



PROJECT FILTER: AN INTERVENTION TO MITIGATE THE SPREAD OF FAULTY AND MISLEADING CONTENT IN THE DISCOVERY OF THE PHILIPPINES THROUGH TIKTOK

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**PROJECT FILTER: AN INTERVENTION TO MITIGATE THE SPREAD OF FAULTY
AND MISLEADING CONTENT IN THE DISCOVERY OF THE PHILIPPINES
THROUGH TIKTOK**

An Action Research
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Regional Center, Brgy. Carpenter Hill,
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ABSTRACT

While Tiktok has become a global trend as is still continuously gaining popularity as a top social media platform that provides entertainment for its users. Seemingly, there's this, unexplored part of TikTok that is gradually impacting our educational system without us even noticing. Most TikTok users are students or teenagers who are deemed to be vulnerable to believing any information presented to them without proper evidence.

This study investigates the hidden influence of TikTok on the educational system, particularly concerning the spread of fake news among vulnerable student users. The research introduces "Project Filter," an intervention aimed at promoting critical thinking and fact-checking skills. Focusing on Araling Panlipunan (Social Studies) in the Philippines, the study examines students' attitudes towards distinguishing facts from misinformation.

A descriptive correlational analysis was conducted using quantitative data from a survey questionnaire and qualitative data from in-depth interviews with junior high school students. Findings revealed the prevalence of historical revisionism and students' credulity when encountering information. The study also identified a weak link between students' attitudes and their TikTok viewing time. Ultimately, the study attributes these challenges to inadequate historical knowledge caused by poor academic performance, ineffective teaching, or a combination of both.



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CONTEXT and RATIONALE

In recent years, social media has morphed into a cornerstone in everyone's lives. Social media nowadays are used by students in making learning more convenient which significantly impacted how students learn. The digital world serves as the space where people primarily get the chance to interact, share and learn with just one click, showing its importance in efficiently accessing information and communication especially in the educational field. However, according to Fernando (2016) due to the fact that social media has given ease in information accessibility, students' willingness to spend more time researching and looking up good information has significantly decreased which paved way for the spread of misinformation. Furthermore, as stated by Menczer (2016), as social media were used as channels of information, it is also increasingly attractive to manipulation and abuse.

Tiktok is an application used to create short videos that run for 15 seconds to 3 minutes. According to Cloudfare (as cited by Engoo, 2022), Tiktok became the Most Popular Website in 2021 and its popularity is still rising with 36 million Filipino users (Pangirit, 2022), and most of them are teens (Ngilangil, 2022). Its popularity is very evident among people of all ages specially to students as they easily get hooked on the different kinds of videos they see on the said platform.

With the rise of teenage TikTok users and its data-gathering dependence among them, problems regarding the spread of misleading information has also significantly increased. Hence this study aimed to provide an intervention by mitigating such scenarios.

ACTION RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study sought to understand the following questions:

1. What are the students' attitudes towards distinguishing a fact from a bluff in studying Araling Panlipunan?
2. What is the general attitude of students towards distinguishing a fact from a bluff per demographic description?
3. Is there a relationship between the attitude of the students in distinguishing a fact from a bluff and the viewing time of students on TikTok?
4. What are the challenges faced by students in Araling Panlipunan?

Theoretical Framework

This research is founded on the outcomes of the study of Safieddine, et al (2017) arriving to a conclusion that young users are particularly inclined to believe what they read on social media without adequate verification of the information. The advent of social media as source of news and social events has significantly increased in recent years. However, according to Stecula and Pickup (2021), using social media as a source of news and education is associated with increased possibility of being misinformed, digging problems in History to which contents are most especially prone to this as it is usually a breeding ground for Cognitive biases.



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Confirmation bias is the tendency of the person to support information that reinforces pre-existing beliefs and neglect opposing perspectives and viewpoints other than their own (Muhammed and Mathew, 2022). Social media contents seen in our accounts are based on the users' algorithm neglecting the users to see information that are contrary to their beliefs; this also results to the echo-chamber effect. Echo-chamber effect refers to the repetitive exposure to contents that coincides with one's pre-existing beliefs, increases believability and shareability of content even without verification of the content the users receive.

The findings of the study and the mentioned theories of Safieddine, et al. will be used as a baseline in understanding how misleading information could be easily spread among social media users specifically on Tiktok.

Brief Review of Literature

According to Social Media Management Firm Hootsuite and We Are Social Agency (as cited by Inquirer Philippines, 2022), a typical person aged 16-64 spends 6 and 58 minutes on the internet daily. 70.6 percent of Filipinos said that they spend their time watching online videos as a source of learning, proving that people now heavily rely on the internet for information.

A lot of students gain their knowledge from Tiktok. However, it poses a very alarming issue that it propagates the spread of misinformation as students easily believe what they see in social media without verification. This was supported by Safieddine et., al. (2017) stating that young users are particularly inclined to believe what they read on social media without adequate verification of the information.

Larkin (2009) stated that one of the major problems in Philippine History traces back from the inadequate knowledge of local historical conditions. In the Philippines, a lot of Filipinos easily fall into misleading contents and fake news specially when it comes to discussing its History. Filipinos love to share their point of views on Tiktok and when teens see it, they easily believe and share the content right away. Most people would argue on certain topics on Philippine history using their ancestors' experience as a source without scientific data. According to NewsGuard (as cited by Engoo, 2022), nearly 1 in 5 Tiktok videos automatically suggested by the platform contained misinformation.

Misinformation and fake news are carriers of a much larger threat to society. The danger of misinformation is that people will find such information to be credible. Fake news is thought to be dangerous because people are likely to believe the false information, and because it is spread through people's trusted contacts via social media, it will be similarly trusted by others. Consequently, the presumed threat of fake news is that people will erroneously believe false information they encounter and that they will, in turn, propagate misinformation to others (Metzger, et al., 2020).

Far Eastern University Public Policy Center (FPPC), viewed historical revisionism as one of the country's pressing problems. They've learned that even historical textbooks in the Grades 5 and 6 are filled with inaccuracies. In Paco National High School, students would mostly share what they see on Tiktok and assume that all information given were facts. In one of our discussions, a student shared to the class that the Philippines was then owned by the Tallano Family, Lapu-lapu killed Magellan himself, Tallanos discovered the Philippines and so on.

With the above-mentioned, teachers carry the challenge to make History lessons appealing in the eyes of the young students/pupils. Since time immemorial, there are two factors that hinder students from embracing learning History. *First, the importance of*



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learning history being overlooked by the young generation (Chong and Yeo, 2016) and second, (as cited by Mureeng and du Toit, 2013) is the teacher's ability to present history in a meaningful way. This is why teachers really must gravitate themselves towards the use of Multiple Intelligences in teaching Araling Panlipunan which proved to be moderately effective, as stated by Baliling (2020). Today, we are experiencing the outcome of these two problems. Hence, this study aimed to understand the students' attitudes when it comes to distinguishing a fact from a bluff to serve as a baseline for necessary actions that should be taken later on.

This action research sought to help address modern problems that arose in the digital world such as the spread of fake news and misinformation. As more and more teens dived into the world of social media, it has become a potent channel to swiftly spread fake news in multitude of ways. According to the results of the study conducted by Siar (2021) it is a must to increase awareness, educate children to be analytical at an early stage, make media literacy part of basic education curriculum, and view fight against fake news a civic and social responsibility to fight proliferation of fake news and misinformation in a sustainable manner. One of the respondents of the study have shared that if they see TikTok videos they'd just easily believe it because it's what they see mostly on their *For You Page*. Thus, it needs intervention so students would clearly understand how to distinguish a fact from a bluff in a scholastic way.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher obtained permission to conduct the study through the Division Research Coordinator and was approved by the Schools Division Superintendent. Learners were selected from different grade levels of the school. Consent from the school head was asked prior to the conduct of the study. The learners were oriented to gathering of data and its purpose and procedures were discussed with the learner- respondents. For the qualitative part of the study, an individual in-depth investigation was implored while a structured survey questionnaire was distributed to the respondents for them to answer. The research instrument utilized for the quantitative part of the study was analyzed through a five-point Likert Scale.

| Scale | Scale Interval | Interpretation | Descriptive Interpretation |
|-------|----------------|----------------|--|
| 5 | 4.21-5.0 | Very High | The item described is always present or the condition is very extensive. |
| 4 | 3.41-4.20 | High | The item described is frequently present or extensive. |
| 3 | 2.61-3.40 | Moderate | The item described is sometimes present or the condition is met. |
| 2 | 1.81-2.60 | Rarely | The item described is rarely present or the condition is limited. |



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| | | | |
|---|---------------|-------|---|
| 1 | 1.00- 1.80 | Never | The item described is never present or the condition is very limited. |
|---|---------------|-------|---|

The given variables mentioned above will be analyzed as to their established relationship utilizing the the Correlation Coefficients: Appropriate use and Interpretation by Anesthesia & Analgesia 126(5):1763-1768, May 2018 and the corresponding interpretation of the result.

| Absolute Magnitude of the Observed Correlation Coefficient | Interpretation |
|--|----------------------------|
| 0.00-0.10 | Negligible correlation |
| 0.10-0.39 | Weak Correlation |
| 0.40-0.69 | Moderate Correlation |
| 0.70-0.89 | Strong Correlation |
| 0.90-1.00 | Very Strong Correlation |

SAMPLING, DATA COLLECTION, ETHICAL ISSUES, DATA ANALYSIS

Sampling

The participants of this study are 182 Junior High School TikTok users and were selected through random sampling technique. The respondents are all enrolled in the current school year, 2022-2023. The researcher employed the Slovin's formula as suggested by (Ellen, 2020) to get the sampling size needed to ensure a reasonable accuracy of the results.

Data Collection

The researcher prepared an interview guide that consisted of interview questions and follow-up questions. The individual in-depth discussion was utilized as a primary data collection method. The researcher conducted the study in the Science Laboratory, where there were no people, so the respondents felt at ease to share their thoughts and experiences. Moreover, a self-made questionnaire was used by the researcher to derive a data on the participant's socio-demographic profile and students' general attitude towards distinguishing a fact from a bluff.

Ethical Issues

There were no ethical issues encountered in the conduct of the study.



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Data Analysis

For the Qualitative Part of the Paper, the researcher used Thematic analysis as suggested by Braun and Clark (as cited by Maguire and Delahunt, 2017). Firstly, the researcher had to familiarize herself with the data by rereading multiple times. Secondly, the researcher generated codes to come up with a theme. The initial codes were then organized into themes and lastly, the researcher analyzed and interpreted the generated codes to come up with an all-encompassing theme.

Citing the works of Ramos (2022), the researcher also assured the reliability and validity of the results by conducting the code-recode strategy. The first round where the researcher manually coded the data, and the second, where Microsoft Excel was used to analyze and code the data. The first and second analysis' results were then compared.

Lastly, the researcher utilized data triangulation which involved the use of a variety of data sources, including time, space, and persons, in a study UNAIDS (2010). To do this, the findings were corroborated by a co-analyst to spot for weaknesses or biases of any methods of the data sources consequently increasing the validity and the reliability of the result.

Ultimately, for the Quantitative Part of the paper, the researcher implored a self-made questionnaire where all data were then gathered, analyzed and interpreted through the assistance of the researcher's statistician.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

This part of the study shows the results based on the analysis of the interview transcripts. The researcher still utilized Thematic Analysis to generate themes and interpret the data. As to the consistency of the themes, the researcher adhered to data triangulation.

Table 1. The students' attitudes in distinguishing a fact from a bluff.

| Global Theme | Organizing Theme | Basic Themes |
|------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Historical Revisionism | Skeptic | Textbooks Verification |
| | Credulous | No Verification |
| | Misinformed | Other individual's verification |
| | | Online Platforms' Verification |
| | | Word of Mouth Verification |
| | | Self-verification |

Historical Revisionism

As students failed to discern which of the contents, they see on TikTok is a fact and a bluff, it poses an outcome of Historical Revisionism. The researcher decided to assign this as the global theme considering the organizing themes of this action research are being Skeptic, Credulous and Misinformed. These three revealed that while we are doing our best to be adept with the 21st century learning, the students were not ready for the vast, readily, and easily accessible information into the World Wide Web. This only proves that our country needs to integrate media literacy even in the basic education curriculum and make it a shared civil and social responsibility to stop the spread of fake news and misleading contents as it





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portrays dangers of people finding fake news and misleading contents as credible sources of information.

Skeptic

Students have revealed that they find it difficult to spot a fact from a bluff. However, contrary to the studies of Safieddine et al (2017) that young teens just believe what they see on social media, there are still few students who showed being skeptic about the content presented to them suggesting that they'd check the textbooks first before believing the content of the videos.

Credulous

This study had revealed that most students don't have enough basic knowledge about the Discovery of the Philippines that they fail to discern whether the contents they encounter are facts or bluffs. This was supported by the study conducted by Metzger, et al (2021) stating that information consumers are universally receptive to any information presented to them due to inadequate knowledge. Credulous students become passive diffusers of misinformation, given the fact that they believe whatever was presented to them even without credible evidence thus leading to the proliferation of fake news and misleading contents.

Misinformed

A number of students have admittedly shared that they'd believe the contents presented to them when they resonate with the views of others or with their existing beliefs. This could be explained by the Cognitive bias or Confirmation bias that falls under the Echo-chamber effect. The participants tend to believe the content when it co-insides with what others tell them, what they see on their For You Page and when it reinforces their pre-existing beliefs, neglecting opposing perspectives and standpoints (Muhammed T and Mathew, 2022). Thus, increases the likelihood of spreading misleading content even more.

Table 2. The general attitude of students towards distinguishing a fact from a bluff per demographic description.

| Grade Level | Skeptic | Credulous | Misinformed | Viewing Time |
|-------------|---------|-----------|-------------|--------------|
| 7 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 |
| 8 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 |
| 9 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 |
| 10 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 |

Table 2 presents students' general attitudes based on demographic characteristics. Across all grade levels, the Skeptic attitude had an average score of 3, indicating occasional skepticism. This suggests that students only sometimes question the information they encounter. Similarly, the Credulous attitude also scored an average of 3, indicating occasional passivity and openness to any information. Additionally, the Misinformed attitude received an average score of 3 across all grade levels, suggesting that students occasionally engage in limited fact-checking and rely on sources such as friends, acquaintances, or personal beliefs. These findings align with Metzger et al.'s (2021) research, which highlights the global receptiveness of people towards presented information.





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Table 3. relationship between the attitude of the students in distinguishing a fact from a bluff and the viewing time of students on TikTok.

| Grade Level | Skeptic | Credulous | Misinformed | Viewing Time |
|-------------|---------|-----------|-------------|--------------|
| 7 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 |
| 8 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 |
| 9 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 |
| 10 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 |

Table 3 shows the relationship of the attitude of the students in distinguishing a fact from a bluff and their viewing time on TikTok. Using blahblah it has revealed that there is a weak correlation between the relationship of the attitude of the learner and their viewing time on TikTok.

Table 4. The students' challenges in studying Araling Panlipunan

| Global Theme | Organizing Theme | Basic Themes |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
| Inadequate Historical Knowledge | Poor Academic Performance | Students' Personal Challenges |
| | Poor Teaching Skills | Students' Challenge with the Mode of Teaching |
| | Poor Teaching Skills and Academic Performance | The nature of the Subject-Matter |

Inadequate Historical Knowledge

During the conduct of the study, it has been revealed that students admittedly acknowledge that they lack basic knowledge about Philippine History. In their narrative, they get most of their knowledge from the trends that appear in their respective For You Page, all of which are not credible sources of information. This result is supported by the study conducted by Larkin (2009) stating that one of the major problems in Philippine History traces back from the inadequate knowledge of local historical conditions.

In an online forum held by Far Eastern University Public Policy Center (FPPC), they viewed historical revisionism as a problem and one of which is that even historical textbooks in the Grades 5 and 6 are filled with inaccuracies. Thus, making it harder to get information since little is known about it and if there is information, the primary source, such as books, is not even as reliable.

Poor Academic Performance

The importance of learning History has always been overlooked by the young generation (Chong and Yeo, 2016). In studying History, students are encouraged to remember or recall significant events to have a deeper understanding and make sense of the linkages of the events. Furthermore, more than memorizing and understanding, a deeper analysis and interpretation is needed by the students to rationalize the memorized historical facts, all these are deemed irrelevant by the students. Hence, Chong and Yeo (2016) argued that all of these did not follow the students' interest at the age that History is being taught.





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Poor Teaching Skills

Students have shared that one of their struggles in learning History is the strategy being employed by the teacher. Most of them have shared that once the teacher discusses something in the past, they tend to easily fall asleep. The use of Multiple Intelligences in teaching Araling Panlipunan proved to be moderately effective as stated by Baliling (2020). Her study arrived to the conclusion that capacity building is highly needed for teachers who are teaching Araling Panlipunan. These could also be attributed to the lack of supplementary references and insufficient learning materials.

Poor Academic Performance and Poor Teaching Skills

The nature of the subject-matter alone is perceived by many as tedious, boring, and irrelevant, not to mention the way it was taught to students played a great role on the challenges faced by the students, as cited by Mureeng and du Toit (2013), one of the greatest problems is the teacher's ability to present history in a meaningful way. Considering the above information (1) nature of the subject matter and (2) poor teaching skills, it is in the educators' hands to find ways to make students realize that History is of high significance in understanding our past, our situation in the present and where we are going in the future in a fun, entertaining and insightful way.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study served as an eye-opener to the pressing issues we are taking lightly on the present day. Being information passive or receptive could result into serious social issues such as the proliferation of fake news, misinformation and even Historical Revisionism. Thus, it is paramount that we mitigate this as early as possible before it's too late to teach students how to look for credible sources.

Apparently, the spread of fake news and misinformation are highly attributed to inadequate knowledge of the students and the teachers' challenge to be innovative in curating teaching styles best suited in learning History. As it turns out, students really have a poor foundation when it comes to studying History, consequently making them feel bored during Historical discussions. Based on the discussions, the students admitted that they really can't tell exactly how to spot a fact from a bluff just by themselves and when they try to validate data, it also appears that they don't know which websites and search engines are credible enough to verify the contents they see.

If they use the textbooks, most of them struggle with the outdated information, lack of supplementary materials, or that the textbooks were too shortened for them to truly make sense of the content they were able to see. All these struggles make students feel that History's all too complicated, troublesome, and irrelevant.

Moreover, the results showed that teachers carry the perennial challenge of making History Lessons appealing to young generations who don't see the need to study History. This opens multitude of problems encountered by History teachers such as challenges in finding updated textbooks, reliable supplementary materials, and support from the government to integrate media literacy even in the basic curriculum.

The students shared some points and ways on how they could appreciate it better. Most students have revealed that they enjoy learning History when it is taught with fun





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graphics, animated story telling, relevant sound effects and when it is condensed into short videos to keep their interests. The students also accepted the challenge in trying to appreciate the need for History to be taught to young minds. Through this, our sense of nationalism will be much stronger and meaningful.

Action Plan

Based on the results of the study, the researcher devised a 4-phase plan to mitigate the spread of fake news and misinformation through social media specifically on TikTok.

| Project Filter | | | | | |
|---|--|----------------|----------------|--|--|
| Goal: To mitigate the spread of faulty and misleading content on the Discovery of the Philippines through TikTok. | | | | | |
| Action Step/Description | Person Responsible | Date to begin | Date Due | Resources Required | Desired Outcome |
| 1. Identify the students' attitudes in distinguishing a fact from a bluff. | Researcher | 11/22/2022 | 11/24/2022 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interview guide• Interview Room | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Generate transcript |
| 2. Devise a plan to mitigate the Spread of Faulty and Misleading Content in the Discovery of the Philippines through Tiktok. | Researcher MIL Teacher ComSci Teacher | 11/22/2022 | 11/25/2022 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conference room | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Project Filter acronym |
| 3. Conduct information Drive using Project Filter. Project Filter aims to develop young teens' analytical thinking to help spot a fact from a bluff in a more scholarly way. | Researcher MIL Teacher Resource Speaker (Journalist) | 12/5/2022 | 12/5/2022 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Money• Conference room• Resource speaker | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students know how to spot a fact from a bluff using Project Filter |
| 4. Monitoring | All Advisers | All year-round | All year-round | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluation sheet | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• monitored results• Awareness• Lessened spread of fake news |



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