

Teaching Economics in Resource-Constrained Classrooms: Lived Experiences of Secondary Social Studies Teachers

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ABSTRACT: Economics instruction at the secondary level demands pedagogical approaches that render abstract, quantitative, and often ideologically contested content accessible and meaningful to adolescent learners—a pedagogical challenge that is profoundly compounded in resource-constrained classroom environments where teachers lack adequate instructional materials, technological tools, and subject-specific professional development support. This phenomenological study explored the lived experiences of secondary Social Studies teachers tasked with teaching Economics in resource-constrained classrooms in Eastern Visayas, Philippines—a region where endemic poverty, geographic isolation, disaster-related educational disruptions, and chronic underfunding of public education converge to create some of the most challenging instructional environments in the country. Anchored in van Manen's (1990) hermeneutic phenomenology and informed by Shulman's (1986) Pedagogical Content Knowledge framework and Freire's (1970) pedagogy of the oppressed as a locally resonant theoretical lens, the study engaged fifteen (15) purposively selected secondary Social Studies teachers from public schools across the six provinces of Eastern Visayas through in-depth semi-structured interviews, reflective narratives, and focus group discussions. Data were analyzed using van Manen's (1990) thematic analysis approach. Six core themes emerged: (1) navigating conceptual abstraction without material support; (2) contextualizing Economics in lived poverty—the double-edged relevance of economic hardship; (3) improvised pedagogical creativity as professional survival; (4) the political and ideological burden of teaching Economics in a marginalized region; (5) professional isolation and the absence of Economics-specific collegial support; and (6) resilience, student economic empowerment, and the moral weight of Economics teaching. The study provides critical implications for curriculum design, teacher professional development, and resource provisioning policy in Eastern Visayas and comparable Philippine regional contexts.

KEYWORDS: Economics education, resource-constrained classrooms, Social Studies teachers, lived experiences, Eastern Visayas, phenomenology, Araling Panlipunan, pedagogical content knowledge, Freire, improvisation, teacher resilience, applied economics

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Economics, as a component of the Philippine Araling Panlipunan (Social Studies) curriculum and as a standalone subject in the Senior High School Academic Track, occupies a distinctive and challenging position within the secondary school curriculum. Unlike history, which draws on narrative and memory, or geography, which engages students' spatial and environmental experiences, Economics deals fundamentally in abstraction—in models, graphs, equations, and theoretical constructs (supply and demand curves, GDP calculations, monetary policy mechanisms, market equilibrium) that require students to reason across multiple levels of conceptual complexity simultaneously (National Council on Economic Education, 2010; Walstad & Rebeck, 2001). Teaching Economics effectively requires not only sound disciplinary knowledge but a sophisticated Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) that enables teachers to make economic concepts accessible, meaningful, and practically applicable to students whose primary exposure to economic life is the grinding reality of household poverty rather than the textbook's idealized market models (Shulman, 1986; Becker & Watts, 2001).

In Eastern Visayas—a region of the Philippines encompassing the provinces of Leyte, Samar, Eastern Samar, Northern Samar, Biliran, and Southern Leyte—the challenges of Economics teaching are intensified by a convergence of structural disadvantages that define the educational environment. The region consistently ranks among the lowest in the Philippines on economic indicators: poverty incidence, per capita income, and human development index scores all place Eastern Visayas among the most economically disadvantaged regions in the country (Philippine Statistics Authority [PSA], 2023). Its geographic configuration—an archipelago of islands and peninsulas with limited road and water transport infrastructure—creates chronic underinvestment in educational facilities, instructional materials, and teacher professional development in rural and island

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communities (National Economic and Development Authority [NEDA], 2023). The region's disaster history—Super Typhoon Yolanda (2013) and Typhoon Odette (2021) among the most devastating events—has repeatedly stripped schools of infrastructure, learning materials, and stability, leaving behind classrooms that are physically damaged, materially depleted, and populated by students carrying layers of trauma and economic dislocation (DepEd, 2022).

Within this environment, secondary Social Studies teachers assigned to teach Economics—whether as components of the Araling Panlipunan curriculum in Grades 7-10 or as the Applied Economics subject in the Senior High School Academic Track—face a pedagogical challenge of particular complexity: they must make meaningful to students the abstract dynamics of an economic system that, in its dominant textbook presentations, is premised on conditions of market efficiency, rational agents, and adequate information that bear little resemblance to the economic realities their students inhabit. The teacher who must explain supply and demand to students in a community where local markets are disrupted by the aftermath of a typhoon, or who must teach entrepreneurship to students whose families cannot afford to eat daily, occupies a profoundly dissonant pedagogical position—one whose emotional, intellectual, and professional dimensions have received insufficient scholarly attention in the Philippine literature.

This study addresses that gap by centering the voices of Secondary Social Studies teachers in Eastern Visayas who navigate the daily challenge of teaching Economics in resource-constrained classrooms. By exploring their lived experiences—their pedagogical strategies, their improvisations, their moments of connection and disconnection with the curriculum, their emotional and professional burdens, and their resilience resources—the study seeks to generate an empirically grounded and theoretically enriched understanding of Economics teaching as it is actually practiced in one of the Philippines' most economically disadvantaged regions. The findings are intended to inform curriculum development, teacher professional development, resource provisioning policy, and the broader scholarly conversation about Economics education in low-income and post-disaster educational contexts.

Statement of the Problem

This study explored the lived experiences of secondary Social Studies teachers teaching Economics in resource-constrained classrooms in Eastern Visayas, Philippines. Specifically, it addressed the following research questions:

- What are the lived instructional experiences of secondary Social Studies teachers in Eastern Visayas who are tasked with teaching Economics in resource-constrained classroom environments?
- What specific resource constraints—material, technological, curricular, and professional—do these teachers encounter, and how do they experience and respond to these constraints in their daily teaching practice?
- What improvised pedagogical strategies do secondary Social Studies teachers in Eastern Visayas develop to make Economics content accessible and meaningful to students in resource-constrained settings?
- How do teachers navigate the tension between the abstract, model-driven character of Economics content and the concrete economic realities of poverty and deprivation experienced by their students in Eastern Visayas?
- What political, ideological, and emotional dimensions characterize the experience of teaching Economics in a marginalized, post-disaster regional context?
- What sources of professional resilience, pedagogical satisfaction, and moral commitment sustain Economics teachers in resource-constrained classrooms in Eastern Visayas?

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study extends across multiple dimensions of the Philippine educational landscape. For the Department of Education Regional Office VIII and school division offices across Eastern Visayas, the study provides the first phenomenologically grounded, teacher-centered account of the specific challenges and pedagogical adaptations characterizing Economics teaching in the region's public secondary schools—evidence essential for designing targeted professional development, allocating instructional materials, and developing locally relevant curriculum support for Social Studies teachers. For the national Araling Panlipunan curriculum development office, the findings contribute evidence for revisiting the Economics content and pedagogical guidance in curriculum documents to better account for the realities of teaching Economics in resource-constrained, poverty-affected regional contexts—contexts that are not marginal exceptions but the dominant reality for a significant proportion of the Philippine secondary school teaching force.

For teacher education institutions (TEIs) in Eastern Visayas, the study provides a basis for incorporating preparation for resource-constrained Economics teaching into pre-service Social Studies teacher education curricula, including modules on improvised pedagogical strategies, contextualizing economic concepts in lived poverty, and the affective and ideological dimensions of teaching Economics in marginalized communities. For the research community, the study enriches the Philippine Social Studies education literature with an original phenomenological contribution that brings together the fields of Economics education, teacher professional identity, post-disaster pedagogy, and the Freirean tradition of education for critical consciousness—a combination that has not previously been systematically examined in the Eastern Visayas context. For Economics teachers themselves, the study provides scholarly validation and visibility for professional experiences that are widely shared but rarely named, creating a foundation for collective professional advocacy for improved conditions and support.

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Scope and Delimitations

This study was delimited to secondary Social Studies teachers—teaching Araling Panlipunan (Grades 7-10) or Applied Economics/Economics and Finance subjects (Grades 11-12)—employed in public secondary schools in Eastern Visayas, Philippines, during the 2024-2025 academic year. Participants were required to have at least two years of experience teaching Economics content within the Araling Panlipunan curriculum or as a standalone Senior High School subject, ensuring sufficient experiential depth for rich phenomenological reflection. Resource-constrained classrooms were defined broadly to encompass any combination of: absence of adequate printed instructional materials (textbooks, activity sheets, reference books); limited or no access to functional technology (computers, projectors, internet); overcrowded physical classroom space; and inadequate physical learning materials (manipulatives, charts, laboratory supplies for simulations). Private school teachers, teachers in other subject areas, and those with fewer than two years of Economics teaching experience were excluded.

The phenomenological methodology precludes statistical generalization; findings are intended for theoretical transferability to comparable secondary Social Studies teacher populations in Eastern Visayas and analogous Philippine regional contexts. Data collection was conducted between April and August 2024. All participant identities, school assignments, and identifying details are fully anonymized in compliance with ethical protocols established by the Research Ethics Committee of Leyte Normal University.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

This study is anchored in three interlocking theoretical frameworks that together provide a multidimensional lens for understanding the phenomenon of Economics teaching in resource-constrained Eastern Visayas classrooms. The primary methodological framework is van Manen's (1990) hermeneutic phenomenology, which directs the researcher toward understanding the essential structures of teachers' lived experience through engaged, interpretive, and reflective reading of first-person accounts. Van Manen's approach is particularly appropriate for this study because it is attentive to the embodied, temporal, relational, and spatial dimensions of experience—dimensions that are all profoundly relevant to what it means to stand in a resource-depleted classroom attempting to teach economic theory to students living in poverty.

The primary substantive framework is Shulman's (1986) Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) theory, which conceptualizes teacher knowledge as comprising not merely subject-matter knowledge (SMK) and general pedagogical knowledge (GPK) but the distinctive synthesis between them—PCK—that enables teachers to make subject matter accessible and meaningful to particular students in particular contexts. Applied to the Economics teaching context, PCK encompasses the repertoire of analogies, examples, demonstrations, and representations that Economics teachers use to render abstract economic concepts concrete and understandable for secondary school students. In resource-constrained settings, where the standard pedagogical tools assumed in PCK development (textbooks with worked examples, technology-enabled data visualization, simulation software) are unavailable or unreliable, the PCK challenge is qualitatively intensified: teachers must develop their own improvised pedagogical representations from the material and experiential resources available in their specific classroom context.

The tertiary framework is Freire's (1970) pedagogy of the oppressed, which provides a critical pedagogical lens for understanding the unique dimension of Economics teaching in a poverty-affected regional context: the possibility—and the responsibility—of using Economics education not merely to transmit economic concepts but to develop students' critical consciousness about the economic structures that produce and perpetuate their community's poverty. Freire's distinction between banking education (the deposit of inert economic knowledge into passive students) and problem-posing education (the dialogic exploration of students' lived economic reality as a starting point for critical analysis) is particularly resonant in the Eastern Visayas context, where the gap between curriculum Economics and lived economic reality is both a pedagogical challenge and a potential pedagogical resource.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Economics Education: Pedagogical Challenges and PCK

The teaching of Economics at the secondary level has long been recognized as presenting distinctive pedagogical challenges related to the abstract, model-driven, and often counterintuitive nature of economic reasoning. Walstad and Rebeck (2001) documented significant deficits in economic understanding among US high school students and attributed these deficits substantially to the pedagogical approaches employed—particularly the dominance of lecture-based, textbook-dependent instruction that privileges definitional recall over the development of genuine economic reasoning. Becker and Watts (2001) similarly documented that the most common pedagogical approaches in Economics education are among the least effective for developing students' ability to apply economic concepts to real-world situations.

Shulman's (1986) PCK framework has been productively applied to Economics education to understand what distinctive knowledge experienced Economics teachers possess that novice teachers lack. Research in this tradition documents that expert Economics teachers develop rich repertoires of subject-specific analogies, examples, and representations—what Shulman terms the pedagogical armamentarium—that enable them to translate abstract economic relationships into forms accessible to students with varying levels of prior knowledge. Siegfried and Walstad (1998) found that effective Economics teachers draw heavily on student

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experiences and familiar examples to anchor economic concepts—an approach whose relevance in the Eastern Visayas context, where student economic experiences are dramatically shaped by poverty and disaster, is both self-evident and underexplored.

The intersection of PCK and resource constraint in Economics teaching has received limited systematic attention in the literature. Existing research on resource-constrained teaching in low-income contexts tends to focus on generic pedagogical adaptations rather than subject-specific PCK development (Moodie, 2016; Chimbi & Jita, 2019). The specific challenge of developing Economics PCK without access to the standard technological and material resources that PCK research has implicitly assumed—without simulation software, data visualization tools, financial calculators, and fully stocked textbook sets—represents an understudied phenomenon whose empirical examination this study contributes.

Resource-Constrained Classrooms in Philippine Education

Resource-constrained classrooms are a pervasive feature of Philippine public secondary education, particularly in regions outside Metro Manila and the wealthier urbanized provinces. The term encompasses multiple dimensions of constraint: shortage of standard instructional materials (textbooks, activity sheets, manipulatives); limited or absent access to educational technology (computers, projectors, internet connectivity); inadequate physical infrastructure (overcrowded rooms, poor lighting, damaged furniture); and insufficient teacher professional development resources (subject-specific training, peer learning opportunities, access to professional literature) (Bernardo et al., 2019; DepEd, 2022).

In Eastern Visayas specifically, resource constraints in public secondary schools are documented across all of these dimensions. The region's persistently low per-student public expenditure, compounded by the recurring destruction of educational infrastructure by typhoons and earthquakes, creates a material environment for schooling that is among the most constrained in the Philippines (NEDA, 2023; PSA, 2023). The deployment of Modular Distance Learning during the COVID-19 pandemic—in which printed learning modules were distributed to students in lieu of classroom instruction—revealed both the depth of digital infrastructure poverty in Eastern Visayas schools and the extraordinary burden placed on teachers to compensate for material resource deficits through their own labor, creativity, and personal expenditure (DepEd, 2021; Talisayon et al., 2022).

Research on teaching in resource-constrained Philippine classrooms has grown since the COVID-19 pandemic, with studies documenting the extraordinary improvisational demands placed on Filipino teachers across subject areas. Cahapay (2020) documented that Filipino teachers in resource-poor settings developed what he termed *bricolage pedagogy*—the construction of effective instructional approaches from whatever heterogeneous materials and resources were available, in the manner of Lévi-Strauss's (1962) *bricoleur* who creates with the tools at hand rather than those ideally designed for the purpose. This concept is directly applicable to Economics teaching in Eastern Visayas, where teachers routinely construct their pedagogical representations from the materials of students' lived economic experience rather than from the standardized instructional resources the curriculum assumes.

Teaching Economics in Poverty-Affected Contexts

The literature on teaching Economics in poverty-affected contexts reveals a distinctive set of pedagogical opportunities and tensions not present in more economically homogeneous classroom environments. On the opportunity side, students who experience economic hardship directly possess a concrete, personal experiential base for economic concepts that students from more privileged backgrounds lack: they understand scarcity, trade-offs, opportunity cost, and the workings of informal credit markets not as textbook abstractions but as daily realities of household survival (Murnane et al., 2012). This experiential proximity to economic concepts can be a powerful pedagogical resource if teachers are equipped to mobilize it critically—connecting students' lived economic experiences to formal economic concepts in ways that illuminate both the concepts and the structures that produce the students' economic circumstances.

On the tension side, the dominant Economics curriculum—even at the secondary level—presents economic concepts within a framework of market efficiency, consumer sovereignty, and rational optimization that implicitly naturalizes the economic structures that produce poverty, rather than subjecting them to critical examination (Stilwell, 2002; Murnane et al., 2012). Teaching this curriculum uncritically to students living in poverty risks what Freire (1970) termed the *fatalism of consciousness*—the internalization of poverty as a personal or natural condition rather than a structural and historically produced one. The teacher who presents supply and demand curves to students in a typhoon-devastated community without situating those models within the political economy of disaster capitalism and regional underdevelopment may inadvertently reinforce rather than illuminate the mechanisms of the students' economic marginalization.

Research on critical Economics education—the integration of Freirean critical pedagogy with Economics instruction—is an emerging field with particular relevance to the Eastern Visayas context. Mader (2011) documented the experiences of Economics teachers in post-apartheid South Africa who navigated the tension between the official Economics curriculum and the critical economic consciousness that their students' experiences of township poverty demanded. These teachers developed what Mader termed *pedagogical dissonance management*—strategies for honoring both the formal curriculum requirements and the critical pedagogical imperatives that teaching Economics in deeply unequal contexts generates. This concept maps productively onto the

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experiences of Social Studies teachers in Eastern Visayas, who face analogous tensions between the formal Economics curriculum and the critical pedagogical possibilities and obligations created by their students' lived economic realities.

Teacher Resilience and Professional Identity in Challenging Contexts

The literature on teacher resilience in resource-constrained and post-disaster contexts is directly relevant to understanding how Economics teachers in Eastern Visayas sustain their professional commitment and pedagogical effectiveness in the face of systemic material deprivation. Day and Gu's (2014) framework of resilient teaching emphasizes that teacher resilience is not a fixed personal trait but a dynamic, contextually embedded capacity for maintaining professional purpose and effectiveness under challenging conditions—a capacity generated through the interplay between individual resources (professional knowledge, personal values, coping skills) and relational and institutional supports (collegial relationships, administrative recognition, professional development access).

Research on teacher resilience in Philippine contexts has consistently documented the centrality of vocational commitment—the teacher's sense of mission, purpose, and moral responsibility for student learning—as the primary sustaining force for professional resilience under challenging conditions (Maranon et al., 2021; Talisayon et al., 2022). In the Economics teaching context, this vocational commitment takes a distinctive form: the conviction that developing students' economic understanding and critical consciousness is not merely an academic exercise but an act of empowerment—an investment in students' capacity to navigate, survive, and potentially transform the economic conditions that define their community's disadvantage. This conviction, expressed consistently in the Freirean tradition of education as conscientization (critical consciousness development), provides a moral foundation for professional resilience that transcends the immediate frustrations of resource constraint.

Eastern Visayas: Regional Economic Context and Educational Implications

Eastern Visayas presents a regional economic and educational context of compelling specificity. The region's poverty incidence rate—among the highest in the Philippines—means that the majority of students in its public secondary schools come from households living below or near the poverty line, with direct consequences for their educational engagement, material circumstances for study, and experiential relationship with Economic concepts (PSA, 2023). The region's agricultural and fishing economy, dominated by small-scale subsistence production and informal labor markets, provides students with experiential proximity to economic concepts of scarcity, labor markets, commodity pricing, and livelihood diversification that a well-equipped Economics teacher could mobilize productively in instruction.

The disaster dimension of Eastern Visayas's economic reality is particularly significant for Economics education. Super Typhoon Yolanda's impact—destroying billions of pesos of productive assets, displacing hundreds of thousands of households, and disrupting economic activity across the region for years—created a living case study in macroeconomic concepts: disaster economics, reconstruction financing, labor market disruption, insurance markets (and their absence), and the political economy of disaster response and recovery. The challenge for Economics teachers in the region is whether and how to make this living economic history pedagogically productive—to use the regional economic experience not as a backdrop for abstract concepts but as the primary material from which economic understanding is built.

CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed van Manen's (1990) hermeneutic phenomenological approach as its governing research design. Hermeneutic phenomenology is distinguished from other qualitative approaches by its commitment to understanding the rich, layered, and meaning-saturated character of lived experience—not as an objectively describable behavioral phenomenon but as a mode of being-in-the-world that can only be accessed through sustained, reflective engagement with first-person accounts. For the study of Economics teaching in resource-constrained classrooms, hermeneutic phenomenology is the most appropriate design because what is at stake is not a measurable pedagogical behavior or outcome but a texture of professional experience—the interweaving of intellectual challenge, improvised creativity, moral weight, professional frustration, and pedagogical satisfaction—that only first-person narrative can adequately convey.

The study is grounded in an interpretivist epistemological stance, which holds that knowledge of teaching practice is constructed through interpretive engagement between the researcher and participants, mediated by the cultural, historical, and biographical situatedness of both. The author's own identity as a Social Studies educator and licensed teacher in Eastern Visayas provides contextual proximity to the phenomenon—familiarity with the regional educational landscape, the Araling Panlipunan curriculum, and the material realities of Eastern Visayas classrooms—that enriches interpretive depth while requiring systematic reflexive management. A dedicated bracketing journal was maintained throughout the research process, documenting the author's own assumptions and experiential responses to participant narratives.

Research Setting

The study was conducted in public secondary schools across the six provinces of Eastern Visayas: Leyte, Samar, Eastern Samar, Northern Samar, Biliran, and Southern Leyte. Schools were selected to represent the range of resource-constraint severity

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and geographic accessibility characterizing the region: from urban schools in Tacloban City with moderate resource access, to rural mainland schools with limited materials and connectivity, to coastal and island schools with the most severe infrastructure deficits. The specific names, school divisions, and locations of participating schools are withheld in compliance with ethical anonymization protocols. Data collection was conducted through a combination of in-person visits at accessible school sites and video-conferencing for participants in remote island locations.

Participants

Fifteen (15) secondary Social Studies teachers participated, selected through purposive sampling guided by the following criteria: (a) currently employed as a regular or permanent Social Studies teacher in a public secondary school in Eastern Visayas; (b) currently assigned to teach at least one subject with significant Economics content—Araling Panlipunan in Grades 7-10 with Economics units, or Applied Economics/Economics and Finance in Senior High School; (c) possessing at least two years of experience teaching Economics content; (d) teaching in a school that the teacher would characterize as significantly resource-constrained in terms of instructional materials, technology, or physical infrastructure; and (e) willing to participate fully in all data collection activities. Sampling achieved diversity across teaching experience, grade level, school setting (urban, rural, coastal, island), and provincial location.

All participants are fully anonymized through the codes SST-01 through SST-15 throughout this manuscript. No participant's name, specific school, exact teaching assignment, or identifying personal detail is disclosed. Aggregate demographic and professional information is presented in Table 1. The fifteen participants comprised nine female and six male teachers, with teaching experience ranging from 2 to 21 years, distributed across all six provinces and representing both Junior High School and Senior High School levels.

Table 1: Aggregate Demographic and Professional Profile of Participants (Anonymized)

Characteristic	Categories / Range	Frequency / Distribution
Participant Codes	SST-01 to SST-15	n = 15
Sex	Female / Male	9 Female; 6 Male
Teaching Experience	2–21 years	Mean = 9.7 years
Grade Level Taught	JHS / SHS / Both	JHS (7); SHS (5); Both (3)
Primary Economics Subject	AP Economics units / Applied Economics	AP Units (10); Applied Econ (5)
School Setting	Urban / Rural / Coastal / Island	Urban (3); Rural (6); Coastal (4); Island (2)
Province Distribution	All six provinces	Leyte (5); Samar (3); E. Samar (3); N. Samar (2); Biliran (1); S. Leyte (1)
Primary Resource Constraint	Materials / Technology / Both	Materials (6); Technology (4); Both (5)

Data Collection Methods

Semi-Structured In-Depth Interviews

Individual semi-structured interviews served as the primary data collection instrument, each lasting between 75 and 110 minutes. Interviews were conducted in Filipino, Waray-Waray, or English based on participant preference. A seventeen-question interview guide was developed, validated by two external reviewers with expertise in qualitative methodology and Social Studies education, and pilot-tested with two non-participant Social Studies teachers prior to deployment. The guide addressed six thematic domains: (a) the teacher's background, specialization, and journey into Economics teaching; (b) the specific resource constraints characterizing their classroom and school environment; (c) pedagogical strategies developed for teaching Economics without adequate resources; (d) the experience of contextualizing Economics in the regional reality of poverty and disaster; (e) the political, ideological, and emotional dimensions of teaching Economics in a marginalized region; and (f) sources of resilience, professional satisfaction, and moral commitment in their Economics teaching practice. All interviews were audio-recorded with explicit written consent and transcribed verbatim.

Reflective Narrative Writing

Following individual interviews, participants were invited to write a reflective narrative of 500-800 words responding to the prompt: "Describe, in as much detail as you are comfortable with, a specific lesson or classroom moment involving Economics that you remember most vividly—one that captures something essential about what it is like to teach Economics in your school and your community. What happened? What did you do? What did you feel? What did it mean to you?" This narrative prompt generated rich, unprompted phenomenological data about the experiential texture of Economics teaching that complemented the more

structured interview data. Twelve of fifteen participants submitted written narratives; three elaborated on the prompt verbally in a follow-up session.

Focus Group Discussions

Two focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted—one with participants from Leyte and Biliran (eight participants) and one with participants from the Samar provinces (seven participants). Each FGD lasted approximately 90 minutes and employed a distinct discussion guide from the individual interview, designed to elicit collective sense-making about shared Economics teaching experiences, peer validation of emerging analytical themes, and group reflection on the regional contextual dimensions of the phenomenon. FGDs also served as a member-checking mechanism, with preliminary thematic observations shared with participants for validation and elaboration. Sessions were audio-recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using van Manen's (1990) phenomenological thematic analysis approach, proceeding through four interconnected analytic activities. First, turning to the nature of lived experience: all interview transcripts, reflective narratives, and FGD recordings were read and reread holistically to develop an immersive sense of the totality of participants' Economics teaching experiences. Second, existential investigation: the researcher examined how the four existential lifeworlds identified by van Manen—corporeality (lived body), temporality (lived time), relationality (lived others), and spatiality (lived space)—manifested in the particular phenomenon of resource-constrained Economics teaching. Third, phenomenological reflection: themes were identified through the selective reading approach—asking of each statement, "Does this statement reveal something essential about the experience of teaching Economics in a resource-constrained classroom?"—and through the holistic reading approach, seeking a phrase that captures the fundamental meaning of the full transcript as a whole. Fourth, phenomenological writing: the identified themes were elaborated through the craft of thick, interpretive description that honors both the particularity of individual experiences and the essential structures shared across participants.

Trustworthiness was enhanced through prolonged engagement with the data, triangulation across three data sources, member checking with five participants, peer debriefing with a colleague in Social Studies education, negative case analysis, and thick description. The author maintained a reflexivity journal throughout, systematically examining how his own identity as an educator in Eastern Visayas and his familiarity with the Araling Panlipunan curriculum shaped emerging interpretations. Data were managed using MAXQDA 2024 qualitative analysis software.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical clearance was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of Leyte Normal University (Protocol No.: LNU-REC-2024-102) prior to data collection. Division Superintendents of all participating school divisions and school principals provided written endorsement. All participants provided written informed consent, with full disclosure of the study's purpose, voluntary nature, right to withdraw, data handling, and anonymization procedures. Participants were assured that no information would be shared with school administrators or supervisors and that all reporting would be anonymized sufficiently to prevent identification even by readers familiar with the regional teaching landscape.

Given the political and ideological sensitivity of some participant narratives—particularly those involving critical perspectives on the Economics curriculum, the adequacy of institutional support, and the political economy of educational underfunding in Eastern Visayas—participants were explicitly protected from potential institutional repercussions through robust anonymization. All participant codes (SST-01 through SST-15), the withholding of specific school and division information, and the aggregation of demographic details to levels that prevent individual identification collectively ensure that no participant can be identified from published research outputs. All audio recordings, transcripts, and narrative documents are stored in encrypted digital repositories accessible only to the researcher and will be securely deleted seven years following publication.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overview of Findings

Analysis of fifteen interview transcripts, twelve reflective narratives, and two FGD recordings yielded six core themes that together constitute the essential structure of the lived experience of secondary Social Studies teachers teaching Economics in resource-constrained classrooms in Eastern Visayas. Table 2 provides a thematic overview before each theme is elaborated through phenomenological description, participant narrative excerpts, and theoretical interpretation.

Table 2: Core Themes, Sub-themes, and Prevalence from Phenomenological Analysis

No.	Core Theme	Sub-themes	Prevalence (n=15)
1	Navigating Conceptual Abstraction Without Material Support	Teaching graphs without paper; Explaining markets without data; The conceptual-material gap; Verbal scaffolding as primary tool	15/15 (100%)

2	Contextualizing Economics in Lived Poverty: The Double-Edged Relevance	Student economic experience as resource; The poverty trap analogy; Emotional weight of proximate examples; Risk of reinforcing fatalism versus building critical consciousness	14/15 (93.3%)
3	Improvised Pedagogical Creativity as Professional Survival	Bayanihan-based simulations; Neighborhood market as laboratory; Role-play markets; Storytelling as economic modeling; Lean resource pedagogy	15/15 (100%)
4	The Political and Ideological Burden of Teaching Economics	Curriculum neutrality versus lived injustice; Critical consciousness tension; Political risk of structural critique; Navigating economic ideology without textbook consensus	13/15 (86.7%)
5	Professional Isolation and Absence of Economics-Specific Support	No Economics subject associations; Absent peer mentorship; Inadequate pre-service Economics preparation; Self-directed professional learning	14/15 (93.3%)
6	Resilience, Student Empowerment, and the Moral Weight of Economics Teaching	Teaching as economic justice; Student transformation as sustaining reward; Vocational conviction; Regional pride as pedagogical resource	15/15 (100%)

Theme 1: Navigating Conceptual Abstraction Without Material Support

Every one of the fifteen participants described the fundamental challenge of teaching Economics content—content whose standard pedagogical presentation relies heavily on visual representations (supply and demand graphs, GDP charts, production possibility frontiers, circular flow diagrams) and numerical data (price indices, national income statistics, interest rate tables)—in classrooms where neither adequate visual materials nor functional data-access technology was routinely available. This challenge is not merely logistical; it is pedagogically fundamental, because the standard PCK repertoire for Economics teaching is built around these visual and numerical representations as primary vehicles for making abstract economic relationships visible and manipulable.

SST-03, a teacher with nine years of experience from a coastal Samar school, described the visual representation challenge with characteristic directness: "Ang supply at demand graph—ito ang puso ng Economics. Pero sa aming silid, walang chalk minsan, walang whiteboard marker. Ginagamit ko ang mga bato—ito ang presyo, ito ang dami—at ang mga bata mismo ang nagiging 'graph.' Sinasabi ko: 'Pumunta ka roon kapag mataas ang presyo; pumunta ka dito kapag mababa.' Ang kanilang katawan ang graph. Hindi ito ang paraan sa libro. Pero gumagana ito." (The supply and demand graph—this is the heart of Economics. But in our room, sometimes there is no chalk, no whiteboard marker. I use stones—this is the price, this is the quantity—and the students themselves become the 'graph.' I say: 'Go there when the price is high; go here when it is low.' Their bodies are the graph. This is not the method in the book. But it works.)

This participant's description—"ang kanilang katawan ang graph" (their bodies are the graph)—captures with extraordinary pedagogical creativity the improvised kinesthetic representation that resource constraint has driven her to develop. In the absence of paper, chalk, or technology, the human body becomes the visualization medium for economic relationships—an approach that, far from being a degraded substitute for conventional graphical representation, may in fact produce more durable conceptual understanding by engaging students' embodied, proprioceptive experience of the abstract relationship. This connects to the broader literature on embodied cognition in learning (Wilson, 2002) and specifically to kinesthetic approaches to Economics education documented by Simkins and Maier (2004) in better-resourced contexts—but arrived at here through necessity rather than pedagogical design.

The absence of current economic data—price indices, regional GDP figures, employment statistics—was identified by eleven participants as a specific and significant pedagogical constraint, as Economics teaching particularly benefits from connecting abstract economic concepts to current real-world data. SST-09, from a rural Northern Samar school, described improvising a data source: "Kapag kailangan ko ng data tungkol sa presyo, nagtatanong ako sa mga bata: 'Magkano ang bigas sa inyong bahay ngayong Sabado? Magkano noong nakaraang taon?' Sila mismo ang data. Hindi ito official na datos, pero tunay. At mas naiintindihan nila kung bakit importanteng subaybayan ang presyo kapag sila ang nagbibigay ng datos." (When I need data about prices, I ask the students: 'How much is rice in your house this Saturday? How much was it last year?' They themselves are the data. This is not official data, but it is real. And they understand better why it is important to track prices when they are the ones providing the data.) This improvised participatory data collection—transforming students into primary economic data sources—simultaneously resolves the resource constraint of absent data, contextualizes economic measurement in the students' own household experience, and creates intrinsic motivation for understanding price dynamics.

Theme 2: Contextualizing Economics in Lived Poverty — The Double-Edged Relevance

Fourteen of fifteen participants described the experience of teaching Economics to students whose daily lives are embedded in economic hardship as a pedagogical condition of profound double-edgedness: simultaneously the most powerful pedagogical resource and the most emotionally and ethically complex pedagogical challenge of their teaching practice. On one edge, the lived economic experience of Eastern Visayas students provides an immediate, concrete, and deeply personal experiential base for economic concepts that textbook examples from Manila's Binondo market district or New York's Wall Street do not. On the other edge, using students' poverty as pedagogical material requires navigating questions of dignity, hope, critical consciousness, and the risk of inadvertently reinforcing the fatalistic acceptance of economic marginalization that Freire (1970) identified as the most dangerous educational outcome in contexts of structural poverty.

SST-07, from a rural Leyte school with seventeen years of teaching experience, articulated this double-edgedness with notable reflective sophistication: "Ang pinaka-epektibong paraan para ituro ang scarcity ay ang ituro ito sa mga batang nakaranas ng kakulangan. Pero may responsibilidad ka rin—hindi mo pwedeng gamitin ang kanilang kahirapan bilang halimbawa nang hindi mo sinasagot ang tanong ng kung bakit naman sila mahirap. Kung tinuturo mo lang ang scarcity nang walang konteksto, ang matutunan ng bata ay: 'Mahirap kami dahil kulang ang aming resources.' Ang dapat matutunang magtanong ay: 'Bakit ganoon ang pamamahagi ng resources? Sino ang nagdesisyon? Maaari ba itong baguhin?' Iyon ang tunay na Economics." (The most effective way to teach scarcity is to teach it to children who have experienced lack. But you also have a responsibility—you cannot use their poverty as an example without answering the question of why they are poor. If you only teach scarcity without context, what the child learns is: 'We are poor because our resources are insufficient.' What they should learn to ask is: 'Why is the distribution of resources like this? Who decided? Can this be changed?' That is real Economics.)

This participant's formulation—distinguishing between a poverty-naturalizing Economics that teaches scarcity as a universal given and a critical Economics that teaches scarcity as a distributionally and politically produced condition—captures precisely the pedagogical tension that Freire (1970) theorized and that Mader (2011) documented in post-apartheid South African Economics classrooms. The teacher here is not merely confronting a resource constraint but a curriculum ideological constraint: the dominant Economics curriculum's tendency to present market mechanisms as natural and inevitable rather than as social constructs subject to political choice and structural critique.

The emotional weight of using poverty-proximate examples was described by ten participants as a specific dimension of the double-edged relevance experience. SST-11, from Eastern Samar, described a classroom moment in which her explanation of the concept of remittances—using the example of OFW remittances as a major source of regional household income—prompted a student to disclose that her father had been an OFW who had died abroad, whose death had caused the family's household income to collapse. "Dun ko naramdaman ang bigat ng Economics—na ang mga tinuturuan nating konsepto ay hindi abstract para sa mga bata. Ang OFW remittances ay hindi isang numero sa GDP—ito ay ang tatay na hindi na makuwento. Kailangan mong guro maging sensitibo sa bigat ng mga halimbawang ito." (There I felt the weight of Economics—that the concepts we are teaching are not abstract for the children. OFW remittances are not a number in the GDP—it is the father who can no longer tell stories. You as a teacher need to be sensitive to the weight of these examples.) This moment—in which a macroeconomic statistic is made human and personal in a way that the textbook did not anticipate—illustrates the emotionally intense pedagogical work that contextualizing Economics in lived experience requires.

Theme 3: Improvised Pedagogical Creativity as Professional Survival

All fifteen participants described extensive repertoires of improvised pedagogical strategies that they had developed—through necessity, experimentation, and the accumulated wisdom of professional experience—to teach Economics effectively in the absence of standard instructional materials and technology. These improvisations were not random adaptations but reflect a sophisticated, contextually embedded PCK that Shulman (1986) would recognize as the most practically relevant form of teacher knowledge: the capacity to make a specific subject's content accessible to specific students in a specific context, using whatever resources that context provides.

SST-01, a teacher with twelve years of experience from Biliran, described a market simulation she had developed using the local fishing community as its pedagogical setting: "Ginagawa ko ang 'talipapa simulation.' Ang mga bata ay nagiging isda-vendor, mamimili, at gobyerno—ang ilan ay nagtatayo ng mataas na taripa, ang ilan ay nag-import ng isda. Ginagamit ko ang totoong mga presyo mula sa aming lokal na palengke. Sa loob ng isang oras, naranasan nila ang equilibrium price, ang effect ng taripa, at ang black market—lahat nang walang aklat, walang technology. Ang kanilang kaalaman tungkol sa talipapa ang curriculum." (I do the 'talipapa simulation.' The students become fish vendors, buyers, and government—some impose high tariffs, some import fish. I use real prices from our local market. Within one hour, they have experienced the equilibrium price, the effect of tariffs, and the black market—all without a book, without technology. Their knowledge of the talipapa is the curriculum.)

This participant's talipapa simulation—a market simulation using the local fish market as its economic environment, real local prices as its data, and students' own market knowledge as its pedagogical resource—exemplifies the bricolage pedagogy that Cahapay (2020) documented among Filipino teachers in resource-poor settings: the construction of powerful pedagogical experiences from the materials of the immediate environment rather than from the standardized instructional products the curriculum

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assumes. The simulation achieves, through local community resources, exactly what elaborate simulation software achieves in better-resourced Economics classrooms—the experiential learning of market dynamics through participation—while simultaneously grounding that learning in the specific economic environment students actually inhabit.

The use of bayanihan-modeled cooperative learning structures—group activities premised on the traditional Filipino value of communal mutual assistance—was described by eleven participants as a pedagogically productive improvisation for Economics contexts specifically. SST-08 described using a paluwagan (rotating savings group) simulation to teach financial concepts: "Ginahimo ko ang paluwagan game—nagtipon kami ng konting barya na mula sa kanilang bulsa, nagpaikot kami. Sa loob ng 30 minuto, natutunan nila ang time value of money, ang informal financial institutions, at ang social capital—lahat ng ito ay nangyayari sa kanilang mga komunidad pero hindi nila alam na may koneksyon ito sa Economics." (I made the paluwagan game—we pooled small coins from their pockets, we rotated. Within 30 minutes, they learned the time value of money, informal financial institutions, and social capital—all of this happens in their communities but they did not know it was connected to Economics.) This improvisation—transforming an indigenous Filipino financial institution into an Economics teaching tool—exemplifies the pedagogical possibility of using local cultural and economic practices as vehicles for formal economic concept acquisition, a possibility that is accessible to Eastern Visayas teachers precisely because of their embeddedness in the communities and cultural practices that their students also inhabit.

Storytelling as economic modeling—the use of narrative to represent and explore the dynamics of economic systems—was described by eight participants as a particularly effective strategy for teaching macroeconomic concepts to students who lack both the mathematical background and the abstract reasoning experience that conventional macroeconomic presentation assumes. SST-14, from a remote island school in Eastern Samar, described crafting an extended oral narrative about a fictional island community whose economic history—from subsistence fishing, to the introduction of a cash crop, to price volatility, to debt crisis, and eventually to cooperative-based recovery—traced the major themes of the macroeconomics unit. "Hindi ito textbook Economics. Pero kapag tinanong ko sila pagkatapos: 'Bakit sumama ang ekonomiya ng nayon na iyon?' Sumasagot sila gamit ang mga konsepto—terms tulad ng 'terms of trade,' 'external debt,' 'dependency'—na wala sa kanilang bokabularyo noong una. Natutunan nila ang Economics sa pamamagitan ng kwento ng mga taong katulad nila." (This is not textbook Economics. But when I ask them afterwards: 'Why did the economy of that village decline?' They answer using concepts—terms like 'terms of trade,' 'external debt,' 'dependency'—that were not in their vocabulary before. They learned Economics through the story of people like them.)

Theme 4: The Political and Ideological Burden of Teaching Economics

Thirteen of fifteen participants described a distinctive political and ideological burden in their Economics teaching that is qualitatively different from the intellectual and material challenges documented in the preceding themes. This burden arises from the gap between the dominant Economics curriculum's implicit ideological orientation—premised on the functioning of market mechanisms, the rationality of economic agents, and the efficiency of free exchange—and the lived political economy of Eastern Visayas, where market mechanisms have conspicuously failed to generate equitable development, and where the structural causes of regional poverty are rooted in political histories that the Economics curriculum does not invite students to interrogate.

SST-13, a veteran teacher with twenty-one years of experience from Leyte, articulated this tension most directly: "Kapag tinututuro ko ang market economy at ang comparative advantage, nagtanong ang isang estudyante: 'Sir, kung tama ang lahat ng ito, bakit tayo mahirap?' Iyon ang pinakamagandang tanong na natanggap ko sa aking karera. At iyon din ang pinaka-mahirap na sagutin—hindi dahil wala akong sagot, kundi dahil ang tunay na sagot ay naglalagay sa iyo sa posisyon na kritikal sa isang sistema na ang textbook ay nagpapakita bilang natural." (When I was teaching market economy and comparative advantage, a student asked: 'Sir, if all of this is correct, why are we poor?' That is the most beautiful question I have received in my career. And it is also the hardest to answer—not because I have no answer, but because the real answer puts you in a position of being critical of a system that the textbook presents as natural.)

This participant's description of the student's question—"kung tama ang lahat ng ito, bakit tayo mahirap?" (if all of this is correct, why are we poor?)—as simultaneously the most beautiful and the most difficult question he had received in his career encapsulates the essential political and pedagogical tension that this theme documents. The student's question is a spontaneous expression of what Freire (1970) termed conscientization—critical consciousness of the gap between ideological representations and material reality. The teacher's difficulty in answering it is not intellectual but political: the honest answer—that the persistence of Eastern Visayas poverty despite decades of market-oriented economic policies reflects structural, political, and historical factors that orthodox Economics textbooks do not equip students to analyze—is an answer that positions the teacher as a structural critic of the dominant economic ideology embedded in the national curriculum.

Nine participants described explicit strategies for navigating this ideological tension without either abandoning the curriculum or abandoning their pedagogical responsibility to develop students' critical economic consciousness. SST-05 described what she called the "two lens" approach: "Tinuturo ko ang standard Economics muna—ang mga modelo, ang mga konsepto. Pagkatapos, tinatanong ko: 'Ito ang sinasabi ng economics textbook. Kung titingnan natin ang ating komunidad, alin sa mga ito ang talagang nangyayari? Alin ang hindi?' Hindi ako nagsasabi na mali ang textbook—tinuturuan ko silang gumamit ng kritisismo." (I

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first teach standard Economics—the models, the concepts. Afterwards, I ask: 'This is what the economics textbook says. If we look at our community, which of these is actually happening? Which is not?' I am not saying the textbook is wrong—I am teaching them to use critical analysis.) This two-lens approach—presenting both the formal economic model and the critical examination of its applicability to the local context—represents a practically sophisticated navigation of the ideological tension that avoids the twin risks of curriculum non-compliance and intellectual dishonesty.

Theme 5: Professional Isolation and the Absence of Economics-Specific Collegial Support

Fourteen of fifteen participants described a profound sense of professional isolation in their Economics teaching—an isolation arising from the absence of subject-specific collegial communities, Economics-focused professional development, and Economics-specialist mentors within their professional environment. This isolation is qualitatively different from the general professional loneliness of rural or island teaching: it is specifically an epistemological isolation—the experience of navigating the particular conceptual, pedagogical, and ideological challenges of Economics teaching without colleagues who share those challenges and can offer informed support.

SST-04, from a coastal Eastern Samar school, described this isolation with evident frustration: "Sa aming division, maraming subject associations—para sa Math teachers, para sa English teachers, para sa Science. Pero para sa mga nagtuturo ng Economics? Wala. Kapag may problema ako sa pagtura ng circular flow model o ng national income accounting, hindi ko alam kung kanino tatanong. Ang mga kasamahan ko ay hindi nagtuturo ng Economics o hindi naman talaga nag-aral nito. Nag-iinventory ako ng solusyon nang mag-isa." (In our division, there are many subject associations—for Math teachers, for English teachers, for Science. But for those who teach Economics? None. When I have a problem teaching the circular flow model or national income accounting, I do not know who to ask. My colleagues do not teach Economics or have not really studied it. I am inventorying solutions alone.)

This participant's image—"nag-iinventory ako ng solusyon nang mag-isa" (I am inventorying solutions alone)—captures the experiential character of Economics-specific professional isolation: a solitary, cumulative problem-solving process undertaken without the collegial resource-sharing and peer validation that more numerically dominant subjects benefit from through established teacher associations, subject-specific professional development programs, and peer mentorship structures. The absence of Economics subject associations at the division level—while Math, English, Science, and MAPEH associations exist—is both a symptom and a reinforcing cause of this isolation, removing the institutional infrastructure through which Economics-specific PCK could be collectively developed and shared.

Eight participants described seeking support from unexpected sources: YouTube tutorials on Economics concepts, educational podcasts accessed during commutes, Facebook groups of Filipino Social Studies teachers, and occasional online contact with Economics faculty from universities. SST-06 described the particular satisfaction—and the inherent limitation—of self-directed professional learning: "Natuto ako ng macroeconomics sa YouTube. Tunay. Nakahanap ako ng mga lectures ng mga professor mula sa mga unibersidad sa Estados Unidos. Malinaw sila. Pero hindi nila alam ang aking silid—hindi nila alam ang mga batang walang pagkain, ang paaralan na natanggal ang bubong sa bagyo. Natuto ako ng konsepto, pero hindi ako natutulungan sa pagtuturo nito dito." (I learned macroeconomics from YouTube. Really. I found lectures from professors at universities in the United States. They are clear. But they do not know my classroom—they do not know the children who have not eaten, the school whose roof was blown away by a typhoon. I learned the concept, but I was not helped with how to teach it here.) This participant's observation—I learned the concept, but not how to teach it here—articulates precisely the gap between general subject knowledge (accessible through online resources) and contextually embedded PCK (accessible only through situated professional communities that do not exist for Economics teachers in Eastern Visayas).

Theme 6: Resilience, Student Empowerment, and the Moral Weight of Economics Teaching

All fifteen participants, across the full range of professional experience and geographic setting, described the experience of teaching Economics in resource-constrained Eastern Visayas classrooms as ultimately sustained by a profound sense of moral purpose—the conviction that helping students develop economic understanding and critical consciousness is an act of real-world consequence for the communities that these students inhabit and will shape. This vocational conviction—aligned with Freire's (1970) conceptualization of education as a practice of freedom—functions as the primary source of professional resilience for Economics teachers who face the compound challenges documented in the preceding themes.

SST-12, from a rural Leyte school with fourteen years of experience, articulated this moral weight with quiet force: "Nagtuturo ako ng Economics sa mga batang ang mga pamilya ay hindi nag-invest ng pondo sa stock market—kundi sa ulan at anihan. Hindi nila kailangan na malaman ang Dow Jones. Kailangan nilang malaman kung paano magtayo ng kooperatiba, kung paano maunawaan ang kung ano ang nangyayari sa kanilang mga utang sa kumpanya ng kopra. Kung matututo sila mula sa akin, maaari silang gumawa ng mas matalinong desisyon para sa kanilang mga pamayanan. Ito ang dahilan kung bakit ako nagtuturo ng Economics sa isang silid na walang libro." (I teach Economics to children whose families have not invested funds in the stock market—but in rain and harvest. They do not need to know the Dow Jones. They need to know how to establish a cooperative, how to understand what is happening to their debts to the copra company. If they learn from me, they can make smarter decisions for their communities. This is the reason I teach Economics in a classroom without books.)

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This participant's statement—"ito ang dahilan kung bakit ako nagtuturo ng Economics sa isang silid na walang libro" (this is the reason I teach Economics in a classroom without books)—encapsulates the essential moral logic that sustains Economics teaching in resource-constrained Eastern Visayas classrooms: the conviction that the practical economic knowledge and critical economic consciousness that students can develop through skilled Economics teaching has immediate, community-level consequences for their capacity to make financially informed decisions, to understand and navigate the economic institutions (cooperatives, credit markets, insurance, government programs) that shape their households' wellbeing, and to participate as informed citizens in the political economic decisions that affect their communities.

Student transformation moments—specific instances in which students demonstrated new economic understanding that visibly changed their relationship to economic phenomena in their communities—were described by all fifteen participants as the primary source of pedagogical satisfaction and professional renewal. SST-02 described one such moment: a student from a fishing barangay who, following a unit on cooperative economics, helped organize a marketing cooperative among her family's neighbors that enabled them to sell dried fish directly to consumers in Tacloban rather than selling through a middleman who captured most of the margin. "Nag-aaply ng Economics ang bata ko sa totoong buhay, at nagbago ang kabuhayan ng kanilang pamilya. Hindi lahat ng araw ganito—pero kapag nangyari, ramdam ko na sulit ang lahat ng pagsisikap." (My student applied Economics in real life, and it changed their family's livelihood. Not every day is like this—but when it happens, I feel that all the effort was worth it.) This single story of student economic empowerment—from Economics classroom to community livelihood intervention—represents the actualization of Freire's (1970) vision of education as conscientization: knowledge that does not merely describe economic reality but enables its critical transformation.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

This phenomenological study has rendered visible the complex, resourceful, politically engaged, and morally committed professional practice of secondary Social Studies teachers who teach Economics in resource-constrained classrooms in Eastern Visayas, Philippines. The six themes identified—navigating conceptual abstraction without material support; the double-edged relevance of contextualizing Economics in lived poverty; improvised pedagogical creativity as professional survival; the political and ideological burden of Economics teaching in a marginalized region; professional isolation and absent subject-specific support; and resilience grounded in the moral weight of student economic empowerment—together constitute a portrait of a professional community whose pedagogical sophistication and moral commitment are inversely proportionate to the institutional support and resources they receive.

Three overarching conclusions are warranted. First, resource constraint in Economics teaching is not merely a material problem requiring a materials solution; it is a pedagogical challenge that demands a qualitatively different form of Economics PCK—one grounded in contextually embedded improvisation, community-based pedagogical resources, and the critical mobilization of students' lived economic experiences. The improvisations documented in this study—kinesthetic graph simulations, community market laboratories, paluwagan-based financial simulations, storytelling macroeconomics—represent a locally developed Economics PCK repertoire of considerable pedagogical sophistication that deserves scholarly recognition, systematic documentation, and professional dissemination across the Eastern Visayas teacher community.

Second, teaching Economics in a context of structural poverty creates an irreducibly political and ideological dimension of the teacher's professional responsibility that the current Araling Panlipunan curriculum does not adequately acknowledge or support. The tension between the curriculum's market-oriented Economics framework and the structural critique that intellectually honest teaching in a poverty-affected context demands is not a personal teacher problem; it is a curriculum design problem that requires policy attention. Curriculum developers must create space—and professional development support—for the critical, context-sensitive Economics pedagogy that teachers like those in this study are already attempting, without institutional guidance or protection.

Third, the professional isolation of Economics teachers in Eastern Visayas—their absence from subject-specific collegial communities, professional associations, and subject-focused professional development—represents both a significant waste of the pedagogical innovation documented in this study and a preventable driver of professional frustration and burnout. The extraordinary improvised pedagogical repertoires that these teachers have developed in isolation are unknown to their colleagues in adjacent schools; the challenges they navigate alone could be navigated collectively and more effectively with the kind of subject-specific professional learning community infrastructure that other subjects in the Eastern Visayas division system have access to and Economics does not.

Recommendations

For the Department of Education Regional Office VIII and Division Offices

DepEd Regional Office VIII should establish a formal Economics Teachers' Learning Community within each school division in Eastern Visayas—a structured, division-level subject association specifically for teachers who teach Economics content within Araling Panlipunan or as a Senior High School subject. This community should meet at least twice per semester, facilitated

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by an Economics subject specialist or a teacher recognized for Economics-specific PCK expertise, and should be explicitly focused on the exchange of improvised pedagogical strategies adapted to resource-constrained Eastern Visayas contexts. The extraordinary pedagogical repertoires documented in this study—kinesthetic representations, community-based market simulations, paluwagan financial games, storytelling macroeconomics—should be systematically documented, compiled into a publicly accessible regional Economics PCK resource bank, and made available to all Social Studies teachers in the region through the division learning management system.

DepEd should also develop and deploy a specific resource provisioning initiative for Economics instruction—ensuring that every public secondary school in Eastern Visayas teaching Economics content has access to a minimum set of instructional materials: current (annually updated) regional economic data summaries prepared by the PSA in accessible formats, a set of reusable Economics simulation materials (card-based market games, role-play scenario kits, cooperative economics activity sets), and a printed Economics teacher's supplement specifically addressing improvised pedagogical strategies for resource-constrained classrooms. These materials should be developed in active collaboration with the regional Economics teacher community, incorporating the locally developed PCK repertoire already present among experienced teachers in the region.

For Curriculum Developers and the Bureau of Curriculum Development

The Araling Panlipunan curriculum for Grades 7-10 and the Applied Economics curriculum for SHS should be reviewed and revised to incorporate an explicit critical economics dimension—learning competencies and pedagogical guidance that enable teachers to situate economic concepts within the structural, historical, and political contexts of inequality, regional underdevelopment, and post-disaster economic reconstruction that are directly relevant to Eastern Visayas and comparable Philippine regional contexts. This revision should be accompanied by companion curriculum guides that specifically address the pedagogical strategies most effective for resource-constrained, poverty-contextualized Economics teaching—drawing explicitly on the Freirean tradition of problem-posing education as a foundation for critical economic literacy.

The Teacher's Guides accompanying Economics curriculum documents should include explicit acknowledgment of the resource-constrained contexts in which most Philippine public school Economics teaching actually occurs, providing alternative pedagogical representations for each major concept that assume the absence of technology, limited printed materials, and access only to students' lived community economic experience as instructional resources. The current Teacher's Guides' implicit assumption of well-resourced classroom environments renders them minimally useful for the majority of public school Economics teachers in Eastern Visayas and comparable regions—a curriculum design inadequacy that this study's findings document with empirical specificity.

For Teacher Education Institutions in Eastern Visayas

Pre-service Social Studies teacher education programs should include dedicated preparation for Economics teaching that addresses three dimensions currently absent from most programs: subject-matter preparation in applied Economics with specific attention to the Philippine regional development context, including the political economy of Eastern Visayas; PCK preparation specifically addressing improvised, community-embedded pedagogical strategies for resource-constrained Economics teaching; and critical pedagogy preparation grounded in the Freirean tradition, specifically preparing beginning Economics teachers to navigate the political and ideological tensions of teaching economics in poverty-affected contexts. Programs should include field experience placements in rural and island Eastern Visayas schools, with structured mentoring from cooperating teachers experienced in resource-constrained Economics PCK, to provide beginning teachers with situated models of the improvised, critical, community-based Economics pedagogy that effective teaching in this context requires.

For Regional Education Researchers

This study's findings open several productive research directions specific to the Eastern Visayas context. Documentation studies that systematically catalog the improvised Economics PCK strategies developed by teachers across the region—capturing them in video, written description, and lesson plan format—would create a publicly accessible repository of locally developed pedagogical knowledge that currently exists only in the individual memory of the teachers who developed it. Comparative effectiveness studies examining the learning outcomes of students taught through community-embedded, improvised Economics strategies versus conventional textbook-dependent approaches would provide the empirical evidence base for advocating expanded use of improvised approaches and for advocating more adequate curriculum support for them. Research on the specific critical economics competencies—the capacity to analyze regional economic structures, understand cooperative economics, evaluate government economic programs—that Eastern Visayas secondary school students currently develop (or fail to develop) would identify the specific gaps in economic literacy that more contextualized, critically oriented Economics teaching should address.

For Future Researchers Broadly

Future research should pursue longitudinal designs tracking the professional development of Economics teachers in Eastern Visayas—their PCK development, their evolving management of the curriculum-context ideological tension, and the longer-term career trajectories of teachers who develop rich improvised Economics PCK compared to those who do not. Cross-regional comparative studies examining how Social Studies teachers in other economically disadvantaged Philippine regions navigate similar Economics teaching challenges would reveal whether the phenomena documented in Eastern Visayas are regionally specific or

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more widely generalizable. International comparative studies—particularly in post-colonial African and Southeast Asian contexts where Economics teaching in poverty-affected communities confronts analogous tensions between orthodox economic curricula and structural critique—would situate the Eastern Visayas findings within a broader global literature on critical Economics education in low-income contexts, providing theoretical enrichment for the locally grounded findings of this study.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Semi-Structured Interview Guide

The following questions guided individual in-depth interviews. Questions were posed in Filipino, Waray-Waray, or English based on participant preference. Probing follow-up questions were used throughout.

Teaching Economics in Resource-Constrained Classrooms: Lived Experiences of Secondary Social Studies Teachers

Part I: Background and Teaching Context

1. How long have you been teaching Social Studies, and how did you come to be assigned to teach Economics content? What was your preparation for teaching Economics?
2. Describe your school and classroom environment. What resources do you have available for teaching Economics? What is absent?
3. How would you describe the economic backgrounds and economic experiences of the students you teach Economics to?

Part II: Resource Constraints and Their Experience

4. What specific resource constraints do you experience most acutely when teaching Economics? How do these affect your ability to teach the subject?
5. Has the absence of textbooks, technology, or other standard resources ever caused a specific lesson to fail or fall significantly short of what you hoped? Describe that experience.
6. What resources—however unconventional—do you have access to that you use in your Economics teaching that most teachers in other contexts might not recognize as instructional resources?

Part III: Pedagogical Strategies and Improvisations

7. Describe a specific lesson or activity you have developed for teaching an Economics concept without the standard instructional materials. How did you develop it? How does it work?
8. Which of your improvised Economics teaching strategies has been most effective at helping students genuinely understand economic concepts? Why do you think it works?
9. How do you use your students' economic experiences—their household experiences with money, markets, farming, fishing, remittances—in your Economics teaching?
10. How do you teach concepts that rely heavily on graphs or numerical data when you have limited materials for visual representation?

Part IV: Economics, Poverty, and Critical Pedagogy

11. Have you ever had a moment in your Economics teaching when the contrast between what the textbook presents and what your students' community experiences was particularly striking? Describe that moment.
12. Do you teach Economics critically—connecting economic concepts to the structural conditions that affect your students' communities? How do you approach this, and what challenges does it create?
13. How do you handle the question—which students in Eastern Visayas are likely to ask—of why their communities remain poor despite the economic principles the textbook presents?

Part V: Professional Support, Isolation, and Resilience

14. Do you have colleagues you can consult about Economics teaching challenges—either in your school, your division, or beyond? What does that professional support look like, or what is it like to not have it?
15. What professional development have you received specifically focused on Economics teaching? How useful has it been for the realities of your classroom?
16. What sustains you as an Economics teacher despite the resource constraints and challenges you have described? What keeps you engaged and committed to teaching Economics?
17. If you could give one message to DepEd curriculum developers or to the Secretary of Education about teaching Economics in schools like yours, what would that message be?

Appendix B: Reflective Narrative Prompt

Prompt: Describe, in as much detail as you are comfortable with, a specific lesson or classroom moment involving Economics that you remember most vividly—one that captures something essential about what it is like to teach Economics in your school and your community. Choose a moment that matters to you, whether because it went particularly well, particularly poorly, or because it revealed something about your students, your subject, or yourself that you have carried with you since. Describe what happened: the topic, the classroom, the students, what you did, what you used. Then describe what you felt—during the moment and afterward. Finally, describe what the moment meant to you—what it revealed about Economics teaching in Eastern Visayas that you think deserves to be understood. Write in whatever language feels most natural and true.

Appendix C: Focus Group Discussion Guide

The following questions facilitated the two focus group discussions (Leyte-Biliran cluster and Samar cluster).

1. As a group, what would you identify as the two or three most significant shared challenges of teaching Economics in resource-constrained Eastern Visayas schools?
2. Share one improvised Economics teaching strategy—a simulation, an activity, a teaching approach—that you have developed and that you think is genuinely effective. What is it, and why does it work in your context?
3. How do you collectively think about the relationship between the Economics you are required to teach and the economic realities your students live? Is the curriculum adequate to that reality? What is missing?

Teaching Economics in Resource-Constrained Classrooms: Lived Experiences of Secondary Social Studies Teachers

4. What kind of professional support—what specifically—would make the most difference to your effectiveness as an Economics teacher in Eastern Visayas?

5. When you think about why you continue to teach Economics despite all the challenges you have described, what do you tell yourself? What is the meaning of this work for you?

6. What do you want researchers, policymakers, and curriculum developers to understand about teaching Economics in schools like yours that they probably do not currently understand?

Appendix D: Ethical Clearance and Anonymization Declaration

This study received ethical clearance from the Research Ethics Committee of Leyte Normal University (Protocol No.: LNU-REC-2024-102) prior to the commencement of data collection. Division Superintendents of all participating school divisions and school principals provided written endorsement of the research activities. All fifteen participants provided written informed consent prior to participation, with full disclosure of the study's purpose, voluntary nature, right to withdraw without professional consequence, data handling, and anonymization measures. Participants were explicitly assured that no information shared—including critical perspectives on the curriculum, the adequacy of institutional support, or the political dimensions of their teaching—would be disclosed to school administrators, division offices, or DepEd officials under any circumstances.

All participant identities are anonymized through the codes SST-01 through SST-15 in all research outputs. No participant's name, specific school, exact grade level and subject combination, specific municipality, or any other identifying detail is disclosed. All audio recordings, interview transcripts, and reflective narrative documents are stored in encrypted digital repositories accessible exclusively to the author and will be permanently and securely deleted seven years following the date of this publication. Inquiries regarding the ethical conduct of this research may be directed to the author at gidchris.malenab@lnu.edu.ph.

Appendix E: Researcher Positionality and Reflexivity Statement

The author—Gid Chris Atip Malenab, MA.Ed (Cand), LPT, PMECTTM, BMECTTM, LSSWBTM, CLSSYB—is a Social Studies faculty member and researcher at Leyte Normal University, a licensed professional teacher in Eastern Visayas, and an MA.Ed candidate whose research interests center on Social Studies education, teacher professional knowledge, and educational equity in the Eastern Visayas region. This positionality provides substantial analytical assets for this study: deep contextual familiarity with the Araling Panlipunan curriculum and its Economics content, professional knowledge of the Eastern Visayas school system and its resource constraints, and biographical embeddedness in the region whose educational realities are the study's subject.

These assets generate corresponding reflexive obligations. As an educator in the region studied, the author brings pre-existing perspectives on the adequacy of the Araling Panlipunan Economics curriculum, on the resource constraints of Eastern Visayas schools, and on the political economy of Eastern Visayas's educational underfunding that may not align with all participants' perspectives and that may predispose the author toward particular interpretive conclusions. The author documented these perspectives systematically in a dedicated bracketing journal at the outset of data collection, returning to this documentation at each analytical stage to identify moments where personal professional conviction appeared to be influencing the interpretive direction. Peer debriefing with a colleague in Social Studies curriculum studies at a different institution provided external analytical challenge at two points during the analysis, enriching the interpretive process and challenging several initial interpretive framings that appeared to reflect the author's own professional commitments more than participants' expressed experiences. The author is confident that these reflexivity measures have substantially mitigated—while not eliminating, consistent with the epistemological principles of hermeneutic phenomenology—the risks of positionality-driven interpretive bias, while preserving the analytical richness that informed insider proximity to the phenomenon enables.



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