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Integrating differentiated instruction in teaching "Pamahalaan at ekonomiya sa Timog Silangang Asya"

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ABSTRACT

Differentiated instruction is a pedagogical approach in which a teacher gives different activities based on the students' abilities, readiness, and interests so that all students have a fair chance to understand the lessons. In line with this, the study aimed to find out the effectiveness of integrating Differentiated Instruction as an instructional tool in teaching Pamahalaan at Ekonomiya sa Timog Silangang Asya in Grade 7 Araling Panlipunan at Candulawan National High School during the academic year 2025-2026. Anchored on Learning Variability Theory and Multimodal Theory, the research employed a mixed-methods research design, employing pre-test, post-test and thematic analysis. This research approach was used to determine whether DI significantly affected students' learning gains as measured through assessments aligned with the identified competencies. The results showed that there was a significant improvement in the students' learning gains as reflected by an increase from Fairly Satisfactory to Satisfactory performance rating, after DI was integrated. Moreover, the paired t-test results showed statistically significant differences in all identified competencies with effect sizes from medium to large, indicating a meaningful learning gain. On the other hand, the qualitative data gathered showed strong themes, emphasizing that DI enhanced students' engagement and fostered active learning through increase participation, collaboration and games-based activities. Based on these findings, a recommendation for the school, teachers, students, and school administrators were formulated. These included the consistent integration of DI in the lesson guide, encouragement of students to actively participate in DI activities and incorporation of training related to DI. Also, future researchers were encouraged to explore the long-term effects of DI as well as to replicate the study to other grade levels, subjects or school. Moreover, an enhanced DI-based lesson guide was developed to support teachers in creating a more inclusive, flexible and learner-responsive enrichment.

Keywords: Differentiated Instruction, Pamahalaan at Ekonomiya sa Timog Silangang Asya, Learning Gains, Araling Panlipunan 7, DI Integrated Lesson Guide.

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INTRODUCTION

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In Araling Panlipunan 7 particularly in the topics of “Pamahalaan at Ekonomiya sa Timog Silangang Asya”, students need to recall, understand, and analyze complex concepts related to politics and economics. And these topics were often too broad and difficult to relate to their everyday experiences at a young age. Recent studies showed that the students were struggling with abstract political and economic concepts which led to limit their conceptual understanding and low engagement in class (Man-Ho Lam, 2023). As a results, the students experienced limited learning opportunities.

Furthermore, classrooms had become more diverse with learners having different learning capabilities and styles. This growing diversity inside the classroom posed a challenge to traditional teaching methods particularly in the Pamahalaan at Ekonomiya sa Timog Silangang Asya complex topics, for it sometimes failed to address the individual needs. Thus, such complex content and diversity supported the need for more responsive and inclusive teaching methods (Ramilo & Ting, 2025).

To address these emerging challenges, the Philippines and other ASEAN Member states started education transformation to integrate Sustainable Development Goals in Education across subjects and grade levels.

This education transformation highlighted the need of the students to understand real-world regional challenges like governance, economy and climate issues (Pascua-Valenzuela, 2025). Also, the Department of Education continued to conduct major education reforms through Curriculum modernization which aimed to ensure that Araling Panlipunan 7 content was updated, and teachers were provided better training and learning materials aligned with realities (Deped, 2021). And recently, the ARAL program which provided interventions and support to students who were struggling with foundational literacy and numeracy. This program ensured that students were prepared to engage with more complex subjects like Araling Panlipunan. However, despite these initiatives, many challenges remain at the classroom level for the effectiveness of these programs still depend on the instructional approaches used by the teachers.

A meaningful solution to this challenge was the integration of differentiated instruction. The goal of this kind of instruction was to let the students know its strengths and weaknesses for them to easily adapt to classroom instruction and discussion. Increase student interest, active participation and enhanced innovation in every classroom discussion had been evident with the used of DI (Aminuriyah et al., 2023). It was concluded that the approach enhanced learning gains by improving the quality of instruction and supporting significant progress over time. Through DI, the students were provided with different opportunities that addressed their learning styles, readiness levels and needs that allowed them to show growth and improvement in their understanding. Thereby, students were able to produce a diverse and a high-quality learning output (Helmi et al., 2023). Moreover, in a classroom with different learning abilities, differentiated instruction ensured every learner the chance to explore their skills and capabilities. When teacher created a lesson or assessment accordingly, students were more likely to participate and felt confident to complete the task. (Ramilo & Ting, 2025). This approach supported students not only on improving students’ learning gains but also in developing positive experiences and better perceptions of the learning process.

In Araling Panlipunan 7, particularly in the content of “Pamahalaaan at Ekonomiya sa Timog Silangang Asya”, the integration of differentiated instruction in lesson discussion allowed students to better understand complex politics and economics concepts by making lessons more meaningful, engaging and accessible.

Statement of the problem

This research determined the effectiveness of integrating differentiated instruction as a strategy in teaching Pamahalaan at Ekonomiya ng Timog Silangang Asya in improving the learning gains among Grade 7 students of Candulawan National High School, Candulawan, Talisay City, Cebu, for the School Year 2025 to 2026, as the basis for enhancement of the Araling Panlipunan lesson guide. Specifically, it answered the following questions:

1. What was the pretest performance of the students in the competencies on identifying the challenges faced by ASEAN regarding sustainable development, analyzing the actions taken by ASEAN in response to the challenges of sustainable development, and presenting values related to ASEAN's efforts to address sustainable development through the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations?
2. After the implementation of the differentiated instruction strategy, what was the posttest performance of the students in the competencies on identifying the challenges faced by ASEAN regarding sustainable development, analyzing the actions taken by ASEAN in response to the challenges of sustainable development, and presenting values related to ASEAN's efforts to address sustainable development through the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations?
3. Was there a significant difference between the pretest and posttest performance of the students after the integration of differentiated instruction?
4. What were the experiences of the students during the use of the differentiated instruction strategy?
5. Based on the findings, what enhanced Araling Panlipunan lesson guide can be presented?

METHODOLOGY

This part explained the methods used in the conduct of the study, particularly how the data and information were gathered, collected, and analyzed to address the research objectives and questions. It also discussed the research design, flow of the study, environment, respondents, research instruments, data gathering procedure, scoring procedure, and statistical treatment used in the study.

The study used a Mixed Methods Research Design combining a quantitative Quasi-Experimental Pre-Test / Post – Test Design with qualitative Thematic Analysis. The quasi-experimental design with the use of pre-test / post-test was used to measure students' learning gains by comparing their performance before and after the application of the instructional approach. In line with this research approach, the participants were given a pre-test based on the identified learning competencies. The students were then taught the lesson "Pamahalaan at Ekonomiya sa Timog Silangang Asya" using differentiated instruction strategies, which included varied learning materials and tasks tailored to their learning styles, abilities, and interests. After the implementation of differentiated instruction, a post-test was administered. The impact of the approach was determined by analyzing the differences between the pre-test and post-test assessment results.

Furthermore, the evaluation component focused on the wider impact of differentiated instruction on enhancing students' participation. A set of questionnaires was given to the participants to determine how students responded to differentiated instruction, particularly in terms of their experiences and perceptions about the learning approach. This component provided qualitative insight that coincided with the quantitative results of the quasi-experimental design.

The flow of the study consisted of three phases, namely the input, the process, and the output of the study. The input phase included a transmittal letter, a profiling survey, and a lesson guide aligned with the mentioned competencies targeted in Pamahalaan at Ekonomiya ng Timog Silangang Asya. The study also used pre-test and post-test questionnaires, as well as differentiated instruction activities that guided the creation of a learner-responsive environment. The process started with obtaining approval from the school principal. Once approval was granted, the researchers profiled the learners using the survey form to identify their interests, readiness levels, and academic standing. Based on the results of the profiling, the researcher prepared a lesson guide that integrated differentiated instruction. This ensured that each lesson presented contained varied instructional approaches. A pre-test was administered first to determine the baseline data on students' knowledge about the lesson. Afterwards, differentiated instruction was implemented using varied modalities such as videos, maps, graphs, hands-on activities, and creative outputs. Following the implementation, the post-test was administered to determine learning improvements. All test results and other data collected were interpreted to assess the effectiveness of the approach. To strengthen the analysis, student feedback was gathered through a self-administered questionnaire. This was conducted to gather students' perceptions, experiences, and suggestions. The researcher consolidated the quantitative and qualitative findings to gain a deeper understanding of how differentiated instruction affected learning outcomes. The output of the study included statistical results that revealed how differentiated instruction affected learning outcomes based on the comparison of pre-test and post-test scores. An additional output was the feedback from the students, which provided valuable insight about the strengths and areas of improvement of the instructional approach. With the use of these findings, an enhanced lesson guide was developed to make it more responsive to diverse learners and complex concepts in Araling Panlipunan.

The research took place at Candulawan National High School, a public school that offered Grade 7 to Grade 10 level, with three sections in each grade level accommodating nearly 30 students in each section. For School Year 2025-2026, the total enrolment was three hundred seventy-five. The school was located in Candulawan, a barangay in the City of Talisay with a population of 6,291 based on the 2020 census. Candulawan shared a common border with Barangay Bulacao, Lagtang Jaclupan in Talisay City, and Barangay Bulacao of Cebu City (PhilAtlas, 2020). Candulawan National High School was located on an elevated area, making the school safe from floods. It was 6 kilometers away from the division office of Talisay City, which was in Barangay Poblacion. Candulawan Elementary School was also a one-stone-throw away only. Although Candulawan National High School was about 1 kilometer away from the national highway, it was only accessible via motorcycle-for-hire due to its elevated narrowed road. The map of Cebu (Ceniza, n.d.) was used to illustrate the graphical location of the research site.

The study employed purposive sampling in selecting the respondents. The respondents were 65 Grade 7 students from two sections of Candulawan National High School, consisting of 33 males and 32 females. The third Grade 7 section was excluded because it was handled by a different teacher who was not specialized in teaching Araling Panlipunan. The frequency distribution of respondents showed that male students had a frequency of 33, a percentage of 50.77%, and a total of 33, while female students had a frequency of 32, a percentage of 49.23%, and a total of 32. Overall, the study involved a total frequency of 65 respondents, equivalent to 100%, with a total of 65.

The study utilized a survey and questionnaires to profile students' readiness, interests, and learning styles. The result of the profiling served as the basis for designing the lesson guide aligned with the identified competencies. The study also used 30-item test questionnaires adapted from Grade 7 Araling Panlipunan. The pre-test and post-test questionnaires with Table

of Specification, found in Appendix D and E respectively, consisted of multiple-choice items that covered the three identified competencies in this study. Moreover, a self-administered questionnaire found in Appendix G was provided to determine students' experiences during the integration of differentiated instruction in teaching Pamahalaan at Ekonomiya sa Timog Silangang Asya.

The data gathering procedure started with the approval of the transmittal letter. Then, the participants were invited to take part in the research. After securing the consent, questionnaires were given to collect learner profiles. When the profiles were established, the preparation of the lesson guide followed, and the integration of differentiated instruction was implemented. A pre-test was then conducted to measure the participants' baseline knowledge on the topics related to the following competencies: Identifies the challenges faced by ASEAN regarding sustainable development (Natutukoy ang mga hamong kinahakaharap ng ASEAN ukol sa likas-kayang pag-unlad.), Analyzes the measure undertaken by ASEAN in response to the challenges of sustainable development (Nasusuri ang mga hakbang na ginagawa ng ASEAN bilang pagtugon sa mga hamon ng likas-kayang pag-unlad.), and Explain the values shown in ASEAN's efforts to address sustainable development through the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (Nailalahad ang mga pagpapahalaga sa pagsisikap ng ASEAN na tugunan ang likas-kayang pag-unlad sa pamamagitan ng Sustainable Development Goals ng United Nations) (Victorio & Soriano, 2024). After the implementation of differentiated instruction, a post-test was administered to assess learning gains using the said approach. The results of both tests were analyzed to identify gaps and improvements. Finally, to gather qualitative insights about differentiated instruction, a self-administered questionnaire was given to the participants.

The statistical treatments used in the research included descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. To summarize the learners' profile, descriptive statistics such as mean, percentage, frequency, and standard deviation were used. Inferential statistics, specifically the paired t-test, was utilized to determine the disparity between students' pre-test and post-test scores. On the other hand, thematic analysis was used in the evaluative part of the research to identify the developing patterns and perceptions about the students' experiences with the differentiated instruction approach. Weighted mean was used to identify the students' scores in the pre-test and post-test. To get the weighted mean of the participants' scores, the sum of the total number of responses was divided by the number of participants of the study. This reflected the overall perception of the participants, considering the frequency of each response. Standard deviation was used to measure the spread of the data about the mean value. The paired t-test was used to determine whether there was a significant difference between participants' pre-test and post-test scores after applying differentiated instruction.

The teacher used a teacher-made instrument in the pre-test and post-test assessment. These scores were used to compute the mean, standard deviation, and percentage of distribution, while a proficiency scale was used to assess the students' performance in both tests. The descriptive categories for the score ranges were aligned using the class-interval method. To evaluate the test performance, the highest score must be subtracted from the lowest score and then divided by the number of categories (Alkharusi, 2022). The interval size was 2, since the highest score was 10 and the lowest score was 1, and the difference was then divided by 5 categories. This method was applied in determining the proficiency scale for all identified competencies.

The proficiency scale for all competencies classified the score range of 9-10 as Outstanding, with the qualitative description that the learners demonstrate an exceptional level of understanding and mastery of the competencies. The score range of 7-8 was described as

Very Satisfactory, indicating that the learners show a solid and consistent understanding of the lesson. The score range of 5-6 was described as Satisfactory, indicating that the learners demonstrate partial understanding of the lesson. The score range of 3-4 was described as Fairly Satisfactory, indicating that the learners show basic but limited understanding of the competencies. The score range of 0-2 was described as Did not meet expectations, indicating that the learner demonstrates very minimal understanding of the lesson.

On the other hand, the effect size was interpreted using Cohen's d, a standardized measure of effect size that was developed by Jacob Cohen. In the Cohen's d computation, participants' test results were measured twice, basically before and after the intervention. Through the computation of the effect size, the researcher was able to determine how strong the impact of the intervention was on the students' learning gains. The effect size indicated whether improvement was small, medium, large, or very large, which gave a clear understanding of the significance of the intervention aside from the statistical results alone. The effect size scale using Cohen's d classified a score range of 1.30 and above as Very Large Effect, with the qualitative description that it demonstrates exceptional mastery of the competencies. A score range of 0.80-1.29 was classified as Large Effect, with the qualitative description that it shows strong and consistent understanding of the competencies. A score range of 0.50-0.79 was classified as Medium Effect, with the qualitative description that it exhibits adequate and acceptable mastery of the competencies. A score range of 0.20-0.49 was classified as Small Effect, with the qualitative description that it Display partial understanding of the competencies. Furthermore, to systematically measure learners' perceptions and experiences with differentiated instruction and provide corresponding evidence to the test scores, self-administered questionnaires were used for Thematic Analysis.

For clarity and consistency, the key terms used in the study were defined to improve comprehension and prevent misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the information provided in the research. Differentiated Instruction (DI) refers to an instructional strategy that structured the content, process, and output of the lessons based on the learners' needs, readiness levels, learning profiles, and interests. Differentiated Instruction (DI) Integrated Lesson Guide refers to the refined instructional plan integrated with differentiated instructional strategies specifically designed for Araling Panlipunan 7 to enhance learning gains. Hamong kinakaharap ng ASEAN refers to the problems that ASEAN countries experienced while trying to work together as a region. These challenges include political differences, economic gaps, environmental concerns, and security issues. Hakbang na ginawa ng ASEAN refers to the steps that ASEAN countries had done to solve the challenges they were experiencing as a region. Learning Gains refers to the measurable improvement in student knowledge and understanding. Pamahalaan at Ekonomiya sa Timog Silangang Asya refers to the study of government and economy in Southeast Asia, a core component in Araling Panlipunan 7 curriculum. Pagpapahalaga sa pagsisikap ng ASEAN refers to recognizing and valuing the actions and efforts of ASEAN in solving the problems and challenges faced by its members. Student Experiences refers to the perceptions, reflections, and insights of the students during the implementation of differentiated instruction.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings and discussion of the study involving 65 Grade 7 Araling Panlipunan students. The study utilized a mixed method design, with pre-test and post-test assessments administered before and after the integration of differentiated instruction, and qualitative feedback gathered through self-administered questionnaires. The quantitative data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, paired t-test, p-value, and Cohen's d effect size, while the qualitative responses were examined through thematic analysis. The discussion is

grounded in the data gathered from the learners and is interpreted in direct relation to the study objectives, particularly the assessment of learners' pre-test and post-test performance in the identified Araling Panlipunan 7 competencies, the determination of significant differences in performance after the integration of differentiated instruction, and the analysis of learners' experiences with differentiated instruction in teaching "Pamahalaan at Ekonomiya sa Timog Silangang Asya." The interpretation of the results also considers the differentiated learning activities implemented during the lessons and relates the findings to relevant scholarly perspectives on differentiated instruction, engagement, motivation, and active learning.

Pre-test performance before the integration of differentiated instruction

The initial assessment determined the learners' baseline performance in three identified learning competencies before differentiated instruction was integrated into the lessons. Before the implementation of differentiated instruction, some students showed minimal engagement, struggled to keep pace with the lesson, and were still developing their reading abilities. Some learners also found the topics challenging because the content was perceived as complex and broad, which affected their overall academic performance. The pre-test results therefore provided a basis for determining the learners' prior knowledge, readiness, and areas of difficulty in relation to the identified competencies.

For the first competency, "Natutukoy ang mga hamong kinahakaharap ng ASEAN ukol sa likas-kayang pag-unlad," students were expected to identify and list the main problems that made it difficult for ASEAN to obtain sustainable development goals. Using the proficiency scale in which 9.00 -10.00 is interpreted as Outstanding, 7.00-8.00 as Very Satisfactory, 5.00 – 6.00 as Satisfactory, 3.00 – 4.00 as Fairly Satisfactory, and 1.00- 2.00 as Did not meet expectations, the results showed that 0 students or 0 fell within the score range of 9-10 and were categorized as Outstanding, 21 students or 32.3% fell within the score range of 7-8 and were categorized as Very Satisfactory, 16 students or 24.6% fell within the score range of 5-6 and were categorized as Satisfactory, 17 students or 26.2% fell within the score range of 3-4 and were categorized as Fairly Satisfactory, and 11 students or 16.9% fell within the score range of 0-2 and were categorized as Did Not Meet Expectations, for a total of 65 students or 100.00. The computed mean was 4.91, interpreted as Fairly Satisfactory, with a standard deviation of 2.13. These findings indicate that the students had moderate prior knowledge of the subject matter, but the absence of learners in the Outstanding category suggests that mastery of the content was not evident at the time the pre-test was conducted. The mean score of 4.91, which fell under the Fairly Satisfactory level, further confirms that the overall class performance was only average. The standard deviation of 2.13 also indicates wide variation in learners' ability or readiness, supporting the need for differentiated instruction as a strategy for addressing diverse learning needs and strengthening foundational concepts before learners proceed to more complex topics.

For the second competency, "Nasusuri ang mga hakbang na ginawa ng ASEAN bilang pagtugon sa mga hamon ng likas -kayang pag-unlad," students were expected to understand and explain the concept of Likas-Kayang Pag-unlad or sustainable development, recognize major environmental issues, social and economic challenges encountered by ASEAN member states, and identify the actions taken by ASEAN in response to these issues and challenges. Based on the same proficiency scale, the pre-test results showed that 7 students or 10.8 fell within the score range of 9-10 and were categorized as Outstanding, 18 students or 27.7% fell within the score range of 7-8 and were categorized as Very Satisfactory, 17 students or 26.2% fell within the score range of 5-6 and were categorized as Satisfactory, 17 students or 26.2%

fell within the score range of 3-4 and were categorized as Fairly Satisfactory, and 6 students or 9.2% fell within the score range of 1-2 and were categorized as Did Not Meet Expectations, for a total of 65 students or 100.00. The computed mean was 5.57, interpreted as Satisfactory, with a standard deviation of 2.31. The data indicate that some students already had a basic understanding of the actions undertaken by ASEAN to address regional challenges despite the complexity of the topic. However, the distribution also shows that other learners still found it difficult to fully grasp the concepts and examples related to the topic. These findings suggest the need to further strengthen students' analytical skills, especially in explaining and connecting ASEAN action plans to real-world issues.

For the third competency, "Nailalahad ang mga pagpapahalaga sa pagsisikap ng ASEAN na tugunan ang likas-kayang pag-unlad sa pamamagitan ng Sustainable Development Goals Ng United Nations," students were expected to appreciate values such as cooperation, responsibility, and care for the environment, and relate these values to real-life situations. This competency was intended to develop students' values formation, basic analysis, and communication skills, which are essential in everyday life. The pre-test results showed that 0 students or 0 fell within the score range of 9-10 and were categorized as Outstanding, 1 student or 1.5% fell within the score range of 7-8 and was categorized as Very Satisfactory, 13 students or 20.0% fell within the score range of 5-6 and were categorized as Satisfactory, 37 students or 56.9% fell within the score range of 3-4 and were categorized as Fairly Satisfactory, and 14 students or 21.5% fell within the score range of 1-2 and were categorized as Did Not Meet Expectations, for a total of 65 students or 100.00. The computed mean was 3.52, interpreted as Fairly Satisfactory, with a standard deviation of 1.38. These results indicate that the students answered only a small portion of the test items correctly and that the majority had a similar starting ability level. Overall, the pre-test results for Competency 3 demonstrate that the learners had minimal understanding of the topic. The findings suggest that students who obtained the lowest scores required additional instructional support to address their varying levels of understanding and analysis. As instruction becomes more engaging and supportive, students may become more motivated to participate and perform better, which is consistent with Ramaila (2025).

Post-test performance after the integration of differentiated instruction

After a series of discussions applying differentiated instruction in teaching "Pamahalaan at Ekonomiya sa Timog Silangang Asya," the results showed better student performance across the three identified competencies. Students were observed to be more engaged and more capable of understanding the topics when they were given activities matched to their abilities, skills, interests, readiness levels, and learning preferences. The post-test results therefore reflected the extent to which differentiated instruction contributed to improved class performance after the lessons were delivered through varied and responsive learning activities.

For the first competency, "Natutukoy ang mga hamong kinahakaharap ng ASEAN ukol sa likas-kayang pag-unlad," a variety of activities were integrated into the lesson discussion and tailored to the learners' different learning styles, interests, and readiness levels. During the Pagkuha ng Dating Kaalaman, the students were grouped and engaged in a kinesthetic and visual activity in which they identified the founding members of ASEAN. This allowed students who learned best through movement and visuals to participate actively while working collaboratively. In the Paglinang at Pagpapalalim phase, Gawain 4 clearly illustrated the use of differentiated instruction, as students were given the freedom to choose the type of activity they wanted to complete based on their preferred learning modality. Visual learners were given images to analyze and relate to the challenges of sustainable development, auditory learners

processed information through a song, reading-oriented learners were given a poem to read and comprehend, and kinesthetic learners participated in game-based activities. These varied activities enabled students to express their understanding in different ways, such as through explanation, interpretation, or creative engagement, which made learning more inclusive and meaningful. Overall, the activities aligned with differentiated instruction principles because they adjusted the process and learning experiences while ensuring that all students worked toward the same lesson objectives.

The post-test results for Competency 1 showed that 20 students or 30.8% fell within the score range of 9-10 and were categorized as Outstanding, 19 students or 29.2% fell within the score range of 7-8 and were categorized as Very Satisfactory, 17 students or 26.2% fell within the score range of 5-6 and were categorized as Satisfactory, 7 students or 10.8% fell within the score range of 3-4 and were categorized as Fairly Satisfactory, and 2 students or 3.1% fell within the score range of 1-2 and were categorized as Did not Meet Expectation, for a total of 65 students or 100.00. The mean score was 7.00, interpreted as Very Satisfactory, with a standard deviation of 2.24. The narrative discussion of the original results also stated that the standard deviation was 2.28, indicating that most students performed close to the mean, although there were still differences in individual performance. The data reveal that more than a quarter of the learners obtained the highest scores in the post-test, which was higher compared to the pre-test results. The considerable number of learners in the Outstanding and Very Satisfactory categories indicates that many students were able to demonstrate a high level of mastery of concepts related to the topic after the approach was implemented. Meanwhile, the small percentage of learners in the lower performance levels indicates that only a few students continued to experience difficulty in comprehending the topic even after differentiated instruction was integrated into class discussions. The mean score of 7.00 suggests a strong level of performance among the learners, and the overall results indicate positive improvement in academic performance after differentiated instruction was used in delivering the lesson. The varied activities allowed learners to engage with the content based on their abilities and learning preferences, which likely contributed to improved post-test performance, as supported by Ramaila (2025).

For the second competency, “Nasusuri ang mga hakbang na ginawa ng ASEAN bilang pagtugon sa mga hamon ng likas-kayang pag-unlad,” differentiated instruction was implemented through a series of student-centered activities. In the introductory phase, students were given an activity that allowed them to recall prior knowledge by arranging letters related to the topic. During the lesson proper, differentiated instruction was further strengthened through hands-on activities and analytical tasks, such as the “Yarn yan” activity, in which students connected ASEAN programs to the appropriate sustainable development goals. This activity helped students visually and strongly understand abstract relationships between ASEAN and UN goals. In the generalization phase, differentiated instruction was emphasized by allowing students to choose how they wanted to present their understanding, whether through posters, infographics, reporting, or role play. By offering multiple ways to demonstrate learning, students were able to express their thoughts according to their strengths, whether visual, oral, or performance-based.

The post-test results for Competency 2 showed that 11 students or 16.9% fell within the score range of 9-10 and were categorized as Outstanding, 24 students or 36.9% fell within the score range of 7-8 and were categorized as Very Satisfactory, 20 students or 30.8% fell within the score range of 5-6 and were categorized as Satisfactory, 7 students or 10.8% fell within the score range of 3-4 and were categorized as Fairly Satisfactory, and 3 students or 4.6% fell within the score range of 1-2 and were categorized as Did Not Meet Expectations, for a total of

65 students or 100.00. The computed mean was 6.49, interpreted as Satisfactory, with a standard deviation of 2.07. The original narrative also stated that the standard deviation of 2.33 indicated that the scores were moderately spread around the average score. The results showed that some learners performed higher than the average, covering 84.6%, while others scored lower. These numbers imply that the approach was generally effective, although it may still require adjustments to better support struggling learners, particularly because 15.4% still fell below the Satisfactory rating. Overall, the results indicate that learners developed a moderate level of understanding after differentiated instruction was integrated into the discussion. The majority of learners performed satisfactorily in the post-test after they were given activities tailored to their readiness, abilities, and interests.

For the third competency, "Nailalahad ang mga pagpapahalaga sa pagsisikap ng ASEAN na tugunan ng likas-kayang pag-unlad sa pamamagitan ng Sustainable Development Goals ng United Nations," students were introduced to the lesson through an activity designed to stimulate engagement through a kinesthetic activity named Paypay Isda Game, in which they identified the sustainable development goals addressed by ASEAN programs. This activity actively engaged students through movement and teamwork and helped them recall prior knowledge. During the lesson, students were given options for presenting their learning. Visual learners were instructed to create a poster, verbal learners were asked to compose a song or jingle, and analytical learners were tasked to prepare cause-and-effect charts. These choices allowed students to process and communicate their understanding of ASEAN's efforts toward sustainable development in ways that were comfortable for them because they knew they could accomplish the tasks. In this way, the approach promoted active participation, deeper understanding of ASEAN's role in achieving SDGs, and meaningful learning experiences for students with diverse learning needs.

The post-test results for Competency 3 showed that 7 students or 10.8% fell within the score range of 9-10 and were categorized as Outstanding, 14 students or 21.5% fell within the score range of 7-8 and were categorized as Very Satisfactory, 24 students or 36.9% fell within the score range of 5-6 and were categorized as Satisfactory, 17 students or 26.2% fell within the score range of 3-4 and were categorized as Fairly Satisfactory, and 3 students or 4.6% fell within the score range of 1-2 and were categorized as Did Not Meet Expectations, for a total of 65 students or 100.00. The computed mean was 5.72, interpreted as Satisfactory, with a standard deviation of 2.07. The results show that most learners clustered between scores 5 to 6, which represented 36.9% of the class. Although the numbers showed improvement, the data also indicate that 26.2% fell under the Fairly Satisfactory rating and 4.6% fell under the Did not Meet Expectations level. These findings suggest that some learners, when required to evaluate or analyze a certain context, remained at the developing or approaching proficiency level. While the post-test showed improvement particularly in the mean score, the results indicate that although some learners were able to recognize or identify specific ASEAN-related concepts, many still struggled to deepen their understanding. The findings imply that the instructional strategy used was effective in helping most students achieve satisfactory ratings. The activities and flexible ways of learning allowed students to understand the lesson content. However, because only a small number of students reached the Outstanding level, the results suggest that differentiated instruction may be further improved by providing additional enrichment for high-performing students and additional instructional support for learners who continued to struggle.

Significant difference between the pre-tests and post-test performance of the Grade 7 Araling Panlipunan students

The learners' pre-test and post-test results were analyzed using the paired t-test to determine whether there were significant differences in performance for each identified competency before and after the implementation of differentiated instruction. The analysis also included effect sizes to provide a clearer understanding of the magnitude of improvement and the educational impact of differentiated instruction on learners' performance. The level of significance was set at $p < 0.05$, and effect sizes based on Cohen's d were interpreted as follows: values of 0.20–0.49 indicate a small effect, 0.50–0.79 indicate a medium effect, 0.80–1.29 indicate a large effect, and values of 1.30 and above indicate a very large effect.

For Competency 1, the pre-test mean was 4.91 and the post-test mean was 7.00, resulting in a mean difference of 2.09. The paired t-test yielded a t-value of 9.2 with a p-value of <.001*, which was lower than the 0.05 level of significance. The effect size was 1.15, interpreted as a large effect. Based on these results, the decision was to Reject Ho, and the interpretation was that there is a significant difference. This indicates that students significantly improved in identifying the challenges faced by ASEAN regarding sustainable development after differentiated instruction was integrated into the lessons. The large effect size of 1.15 further suggests that the improvement was not only statistically significant but also educationally meaningful. The use of visual aids, clear definitions, and game-based discussion appeared to work well for this type of competency because these strategies provided learners with accessible and engaging ways to understand basic terms and concepts.

For Competency 2, the pre-test mean was 5.57 and the post-test mean was 6.49, resulting in a mean difference of 0.92 according to the statistical summary. The paired t-test yielded a t-value of 4.8 with a p-value of <.001*, which was lower than the 0.05 level of significance. The effect size was 0.59, interpreted as a medium effect. Based on these results, the decision was to Reject Ho, and the interpretation was that there is a significant difference. The original narrative also stated that the mean score increased from 5.57 to 6.49, resulting in a mean difference of 2.09; however, the statistical summary reports the mean difference as 0.92. Retaining the reported data, the findings indicate that differentiated instruction contributed to learning gains in analyzing the measures undertaken by ASEAN in response to the challenges of sustainable development. The medium effect size of 0.59 suggests that the approach had a meaningful but more moderate impact on this competency compared with the other competencies, which may reflect the higher analytical demand of connecting ASEAN actions to sustainable development issues.

For Competency 3, the pre-test mean was 3.52 and the post-test mean was 5.72, resulting in a mean difference of 2.20. The paired t-test yielded a t-value of 8.2 with a p-value of <.001*, which was lower than the 0.05 level of significance. The effect size was 1.02, interpreted as a large effect. Based on these results, the decision was to Reject Ho, and the interpretation was that there is a significant difference. These findings demonstrate that differentiated instruction had a wide impact on students' ability to understand and apply concepts related to the competency, particularly in presenting values associated with ASEAN's efforts to address sustainable development through the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The large effect size of 1.02 suggests that the improvement was substantial and that differentiated instruction helped learners move from minimal understanding toward a more satisfactory level of performance.

Across all three competencies, the paired t-test results showed p-values of <.001*, indicating statistically significant improvement in learners' performance after differentiated instruction was implemented. Since all p-values were lower than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected for Competency 1, Competency 2, and Competency 3. These results confirm that the difference between the pre-test and post-test scores was statistically

significant. The effect sizes, which ranged from medium to large, further support the finding that differentiated instruction had a positive and meaningful effect on students' learning gains. Overall, the findings suggest that differentiated instruction was statistically effective and educationally impactful in improving the students' class performance in Araling Panlipunan.

Experiences of the Grade 7 Araling Panlipunan students on the integration of differentiated instruction

After the implementation of differentiated instruction in teaching "Pamahalaan at Ekonomiya sa Timog Silangang Asya," the researcher administered self-administered questionnaires to the Grade 7 learners involved in the study. The respondents were asked to share their experiences and perspectives regarding their learning process throughout the discussion. Through careful transcription and thematic analysis of the qualitative data, the researcher identified important trends and themes from the learners' responses. To find recurrent patterns and significant ideas, the researcher carefully reviewed the transcripts. The gathered responses were used to create themes, which were then categorized to support clearer understanding of the data and to guide the formulation of conclusions. To determine how the components were used, the themes were carefully reviewed, which helped avoid the influence of personal biases on the interpretation of results. The original themes were then given standard names, redefined, and explained thoroughly.

The first theme that emerged from the learners' responses was engagement and motivation. Differentiated instruction works to maximize student engagement and achievement by offering individualized learning experiences, as noted by Groenewald et al. (2024). The use of visual tools, graphic organizers, and game-based activities also helps learners access content at different readiness levels, as supported by Am et al. (2023a). In response to the question, "How would you describe your learning experience when Differentiated Instruction was used in teaching Pamahalaan at Ekonomiya sa Timog Silangang Asya, particularly in the lesson about ASEAN and sustainable development?", the students provided several responses that reflected enjoyment, excitement, and improved understanding. These responses included: "I enjoyed learning because I like the different activities, as they are very challenging." "I feel excited and happy doing tasks with my friends." "I enjoyed and learned with the activities given by Ma'am." "The different activities were fun; it keeps me engaged. The lesson is easier for me to understand." "I had fun because the games and different activities were great." "Learning is fun and easy when there are lots of activities." "I understood and felt happy during the grouping." "I really enjoyed the variety of activities."

These responses show that when learners were given activities based on their skills, abilities, and interests, their excitement and curiosity were stimulated. This was evident in several responses found in Appendix H. For example, Student F stated, "I enjoyed learning because I like the different activities, as they are very challenging." Some students also specified the types of activities they enjoyed the most. Student B shared, "I feel excited and happy doing tasks with my friends," while Student C remarked, "I enjoyed and learned with the activities given by Ma'am." Another student who supported the theme was Student D, who stated, "The different activities were fun, it keeps me engaged. The lesson is easier for me to understand." These responses suggest that students felt excited whenever activities such as groupings, games, picture analysis, or video presentation were used. Through differentiated instruction, it became easier for students to learn and comprehend the basic terms and concepts in "Pamahalaan at Ekonomiya sa Timog Silangang Asya," as the activities helped sustain their engagement throughout the lesson.

The learners' responses can also be interpreted in relation to motivation theory. According to Ryan (2000), there are two types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation refers to activities that are inherently enjoyable and interesting, while extrinsic

motivation involves doing something to earn a reward, receive recognition, or avoid punishment. Intrinsic motivation arises from internal factors and is driven by personal satisfaction or inner enjoyment, as explained by Hoose (2020). Based on the responses of the students, common phrases such as "I had fun," "I enjoyed," and "It's fun and easy to learn" reveal that they experienced personal satisfaction, curiosity, interest, and joy from activities that matched intrinsic motivation. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation was reflected in responses driven by the desire to win, be praised, or succeed. Some responses that were noted included "…it is so challenging" and "It was fun because we won." These student-centered environments, which provide multiple pathways for success based on students' learning preferences, help strengthen motivation and promote a more positive attitude toward learning, as supported by Rahman and Mehnaz (2024).

The second theme that emerged from the qualitative responses was active learning. Differentiated instruction became a powerful tool in class discussion because the different activities were tailored to the learning preferences, abilities, and interests of the students. When students were asked the question, "What differentiated instruction activity in the lesson helped you learn the topic best?", their responses showed that they learned more effectively through activities that required participation, collaboration, and interaction. The students stated: "I learned from the through watching videos." "I learned from the group work and watching the video." "I learned a little during the games." "I learned something new and enjoyed the process." "I learned because the group activities were challenging." "I had learned because the activities were challenging."

These responses indicate that students did not rely solely on listening, but learned best when games, collaborative activities, videos, and pictures were provided. Not all learners gain knowledge through lectures and writing alone; some understand concepts more effectively through visuals, movement, or collaboration. The integration of games, group activities, video presentation, picture analysis, and opportunities for students to perform or present outputs based on their skills or interests ensured that learners had an entry point for learning. Student E stated, "I learned because the group activities were fun," while Student F remarked, "I learned because the activities were challenging." These responses suggest that differentiated instruction reduced barriers to learning and increased learners' understanding by allowing them to access the lesson through varied and meaningful activities.

Through differentiated instruction, learners were transformed from passive receivers of information into active participants. Games, group tasks, and interactive activities allowed students to practice concepts rather than merely hear them. Active learning was therefore a significant component of differentiated instruction because it allowed students to learn by doing through different activities or tasks, as supported by Am et al. (2023b). These activities engaged learners in hands-on learning experiences that matched their readiness and interests, which helped make the teaching of "Pamahalaan at Ekonomiya sa Timog Silangang Asya" more inclusive, participatory, and responsive to learner diversity.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the integration of differentiated instruction improved the Grade 7 learners' performance in the three identified Araling Panlipunan competencies and contributed to more engaging and meaningful learning experiences. The pre-test results showed that students initially had Fairly Satisfactory to Satisfactory levels of performance, with mean scores of 4.91, 5.57, and 3.52 across the three competencies. After differentiated instruction was implemented, the post-test results improved to mean scores of 7.00, 6.49, and 5.72, indicating higher levels of performance, particularly in identifying ASEAN challenges related to sustainable development and in explaining values connected with ASEAN's efforts toward the Sustainable Development Goals. The paired t-test results

confirmed significant differences between the pre-test and post-test scores, with p-values of <.001* for all competencies, leading to the rejection of Ho and showing that differentiated instruction had a statistically significant effect on student performance. The effect sizes of 1.15, 0.59, and 1.02 further indicate that the impact of differentiated instruction ranged from medium to large. The qualitative findings strengthened these quantitative results by showing that students experienced greater engagement, motivation, enjoyment, collaboration, and active learning when instructional activities were aligned with their readiness, abilities, interests, and learning preferences. Taken together, these results affirm that differentiated instruction is a relevant and educationally meaningful strategy for improving Araling Panlipunan learning outcomes, promoting inclusivity, and supporting diverse learners in understanding complex topics such as ASEAN, sustainable development, and the Sustainable Development Goals. These findings provide a strong basis for the subsequent chapter, particularly in formulating conclusions and recommendations for the continued use and enhancement of differentiated lesson guides in Araling Panlipunan instruction.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that the integration of differentiated instruction in teaching "Pamahalaan at Ekonomiya sa Timog Silangang Asya" had a significant and positive impact on the learning outcomes of the students. The pre-test results showed that although the students had prior knowledge about ASEAN, they experienced difficulty in explaining the concepts further, particularly in the first and third competencies. After the implementation of differentiated instruction, the students showed improvement across the three identified competencies, indicating that the use of varied learning activities aligned with their learning styles, interests, and readiness levels helped enhance their engagement, motivation, comprehension, and confidence in learning Araling Panlipunan.

The findings further revealed that differentiated instruction enabled students to understand and process the lessons more meaningfully. In the first competency, students became more confident in identifying the challenges faced by ASEAN in relation to sustainable development through visual analysis, games, and creative tasks. In the second competency, which focused on analyzing ASEAN's measures in addressing sustainable development challenges, students were able to understand the concepts through hands-on and analytical tasks that allowed them to express their ideas and connect abstract concepts to real-life applications. In the third competency, students were able to articulate the values reflected in ASEAN's efforts toward sustainable development through activities such as games, songs, and posters, which encouraged active participation and meaningful learning experiences. Although most students achieved satisfactory performance, the findings also showed that some still needed further support in deepening their understanding of the concepts.

The comparison between the pre-test and post-test results showed statistically significant differences across the identified competencies, which implied that differentiated instruction had a meaningful effect on students' learning gains. This was supported not only by the statistical data gathered and analyzed but also by the feedback collected from the research respondents. The students' experiences and perceptions of differentiated instruction consistently pointed to engagement and motivation as recurring themes, suggesting that differentiated instruction was an effective strategy for promoting active participation and meaningful learning. Overall, the results confirmed that differentiated instruction contributed to improved academic outcomes, strengthened students' understanding of the subject matter, and enhanced their confidence in participating in classroom activities.

The conclusions of the study were closely aligned with multimodal learning theory, which emphasizes that students acquire and retain ideas more effectively when lessons are

delivered through different learning modes, such as visual, auditory, and movement-based activities. By providing varied modes of learning, differentiated instruction allowed students to process concepts in ways that matched their learning needs, thereby improving their comprehension and motivation. At the same time, giving students opportunities to express their ideas through creative outputs and performances encouraged them to engage actively with the topic. These theoretical foundations help explain why differentiated instruction was successful in creating a learner-responsive classroom environment that supported meaningful learning gains and positive learning experiences.

In light of these conclusions, the study recommends that Candulawan National High School continue to support the implementation of differentiated instruction by ensuring the availability of instructional materials and resources, providing continuous professional development, and promoting an inclusive learning environment. School administrators should equip classrooms with appropriate materials, technology such as modems, speakers, and HDTV, and flexible learning tools that support differentiated activities. They should also organize training, workshops, and seminars focused on differentiated instruction strategies so that teachers may be better prepared to address diverse learner needs. Teachers are encouraged to consistently integrate differentiated instruction into lesson planning and classroom activities by considering students' profiles, interests, abilities, and learning preferences. In developing lesson guides, differentiated instruction should be embedded to provide learners with options suited to visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning needs.

The study further recommends that parents actively support their children's learning by providing encouragement, guidance, and a conducive home environment that promotes good study habits. Through parental involvement, students' motivation, confidence, and understanding of complex topics in Araling Panlipunan may be further strengthened. Students, in turn, should actively participate in every learning activity because such participation can help deepen their understanding and make learning more engaging. They should also provide constructive and honest feedback on the differentiated instruction strategies that are most effective for them, as this can help improve lesson design and ensure that their learning needs are addressed. Finally, future researchers are encouraged to explore the sustained impact of differentiated instruction on students' engagement, knowledge retention, and performance over longer periods of time. Similar studies may also be conducted in other grade levels, subject areas, or schools to determine whether differentiated instruction produces comparable improvements in learners' performance across different disciplines.

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