

The Effect of Songs on Students' Attitude and Achievement

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Abstract: The intentional use of songs in the classroom will set the scene and learning atmosphere to enhance teaching and learning activities. Songs, one of the joyous in life, can be one of the joyous of learning as well. With there strategy the teacher can orchestrate a classroom environment that is rich and resonant and provide learners with the symphony of learning activities and a sound education.

This study aimed to find out the effects of songs as an instructional aid in teaching Social Studies 1 in terms of academic achievement and development of desirable attitude toward the subject. A repeated measure experimental design was used, wherein one class was exposed to two different conditions. Two types of tests were administered. First, the attitude scale test which measure the ideas, feelings and predispositions of students in the learning of Social Studies 1. Second, the achievement tests which was administered as a post-test. The achievement tests exhibited cognitive complexity because it measure knowledge, comprehension and higher order thinking skills. The mean and the standard deviation were used to determine the achievement and attitude scores while the t-test was used to compute the significant difference between the mean achievement scores and the mean attitude scores. It was found out that the attitude and the achievement of the students was better when they were taught with the use of songs. The use of songs improves academic achievement and enhances positive attitude toward a subject.

Keywords: Use of songs, improved achievement, Desirable attitude, book-based teaching, academic achievement.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Philippine Educational System is faced with the fact that there are biases that surrounds the teaching and learning of history through the course in Social Studies. Education planners have tried to refocus their attention to solve it. Solutions range from the evolution of new trends in the content of history to be taught and to the methods and approaches that social studies teachers may adopt.

In fact, the Filipinos share some common preconceived notions and prejudices about history per se. The IBON magazine of facts reveal the following common wrong notions on history: History is studied because it is required and it does not have any probative value to the students; it involves only memorization of facts, events, people and places; it is easy and simple to understand; it is basically literature, except that it is more precise and objective, its main interest is style; it is studied for the sake of Goddess Clio; it is only a method; and the study of history is something you do to earn a bread.

These facts imply some serious problems that should not be neglected. In fact, the unique role of history in the lives of citizens has been supported by educators and professionals. Moreover, it is through history that one understands the present. It cannot be questioned that one could evaluate, interpret and address the present only by identifying it to a meaningful past.

One measure to set the learning atmosphere is through the use of songs as a teaching strategy. All know how song greatly affects one's feelings and energy levels. Without even thinking about it, songs are used to create desired moods, to make us happy, to enjoy movement and dance, to energize, to bring back powerful memories, to help us relax and focus. It helps set the scene for many important experiences.

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The intentional use of songs in the classroom will set the scene and learning atmosphere to enhance teaching and learning activities [1].

Songs, one of the joyous in life, can be one of the joys of learning as well. With this strategy, the researcher believes that teachers can orchestrate a classroom environment that is rich and resonant and provide learners with the symphony of learning opportunities and a sound education [2].

Cognizant to these situations, the researcher being a Social Studies teacher studied on the use of songs that would substitute the traditional method of teaching Social Studies¹ and more importantly, enhance students interest and improve their academic performance.

Statement of the Problem:

The study aimed to find out the effects of using songs as an instructional aid in teaching Social Studies I to freshmen class in terms of academic achievement and development of desirable attitude toward the subject.

Specifically, this study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What are the mean attitude scores of the students in Social Studies I in the control phase and in the experimental phase?
2. What are the mean achievement scores of the students in Social Studies I in the control phase and in the experimental phase?
3. Is there a significant difference between the attitude scores of students in Social Studies I in the control phase and in the experimental phase?
4. Is there a significant difference between the achievement scores of students in Social Studies I in the control phase and in the experimental phase?

Hypotheses:

1. There is no significant difference between the attitude scores of the students in the control phase and in the experimental phase.
2. There is no significant difference between the achievement scores of the students in the control phase and in the experimental phase.

2. THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Social studies deal primarily with Philippine history, past events, culture and government. This nature of Social studies subjects requires the skills of remembering important facts and understanding and appreciation of one's own culture.

In order for learners to develop a positive attitude toward their subject, the activities and the atmosphere in the classroom should be both enjoyable and interesting. This proposition is embodied in the Affective Filter Hypothesis. Basically, it is an explanation of how the affective factors relate to learning. It is particularly appealing to teachers because it provides an explanation to why some learners learn and others do not.

According to this hypothesis, teachers have long recognized the need for students to have a positive attitude with regard to learning. Krashen explains that for optimal learning to occur the affective filter must be weak [3]. A weak affective filter means that a positive attitude towards learning is present. If the affective filter is strong the learner will not seek information, and in turn, not be open for knowledge acquisition. The practical application of the Affective Filter Hypothesis is that teachers must provide a positive atmosphere conducive to learning [4]. Use of songs is one method for achieving a weak affective filter and promoting language learning.

The reasons for using music and songs are obvious: a pleasant change from book-based teaching, a common interest among students and teachers, and an excellent medium for the presentation of lesson [5].

It could be said then that songs in this context are very appropriate to create this atmosphere because they provide a non-threatening atmosphere. Songs are highly motivating and excite learners because of its interesting attack due to its lively tunes and lyrics which could tell stories about history and culture. They also inspire creativity and the use of imagination

in a relaxed atmosphere. Furthermore, songs as a student-centered instructional strategy can generate student interest and curiosity in a topic and are successful in actively involving students in the learning process.

Likewise, learners in order to have a positive attitude towards their subject should develop a great deal of attention and listening ability. These factors contribute effectively in the learning process. Undoubtedly, songs help enhance these skills which reinforce learning. Songs are precious resources to develop and encourage extensive listening. They are good means through which cultural themes are presented effectively [6].

Considering a song’s power to motivate and to develop active listening and involvement which lead to greater attention could favorably change students’ attitude toward their subject. In effect, their achievement in their subject could be greater.

Songs do not only possess these characteristics but they are also deviceful in the sense that they help in retention especially of facts and past events. Retention is a primary skill in learning history and culture. In this aspect, songs effectively enhance this requisite skill. Hamilton (2003) pointed out that songs conjure up images and visions in one’s mind. They are wonderful tools in enhancing long-term memory and for memorizing materials. Music will touch students on an extremely personal level, all the while enhancing memory [7]. The information that is meaningful or emotionally charged is then, of course, more likely to be remembered. For them, songs are very effective for cumulative and long-term learning [8].

In this sense, it could be said that songs help learners retain new information, likewise, to have a greater achievement.

From this analysis, a paradigm is developed which is shown in Figure 1. It shows that songs with its unique characteristics to enhance the requisite skills of learning history and culture could positively affect students’ attitude and achievement.

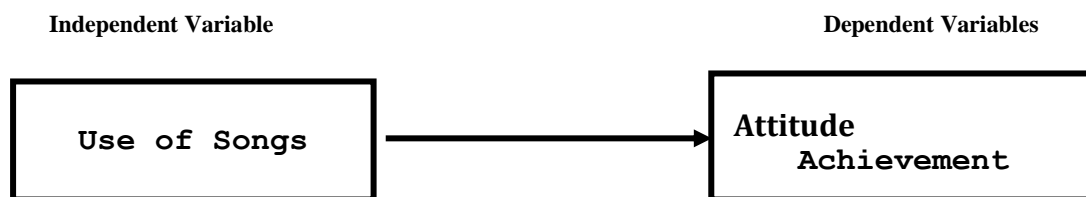


Figure 1. Paradigm of the Study

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design:

The study made used of the Repeated Measure Experimental Design. This design was used because only one class was involved. The single class was exposed to two different conditions. In effect, the single class served as the control group when taught without the use of songs and as an experimental group when taught with the use of songs. Apparently, the subjects of the study were measured twice.

Locale of the Study:

The study was conducted in Apayao State College-Laboratory High School of Apayao Province.

Research Instruments:

Two types of tests were administered. First, the Attitude Scale Test was given as a post-test both in the control phase and experimental phase. The attitude test was given to determine the attitude of the students toward Social Studies I. The Attitude Scale Test that was adopted in this study is the same attitude test used by Tangan (1998) and Castillo (1997) in their experimental studies. The Attitude Scale test measured the ideas, feelings and predispositions of the students in the learning of Social Studies I [9].

Second, the achievement tests, which was the periodic tests, was administered as a post - tests to the subjects after the first grading period (control phase) and second grading period (experimental phase). The test which was prepared by the researcher was given to determine the effect of songs in their achievement in Social Studies I. The achievement tests were multiple-choice questions. It consisted 80 items covering lessons in the First Grading and Second Grading respectively.

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The test exhibited cognitive complexity because it measured the following skills: knowledge, comprehension, and high order thinking skills.

Research Procedure:
Preliminary Phase:

The Philippine Secondary Schools Learning Competencies (PSSLC) prescribed by the Department of Education for public high schools was used to identify the concepts or subject matters in the second grading period where related songs were used.

Songs were gathered from different sources like cassette tapes, songhits, mp3's, cd's, vcd's, dvd's, television and internet popularized by different artists both local and foreign.

Simultaneously with the selection of songs was the adaptation of Attitude Scale Test and the development of the Achievement tests. Subject experts were consulted to evaluate and validate the content of the tests.

After the development of the Achievement Tests, it was subjected for validation to first year students of Apayao Science High School, a neighboring school.

Control Phase:

This phase was conducted during the first grading period. The subject was taught without the use of songs.

Post-Control Phase:

The validated Achievement Tests and Attitude Scale Test were given toward the end of the First Grading Period.

Experimental Phase:

This phase was conducted during the second grading period. Songs were utilized as a motivation, background music, for reflection, analysis, summarizing the lesson, and evaluation in teaching the identified subject matters to the subjects. There were 20 songs used as a strategy in teaching Social Studies I during the experimental phase. However, not all lessons in the Second Grading Period was presented to the students using songs because teaching any subject entails variation in strategy.

Post-Experimental Phase:

The Attitude and Achievement tests were administered after the experimental period as posttests. The scores of the students in the Attitude Scale Inventory and Achievement Test both in the first grading period (control phase) and second grading period (experimental phase) were compared to determine whether they performed better either in the control period (without songs) or in the experimental phase (with the use of songs) and to determine if songs have positively affected students' attitude toward Social Studies I as a subject.

Method of Analysis:

Mean and the standard deviation were used in determining and analyzing the achievement and attitude scores of the subjects both in the control and experimental phases.

T-test was also used to compute the significant difference between the mean achievement scores and mean attitude scores in the first (control phase) and second grading (experimental phase) periods respectively.

The weighted mean was also used to determine the significant difference between the mean attitude scores in the control phase and experimental phase.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1. Attitude Mean Scores of the Students in the Control Phase and in the Experimental Phase

Phase	Mean	SD
Control	54.76	12.86
Experimental	60.12	5.73

As seen in table 1, the students have a higher attitude mean score of 60.12 in the experimental phase than in the control phase which is 54.76. This means that students have better attitude toward Social Studies I when taught with the use of songs than taught without the use of songs. The students were more attentive, more participative and delightful during the experimental phase.

The children are easily captivated by the music in their environment. They respond spontaneously to a variety of tempos, from gentle swaying to drum beating and naturally memorizing lyrics from popular songs and jingles [10]. The enthusiasm displayed by her students allows music to be a powerful medium through which literacy skills are taught and reinforced.

Table 2. Achievement Mean Scores of Students in Araling Panlipunan I in the Control Phase and in the Experimental Phase

Phase	Mean	SD
Control	49.88	11.53
Experimental	55.00	9.43

The table shows that the students have a higher achievement mean score which is 55.00 in the experimental phase than in the control phase which is 49.88. This means that students when taught with songs in Social Studies I performed better than when taught without the use of songs.

They suggested that math and science concepts though difficult to teach can be learned using spatial-temporal reasoning methods [11]. Songs can enhance the hardware for the spatial-temporal reasoning in the brain. Songs can develop the skill areas of reading, writing, listening and speaking [12].

Table 3. Difference of the Attitude Mean Scores of the Students in Social Studies 1

Phase	N	Mean	t-value	Computed t	Decision
Control	25	54.76	1.684	1.907**	Reject Ho
Experimental	25	60.12			

** significant at .05 level

Looking at the table, it reveals that there is a significant difference between the attitude mean scores of the students in the control phase and experimental phase. This means that the high attitude mean score of the students in the experimental period is attributed to the use of an intervention, the use of songs. This implies that teaching Social Studies I with the use of songs changes favorably the attitude of the students toward the subject. Also, songs reinforce positive attitude toward Social Studies subjects.

This result is proved that song and music can entertain and relax the learners while they are learning or practicing a structure, and they often eliminate the students' negative attitude towards learning [13].

Also, Udarbe and Casauay (1998) concluded in their study that selected songs can be used as a resource materials for they contain core and related values development that the students' sing before and after their classes [14].

Moreover, Brilliantes (1990) when she used songs in enriching lessons in Social Studies I and Character Education subjects, she observed that her students developed moral and spiritual values and their knowledge about culture was enriched [15].

Table 4. Difference of the Achievement Mean Scores of the Students in Social Studies 1

Phase	N	Mean	t-value	Computed t	Decision
Control	25	49.88	1.684	1.718**	Reject Ho
Experimental	25	55.00			

** significant at .05 level

The results reveal that there is a significant difference between the achievement mean scores of the students in the control phase and in the experimental phase. This confirms that students had higher achievement when they were taught with the use of songs than when they were taught without the use of songs. In addition, teaching with the use of songs has a positive effect on student's achievement in Social Studies I.

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The finding is proven by the study made by Williams (2002). He found out that song, chants and raps improved memory of contents, facts and details through rhyme, rhythm and melody [16]. Teaching these to students or having them write their own is a terrific memory tool. He also added that songs empower students, help them to acquire insights, knowledge and critical thinking skills. The method of using songs designed to create very different but equally active learning environment.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The use of songs in teaching improves academic achievement and enhances positive attitude toward Social Studies I. When exposed to songs, students learn better and develop wholesome attitude toward a subject.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based from the findings and conclusions the following are recommended:

Songs that contain core and related values, should be used as relevant resource materials in teaching Social Studies I.

There should be careful and wise use of songs to fit the sensitivities of the students and the subject's learning competencies.

An in-service training should be conducted to showcase the use of songs as a teaching strategy for its adaptability.

Local songs (even in vernacular) can be used for reinforcing interests, values and even the teaching of knowledge in Social Studies I.

The school's library should have a collection of songs of different themes to reinforce teaching.

Collection of thematic songs may form important part of every School's Learning Resource Center.

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