Division of Zamboanga del Norte demonstrate high classroom management skills, with instructional management and classroom organization being very high. Pupils achieve very satisfactory learning outcomes. A significant moderate positive relationship exists between teachers' management skills and pupils' outcomes. Critically, instructional management is the strongest predictor of learning outcomes, suggesting that how teachers organize and deliver instruction matters more for achievement than discipline or engagement alone. These findings provide an empirical basis for targeted interventions. The proposed program, focusing on instructional enhancement and learner engagement, offers a practical roadmap for school heads and teacher educators to improve both teaching practice and pupil achievement in Araling Panlipunan.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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