

Proficiency Level and Challenges of Grade 11 Public School Students on Contemporary Issues

Maria Arvelyn B. Rios^{1*}, Joel M. Bual², Dennis V. Madrigal³ 

¹Domingo Lacson National High School, Negros Occidental, Philippines

^{2,3} University of Negros Occidental-Recoletos, Philippines

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received August 06, 2023

Revised August 10, 2023

Accepted December 07, 2023

Available online December 25, 2023

Kata Kunci:

Isu kontemporer, tingkat kemahiran, deskriptif-komparatif, sekolah negeri Filipina

Keywords:

Contemporary issues, proficiency level, descriptive-comparative, Philippine public schools



This is an open access article under the [CC BY-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/) license.

Copyright ©2023 by Author. Published by Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha.

ABSTRAK

Isu-isu kontemporer sangat penting bagi pelajar K-12 untuk mengembangkan kesadaran mereka terhadap kondisi sosial sebagai potensi pemecah masalah. Oleh karena itu, penilaian kemahiran diperlukan untuk memeriksa perolehan kompetensi mereka. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kemahiran dan tantangan siswa Kelas 10 mengenai isu-isu kontemporer di kalangan sekolah negeri di Filipina Tengah mengenai pentingnya mempelajari isu-isu kontemporer, hak politik, hak asasi manusia, dan hak pendidikan terkait dengan jenis kelamin dan keterlantaran. Memanfaatkan pendekatan deskriptif-komparatif, kuesioner dan daftar periksa yang telah divalidasi dan diuji reliabilitas diberikan kepada 261 siswa menggunakan tanggapan awal, pengembangan, pendekatan kemahiran, kemahiran, dan lanjutan. Dalam analisis data digunakan mean, standar deviasi, penghitungan frekuensi, persentase, rank, Mann Whitney, dan Kruskal Wallis. Secara umum, mereka mendekati kemahiran di semua bidang yang menunjukkan bahwa kompetensi tersebut belum dikuasai sepenuhnya. Oleh karena itu, perbaikan dalam pengajaran sangatlah penting. Sebagai perbandingan, terdapat perbedaan ketika dikelompokkan berdasarkan jenis kelamin dan wilayah dimana siswa perempuan dan TVL menilai kemahiran lebih tinggi dibandingkan rekan-rekan mereka. Sementara itu, mereka tertantang dalam hal motivasi belajar, strategi pengajaran tradisional, manajemen waktu dalam menyelesaikan tugas, fasilitas belajar yang tidak memadai, dan kesempatan belajar interaktif yang tidak memadai. Berdasarkan hasil ini, hal ini menyiratkan pentingnya meningkatkan strategi pengajaran guru dalam memastikan kemahiran kualitas siswa dalam isu-isu kontemporer.

ABSTRACT

Contemporary issues is essential for K-12 learners to develop their awareness of the social conditions as potential problem solvers. Hence, proficiency assessment is necessary to check their competency acquisition. This study aims to analyze the Grade 10 students' proficiency and challenges on contemporary issues among public schools in Central Philippines in the importance of studying contemporary issues, political rights, human rights, and educational rights relative to sex and strand. Utilizing a descriptive-comparative approach, a validated and reliability tested questionnaire and checklist were administered to 261 students using beginning, developing, approaching proficiency, proficiency, and advanced responses. In data analysis, mean, standard deviation, frequency count, percentage, rank, Mann Whitney, and Kruskal Wallis were employed. Generally, they have approaching proficiency in all areas indicating that the competencies were not fully acquired. With this, improvement on instruction is critical. Comparatively, there was a difference when grouped to sex and strand where females and TVL students rated higher proficiency than their counterparts. Meanwhile, they are challenged on their motivation to learn, traditional teaching strategies, time management in accomplishing tasks, inadequate learning facilities, and insufficient interactive learning opportunities. Given the results, these imply the importance of improving the teachers' instructional strategies in ensuring the students' quality proficiency in Contemporary issues.

*Corresponding author

E-mail addresses: riosarvelyn@gmail.com (Maria Arvelyn B. Rios)

1. INTRODUCTION

Contemporary issues subject is essential in developing the learners' awareness of the various global social conditions as potential problem solvers. Also, this makes them aware of their duties as community members and citizens of the country (Andrews, 2021; Bovaird et al., 2015). Additionally, it is designed to help them recognize the current political, social, economic, and ideological developments that influence their positive behavior towards society. Meanwhile, learning this subject's competencies establishes an in-depth understanding of the societal challenges and critically envisions ways of reshaping society toward peaceful social living (Maksum et al., 2021; Ossai, 2016) Hence, offering this discipline is necessary among students to make them responsible citizens and active social problem solvers. In response, the Philippine Department of Education K to 12 curriculums offers contemporary issues as a discipline that makes the learners responsive to the social demands. Mainly, this provides the learners with an in-depth understanding of the contemporary challenges in the country's politics, human rights, education, and social accountability through research and data analysis (Giorgdze & Dgebuadze, 2017; Ilic, 2021). It also develops their capacity to become critical, reflective, and prudent in their decision-making, social responsibility, and participation as national citizens. Lastly, it establishes their values to become environmental, nationalistic, and accountable, which are necessary for social and national development. However, considering its nature, the students are expected to research and share ideas on various social conditions. Most find these academic tasks and responsibilities demanding (Dewi & Primayana, 2019; Ibardezo et al., 2022). Some perceives this course difficult for it entails discussions, analysis and interpretations, and sharing of insights on matters like politics, human rights, and education, which they think are beyond their comprehension. Inevitably, the pandemic negatively affected the instruction, which shifted the teaching mode to modular-online (Bual & Madrigal, 2021; Placencia Jr & Lopres, 2022). During this circumstance, both teachers and learners were not designed for this instructional set-up, which compromised the students' disposition and competency acquisition of contemporary issues. It is observed among public schools in Central Philippines that most students find this subject uninteresting because it demands reading articles and legal documents from the internet vis-à-vis the different social issues. They had to memorize concepts and ideas and share during the class or put them into writing. These tasking responsibilities demand much motivation and interest among the students. Not to mention, the pandemic effects on the educational landscape, which negatively impacted their disposition towards learning (Garcia & Weiss, 2020; Torres & Ortega-Dela Cruz, 2022).

Some had difficulties in connectivity, learning management systems, and modular comprehension, which demotivated them and compromised the acquisition of contemporary issues learning. In the Philippines, there was a study on contemporary issues as a social studies discipline. Previous study conducted on the use of contextualized differentiated instruction in contemporary issues relative to the development of the COVID-19 model (Saguin et al., 2020). This record only shows a need for more literature, especially on students' proficiency level vis-à-vis contemporary issues in the context of public schools. There were also proficiency studies in Economics (Quirao et al., 2022) and Biology (Manzanares & Linaugo, 2022) but no record on contemporary issues. This is the gap that this study would like to fill in. Thus, this paper assessed the Grade 11 students' proficiency level in contemporary issues among selected public schools in Central Philippines during 2022-2023 in terms of the importance of studying contemporary issues, political, human rights, and educational issues when taken as a whole and grouped to sex and strand. Likewise, it identified the challenges encountered in learning contemporary issues. Also, it determined the difference in their proficiency level in contemporary issues when grouped to demographics. The findings may serve as a basis in formulating the proposed Strategic Intervention Materials (SIM) for low-proficiency areas to improve the contemporary issues instruction among public schools. The study theorized that the students' proficiency level is rated advanced since they already finished the subject and are expected to have acquired the competencies regardless of the demographics. This assumption was anchored on cognitive development theory which perceives that as individuals progress, they acquire specific cognitive understanding. As they develop the cognitive skills, they engage in higher-level thinking, comprehend higher concepts, and apply the principles to real-world situations regardless of sex and strand. This has something to do with the student's proficiency level. Since they already finished the contemporary issues course, they are expected to have acquired and manifested the subject's competencies in their assessment.

2. METHOD

This study utilized a quantitative research design, particularly the descriptive-comparative approach. The descriptive approach assessed the student's proficiency level in contemporary issues and the challenges they encountered. Meanwhile, the comparative approach investigated their proficiency

level differences when grouped to sex and strand. The respondents were 261 Grade 11 HUMSS students among selected public schools in Central Philippines. They were determined using stratified random sampling and fishbowl technique. Demographic profile of the respondents is show in [Table 1](#).

Table 1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Variable	f	%
Sex		
Male	127	48.7
Female	134	51.3
Strand		
CCS	46	17.6
HUMSS	112	42.9
SMAW	41	15.7
TVL	62	23.8
Total	261	100.0

Base on [Table 1](#) in assessing the study, a 45-item researcher-made test questionnaire was used. It was based on the Social Studies Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs) (DepEd, 2016). The instrument underwent validation and yielded a valid score of 0.89. It was pilot-tested, subjected to item analysis, and produced a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.908. It was responded to using the scale in ascending order: beginning, developing, approaching proficiency, proficiency, and advanced. Regarding the challenges, it employed a researcher-made checklist regarding teacher, student, facilities and resources, learner environment, and curriculum factors. In data analyses, descriptive and comparative studies were utilized. Frequency count, percentage distribution, rank, mean, and standard deviation were used to analyze the students' proficiency level and challenges. Meanwhile, Kolmogorov-Smirnov was used for normality test. The result revealed that their proficiency [KS=0.106, p=0.000] was not normally distributed. Specifically, Mann Whitney and Kruskal Wallis were used in investigating the difference in their proficiency when grouped to sex and strand. Lastly, the researcher ensured the paper's ethical soundness in adherence to the general principles of respect for persons, justice, and beneficence by the Philippine Health Research Ethics Board (PHREB). Specifically, it addressed the participants' vulnerability and ensured their anonymity and the confidentiality of the data gathered.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Proficiency Level of Students on Contemporary Issues

[Table 2](#) presents the students' proficiency level in contemporary issues. Their proficiency level manifests their acquisition of knowledge, skills, and competencies in providing a thorough understanding of the social conditions, whether legal, political, human rights or educational. Generally, their approaching proficiency indicates that they still need to acquire the subject's competencies fully. Expectedly, they should have learned the subject since they already took this before the assessment. Hence, the instruction is put into question. Meanwhile, a much-needed improvement to achieve the advanced rating is necessary, perhaps focusing on the four areas, which were all rated approaching proficiency too.

Table 2. Level of Proficiency of Students on Contemporary Issues

Variable	Importance of Studying Contemporary Issues			Political Rights			Human Rights			Educational Rights			Proficiency		
	M	SD	Int	M	SD	Int	M	SD	Int	M	SD	Int	M	SD	Int
Sex															
Male	6.83	3.35	AP	3.28	2.06	De	5.17	3.02	De	2.77	1.96	De	18.06	8.99	AP
Female	8.57	3.15	AP	4.17	2.51	AP	6.66	3.18	AP	3.57	1.90	AP	22.97	8.93	AP
Strand															
CCS	6.54	2.53	AP	2.72	1.73	De	5.30	3.14	AP	2.46	1.49	De	17.02	6.84	De
HUMSS	8.75	2.88	AP	3.88	2.17	AP	6.15	2.84	AP	3.50	2.07	AP	22.29	8.39	AP
SMAW	4.41	1.73	De	2.39	1.12	De	3.54	1.67	De	1.78	1.65	De	12.12	3.30	De
TVL	8.94	3.80	AP	5.11	2.78	AP	7.61	3.53	AP	4.06	1.60	AP	25.73	10.34	AP
Whole	7.72	3.36	AP	3.74	2.34	AP	5.94	3.19	AP	3.18	1.97	AP	20.58	9.27	AP

Base on Table 2, the student's proficiency level in contemporary issues (M=20.58; SD=9.27) is approaching proficiency. All areas were approaching proficiency: the importance of studying Contemporary Issues (M=7.72; SD=3.36), political issues (M=3.74; SD=2.34), human rights issues (M=5.94; SD=3.19), and educational issues (M=3.18; SD=1.97). Regarding demographics, both males (f=127, 48.7%) and females (f=134, 51.3%) acquired approaching proficiency ratings. Relative to strand, HUMSS (f=112, 42.9%) and TVL (f=62, 23.8%) were rated approaching proficiency, while CCS (f=46, 17.6%) and SMAW (f=41, 15.7%) were developing.

Difference in the Proficiency Level on Contemporary Issues in terms of Sex and Strand

Table 3 presents the difference in the student's proficiency level in contemporary issues regarding sex and academic strand. The significant differences in their proficiency level relative to these demographics indicate that their assessments differ, as reflected in the post hoc analyses, where female and TVL students scored higher than their counterparts.

Table 3. Difference in the Proficiency Level of Students on Contemporary Issues in Sex and Strand

Variables	U	z	p
Sex	5654.000*	-4.688	0.000
Strand	χ^2 66.777*	df 3	p 0.000

Note: *difference is significant when $p \leq 0.05$

Base on Table 3 The results revealed a difference in their proficiency level when grouped to sex [U=5654.0, p=0.000]. Meanwhile, there was a difference when grouped to strand [$\chi^2(3) = 66.777$, p=0.000]. Hence, the null hypotheses are rejected. Post hoc analyses revealed that female and Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) students scored significantly higher that their counterparts.

Challenges of Students in Learning Contemporary Issues

Table 4 presents the students' challenges in learning contemporary issues regarding teacher, student, facilities and resources, learning environment, and curriculum related factors. In the teachers' traditional teaching, this is expected among students of modular-online instruction. During pandemic, these teachers were also struggling to deliver the instruction. Most resorted is conventional teaching like memorization of concepts. They delivered the instruction through lectures to survive the shifting instructional mode. Online lectures became possible during pandemic instruction since the students and teachers could not meet in the actual classroom. This circumstance may have affected the students' rating.

Table 4. Challenges of Students in Learning Contemporary Issues

Factors	f	%
A. The teacher....		
utilizes traditional teaching	131	50.2
depends on textbooks	104	39.8
misses to give feedbacks	68	26.1
pressures the students of tasks	55	21.1
teaches that is out of expertise	50	19.2
lacks student encouragement	28	10.7
lacks teaching confidence	21	8.0
Factors		
has poor background of the subject	17	6.5
lacks connection of social issues to students' lives	17	6.5
lacks utilization of educational technology	8	3.1
B. The students....		
lack motivation to learn	131	50.2
have difficulty in time management	127	48.7
find it difficult to understand the topics	90	34.5
get bored about social issues	55	21.1
lack background on social issues	44	16.9
find the subject irrelevant	42	16.1
find the subject uninteresting	39	14.9
lacks utilization of technology in learning	35	13.4

C. Facilities and Resources: The school ...		
has limited instructional facilities	115	44.1
lacks encouragement to use library	98	37.5
lacks updated learning resources	75	28.7
lacks encouragement to use technology	75	28.7
D. The learning environment ...		
lacks collaborative learning	106	40.6
lacks administrative support for activities at home is not favorable for studying	59	22.6
in the classroom is not conducive	58	22.2
	39	14.9
E. The curriculum's		
objectives are difficult to understand	78	29.9
topics demand much activities	72	27.6
competencies are unachievable	66	25.3
topics are irrelevant	58	22.2
subject demands unachievable tasks	52	19.9

Base on [Table 4](#), the students' challenges in learning contemporary issues were identified regarding teacher, student, facilities and resources, learning environment, and curriculum factors. Relative to the teacher factors, their traditional teaching (f=131, 50.2%), was considered the top issue. Regarding the students, they mostly lack the motivation to learn the subject (f=131, 50.2%). In facilities and resources, limited facilities like television, computers, and connectivity for instruction (f=115, 44.1%) challenge most students. Regarding learning environment, it lacks collaborative learning (f=106, 40.6%). Lastly, in curriculum, the subject's objectives are difficult to understand (f=78, 29.9%).

Discussion

Proficiency Level of Students on Contemporary Issues

Several factors could be attributed to the student's overall proficiency in contemporary issues. This subject is challenging because it deals with familiarizing concepts of politics, education, and human rights as overarching competencies ([Esman et al., 2023](#); [Ravetz, 2020](#)). In fact, previous studies found that most students struggle with contemporary issues due to terminologies, memorizing cases, critical thinking, reading, constitution, and class interaction which cause their non-performance ([Cheek et al., 2017](#); [Pan & Hamilton, 2018](#)). They are also expected to provide in-depth understanding of the social issues. Besides, these learners were products of pandemic instruction, where most depended on modular-online learning, and assessments were unreliable ([Clair et al., 2011](#); [Placencia Jr & Lopres, 2022](#)). Most also need to gain prior knowledge of the complex principles of the topics. Additionally, they were deprived of interaction during class discussions due to technological and connectivity constraints ([Cena & Bual, 2021](#); [Ravetz, 2020](#)).

Previous study found that when students encounter politics and laws, most do not engage because of their demand for higher-order comprehension ([Alic & Bual, 2021](#)). Imagine familiarizing laws and policies governing politics and human rights, which are demanding for learners amid pandemic conditions. In education, to grasp its issues, the students must critically analyze the curriculum and its implementation ([Dwi et al., 2018](#); [Kolesnikov et al., 2019](#)). In fact, previous study perceived that education is too broad to grasp due to its various facets and thrusts ([Prior, 2022](#)). Lastly, pandemic study argue that this circumstance has negatively affected the instruction and the student's disposition toward learning, compromising their competency acquisition ([Placencia Jr & Lopres, 2022](#)). Regarding the political issues, its approaching proficiency shows that the learners still need to fully acquire the competencies that concern their take on political challenges. The fact that this subject deals with the constitution, political laws and their understanding of the existing issues, it is expected that most students find this difficult and time-consuming to deal ([Ibardeloza et al., 2022](#); [Wahyuni et al., 2019](#)). Most find this too heavy since it demands higher-order thinking. This scenario could contribute to the approaching proficiency of this domain. In support, other study found that learning political issues is challenging for students, especially with insufficient background, since it concerns political ideologies and debates ([Levy et al., 2015](#)). Hence, the findings imply motivating the students' interest in political issues amid the difficulty. Relative to the human rights issues, the approaching proficiency rating indicates that they need to adequately learn the competencies. Human rights are the most comprehensive problem in society nowadays, where students can learn a lot ([Barker et al., 2015](#); [Blumberg & Fisch, 2013](#)). However, due to the pandemic instruction, these issues were highlighted little since the teaching mode shifted to distance instruction which compromised the actual interaction and, the student's learning, which probably influenced the rating

(Castells, 2015; Merrill et al., 2017). Previous study found that human rights lessons are potential avenues for students to share their ideas since they are bombarded with many issues regarding these phenomena daily through their social media experiences (Montaner Sanchis et al., 2022). Meaning, compared to politics and education issues, the students can relate much since it is easy for them to react in agreement or not. Hence, the findings imply improvement of teaching strategies through exposing the students to human rights issues to elicit their sharing of ideas.

Meanwhile, the approaching proficiency of male and female students, indicates that both still need to fully acquire the contemporary issues' competencies. Both experience similar struggles during the pandemic instruction, which negatively resulted in poor knowledge acquisition (Cena & Bual, 2021; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2021). During this circumstance, both were confined to modular-online learning at home, where those who excel and non-performing share similar struggling experiences on coping. The result shows poor competency acquisition despite the higher proficiency of the Technological-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) students. All share similar struggling experiences on learning the subject amid the shifting instructional mode. How much more those students leaning towards Contact Center Services (CCS) and Shielded Metal Arc Welding (SMAW) strands. Their developing results indicate they have struggled a lot in learning the subject during the pandemic considering its complex nature (Garcia & Weiss, 2020; Margario et al., 2022). Basically, they are into an application and demonstrative skills, where during this circumstance were deprived of these activities and appropriate assessments. Hence, these findings imply the improvement of instruction post-pandemic and conduct further studies to validate the results of this paper.

Difference in the Proficiency Level on Contemporary Issues in terms of Sex and Strand

In sex, the rating could be attributed to the fact that contemporary issues subject requires research and sharing of ideas which by nature are female-oriented. With the outnumbering females in this study, this record could highly influence the girls' rating. Basically, girls are more interested to learn contemporary issues since most boys would find these to be tasking and demanding. In support, when it comes to doing research and writing, most males ask the girls to do these for them (Wildman, 2021). In fact, most boys find these boring and unproductive since they do not usually move. Other study perceived that boys normally are interested in participating and excel when activities are psychomotor (Margario et al., 2022). Additionally, female students usually have higher motivation in any subject compared to males (Froiland & Worrell, 2016; Oh & Syn, 2015). This could be because the subject entails metacognitive skills and comprehension of complex concepts. Previous study agreed that female learners have higher engagement, ability beliefs, and performance than males (Yildirim, 2016). Regarding sharing ideas and opinions, especially during class discussions or writing, other study argued that females are more open to problems and are willing to share them than boys (Jabor & Azhar, 2019). These findings imply improvement of instructional strategies that elicit the motivation, and participation of both male and female students in learning contemporary issues subject to increase their competency acquisition.

Regarding the academic strand, the higher proficiency of TVL could be ascribed to the fact that the nature of contemporary issues entails research works and writing compliances that employ the use of the internet and technology (Barrera, 2022; Mustafa & Alzubi, 2020). Before the assessment, these students were products of online-modular instruction. Compared to other students of different strands, TVL students were inclined to use technology most of the time where they can manipulate it and most likely are more compliant on online submissions (Barrera, 2022; Pahilanga et al., 2023). During pandemic, studies show that in online-modular instruction, those who are into technology can usually cope because they can manipulate learning management systems. Here, most students leaning towards TVL were participative due to their knowledge of using technology (Jayben et al., 2022; Torres & Ortega-Dela Cruz, 2022). They can do online research and share their ideas via online platforms. Hence, they could acquire the learning incomparable to other strands that needed help to cope with the pandemic instruction which they were not designed. On one hand, the outnumbering HUMSS students are expected to get a higher rating in this assessment since contemporary issues is a social science (Ocampo, 2023). However, it cannot be denied that they were also struggling with modular-online learning. With this, the findings imply the essentials of eliciting the students' interest to participate regardless of their strands. Further studies are also encouraged assessing the post-pandemic students to validate the claims.

Challenges of Students in Learning Contemporary Issues

Meanwhile, prior to pandemic, most Filipino teachers were at ease with conventional teaching. Besides, the discipline entails complex concepts that need the teachers' knowledge, where lectures, discussions, and memorizations are necessary (Ravetz, 2020; Torres & Ortega-Dela Cruz, 2022). Meanwhile, inadequate instructional resources like recent textbooks and technology also affected the

teachers' conventional teaching. These compromise the students' motivation to learn the subject. Previous study argued that students find lessons boring in traditional instructions (Giorgdze & Dgebuadze, 2017). Students nowadays are motivated to learn when provided with activities that employ audio-visual, psychomotor, and technological approaches (Esman et al., 2023; Margario et al., 2022). Hence, innovating the teachers' strategies is essential in teaching contemporary issues. Regarding student factors, their lack of motivation could be ascribed to the nature of the subject itself. Contemporary issues subject entails research, reading, and familiarization of political, educational, and legal concepts and issues, and most students find this challenging. They also need to share their opinions on the social conditions, which is demanding (Ibardelozza et al., 2022; Pan & Hamilton, 2018). These respondents were products of modular-online instruction, and most needed time to be ready for this instructional setup. Some were not participative because of technological and connectivity issues. These scenarios could have influenced their rating (Merrill et al., 2017; Placencia Jr & Lopres, 2022).

Previous study found that activities that concern research are discouraging and demotivating among students, given their insufficient skills. Some even copy-paste online to comply. They perceive these activities as time-consuming (Ecang & Petalla, 2022; Garcia & Weiss, 2020). Meanwhile, most students normally get rid of familiarizations of legal, economic, and political concepts since these demand higher thinking. Additionally, some do not share their opinions during discussions because they do not want to think that their answers are wrong (Ibardelozza et al., 2022; Quirao et al., 2022). Hence, these encourage the teachers to exhaust techniques that make lessons interesting and the students share. Relative to issues on facilities, the limited resources and connectivity for instruction could be ascribed to the pandemic effects. The shifting instructional modality to modular online affected many students (Cena & Bual, 2021; Torres & Ortega-Dela Cruz, 2022). In this learning mode, the students relied much on modules and learning management systems. Some did not have gadgets, and some without internet connection (Ecang & Petalla, 2022). In previous study most struggled with technology and connection during the pandemic due to low family income (Garcia & Weiss, 2020). Other study also argued that distance learning is complex since it requires connectivity, information, educational materials, and digital skills (Mustafa & Alzubi, 2020). Hence, this encourages incorporating technology in instruction to train and develop the students' skills.

Lastly, regarding the students' difficulty in understanding the contemporary issues' objectives, it boils down to the subject's complex nature. The objectives deal with concepts, terminologies, principles, and issues in law, politics, education, human rights, economy, and many others. Considerably, most students find these beyond their comprehension (Barker et al., 2015; Maksum et al., 2021). Given the approaches like research and case analysis, most perceive these as demanding and difficult to understand. Hence, these imply clear orientations among students on the objectives of contemporary issues and exhausting instructional strategies to understand the subject. The findings also signify the essentials of addressing the identified challenges to establish the quality teaching-learning process. Hence, by improving the instruction and addressing these challenges, public schools ensure the students' competency acquisition and guarantee their engagement on the social conditions. However, given the non-validation of theory and the assessment's limitations, further post-pandemic studies on the student's proficiency in contemporary issues are encouraged to validate the claims.

4. CONCLUSION

The students' overall approaching proficiency implies the importance of improving the contemporary issues' instructional delivery among public schools in Central Philippines. The improvement is necessary in achieving the advanced competency of the discipline as prescribed by the Department of Education. To achieve this, the teachers play an essential role in exhausting varied instructional strategies and providing opportunities that elicit the students' knowledge, skills, attitude, motivation, interest, and interactive participation towards the subject.

5. REFERENCES

- Alic, A. K. B., & Bual, J. M. (2021). Readings in Philippine History: Course review, best practices, and challenges among higher education institutions. *Philippine Social Science Journal*, 4(4), 91-103. <https://doi.org/10.52006/main.v4i4.424>.
- Andrews, T. (2021). Bourdieu's theory of practice and the OECD Pisa Global Competence Framework. *Journal of Research in International Education*, 20(2), 154-170. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14752409211032525>.
- Barker, C., Pistrang, N., & Elliott, R. (2015). *Research methods in clinical psychology: An introduction for*

students and practitioners.

- Barrera, R. (2022). Availability of instructional materials model of the technical-vocational livelihood curriculum implementation for public senior high schools. *In International Conference on Emerging Technology and Interdisciplinary Sciences*, 89–113. <https://doi.org/10.57040/icetis.vi.34>.
- Blumberg, F. C., & Fisch, S. M. (2013). Introduction: Digital games as a context for cognitive development, learning, and developmental research. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, 139, 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cad.20026>.
- Bovaird, T., Ryzin, G. G., Loeffler, E., & Parrado, S. (2015). Activating citizens to participate in collective co-production of public services. *Journal of Social Policy*, 44(1), 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047279414000567>.
- Bual, J. M., & Madrigal, D. V. (2021). Correlating the school climate and teacher leadership of Catholic schools in Antique, Philippines. *Asian Journal of Education and Social Studies*, 21(4), 22–34. <https://doi.org/10.9734/ajess/2021/v21i430514>.
- Castells, M. (2015). *Networks of outrage and hope: Social movements in the internet age*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Cena, J. B., & Bual, J. M. (2021). Spiritual well-being of senior high school students of Philippine public schools. *Philippine Social Science Journal*, 4(4), 50–61. <https://doi.org/10.52006/main.v4i4.446>.
- Cheek, J., Abrams, E. M., Lipschitz, D. L., Vago, D. R., & Nakamura, Y. (2017). Creating novel school-based education programs to cultivate mindfulness in youth: What the letters told us. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 26, 2564–2578. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-017-0761-1>.
- Clair, M. C., Pickles, A., Durkin, K., & Conti-Ramsden, G. (2011). A longitudinal study of behavioral, emotional and social difficulties in individuals with a history of Specific Language Impairment (SLI). *Journal of Communication Disorders*, 44(2), 186–199. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcomdis.2010.09.004>.
- Dewi, P. Y. A., & Primayana, K. H. (2019). Effect of Learning Module with Setting Contextual Teaching and Learning to Increase the Understanding of Concepts. *International Journal of Education and Learning*, 1(1). <https://doi.org/10.31763/ijele.v1i1.26>.
- Dwi, Y. R., Haryono, & Florentinus, T. S. ; (2018). The evaluation of the CIPP model in the implementation of character education at junior high school. *Innovative Journal of Curriculum and Educational Technology*, 7(2), 65–77. <https://doi.org/10.15294/IJCET.V7I2.28391>.
- Ecang, V. S. S., & Petalla, M. B. (2022). A metamorphic experience of students-at-risk-of-dropping-out in the printed modular distance learning in time of Covid-19 pandemic. *Philippine Social Science Journal*, 5(1), 49–56. <https://doi.org/10.52006/main.v5i1.470>.
- Esman, E. N., Bual, J. M., & Madrigal, D. V. (2023). Twenty-first century teaching skills and job satisfaction of public senior high school teachers in Central Philippines. *Asian Journal of Advanced Research and Reports*, 17(7), 46–62. <https://doi.org/10.9734/ajarr/2023/v17i7493>.
- Froiland, J. M., & Worrell, F. C. (2016). Intrinsic motivation, learning goals, engagement, and achievement in a diverse high school. *Psychology in the Schools*, 53(3), 321–336. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.21901>.
- Garcia, E., & Weiss, E. (2020). COVID-19 and student performance, equity, and US education policy: Lessons from pre-pandemic research to inform relief, recovery, and rebuilding. *Economic Policy Institute*. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED610971>.
- Giorgdze, M., & Dgebuadze, M. (2017). Interactive teaching methods: Challenges and perspectives. *International E-Journal of Advances in Education*, 3(9), 544–548. <http://ijaedu.ocerintjournals.org/en/download/article-file/390165>.
- Ibardeloza, K. B., Badillo, L. T., Macatangay, J. M. H., Cruz, K. R. D., & Malabanan, M. P. (2022). Students' exposure to social media and their radical involvement on the societal issues in the Philippines. *International Review of Social Sciences Research*, 2(1), 47–60. <https://doi.org/10.53378/352878>
- Ilic, P. (2021). The Challenge of Information and Communications Technology in Education. *SHS Web of Conferences*, 102, 01009. <https://doi.org/10.1051/shsconf/202110201009>.
- Jabor, A. A., & Azhar, I. A. . (2019). External and Internal Factors Affecting Student's Academic Performance. *The Social Sciences*, 14(4), 155–168. <https://doi.org/10.36478/sscience.2019.155.168>.
- Jayben, P. L., Sison, J. C., Suarez, S. B. C., Jesus, M. T., Pelande, J. C., & Uy, M. S. (2022). The academic experiences of senior high school students in the midst of pandemic. *East Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 1(6), 1017–1032. <https://doi.org/10.55927/eajmr.v1i6.684>.
- Kolesnikov, A., Zhai, X., & Beyer, L. (2019). Revisiting self-supervised visual representation learning. *Proceedings of the IEEE Computer Society Conference on Computer Vision and Pattern Recognition, 2019-June*, 1920–1929. <https://doi.org/10.1109/CVPR.2019.00202>.

- Levy, B. L., Journell, W., He, Y., & Towns, B. (2015). Students blogging about politics: A study of students' political engagement and a teacher's pedagogy during a semester-long political blog assignment. *Computers & Education*, 88, 64–71. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2015.04.010>.
- Maksum, A., Widiana, I. W., & Marini, A. (2021). Path analysis of self-regulation, social skills, critical thinking and problem-solving ability on social studies learning outcomes. *International Journal of Instruction*, 14(3), 613–628. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2021.14336a>.
- Manzanares, R. R., & Linaugo, J. (2022). Proficiency level in biology among Grade 9 entrants in a public secondary school. *Technium Social Science Journal*, 38, 142. <https://doi.org/10.47577/tssj.v38i1.7920>.
- Margario, B. M., Solidarios, J. T., & Bual, J. M. (2022). Learning environment, motivation, and challenges of junior high students under physical education modular instruction. *Asian Journal of Education and Social Studies*, 47–59. <https://doi.org/10.9734/ajess/2022/v31i430757>.
- Merrill, K. L., Smith, S. W., Cumming, M. M., & Daunic, A. P. (2017). A review of social problem-solving interventions: Past findings, current status, and future directions. *Review of Educational Research*, 87(1), 71–102. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654316652943>.
- Montaner Sanchis, A., Gumbau Puchol, V., Villalba Ferrer, F., & Eleuterio Cerveró, G. (2022). Mobile learning in human anatomy: Application market study. *Educacion Medica*, 23(2). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edumed.2022.100726>.
- Mustafa, M., & Alzubi, S. (2020). Factors affecting the success of internet of things for enhancing quality and efficiency implementation in hospitals sector in Jordan during the crises of Covid-19. *Internet of Medical Things for Smart Healthcare: Covid-19 Pandemic*, 107–140. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-8097-0_5.
- Ocampo, N. D. (2023). Perceptions, challenges and effectiveness of modular distance learning approach to the academic performance of Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) students of Botolan National High School. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary: Applied Business and Education Research*, 4(6), 1833–1848. <https://doi.org/10.11594/ijmaber.04.06.09>.
- Oh, S., & Syn, S. Y. (2015). Motivations for sharing information and social support in social media: A comparative analysis of Facebook, Twitter, Delicious, YouTube, and Flickr. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 66(10), 2045–2060. <https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.23320>.
- Ossai, P. A. U. (2016). Relationship between students' scores on research methods and statistics, and undergraduate project scores. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 7(8). <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1095370>.
- Pahilanga, L. L. V., Bual, J. M., & Madrigal, D. V. (2023). Life skills of Filipino emerging adults of a Catholic higher education institution in Central Philippines. *Indonesian Journal of Educational Research and Review*, 6(1). <https://doi.org/10.23887/ijerr.v6i1.59582>.
- Pan, X., & Hamilton, A. F. D. C. (2018). Why and how to use virtual reality to study human social interaction: The challenges of exploring a new research landscape. *British Journal of Psychology*, 109(3), 395–417. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjop.12290>.
- Placencia Jr, M. C., & Lopres, J. R. (2022). Learning conditions vis-à-vis alternative delivery mode in the Philippine Department of Education during the pandemic for instruction augmentation. *International Journal of Science and Management Studies (IJSMS)*, 5(6), 2581–5946. <https://doi.org/10.51386/25815946/ijms-v5i6p119>.
- Prior, M. (2022). *Understanding specific learning difficulties*. Psychology Press. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315784816>.
- Quirao, Z. D., Bual, J. M., & Madrigal, D. V. (2022). Proficiency level and challenges in Economics of Grade 10 students in selected public schools in Central Philippines. *South Asian Journal of Social Studies and Economics*, 20(1). <https://doi.org/10.9734/SAJSSE/2023/v20i1687>.
- Ravetz, J. R. (2020). *Scientific knowledge and its social problems*. Routledge.
- Saguin, E. D., Inocian, R. B., & Un, J. L. B. (2020). *Contextualized differentiated instruction in contemporary issues vis-à-vis the development of its COVID-19 model*. <https://doi.org/10.37134/jrppte.vol10.2.2.2020>.
- Shapiro, J. P., & Stefkovich, J. A. (2021). *Ethical leadership and decision making in education: Applying theoretical perspectives to complex dilemmas*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315773339>.
- Torres, R. A. O., & Ortega-Dela Cruz, R. A. (2022). Remote Learning: Challenges and opportunities for educators and students in the new normal. *Anatolian Journal of Education*, 7(1), 83–92. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1333478.pdf>.
- Wahyuni, T., Suwandi, S., Slamet, S. Y., & Andayani, A. (2019). The Content Of Indonesian Language

- Syntactic Learning Instrument Based On The Need Analysis Directed To The Indonesian Language And Literature Education Department Students Among The Universities In Surakarta Indonesia. *Anatolian Journal of Education*, 2(1). <https://doi.org/10.29333/aje.2017.211a>.
- Wildman, J. (2021). Covid-19 and income inequality in OECD countries. *The European Journal of Health Economics*, 22. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10198-021-01266-4>.
- Yıldırım, S. (2016). Infographics for educational purposes: Their structure, properties and reader approaches. *Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology*, 15(3), 98–110. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1106376>.