

Perceived Relevance of a Structured Debate Toolkit in Araling Panlipunan

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ABSTRACT

This study focused on assessing the relevance and perceived relevance of a Structured Debate Toolkit for Grade 10 Araling Panlipunan as perceived by students, teachers, and evaluators. Using a developmental research design with evaluative components anchored on the ADDIE Model, the study involved 93 Grade 10 students, 6 Araling Panlipunan teachers, and 7 evaluators from selected public secondary schools in the Division of Agusan del Norte, Philippines. A researcher-developed Relevance Assessment Survey Questionnaire was utilized to determine the perceived relevance of the toolkit across five dimensions: content and contextual relevance, utility for achieving learning, addressing identified gaps, developmental and engagement relevance, and civic empowerment relevance. Findings revealed that students rated the toolkit as Highly Relevant, while teachers and evaluators rated it as Very Highly Relevant across all dimensions, with civic empowerment and content relevance obtaining the highest ratings. One-Way ANOVA further revealed significant differences in the perceptions of the three respondent groups, indicating variations in professional and experiential perspectives toward the toolkit. The study concluded that the Structured Debate Toolkit is a relevant, practical, and innovative instructional intervention capable of strengthening participatory learning, democratic discourse, and higher-order thinking skills in Araling Panlipunan. Furthermore, the toolkit promotes evidence-based reasoning, collaborative learning, reflective thinking, and respectful communication among learners, making it responsive to the demands of twenty-first-century education and active civic participation outside classrooms.

Keywords: Structured Debate Toolkit, Araling Panlipunan, Critical Thinking, Civic Engagement, Debate-Based Instruction

INTRODUCTION

Debate is an applied form of learning in Araling Panlipunan that allows students to discuss social issues, examine different perspectives, and express their ideas clearly and logically through evidence-based reasoning. In the context of 21st-century education, debate develops communication skills, critical thinking, collaboration, and civic awareness among learners. Anchored on this premise, the present study seeks to design, implement, and validate a Structured Debate Toolkit as an instructional intervention intended to improve the argumentation skills and classroom engagement of Grade 10 learners in Araling Panlipunan.

Several studies have highlighted the effectiveness of debate and other learner-centered instructional strategies in enhancing students' critical thinking and communication skills in Araling Panlipunan and related disciplines. Joaquin and Hermosa (2023) found that Scenario-Based Learning significantly improved the critical thinking skills of Grade 9 learners in Araling Panlipunan by encouraging students to analyze situations, evaluate arguments, and formulate reasoned conclusions. Similarly, Peña et al. (2025) revealed that fostering classroom discussion and debate positively influenced learners' critical thinking skills in Social Studies, particularly in analyzing current issues and expressing evidence-based opinions. Moreover, a study by Iman (2017) revealed that debate-based instruction significantly improved students' critical thinking and speaking skills by encouraging them to analyze issues, formulate arguments, and defend ideas using evidence-based reasoning.

Likewise, Chikeleze et al. (2018) emphasized that debate activities enhance communication competence, collaborative learning, and learners' confidence in expressing opinions on social and academic issues.

Despite the recognized benefits of debate-based instruction, many schools still encounter difficulties in implementing structured argumentation activities due to limited instructional materials, lack of teacher preparation, and insufficient classroom resources designed specifically for Araling Panlipunan. In the Buenavista District of Agusan del Norte, the Mean Percentage Score in Araling Panlipunan 10 was recorded at 69.00% for School Year 2024–2025, indicating below-average mastery of the subject competencies. Likewise, the results of the 2024–2025 National Achievement Test revealed that most Grade 10 learners belonged to the “low proficiency” level in cognitive skills, with critical thinking identified as the weakest among the measured 21st-century skills (Department of Education, 2025). These findings indicate the need for innovative and evidence-based instructional interventions that can strengthen students' reasoning, communication, and analytical abilities. Hence, this study aims to address these gaps by developing a Structured Debate Toolkit that is contextualized, practical, and responsive to the learning needs of Grade 10 students in Araling Panlipunan.

The significance of this study lies in its potential contribution to improving teaching and learning practices in Araling Panlipunan through the development of a validated and learner-centered debate toolkit. The findings of this study may benefit students by enhancing their critical thinking, communication, and civic engagement skills; teachers by providing an organized and practical instructional resource; school administrators and curriculum planners by supporting innovative teaching strategies; and future researchers by serving as a reference for related studies on debate and argumentation. Specifically, this study aims to determine the profile of the respondents in terms of: students' age, gender, and exposure to classroom debates; and teachers' and evaluators' length of service, academic rank, academic background, trainings and seminars attended related to debate and argumentation, and activities or contests attended as coach related to debate. Furthermore, the study aims to assess the level of relevance of the developed Structured Debate Toolkit encompassing practicality and usability as perceived by the three groups of respondents in terms of content and contextual relevance, utility for achieving learning, addressing the identified gaps, developmental and engagement relevance, and civic empowerment relevance. Lastly, the study seeks to determine whether there is a significant difference in the perceived relevance of the developed Structured Debate Toolkit among the three groups of respondents.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employed a developmental-evaluative research design utilizing the ADDIE Model (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation) in the development and assessment of the Structured Debate Toolkit for Grade 10 Araling Panlipunan. The study was conducted in two public secondary schools in the Division of Agusan del Norte, namely Guinabsan National High School and Sangay National High School, which were purposively selected based on accessibility, administrative support, and suitability for the implementation of innovative instructional strategies. The respondents consisted of 93 Grade 10 students, 6 Araling Panlipunan teachers, and 7 evaluators or experts selected through purposive sampling. Students were chosen based on their enrollment in Grade 10 during School Year 2025–2026, while teachers and evaluators were selected according to their teaching experience, professional qualifications, and involvement in debate-related activities and instructional evaluation.

The study utilized a researcher-developed Relevance Assessment Survey Questionnaire to determine the perceived relevance of the Structured Debate Toolkit across five dimensions: Content and Contextual Relevance, Utility for Achieving Learning, Addressing the Identified Gaps, Developmental and Engagement Relevance, and Civic Empowerment Relevance. The instruments underwent expert validation and reliability testing to ensure clarity, consistency, and appropriateness for the study objectives. Data gathering was conducted systematically following the ADDIE framework. After securing permission from school authorities, the researcher administered the survey questionnaires to the students, teachers, and evaluators following the implementation of the toolkit during structured debate sessions. The responses gathered were treated with strict confidentiality and anonymity through the use of coding procedures, and all information obtained from the participants was utilized solely for academic and research purposes. Participation in the study was voluntary, informed consent was secured from all participants, and confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained throughout the conduct of the study.

To analyze the data, frequency counts and percentages were used to describe the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, exposure to debate, length of service, academic rank, educational background, trainings attended, and experience as debate coach. Mean scores were utilized to determine the level of perceived relevance of the toolkit among students, teachers, and evaluators. Furthermore, One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was employed to determine whether significant differences existed in the perceptions of the three respondent groups across the five dimensions of relevance. These statistical tools enabled the researcher to establish the extent of the toolkit's relevance and identify variations in assessment among stakeholders, thereby providing empirical support for the effectiveness and perceived relevance of the Structured Debate Toolkit in Araling Panlipunan instruction.

The **Structured Debate Toolkit in Araling Panlipunan** instruction was developed as a comprehensive instructional package designed to strengthen students' civic argumentation competence, critical thinking, participatory learning, and democratic engagement through structured classroom debates. The toolkit contains organized and contextualized materials aligned with the competencies of Grade 10 Araling Panlipunan, particularly on topics related to human rights, democratic participation, and the rule of law. It includes an introduction to debate concepts, learning competencies, implementation guides, debate procedures, instructional activities, assessment tools, and supplementary reference materials. The toolkit also provides teacher facilitation guides, session plans, role assignments, activity sheets, and debate rules intended to ensure systematic and meaningful classroom implementation. Furthermore, the toolkit integrates the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and selected provisions from the 1987 Philippine Constitution to contextualize debate topics and encourage students to examine contemporary civic and social issues using evidence-based reasoning and ethical discourse.

Moreover, the toolkit is composed of four major instructional sessions, namely: Introduction and Orientation, Research and Preparation, Practice and Coaching, and Actual Debate Proper. These sessions guide learners from understanding debate motions and identifying debate roles to constructing arguments, presenting rebuttals, and participating in formal debate activities. The toolkit incorporates structured debate formats, Toulmin Model-based argument construction, issue analysis worksheets, role description cards, peer and team assessment forms, scoring rubrics, and reflection activities to develop students' reasoning, collaboration, and communication skills. It also contains assessment tools such as performance rubrics, scoring sheets, observer evaluation forms, and reflection guides to evaluate students' claim formulation, evidence utilization, reasoning, rebuttal skills, persuasiveness, respectful discourse, and teamwork. Additionally, the toolkit provides sample affirmative and negative arguments, debate motions, and civic issue prompts to assist learners in organizing logical and evidence-supported arguments while promoting respectful and reflective civic discourse.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the demographic profile of the respondents, including the student participants, teacher participants, and evaluator participants. It also discusses the perceived relevance of the Debate Toolkit and the differences in perceived relevance across respondent groups. The demographic characteristics of the respondents were considered essential in understanding their background, level of experience, and potential influence on the evaluation and implementation of the developed instructional material.

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

This section presents the demographic profile of the student participants in terms of age, sex, and exposure to debate, as well as the demographic profile of the teacher and evaluator participants in terms of length of service, academic rank, educational background, trainings attended, and experience as debate coach.

Table 1.1 Demographic Profile of the Student Participants

Age	Frequency	Percentage
15	53	57%
16	34	37%
17 and above	6	6%

Total	93	100%
Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	45	47%
Female	48	53%
Total	93	100%
Exposure to Debate	Frequency	Percentage
Never	13	14%
Once or Twice	67	72%
Occasionally	13	14%
Total	93	100%

Table 1.1 presents the demographic profile of the student participants in terms of age, sex, and exposure to debate. Among the respondents, the highest proportion belonged to the age group of 15 years old, comprising 57% (53 students) of the total population, while the lowest proportion was recorded among students aged 17 years and above, with only 6% (6 students). This distribution indicates that the participants were generally within the expected age range of Grade 10 learners in the Philippine K–12 curriculum. The concentration of respondents within a similar age bracket suggests developmental consistency among participants, which may contribute to relatively comparable levels of cognitive readiness, communication abilities, and classroom engagement.

In terms of sex, female students represented the highest percentage at 53% (48 students), while male students comprised 47% (45 students), reflecting a nearly balanced distribution between the two groups. This balanced representation strengthens the credibility of the findings since the responses were not heavily dominated by one sex category alone. Such distribution minimizes potential gender bias in interpreting the effectiveness of the intervention and supports broader applicability of the results across male and female learners.

With regard to exposure to debate, the highest percentage of students, 72% (67 students), reported having experienced debate “once or twice,” while the lowest percentages were found among those who had “never” participated in debate and those who participated “occasionally,” both at 14% (13 students). These findings suggest that most learners already possessed minimal prior exposure to debate activities but lacked extensive or sustained experience. This level of familiarity indicates that students were not entirely unfamiliar with argumentative discourse; however, their exposure remained limited and introductory in nature. Such findings are important because prior experience with debate may influence learners’ confidence, reasoning skills, and ability to construct arguments. Research has shown that participation in debate activities contributes to the development of argumentation, critical thinking, and evidence-based reasoning skills among students (Nugroho et al., 2025; Hendratmoko et al., 2024).

The profile of the respondents further supports the applicability of Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) theory in the present study. According to Vygotsky (1978), learning occurs most effectively when learners receive appropriate guidance and scaffolding within the range between what they can accomplish independently and what they can achieve with assistance. Learners with limited debate exposure may already possess basic communication skills and preliminary understanding of argumentation but still require structured support to develop higher-order reasoning and evidence-based argument construction. The toolkit intervention therefore becomes significant because it provides guided opportunities for learners to strengthen their argumentative competence through scaffolded activities and collaborative engagement. Studies on ZPD and scaffolding emphasize that learners develop more effectively when instructional support is aligned with their current developmental level and gradually leads them toward independent performance (Shabani, 2010; McLeod, 2026).

Moreover, the findings imply that the respondents were at the stage where they could express personal opinions but still needed assistance in organizing logical claims, supporting arguments with evidence, and defending positions systematically. This observation aligns with studies emphasizing that debate-based learning enhances students’ scientific and critical argumentation skills through guided inquiry, interaction, and structured reasoning activities (Hendratmoko et al., 2024; Ricco, 2025).

Table 1.2. Demographic Profile of the Teacher and Evaluators Participants

Length of Service	Teachers Frequency	Percentage	Evaluators Frequency	Percentage
1-5 years	2	33%	0	0%
6-10 years	2	33%	4	57%
11-15 years and above	1	17%	2	29%
16 years and above	1	17%	1	14%
TOTAL	6	100%	7	100%
Academic Rank	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Teacher 1-3	6	100%	1	14%
Master Teacher	0	0	0	0%
AP Coordinator	0	0	1	14%
Education Program Specialist	0	0	1	14%
LRM	0	0	1	14%
Others	0	0	3	43%
Total	6	100%	7	100%
Educational Background	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Bachelor's Degree	5	83%	1	14%
Master's Degree	1	17%	4	57%
Doctorate	0	0%	2	29%
TOTAL	6	100%	7	100%
Trainings Attended	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
None	4	67%	2	29%
1-2	2	33%	4	57%
3-5	0	0%	1	14%
TOTAL	6	100%	7	100%
Experience as Debate Coach	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	0	0%	4	57%
No	6	100%	3	43%
Total	6	100%	7	100%

Table 1.2 presents the demographic profile of the teacher and evaluator participants in terms of length of service, academic rank, educational background, trainings attended, and experience as debate coach. These characteristics are important because they establish the professional qualifications and competencies of the individuals involved in the implementation and evaluation of the toolkit.

In terms of length of service, the highest percentage among teacher participants was shared by those with 1–5 years and 6–10 years of service, both at 33%, while the lowest percentages were recorded among those with 11–15 years and 16 years and above, both at 17%. Among evaluator participants, the highest percentage was observed among those with 6–10 years of service at 57%, while the lowest was 0% for those with 1–5 years of service. This indicates that most evaluators possessed moderate to extensive teaching experience, which may contribute to stronger instructional judgment and evaluation skills. Research shows that teaching experience positively contributes to teacher competence, instructional effectiveness, and classroom management abilities over time (Yang & Gong, 2025).

Regarding academic rank, the highest percentage among teacher participants was Teacher I–III at 100%, while the lowest percentages were recorded in the Master Teacher, AP Coordinator, Education Program Specialist, LRM, and Others categories, all at 0%. For evaluator participants, the highest percentage was under the “Others” category at 43%, while the lowest was 0% for Master Teacher. The varied professional positions among evaluators suggest diversity in expertise and educational perspectives, which strengthens the comprehensiveness of the evaluation process. The OECD emphasized that professional diversity and collaborative expertise among educators enhance educational quality and innovation in teaching practices (OECD, 2025).

In terms of educational background, the highest percentage among teacher participants was Bachelor’s Degree holders at 83%, while the lowest was Doctorate Degree holders at 0%. Among evaluator participants, the highest percentage was Master’s Degree holders at 57%, while the lowest was Bachelor’s Degree holders at 14%. Additionally, 29% of evaluators possessed Doctorate Degrees. These findings imply that evaluator participants had advanced academic preparation, which may strengthen the credibility and rigor of the toolkit evaluation. According to OECD (2025), advanced academic qualifications and continuous professional learning contribute significantly to teacher expertise and effective educational assessment.

With regard to trainings attended, the highest percentage among teacher participants was under the “None” category at 67%, while the lowest was under the “3–5 trainings” category at 0%. For evaluator participants, the highest percentage was among those who attended 1–2 trainings at 57%, while the lowest was among those who attended 3–5 trainings at 14%. The findings indicate that evaluator participants had relatively greater participation in professional development activities compared to teacher participants. Studies highlight that teacher professional development improves instructional quality, pedagogical innovation, and professional competence, especially when educators are exposed to continuous learning opportunities (OECD, 2025; UNESCO, 2025).

In terms of experience as debate coach, the highest percentage among teacher participants was “No” at 100%, while the lowest was “Yes” at 0%. Conversely, among evaluator participants, the highest percentage was “Yes” at 57%, while the lowest was “No” at 43%. This suggests that most evaluator participants possessed relevant experience in debate facilitation, which may enhance the quality and reliability of their evaluation of the toolkit. Debate coaching experience is significant because it develops educators’ competencies in facilitating critical thinking, communication, and evidence-based reasoning among learners. Research further explains that educators with specialized instructional experience are more capable of guiding students toward higher-order thinking and collaborative learning (OECD, 2025).

Perceived Relevance of the Debate Toolkit

This section presents the perceived relevance of the Structured Debate Toolkit as assessed by the student participants, teacher participants, and evaluator participants across five dimensions.

Table 2. Perceived Relevance of the Structured Debate Toolkit Across Three Groups

Indicators	Students Mean	Students Adj Rating	Teachers Mean	Teachers Adj Rating	Evaluators Mean	Evaluators Adj Rating
Content & Contextual Relevance	4.017	Highly Relevant	4.667	Very Highly Relevant	4.714	Very Highly Relevant
Utility for Achieving Learning	3.985	Highly Relevant	4.667	Very Highly Relevant	4.657	Very Highly Relevant
Addressing the identified Gaps	3.778	Highly Relevant	4.567	Very Highly Relevant	4.743	Very Highly Relevant
Dev'l & Engagement Relevance	3.733	Highly Relevant	4.467	Very Highly Relevant	4.600	Very Highly Relevant

Civic Empowerment Relevance	3.744	Highly Relevant	4.567	Very Highly Relevant	4.829	Very Highly Relevant
Over-all Mean	3.851	Highly Relevant	4.587	Very Highly Relevant	4.709	Very Highly Relevant

Table 2 presents the perceived relevance of the Structured Debate Toolkit as evaluated by students, teachers, and evaluators across five dimensions. Overall findings reveal consistently positive assessments from all respondent groups, with evaluators providing the highest overall mean ($M = 4.709$, Very Highly Relevant), followed by teachers ($M = 4.587$, Very Highly Relevant), while students reported the lowest overall mean ($M = 3.851$, Highly Relevant). Despite differences in perspective, all dimensions obtained ratings within the “Highly Relevant” to “Very Highly Relevant” range, demonstrating broad acceptance of the toolkit among experts, implementers, and end-users.

Among the student respondents, the highest-rated indicator was Content and Contextual Relevance ($M = 4.017$, Highly Relevant), suggesting that students recognized the toolkit as aligned with the context and competencies required in Araling Panlipunan. The lowest-rated dimension was Developmental and Engagement Relevance ($M = 3.733$, Highly Relevant), indicating that although students acknowledged the value of the toolkit, some may still require further exposure and guidance in engaging with structured debate activities. This finding is consistent with studies emphasizing that active-learning pedagogies often demand an adjustment period before students fully appreciate their developmental benefits and engagement potential (Karjanto & Acelajado, 2022). Furthermore, debate-based instruction has been found to enhance critical thinking, decision-making, and problem-solving skills among learners, particularly in civic education contexts (Hamidah, 2025).

For teacher respondents, the highest means were recorded in Content and Contextual Relevance and Utility for Achieving Learning (both $M = 4.667$, Very Highly Relevant). These findings indicate that teachers perceived the toolkit as highly aligned with curricular objectives and effective for improving learning outcomes. The lowest-rated indicator among teachers was Developmental and Engagement Relevance ($M = 4.467$, Very Highly Relevant), although the score still reflects strong approval. This comparatively lower mean may suggest teachers’ recognition of the practical challenges associated with facilitating structured debates, especially for learners with limited prior exposure to formal argumentation. Existing literature supports the importance of teacher readiness and implementation fidelity in ensuring the effectiveness of innovative classroom interventions (Rademaker et al., 2021). Likewise, UNESCO’s framework on transformative pedagogy emphasizes that interactive and participatory instructional strategies strengthen learner engagement, critical inquiry, and collaborative learning (UNESCO, 2023).

Among evaluator respondents, the highest-rated dimension was Civic Empowerment Relevance ($M = 4.829$, Very Highly Relevant), while the lowest was Developmental and Engagement Relevance ($M = 4.600$, Very Highly Relevant). The exceptionally high rating for civic empowerment reflects evaluators’ recognition of the toolkit’s potential to cultivate democratic participation, critical consciousness, and responsible citizenship among students. Debate-oriented pedagogies are widely recognized for fostering civic engagement and empowering learners to actively participate in democratic discourse and public decision-making processes (Loveridge et al., 2026). Similarly, civic education studies have shown that participatory and discussion-based learning approaches significantly improve students’ willingness to engage in civic and political activities (Alscher et al., 2022). The comparatively lower rating for developmental and engagement relevance, despite remaining very high, may indicate evaluators’ awareness that meaningful participation in debates requires sustained scaffolding and classroom support mechanisms.

The noticeable variation between student and adult respondents may also be interpreted through the lens of social validity theory. Students often evaluate instructional innovations more conservatively because they may not yet fully recognize their own developing competencies and long-term gains. In contrast, teachers and evaluators, who possess broader pedagogical and professional perspectives, are more capable of identifying the future value and applicability of such interventions. Research on social validity assessment explains that stakeholders

frequently differ in their perceptions of educational interventions depending on their experience, implementation role, and understanding of expected outcomes (Rademaker et al., 2021).

Overall, the consistently high ratings across all respondent groups strongly affirm the relevance, applicability, and educational value of the Structured Debate Toolkit for Grade 10 Araling Panlipunan. The findings demonstrate that the toolkit is not only contextually appropriate and instructionally useful but also capable of fostering civic empowerment, learner engagement, and higher-order thinking skills. These results reinforce the argument that structured debate serves as an effective pedagogical approach for developing participatory citizenship and meaningful learning experiences within civic education.

Differences in Perceived Relevance Across Respondent Groups

Table 3 presents the test of significant differences in the perceived relevance of the developed Structured Debate Toolkit among students, teachers, and evaluators across the five dimensions.

Table 3. Significant difference on the relevance of the developed Structured Debate Toolkit as perceived by the three groups of respondents

Sources of variation	Computed f	P-value	Decision	Conclusion
Content & Contextual Relevance	13.250	$p < .001$	Reject Ho	Statistically Significant
Utility for Achieving Learning	9.350	$p < .001$	Reject Ho	Statistically Significant
Addressing the identified Gaps	11.780	$p < .001$	Reject Ho	Statistically Significant
Dev'l & Engagement Relevance	8.810	$p < .001$	Reject Ho	Statistically Significant
Civic Empowerment Relevance	12.200	$p < .001$	Reject Ho	Statistically Significant

Among the indicators, the highest computed F-value was obtained in Content and Contextual Relevance ($F = 13.250$, $p = 0.000$), followed closely by Civic Empowerment Relevance ($F = 12.200$, $p = 0.000$) and Addressing the Identified Gaps ($F = 11.780$, $p = 0.000$). Meanwhile, the lowest computed F-value was found in Developmental and Engagement Relevance ($F = 8.810$, $p = 0.000$), although it still reflected a statistically significant difference among the three respondent groups. The consistently low p-values across all dimensions indicate that the differences in perceptions among students, teachers, and evaluators were statistically significant and not attributable to chance alone.

Table 3 reveals that the One-Way ANOVA results indicate significant differences in the perceptions of students, teachers, and evaluators regarding the relevance of the developed debate toolkit across all five dimensions. Consequently, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the three groups is rejected. The significant variation in responses suggests that each group assessed the toolkit using different professional, pedagogical, and experiential lenses. Such variation is expected because evaluators, teachers, and students occupy distinct roles within the educational process and therefore interpret instructional innovations differently.

The highest variation observed in Content and Contextual Relevance implies that evaluators perceived the toolkit as highly aligned with curricular standards, civic education goals, and authentic classroom discourse practices compared with the perceptions of students and teachers. Evaluators, who possess advanced expertise in debate instruction and curriculum development, likely examined the toolkit in relation to broader educational objectives such as democratic participation, critical thinking, and contextualized learning. Research supports the idea that structured debate promotes higher-order thinking, perspective-taking, and civic engagement by allowing learners to deliberate on complex societal issues in authentic contexts (Loveridge, 2026). Likewise, civic education literature emphasizes that effective instructional materials should connect classroom learning to real-world democratic participation and contextual social issues (Alscher et al., 2022).

The second highest difference was found in Civic Empowerment Relevance, indicating that evaluators viewed the toolkit as highly capable of cultivating democratic values, civic efficacy, and participatory skills among learners. This finding aligns with studies asserting that debate-based pedagogies strengthen students' civic

competencies by engaging them in dialogue, argumentation, and reflective reasoning related to public concerns (Novacek, 2024). Civic education frameworks further explain that civic empowerment develops when learners acquire civic knowledge, communication skills, and democratic dispositions necessary for active participation in society (Generation Citizen, 2019). The higher ratings from evaluators therefore suggest recognition of the toolkit's long-term potential to foster informed and responsible citizenship.

Similarly, the significant difference in Addressing the Identified Gaps demonstrates that evaluators and teachers perceived the toolkit as an effective intervention for deficiencies in civic reasoning, structured discourse, and participatory learning within Araling Panlipunan instruction. Experts may have recognized how the toolkit fills persistent gaps in civic education by integrating collaborative learning, structured argumentation, and reflective discussion. Civic education scholars argue that participatory and discussion-based instructional approaches are effective in bridging gaps in democratic learning because they actively engage students in critical examination of societal issues (Rietbergen-McCracken, 2010). This suggests that the toolkit addresses both instructional and developmental needs commonly observed in social studies education.

Although Developmental and Engagement Relevance yielded the lowest computed F-value, the result remained statistically significant, indicating that differences among the three groups still existed. Teachers appeared more cautious in this dimension because they are directly exposed to practical classroom realities such as time limitations, varying student motivation, and classroom management concerns. Their slightly moderated ratings may reflect awareness of the adjustments necessary when implementing debate activities in actual classroom settings. Nevertheless, the ratings remained within the "Highly Relevant" and "Very Highly Relevant" categories, signifying strong acceptance of the toolkit's ability to promote student engagement and developmental growth. Literature supports that participatory instructional strategies, including debates and simulations, enhance learner engagement, collaboration, and critical communication skills when appropriately scaffolded (Rietbergen-McCracken, 2010).

Students consistently provided the lowest ratings among the three groups, although their responses still fell within the "Highly Relevant" category. This finding may be attributed to students' limited prior exposure to formal debate structures and civic discourse activities. Since learners directly experience the cognitive demands of constructing arguments, defending positions, and engaging in critical discussion, they may initially perceive the activities as challenging. However, educational research explains that exposure to structured debates gradually develops metacognitive awareness, confidence, and democratic reasoning skills over time (Loveridge, 2026). Students may therefore require sustained exposure and reflective activities before fully recognizing the toolkit's broader contributions to civic empowerment and intellectual growth.

Overall, the significant differences identified through ANOVA do not indicate disagreement regarding the value of the debate toolkit. Instead, they reflect differences in perspective shaped by expertise, teaching experience, and learner exposure. Despite the statistical differences, all respondent groups consistently rated the toolkit positively, demonstrating broad acceptance of its relevance and educational value. The convergence of expert validation, teacher practicality, and student acceptability indicates that the toolkit is pedagogically balanced and responsive to multiple educational stakeholders. The findings further suggest that future implementation should incorporate reflective and metacognitive activities that help students recognize their own development in civic reasoning, democratic participation, and critical discourse competencies.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study strongly establish that the developed Structured Debate Toolkit is a highly relevant, contextually appropriate, and pedagogically effective instructional material that supports the development of critical thinking, civic engagement, participatory learning, and higher-order reasoning among Grade 10 Araling Panlipunan learners.

The study concludes that the student respondents were generally within the appropriate developmental stage for engaging in structured debate activities, as most participants were 15 years old and had limited but existing exposure to debate. This suggests that the learners possessed foundational communication and reasoning skills

but still required structured guidance and scaffolding to strengthen argumentation and evidence-based reasoning competencies.

It is further concluded that the teacher and evaluator participants possessed sufficient professional qualifications, instructional experience, and academic preparation to provide credible assessments of the toolkit. Evaluators, in particular, demonstrated stronger specialization in debate facilitation, professional training, and advanced educational attainment, which contributed to more rigorous and expert-based evaluations of the instructional material.

The findings also confirm that the Structured Debate Toolkit was positively accepted by all respondent groups. Students perceived the toolkit as “Highly Relevant,” while teachers and evaluators consistently rated it as “Very Highly Relevant” across all dimensions. Among the dimensions assessed, Content and Contextual Relevance and Civic Empowerment Relevance emerged as the strongest indicators, demonstrating the toolkit’s alignment with curricular competencies, democratic participation, and authentic civic learning experiences.

Moreover, the study concludes that the toolkit effectively addresses existing instructional gaps in Araling Panlipunan by promoting structured discourse, collaborative learning, reflective thinking, and civic reasoning. The toolkit likewise enhances learner engagement and supports the development of communication, analytical, and participatory skills necessary for active citizenship and democratic participation.

The significant differences identified among students, teachers, and evaluators further indicate that stakeholders viewed the toolkit from varying experiential and professional perspectives. However, these differences do not imply disagreement regarding the value of the toolkit; rather, they reflect distinctions in pedagogical expertise, classroom exposure, and learner experience. Despite these differences, the consistently high ratings across all groups strongly affirm the overall relevance, acceptability, and educational value of the toolkit.

Finally, the study concludes that the Structured Debate Toolkit is a viable and innovative instructional intervention for Araling Panlipunan that can strengthen civic education, foster meaningful classroom discourse, and cultivate critical and reflective learners. The findings further imply that sustained implementation, continuous scaffolding, and reflective learning activities are necessary to maximize students’ appreciation of debate as a tool for civic empowerment and democratic engagement.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

The authors declare that no conflicts of interest existed in relation to this study. The research was conducted with adherence to the principles of honesty, integrity, and academic responsibility. All data gathered and findings obtained were utilized solely for academic, scholarly, and research purposes.

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