

Enhancing Civic Literacy in Grade 6: Assessment and Strategic Interventions

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Abstract. Cultivating students to become critical, reflective, productive, and responsible members of society with a strong civic competence is the groundwork for forming nation builders. This research assesses the civic literacy of grade six Social Studies students in terms of personal responsibility, civic responsibility, leadership efficacy, civic thinking skills, civic participation skills, sense of community, and civic knowledge, and how do grade school teachers integrate civic literacy in their Social Studies lesson in a private basic education institution in Mandaue City, Philippines. Employing a mixed-method design, the study assesses 186 Grade 6 students' civic literacy across dimensions such as personal responsibility, civic responsibility, and leadership efficacy with a strong understanding of civic knowledge. While there are no significant differences in civic literacy based on sex or religion for most areas, leadership efficacy does show notable variation between Catholic and non-Catholic respondents. Additionally, integrating civic literacy in social studies lessons relies on real-life experiences in instruction, nurturing accountability and responsibility, contextualized learning, professional development, and resource utilization. The findings contribute to the existing literature by providing empirical data on the civic literacy levels of elementary students in the Philippine private school context while emphasizing the importance of culturally and contextually responsive pedagogies and highlighting actionable strategies for enhancing civic engagement at the basic education level.

Keywords: Civic education; Civic literacy; Leadership efficacy; Personal responsibility; Student engagement.

1.0 Introduction

The newly launched MATATAG Curriculum of the Department of Education highlights the primary objective of Social Studies discipline, that is to cultivate Filipino students to become critical, reflective, productive, and responsible members of society with a strong civic competence deeply rooted in a profound understanding of cultural identity and love for the country, while also possessing a global perspective and values related to social issues (2023). In the recently renewed mission of Sacred Heart School-Ateneo de Cebu, that is “to nurture socially responsible innovators and transformational leaders...” (Sacred Heart School-Ateneo de Cebu-Vision Mission 2023), civic literacy is a key foundation in its realization. A limited body of research assessing civic literacy among elementary students, particularly in private educational institutions, highlights the need for targeted instructional strategies.

Civic literacy is the ability to “let your life speak” by participating thoughtfully, responsibly, and passionately in the community's life with concern for the common good (Chi et al., 2006). The word “civic” is a Greek word that implies citizens of a city or an area. Therefore, civic education is that form of education, which is primarily

designed and organized in content and function, to produce good and valuable people who know what events happen within the country and globally (Ukegbu & Anyaoha, 2014). It is a tool for releasing citizens from ignorance and providing them with the knowledge, abilities, political, economic, and social consciousness needed to support and preserve national consciousness. It also helps to enlighten, educate, and support each person's intellectual growth while instilling good values and patriotism (Nkechinyere, 2019).

Much of the existing research on youth civic engagement centers on high school, college, and young adult learners, with notable improvements in political knowledge and civic skills observed from ninth grade onwards (Andolina et al., 2003; Morgan & Streb, 2001; Perry & Katula, 2001). However, scholars increasingly recognize the elementary years as vital for laying the groundwork for civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Borysenko and Vysotska (2018) highlight that early grades present a critical window for fostering civic competencies, underscoring the need to establish age-appropriate expectations for students in civic knowledge, behaviors, and values.

More recent studies further underscore the importance of civic literacy at the elementary level. Gil and Domingo (2021) investigated how teachers assessed civic literacy during the COVID-19 pandemic and identified significant challenges, particularly in monitoring student progress and verifying the authenticity of student work. They advocated for more flexible and tech-integrated assessment tools better suited to remote learning contexts. Similarly, Enright et al. (2023) demonstrated how structured writing instruction on local civic issues can deepen students' understanding and engagement. Their study shows that integrating civics-specific writing helps develop young learners' skills in perspective-taking and communication. In another study, Willis, Baker, and Shulsky (2024) found that while future elementary teachers recognize the importance of civic literacy, many feel ill-equipped to integrate it effectively in the classroom, highlighting the need for improved civic education in teacher preparation programs.

At the global level, Schulz et al. (2025), in the IEA International Civic and Citizenship Education Study, provided comparative data on how 24 countries prepare students for citizenship. Their findings underscore the significance of national education policies and classroom practices in shaping students' civic knowledge, attitudes, and engagement. Complementing this perspective, Zakiah et al. (2023) examined how multicultural values are taught through civic education in elementary schools. Their research highlights the role of civic education in nurturing inclusive mindsets, appreciation of diversity, and cultural understanding—all essential components of civic competence.

To assess the civic outcomes in the elementary level, Chi (2006) patiently laid out the indicators and measures of civic outcomes at the elementary grades in a way that will stimulate reflection on the part of researchers and educators about appropriate directions in this area. Their framework highlighted the following components of civic literacy: Personal Responsibility (demonstrating responsible behaviors and work habits); Civic Responsibility (caring for others, valuing group work, caring for community, appreciating diversity and demonstrating environmental stewardship); Leadership Efficacy (demonstrating the attitudes and actions of taking leadership positions); Civic Thinking Skills (ability to think critically); Civic Participation Skills (skills in perspective taking, communication, group membership and conflict resolution); School as a Community (sense of community that exists within school); and Civic Knowledge (concepts and standards covered primarily in elementary grades).

At present, Sacred Heart School-Ateneo de Cebu has offered a Social Studies Curriculum at all levels of the grade school, as well as different multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary activities to reinforce civic consciousness and efficacy as engaged citizens of the Philippines. However, the absence of their impact assessment on the Grade School students calls for a systematic and thorough review. This study assesses the civic literacy among Grade 6 learners in Sacred Heart School-Ateneo de Cebu. Specifically, it aims to address the following: 1) the students' level of civic literacy in terms of personal responsibility, civic responsibility, leadership efficacy, civic thinking skills, civic participation skills, sense of community; and civic knowledge; 2) whether there is significant difference of learners' civic literacy in terms of sex and religion; 3) how grade school teachers integrate civic literacy in their Social Studies lesson; and 4) proposed interventions to increase the civic literacy among grade school learners.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods design. The quantitative method was used to describe and interpret the current civic literacy of the grade school learners through a survey and a researcher-made multiple-choice test. On the other hand, the qualitative method was used to explore the strengths and limitations of civic literacy integration into the GS Social Studies curriculum to support the quantitative findings.

2.2 Research Participants

A complete enumeration of all the 186 Grade 6 learners in the Grade School of Sacred Heart School-Ateneo de Cebu Grade School Department was invited to answer the self-report survey and the researcher-made test to measure civic literacy. Grade 6 learners were chosen to be participants because the first year of the MATATAG Curriculum next year will include the Grade 7 level. Then, using purposive sampling, six GS Social Studies teachers will be invited for a Focus Group Discussion to identify how they interpret civic literacy in the GS Social Studies curriculum.

2.3 Research Instrument

This study utilized three instruments. First, the Civic Outcomes and Measures Scale, which was completely adapted from Chi et al. (2006). Second, a researcher-made Test to measure Civic Knowledge, which was validated by three experts—one in Social Studies content, one in Assessment, and one in the Research process. Third, a researcher-made Questionnaire for the Focus Group Discussion, which was also validated by the same experts.

2.4 Data Gathering Procedure

Parental consent was obtained before student participation, in adherence to ethical research standards. Details on the study procedure, nature of voluntary participation, risks and benefits, and statement of confidentiality were discussed with both the parents and student respondents before conducting the research. Then, they were asked to answer the adopted Civic Outcomes and Measures Scale by Chi et.al. (2006) and the researcher-made test to measure Civic Knowledge. The quantitative data were then analyzed to identify significant findings to be explored through focus group discussions with the Social Studies teachers.

2.5 Statistical/Data Treatment:

The quantitative data were tabulated and analyzed to describe the participants' civic literacy. At the same time, an independent T-test will be used to identify whether or not there is a significant difference between male and female enrolled students in their civic literacy. The Jamovi software was used to interpret the quantitative results. Also, a thematic analysis of the qualitative data was conducted on the answers in the focus group discussion with the Social Studies teachers.

3.0 Results and Discussion

The 186 student participants from Grade 6 were all identified as members of Generation Alpha, with an age bracket of ten to thirteen years old. They were categorized according to their sex and religion. In terms of sex, 47.8% of them were female, while 52.2% were male, showing a more or less equal percentage at present after the school became co-educational in and started accepting girls from being Sacred Heart School-Boys in 1998 (SHS-AdC history). Regarding religion, most are Roman Catholics, with 89.8%, and only 10.2% are non-Catholics. Sacred Heart School-Ateneo de Cebu is a Catholic school, placing a premium on forming students to be Christ-centered. However, its gates are also open for non-Catholic enrollees and communities.

3.1 Civil Literacy

Personal Responsibility

According to Chi (2006), personal responsibility is one of the components of civic literacy, which refers to demonstrating one's responsible behaviors and work habits. It encompasses moral and conventional aspects of personal responsibility. The data from Table 1 highlights the respondents' levels of Personal Responsibility across various indicators. Highly observed behaviors include always trying to do their best work, attempting to improve after a poor performance, and believing in the importance of rule-following, indicating a strong consensus on these values. Other behaviors, such as fixing something when broken, putting things away after use, and following

rules even when unobserved, are occasionally observed. The least frequently observed behavior is usually doing what one is supposed to do, reflecting a more neutral stance.

Table 1. *Respondents' Level of Personal Responsibility*

Indicators	Mean	sd	Interpretation
1. If I break something, I try to fix it.	4.07	0.89	Occasionally Observed
12. I usually do what I am supposed to do.	3.50	0.99	Neutral
19. It is important for me to follow the rules even if no one is watching.	4.00	1.00	Occasionally Observed
22. I put things away when I am done with them.	3.75	1.07	Occasionally Observed
25. I always try to do my best work.	4.32	0.90	Highly Observed
31. If I do not do a good job, I try to do better the next time.	4.28	0.88	Highly Observed
38. I think it is important for people to follow the rules.	4.39	0.86	Highly Observed

These results suggest that while there is a unified agreement on the importance of personal responsibility, these behaviors vary among the respondents based on their actual demonstration. Factors such as individual differences, situational contexts, or the specific nature of the responsibility in question can explain these. Wanabuliandari et al. (2021) conducted a study where the personal responsibility levels of elementary school students were analyzed and discovered that many students demonstrated low levels of self-responsibility, particularly during online learning periods. The research indicated that further reliance on technology, such as cell phones, diminished responsible behaviors, as students became less engaged with their peers and their educational environment. As emphasized in the study, teachers need to implement character education to promote positive values and strengthen students' sense of responsibility (Wanabuliandari et al., 2021).

Moreover, varied educational resources stress the significance of teaching personal responsibility in elementary education. For example, a blog post on HopSkipDrive frames strategies for teaching personal responsibility to elementary students, highlighting the role of modeling responsible behavior, setting clear expectations, and fostering an independent sense of responsibility. The article details that responsibility is not merely about obedience but involves self-initiated actions that reflect a child's desire to do the right thing (HopSkipDrive, 2023). Furthermore, the CIRCLE report on civic outcomes for elementary students underscores that personal responsibility is a crucial component of civic literacy. It claims that students should manifest responsible behavior by using good judgment, accepting responsibility for their actions, and showing initiative in problem-solving (CIRCLE, 2006). This blueprint illustrates the connection between personal responsibility and broader civic engagement, proposing that fostering responsibility in young students can lead to more engaged and conscientious citizens.

Civic Responsibility

According to Chi (2006), civic responsibility is another important component of civic literacy, which is defined as 'caring for others, valuing group work, caring for community, appreciating diversity, and demonstrating environmental stewardship. Table 2 reflects the levels of civic responsibility among the respondents, revealing a range of attitudes and behaviors related to civic engagement. The mean scores indicate that respondents generally exhibit a moderate level of civic responsibility, with several items categorized as "occasionally observed." Notably, the highest mean score is for the statement "I think it is important to change things that are unfair in society", suggesting a strong awareness of social justice issues among participants. Conversely, the lowest mean score is for "I try to get my friends to recycle bottles and cans", indicating a more neutral stance on environmental responsibility.

The role of educators in integrating social justice education into early elementary classrooms is highlighted by Kretz (2020), suggesting that when teachers address topics related to justice and injustice, students develop a greater understanding of these concepts. The natural inclination of young children to recognize fairness and injustice in their interactions, particularly in social settings like playgrounds, provides a foundation for this awareness (Edutopia, n.d.). Furthermore, engaging students in social justice activities, as outlined by Education World (2020), fosters their understanding of human rights and their responsibilities toward others, ultimately preparing them to become responsible global citizens. These insights indicate that when social justice topics are actively incorporated into the curriculum, elementary students can cultivate a heightened awareness of social issues and their implications.

In contrast, the neutral stance that elementary students often take regarding environmental responsibility can be attributed to several factors. While educators may successfully teach social justice concepts, environmental issues may not receive the same emphasis in the curriculum. The complexity of addressing multiple social issues can lead to challenges in incorporating environmental education, resulting in a less robust understanding among students, as noted by Kretz (2020). The American University (2023) also discusses the importance of culturally responsive teaching and its potential to empower students in addressing social justice issues. However, it suggests that environmental responsibility may be less prominent, contributing to students' neutral attitudes toward environmental actions. Education World (2020) further emphasizes the need for specific activities focused on environmental justice; without these, students may lack the motivation to engage actively in environmental responsibility, leading to a more indifferent stance.

Table 2. *Respondents' Level of Civic Responsibility*

Indicators	Mean	sd	Interpretation
2. To solve most problems, I must learn to work with others.	3.58	1.03	Occasionally Observed
4. I want to help when I see someone in need.	3.97	0.94	Occasionally Observed
6. I try to be with my family and recycle at home.	3.56	1.02	Occasionally Observed
10. When I decide, I try to think about how others will be affected.	3.69	1.08	Occasionally Observed
11. I try to be kind to other people.	4.21	0.92	Occasionally Observed
14. I want to have friends who have different backgrounds from me.	3.22	1.13	Neutral
16. I can learn more from working on group projects than from working alone.	3.49	1.33	Occasionally Observed
17. I have a responsibility to help keep the community clean.	3.69	1.06	Occasionally Observed
20. I apologize when I hurt someone's feelings.	4.20	0.90	Occasionally Observed
23. I spend time on projects with other people to help the community.	3.34	1.10	Neutral
24. I like working with other people on group projects.	3.52	1.37	Occasionally Observed
27. I think it is important to change unfair things in society.	4.49	0.75	Highly Observed
37. I have done things to help people in my community.	3.61	0.98	Occasionally Observed
39. I try to get my friends to recycle bottles and cans.	3.14	1.28	Neutral
42. I believe that I can make a difference in my community.	3.37	1.21	Neutral
43. I can learn a lot from people with backgrounds and experiences that are different from mine.	3.97	1.02	Occasionally Observed
46. I want to help when I see someone having a problem.	3.99	0.95	Occasionally Observed
47. I do my part to help the environment.	3.63	1.06	Occasionally Observed

Leadership Efficacy

According to Chi (2006), leadership efficacy is another important component of civic literacy, defined as 'demonstrating the attitudes and actions of taking leadership positions'. Table 3 reveals the levels of leadership efficacy among respondents, showcasing a blend of confidence in various leadership skills. The highest mean score is associated with the statement "If I am the leader of a group, I make sure that everyone in the group feels important", indicating that respondents prioritize inclusivity and emotional intelligence in leadership roles. This aligns with contemporary leadership theories emphasizing fostering team cohesion and motivation through relational leadership (Oh, 2023; Loughhead & Hardy, 2006). However, several items reflect a more neutral stance, particularly regarding organizational skills, as seen in the mean score: "I am pretty good at organizing a team of kids to do a project." This suggests that while students may grasp the theoretical aspects of leadership, they may lack the practical experience or confidence to implement these skills effectively.

Table 3. *Respondents' Level of Leadership Efficacy*

Indicators	Mean	sd	Interpretation
7. Once I know what needs to be done, I am good at planning how to do it.	3.58	1.15	Occasionally Observed
13. When I see something that needs to be done, I try to get my	3.37	1.22	Neutral
18. I am pretty good at organizing a team of kids to do a project.	3.20	1.27	Neutral
21. If I am a group leader, I make sure that everyone in the group feels important.	4.17	0.95	Occasionally Observed
28. I can stand up for what I think is right, even if my friends disagree.	3.81	1.04	Occasionally Observed
33. When I see something wrong, I try to change it.	3.81	0.99	Occasionally Observed

Additionally, the dataset highlights a moderate level of self-efficacy in moral leadership. This indicates that respondents are willing to advocate for their beliefs, even in challenging situations. However, the lower scores in planning and organizing emphasize the need for further development in these areas. To enhance leadership efficacy, educational programs should provide practical experiences that build students' confidence in planning,

organizing, and initiating group actions, equipping them with the necessary skills to become effective community leaders.

Civic Thinking Skills

According to Chi (2006), civic thinking skills are another important component of civic literacy, which is defined as ‘the ability to think critically’. Table 4 presents the levels of civic thinking skills among respondents, indicating a generally positive attitude toward critical thinking and rational discourse vis-à-vis civic issues. The highest mean score is for the statement "I can give reasons for my opinions", signifying that respondents feel self-assured in articulating their viewpoints and granting justifications for their beliefs. This skill is vital for meaningful civic engagement, as it encourages individuals to participate in discussions based on evidence and rationale. Additionally, the high mean score for the statement "I need to get information to support my opinions" specifies an awareness of the value of credible information in shaping their views, which is crucial for informed citizenship.

However, the slightly lower score for "I keep my mind open to different ideas when making a decision" recommends that while respondents are willing to gather data and articulate their opinions, they may struggle with fully embracing varied perspectives. This could indicate an inclination toward confirmation bias, where individuals prioritize information that aligns with their beliefs. Overall, while respondents establish a solid foundation in reasoning and information gathering, there is an opportunity for development in cultivating open-mindedness and engaging with myriad ideas. Educational programs to enhance civic thinking should promote critical analysis and respectful dialogue to equip individuals better to navigate complex civic issues and contribute positively to their communities.

Table 4. *Respondents' Level of Civic Thinking Skills*

Indicators	Mean	sd	Interpretation
5. I need to get information to support my opinions.	3.89	1.01	Occasionally Observed
29. I can give reasons for my opinions.	4.01	1.01	Occasionally Observed
30. I keep my mind open to different ideas when deciding.	3.83	0.95	Occasionally Observed

Civic Participation Skills

According to Chi (2006), civic participation skills is another important component of civic literacy which is defined as ‘skills in perspective taking, communication, group membership and conflict resolution’. Table 5 presents the levels of civic participation skills among respondents (n=186), highlighting their abilities to engage effectively in social interactions and community involvement. The dataset indicates a generally moderate level of civic participation skills, with mean scores reflecting a mix of occasional observations and neutral responses across various statements. The highest mean score is for the statement "If a friend is mad at me, I try to understand why", suggesting that respondents recognize the importance of empathy and understanding in their interactions. This aligns with the notion that civic participation is not only about active engagement in community activities but also involves interpersonal skills that foster constructive dialogue and conflict resolution (Whitacre, n.d.).

Table 5. *Respondents' Level of Civic Participation Skills*

Indicators	Mean	sd	Interpretation
3. I try to think about how someone else would feel before I say something.	3.51	1.15	Occasionally Observed
8. If friends are fighting, I try to get them to talk to each other and stop fighting.	3.46	1.25	Neutral
9. I try to think before I say something.	3.43	1.11	Neutral
36. I summarize what another person said to ensure I understood.	3.74	1.05	Occasionally Observed
40. If a friend is mad at me, I try to understand why.	4.06	1.13	Occasionally Observed
41. I watch other people's body language to help me understand what they are trying to say.	3.90	1.14	Occasionally Observed
44. When I play with others, I take turns.	3.94	0.96	Occasionally Observed
45. I know how to avoid a fight when I need to.	3.91	1.15	Occasionally Observed
48. I ensure I understand what another person is saying before responding.	3.78	1.08	Occasionally Observed
49. When listening to someone, I try to understand their feelings.	4.03	1.04	Occasionally Observed

However, several items reflect more neutral responses, such as "If friends are fighting, I try to get them to talk to each other and stop fighting" and "I try to think before I say something". These scores indicate that respondents may not consistently apply the skills of meditation and thoughtful communication in practice, another important component of civic literacy, even if they acknowledge them. The relatively lower scores for statements related to

proactive conflict resolution and communication suggest potential areas for development in civic education. Research indicates that civic skills, including empathy, active listening, and conflict resolution, are crucial for effective civic engagement and participation (Kirlin, 2003). Therefore, educational programs should enhance these skills to empower students to engage more fully in their communities, fostering a sense of agency and responsibility essential for democratic participation (Perry & Katula, 2001).

Sense of Community

According to Chi (2006), civic participation skills are another important component of civic literacy, which was adapted from a much longer scale created by the Developmental Studies Center used to assess the sense of community within a school. Table 6 presents respondents' sense of community levels, revealing insights into students' perceptions of their school environment and interpersonal relationships. The dataset indicates a concerning trend, particularly highlighted by the low mean score for the statement "Most students at this school treat each other with respect," which falls into the "rarely observed" category. This suggests that many students may not feel that respect is a prevalent value within their school community. The importance of respect in fostering a favorable school climate is well-documented; research indicates that a respectful environment enhances student engagement and academic performance (Bryk & Driscoll, 1988). Conversely, the higher mean score for "Teachers at this school will not let students make fun of other students" indicates that while teachers actively create a supportive environment, the overall student culture may still lack mutual respect.

Table 1.6. *Respondents' Level of Sense of Community*

Indicators	Mean	sd	Interpretation
15. Most students at this school treat each other with respect.	2.68	1.16	Rarely Observed
26. Most students seem to care about each other, even people they do not know well.	3.22	1.18	Neutral
32. Teachers at this school will not let students make fun of other students.	3.96	1.12	Occasionally Observed
34. Students can debate and discuss issues in this school.	3.72	1.10	Occasionally Observed
35. Students feel like they are an important part of this school.	3.55	1.10	Occasionally Observed
50. Students can talk to the teachers in this school about this	3.44	1.35	Neutral

The dataset also reveals mixed perceptions regarding care and belonging among students. The statement "Most students seem to care about each other, even people they do not know well" received a neutral mean score, suggesting that while some students may feel a sense of care, it is not universally experienced. This aligns with findings from the literature that emphasize the role of community involvement in enhancing students' feelings of belonging and support (ThoughtExchange, 2022). Additionally, the mean scores for statements such as "Students feel like they are an important part of this school" and "Students can talk to the teachers in this school about things" further illustrate that while there are opportunities for student-teacher interaction, the sense of belonging and community is not as strong as it could be.

Civic Knowledge

Civic knowledge is also an important component in civic literacy, which focuses on the concepts and standards primarily at the elementary level. Table 7 reveals the respondents' civic knowledge wherein, in this case, the mean score is 8.86 with an SD of 1.28, which would place them within the "Advanced" level of performance according to the SHS-AdC's Levels of Proficiency. This score signifies that participants have a good knowledge of the main ideas of civics, which implies that these are indeed very knowledgeable youth about civic matters, one of the essential ingredients for democratic participation. Moreover, civic knowledge encompasses understanding political systems, rights, and responsibilities, how government works — all very important precursors of informed citizenship (TorneyPurta et al., 2001). Such a progressive categorization also reflects the ability of the respondents to apply their knowledge in real-life situations, a central component of civic engagement.

This is a high level of civic knowledge, as evidenced by this dataset, which agrees with several studies on the importance of civic education in building a properly informed and involved citizen. Other studies have found that students exposed to comprehensive civic education tended to record high civic knowledge and engagement (Gómez & Suárez, 2023). Moreover, civic knowledge is commonly followed by several positive indices such as increased political participation and greater civic responsibility (Kirlin, 2003). This is a responsibility to keep citizens up to date with civic knowledge. However, despite the generally exemplary trend, there are numerous demographics and educational settings where civic knowledge can take different turns. Further research should be done to examine how the acquisition of civic knowledge is influenced by socio-economic status, school climate,

and teaching methodology. In light of this, educators and policymakers may better tailor civic learning programs to build civic knowledge and engagement across diverse student populations.

Table 7. Respondents' Level of Civic Knowledge

	N	Mean	SD	Transmuted Grade	Level of Performance
Civil Knowledge	185	8.86	1.28	92	Advanced
<i>Based on SHS-AdC's Level of Proficiency</i>					
95 – 100		Excellent			
90-94		Advanced			
85-89		Proficient			
80-84		Developing			
75-79		Beginning			
Below 75		Needs Improvement			

3.2 Relationship between Civil Knowledge and Students' Profile

Table 8 presents the results of the Mann-Whitney U test, which evaluates differences in civic literacy between male and female respondents across various dimensions, including personal responsibility, civic responsibility, leadership efficacy, civic thinking skills, civic participation, sense of community, and civic knowledge. The results indicate no statistically significant differences between the sexes in most areas, with p-values exceeding the 0.05 threshold for personal responsibility, civic responsibility, leadership efficacy, civic thinking skills, civic participation, and sense of community. However, a significant difference is observed in civic knowledge, with a p-value of 0.001, suggesting that gender may influence this dimension. These findings align with previous research indicating that while gender does not significantly affect overall civic engagement and literacy, it may play a role in specific areas such as civic knowledge, highlighting the need for targeted educational strategies to address these differences and promote equitable civic literacy among all students.

Table 8. Mann-Whitney U (Nonparametric) Test on Respondents' Civic Literacy in terms of Sex

	Statistic	P-value
Personal Responsibility	4208	.431
Civic Responsibility	4080	.702
Leadership Efficacy	4068	.714
Civic Thinking Skills	3888	.857
Civic Participation	3809	.899
Sense Of Community	3509	.896
Civic Knowledge	3174	.001

Note. $H_a \mu_{\text{Female}} < \mu_{\text{Male}}$

Table 9 presents the results of the Mann-Whitney U test, which examines differences in civic literacy between Catholic and non-Catholic respondents across various dimensions. The analysis indicates that religion does not significantly influence most aspects of civic literacy, as evidenced by p-values exceeding the 0.05 significance level for personal responsibility, civic responsibility, civic thinking skills, civic participation, sense of community, and civic knowledge. However, a significant difference is observed in leadership efficacy, with a p-value of 0.040, suggesting that Catholic respondents may demonstrate higher leadership skills. This finding aligns with research indicating that religious involvement can foster leadership qualities, such as moral reasoning and community engagement. While religion may impact leadership efficacy, it does not significantly affect other dimensions of civic literacy, highlighting the multifaceted nature of civic engagement shaped by various individual and social factors (Dik et al., 2014; Putnam & Campbell, 2010).

Table 9. Mann-Whitney U (Nonparametric) Test on Respondents' Civic Literacy in terms of Religion

	Statistic	P-value
Personal Responsibility	1517	.608
Civic Responsibility	1395	.206
Leadership Efficacy	1191	.040
Civic Thinking Skills	1359	.159
Civic Participation	1468	.691
Sense Of Community	1482	.333
Civic Knowledge	1341	.791

Note. $H_a \mu_{\text{Catholic}} > \mu_{\text{Non-Catholic}}$

Research on the relationship between religious affiliation and leadership efficacy has yielded mixed findings. Some studies suggest that religion shapes leadership practices, while others report minimal differences. For example, Hage and Posner (2015) found that religious affiliation and religiosity significantly impacted leadership behaviors, with religion having a greater influence than the degree of religiosity. Zakiah et al. (2023) highlighted that Catholic school leaders often integrate Gospel values, which shape their leadership approach compared to secular or faith-based schools. However, Savior (2014) found that institutional affiliation had little impact on leadership practices or perceived effectiveness among university presidents, although leaders at religious institutions demonstrated a more substantial commitment to their institution's mission and values. In other words, religious affiliation can shape leadership behaviors and perceptions, though the extent and nature of this influence may differ across settings.

3.3 Integration of Civic Literacy in Social Studies Lessons

Based on the discussion of the quantitative datasets and the FGD results with six grade school Social Studies teachers, the following themes emerged:

Real-Life Experiences in Instruction

The quantitative results indicate that students exhibit varying levels of civic literacy, particularly in civic knowledge. Educators can capitalize on this strength by embedding real-life experiences into lessons, enhancing students' understanding and application of civic concepts in their daily lives. Teachers emphasize the importance of relating civic literacy to real-life situations. For instance, Participants 2 and 5 highlight their practice of using reflection questions and real-life scenarios in assessments to make civic concepts accessible to younger students.

"I make sure that my examples are related to real-life situations based on their level," indicating the need for age-appropriate contextualization of civic concepts." (Participant 2)

"Providing contextualized examples would push students to reflect on it and develop their civic consciousness," showcasing how real-life examples can stimulate critical thinking and engagement." (Participant 5)

According to research, integrating complex texts and real-life scenarios into civic education significantly strengthens students' engagement and comprehension. For instance, students navigate civic issues effectively, fostering their ability to gather information from diverse sources, including news media, through scaffolded reading instruction, which is crucial for informed civic participation (Allen, 2016).

Nurturing Accountability and Responsibility

The study results show students' solid understanding of civic knowledge, which can be leveraged in fostering accountability. Educators can cultivate a sense of civic duty and engagement by discussing relevant societal issues and encouraging students to reflect on their responsibilities. Cultivating a sense of accountability is crucial for developing responsible citizens. Teachers raise a concern about students not relating to social issues, hindering their ability to participate in myriad civic responsibilities. For example, Participant 5 accounts that some students *"have not experienced any difficulty in life,"* resulting in a lack of awareness about societal issues. This highlights the need for educators to create opportunities for students to understand and empathize with diverse experiences. Participant 3 emphasizes the importance of engaging students with current societal issues, stating:

"I already started engaging with the different societies' issues and what was happening in the present times." (Participant 3)

Civic literacy empowers students to actively participate in their communities and understand their civic responsibilities. Students can engage in community organizing and advocate for social justice by nurturing civic consciousness. This aligns with the teachers' efforts to instill a sense of responsibility and obligation in their students through relevant civic education.

Contextualized Learning

The quantitative results show that students struggle with civic thinking and participation skills. Teachers can enhance students' understanding and engagement by contextualizing lessons around local and current issues, making civic education more applicable and meaningful. Contextualized learning is essential for making civic education relevant. Teachers face challenges localizing content and addressing students' limited exposure to broader societal issues. However, they recognize the value of integrating current events and community issues into lessons. Participant 2 articulates the challenge of engaging students with social issues beyond their immediate experiences, stating, *"Even if some students are aware of these issues, a lack of direct exposure frequently prevents them from fully understanding the consequences."* Participant 3 echoes this sentiment, expressing the difficulty in localizing context due to limited resources, emphasizing the need for more tailored materials that resonate with students' lives. Integrating civic education across various subjects can enhance students' critical thinking and engagement competencies. By embedding civic literacy within the curriculum, educators can encourage discussions on social issues and promote student-led projects that address community needs (Mirra, 2014). This approach makes civic education more applicable and fosters a deeper understanding of societal issues.

Professional Development and Resource Utilization

While the study indicates that students possess a strong understanding of civic knowledge, the challenges in critical thinking skills point to a need for improved instructional strategies. Professional development opportunities can provide teachers with innovative methods to engage students and enhance their civic literacy. Professional development is crucial for equipping teachers with the skills and resources necessary to teach civic literacy effectively. Teachers desire more training and resources to help them integrate civic concepts into their lessons. Participant 1 shares her commitment to professional growth by pursuing a master's degree, stating:

"With this, I can get to learn more teaching strategies which can help me to impart the lesson effectively." (Participant 1)

Participant 2 highlights the importance of online resources and seminars for enhancing teaching practices, suggesting that *"a seminar for teachers like me as a beginner would be a great help."*

Integrating civic literacy skills into the curriculum can alleviate the pressure on teachers by framing civic education as an overarching purpose rather than an additional subject. This perspective allows for incorporating civic learning into existing literacy instruction, making it more manageable for educators (Mirra, 2014). Furthermore, structured exposure to media literacy education can provide the necessary scaffolding for students to engage in civic activities effectively (Cohen & Kahne, 2012).

4.0 Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussion presented, it is concluded that the grade six students exhibit varying levels of civic literacy across dimensions such as personal responsibility, civic responsibility, and leadership efficacy, with a strong understanding of civic knowledge. While there are no significant differences in civic literacy based on sex or religion for most areas, leadership efficacy does show notable variation between Catholic and non-Catholic respondents. Additionally, the integration of civic literacy in social studies lessons relies on real-life experiences in instruction, nurturing accountability and responsibility, contextualized learning, and professional development and resource utilization. This study recommends that social studies educators 1) adopt contextualized teaching methods that link civic concepts to students' lived experiences; 2) integrate a comprehensive civic literacy curriculum into lessons; 3) emphasize critical thinking skills and leadership efficacy; 4) encourage students to actively participate in community service projects and local governance, providing opportunities to apply civic knowledge in practical settings; and 5) regularly assess students' civic literacy development and adapt teaching strategies to address identified gaps, ensuring all students are equipped with necessary skills for active citizenship.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

Author 1 (Aldrin G. Mahilum) – ideation, manuscript writing, supervising, data analysis; Author 2 (Rachel Mae I. Deriada) – writing, administering, transcribing, encoding, data analysis; Author 3 (Marcel E. Baril) – statistics, data analysis, writing and editing of the final manuscript based on the journal's standards.

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7.0 Conflict of Interests

The authors indicate that they have no conflict of interest.

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