

Learners' Attitude toward Digital Media and Their Learning Engagement

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the attitudes toward digital media and the learning engagement of Grade 6 learners in Araling Panlipunan in San Fernando District II, Division of Bukidnon, during School Year 2025–2026. Specifically, it assessed learners' attitudes toward digital media, including support for digital media, attitudes toward technology, understanding of the assignment, and knowledge construction. It also assessed learners' engagement in Araling Panlipunan and investigated the relationship between learners' attitudes toward digital media and their engagement in learning. The study employed a descriptive–correlational research design and involved 188 Grade 6 learners selected using proportionate stratified random sampling. Data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, Pearson's product–moment correlation, and multiple regression at the 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that learners demonstrated a high level of attitude toward digital media across all dimensions and a high level of learning engagement in Araling Panlipunan. However, the correlation analysis revealed no statistically significant relationship between learners' attitudes toward digital media and their learning engagement. None of the attitude dimensions significantly impacted learners' engagement. The study concludes that although learners exhibit positive attitudes toward digital media and high engagement in Araling Panlipunan, attitude toward digital media alone does not significantly influence learning engagement. Other instructional and contextual factors may play a more substantial role in shaping learners' engagement. Based on these findings, teachers are recommended to provide structured guidance when integrating digital media into instruction, particularly in helping learners organize ideas, understand learning goals, and communicate their thoughts effectively through digital activities.

Keywords: attitude toward digital media, learning engagement, Araling Panlipunan, Grade 6 learners, descriptive-correlational research.

INTRODUCTION

Learner engagement in Araling Panlipunan is a serious problem in schools. To begin with, this subject is often considered too boring by many students because teachers, most of the time, focus on memorizing facts, dates, and laws rather than helping students apply the information to practical needs (Flores, 2025). This method reduces students' interest and desire to engage in lessons (Flores, 2025). Moreover, many classrooms lack sufficient textbooks, teaching resources, and technology, making it hard to introduce teachers to interactive or student-centered practices (Tolentino et al., 2025). Additionally, teachers are not always adequately trained to implement new teaching methods and often resort to conventional lecture-based techniques. Moreover, large classes and limited time to teach students do not give teachers the opportunity to pay special attention to students or engage them in classroom discussions (Tolentino et al., 2025). The challenges thus lead to a lack of learner engagement in behavioral, emotional, and cognitive aspects of the Araling Panlipunan lessons (Angeles & Rabago, 2025).

According to Galamay et al. (2025), conflict, displacement, and unequal access to schooling and the internet are also considered other barriers to student engagement in places such as Mindanao or other parts of the southern Philippines. The conditions, in their turn, interfere with the regular attendance, the continuity of the learning process, and the emotional engagement of the students in the classroom activities. Besides, in these regions, teachers are usually underprepared in terms of professional training on implementing new curricula, such as the

MATATAG curriculum, and K-12 reforms. As a result, most teachers have difficulty designing inquiry-based lessons that foster autonomy, critical thinking, and civic competence in learners. Taken together, these contribute significantly to the behavioral, emotional, and cognitive disengagement of students in Araling Panlipunan, thereby hindering the acquisition of critical thinking and civic-mindedness.

In view of these obstacles, the attitudes of the learners towards digital media have played a significant role in ensuring interaction in contemporary classrooms. In particular, a positive attitude toward digital media may contribute to improved learners' self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation, and increased engagement with digital tools. These factors, in turn, favor behavioral, emotional, cognitive, collaborative, and social engagements. As an example, Getenet et al. (2024) identified, in a large-scale study of higher education, that students with positive attitudes towards digital technology exhibited improved self-efficacy, and that self-efficacy was a significant predictor of various aspects of learning engagement, such as social, collaborative, behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement.

Moreover, attitudes toward digital technologies are closely connected to digital competence, technology use, and learning agility. These aspects affect students' willingness and effectiveness in digital learning environments. In the Philippine context, learners with positive attitudes toward technology are more likely to use social media for academic, civic, and information-seeking activities. These practices, in turn, are associated with increased academic interest and global awareness among learners (Tus et al., 2021).

That being said, no empirical study to date has examined how students' attitudes toward digital media influence their participation in Araling Panlipunan in San Fernando District II, Division of Bukidnon. Nowadays, local research focuses on teacher competence and instructional supervision. Thus, it can be concluded that the missing links in knowledge of how perceptions of digital tools affect behavioral, cognitive, and emotional engagement among learners in Araling Panlipunan remain. To fill this gap, the proposed study will focus on identifying the effects of learners' attitudes towards digital media on their participation in Araling Panlipunan.

The research is based on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) of Davis (1989) and Self-determination theory (SDT) of Deci and Ryan (1985), which offers a good theoretical basis on the analysis of how the learners. Digital Media Attitude affects their involvement in Social Studies. According to the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), the acceptance and adoption of technology is mainly determined by two factors: perceived usefulness (the belief that using a given technology improves learning performance) and perceived ease of use (the belief that the use of a given technology is not associated with any form of effort) (Davis, 1989). Similarly, the Self-Determination Theory (SDT), created by Deci and Ryan (1985) highlights that people are most motivated and get engaged when their psychological needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness are met. Autonomy is the feeling of choice in learning activities, competence is the feeling that people are able to master tasks, and relatedness is the feeling of connection to others in the learning process.

The TAM describes how the attitude of the learners towards the digital media can be explained by their perception of the media as useful and easy to use, which subsequently determines their readiness to participate in the activities of Social Studies. Figure 1 summarizes the relationships between learners' attitudes towards digital media and their involvement in learning through a schematic diagram.

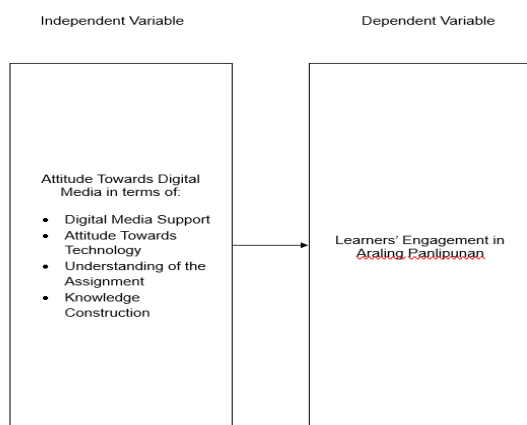


Figure 1. Schematic Diagram showing the Relationship of the Independent and Dependent Variables of the Study

This study aimed to determine the impact of attitudes towards digital media among Grade 6 learners in San Fernando District II, Division of Bukidnon, for the school year 2025-2026.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of learners' attitude towards digital media in terms of digital media support, attitude towards technology, understanding of the assignment, and knowledge construction?
2. What is the level of learners' engagement in Araling Panlipunan?
3. Is there a significant relationship between learners' attitude towards digital media and learning engagement in Araling Panlipunan?

Hypothesis of the Study

The hypothesis was tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

Ho: There is no significant relationship between learners' attitude towards digital media and learning engagement in Araling Panlipunan.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive–correlational research design to examine the relationship between learners' attitudes toward digital media and their engagement in learning Social Studies. A descriptive–correlational design is a quantitative approach used to describe existing conditions and determine relationships between variables without manipulating them in a natural setting. This design was appropriate for the study because it allowed the researcher to examine learners' attitudes toward digital media and determine whether these attitudes are associated with their level of engagement in Araling Panlipunan. Data were collected through survey questionnaires and analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques.

Research Locale

The study was conducted in the San Fernando II District, Division of Bukidnon, Philippines. The municipality of San Fernando is located approximately 48 kilometers from Valencia City and comprises 24 barangays. The area is characterized by mountainous terrain and river valleys formed by the Tigwa and Salug rivers.

Several public elementary schools within the district participated in the study, including Kalagangan Central Elementary School, Bugca Elementary School, Matupe Integrated School, Mahayag Elementary School, Cayaga Elementary School, Iglugsad Elementary School, Palacpacan Elementary School, Kibongkong Integrated School, and San Jose Elementary School. These schools represent diverse learning environments within the district, making them suitable for examining the relationship between learners' attitudes toward digital media and their engagement in Social Studies learning.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study were Grade 6 learners enrolled in public elementary schools in San Fernando II District, Division of Bukidnon. A total population of 367 Grade 6 learners served as the sampling frame. Grade 6 learners were selected because they are at a stage where digital media is increasingly integrated into their learning activities, and their attitudes toward technology may influence their engagement in classroom learning, particularly in Araling Panlipunan.

Sampling Procedure

The sample size was determined using Slovin's formula with a 5% margin of error, which yielded a required sample of 188 respondents. To ensure fair representation across schools, proportionate stratified random

sampling was employed. Each school served as a stratum, and respondents were selected proportionally based on the number of Grade 6 learners in each school. This sampling technique ensured that all learners had an equal chance of being selected while maintaining representation from each participating school.

Research Instrument

Data were collected using a two-part survey questionnaire.

Part I measured learners’ attitudes toward digital media in learning Social Studies. The instrument was adapted from Reyna and Meier (2018) and consisted of four dimensions: Digital media support, Attitude toward technology, Knowledge about the assignment, Knowledge construction

Part II measured learners’ engagement in Araling Panlipunan. This section was adapted from Ocakci and Samanci (2024) and assessed three dimensions of engagement: Behavioral, Emotional, and Cognitive. Both instruments utilized a five-point Likert scale to measure respondents’ perceptions.

While the study utilized survey questionnaires to collect data, reliance on self-reported measures may limit the depth and accuracy of findings. Future studies may incorporate triangulated data sources such as classroom observations, interviews, or analysis of learner outputs to validate and enrich the results.

Data Gathering Procedure

Prior to data collection, the researcher secured permission from the Schools Division Superintendent of Bukidnon and the school heads of the participating schools. After approval was granted, coordination was conducted with Grade 6 teachers to distribute questionnaires. The purpose of the study and instructions for completing the questionnaire were explained to the respondents before administration. The questionnaires were distributed and collected by the researcher through the assistance of the teachers. After retrieval, the responses were checked for completeness, coded, and tabulated for statistical analysis.

Scoring Procedure

Responses were interpreted using a five-point Likert scale.

A. Learners’ Attitude Toward Digital Media

Scale	Range	Descriptive Rating	Qualitative Description
5	4.20–5.00	Always	Very High
4	3.40–4.19	Often	High
3	2.60–3.39	Sometimes	Moderate
2	1.80–2.59	Rarely	Low
1	1.00–1.79	Never	Very Low

B. Learners’ Engagement in Araling Panlipunan

Scale	Range	Descriptive Rating	Qualitative Description
5	4.20–5.00	Strongly Agree	Very High
4	3.40–4.19	Agree	High

3	2.60–3.39	Neutral	Moderate
2	1.80–2.59	Disagree	Low
1	1.00–1.79	Strongly Disagree	Very Low

Statistical Treatment of Data

Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the collected data.

The mean and standard deviation were used to determine the levels of learners’ attitudes toward digital media and their engagement in Araling Panlipunan.

The Pearson product–moment correlation coefficient (Pearson r) was used to determine the relationship between learners’ attitudes toward digital media and their engagement in Social Studies.

To determine which variables significantly influence learners’ engagement in Araling Panlipunan, multiple regression analysis was also conducted.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards were strictly observed throughout the study. Approval was obtained from the Schools Division Superintendent and the school administrators before conducting the research.

Participation in the study was voluntary. Respondents were informed of the study's purpose, the procedures involved, and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty.

Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured by assigning identification codes rather than using respondents’ names. All collected data were used solely for research purposes and were stored securely. The study adhered to ethical research practices to protect participants’ rights, privacy, and well-being.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the analysis and interpretation of the data gathered from Grade 6 learners in San Fernando District II, Division of Bukidnon. The results are organized according to the research problems of the study. Statistical tools such as the mean, standard deviation, and Pearson product–moment correlation coefficient were used to assess learners’ attitudes toward digital media, their learning engagement in Araling Panlipunan, and the relationship between the two variables.

Level of Learners’ Attitude Towards Digital Media

Table 1. Overall Level of Learners’ Attitude Towards Digital Media

Dimension	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Digital Media Support	3.45	0.453	High
Attitude Toward Technology	3.45	0.434	High
Understanding of the Assignment	3.45	0.451	High
Knowledge Construction	3.46	0.480	High
Overall Mean	3.45	0.455	High

Table 1 shows the overall level of learners’ attitudes toward digital media in learning Social Studies. The results reveal an overall mean of 3.45 (SD = 0.455) interpreted as High, indicating that learners generally demonstrate positive attitudes toward the use of digital media in their learning activities. Among the dimensions, knowledge construction obtained the highest mean (3.46) while digital media support, attitude toward technology, and understanding of the assignment obtained means of 3.45, all interpreted as high.

These findings suggest that learners perceive digital media as helpful in constructing knowledge, collaborating with peers, and improving their understanding of Social Studies lessons. Learners also show confidence in using technological tools for school-related tasks and demonstrate favorable perceptions of digital learning activities. Positive attitudes toward digital media indicate that learners recognize the value of digital tools in facilitating learning processes, supporting classroom activities, and enhancing creativity during academic tasks.

These results support the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) proposed by Davis (1989), which explains that individuals are more likely to adopt technology when they perceive it as useful and easy to use. When learners believe that digital tools help them accomplish tasks more efficiently and enhance their learning performance, they develop more favorable attitudes toward the use of technology in education. Similarly, the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) developed by Deci and Ryan (1985) explains that learners become more motivated and engaged when their needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are fulfilled. Digital media can provide learners with opportunities to explore information independently, express creativity, and collaborate with peers, thereby strengthening their motivation and positive learning attitudes.

The findings are also consistent with several studies that highlight the positive role of digital technology in supporting student learning. Adu et al. (2024) emphasized that digital learning tools help learners develop collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking skills, which contribute to improved academic experiences. Similarly, Adeoye et al. (2024) found that technology-supported learning environments enhance learners’ participation and foster the development of 21st-century learning competencies. Moreover, Al-Emran et al. (2022) reported that digital learning tools support self-directed learning and help students develop critical thinking skills in Social Studies education. These findings indicate that positive attitudes toward digital media may strengthen learners’ willingness to participate in technology-supported learning activities and contribute to a more meaningful learning experience.

Level of Learners’ Engagement in Araling Panlipunan

Table 2. Overall Level of Learners’ Engagement in Araling Panlipunan

Variable	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Learners’ Engagement in Araling Panlipunan	3.40	0.345	High

Table 2 presents the overall level of learners’ engagement in Araling Panlipunan. The findings show a mean score of 3.40 (SD = 0.345) interpreted as High, indicating that learners are generally engaged in classroom learning activities related to Social Studies. The results suggest that learners actively participate in class discussions, ask questions when they encounter difficulties, take notes during lessons, and interact with teachers and classmates during learning activities.

High levels of engagement indicate that learners demonstrate behavioral participation and interest during classroom instruction. Engagement in learning reflects learners’ willingness to take part in instructional activities, communicate their ideas, and seek assistance when necessary. However, some indicators related to independent learning behaviors, such as studying Social Studies regularly and preparing lessons in advance, received moderate responses, suggesting that learners’ engagement may be stronger during classroom interaction than during self-directed learning outside the classroom.

These findings support the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) of Deci and Ryan (1985) which explains that learners become more engaged when their needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are fulfilled. Classroom environments that encourage interaction, provide meaningful learning activities, and support

learners' competence can promote higher levels of engagement. Learners who feel capable of understanding the lessons and who experience supportive relationships with teachers and classmates are more likely to participate actively in classroom learning activities. The results also support educational perspectives emphasizing that engagement is a multidimensional construct involving behavioral participation, emotional interest, and cognitive investment in learning activities. When learners are encouraged to interact, collaborate, and share their ideas, they are more likely to sustain attention and participate meaningfully in classroom learning.

Relationship Between Learners' Attitude Towards Digital Media and Learning Engagement in Araling Panlipunan

Table 3. Correlation Analysis between Learners' Attitude Toward Digital Media and Learning Engagement

Variable	r	p-value	Interpretation
Digital Media Support	0.025	0.734	Not Significant
Attitude Toward Technology	0.076	0.297	Not Significant
Understanding of the Assignment	0.058	0.430	Not Significant
Knowledge Construction	0.081	0.269	Not Significant
Overall Relationship	0.104	0.154	Not Significant

Table 3 presents the correlation analysis between learners' attitudes toward digital media and their engagement in Araling Panlipunan. The results indicate that the overall relationship between the two variables is not statistically significant ($r = 0.104$, $p = 0.154$). Although weak positive correlations were observed across all dimensions of digital media attitudes, none of the relationships were statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

The results revealed that learners had positive attitudes toward digital media and high levels of engagement in Araling Panlipunan. However, the relationship between these variables was not statistically significant. This finding suggests that favorable perceptions of digital media alone are insufficient to meaningfully influence learners' engagement.

A deeper analysis indicates that engagement is a multidimensional construct influenced by various instructional and contextual factors beyond attitudes. While learners may perceive digital media as useful and enjoyable, engagement depends largely on how these tools are integrated into the learning process. This supports the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989), which explains that perceived usefulness and ease of use influence attitudes but do not necessarily guarantee behavioral outcomes such as sustained engagement.

Similarly, Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) emphasizes that engagement is driven by the fulfillment of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Even when learners have positive attitudes toward digital tools, engagement may remain limited if instructional activities do not promote meaningful participation, collaboration, and a sense of achievement.

The non-significant findings may also be explained by contextual factors such as limited digital access, variability in teacher facilitation, and differences in instructional design. For instance, digital media used primarily for passive consumption (e.g., watching videos or reading slides) may not significantly enhance engagement compared to interactive and student-centered activities.

Furthermore, the weak correlation suggests that other variables, such as teaching methods, classroom environment, learner motivation, and socioeconomic conditions, may have a stronger influence on engagement than attitudes alone. This aligns with Qureshi et al. (2021), who emphasized that learning performance and engagement are shaped by multiple interacting factors rather than a single predictor.

Overall, the findings highlight that the effectiveness of digital media in promoting engagement depends not merely on learners' attitudes but on how technology is pedagogically designed and implemented in the classroom.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study indicate that Grade 6 learners demonstrate generally positive attitudes toward digital media and a high level of engagement in Araling Panlipunan. However, the absence of a statistically significant relationship between these variables suggests that attitudes toward digital media alone do not directly influence learners' engagement.

This implies that engagement is shaped by a more complex interplay among factors, including instructional strategies, classroom interactions, and learners' intrinsic motivation. While digital media can support learning, its impact depends on how effectively it is integrated into teaching practices.

The results emphasize the importance of moving beyond mere access to technology and focusing on meaningful instructional design. Digital tools must be used in ways that promote active participation, collaboration, and higher-order thinking to enhance engagement.

Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted, indicating that there is no significant relationship between learners' attitudes toward digital media and their engagement in Araling Panlipunan.

RECOMMENDATION

Future research should expand the study's scope to include learners from different grade levels, schools, and regions to improve the generalizability of the findings. Examining diverse educational contexts may provide a more comprehensive understanding of how digital media influences learning engagement.

Researchers are also encouraged to adopt a mixed-method approach by combining quantitative surveys with qualitative methods such as interviews, focus group discussions, or classroom observations. This would provide deeper insights into learners' experiences, perceptions, and actual use of digital media in learning. Further studies should consider including additional variables such as teaching methods, digital access, learner motivation, socioeconomic background, and classroom environment. These factors may help explain the complex nature of learning engagement and provide a more holistic understanding of the variables influencing it.

Longitudinal research designs are also recommended to examine how learners' attitudes toward digital media and their engagement evolve over time. Such approaches can provide insights into the long-term impact of digital learning interventions.

Moreover, future research may explore the role of instructional design as a mediating variable in the relationship between digital media and learning engagement. Investigating how specific teaching strategies and learning activities influence engagement can provide valuable guidance for educators.

From a practical perspective, teachers should be provided with professional development programs that focus on integrating digital media using interactive, inquiry-based, and student-centered strategies. Schools should also invest in improving technological infrastructure and ensuring equitable access to digital resources to support effective learning environments.

Overall, future studies should adopt more comprehensive and context-sensitive approaches to better understand the role of digital media in enhancing learner engagement.

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