

Strategies of Bridging the Gap Created by Antipathy

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Abstract

This study, titled “*Strategies of Bridging the Gap Created by Antipathy*”, examined how values-based educational strategies help address negative attitudes, emotional distance, and disengagement among students in school settings. The study aimed to identify effective situational, relational, and contextual strategies that promote empathy, respect, cooperation, and positive relationships within the educational environment. A qualitative research design was employed using in-depth interviews with twenty-seven teacher participants from Lakandula High School who were selected through purposive sampling. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis to determine recurring patterns and themes.

The findings revealed that teachers recognized the significant role of values education in fostering holistic student development, promoting positive school culture, and reducing antipathy among learners. Teachers emphasized strategies such as integrating values education across subject areas, modeling ethical behavior, encouraging empathy and respect, adapting instruction to learners’ diverse needs, and creating safe and inclusive classroom environments. The study further highlighted the importance of collaboration among teachers, parents, and school administrators in strengthening values formation.

The study concluded that a holistic and values-driven approach is essential in bridging antipathy in schools. It underscores the importance of integrating moral formation with academic learning to cultivate compassionate, respectful, and socially responsible individuals.

Keywords: Values Education, Antipathy, Teaching Strategies, Holistic Development, Inclusive Education

1. Introduction

Education plays a vital role in shaping the moral, intellectual, emotional, and social development of learners. Schools are not only institutions for academic learning but also environments where values, attitudes, and behaviors are developed. However, modern educational settings increasingly face challenges related to antipathy, negative attitudes, emotional disconnection, lack of empathy, and disengagement among students. These issues affect classroom relationships, discipline, and the overall learning environment.

Values education has been recognized as an essential component in promoting respect, empathy, responsibility, and cooperation among learners. According to previous studies, values education contributes to holistic development by guiding students toward ethical behaviour and positive social interaction. Teachers play a significant role in this process because they serve not only as facilitators of knowledge but also as role models who influence students’ character formation.

The increasing influence of modernization, technology, social media, and individualistic behaviour has created challenges in sustaining positive values among students. Many educators observe that learners today experience difficulties in building meaningful relationships and demonstrating moral responsibility. As a result, schools must strengthen values education to help bridge the gap created by antipathy.

This study explored the strategies used by teachers to reduce antipathy and promote positive relationships within the school environment. Specifically, it focused on situational, relational, and contextual strategies applied by teachers in integrating values education into their teaching practices. The findings of this study may contribute to improving instructional approaches and strengthening moral formation programs in schools.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design, specifically utilizing in-depth interviews to explore teachers' strategies in bridging the gap created by antipathy in the teaching of Values Education. Qualitative research was deemed appropriate because it enabled the researcher to gather rich, detailed, and meaningful descriptions of the participants' experiences, perceptions, and practices. The study focused on understanding the phenomenon within its natural setting and answering the "how" and "why" questions surrounding the integration of Values Education. Open-ended, semi-structured interview questions allowed participants to freely express their insights, resulting in comprehensive data for thematic analysis.

2.2 Research Setting and Documentary Sources

The study was conducted at Lakandula High School, a public secondary school with approximately 185 teachers and 5,400 learners. Established in 1962, the school has been serving the community for more than six decades. The school was selected because it provided a suitable environment where teachers from different academic departments integrate Values Education into their classroom instruction.

The documentary sources consisted of:

- Approved research proposal and institutional permission documents
- Signed informed consent forms
- Semi-structured interview guide
- Audio recordings of the interviews
- Verbatim interview transcripts
- Field notes taken during the interview sessions and
- Coding matrices, thematic analysis worksheets, and researcher memos used during data analysis.

2.3 Selection of Documents

The documents included in the study were selected based on their direct relevance to the research objectives. Only documents generated during the research process were utilized. These included completed informed consent forms, interview transcripts, audio recordings, field notes, and thematic coding matrices. Documents that were incomplete, unrelated to the study, or lacked participant consent were excluded from the analysis. All research documents were securely stored and treated with strict confidentiality throughout the conduct of the study.

2.4 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher first secured permission from the appropriate authorities before conducting the study. Qualified participants were selected through purposive sampling using the following criteria:

- They must be teachers of Lakandula High School.
- They must represent their respective academic departments; and
- They must be integrating Values Education in their teaching.

A total of 27 teachers participated in the study.

Prior to data collection, informed consent was obtained from each participant after explaining the purpose, significance, procedures, confidentiality measures, voluntary participation, and right to withdraw from the study at any time. Face-to-face, semi-structured, in-depth interviews were then conducted in a private setting to ensure confidentiality. With the participants' permission, all interviews were audio-recorded while field notes were simultaneously documented. After each interview, recordings were transcribed verbatim, and participants were given the opportunity to review and validate the accuracy of their transcripts through member checking.

2.5 Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis following Creswell (2017). The analysis involved six systematic phases:

1. Familiarization with the Data – Interview recordings were transcribed verbatim, repeatedly read, and validated by the participants.
2. Generating Initial Codes – Significant statements were identified and coded with the assistance of experts to strengthen triangulation.
3. Searching for Themes – Related codes were grouped into categories to identify emerging themes.
4. Reviewing Themes – Themes were compared with the original data to ensure consistency, relevance, and accuracy.
5. Defining and Naming Themes – Each theme was clearly described and supported by representative participant quotations.
6. Producing the Report – The final themes were presented together with translated verbatim responses and corresponding interpretations aligned with the research questions.

2.6 Trustworthiness of the Study

To ensure the rigor and trustworthiness of the study, several qualitative validation strategies were employed.

Credibility was established through prolonged engagement with the data, member checking (respondent validation), and expert-assisted coding.

Dependability was maintained by documenting every stage of the research process, including data collection, transcription, coding, and analysis.

Confirmability was achieved through data triangulation, consultation with qualitative research experts, and maintaining an audit trail of coding decisions.

Transferability was supported by providing rich descriptions of the research setting, participants, research procedures, and thematic findings, allowing future researchers to determine the applicability of the results in similar contexts.

2.7 Ethical Considerations

The researcher adhered to fundamental ethical principles throughout the conduct of the study.

Participants were selected fairly using established inclusion criteria, ensuring that no individual was favored or discriminated against.

Participation was entirely voluntary. Participants were fully informed about the study through the informed consent process and retained the right to withdraw at any point without penalty.

The researcher prioritized the welfare of the participants by conducting interviews in a private environment, minimizing possible risks, and ensuring that the study's benefits outweighed any potential discomfort.

Participants' identities were protected through the use of pseudonyms or code names. Interview recordings, transcripts, and personal information were securely stored and accessed only by the researcher. All findings were reported without revealing participants' identities.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Profile of the Teacher Respondents

Table 1
Frequency Distribution of the Teacher Respondents' Profile

Profile	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
25 – 35 years old	20	74.1%
36 – 45 years old	4	14.8%
46 – 55 years old	3	11.1%
Total	27	100%
Sex		
Male	9	33.3%
Female	18	66.7%
Total	27	100%
Years of Service		
Less than 5 years	13	48.1%
5–10 years	8	29.6%
11–15 years	2	7.4%

16–20 years	2	7.4%
21–25 years	1	3.7%
More than 25 years	1	3.7%
Total	27	100%
Seminars Attended		
Less than 5 seminars	14	51.9%
5-10 seminars	9	33.3%
More than 10 seminars	4	14.8%
Total	27	100%
Educational Attainment		
Bachelor's Degree Holder	10	37%
Bachelor's Degree Holder with Master's Unit	15	55.6%
Master's Degree Holder	1	3.7%
Master's Degree with Doctoral Units	1	3.7%
Total	27	100%
Position		
Teacher 1	20	74%
Teacher 2	3	11.1%
Teacher 3	1	3.7%
Master Teacher 1	3	11.1%
Total	27	100%

The respondents were predominantly female teachers aged 25–35 years old, occupying Teacher I positions and pursuing graduate studies. Most had less than five years of teaching experience, indicating a relatively young teaching workforce that remains actively engaged in professional growth. These characteristics suggest that the participants possess current pedagogical knowledge while continuously improving their instructional competencies through graduate education and professional development.

3.2. Responses of the Teacher Respondents on the Strategies to Bridge the Gap Created by Antipathy in terms of Situational

Table 2
Emerging Themes on Situational Strategies to Bridge the Gap Created by Antipathy

Major Theme	Description	Representative Strategies
Values Education for Holistic Student Development	Development of moral, emotional, social, and academic growth	Teaching respect, integrity, empathy, responsibility
Values Education for Promoting Positive School Culture	Establishing harmonious relationships and ethical behavior	Character education, cooperation, tolerance, discipline
Integration of Values Education Across the Curriculum	Embedding values in different learning areas	Ethical discussions, role-playing, service learning
Overcoming Challenges in Implementation	Addressing limited time, resources, and stakeholder resistance	Collaboration, use of online resources, curriculum integration

The findings revealed that participants viewed values education as fundamental to learners' holistic development. Teachers emphasized that academic excellence alone is insufficient without the cultivation of integrity, empathy, respect, and responsibility. They consistently integrated ethical discussions, community engagement, role-playing, and reflective activities across different learning areas to strengthen students' moral reasoning.

Teachers also acknowledged several implementation challenges, including insufficient instructional resources, limited classroom time, and varying parental support. Nevertheless, participants demonstrated adaptability by integrating values instruction into regular lessons and collaborating with colleagues to maximize available resources. These findings suggest that situational strategies effectively reduce antipathy by providing meaningful learning experiences that encourage ethical behavior and responsible decision-making.

3.3. Responses of the Teacher Respondents on the Strategies to Bridge the Gap Created by Antipathy in terms of Relational

Table 3
Emerging Themes on Relational Strategies to Bridge the Gap Created by Antipathy

Major Theme	Description	Representative Strategies
Building Positive Teacher–Student Relationships	Establishing trust and mutual respect	Open communication, empathy, active listening
Respecting Learner Diversity	Addressing individual differences	Differentiated instruction, inclusive teaching
Modeling Positive Behavior	Teachers serving as role models	Fairness, patience, integrity, compassion
Strengthening Social-Emotional Learning	Developing interpersonal competencies	Collaboration, reflection, peer interaction

Relational strategies highlighted the importance of establishing meaningful teacher-student relationships. Participants believed that empathy, trust, and consistent communication encourage learners to participate actively in the classroom while reducing emotional barriers caused by antipathy.

Teachers further recognized the importance of accommodating students' diverse backgrounds, learning abilities, and personal experiences through differentiated instruction and inclusive practices. By modeling desirable values and maintaining positive interpersonal relationships, teachers create emotionally safe learning environments where learners develop stronger social-emotional competencies and greater respect for others.

3.4. Responses of the Teacher Respondents on the Strategies to Bridge the Gap Created by Antipathy in terms of Contextual

Table 4
Emerging Themes on Contextual Strategies to Bridge the Gap Created by Antipathy

Major Theme	Description	Representative Strategies
Creating Inclusive School Environment	Building a safe and respectful learning community	Inclusive policies, emotional support
Strengthening School–Home–Community Partnership	Collaborative responsibility for values formation	Parent involvement, community outreach

Promoting Positive School Climate	Encouraging cooperation and belongingness	School programs, peer collaboration
Supporting Holistic Development	Reinforcing values through school culture	Student leadership, civic engagement

The contextual findings emphasized that bridging antipathy extends beyond classroom instruction. Participants identified the school environment as a significant factor influencing learners' attitudes, behaviors, and relationships. Inclusive school policies, supportive classroom climates, and opportunities for collaboration contribute to a stronger sense of belonging among students.

Teachers likewise highlighted the importance of involving parents and community stakeholders in reinforcing values education. School-community partnerships, leadership opportunities, and outreach programs provide authentic experiences that allow students to practice empathy, cooperation, and civic responsibility. These contextual supports strengthen values formation and help cultivate a positive and compassionate school culture.

Summary of the Results

Research Objective	Major Findings
Situational Strategies	Values education promotes holistic development, ethical behavior, and interdisciplinary learning despite instructional challenges.
Relational Strategies	Positive teacher-student relationships, empathy, respect, and differentiated instruction reduce antipathy and improve learner engagement.
Contextual Strategies	Inclusive school environments and strong collaboration among teachers, parents, and the community reinforce values formation and strengthen positive school culture.

3.5 Discussion of Major Findings

The findings demonstrate that bridging the gap created by antipathy requires an integrated approach involving situational, relational, and contextual strategies. Teachers consistently emphasized that values education should extend beyond subject content and become an integral component of every learning experience. Their practices align with Milton Rokeach's Theory of Human Values, which posits that enduring values guide human attitudes and behaviors. By modeling ethical conduct, fostering positive relationships, and creating supportive learning environments, teachers effectively promote empathy, respect, cooperation, and responsible citizenship. Consequently, values education emerges as a powerful mechanism for reducing antipathy and cultivating a harmonious, inclusive, and morally grounded educational community.

4. Conclusion

This study concludes that bridging the gap created by antipathy in educational settings requires a comprehensive and values-driven approach that addresses the cognitive, emotional, and social dimensions of learners. The findings revealed that teachers recognize Values Education as an essential component in cultivating respect, empathy, responsibility, cooperation, and ethical decision-making among students. These

values serve as the foundation for reducing negative attitudes, strengthening interpersonal relationships, and promoting harmonious classroom interactions.

The emerging themes demonstrated that effective strategies for addressing antipathy extend beyond classroom instruction. Situational strategies emphasized integrating values education into daily teaching and learning experiences to promote holistic student development. Relational strategies highlighted the importance of differentiated instruction, cultural responsiveness, empathy, and positive teacher–student relationships in creating inclusive learning environments. Contextual strategies underscored the need for safe, supportive, and collaborative school communities where teachers, parents, and school leaders work together to reinforce positive values and social-emotional learning.

Furthermore, the study affirms that teachers play a critical role as models of moral and ethical behavior. Their instructional practices, interpersonal relationships, and commitment to creating inclusive classrooms significantly influence students' values formation and contribute to minimizing antipathy. Despite challenges such as limited instructional time, insufficient resources, varying learner needs, and differing stakeholder perspectives, teachers continuously adapt their strategies to ensure that values education remains meaningful and relevant.

Overall, the study establishes that Values Education is not merely an academic subject but a transformative educational process that fosters character formation, strengthens relationships, and creates a positive school culture. Bridging antipathy therefore requires sustained collaboration among educators, school leaders, parents, and the community to nurture learners who are morally grounded, socially responsible, and committed to peaceful coexistence.

Practical Implications

The findings of this study provide several practical implications for educational practice, policy, and future professional development.

Teachers may strengthen the integration of values education across all learning areas by embedding activities that promote empathy, respect, cooperation, ethical decision-making, and reflective thinking. They should continue utilizing differentiated instruction, collaborative learning, role-playing, real-life situations, and service-learning activities to address learners' diverse backgrounds and reduce antipathy within the classroom.

School leaders may develop policies and programs that cultivate a positive school climate by promoting inclusive practices, social-emotional learning, restorative approaches to conflict resolution, and collaborative partnerships among teachers. Professional development programs focusing on values integration, classroom management, differentiated instruction, and culturally responsive pedagogy should also be prioritized.

The findings support strengthening the implementation of Values Education by providing updated instructional resources, teacher training, and curriculum enrichment that integrate character education across subject areas. DepEd may also encourage schools to implement programs that reinforce empathy, inclusivity, citizenship, and positive school culture.

Parents and community stakeholders should actively collaborate with schools in reinforcing positive values through consistent guidance, open communication, and participation in school activities. A strong partnership

between home and school enhances learners' character development and helps sustain positive behaviors beyond the classroom.

Students may benefit from learning environments that emphasize respect, empathy, collaboration, and responsible decision-making. Such environments foster positive peer relationships, strengthen emotional well-being, reduce conflicts, and encourage learners to become active contributors to a caring and inclusive school community.

Future studies may expand this research by involving participants from different schools, educational levels, or regions to validate and enrich the findings. Researchers may also investigate the effectiveness of specific values-based interventions or examine the long-term impact of values education on student behavior, school climate, and social-emotional development.

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