

Contextualized Social Studies Instruction and Civic Meaning-Making among Secondary Learners

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the influence of contextualized Social Studies instruction on civic meaning-making among secondary learners at Rang-Ayan National High School, City of Ilagan, Isabela. A cross-sectional explanatory design with construct-based predictive modeling was employed. Participants were selected through proportionate stratified random sampling across grade levels. Data were gathered using a validated questionnaire measuring local relevance, community connection, familiar social issues, local learning materials, civic interpretation, perspective-taking, reflective judgment, and civic responsibility. The instrument obtained an overall content validity index of 0.92 and a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.93. Descriptive statistics and partial least squares structural

equation modeling with bootstrapping were used to analyze the data. Results showed that contextualized Social Studies instruction was favorably assessed, with local relevance receiving the highest rating, while the integration of authentic local materials obtained the lowest. Civic meaning-making was also rated favorably, although perspective-taking remained comparatively weak. The measurement model demonstrated acceptable internal consistency, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Contextualized Social Studies instruction significantly predicted civic meaning-making, with a path coefficient of 0.647 and an effect size of 0.721. It explained 41.90 percent of the variance in civic meaning-making and demonstrated meaningful predictive relevance. The findings confirmed that connecting Social Studies lessons with community realities strengthened learners' civic understanding and responsibility. Greater use of authentic local sources, multiperspective inquiry, and evidence-based civic discussion was recommended.

Keywords: *civic education, civic meaning-making, contextualized instruction, local learning materials, secondary learners, Social Studies*

INTRODUCTION

Social Studies carries a public purpose that extends beyond the memorization of dates, personalities, political institutions, and geographical information. It provides learners with opportunities to examine how societies are formed, how public decisions affect communities, and how citizens may respond to common concerns. Through the study of history, government, economics, geography, and culture, learners begin to understand their place within social institutions and the responsibilities connected with community membership. International civic education frameworks recognize schools as important spaces where young people develop civic knowledge, social attitudes, democratic values, and dispositions toward participation. Citizenship education therefore involves not only learning about government structures but also developing the ability to consider

different perspectives, make ethical judgments, and take part in shared affairs (Schulz et al., 2018; UNESCO Office Bangkok and Regional Bureau for Education in Asia and the Pacific, 2018).

These purposes become especially meaningful during secondary education, when learners encounter social questions related to identity, belonging, justice, authority, rights, and responsibility. Their understanding of citizenship is shaped not only by textbooks and classroom instruction but also by family experiences, community relationships, media exposure, peer discussions, and observations of public life. Civic learning therefore requires more than receiving established information. Learners need opportunities to examine claims, interpret evidence, recognize competing viewpoints, and explain their own positions. Civic reasoning involves making sense of difficult public questions while considering how personal identity, group membership, moral judgment, and social responsibility influence one's interpretation of an issue (Lee et al., 2021). Similarly, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development explains that learners need the capacity to examine local and global concerns, understand the perspectives of others, communicate across differences, and act for collective well-being (OECD, 2020).

The civic purpose of Social Studies may become clearer when instruction connects formal subject matter with places, events, practices, and concerns that learners recognize. Contextualized Social Studies instruction uses local history, community experiences, familiar institutions, cultural practices, and public issues as starting points for understanding broader social concepts. Rather than limiting instruction to the immediate locality, this approach creates a bridge between community life and national or global concerns. A lesson on governance, for example, may begin with the functions of local government before examining national political structures. A discussion of citizenship may draw from community participation, youth activities, environmental concerns, or local decision-making. The Philippine K to 12 policy supports a curriculum that is learner-centered, relevant, responsive, and sensitive to learners' social and cultural conditions. This policy direction allows teachers to adapt learning experiences while maintaining the standards and competencies prescribed in the curriculum (Department of Education, 2019).

Local material can give learners a stronger sense that civic life is not distant from their everyday experiences. Stefaniak et al. (2017) found that teaching local history increased learners' interest in their locality and strengthened their attachment to place. Greater place attachment was also associated with stronger intentions toward civic engagement and higher levels of social trust. These findings suggest that learners may become more attentive to public life when historical and social content is connected with communities that they know. Local examples can make social change, conflict, cooperation, leadership, and collective responsibility easier to recognize. They can also help learners see that ordinary communities have histories worth studying and that citizenship is practiced through decisions and relationships close to home. Localized instruction, however, must still encourage careful analysis so that familiarity does not replace evidence or lead to an uncritical view of community traditions.

Civic meaning-making is central to this process. In the present study, civic meaning-making refers to the way learners interpret civic ideas and public issues, connect them with personal and community experiences, consider evidence and differing viewpoints, and form judgments about belonging, responsibility, and participation. It is not limited to recalling the meaning of citizenship, democracy, or public service. It becomes visible when learners explain why an issue matters, identify who is affected, relate historical experiences to present conditions, and consider possible forms of civic response. Lee et al. (2021) described civic reasoning as a demanding intellectual and social activity that requires individuals to interpret arguments, address divergent positions, and consider the consequences of public decisions. Civic meaning is therefore constructed through reflection and interaction rather than transmitted as a fixed set of statements.

The quality of classroom instruction influences whether learners develop this deeper understanding. Open discussion, carefully framed questions, evidence-based inquiry, and intellectually challenging tasks can encourage learners to explain and reconsider their ideas. Alscher et al. (2022) found that an open classroom climate and cognitively activating instruction were associated with students' willingness to participate in political and civic life. Political interest and civic knowledge helped explain these relationships. This finding suggests that

participation is more likely when learners are invited to think, question, and discuss rather than simply accept information. Social Studies teachers may also use news reports, community documents, photographs, oral accounts, and digital media as learning materials. When these sources are examined critically, learners can identify how public issues are represented, whose perspectives receive attention, and what information may have been omitted. Critical media literacy can therefore support Social Studies learners in evaluating public messages and understanding how media narratives influence civic judgment (Harshman, 2018).

The relevance of this approach is evident in Philippine classrooms, where Araling Panlipunan is expected to connect historical understanding, national identity, social awareness, and responsible citizenship. In a study involving Grade 7 learners in a Philippine public school, Crisolo et al. (2021) reported that students viewed Social Studies as useful in developing community participation, critical and creative thinking, cultural sensitivity, global awareness, and personal values. The authors recommended the stronger use of contextualized, localized, and indigenized teaching practices to make the subject more responsive to learners. Such findings indicate that students recognize the value of Social Studies when lessons allow them to relate academic content to human experiences and social concerns. The challenge for teachers is to ensure that contextualization goes beyond adding local names or examples. Lessons must guide learners toward explaining connections, evaluating evidence, and forming informed civic interpretations.

Existing scholarship has established the contribution of local history, open classroom discussion, cognitive engagement, and civic reasoning to citizenship education. However, these studies provide limited explanation of how secondary learners in a particular Philippine public school make civic meaning when Social Studies instruction draws from familiar community realities. Learners may receive the same curriculum but differ in how they interpret local issues, connect them with broader civic concepts, and view their own responsibilities. Examining these experiences can help determine whether contextualized teaching merely increases familiarity with a lesson or supports a more thoughtful understanding of citizenship and public life. This study therefore seeks to examine contextualized Social Studies instruction and civic meaning-making among secondary learners of Rang-Ayan National High School in the City of Ilagan, Isabela. It aims to generate evidence that may guide teachers in designing lessons that are locally grounded, academically sound, and capable of helping learners understand their place and possible role in civic life.

Literature Review

Contextualized and Place-Based Social Studies Instruction

Contextualized Social Studies instruction begins with the places, experiences, institutions, and concerns that learners recognize, then connects these with broader historical, geographic, economic, and political ideas. Place-based instruction treats the local community as a source of knowledge rather than merely a setting where schooling occurs. In an experimental study involving sixth-grade learners, Akkaya Yılmaz and Karakuş (2018) found that students taught through place-based activities achieved significantly higher scores than those who received conventional classroom instruction. The approach drew learning materials from the learners' surroundings and allowed them to examine social and environmental resources through direct experience. Such findings support the use of local events, community practices, public spaces, oral accounts, and familiar social concerns in Social Studies lessons. Grant et al. (2017) added that inquiry-based Social Studies becomes more meaningful when learners investigate compelling questions, analyze relevant sources, construct evidence-based explanations, and consider informed forms of action. Contextualization should therefore involve more than replacing unfamiliar examples with local names. It requires lessons that use community realities to raise questions, examine evidence, and connect local experiences with larger social processes. When familiar places are treated as subjects of disciplined inquiry, learners can recognize that historical change, governance, citizenship, and collective responsibility are present within their own communities.

Historical Contextualization and Evidence-Based Inquiry

Historical contextualization enables learners to interpret people, decisions, and events according to the conditions of a particular period rather than judging the past solely through present-day assumptions. Huijgen et al. (2017) explained that learners need guidance in placing human actions within their temporal, social, political, and cultural settings. Their Framework for Analyzing the Teaching of Historical Contextualization identified instructional practices that help teachers demonstrate contextual reasoning and involve students in performing it themselves. This distinction is important because a teacher may provide extensive background information without giving learners opportunities to use that information in interpreting evidence. Gómez Carrasco and Miralles Martínez (2016) similarly argued that History and Social Studies assessment should move beyond the recall of names, dates, and isolated facts. Learners should be asked to investigate sources, construct arguments, explain causes and consequences, and justify interpretations. These intellectual activities allow historical knowledge to become part of civic meaning-making because learners begin to see how social conditions shape human choices and public outcomes. In a contextualized classroom, local history can be examined through documents, photographs, community narratives, maps, and material evidence. Learners are then encouraged to compare claims and explain how past experiences continue to influence identity, institutions, and community relationships.

Multiperspectivity and Critical Civic Judgment

Social and historical issues often involve competing interests, unequal experiences, and different interpretations of the same event. Multiperspectivity allows learners to examine these differences without assuming that a single narrative represents every group involved. Kropman et al. (2023) studied Grade 10 learners who read historical texts containing either limited or extensive perspectives. Students who worked with the text containing greater multiperspectivity included more viewpoints in their own representations of the historical event. This suggests that the structure and selection of classroom materials influence how learners understand conflict, identity, and social change. Teachers must therefore choose sources that represent varied social actors while helping students assess the evidence, position, and limitations of each account. Exposure to several viewpoints, however, does not automatically produce sound civic judgment. Kahne and Bowyer (2017) found that young people's evaluation of political information was affected by whether a claim agreed with their prior beliefs. Political knowledge alone did not consistently improve their accuracy judgments, while exposure to media literacy education produced better results. Civic meaning-making consequently requires learners to examine not only what a source says but also why they are inclined to accept or reject it. Lessons that combine multiperspectivity, source criticism, and reflective discussion can help secondary learners distinguish evidence-based interpretation from preference, loyalty, or misinformation.

Civic Meaning-Making and Participatory Dispositions

Civic meaning-making develops when learners connect knowledge about society with their own sense of belonging, responsibility, efficacy, and possible participation. Formal civic coursework can provide useful knowledge, but course exposure by itself does not guarantee lasting public engagement. Weinschenk and Dawes (2022), using longitudinal data and academic records, found that the apparent relationship between high school civic education and adult voter turnout became limited after individual and family characteristics were considered. Their findings indicate that the effects of civic education depend on more than the number or type of courses completed. Classroom experiences must allow learners to interpret public concerns, express reasoned positions, and recognize that their choices may affect other people. Holbein et al. (2020) also found that psychosocial capacities such as perseverance were associated with school engagement, political efficacy, intention to vote, and volunteerism among young people. Civic learning therefore involves both intellectual understanding and the development of dispositions that support sustained participation. Social Studies instruction may contribute to these dispositions when learners investigate community issues, discuss possible responses, collaborate with classmates, and reflect on the consequences of public decisions. Through these experiences, citizenship becomes more than

an abstract legal status. It becomes a way of understanding one's relationship with the community and considering how knowledge, judgment, and action may be directed toward shared concerns.

METHODS

Research Design

The study employed a cross-sectional explanatory design with construct-based predictive modeling. This design was selected because the investigation sought to determine how contextualized Social Studies instruction was associated with and predicted civic meaning-making among secondary learners at a specific point in the school year. Rather than limiting the analysis to a simple test of association, the design treated both major variables as multidimensional constructs composed of related indicators. Contextualized Social Studies instruction was examined through learners' experiences of local relevance, community connection, use of familiar social issues, and integration of local materials, while civic meaning-making was examined through civic interpretation, perspective-taking, reflective judgment, and perceived civic responsibility. The design allowed the study to estimate both the quality of the measurement model and the predictive relationship between the two constructs without manipulating classroom conditions.

Research Locale

The study was conducted at Rang-Ayan National High School in Rang-Ayan, City of Ilagan, Isabela. The school served secondary learners from communities with social, cultural, and civic experiences that could be connected with the content of Araling Panlipunan. Its location provided an appropriate setting for examining how learners experienced lessons that incorporated community events, local institutions, cultural practices, environmental concerns, and issues affecting everyday life. The locale was selected because Social Studies instruction in the school provided opportunities for teachers to relate curriculum competencies to the learners' immediate surroundings while maintaining alignment with national learning standards.

Participants and Sampling Technique

The participants were secondary learners officially enrolled at Rang-Ayan National High School during the period of data collection. Learners who had received Social Studies or Araling Panlipunan instruction during the school year were considered eligible for inclusion. Proportionate stratified random sampling was applied to obtain representation from the different grade levels and class sections. Each grade level served as a stratum, and the required participants were selected randomly from the official class lists. The proportional allocation ensured that larger grade-level groups received a correspondingly larger share of the sample while smaller groups remained represented. Learners who participated in the pilot testing were excluded from the final survey administration to prevent prior familiarity with the instrument from affecting their responses.

Research Instrument

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed specifically for the constructs examined in the study. The first section measured contextualized Social Studies instruction through statements concerning the use of community-based examples, local historical and social materials, familiar civic issues, culturally relevant learning activities, and connections between classroom content and learners lived experiences. The second section measured civic meaning-making through statements concerning interpretation of civic issues, recognition of multiple viewpoints, connection of public concerns with community life, formation of reasoned judgments, and understanding of civic responsibility. Responses were recorded through a five-point agreement scale.

The initial instrument was reviewed by specialists in Social Studies education, educational research, and measurement and evaluation. The reviewers examined each statement for relevance, clarity, appropriateness, and alignment with the identified dimensions. Their assessments produced an overall content validity index of 0.92, which indicated strong agreement regarding the adequacy of the items. Statements identified as repetitive, vague,

or overly technical were revised before pilot administration. The revised questionnaire was pilot-tested among secondary learners from a public school with characteristics comparable to those of the research locale. These learners were not included in the main study. The pilot results produced a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.93 for the full instrument. The contextualized Social Studies instruction scale obtained an alpha coefficient of 0.91, while the civic meaning-making scale obtained an alpha coefficient of 0.90. The coefficients indicated high internal consistency. Corrected item-total correlations were also examined, and items that failed to meet the acceptable criterion were revised or removed before the final version was administered.

Data Gathering

Permission to conduct the study was secured from the appropriate school authorities before any data were collected. After approval had been granted, the researcher coordinated with the school head and Social Studies teachers to determine suitable schedules that would not interfere with examinations, major classroom activities, or other school programs. The purpose, procedure, voluntary nature, and expected participation requirements of the study were explained to the eligible learners.

Parental or guardian consent and learner assent were obtained before the questionnaire was administered. The selected participants received uniform instructions and were informed that the survey was not an academic test and would not affect their grades, class standing, or relationship with their teachers. The questionnaires were completed in an orderly classroom setting under the supervision of the researcher or an authorized research assistant. No subject teacher handled the completed forms to reduce pressure and social desirability in the participants' responses. After collection, the questionnaires were checked for completeness without identifying the learners by name. Valid responses were coded, encoded, verified, and stored in a password-protected electronic file before statistical analysis was conducted.

Data Analysis

The data were examined through descriptive and variance-based structural modeling procedures. The weighted mean and standard deviation were computed to describe the participants' assessments of contextualized Social Studies instruction and civic meaning-making. Skewness and kurtosis values were inspected to identify serious distributional concerns, while missing responses and unusual response patterns were screened before the main analysis.

Partial least squares structural equation modeling was used as the principal statistical treatment. This procedure was selected because it allowed the study to assess the reliability and validity of the constructs and estimate their predictive relationship within one analytical framework. The measurement model was evaluated through indicator loadings, composite reliability, ρ_A , average variance extracted, and the heterotrait-monotrait ratio. Indicator loadings of at least 0.70 were preferred, although theoretically important items with acceptable contributions to construct reliability were retained when justified. Composite reliability and ρ_A values of at least 0.70 were treated as acceptable. An average variance extracted value of at least 0.50 indicated convergent validity, while heterotrait-monotrait values below the accepted threshold supported discriminant validity.

The structural model was assessed through the standardized path coefficient, coefficient of determination, effect size, variance inflation factor, and predictive relevance. A bootstrapping procedure with resampling was performed to test the statistical significance and confidence interval of the path from contextualized Social Studies instruction to civic meaning-making. The coefficient of determination indicated the amount of variance in civic meaning-making explained by contextualized instruction. The effect size showed the practical contribution of the predictor, while the Stone-Geisser predictive relevance value was examined to determine whether the model demonstrated meaningful out-of-sample predictive capability. Statistical decisions were made at the 0.05 level of significance.

Ethical Consideration

The study observed the principles of voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality, privacy, fairness, and protection from harm. Participation was not required as part of any class activity, and learners were

informed that they could decline or withdraw without penalty. Because the participants were secondary learners, written consent from parents or guardians and assent from the learners were secured before participation.

The questionnaire did not request names, learner reference numbers, contact details, or other direct identifiers. Codes were used solely for data organization, and individual responses were not disclosed to teachers, classmates, parents, or school personnel. Findings were reported only in aggregated form. The collected records were stored securely and were accessed only for legitimate research purposes. The instrument avoided questions that could embarrass, stigmatize, or expose the learners to social, academic, or emotional harm. The researcher also ensured that participation did not affect grades, disciplinary decisions, access to school services, or classroom treatment. All data were interpreted honestly, and no results were altered, concealed, or selectively presented to support a preferred conclusion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. *Assessment of Contextualized Social Studies Instruction*

Dimension	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation	Rank
Local relevance of lessons	4.24	0.55	Strongly Agree	1
Community connection	4.05	0.61	Agree	2
Use of familiar social issues	3.96	0.66	Agree	3
Integration of local materials	3.39	0.76	Moderately Agree	4
Overall	3.91	0.58	Agree	

Scale: 4.21 to 5.00 = Strongly Agree; 3.41 to 4.20 = Agree; 2.61 to 3.40 = Moderately Agree; 1.81 to 2.60 = Disagree; 1.00 to 1.80 = Strongly Disagree.

Table 1 shows that contextualized Social Studies instruction was generally practiced at an agreeable level, as indicated by the overall mean of 3.91 and standard deviation of 0.58. The relatively small overall standard deviation showed that the learners had fairly consistent perceptions of their classroom experiences. Local relevance of lessons obtained the highest mean of 4.24, which indicated that learners strongly recognized examples, situations, and explanations related to places and experiences familiar to them. Community connection also received a favorable assessment, suggesting that lessons were commonly associated with community conditions, institutions, and concerns. These results indicated that Social Studies instruction had successfully made curricular content more understandable by linking it with the learners' immediate environment.

The integration of local materials received the lowest mean of 3.39 and was interpreted as moderately agree. This result revealed a practical weakness despite the favorable overall assessment. Lessons may have referred to local situations, but the regular use of community documents, local maps, photographs, oral accounts, artifacts, news reports, and locally produced texts remained limited. Thus, contextualization appeared to depend more on verbal examples provided by teachers than on the systematic examination of authentic local sources. Huijgen et al. (2017) emphasized that contextual understanding required more than the provision of background information because learners also needed opportunities to use contextual evidence in forming interpretations. The finding suggested that the instructional program was strong in relating lessons to familiar experiences but still needed a more organized collection and use of local source materials.

Table 2. *Assessment of Civic Meaning-Making among Secondary Learners*

Dimension	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation	Rank
Perceived civic responsibility	4.11	0.59	Agree	1
Civic interpretation	4.03	0.61	Agree	2
Reflective civic judgment	3.79	0.68	Agree	3

Dimension	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation	Rank
Perspective-taking	3.35	0.74	Moderately Agree	4
Overall	3.82	0.60	Agree	

Table 2 indicates that the learners demonstrated a generally favorable level of civic meaning-making, with an overall mean of 3.82 and standard deviation of 0.60. Perceived civic responsibility ranked first, with a mean of 4.11. The learners generally understood that they had responsibilities toward their school, community, and society. They also recognized that community concerns required attention, cooperation, and responsible action. Civic interpretation ranked second, which showed that learners were generally capable of connecting Social Studies concepts with public issues and community experiences.

Perspective-taking obtained the lowest mean of 3.35 and was the only dimension interpreted as moderately agree. This result showed that the learners had greater difficulty considering explanations and positions that differed from their own experiences or established beliefs. They appeared more confident in identifying civic duties than in examining why individuals and social groups might interpret the same issue differently. This weakness was important because meaningful civic judgment depended on the capacity to compare perspectives, examine evidence, and avoid forming conclusions solely on the basis of familiarity or personal preference. Kropman et al. (2023) found that learners who studied historical texts with greater multiperspectivity represented more viewpoints in their explanations. Kahne and Bowyer (2017) also demonstrated that prior beliefs could influence young people's judgments about the accuracy of public claims. The present result indicated a need for classroom tasks that required learners to compare accounts, defend interpretations with evidence, and respond respectfully to opposing civic positions.

Table 3. *Measurement Model Reliability and Convergent Validity Results*

Construct or dimension	Indicator Loading Range	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted	Decision
Local relevance of lessons	0.744 to 0.861	0.853	0.861	0.899	0.692	Retained
Community connection	0.721 to 0.842	0.821	0.828	0.881	0.650	Retained
Use of familiar social issues	0.703 to 0.831	0.804	0.810	0.870	0.626	Retained
Integration of local materials	0.701 to 0.814	0.781	0.789	0.853	0.592	Retained
Civic interpretation	0.738 to 0.858	0.842	0.848	0.894	0.679	Retained
Perspective-taking	0.704 to 0.832	0.796	0.804	0.867	0.620	Retained
Reflective civic judgment	0.721 to 0.846	0.817	0.823	0.878	0.642	Retained
Perceived civic responsibility	0.752 to 0.879	0.862	0.869	0.905	0.705	Retained

The measurement model produced satisfactory reliability and convergent validity results. All indicator loadings ranged from 0.701 to 0.879, showing that the observed questionnaire items made acceptable contributions to their assigned dimensions. None of the indicators required removal because all loading values reached the preferred minimum level. Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.781 to 0.862, while rho_A values ranged from 0.789 to 0.869. These coefficients showed that the indicators within each dimension consistently measured the same underlying idea.

Composite reliability values ranged from 0.853 to 0.905, which further supported the internal consistency of the scales. The average variance extracted values ranged from 0.592 to 0.705. Each value exceeded 0.50, indicating that the corresponding construct explained more than half of the variance in its indicators. The

integration of local materials dimension produced the lowest reliability and convergent validity coefficients, although its values remained acceptable. This pattern was consistent with the descriptive result in Table 1, where the dimension also received the lowest mean. Its weaker performance may have resulted from differences in the types and frequency of local materials encountered by learners across classes. Based on established PLS-SEM criteria, loading values close to or above 0.70, reliability coefficients above 0.70, and average variance extracted values above 0.50 supported an acceptable reflective measurement model (Hair et al., 2022).

Table 4. *Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio Results*

Construct Pair	HTMT Value	Criterion	Decision
Local relevance and community connection	0.842	Below 0.85	Established
Community connection and familiar social issues	0.816	Below 0.85	Established
Familiar social issues and local materials	0.788	Below 0.85	Established
Civic interpretation and perspective-taking	0.831	Below 0.85	Established
Perspective-taking and reflective judgment	0.824	Below 0.85	Established
Reflective judgment and civic responsibility	0.795	Below 0.85	Established
Contextualized Social Studies instruction and civic meaning-making	0.781	Below 0.85	Established

Table 4 presents the heterotrait-monotrait ratio results used to establish discriminant validity. The values ranged from 0.781 to 0.842 and remained below the conservative criterion of 0.85. These results indicated that the dimensions were related but did not measure identical concepts. For instance, local relevance and community connection were closely associated, but they represented distinguishable aspects of instruction. Local relevance concerned the familiarity of lesson content, while community connection involved the relationship of learning activities with actual community structures and concerns.

The HTMT value of 0.781 between the two major constructs confirmed that contextualized Social Studies instruction and civic meaning-making were empirically distinct. This distinction was necessary because the study proposed that instructional experiences predicted how learners interpreted civic life rather than treating the two variables as interchangeable. The result supported the use of both constructs in the structural model. An HTMT value of 0.85 or lower is commonly treated as evidence that conceptually related constructs retain sufficient distinctiveness within a PLS-SEM model (Hair et al., 2022).

Table 5. *Structural Path from Contextualized Social Studies Instruction to Civic Meaning-Making*

Structural Path	Path Coefficient	Standard Error	t-value	p-value	95% Confidence Interval	Effect Size	Decision
Contextualized Social Studies instruction → Civic meaning-making	0.647	0.060	10.783	< 0.001	0.526 to 0.754	0.721	Significant

Bootstrapping was performed through 5,000 resamples.

Table 5 reveals that contextualized Social Studies instruction had a positive and statistically significant effect on civic meaning-making. The standardized path coefficient of 0.647 showed that stronger experiences of contextualized instruction were associated with higher levels of civic interpretation, perspective-taking, reflective judgment, and civic responsibility. The t-value of 10.783 exceeded the critical value, while the p-value was below 0.001. The bootstrapped confidence interval ranged from 0.526 to 0.754 and did not include zero, further confirming the stability of the positive relationship. The null hypothesis stating that contextualized Social Studies instruction did not significantly predict civic meaning-making was therefore rejected.

The effect size of 0.721 indicated a substantial contribution of contextualized instruction to civic meaning-making. The finding showed that lessons became more civically meaningful when learners could connect academic ideas with familiar places, community experiences, recognizable institutions, and issues affecting their

everyday lives. Contextualization may have allowed learners to understand civic concepts as matters experienced within communities rather than as definitions confined to textbooks. However, the finding should not be interpreted to mean that the mere inclusion of local examples automatically developed civic judgment. The lower results for local materials and perspective-taking showed that the quality of contextualization still depended on how learners examined evidence and encountered differing viewpoints. Alscher et al. (2022) found that cognitively activating civic instruction and an open classroom climate were associated with learners' willingness to participate in civic and political life. The present finding similarly indicated that meaningful instructional connections supported civic development when learners were given opportunities to interpret, question, and discuss public concerns.

Table 6. *Explanatory and Predictive Performance of the Structural Model*

Endogenous Construct	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Q ² Predictive Relevance	Predictor VIF	Interpretation
Civic meaning-making	0.419	0.416	0.287	1.000	Moderate explanatory power and predictive relevance

Table 6 shows that contextualized Social Studies instruction explained 41.90 percent of the variance in civic meaning-making. The adjusted coefficient of determination remained close to the unadjusted result at 0.416, suggesting that the model's explanatory performance was not substantially inflated. This result represented a meaningful level of explanatory power for a model involving educational perceptions and civic interpretation. It showed that contextualized instruction accounted for an important portion of differences in how learners understood public concerns, considered civic responsibilities, and formed judgments about community life.

The Q² value of 0.287 was above zero and indicated that the model had predictive relevance for civic meaning-making. Thus, the model did more than describe relationships within the analyzed responses. It also demonstrated an acceptable capacity to predict the learners' civic meaning-making scores from their experiences of contextualized instruction. The variance inflation factor of 1.000 showed no multicollinearity concern because the model contained one principal predictor. Although the model explained a substantial portion of civic meaning-making, 58.10 percent of its variance remained attributable to factors not included in the model. These factors may have included family discussion, peer relationships, media exposure, prior civic knowledge, classroom discussion quality, learner interest, and opportunities for community participation. The unexplained variance also clarified why contextualized instruction should not be regarded as the sole basis of civic development.

CONCLUSION

Contextualized Social Studies instruction significantly strengthened civic meaning-making among secondary learners, particularly when lessons were connected with familiar community experiences, local issues, and recognizable social institutions. Learners showed a favorable understanding of civic responsibility, interpretation, and reflective judgment, while the positive predictive relationship confirmed that meaningful classroom connections contributed substantially to how they understood public concerns and their role in community life. However, the limited use of authentic local materials and the moderate level of perspective-taking indicated that contextualization was not yet fully supported by source-based inquiry and exposure to differing viewpoints. It is therefore recommended that Social Studies teachers develop and regularly use localized learning resources such as community maps, oral histories, local documents, photographs, news reports, and accounts from various social groups. Classroom activities should also include structured debates, source comparison, community issue analysis, and evidence-based discussions that allow learners to examine opposing positions respectfully. School administrators may support these efforts by providing professional development on contextualized and inquiry-based instruction, establishing a repository of local instructional materials, and encouraging partnerships

with community leaders, cultural workers, and local government offices. Future studies may examine other factors that influence civic meaning-making, including family discussion, media exposure, classroom climate, civic knowledge, and participation in community activities.

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