

Place-Based Social Studies Instruction and Cultural Heritage Education Among Public Secondary School Teachers

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the role of place-based social studies instruction in shaping cultural heritage education among public secondary school teachers. Using a cross-sectional predictive-explanatory design, data were gathered through a validated researcher-developed questionnaire administered to Social Science teachers and analyzed through descriptive statistics and Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling. The findings showed that place-based social studies instruction was generally high, with localized content integration emerging as the strongest instructional dimension, while community-linked learning activities obtained the lowest rating. Cultural heritage education was likewise rated high

overall, although instructional support for cultural continuity and identity formation appeared less developed than heritage awareness and the integration of cultural knowledge in teaching. Measurement model results confirmed satisfactory indicator loadings, composite reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Structural model analysis further revealed that instructional grounding in learners' lived experiences, localized content integration, and contextual use of local resources significantly predicted cultural heritage education, while community-linked learning activities showed the weakest but still significant effect. The model explained a substantial proportion of the variance in cultural heritage education, indicating that place-based instructional practices meaningfully contributed to heritage-oriented teaching outcomes. The study concluded that while teachers already demonstrated a strong foundation in contextualized social studies teaching, deeper community engagement and stronger identity-forming heritage instruction remained underdeveloped. These findings highlight the need for sustained pedagogical support, locally responsive planning, and strengthened school-community collaboration to enrich cultural heritage education in secondary social studies classrooms.

Keywords: *cultural heritage education; learners' lived experiences; local resources; place-based instruction; public secondary school teachers; social studies*

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, educational scholarship has increasingly emphasized the value of teaching that is rooted in learners' immediate environments, histories, and communities. This direction is closely aligned with place-based education, which positions the local setting not merely as background context but as a meaningful source of knowledge, inquiry, and civic formation. A recent systematic review describes place-based education as an approach that connects formal learning with the social, cultural, and environmental

realities of particular communities, making instruction more relevant and participatory for learners (Yemini et al., 2025). In the field of social studies, this orientation is especially significant because the subject is fundamentally concerned with people, place, identity, citizenship, and collective memory. When instruction begins from the lived experiences of learners and the realities of their communities, social studies becomes more than the transmission of facts. It becomes a way of helping students interpret their world and understand their responsibilities within it (Üztemur et al., 2023).

Place-based social studies instruction is particularly valuable because it helps bridge the gap between abstract concepts and concrete community life. Studies on place-based pedagogy have shown that when teachers draw from local history, community spaces, and everyday cultural experiences, students are more likely to develop a stronger sense of connection to learning and to the places they inhabit (Hamilton et al., 2023). This is important in secondary education, where adolescents are developing more complex understandings of identity, social participation, and historical interpretation. Social studies classrooms that engage local narratives, local issues, and local heritage can create opportunities for critical reflection while also strengthening learners' civic consciousness. In this sense, place-based instruction is not a narrow localism. Rather, it is a grounded way of helping students move from local understanding toward broader national and global awareness, which remains central to contemporary social studies education (UNESCO, 2021).

At the same time, cultural heritage education has gained importance as schools respond to the need to preserve identity, transmit values, and sustain historical consciousness in rapidly changing societies. UNESCO has underscored that culture and education are deeply interconnected and that education systems should nurture respect for cultural diversity, heritage, and identity as part of meaningful and humane learning (UNESCO, 2024, 2025). Recent scholarship also notes that heritage education is not limited to monuments or historical artifacts. It involves helping learners understand the meanings communities attach to traditions, practices, memories, places, and cultural expressions across generations (Van Doorselaere, 2021; Kisler, 2026). In school settings, this makes heritage education an important educational response to cultural erosion, historical detachment, and weakening intergenerational knowledge. For teachers, especially those in social studies, cultural heritage education offers a way to connect curriculum content with the stories, symbols, and practices that shape community identity.

The relevance of this discussion is particularly strong in the Philippine educational framework. The Department of Education's current curriculum direction recognizes the role of Araling Panlipunan in developing civic competence, national self-identity, and deeper understanding of the learner's relationship with community and society (Department of Education, 2023a). The MATATAG curriculum shaping paper likewise emphasizes that learning areas should contribute to learners' appreciation of cultural heritage, identity, and respectful understanding in diverse social environments (Department of Education, 2023b). In parallel, the Department of Education continues to support the Philippine Cultural Education Program, reflecting a sustained institutional effort to strengthen cultural education through programs, teacher development, and curriculum-related initiatives (Department of Education, 2023c). Together, these policy directions suggest that social studies teaching in the Philippines is not only expected to develop academic understanding but also to cultivate place awareness, cultural rootedness, and civic responsibility among learners.

Teachers are expected to make instruction responsive to curriculum standards while also ensuring that learning remains relevant to students' actual communities and cultural experiences. Research has shown that teachers play a central role in reinforcing students' cultural awareness and heritage understanding through curriculum choices, classroom practices, and school-based activities (Abdallah et al., 2023). However, place-based and heritage-oriented teaching also requires substantial pedagogical work. Teachers need familiarity with local history, local culture, and community knowledge systems, as well as the ability to transform these into meaningful classroom experiences (Tan et al., 2016; Yemini et al., 2025). Without such grounding, cultural heritage may remain peripheral in instruction, even when curriculum frameworks

recognize its value. This makes the study of teachers' instructional practices and cultural heritage education especially important in understanding how policy intentions are translated into classroom realities.

Recent official reports have highlighted cultural markers in Cabagan such as the Kalesa, Kabayu, Kalaseru festival and the opening of the Cabagan Municipal Museum, both of which foreground the municipality's historical memory, agrarian roots, and local identity (Philippine Information Agency, 2025, 2026). Such a context presents rich possibilities for social studies instruction that is grounded in place and heritage. Yet the educational value of these local resources depends greatly on whether and how teachers integrate them into classroom practice. This study examines place-based social studies instruction and cultural heritage education among public secondary school teachers, with particular attention to how teachers in Cabagan, Isabela may serve as mediators between curriculum, community knowledge, and learners' developing sense of identity. By focusing on teachers in this specific locale, the study seeks to contribute a more context-sensitive understanding of how social studies education can support both meaningful instruction and the preservation of cultural heritage in contemporary Philippine schools.

Literature Review

Place-Based Instruction as a Pedagogical Foundation

Place-based instruction has gained strong scholarly attention as a pedagogical approach that links teaching and learning to the physical, social, cultural, and historical realities of the communities where learners live. Rather than treating knowledge as detached from context, this approach emphasizes that place itself can become a source of inquiry, meaning, and participation. In their systematic review, Yemini et al. (2025) define place-based education as an approach that connects the learning process to the physical place in which teachers and students are situated, while also incorporating meanings and lived experiences that extend beyond the classroom. This framing is important because it positions local knowledge, community spaces, and social realities as legitimate educational resources rather than as incidental examples. Similarly, Üztemur and Dere (2023) found that place-based education helped prospective social studies teachers develop a stronger sense of place, deeper awareness of their local community, and improved social participation skills. These studies suggest that place-based instruction is not simply a teaching technique but a broader orientation that encourages contextualized learning, active inquiry, and stronger educational relevance.

Social Studies as a Context for Meaningful and Grounded Learning

Social studies is one of the most appropriate disciplines for place-based instruction because the subject inherently deals with human experience, identity, history, citizenship, culture, and the relationship between people and society. In the Philippine context, the Department of Education's MATATAG Curriculum for Araling Panlipunan explicitly presents the curriculum as a guide for enriching the subject and directing its continuing development, while underscoring its broader social and educational implications (Department of Education, 2023). This is significant because it reflects the view that social studies should not be limited to content transmission but should help learners become critical and responsible members of society. Place-based teaching complements this objective by grounding social studies concepts in familiar realities, making issues of citizenship, heritage, and community life more meaningful to students. The literature also shows that place-based approaches can support active learning and historical thinking because they encourage students and teachers to engage directly with community narratives, local spaces, and lived social experiences (Üztemur & Dere, 2023). Thus, within social studies, place-based instruction can be understood as a way of deepening relevance, strengthening learner engagement, and making civic and historical concepts more concrete.

Cultural Heritage Education as an Educational Imperative

Cultural heritage education has become an increasingly important area of inquiry because schools are expected not only to transmit academic knowledge but also to help learners understand the meanings, memories, practices, and identities that shape communities across time. UNESCO (2024) explains that culture and arts education includes teaching and learning about, with, and through culture, and positions culture as an educational tool, an approach, and a field of study and practice. This broad framing is useful because it moves heritage education beyond a narrow focus on monuments or artifacts and opens space for more holistic understandings of cultural transmission. Recent studies in heritage education reinforce this position. Pérez-Guilarte and García-Morís (2023) argue that intangible heritage has substantial educational potential for critical citizenship education because it helps learners engage values, interpretation, and social understanding through lived cultural expressions. In a related way, Cuenca-López et al. (2021) emphasize that teacher preparation in heritage education should include heritage, emotions, identities, citizenship, and socio-environmental concerns, suggesting that heritage education is deeply tied to the formation of socially aware and culturally grounded learners. These perspectives show that cultural heritage education is no longer viewed as an optional enrichment topic. Rather, it is increasingly treated as a meaningful component of contemporary education because it supports identity formation, value development, cultural continuity, and citizenship learning.

Teachers' Perceptions, Preparation, and Instructional Challenges in Heritage-Oriented Teaching

The literature consistently shows that the effectiveness of place-based and heritage-related instruction depends greatly on teachers' own conceptions, preparation, and pedagogical confidence. Yáñez et al. (2023), in their study of in-service teachers, found that teachers' understandings of heritage and its teaching are shaped by prior training and professional background, and that this influences which forms of heritage are more commonly brought into classroom practice. Van Doorselaere (2024) similarly found that pre-service teachers often hold a traditional and monument-centered interpretation of heritage, even while expressing positive attitudes toward using heritage as an educational resource. Earlier work by Chaparro-Sainz et al. (2020) likewise reported that teachers in training attached strong value to using both tangible and intangible heritage in history teaching, yet tensions remained between the kinds of teaching they experienced as students and the more active, heritage-based methodologies they hoped to implement. In addition, Koutromanos et al. (2023) showed that teachers perceived participatory digital platforms for cultural heritage content as meaningful tools for creation and dissemination, suggesting that heritage education now also involves technological and collaborative dimensions.

METHODS

Research Design

The study employed a cross-sectional predictive-explanatory design anchored in a quantitative research approach. This design was selected because the study did not merely describe the level of place-based social studies instruction and cultural heritage education, but also examined how instructional practices functioned as meaningful predictors of heritage-related educational outcomes among public secondary school teachers. Compared with a conventional descriptive-correlational design, the predictive-explanatory approach allowed the study to move beyond simple association and to estimate the directional contribution of the dimensions of place-based instruction to cultural heritage education. The design was appropriate because both core variables were measurable through structured indicators and were examined within a single period of data collection. It also provided a stronger analytical basis for identifying which instructional dimensions had the most substantial explanatory value in the model.

Research Locale

The study was conducted in Cabagan, Isabela, a municipality in the province of Isabela in Region II, Philippines. The locale was selected because it has public secondary schools where Social Science teachers carried out classroom instruction in contexts that naturally involved community history, local traditions, and culturally grounded learning experiences. As a setting for educational inquiry, Cabagan provided an appropriate environment for examining how teachers implemented place-based instructional practices and how these practices related to cultural heritage education in the school setting. The locale also offered a practical context for gathering teacher-based data relevant to curriculum delivery in Social Studies.

Participants and Sampling Technique

The participants of the study were public secondary school Social Science teachers assigned in the identified schools within the research locale. These teachers were chosen because they were directly involved in the planning and delivery of Social Studies instruction and were therefore in the best position to provide data on place-based instructional practices and cultural heritage education.

The study used total enumeration sampling. This technique was adopted because the target group was specialized and clearly bounded, and all qualified teachers within the identified population were considered relevant to the investigation. Total enumeration strengthened the study by ensuring that all accessible teachers who met the inclusion criteria were given the opportunity to participate, thereby allowing the data to reflect the full range of views and practices present within the defined group.

Research Instrument

Data were gathered through a researcher-developed survey questionnaire composed of two major parts. The first part measured place-based social studies instruction, with indicators focused on localized content integration, community-linked learning activities, contextual use of local resources, and instructional grounding in learners' lived experiences. The second part measured cultural heritage education, with indicators covering heritage awareness, integration of cultural knowledge in teaching, promotion of heritage appreciation, and instructional support for cultural continuity and identity formation. The items were presented using a five-point Likert scale to capture the extent to which each statement described the teachers' practices and educational orientations.

To establish content validity, the initial instrument was submitted to a panel of experts composed of specialists in Social Studies education, educational research, and language validation. Their comments were used to refine item wording, improve conceptual alignment, remove ambiguity, and ensure that each statement reflected the intended construct. After revision, the instrument was subjected to pilot testing among teachers with characteristics comparable to the actual participants but who were not included in the final data collection. The pilot test showed that the instrument was understandable, contextually suitable, and administratively workable.

For reliability testing, the responses from the pilot administration were processed using Cronbach's alpha. The overall instrument yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.93, indicating excellent internal consistency. The subscale for place-based social studies instruction obtained an alpha coefficient of 0.91, while the subscale for cultural heritage education registered 0.89. These results indicated that the items within each section were highly consistent and reliable for measuring the intended dimensions. Construct clarity was further supported through expert review and item refinement, which strengthened the instrument's validity for use in the study.

Data Gathering

Before the conduct of the study, a formal letter requesting permission to administer the instrument was prepared and submitted to the appropriate school authorities. Upon approval, coordination with school heads and concerned offices was undertaken to facilitate the orderly distribution and retrieval of the

questionnaires. The purpose of the study was clearly explained to the participants, and they were informed that participation was voluntary.

The validated survey instrument was then administered to the qualified teachers through an agreed schedule that did not disrupt regular school functions. Participants were given adequate time to read and answer the questionnaire. The accomplished instruments were retrieved, checked for completeness, and organized for coding and analysis. Responses were treated with confidentiality throughout the entire process, and all data were encoded only after the questionnaires had been reviewed for consistency and usability.

Data Analysis

The study used a set of statistical treatments suited to the predictive-explanatory nature of the inquiry. To describe the extent of place-based social studies instruction and cultural heritage education, mean and standard deviation were employed. These measures provided a clear summary of central tendency and response dispersion across the indicators and dimensions.

To examine the interrelationship between the study variables at a deeper level, the data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). This statistical treatment was selected because it was more responsive than ordinary correlational analysis for studies involving multi-dimensional constructs measured through several observed indicators. PLS-SEM allowed the study to assess both the measurement model and the structural model, making it possible to determine whether the dimensions of place-based instruction significantly explained variations in cultural heritage education.

In assessing the measurement model, the study considered indicator loadings, composite reliability, and average variance extracted to confirm that the latent constructs were represented adequately by their indicators. In the structural model, path coefficients, effect sizes, and predictive relevance were examined to determine the magnitude and explanatory strength of the relationships. This approach provided a more analytically robust understanding of the study variables than a traditional test of correlation alone, and it allowed the findings to identify which aspects of place-based instruction meaningfully contributed to cultural heritage education.

Ethical Consideration

The study observed key ethical standards throughout the research process. Permission to conduct the study was secured from the appropriate authorities before data collection began. Participation was based on informed consent, and all participants were informed of the purpose of the study, the nature of their involvement, the voluntary character of participation, and their right to decline or withdraw without penalty.

Confidentiality and anonymity were protected by ensuring that no identifying personal information was disclosed in the presentation of the results. The accomplished questionnaires were handled carefully and were used strictly for academic and research purposes only. The study also upheld respect, fairness, and non-coercion in dealing with the participants. Data were interpreted honestly and reported faithfully to preserve the integrity of the research process and the credibility of the findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. *Level of Place-Based Social Studies Instruction Among Public Secondary School Teachers*

Indicators	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description
Localized content integration	3.84	0.58	High
Community-linked learning activities	3.36	0.71	Moderate
Contextual use of local resources	3.52	0.66	High

Indicators	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description
Instructional grounding in learners' lived experiences	3.68	0.61	High
Overall	3.60	0.64	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 place-based social studies instruction was high as reflected by the overall mean of 3.60. This result indicated that the teachers generally practiced instructional strategies that connected social studies content with familiar contexts, local realities, and learners' everyday experiences. Among the indicators, localized content integration registered the highest mean of 3.84, suggesting that teachers were more confident in embedding local examples, community narratives, and familiar sociocultural references into their lessons. This pattern implies that content adaptation was more readily practiced because it could be incorporated within regular classroom discussion and lesson preparation without requiring extensive external coordination.

The indicator instructional grounding in learners' lived experiences also obtained a high mean of 3.68, which suggested that the teachers often related social studies concepts to situations that students could personally recognize or understand. This finding reflected an encouraging tendency among teachers to make instruction more relatable and meaningful. Likewise, the contextual use of local resources posted a high mean of 3.52, indicating that teachers made use of available community materials, locally relevant examples, or culturally significant references in their teaching.

However, community-linked learning activities had the lowest mean of 3.36, interpreted as moderate. This result pointed to a practical limitation in the enactment of place-based instruction. While teachers appeared able to localize examples and contextualize classroom discussions, they were less consistent in organizing learning activities that directly involved the community, local stakeholders, or authentic field-based engagement. This suggested that place-based instruction was more often realized at the level of classroom integration than at the level of immersive or participatory community connection. The moderate rating also implied the presence of constraints such as time, logistics, institutional support, or limited access to structured partnerships. This finding revealed that the major issue was not the teachers' awareness of place-based instruction, but the uneven depth of its implementation.

Table 2. *Level of Cultural Heritage Education Among Public Secondary School Teachers*

Indicators	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description
Heritage awareness in instruction	3.79	0.55	High
Integration of cultural knowledge in teaching	3.61	0.63	High
Promotion of heritage appreciation	3.37	0.69	Moderate
Instructional support for cultural continuity and identity formation	3.28	0.73	Moderate
Overall	3.51	0.65	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 cultural heritage education, which yielded an overall mean of 3.51, interpreted as high. This indicated that the teachers generally incorporated cultural heritage-related elements in their professional practice. The highest mean was obtained by heritage awareness in instruction at 3.79, suggesting that teachers were able to acknowledge the relevance of cultural heritage within the teaching of social studies. This result implied that the concept of heritage had already entered classroom consciousness, at least at the level of recognition and awareness.

The integration of cultural knowledge in teaching also reached a high level with a mean of 3.61, which indicated that cultural concepts, traditions, or historical references were often brought into lessons. This suggested that teachers recognized the educational value of heritage-related content and attempted to

embed it within their teaching materials and discussions. However, the movement from awareness and inclusion to deeper educational influence appeared less consistent.

The indicators promotion of heritage appreciation and instructional support for cultural continuity and identity formation registered means of 3.37 and 3.28, respectively, both interpreted at lower levels, with the latter remaining only moderate. These results suggested that although teachers could introduce cultural content, the more transformative dimensions of heritage education were not yet fully developed. In particular, the lower rating for cultural continuity and identity formation showed that classroom instruction did not always progress toward helping learners internalize heritage as part of their ongoing social identity and communal responsibility. This signaled an important instructional issue. Heritage education was present, but it was more visible in content exposure than in deeper formative outcomes. The result suggested that heritage teaching may still have been treated as supplementary knowledge rather than as a sustained pedagogical commitment to identity-building and continuity.

Table 3. *Indicator Loadings, Composite Reliability, and Average Variance Extracted of the Constructs*

Construct / Indicator	Outer Loading	Composite Reliability	AVE
Localized content integration		0.887	0.664
LCI1. I integrate local historical events and developments into my Social Studies lessons.	0.79		
LCI2. I use examples from the local community to explain Social Studies concepts.	0.84		
LCI3. I incorporate local traditions, practices, and issues when discussing social and cultural topics.	0.82		
LCI4. I align lesson content with community-based realities that are familiar to learners.	0.81		
Community-linked learning activities		0.864	0.614
CLLA1. I design learning activities that encourage students to investigate issues within their community.	0.76		
CLLA2. I involve community-based experiences or tasks in the teaching of Social Studies whenever appropriate.	0.81		
CLLA3. I encourage students to interact with local resource persons or community members as part of class learning.	0.79		
CLLA4. I organize activities that connect classroom discussions with actual community situations and concerns.	0.77		
Contextual use of local resources		0.876	0.638
CULR1. I use local stories, cultural materials, or community references as teaching resources in Social Studies.	0.80		
CULR2. I incorporate available community-based sources such as artifacts, documents, or local accounts into instruction.	0.82		
CULR3. I maximize the use of local places, examples, and materials to make lessons more meaningful.	0.78		
CULR4. I use culturally relevant and locally accessible resources to support students' understanding of Social Studies topics.	0.80		
Instructional grounding in learners' lived experiences		0.901	0.694
IGLE1. I connect Social Studies lessons to the daily experiences of my students.	0.83		

Construct / Indicator	Outer Loading	Composite Reliability	AVE
IGLE2. I relate classroom discussions to the learners' family, community, and social realities.	0.85		
IGLE3. I encourage students to reflect on their own experiences when interpreting Social Studies concepts.	0.82		
IGLE4. I present lessons in ways that are responsive to the learners' actual life situations.	0.84		
Cultural heritage education		0.918	0.652
CHE1. I promote awareness of local cultural heritage through my teaching.	0.78		
CHE2. I integrate cultural knowledge and heritage-related content into Social Studies lessons.	0.82		
CHE3. I encourage students to appreciate the value of cultural traditions and historical legacies.	0.84		
CHE4. I help students understand the importance of preserving cultural heritage for future generations.	0.80		
CHE5. I use instructional activities that strengthen students' sense of cultural identity and belonging.	0.79		
CHE6. I support learning experiences that connect heritage education with cultural continuity and community memory.	0.83		

Table 3 shows that the measurement model met accepted standards for internal consistency and convergent validity. All outer loadings ranged from 0.76 to 0.85, indicating that the indicators adequately represented their assigned latent constructs. The composite reliability values ranged from 0.864 to 0.918, all of which exceeded the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70. This indicated that the item sets were internally coherent and statistically dependable.

Similarly, the average variance extracted (AVE) values ranged from 0.614 to 0.694, exceeding the recommended minimum of 0.50. This confirmed that the constructs explained more than half of the variance in their indicators. These results suggested that the measurement structure of the study was statistically sound and appropriate for structural analysis. In practical terms, the constructs used in the study were measured with satisfactory precision, and the indicators showed enough shared variance to support interpretation of the higher-level relationships.

The strong measurement properties were important because they strengthened confidence in the later structural findings. Since the study examined multiple dimensions of place-based instruction and linked them to cultural heritage education, it was necessary to establish that each construct was measured credibly. The results of the measurement model showed that the relationships found in the next stage were not likely due to weak or unstable indicators.

Table 4. *HTMT Ratios for Discriminant Validity*

Constructs	1	2	3	4	5
1. Localized content integration					
2. Community-linked learning activities	0.71				
3. Contextual use of local resources	0.68	0.74			
4. Instructional grounding in learners' lived experiences	0.76	0.73	0.70		
5. Cultural heritage education	0.79	0.67	0.75	0.81	

Table 4 presents the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) values used to assess discriminant validity. All values were below the conservative cutoff of 0.85, indicating that the constructs were empirically distinct from one another. This finding suggested that although the dimensions of place-based instruction were related in concept, each one still captured a different aspect of instructional practice. Cultural heritage education likewise remained distinguishable from the instructional dimensions, even if strong associations were expected.

This result was important because it confirmed that the study did not collapse several highly similar ideas into one undifferentiated construct. Instead, the data showed that localized content integration, community-linked learning activities, contextual use of local resources, and instructional grounding in learners' lived experiences functioned as separate but related dimensions. This supported a more nuanced interpretation of which dimensions were more influential in explaining cultural heritage education.

Table 5. *Direct Effects of Place-Based Social Studies Instruction Dimensions on Cultural Heritage Education*

Path	Path Coefficient (β)	Standard Error	t-value	p-value	Effect Size (f^2)	Decision
Localized content integration → Cultural heritage education	0.29	0.07	4.14	0.001	0.11	Significant
Community-linked learning activities → Cultural heritage education	0.12	0.06	1.97	0.049	0.03	Significant
Contextual use of local resources → Cultural heritage education	0.25	0.08	3.21	0.002	0.08	Significant
Instructional grounding in learners' lived experiences → Cultural heritage education	0.31	0.07	4.43	0.001	0.13	Significant

Model Summary

Endogenous Construct	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Q ²
Cultural heritage education	0.58	0.56	0.34

Table 5 presents the structural model results. The four dimensions of place-based social studies instruction significantly predicted cultural heritage education, with an R² of 0.58, indicating that 58 percent of the variance in cultural heritage education was explained by the instructional dimensions included in the model. This showed a substantial level of explanatory power and suggested that how teachers enacted place-based instruction strongly mattered in shaping the degree to which cultural heritage education was manifested in their teaching. The Q² value of 0.34 further indicated acceptable predictive relevance of the model.

Among the predictors, instructional grounding in learners' lived experiences emerged as the strongest predictor with a path coefficient of $\beta = 0.31$, followed closely by localized content integration with $\beta = 0.29$ and contextual use of local resources with $\beta = 0.25$. These findings suggested that cultural heritage education was most strongly supported when teachers connected instruction to the everyday realities of learners, embedded local content in teaching, and actively used contextual resources that reflected the surrounding social and cultural environment. The results implied that cultural heritage education became stronger when teaching was not detached from the students' lived world.

In contrast, community-linked learning activities had the weakest direct effect, with $\beta = 0.12$, although it remained statistically significant. This was a noteworthy result because it indicated that direct community engagement, while beneficial, was not as consistently influential in the model as classroom-based contextualization and lived-experience grounding. This weaker effect aligned with the earlier descriptive finding in which community-linked learning activities obtained the lowest mean. The pattern suggested a practical problem in implementation. Teachers may have valued community involvement, but

barriers likely limited the extent to which such activities became sustained and high-impact components of instruction. As a result, cultural heritage education appeared to rely more heavily on what teachers could accomplish within the classroom rather than through broader community immersion or partnership structures.

The effect sizes also supported this interpretation. The strongest effects were found in instructional grounding in learners' lived experiences and localized content integration, while community-linked learning activities showed only a small effect. This indicated that not all dimensions contributed equally to cultural heritage education. The findings therefore demonstrated that place-based instruction was most educationally powerful when teachers translated culture and heritage into forms that students could immediately connect with, rather than depending solely on external or event-based community participation.

Table 6. *Summary of Major Findings*

Variable / Relationship	Result
Overall level of place-based social studies instruction	High
Strongest dimension of place-based social studies instruction	Localized content integration
Weakest dimension of place-based social studies instruction	Community-linked learning activities
Overall level of cultural heritage education	High
Strongest dimension of cultural heritage education	Heritage awareness in instruction
Weakest dimension of cultural heritage education	Instructional support for cultural continuity and identity formation
Best predictor of cultural heritage education	Instructional grounding in learners' lived experiences
Overall explanatory power of the structural model	Substantial, with 58% explained variance

Table 6 synthesizes the central outcomes of the study. The findings showed that both place-based social studies instruction and cultural heritage education were generally present at favorable levels. However, the results also revealed an important gap between awareness-oriented practice and deep educational transformation. Teachers were generally able to recognize heritage, localize content, and connect lessons to students' lived realities. Yet they were less consistent in sustaining activities that extended into the community and in promoting cultural continuity and identity formation at a deeper instructional level.

This pattern suggested that the instructional challenge was not the absence of place-based or heritage-oriented teaching, but the uneven maturity of its implementation. The data implied that teachers had already established a foundation for contextualized social studies instruction, but some dimensions remained more accessible than others. Classroom-level adaptation appeared stronger than community-level engagement, and heritage exposure appeared stronger than identity-forming heritage education. These findings pointed to a practical need for more structured support, stronger pedagogical models, and greater institutional facilitation if place-based social studies instruction was to produce richer and more sustained cultural heritage outcomes.

CONCLUSION

Place-based social studies instruction and cultural heritage education were both evident at generally favorable levels among public secondary school teachers, yet their implementation was not equally strong across all dimensions. Teachers were more effective in integrating local content, using contextual resources, and grounding instruction in learners' lived experiences than in organizing community-linked learning

activities. In the same way, cultural heritage education was more apparent in heritage awareness and content integration than in sustaining cultural continuity and supporting identity formation. The structural model further showed that instructional grounding in learners' lived experiences, localized content integration, and contextual use of local resources were the strongest contributors to cultural heritage education, while community-linked learning activities had the weakest effect, indicating a practical gap in deeper community-connected implementation. Based on these findings, it was recommended that school leaders and education authorities strengthen support for heritage-oriented social studies through targeted professional development, locally responsive instructional planning, and structured partnerships with cultural bearers, local historians, and community institutions. Teachers may be encouraged to move beyond classroom-based contextualization by designing more participatory and sustained community-linked learning experiences, while curriculum support materials may be developed to help translate heritage content into identity-forming and continuity-focused teaching practices. Future school-based interventions may also focus on reducing logistical and institutional barriers that limit authentic community engagement in social studies instruction.

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