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Local Heritage Integration and Place-Based Pedagogical Practices Among Public Elementary School Teachers in Social Science Education

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ABSTRACT

Anchored on the need to make Social Science education more culturally grounded and community-responsive, this investigation determined the relationship between local heritage integration and place-based pedagogical practices among public elementary school teachers in Cabagan, Isabela. It employed a cross-sectional explanatory survey design with a latent-variable approach. Data were gathered through a validated researcher-made questionnaire with strong internal consistency, as shown by an overall Cronbach's alpha of 0.93. Weighted mean, standard deviation, and Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling were used to analyze the data. Findings revealed that teachers demonstrated a high level of local heritage integration and a high level of place-based pedagogical practices. Teachers were particularly strong in aligning local content with curriculum competencies and in linking lessons to pupils' immediate surroundings. However, moderate results were noted in community interaction, outdoor or site-based learning, and the use of local elders and heritage resources, indicating that implementation remained uneven and somewhat classroom-bound. Measurement model results confirmed acceptable construct validity and reliability. Structural model analysis further showed that local heritage integration significantly and positively influenced place-based pedagogical practices, suggesting that stronger heritage-based instruction corresponded with stronger place-responsive teaching. The study concluded that while teachers had already embraced contextualized Social Science instruction, more sustained support was needed to deepen experiential, inquiry-based, and community-embedded practices in elementary classrooms.

Keywords: *local heritage integration, place-based pedagogy, Social Science education, public elementary school teachers, contextualized instruction, Cabagan Isabela*

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, education has increasingly been called to become more responsive to the lived realities of learners and the communities where schools are situated. This shift is especially important in Social Science education, where concepts such as identity, citizenship, culture, governance, and history are not meant to remain abstract ideas in textbooks alone. They become more meaningful when they are connected to the places learners inhabit, the practices they observe, and the heritage they inherit. UNESCO has emphasized that intangible cultural heritage represents the living expressions of identity that communities continuously recreate and preserve. More importantly, UNESCO's recent work on living

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heritage and education has shown that bringing heritage into formal learning can strengthen learners' identity and sense of belonging, bring schools and communities closer together, and improve learning outcomes across subject areas while also supporting peace, active citizenship, and sustainable development (UNESCO, 2025a; UNESCO, 2025b).

This perspective strongly aligns with the logic of place-based pedagogy. Place-based education is grounded in the view that learning becomes more relevant, engaging, and meaningful when it is linked to local environmental, cultural, and community contexts. Recent scholarship describes place-based education as an approach that situates instruction within learners lived experiences and local realities, allowing them to see the connection between what is taught in school and what actually happens in their communities (Mercier et al., 2025; Scherer et al., 2025). Rather than treating knowledge as detached from everyday life, place-based pedagogy invites teachers to use local stories, local issues, community practices, heritage sites, and cultural memory as instructional anchors. In this way, teaching does not merely transmit information. It cultivates belonging, relevance, and a more reflective understanding of one's social world.

The significance of such an approach becomes even clearer in Social Science education because this learning area is inherently concerned with helping learners understand society and their role within it. International evidence from the IEA International Civic and Citizenship Education Study showed that civic and citizenship education is commonly delivered through subjects related to the human and social sciences, and that teachers and school leaders view critical and independent thinking, understanding rights and responsibilities, and respect for diversity as central aims of instruction (IEA, 2023). The same body of evidence also noted that positive classroom climates for discussing civic issues and opportunities to engage with external groups are associated with stronger civic learning. UNESCO likewise explains that citizenship education should nurture critical thinking, empathy, collaboration, and active participation in addressing local, national, and global concerns (UNESCO, 2025c; UNESCO, 2026). These ideas suggest that Social Science teaching becomes more powerful when it is dialogic, contextualized, and socially grounded.

In the Philippines, this educational direction is not foreign to policy and curriculum reform. DepEd has long recognized that curriculum contextualization, localization, and indigenization are essential to making learning relevant to diverse learners and communities. DepEd Order No. 35, s. 2016 explicitly explains that contextualization involves linking curriculum content and instructional strategies to learners' experiences, interests, aspirations, and the wider school community. It further notes that by connecting new content to familiar local experiences, learning becomes more efficient and relevant, and that learning materials may be modified to reflect the unique conditions of a locality (Department of Education, 2016). At the same time, the current direction of Araling Panlipunan under the MATATAG curriculum emphasizes civic competence, local and global issues affecting learners and their communities, and the role of culture in shaping local and national identity (Department of Education, n.d.). These policy and curricular directions provide strong justification for examining how teachers actually translate contextualization into classroom practice, especially through local heritage integration and place-based pedagogy.

Publicly documented heritage features of the wider area include the continuing celebration of Cabagan's Kalesa, Kabayu, Kalaseru Festival, which pays homage to the town's agrarian roots and symbolizes work, mobility, and resilience in local life. Recent public reports have also highlighted Cabagan's municipal museum and the Irraya exhibit as efforts to preserve and communicate local history and identity. In nearby San Pablo, the San Pablo Church, built in 1624, stands as the oldest church in Isabela and remains a historical landmark in the province (Philippine Information Agency, 2025, 2026; Province of Isabela, n.d.). These are not merely tourism or commemorative assets. In educational terms, they are potential entry points for helping elementary learners connect social science concepts with the history, memory, symbols, and narratives of their own place.

Despite these strong conceptual, curricular, and local foundations, there remains a practical question of how far local heritage is actually being integrated into Social Science teaching and how consistently public elementary school teachers employ place-based pedagogical practices in their

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classrooms. In many school settings, the ideals of contextualized education are acknowledged in principle, yet their actual classroom translation may vary depending on teacher preparation, access to local resources, school support, instructional confidence, and familiarity with local history and culture. This makes the present study both relevant and timely. By focusing on public elementary school teachers in Cabagan, Isabela, the study sought to determine how local heritage integration and place-based pedagogical practices were manifested in Social Science education. In doing so, it aimed to contribute not only to instructional improvement but also to the larger goal of making Social Science learning more rooted, meaningful, community-connected, and identity-forming for young learners.

Literature Review

Local Heritage as an Educational Resource

Local heritage has increasingly been recognized as a meaningful educational resource because it connects classroom learning with the lived experiences, traditions, stories, and identities of communities. UNESCO defined living heritage as practices, expressions, knowledge, and skills that communities recognize as part of their cultural inheritance and continuously recreate across generations. When integrated into education, heritage does not only preserve cultural memory but also enriches teaching by making learning more relevant, participatory, and rooted in community life (UNESCO, 2025a, 2025b). This perspective is especially valuable in elementary education, where learners build their earliest structured understanding of identity, locality, and belonging. Heritage-based teaching allows children to see that culture is not distant or abstract, but something present in family traditions, local festivals, language practices, oral histories, and community spaces. Such a view strengthens the educational value of local knowledge while also affirming that schools are part of a broader social and cultural ecosystem.

Recent literature also indicates that heritage education contributes to the construction of cultural identity and to learners' appreciation of social continuity. Heritage resources help students understand the relationship between past and present and encourage them to interpret their own place within a historical and cultural narrative. In this sense, local heritage is not simply a teaching aid. It becomes a pedagogical bridge between the learner's immediate world and wider social concepts such as identity, diversity, memory, and citizenship (Liu, 2023; UNESCO, 2025a).

Place-Based Pedagogy and Contextualized Learning

Place-based pedagogy is grounded in the idea that education becomes more meaningful when it draws from the local environment, community realities, and cultural context of learners. Rather than isolating learning from the places students actually know, this approach positions the locality as a source of content, inquiry, and reflection. Contemporary research describes place-based education as an approach that integrates environmental, cultural, historical, and social dimensions of the community into the teaching process, thereby increasing relevance and learner engagement (Mercier et al., 2025; Scherer et al., 2025). In practice, this means that teachers use nearby sites, local narratives, community issues, and culturally familiar materials to enrich lesson delivery and deepen conceptual understanding.

The educational value of place-based learning has also been supported by earlier empirical work. Yılmaz and Koca (2018) found that place-based teaching in social studies improved student achievement, suggesting that connecting instruction with local realities can positively affect learning performance. Miller and Twum (2017), meanwhile, showed that teachers who implemented place-based education viewed it as a way of making instruction more authentic and connected to learners' lives, although they also encountered structural and logistical difficulties in practice. These findings suggest that place-based pedagogy is not merely a theoretical preference. It has both instructional potential and practical implications for teachers, particularly in subjects that aim to interpret social life and human environments.

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More recent studies also show that place-based education remains highly relevant in rural and community-centered contexts. Shi et al. (2025) found that local culture often remains underused in teaching because of weak integration into instructional materials and a lack of localized professional support for teachers.

Social Science Education in the Elementary Level

Elementary Social Science education occupies a crucial position in helping learners understand people, places, institutions, culture, history, and civic life. The National Council for the Social Studies emphasized that elementary social studies should be meaningful, integrative, value-based, challenging, and active. It should help children build understanding from their immediate communities outward, enabling them to interpret social life through inquiry, multiple perspectives, and real-world connections (National Council for the Social Studies [NCSS], 2024). This understanding affirms that the elementary years are not too early for serious engagement with social ideas. On the contrary, they are the stage when foundational notions of identity, fairness, participation, and belonging begin to develop.

In the Philippine setting, Social Science education, particularly Araling Panlipunan, has likewise been framed as essential in developing informed, reflective, and socially responsible learners. Recent international analysis of civic and citizenship education has shown that subjects under the social sciences remain central venues for building learners' civic understanding, respect for diversity, critical thinking, and participatory awareness (IEA, 2023). This reinforces the idea that Social Science teaching must move beyond rote memorization of facts and instead engage learners with contexts that are socially meaningful. Since elementary learners first encounter social institutions and identities through their immediate surroundings, local heritage and place-based pedagogical practices become especially relevant for strengthening the subject's educational purpose.

Curriculum Contextualization, Localization, and Indigenization in the Philippine Setting

The integration of local heritage into teaching is strongly supported by Philippine basic education policy. DepEd Order No. 35, s. 2016 explained that curriculum contextualization involves matching curriculum content and instructional strategies to learners' realities, interests, and community conditions. The same policy noted that localization and indigenization help make teaching more relevant and effective because they allow schools to relate formal curriculum content to local experiences and culturally grounded knowledge (Department of Education, 2016). This policy direction is important because it establishes that contextualized education is not optional enrichment alone, but part of the broader effort to improve the quality and relevance of learning in basic education.

This orientation continued in later DepEd guidance on curriculum contextualization strategies, which reaffirmed localization and indigenization as ways of adjusting instruction to learners' communities, histories, and available resources (Department of Education, 2020). In essence, these policies encourage teachers to become interpreters of curriculum rather than mere transmitters of prescribed content. For Social Science teachers, this means they are expected to connect national competencies with local historical experiences, cultural practices, and community narratives.

Heritage Integration in Social Science Teaching

The literature increasingly suggests that heritage integration in Social Science teaching supports more contextual, responsive, and identity-affirming learning. A recent study by Niman (2025) found that embedding local culture in elementary social studies can support students' social-emotional development by grounding instruction in familiar practices, values, and narratives. The study argued that social studies learning often becomes too normative or abstract when it is detached from learners' actual contexts. When local culture is brought into the classroom, however, the subject becomes more relational and meaningful, enabling students to connect social concepts to their own communities and experiences. This is especially

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important in elementary classrooms, where children learn best when concepts are linked to familiar symbols, routines, and local stories.

Similarly, Armiyati et al. (2025) highlighted the instructional promise of incorporating living heritage into history learning, noting that heritage-based instruction can support inclusivity and enrich learners' classroom experiences. Although their focus was history learning, the implications are directly relevant to Social Science education more broadly because both areas depend on interpretation, context, and human experience. Heritage integration enables teaching to move from the mere telling of historical or social facts toward a more situated exploration of how communities remember, preserve, and transmit meaning.

Teacher Practices in Implementing Place-Based and Heritage-Oriented Instruction

Teachers occupy a central role in translating heritage and place into actual classroom experiences. Their pedagogical choices determine whether local resources remain peripheral references or become meaningful components of learning. Research has shown that teachers who adopt place-based education often do so by connecting lessons to local issues, community members, out-of-school experiences, and culturally familiar materials (Miller & Twum, 2017). These practices help learners see continuity between school knowledge and everyday life. Yet teacher implementation also depends on confidence, familiarity with local content, and the ability to design learning tasks that are both curriculum-aligned and context-sensitive.

Recent scholarship further suggests that teacher commitment to place-based education is influenced by motivation, beliefs, and support conditions. Li et al. (2026) found that teachers' willingness to implement place-based education is shaped by cognitive, affective, and behavioral factors. This suggests that teacher practice is not simply a matter of policy compliance but is also connected to teacher identity, perceived value of the approach, and the supportiveness of the professional environment.

Educational Benefits of Local Heritage Integration and Place-Based Pedagogy

A consistent theme in the literature is that local heritage integration and place-based pedagogy improve the relevance and depth of learning. UNESCO (2025a) emphasized that living heritage in education can enhance the quality of learning, enliven teaching experiences, and help sustain community knowledge across generations. This suggests that heritage-based teaching serves both educational and cultural purposes. It makes instruction more engaging for learners while also supporting intergenerational transmission of knowledge and identity.

Research on place-based learning also points to benefits related to engagement, agency, and social understanding. Mercier et al. (2025) noted that place-based projects can foster identity development and learner agency by grounding instruction in local concerns. In elementary social studies, this has particular relevance because learners are expected not only to know facts about society but also to interpret their role within a community. When children encounter lessons through local heritage, nearby sites, local traditions, or community narratives, they are more likely to develop curiosity, ownership of learning, and a stronger sense of place. These outcomes support the larger goals of Social Science education, which include social awareness, civic orientation, and informed participation.

Challenges in the Use of Local Heritage and Place-Based Practices

Although the literature strongly supports contextualized and heritage-based instruction, implementation remains uneven. Teachers often face practical constraints such as limited localized materials, insufficient professional development, weak institutional support, and lack of time for designing context-specific lessons. Shi et al. (2025) found that the limited presence of local knowledge in formal materials and the absence of localized support mechanisms hindered the implementation of place-based education. Miller and Twum (2017) also reported that teachers experienced challenges related to logistics,

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planning demands, and structural conditions when implementing place-based approaches. These recurring concerns suggest that while teachers may value heritage-rich and place-responsive pedagogy, sustaining such practices requires more than individual effort. It also requires organizational and curricular support.

In the Philippines, this challenge becomes more important because contextualization policies presume a degree of teacher initiative and local resourcefulness. Yet not all teachers may feel equally prepared to identify heritage resources, interpret local history, or transform community knowledge into structured instructional activities. This creates a gap between policy intent and pedagogical reality. For this reason, examining the level of local heritage integration and place-based pedagogical practices among public elementary school teachers becomes a necessary scholarly concern. It helps determine whether contextualization remains a formal directive or has become an actual teaching practice in Social Science education.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a cross-sectional explanatory survey design anchored in a latent-variable approach. The design was selected because the study did not merely seek to describe the extent of local heritage integration and place-based pedagogical practices among public elementary school teachers in Social Science education, but also aimed to examine how these constructs were associated at the level of their underlying dimensions. Unlike a purely descriptive survey, the explanatory survey design allowed the study to move beyond surface-level reporting and investigate whether variations in teachers' heritage-based instructional integration corresponded with differences in their place-based pedagogical practices.

To strengthen the analytical depth of the inquiry, the study treated the major variables as multidimensional constructs reflected through several indicators. This approach was appropriate because both local heritage integration and place-based pedagogy are not single, isolated behaviors. Rather, they are expressed through interrelated teaching actions, classroom decisions, and contextual instructional strategies. Thus, the design provided a more refined basis for examining patterns within the data and for generating findings that were instructionally meaningful in the setting of Social Science education.

Research Locale

The study was conducted in Cabagan, Isabela, a municipality in the Province of Isabela known for its strong agricultural identity, evolving local cultural life, and public-school communities that remained closely linked with local history and everyday community experiences. The locale was considered appropriate for the study because Cabagan provided a meaningful context for examining local heritage integration and place-based pedagogical practices. Its social environment, local traditions, community narratives, and historical markers offered a natural setting in which Social Science education could potentially draw from place, memory, and cultural experience.

The public elementary schools in the municipality served as suitable instructional spaces where teachers translated curriculum standards into classroom practice. Since Social Science education at the elementary level is expected to connect learning with the learner's environment, community, and social realities, Cabagan offered a relevant and grounded setting for investigating how teachers incorporated local heritage into instruction and how they practiced place-based pedagogy in actual classroom contexts.

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Participants and Sampling Technique

The participants of the study were public elementary school teachers handling Social Science-related instruction in the selected schools of Cabagan, Isabela. These teachers were considered the most appropriate sources of data because they were directly involved in classroom planning, lesson delivery, contextualization of content, and the use of community-linked instructional practices in the elementary setting. A simple random sampling technique was employed in selecting the respondents. This method gave all eligible teachers an equal chance of being included in the study. The list of qualified public elementary school teachers served as the sampling frame, and the respondents were chosen randomly from this list. This procedure helped reduce selection bias and allowed the researcher to gather responses from teachers in a fair and objective manner.

Research Instrument

Data were gathered through a researcher-developed structured questionnaire designed specifically for the objectives of the study. The instrument consisted of two major sections corresponding to the principal variables: local heritage integration and place-based pedagogical practices in Social Science education. The first section measured the extent to which teachers incorporated local history, cultural practices, community narratives, indigenous knowledge, local landmarks, and heritage-related examples into lesson planning and classroom instruction. The second section measured the extent to which teachers employed pedagogical practices rooted in place, such as the use of local contexts, community-based examples, learner-environment connections, inquiry anchored in local issues, and instruction grounded in the realities of the surrounding community.

The questionnaire was written using clear and context-sensitive statements to suit the professional background of teacher-respondents. A five-point Likert scale was used to capture the degree of practice demonstrated in each statement. The instrument underwent content and face validation by a panel of experts, composed of specialists in educational research, Social Science education, and curriculum contextualization. Their comments were used to refine item wording, remove ambiguity, strengthen alignment with the study variables, and improve the overall clarity of the instrument.

Before the actual administration, the instrument was pilot-tested among teachers who shared characteristics similar to the intended participants but were not included in the final study. Results of the pilot test showed that the instrument demonstrated strong internal consistency. The overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.93, indicating excellent reliability. Specifically, the subscale for local heritage integration yielded an alpha of 0.91, while the subscale for place-based pedagogical practices obtained an alpha of 0.92. These results indicated that the items were sufficiently consistent and dependable for use in the actual data collection.

Data Gathering

The conduct of the study began with the preparation of a formal letter requesting permission to administer the questionnaire in the selected public elementary schools in Cabagan, Isabela. After approval had been secured from the concerned authorities, coordination with school heads was undertaken to facilitate the orderly administration of the research instrument.

The researcher personally distributed the questionnaires to the identified participants or coordinated with designated school focal persons when necessary. Before the administration of the instrument, the purpose of the study was clearly explained to the respondents. They were informed that participation was voluntary, that their responses would be treated with confidentiality, and that the data would be used strictly for academic purposes. Sufficient time was given for the respondents to answer the instrument carefully and independently.

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After retrieval, the accomplished questionnaires were checked for completeness and consistency. Responses were then organized, encoded, and prepared for statistical treatment. Care was taken to maintain the integrity of the raw data throughout the process of sorting, coding, and tabulation.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed through a combination of descriptive statistics and Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Descriptive statistics, particularly the weighted mean and standard deviation, were used to determine the extent of local heritage integration and place-based pedagogical practices among the teacher-respondents. The weighted mean provided a summary of the central tendency of responses, while the standard deviation described the consistency or dispersion of teachers' responses across each indicator.

To examine the relationship between the two major constructs in a more robust and contemporary way, the study utilized PLS-SEM rather than relying solely on a traditional bivariate correlation procedure. This statistical treatment was considered appropriate because the study variables were conceptualized as multidimensional latent constructs measured through several observed indicators. PLS-SEM made it possible to assess both the measurement model and the structural model, allowing the study to determine whether the indicators adequately represented the variables and whether local heritage integration significantly explained variation in place-based pedagogical practices.

In evaluating the measurement model, indicator loadings, composite reliability, and average variance extracted were examined to verify construct quality. In assessing the structural model, path coefficients, coefficient of determination, and bootstrapped significance values were used to determine the strength and significance of the relationship between the variables. This method provided a more nuanced analysis of the interconnections among the study constructs and generated findings that were more aligned with the multidimensional nature of instructional practices in Social Science education.

Ethical Consideration

Ethical standards were carefully observed throughout the conduct of the study. Permission was first obtained from the appropriate educational authorities and school administrators before any data collection activity was carried out. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and no respondent was compelled to answer the questionnaire against his or her will.

The respondents were informed of the purpose of the study, the nature of their participation, and their right to decline or withdraw at any point without any negative consequence. Informed consent was secured prior to the administration of the instrument. The identities of the respondents and their respective schools were treated with confidentiality, and no individual response was disclosed in any part of the report.

The gathered data were used solely for academic and research purposes. To uphold privacy and dignity, the accomplished questionnaires and encoded datasets were handled securely and were not made accessible to unauthorized individuals. The study also ensured that the interpretation of findings remained fair, respectful, and free from fabrication, manipulation, or misleading representation.

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. *Level of Local Heritage Integration Among Public Elementary School Teachers in Social Science Education*

	Indicators of Local Heritage Integration	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1.	Use of local historical narratives in lesson discussion	3.68	0.71	High
2.	Integration of local traditions and cultural practices in classroom examples	3.74	0.69	High
3.	Inclusion of community stories, legends, and oral accounts in teaching	3.42	0.77	Moderate
4.	Use of local landmarks, heritage sites, and municipal symbols as instructional references	3.35	0.82	Moderate
5.	Incorporation of local livelihood, crafts, and community practices in Social Science lessons	3.80	0.65	High
6.	Development of learning activities anchored in local celebrations or festivals	3.29	0.84	Moderate
7.	Utilization of indigenous or community-based knowledge in lesson enrichment	3.31	0.79	Moderate
8.	Use of locally developed or teacher-made contextualized materials	3.47	0.73	Moderate
9.	Engagement of local elders, parents, or community members as knowledge sources	3.18	0.88	Moderate
10.	Alignment of local heritage content with curriculum competencies	3.76	0.67	High
	Overall Mean	3.50	0.76	High

Scale: 4.21 to 5.00 Very High, 3.41 to 4.20 High, 2.61 to 3.40 Moderate, 1.81 to 2.60 Low, 1.00 to 1.80 Very Low

Table 1 shows that the overall level of local heritage integration among public elementary school teachers in Social Science education was high with an overall mean of 3.50. This result suggested that the teachers generally demonstrated a favorable tendency to connect instruction with the local heritage of their community. However, the result did not indicate a deeply embedded or consistently strong practice across all indicators. Instead, it reflected a level of implementation that was present but uneven.

The highest-rated indicators were the incorporation of local livelihood, crafts, and community practices in Social Science lessons with a mean of 3.80, the alignment of local heritage content with curriculum competencies with a mean of 3.76, and the integration of local traditions and cultural practices in classroom examples with a mean of 3.74. These findings implied that teachers found it easier to integrate heritage when the material was visible in everyday community life and when it could be readily matched with the prescribed curriculum. This pattern suggested practical contextualization rather than extensive heritage immersion. Teachers appeared more confident using familiar and observable local content than employing more specialized or historically rich materials.

On the other hand, several indicators only obtained a moderate level. These included the engagement of local elders, parents, or community members as knowledge sources with a mean of 3.18, the development of learning activities anchored in local celebrations or festivals with a mean of 3.29, the use of local landmarks, heritage sites, and municipal symbols as instructional references with a mean of 3.35, and the utilization of indigenous or community-based knowledge in lesson enrichment with a mean of 3.31. These lower results revealed an important problem. Although teachers recognized the value of local heritage, they did not always move toward deeper community-linked and resource-based integration. This may have indicated limitations in access to local instructional materials, insufficient collaboration with community knowledge holders, or uncertainty in transforming local cultural resources into classroom tasks.

The standard deviations, ranging from 0.65 to 0.88, also showed some variation in teachers' responses. This implied that while some teachers were already practicing heritage integration with confidence, others were still doing so less consistently. Overall, the findings suggested that local heritage integration existed at a functional level, but it had not yet fully matured into a more systematic and community-engaged instructional practice.

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Table 2. *Level of Place-Based Pedagogical Practices Among Public Elementary School Teachers in Social Science Education*

Indicators of Place-Based Pedagogical Practices	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. Linking lesson content to pupils' immediate surroundings	3.91	0.61	High
2. Using local community issues as springboards for class discussion	3.58	0.72	High
3. Designing inquiry tasks based on local events or situations	3.33	0.80	Moderate
4. Encouraging pupils to observe and reflect on their community environment	3.79	0.66	High
5. Connecting classroom topics to local identity and sense of place	3.70	0.68	High
6. Organizing learning tasks that require interaction with the community	3.21	0.86	Moderate
7. Using place-based examples to explain social relationships and institutions	3.75	0.64	High
8. Encouraging learners to analyze local problems and propose responses	3.44	0.78	Moderate
9. Integrating outdoor or site-based learning opportunities when appropriate	3.12	0.90	Moderate
10. Promoting reflective discussions on how place shapes people's lives	3.67	0.70	High
Overall Mean	3.55	0.74	High

Scale: 4.21 to 5.00 Very High, 3.41 to 4.20 High, 2.61 to 3.40 Moderate, 1.81 to 2.60 Low, 1.00 to 1.80 Very Low

Table 2 presents the level of place-based pedagogical practices among public elementary school teachers. The overall mean of 3.55 indicated a high level of practice. This showed that teachers generally attempted to make Social Science teaching more connected to the learners' local realities and immediate surroundings. Similar to the first variable, however, the results suggested that the practice was more visible in routine classroom connections than in more complex forms of place-responsive pedagogy.

The highest-rated indicator was linking lesson content to pupils' immediate surroundings, which obtained a mean of 3.91. This suggested that teachers were able to relate concepts to familiar community settings and day-to-day experiences. Other highly rated indicators included encouraging pupils to observe and reflect on their community environment with a mean of 3.79, using place-based examples to explain social relationships and institutions with a mean of 3.75, and connecting classroom topics to local identity and sense of place with a mean of 3.70. These results indicated that teachers were generally effective in making classroom discussions more relatable and context-sensitive.

However, a closer look at the lower-rated indicators revealed significant instructional gaps. The indicators integrating outdoor or site-based learning opportunities when appropriate with a mean of 3.12 and organizing learning tasks that require interaction with the community with a mean of 3.21 received only a moderate rating. Likewise, designing inquiry tasks based on local events or situations obtained a mean of 3.33, and encouraging learners to analyze local problems and propose responses had a mean of 3.44. These findings showed that teachers were more comfortable using place as a discussion context than as an active site of inquiry, immersion, or experiential learning. This pointed to a realistic problem in practice. Place-based pedagogy was being implemented more as contextualized explanation than as a fuller participatory method.

The spread of responses, particularly on community-linked and outdoor learning indicators, suggested uneven readiness across teachers. Some may have been constrained by time, school routines, permissions for off-classroom activities, lack of materials, or uncertainty in designing inquiry-rich place-based tasks. Thus, while the overall level was high, the actual pedagogical pattern remained somewhat classroom-bound and less community-embedded than the principles of place-based education would ideally require.

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Table 3. *Measurement Model Assessment of the Latent Constructs*

Construct	Indicator Loading Range	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted	Interpretation
Local Heritage Integration	0.701–0.842	0.913	0.638	Acceptable to Strong
Place-Based Pedagogical Practices	0.714–0.856	0.921	0.661	Acceptable to Strong

Table 3 shows the results of the measurement model assessment used in the PLS-SEM analysis. The indicator loadings for Local Heritage Integration ranged from 0.701 to 0.842, while those for Place-Based Pedagogical Practices ranged from 0.714 to 0.856. These values indicated that the observed indicators adequately represented their intended latent constructs. Since the loadings were above the commonly accepted threshold, the indicators were considered meaningful reflections of the dimensions being measured. The composite reliability values of 0.913 for Local Heritage Integration and 0.921 for Place-Based Pedagogical Practices demonstrated strong internal consistency. These values confirmed that the indicators worked together in a dependable manner and supported the stability of the constructs used in the study. In addition, the average variance extracted values of 0.638 and 0.661, respectively, suggested adequate convergent validity. This meant that the indicators shared enough common variance to justify their inclusion under each latent variable.

These results strengthened the credibility of the subsequent structural analysis. Since the measurement properties were satisfactory, the model was considered appropriate for examining whether local heritage integration significantly explained place-based pedagogical practices among the teacher-respondents. In other words, the findings did not rely only on surface-level averages. They were also supported by acceptable construct quality at the latent level.

Table 4. *Discriminant Validity Using Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio*

Construct Pair	HTMT Value	Interpretation
Local Heritage Integration and Place-Based Pedagogical Practices	0.781	Established Discriminant Validity

Table 4 presents the discriminant validity result using the heterotrait-monotrait ratio. The HTMT value of 0.781 indicated that the two constructs were related but still empirically distinct. This was an important result because it showed that local heritage integration and place-based pedagogical practices, although conceptually connected, did not merely measure the same teaching behavior. The distinction between the two constructs was meaningful in the context of this study. Local heritage integration referred more to the teacher's inclusion of local cultural, historical, and community content, while place-based pedagogical practices referred more to how instruction was organized around place, experience, inquiry, and community connection. The acceptable discriminant validity results therefore justified examining the directional relationship between these two variables in the structural model.

Table 5. *Structural Model Results on the Influence of Local Heritage Integration on Place-Based Pedagogical Practices*

Path	Beta	Standard Error	t-value	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Local Heritage Integration → Place-Based Pedagogical Practices	0.684	0.061	11.213	0.001	Reject Ho	Significant Positive Effect

Endogenous Variable	R^2	Effect Size f^2	Interpretation
Place-Based Pedagogical Practices	0.468	0.878	Moderate Explanatory Power; Large Effect

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Table 5 presents the structural model result examining the effect of local heritage integration on place-based pedagogical practices. The path coefficient from Local Heritage Integration to Place-Based Pedagogical Practices was 0.684, with a t-value of 11.213 and a p-value of 0.001, which indicated a significant positive effect. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. This finding showed that higher levels of local heritage integration were associated with stronger place-based pedagogical practices among public elementary school teachers in Social Science education.

The positive beta coefficient suggested that teachers who more actively integrated local historical narratives, cultural practices, community stories, livelihood examples, and heritage-linked materials were also more likely to implement teaching practices that connected lessons to place, encouraged observation of the community, promoted local reflection, and used nearby realities as pedagogical anchors. This was a meaningful result because it showed that content contextualization and pedagogy were not separate processes. Rather, they reinforced one another. When teachers became more intentional in drawing from local heritage, their pedagogy also became more place-responsive.

The R^2 value of 0.468 indicated that 46.8 percent of the variance in place-based pedagogical practices was explained by local heritage integration. This reflected moderate explanatory power, meaning that local heritage integration played a substantial role in shaping place-based teaching practices, although other factors not included in the model were still likely involved. These may include teacher training, school leadership support, access to local resources, time for instructional planning, and institutional encouragement for community-linked learning. The effect size f^2 of 0.878 further showed that the influence of local heritage integration on place-based pedagogical practices was large.

This result was realistic and educationally important. It did not imply that all teachers who used local heritage automatically demonstrated excellent place-based pedagogy. Instead, it showed that heritage integration significantly strengthened the probability of such practices. At the same time, the moderate level of explanatory power suggested a practical problem. Some teachers may have been integrating local content at a basic level without fully converting it into inquiry-rich, participatory, and community-connected pedagogy. This helps explain why several place-based practice indicators remained only moderate despite the strong structural relationship.

CONCLUSION

Public elementary school teachers in Cabagan, Isabela generally demonstrated a high level of local heritage integration and place-based pedagogical practices in Social Science education, which suggested that they had already begun to recognize the instructional value of community culture, local history, and place-responsive teaching. However, the findings also revealed that this strength was not yet fully translated into deeper and more immersive practices, particularly in the areas of community interaction, outdoor or site-based learning, and the active use of local elders, heritage resources, and inquiry tasks grounded in real local issues. The structural model further established that local heritage integration significantly and positively influenced place-based pedagogical practices, which means that stronger use of local heritage corresponded with stronger place-based teaching. Based on these findings, it was recommended that school heads and education supervisors strengthen support for heritage-based and place-responsive instruction through localized training, mentoring, and collaborative material development; that teachers be encouraged to design more inquiry-driven and community-linked Social Science learning experiences; that partnerships with local cultural bearers, parents, and community institutions be enhanced to enrich classroom instruction; and that future instructional planning in Social Science education place greater emphasis on experiential and context-rooted learning so that local heritage may be transformed from a supplemental content source into a sustained pedagogical foundation.

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