

Exploring the Impact of Learners' Engagement in Social Studies on Academic Performance

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Abstract. This quantitative descriptive-correlational study examined the factors influencing learners' engagement in Social Studies and their impact on academic performance among Grade 4 students at Tamnag Central Elementary School in Region XII, Philippines. The research was guided by Astin's Student Involvement Theory and Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory, focusing on teacher-related factors, culturally responsive pedagogy, and the learning environment as key variables. A researcher-made survey questionnaire was utilized to collect data from 140 student respondents. The instrument underwent expert validation and pilot testing, resulting in a high reliability coefficient 0.998. Descriptive statistics were employed to determine the extent of influence of each factor, while Pearson's r was used to examine the relationship between learner engagement and academic performance. Findings revealed that all three factors had varying degrees of influence on learners' engagement, and a significant positive correlation was identified between engagement and students' grade point average in Social Studies. The study concludes that higher engagement, driven by effective teaching strategies, inclusive pedagogy, and supportive learning environments, leads to better academic outcomes. These results suggest that enhancing these key areas can promote meaningful engagement and improved performance, particularly in socio-economically diverse regions. The study offers valuable insights for educators, school administrators, curriculum developers, and future researchers aiming to strengthen Social Studies education in elementary schools.

Keywords: Learner engagement; Social studies; Academic performance; Teacher-related factors; Culturally responsive pedagogy; Learning environment.

1.0 Introduction

Learner engagement is critical in academic success, particularly in subjects like Social Studies, where students are expected to analyze historical developments, understand societal structures, and explore civic responsibilities. Engagement in this context involves behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions, all of which significantly influence student outcomes (Wang & Degol, 2014). Studies have consistently shown that highly engaged students demonstrate stronger academic performance, while disengaged students often struggle to meet learning goals (Sinatra et al., 2015; Martin, 2023). In Social Studies education, the depth of understanding required for historical analysis and civic discourse necessitates surface-level attention and sustained engagement at all levels.

The global educational landscape emphasizes the importance of engagement-enhancing instructional strategies. Active learning methods, such as inquiry-based learning, group collaboration, and experiential activities, have boosted interest and retention in Social Studies classrooms. Shernoff et al. (2016) found that students engaged through interactive approaches tend to be more motivated, as these methods foster critical thinking and real-world application. Social, cultural, and pedagogical elements—including parental involvement—further shape learners' motivation and participation (Li & Lerner, 2018). These multifaceted influences reflect a growing need to consider how broader contextual variables interact with classroom instruction to affect learner engagement.

In Southeast Asia, particularly in the Philippines, Social Studies engagement is increasingly shaped by community-based learning, digital platforms, and culturally grounded content. Mendoza (2023) emphasized that localized and interactive approaches, such as field trips, cultural discussions, and community immersion, make Social Studies more relevant and engaging for Filipino learners. These strategies help bridge the gap between textbook knowledge and lived experience, allowing students to connect personally with history, governance, and social development topics. However, the use of digital media presents a dual challenge. While platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok can support learning through educational content, they also pose risks such as distraction and spreading misinformation (Ramirez, 2022). This underscores the need to understand how digital influencers and content creators impact engagement, either positively, by providing relatable content, or negatively, by leading students away from structured academic objectives (De Leon & Santos, 2021).

Socioeconomic disparities further complicate the engagement landscape. In rural areas of Region XII, many learners face limited access to devices, internet connectivity, and instructional support, leading to lower participation in digital and blended learning formats. The COVID-19 pandemic widened this divide, highlighting structural inequalities affecting learner engagement, particularly among marginalized groups (Ramirez, 2022). These barriers necessitate pedagogical approaches that are inclusive, adaptive, and sensitive to the realities of learners in both rural and urban settings.

Moreover, international studies have shown that experiential and participatory teaching strategies—such as debates, simulations, and role-playing—have yielded positive outcomes in Social Studies engagement, particularly in countries like Finland and Sweden (Fredricks et al., 2016). Similarly, strong parental involvement, as seen in educational systems in South Korea and Japan, significantly boosts student engagement and academic performance (Li & Lerner, 2018). These examples highlight that cultural and systemic support mechanisms are essential in sustaining engagement beyond the classroom walls.

Despite the wealth of literature on engagement, there remain critical gaps in understanding how younger learners, particularly those in elementary school, engage with Social Studies content. Much of the research focuses on secondary or tertiary levels, yet elementary learners may require different strategies due to their developmental stages and learning needs (Wang & Degol, 2014). In addition, the role of digital influencers and culturally embedded content in shaping Social Studies engagement at the elementary level is still underexplored, even though these factors are becoming increasingly relevant in students' day-to-day learning environments (Wang et al., 2021; Joo & Choi, 2022).

There is also a scarcity of studies examining how parental support, pedagogical practices, and digital environments combine to affect Social Studies engagement, especially in socio-economically diverse regions like Region XII. These interconnected factors may offer practical insights into how schools can design more inclusive and effective engagement strategies. Furthermore, long-term studies that explore how early engagement influences future academic success in Social Studies are limited (Wang & Degol, 2014), presenting opportunities for further research.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study used a quantitative research design, specifically the descriptive-correlational method. This design was suited to describe and correlate the influence of the learners' engagement in Araling Panlipunan on the learners' academic performance. Quantitative research design was a design that was used to answer scientific research questions through the analysis of numerical data (Rana et al., 2021). This approach was suited to

weighing the strengths and weaknesses of evidence effectiveness, quantifying effect sizes. In contrast, the researcher sought to describe situations, establish relationships between variables, and sometimes attempt to explain causal relationships between variables. The researcher described the variables, in this case, the extent to which the factors influenced learners' engagement in Social Studies, the level of learners' academic performance, and correlated the extent to which factors influencing learners' engagement and their academic performance in Social Studies. Hence, variables could not be separated from the hypothesis, as variables determined whether there was a significant relationship (Adedoyin, 2020).

2.2 Research Respondents

The respondents of the study were all 140 Grade 4 students enrolled at Tamnag Central Elementary School during the academic year 2024–2025. The study employed a total enumeration sampling technique, wherein the entire population of Grade 4 students served as the sample. This technique was chosen to ensure comprehensive coverage of the target group and enhance the findings' reliability and generalizability within the school context. The inclusion criteria consisted of Grade 4 students who were officially enrolled, had complete academic records, and whose parents or guardians provided informed consent. Students who had transferred in or out during the academic year or whose academic records were incomplete were excluded from the study. The use of total enumeration ensured that every eligible learner was represented in the data collection process, thus strengthening the validity of the results.

2.3 Research Instrument

The research instrument for this study was administered through a researcher-made survey questionnaire, designed to collect quantitative data and structured to capture both descriptive and correlational information. It focused on the extent of factors that influence learners' engagement, specifically teacher-related factors, culturally responsive pedagogy, and the learning environment in Social Studies. The researcher used a 5-point Likert scale to rate the extent of the factors that influence learners' engagement. To ensure the validity and reliability of the instrument, it was validated by master teachers with expertise in elementary education. It underwent pilot testing to assess its clarity, relevance, and effectiveness in measuring the intended variables. The data gathered from the pilot testing underwent validity and reliability testing, which resulted in a reliability coefficient of 0.998, indicating excellent internal consistency.

2.4 Data Collection

The data gathering procedure began with a thorough preparation phase. First, a structured questionnaire was developed, incorporating both closed and open-ended questions to collect quantitative and qualitative data on demographic information, program participation, perceived effects, and challenges faced by beneficiaries. This questionnaire was then pilot-tested with a small group of beneficiaries (approximately 30 participants) to identify any ambiguities or issues in the questions, allowing for feedback to refine the instrument for clarity and relevance. Following this, the research proposal and the survey instrument were submitted to the ethical review board to ensure the study met ethical standards for participant rights and data confidentiality. Once ethical approval was granted, informed consent forms were prepared to explain the study's purpose, voluntary nature, and confidentiality measures to participants.

The next phase involved recruiting enumerators and training a team to administer the survey effectively. The enumerators were trained in the use of the questionnaire, data collection techniques, and ethical considerations, particularly in obtaining informed consent from participants. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to select 617 beneficiaries from 11 barangays in Sultan Kudarat, based on a total beneficiary count of 46,852, to ensure a representative sample across different demographics and socio-economic backgrounds. Data was collected through face-to-face interviews, where enumerators met selected beneficiaries in their homes or community centers. Each interview lasted 30-45 minutes, providing ample time for participants to respond to all questions. Enumerators offered assistance and clarification, minimizing misunderstandings and improving data quality. Supervisors were assigned to oversee data collection, ensuring that enumerators adhered to protocols and ethical standards, with regular check-ins to address any challenges.

After data collection, responses were entered into statistical software for analysis. Double data entry was performed to minimize errors and ensure data accuracy, followed by a data cleaning process to review the dataset for completeness and consistency, addressing any discrepancies or missing data. Finally, a thorough

dataset review was conducted to confirm data accuracy, and descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were performed to interpret the findings.

2.5 Data Analysis

This study utilized descriptive correlational statistics. Descriptive correlational methods were employed to identify the extent to which factors influenced learners' engagement and the level of learners' academic performance in Social Studies. This included calculating measures such as mean, median, and standard deviation for the variables related to factors influencing learners' engagement. The correlation statistic was used to determine the relationship between the factors influencing learners' engagement and their academic performance in Social Studies using Pearson's r .

2.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations played a paramount role when undertaking research, particularly in the context of this study. First and foremost, the researcher obtained informed consent from participants, ensuring that the researcher clearly articulated the research purpose, potential risks, and benefits to university administrators, staff, or students, ensuring that they participated willingly and with full awareness. Maintaining confidentiality was equally critical. The researcher anonymized participant data and securely stored it to prevent unauthorized access, safeguarding their privacy and protecting sensitive information. Voluntary participation was guaranteed, granting participants the freedom to withdraw from the study at any point without facing adverse consequences. The researcher implemented measures to minimize any potential risks, ensuring that the research did not cause harm, both physically and emotionally, to those involved. Upholding bias and fairness were non-negotiable. The researcher conducted the research without biases or discriminatory practices that could skew results. Transparency permeated the research process, with documented methodologies, data collection procedures, and analysis techniques to ensure transparency and reproducibility. To maintain integrity, the researcher disclosed any potential conflicts of interest that could influence the objectivity of their research, and the researcher respected intellectual property by appropriately citing and crediting the work of others, guarding against plagiarism.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Factors Influencing Learners' Engagement in Social Studies

Teacher-Related Factors

The findings of this study indicate that teacher-related factors significantly impact learners' engagement in Social Studies (see Table 1). The highest-rated factors, such as the use of diverse teaching methods (4.70), encouragement of classroom participation (4.70), and integration of real-life examples (4.70), all fall under the "Great Extent" category. This suggests that these teacher practices are highly effective in fostering learner engagement and promoting academic success in the subject. The consistently high ratings underscore the importance of instructional variety, interactive learning, and contextual relevance in the classroom.

Table 1. Mean and Interpretation Distribution on the Factors that Influence Learners' Engagement in terms of Teacher-Related Factors

	Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1	The Social Studies teacher uses different teaching methods to make the lesson more engaging.	4.70	Great Extent
2	The teacher encourages students to participate in discussions and activities during Social Studies class.	4.70	Great Extent
3	The teacher explains lessons in a way that is easy to understand.	4.62	Great Extent
4	The teacher uses real-life examples to help students relate Social Studies lessons to everyday life.	4.70	Great Extent
5	The teacher provides feedback on student participation and performance in Social Studies.	4.57	Great Extent
6	The teacher uses technology (videos, presentations, online resources) to make Social Studies lessons more interesting.	4.59	Great Extent
7	The teacher adjusts teaching methods based on students' needs and learning styles.	4.52	Great Extent
8	The teacher creates a positive and supportive learning environment in Social Studies class.	4.31	Great Extent
9	The teacher asks for students' opinions and ideas during Social Studies lessons.	4.61	Great Extent
10	Students feel more engaged and interested in Social Studies because of the way their teacher teaches.	4.61	Great Extent
	Grand Mean	4.69	Great Extent

Using diverse teaching methods caters to different learning styles, allowing students to engage with content in multiple ways—through visual aids, group discussions, role-playing, or multimedia presentations. Such strategies sustain attention and deepen understanding, as learners process information from various angles. Similarly, encouraging classroom participation nurtures a sense of agency among students. When learners are invited to contribute ideas, ask questions, and engage in discussions, they are likelier to develop a sense of

ownership over their learning. This interactive process fosters critical thinking and builds confidence, which are vital for success in a subject like Social Studies that often involves the analysis of historical events, social issues, and civic responsibilities.

Moreover, integrating real-life examples helps bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. Teachers make the subject matter more relatable and meaningful by connecting lessons to students' everyday experiences, current events, and community contexts. This approach not only enhances engagement but also promotes retention and transfer of knowledge. These results align with previous research emphasizing the role of effective teaching strategies in promoting academic success. Studies have shown that engaging instructional methods enhance cognitive and emotional engagement, leading to better performance (Fredricks et al., 2019; Reeve & Tseng, 2020). Furthermore, encouraging active participation fosters a more interactive learning environment, which has been linked to increased motivation and improved retention of information (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Providing real-life examples also strengthens students' connection to the subject matter, making lessons more meaningful and applicable to their daily lives (Eccles & Wigfield, 2020).

Interestingly, the factor with the lowest mean—creating a positive and supportive learning environment—received a rating of 4.31, which, although the lowest among the identified factors, still falls under the "Great Extent" category. This indicates that while it may not have been rated as highly as the others, it still strongly impacts student engagement and academic outcomes in Social Studies. The relatively lower rating may be attributed to the inherent challenges of consistently maintaining an emotionally supportive environment amid academic pressures and diverse classroom dynamics. Nevertheless, its importance cannot be overstated.

Research supports the critical role of classroom climate in shaping students' academic behaviors and learning experiences. For instance, Khuhro (2024) found that a nurturing classroom environment enhances learners' engagement through mechanisms explained by Bandura's social cognitive theory. According to this framework, students develop stronger self-efficacy when their environment reinforces positive learning experiences, encouraging greater academic effort. Likewise, Reyes et al. (2015) emphasized that emotionally supportive classrooms facilitate deeper student engagement, reduce anxiety, and contribute to improved academic achievement. The emotional climate of a classroom—including mutual respect, encouragement, and a sense of safety—serves as the foundation upon which meaningful learning can occur.

The grand mean of 4.69, which is also categorized under the "Great Extent" level, further supports the conclusion that teacher-related factors significantly and consistently positively influence learners' engagement and academic performance in Social Studies. This high overall mean highlights the central role of teachers as catalysts of academic success. It affirms that when educators employ effective teaching strategies, foster active participation, build supportive relationships, and create a conducive learning atmosphere, students are more likely to engage deeply with the subject matter and perform at higher academic levels. This finding aligns with a growing body of literature that underscores the multifaceted impact of teacher behavior, instructional clarity, and interpersonal connection on learner outcomes. According to Hattie (2015), teacher-related influences—such as feedback, clarity, and classroom management—are among the most potent determinants of student achievement. These elements synergistically create a well-organized, emotionally responsive, intellectually stimulating learning environment. Furthermore, research by Qureshi and Rasli (2020) supports the view that student engagement and academic performance improve significantly when teachers display supportive attitudes and utilize sound pedagogical practices. This is especially critical in Social Studies, where students must engage in higher-order thinking, analyze complex social phenomena, and connect historical and contemporary issues.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

The findings of this study indicate that Culturally Responsive Pedagogy significantly impacts learners' engagement in Social Studies (see Table 2). The highest-rated factor, using different teaching strategies to accommodate diverse learners (4.68), falls under the "Great Extent" category. This suggests that employing various instructional strategies to meet diverse students' cultural and learning needs has a powerful positive impact on their academic performance in Social Studies. This result aligns with previous studies highlighting the effectiveness of culturally relevant instructional practices. For instance, Gay (2018) underscores that culturally responsive teaching, through differentiated instruction and content that reflects students' cultural backgrounds,

enhances motivation and achievement by increasing the relevance of classroom learning. Similarly, Ladson-Billings (2014) emphasizes that tailoring instruction to reflect learners' cultural experiences increases classroom participation and deepens comprehension and critical thinking, especially in context-rich subjects like Social Studies. Furthermore, Hammond (2015) stresses that when educators actively incorporate cultural considerations into instructional planning, they reduce cultural disconnects and support cognitive development, ultimately strengthening student engagement.

Table 2. Mean and Interpretation Distribution on the Factors that Influence Learners' Engagement in terms of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

	Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1	The teacher incorporates diverse cultural examples, including those from the students' own backgrounds, into Social Studies lessons.	4.37	Great Extent
2	The teacher encourages students to share their cultural backgrounds and experiences during class discussions.	4.23	Great Extent
3	The teacher respects and values the different traditions, beliefs, and perspectives of students.	4.27	Great Extent
4	The teacher uses learning materials (e.g., books, videos, stories) that reflect diverse cultures and histories.	4.40	Great Extent
5	The teacher connects Social Studies lessons to real-world cultural and historical events relevant to the community.	4.55	Great Extent
6	Students are allowed to express their identities and cultural heritage in class activities and projects.	4.50	Great Extent
7	The teacher employs different teaching strategies to accommodate students from diverse backgrounds and learning styles.	4.68	Great Extent
8	The teacher discusses social justice issues and the importance of respecting cultural diversity in society.	4.67	Great Extent
9	The teacher encourages critical thinking about history and different perspectives from various cultures.	4.55	Great Extent
10	Students feel more engaged and comfortable in Social Studies class because the teacher acknowledges and values their culture.	4.54	Great Extent
	Grand Mean	4.48	Great Extent

Meanwhile, other factors, such as encouraging students to share their cultural backgrounds (4.23), while still categorized under the "Great Extent" level, received slightly lower mean scores. This indicates that encouraging cultural sharing also positively impacts learners' academic performance in Social Studies, albeit slightly less than differentiated teaching strategies. While cultural sharing fosters a sense of inclusion and strengthens classroom relationships, researchers suggest that the strategic application of culturally responsive instructional techniques most directly enhances academic outcomes. For example, Morrison et al. (2019) argue that CRP must go beyond celebrating diversity—it should integrate differentiated instruction aligned with students' learning profiles and sociocultural identities to promote academic equity truly. This approach ensures learners are included, challenged, and supported appropriately according to their unique needs.

The grand mean of 4.48, which also falls under the "Great Extent" category, further supports the conclusion that Culturally Responsive Pedagogy strongly influences learners' engagement and academic performance in Social Studies. This finding is consistent with existing literature that emphasizes the critical role of culturally aware teaching in fostering meaningful learning experiences and closing achievement gaps. According to Siwatu et al. (2016), when teachers incorporate students' cultural knowledge, values, and experiences into instruction, learners develop a stronger sense of relevance and belonging, which leads to increased engagement and improved academic outcomes. Similarly, Sleeter (2020) highlights that culturally responsive teaching helps dismantle systemic inequities in education by promoting inclusive classrooms where all students feel empowered and supported in their learning journey.

Learning Environment

The findings of this study indicate that the learning environment significantly influences learners' engagement in Social Studies (see Table 3). The highest-rated factor—creating a classroom environment where everyone's culture and identity are respected—received a mean score of 4.61, which falls under the "Great Extent" category. This suggests that establishing a respectful, inclusive classroom climate where learners' identities are acknowledged strongly impacts their academic performance in Social Studies. This result is consistent with previous research highlighting the decisive role of classroom climate in shaping student engagement and success. Paris and Alim (2017) advocate for culturally sustaining pedagogies that honor and actively maintain and celebrate students' cultural identities within the curriculum. This kind of environment nurtures a strong sense of belonging, which in turn fuels motivation and engagement. Likewise, Byrd (2016) found that students who perceive their cultural identities as respected and represented in the classroom demonstrate higher levels of

participation and academic achievement, especially in content areas such as Social Studies that require reflection, empathy, and contextual understanding.

Table 3. *Mean and Interpretation of the Distribution on the Factors that Influence Learners' Engagement in terms of Learning Environment*

	Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1	The teacher creates a classroom environment where everyone's culture and identity are respected.	4.61	Great Extent
2	The classroom setting encourages open discussions about different cultural perspectives.	4.42	Great Extent
3	The teacher uses classroom activities that reflect the diverse cultures and experiences of the students.	4.30	Great Extent
4	The classroom atmosphere feels inclusive and welcoming to all students, regardless of their background.	4.32	Great Extent
5	The teacher incorporates students' cultural experiences and interests into Social Studies lessons.	4.37	Great Extent
6	A safe space is created where students feel comfortable sharing their cultural views and experiences.	4.33	Great Extent
7	Classroom materials (books, posters, etc.) reflect a wide range of cultural backgrounds and histories.	4.35	Great Extent
8	The learning environment promotes mutual respect among students from different cultural backgrounds.	4.44	Great Extent
9	The classroom layout encourages collaboration and facilitates the sharing of ideas, contributing to a productive learning atmosphere.	4.34	Great Extent
10	The teacher fosters an environment where every student feels valued and encouraged to express their thoughts and opinions.	4.34	Great Extent
	Grand Mean	4.38	Great Extent

Meanwhile, other factors, such as using classroom activities that reflect diverse cultures and fostering an environment where students feel valued and encouraged to express their thoughts, both rated at 4.30, also fall under the "Great Extent" level. This indicates that these aspects of the learning environment positively impact learners' academic performance in Social Studies, although to a slightly lesser degree than fostering cultural respect. These practices play a key role in promoting student-centered learning. Banks and Banks (2019) emphasize that when multicultural education is embedded in classroom tasks and discourse, students can more easily relate to the material, making content more meaningful and increasing academic outcomes. Similarly, Hiver et al. (2021) highlight that when students feel valued and autonomous in classroom discussions, their motivation and achievement levels rise, especially in Social Studies, where voice, perspective, and reflective thinking are central to learning.

The grand mean of 4.38, which is also categorized under the "Great Extent" level, reinforces the conclusion that a positive and inclusive learning environment plays a crucial role in promoting student participation, connection, and academic performance in Social Studies. These findings align with prior studies that emphasize the importance of the learning environment in shaping academic outcomes. Fredricks et al. (2019) and Reeve & Tseng (2020) affirm that inclusive and respectful classroom settings enhance cognitive and emotional engagement, leading to improved academic performance. A classroom that encourages open dialogue and appreciation of diverse perspectives promotes interactivity and supports learners' sense of agency and self-worth. According to Ryan and Deci (2017), this environment boosts intrinsic motivation and improves knowledge retention, particularly in subjects like Social Studies that require deep understanding and contextual application. Eccles and Wigfield (2020) also note that when lessons are culturally relevant, students see greater purpose in their learning, resulting in more meaningful and transferable learning. Zhou et al. (2021) also found that a collaborative classroom structure enhances social interactions, encourages peer learning, and increases students' active participation—key contributors to engagement and academic achievement.

3.2 Academic Performance

The findings of this study reveal the academic performance of Grade 4 pupils in Social Studies, categorized using a five-point rating scale, and indicate an encouraging level of achievement across the class (see Table 4). A notable portion of students demonstrated high academic proficiency, with 49 learners scoring within the Outstanding range (mean range 4.21–5.00, GPA 90–100). This suggests a strong and consistent mastery of Social Studies content and skills, indicative of excellence in academic performance. Furthermore, most learners—71 students—were rated under the Very Satisfactory category (mean range 3.41–4.20, GPA 85–89), reflecting that most students not only met expectations but often exceeded them in their understanding and participation in Social Studies. This distribution points to a generally high level of learner competence and readiness.

Table 4. *Level of Learners' Academic Performance*

Number of Students	Mean Range	Grade Point Average	Interpretation
49	4.21-5.00	90-100	Outstanding
71	3.41-4.20	85-89	Very Satisfactory
19	2.61-3.40	80-84	Satisfactory
1	1.81-2.61	75-79	Fairly Satisfactory
0	1.0-1.80	Below 75	Did Not meet Expectations

Meanwhile, 19 students were classified under the Satisfactory category (mean range 2.61–3.40, GPA 80–84), indicating an average performance level that may benefit from targeted support or enrichment. Only one learner scored in the Fairly Satisfactory category (mean range 1.81–2.61, GPA 75–79), suggesting isolated needs for academic intervention. Notably, no students were categorized under Did Not Meet Expectations (mean range 1.00–1.80, GPA below 75), highlighting the effectiveness of instructional delivery and student engagement in this context.

These results strongly suggest that most learners perform at high academic levels, with the Outstanding and Very Satisfactory categories encompassing most respondents. This pattern is consistent with research emphasizing the crucial role of learner engagement in improving academic outcomes. According to Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2019), students actively involved in classroom discussions, demonstrate sustained interest, and engage meaningfully with content tend to achieve higher academic success. Engagement, in this sense, supports cognitive and emotional connections to the material, fostering deeper learning. Eccles and Wigfield (2020) further assert that engaging, interactive, and culturally responsive classroom experiences enhance academic motivation and elevate performance, particularly in subjects like Social Studies, where identity, perspective, and critical thinking are key components.

The high rate of positive academic performance observed in this study may also be attributed to implementing effective teaching strategies that prioritize culturally responsive pedagogy and inclusive learning environments. Gay (2018) stresses that connecting classroom lessons to students' real-world cultural experiences strengthens content relevance and boosts learner engagement and achievement. When Social Studies instruction is designed to be both inclusive and meaningful, learners are more likely to find personal value in their learning journey. Furthermore, incorporating collaborative activities and multimedia tools, as highlighted by Zhou, Sullivan, and Matus (2021), enhances classroom interactivity and supports various learning styles, creating conditions that foster academic success. These strategies contribute to a classroom climate where learners are empowered to participate, explore diverse perspectives, and deepen their understanding of societal issues—all essential for excelling in Social Studies.

3.3 Relationship between Factors and Academic Performance

Teacher Related Factor and Academic Performance

Table 5 reveal a moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.560$) between teacher-related factors and students' academic performance in Social Studies. This indicates a noticeable and statistically meaningful relationship, suggesting that as the effectiveness of teacher-related factors increases, so does learners' academic performance. While the correlation is not perfect, it clearly shows that teacher-related influences, such as instructional strategies, classroom management, and teacher-student interaction, play a crucial role in shaping academic outcomes. While teachers significantly impact students' performance, other variables (such as learner attitudes, home environment, and learning materials) may also contribute to the broader academic landscape.

Table 5. *Relationship between the Teacher Related Factor and Academic Performance*

	Teacher Related Factor	
	Average Questionnaire	Average Grade
Average Questionnaire	1	
Average Grade	0.560	1

Teacher-related factors are a core foundation for guiding, motivating, and engaging students throughout the learning process. Santos et al. (2020) state that teachers who implement diverse instructional strategies, provide personalized support, and maintain a favorable classroom climate significantly boost learner performance. In Social Studies, a subject rich in context, inquiry, and interpretation, the way the teacher delivers and facilitates lessons profoundly shapes how learners process and apply information. Reyes and Martinez (2018) underscore

that teaching strategies encouraging active discussion, critical analysis, and real-world application enable students to connect meaningfully with the content, enhancing their academic growth.

Furthermore, research from 2014 reinforces the importance of teacher clarity, constructive feedback, and technology integration in improving academic performance. Dela Cruz et al. (2023) highlight how clear instructions and feedback loops help students identify areas of improvement, fostering academic self-regulation and deeper learning. When teachers use technology-enhanced tools, such as interactive visuals, digital simulations, or multimedia resources, they support varied learning styles and promote better comprehension and retention of complex Social Studies concepts. This aligns with findings by Hattie (2015), who emphasized that teacher influences—especially those involving visible learning strategies—rank among the most effective in improving student achievement across disciplines.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and Academic Performance

Table 6 reveal a low positive correlation ($r = 0.460$) between Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and students' academic performance. This suggests some degree of relationship, indicating that culturally responsive teaching practices have a limited yet notable impact on learners' grades. While this correlation highlights that incorporating cultural relevance in teaching may support student engagement and achievement, it also implies that other factors likely play a more significant role in determining academic outcomes.

Table 6. Relationship between the Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and Academic Performance		
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy		
	Average Questionnaire	Average Grade
Average Questionnaire	1	
Average Grade	0.460	1

Gay (2018) emphasized that culturally responsive teaching is a key determinant of student success. Teachers who employ strategies that respect and reflect students' cultural identities, adapt their methods to meet diverse learning needs, and create inclusive classrooms can greatly enhance academic performance. In Social Studies classes, where historical and cultural narratives are central, culturally responsive pedagogy becomes even more crucial in sustaining student engagement and improving performance outcomes (Lopez, 2019). Dee and Penner (2017) found that students enrolled in culturally responsive courses showed improved attendance and GPA scores, demonstrating the positive impact of such pedagogical approaches. Similarly, Ladson-Billings (2014) highlighted that culturally relevant content and integrating diverse perspectives in classroom discussions significantly enhance academic performance.

Learning Environment and Academic Performance

Table 7 reveal a low positive correlation ($r = 0.460$) between Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and students' academic performance. This suggests some degree of relationship, indicating that culturally responsive teaching practices have a limited yet notable impact on learners' grades. While this correlation highlights that incorporating cultural relevance in teaching may support student engagement and achievement, it also implies that other factors likely play a more significant role in determining academic outcomes. This points to the complexity of academic performance, which is influenced by multiple interacting elements beyond pedagogy alone.

Table 7. Relationship between the Learning Environment and Academic Performance		
Learning Environment		
	Average Questionnaire	Average Grade
Average Questionnaire	1	
Average Grade	0.383	1

Gay (2018) emphasized that culturally responsive teaching is a key determinant of student success. Teachers who employ strategies that respect and reflect students' cultural identities, adapt their methods to meet diverse learning needs, and create inclusive classrooms can greatly enhance academic performance. By validating students' cultural backgrounds and experiences, educators foster a learning environment where students feel seen and valued. This, in turn, can increase motivation and participation, which are critical drivers of academic achievement. In Social Studies classes, where historical and cultural narratives are central, culturally responsive

pedagogy becomes even more crucial in sustaining student engagement and improving performance outcomes (Lopez, 2019). Such an approach helps learners connect course content to their lives and communities, making learning more meaningful and memorable.

Dee and Penner (2017) found that students enrolled in culturally responsive courses showed improved attendance and GPA scores, demonstrating the positive impact of such pedagogical approaches. Their research supports the idea that culturally responsive instruction improves academic metrics and encourages consistent school participation. Similarly, Ladson-Billings (2014) highlighted that culturally relevant content and integrating diverse perspectives in classroom discussions significantly enhance academic performance. This inclusive approach promotes critical thinking by exposing students to various viewpoints, which is especially important in Social Studies, where understanding multiple perspectives is essential for a comprehensive grasp of the subject. However, the relatively low correlation suggests that while culturally responsive pedagogy is beneficial, its effectiveness may be contingent on its integration with other instructional practices and contextual factors such as school resources, family support, and students' prior knowledge.

4.0 Conclusion

The present study contributes to the growing body of literature on student engagement by providing empirical evidence on the significant roles of teacher-related factors, culturally responsive pedagogy, and the learning environment in shaping the academic performance of Grade 4 learners in Social Studies. Situated within the context of a public elementary school in Region XII, Philippines, this research underscores the importance of integrating effective instructional practices with culturally grounded and emotionally supportive learning conditions to promote meaningful engagement and improved educational outcomes.

The findings of this study carry important implications for educational practice. Teachers must be equipped not only with varied pedagogical strategies but also with the cultural competence to adapt their teaching to the backgrounds and experiences of their learners. Engagement should not be viewed solely as a product of instructional design but as a relational and contextual process that demands inclusive classroom practices. Professional development programs should thus prioritize training in differentiated instruction, cultural responsiveness, and classroom climate enhancement to foster holistic engagement.

At the policy level, the results suggest the need to institutionalize culturally responsive pedagogy within the national curriculum framework and teacher education standards. Policymakers and curriculum planners should consider creating structured guidelines that support the integration of learners' cultural identities into instructional materials and classroom practices. Moreover, equitable resource allocation to improve learning environments, particularly in under-resourced schools, can help close the engagement gap between rural and urban learners.

This study also lays the groundwork for further research in the field of elementary Social Studies education. Future studies may consider longitudinal designs to examine how early engagement practices influence learners' long-term academic trajectories. There is also a need for qualitative or mixed-methods research that explores students' narratives, providing deeper insights into how engagement is experienced from the learner's perspective. In addition, investigating the role of digital content creators and online educational platforms in influencing learner motivation and comprehension may yield valuable insights, particularly in the post-pandemic educational landscape.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

Author 1 provided essential contributions by editing, writing, encoding data, and performing the data analysis for this research. Author 2 assisted in the review of related literature and supported the data analysis process.

6.0 Funding

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7.0 Conflict of Interests

There is no conflict of interest associated with this research.

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