Innovative Learning Strategies and Students' Engagement in Social Science in Public Secondary High Schools

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ABSTRACT

Innovative learning strategies are essential in boosting student engagement, especially in Social Science, where critical thinking and active participation are key. This study focused on Grade 11 Humanities and Social Sciences students in Public Secondary High Schools, analyzing how Art Performance, Creative Assignments, and Fieldwork impact engagement across skills, emotional, participation, and performance domains. Using descriptive and correlational research methods, data were collected via survey questionnaires from 2024-2025 academic year enrollers. Statistical tools like mean, standard deviation, Pearson r, and ANOVA aided in evaluating results. Findings revealed that innovative strategies were predominantly "Always Observed" in classrooms, with Art Performance and Creative Assignments being the most implemented, while Fieldwork was less frequent. Positive correlations emerged between Fieldwork and participation/performance, showcasing its effectiveness in enhancing student involvement and academic outcomes. Art Performance and Creative Assignments, however, had weaker or insignificant impacts on engagement aspects. These insights stress the necessity of interactive, student-centered approaches to optimize engagement. The study suggests further exploration into the long-term effects of innovative strategies and advocates for balancing experiential learning with skill development to maximize student engagement in diverse learning contexts.
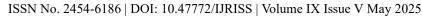
BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Education is a powerful tool for social change and transformation, and enhancing its quality necessitates innovative teaching practices. Consequently, educators must be creative to impart new skills and prepare students to tackle the global challenges of the 21st century. Life challenges demand diverse and complex solutions in today's world, making innovation essential. Modern educational pedagogies emphasize active learning, where students participate in activities that promote analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of class content. Innovative learning aids, such as interactive technologies, gamified learning experiences, and collaborative tools, are integrated into classrooms to enhance engagement and improve educational outcomes.

In the global lens, student engagement remains a significant challenge, indicating that disengaged students are more likely to perform poorly academically, drop out of school, and face social and economic difficulties later in life (Finn & Zimmer, 2012). The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) highlights that while technology can boost student engagement, its implementation must be carefully managed to avoid intensifying inequalities (OECD, 2015). Furthermore, cultural and socio-economic factors are crucial in shaping engagement levels, necessitating tailored approaches to address these diverse influences (Reeve, 2012).

Moreover, student engagement has been linked to improved achievement, persistence, and retention (Hew et al., 2019). Disengagement profoundly affects student learning outcomes and cognitive development (Ma et al., 2015). It predicts a student dropout in both secondary and higher education (Jarvela et al., 2016). Student engagement is a multifaceted and complex construction, which some have called a meta-construct (Moore et al., 2018).

In the Philippines, student engagement is also a pressing concern. A study by Bernardo (2010) points out that many Filipino students exhibit low levels of engagement due to traditional rote learning methods, large class

sizes, and insufficient resources. The Department of Education (DepEd) has acknowledged these challenges and strives to implement reforms to promote more interactive, student-centered learning environments (DepEd, 2019). However, the effective integration of innovative learning aids remains limited, especially in remote and underserved areas.

Innovative teaching strategies involve intentionally, creatively, and effectively selecting teaching materials, methods, and evaluation techniques to enhance and foster learners' creativity (Yu et al., 2021). Employing novel approaches and tools nurtures students' creativity and promotes innovative thinking as part of the learning process.

Theoretical Lens

This study draws from four key theories: This study anchored its concept to the three theories of how learning takes place, namely the Constructivist Theory of Piaget (1952), the Social Psychology of Creativity Theory of Amabile (1992), and Experiential Learning developed by Kolb (1984). Applying these to educational settings, teachers can design learning experiences that allow students to choose topics of interest, engage in complex, open-ended tasks, and receive constructive feedback. This approach fosters creativity and enhances student engagement by making learning more relevant and personally significant. When intrinsically motivated, students are more likely to immerse themselves in their work, exhibit persistence, and achieve higher levels of understanding and innovation.

Research Questions

This study evaluated social science teachers' innovative learning strategies and their effect on students' engagement. It answered the following questions:
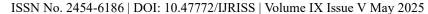
1. What is the level of innovative learning strategies utilized in Social Science in terms of:

    1.1. art performance;
    1.2. creative assignments; and
    1.3. fieldwork?

2. What is the level of student engagement in Social Science class in terms of:

    2.1. skills;
    2.2. emotional;
    2.3. participation; and
    2.4. performance engagement?

3. Is there a significant relationship between using innovative learning strategies and students' engagement in Social Science?

4. Is there a significant difference between skills engagement, emotional engagement, participation engagement, and performance engagement?

Significance of the Study

This research informs the Sultan Kudarat Division, School Heads, Social Studies Teachers, the Senior High School Students and the Researcher and Future Researchers.

Review of Related Literature

The literature emphasizes that the Innovative teaching strategies refers to the teacher's creativity and novelty, which changes the style and method of teaching (Felder & Brent, 2016). One innovative approach involves combining various digital media types, such as text, images, audio, and video, into an integrated multi-sensory interactive application or presentation to convey information (Wang & Degol, 2014). Engaged students tend to

learn more, retain more information, persist in their efforts, and find joy in completing their work. Therefore, making lessons interesting is crucial for fostering student engagement (Kalyani & Rajasekaran, 2018).

In education, effective teaching methodologies and innovative ideas are interdependent. The effectiveness of teaching methods relies on addressing students' needs and ensuring the content is appropriate (Bruschi, 2020). Teacher characteristics significantly influence the choice of teaching methods, with some educators still adhering to traditional methods focused on rote memorization (Azman et al., 2018). Teachers must have the necessary skills and resources to implement these methods effectively (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

Student engagement in the classroom refers to students' level of involvement, interest, and enthusiasm towards learning and classroom activities. Recent conceptualizations of student engagement have shifted from viewing it as simply the opposite of disengagement (like truancy) to recognizing it as a distinct construct (Fredricks et al., 2019). At the same time, digital technology has become increasingly central to higher education, influencing all aspects of the student experience (Barak, 2018). There is growing international recognition of the importance of ICT skills and digital literacy, not only for active citizenship (Choi et al., 2017) but also for developing interdisciplinary and collaborative skills (Oliver & de St Jorre, 2018).

The potential for educational technology to improve student engagement has long been recognized. While still a young area, most of the research undertaken to gain insight into this has been focused on undergraduate students finding a positive relationship between the use of technology and student engagement, particularly earlier in university study (Webb et al., 2017).Kaliisa and Picard (2017) found that most of these technologies positively impacted multiple indicators of student engagement across the three dimensions of engagement, with digital games, web-conferencing software, and Facebook being the most effective. However, it must be noted that they only considered seven indicators of student engagement, which could be extended by considering further indicators of student engagement. Other reviews that have found at least a small positive impact on student engagement include those focused on audience response systems, mobile learning, and social media (Hunsu et al., 2016).

In synthesis, emphasize the significance of innovative teaching strategies in enhancing student engagement and learning outcomes. Most of the cited literature and studies reveal a striking consensus regarding the effectiveness of Innovative teaching in student engagement. Across multiple sources and studies, there is a resounding affirmation of these strategies' substantial and beneficial effects on students' educational engagement. This comprehensive body of evidence consistently highlights an innovative pedagogical approach that significantly improves students' engagement and grasp of concepts. This study also perceived innovative teaching as vital in the educational arena, particularly for Grade 11 students in public secondary high schools in their social science classes.
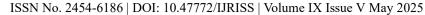
METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study (Creswell, 2014) employed descriptive and correlational research methods to examine the relationship between innovative teaching strategies and students' engagement in the Social Science class.

Participants and Locale

This research focused on public secondary high schools, particularly for the 2024-2025 academic year, specifically the Students of Grade 11 Humanities and Social Sciences strand in rural areas of Isulan, Sultan Kudarat.

Data Collection

A survey questionnaire was employed to get valid and reliable information from the respondents. The first part of the questionnaire assessed the level of innovative learning strategies utilized in Social Science, which is adapted from Ortega and Ortega-Dela Cruz (2016). The second part consisted of items that determined the level of students' engagement, subdivided into four subcategories: skills, emotional, participation, and performance,

adapted from the study of Hart and Stewart's work (2011) and Morbo (2024)

Data Analysis

The researcher employed various statistical methods to analyze the data collected in this study. These methods have specific purposes and provide valuable insights into different aspects of the research. Standard deviation, mean, and standard deviation were used to describe the level of innovative learning strategies and the level of the students' engagement in their Social Science class.

Moreover, Pearson r assessed the relationship between innovative learning strategies and students' engagement. An analysis of Variance (ANOVA) also tested the significant difference in students' engagement among the three innovative learning strategies integrated in the Social Science Class

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Level of Use of Innovative Learning Strategies in Social Science in terms of Art Performance

The result suggests that teachers effectively implement innovative strategies, fostering an engaging and supportive learning environment for students. Several indicators achieved the highest mean score of 5.00, reflecting unanimous agreement among students that these practices are **"Always Observed."**

These indicators include the teacher's ability to start lessons effectively, facilitate the class, establish a conducive learning environment, show interest in presenting performance-based lessons, provide motivation, allocate preparation time, and ensure adequate subject-related reading materials. The perfect scores indicate that these aspects of teaching are well-executed and significantly contribute to student engagement.

The findings highlight that teachers consistently employ innovative learning strategies in the Art Performance class, ensuring student engagement. However, minor variations suggest areas for further enhancement, particularly maintaining a uniformly high enthusiasm for the subject's performance and content aspects.

This study of Berger et al.'s (2014) claim that an arts education helps students achieve the lesson's objectives, reach certain proficiency levels, and meet these milestones at specific educational stages. It offers a vision of competency and educational success without imposing a rigid framework on all arts programs.

Level of Use of Innovative Learning Strategies in Social Science In terms of Creative Assignments

Reveals that using innovative learning strategies in creative assignments within the Social Science class is highly effective. This is reflected in the overall mean score of 4.82 (SD = 0.11), which falls under the **"Always Observed"** category. The result suggests that teachers consistently implement creative assignments as an innovative strategy to enhance student engagement and learning.
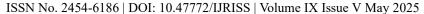
Among the indicators, the highest mean score of 5.00 was observed in three key areas: the teacher's ability to start lessons using creative assignments, establish a positive and structured classroom climate, and effectively handle creative assignments. These perfect scores indicate that teachers excel in lesson initiation, classroom management, and instructional delivery, making creative assignments an integral part of their teaching approach.

It is also supported by the claim that creative assignments encourage students to think innovatively as they showcase their learning. They are marked by high innovation, divergent thinking, and risk-taking (Davis, 2019).

Level of Use of Innovative Learning Strategies in Social Science in terms of Field Work

The findings reveal that the level of use of innovative learning strategies in fieldwork within Social Science classes is generally high, with an overall mean of 4.36 (SD = 0.42), categorized as **"Always Observed."** The result indicates that teachers frequently incorporate fieldwork as an innovative learning strategy, fostering experiential learning opportunities for students.

The indicator stating that teachers are more interested in presenting fieldwork classes than content-driven classes

recorded the highest mean score of 4.94. The result suggests that teachers strongly prefer hands-on, experiential learning activities, likely recognizing their value in enhancing student engagement and real-world application of knowledge.

In support of this, Ababio and Dumba (2014) emphasize that the practical application of fieldwork complements theoretical lessons, making concepts more understandable for students. This also provides a practical aspect to classroom instruction and benefits teachers and students by simplifying complex ideas and saving time and effort.

Summary of the Level of Use of Innovative Learning Strategies in Social Science

The summary of the level of use of innovative learning strategies in Social Science classes reveals a generally high implementation, with an overall mean of 4.67 (SD = 0.14), categorized as **"Always Observed."** The result implies that teachers consistently integrate innovative strategies in their teaching practices, enhancing student engagement and learning experiences.

Among the three strategies assessed, Art Performance received the highest mean score of 4.84 (SD = 0.07). The result indicates that teachers are most confident and effective in incorporating artistic elements into their social studies instruction, likely due to its engaging and interactive nature, which helps students express their understanding creatively.

Overall, the findings highlight that teachers frequently apply innovative learning strategies in Social Science classes, particularly emphasizing art performance and creative assignments.

Further, this is supported by Felder and Brent (2016), who state that innovative teaching is necessary to help students reach their full potential in education's present and future, which changes the style and method of teaching.

Level of Student Engagement in Social Science Class in Terms of Skills

The findings on student engagement in Social Science classes in terms of skill indicate a strong commitment to academic responsibilities, as reflected in the overall mean of 4.38 (SD = 0.51), categorized as **Excellently Observed**. The result suggests that students consistently demonstrate active participation and skill-based engagement in their learning process.

The results reveal that students exhibit strong engagement in skill-related aspects of Social Science learning, particularly in classroom participation, note-taking, and organization.
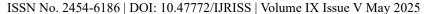
However, additional support or motivation may be needed to encourage students to maintain regular reading habits and complete all assigned tasks to foster students' participation and identification further is now considered an effective way to improve school attendance, address truancy, and reduce dropout rates (Virtanen et al., 2014)

Level of Student Engagement in Social Science Class in Terms of Emotional

The findings on students' emotional engagement in Social Science classes indicate a generally positive level of emotional involvement, with an overall mean of 4.18 (SD = 0.64), categorized as **Highly Observed**. The result suggests that students demonstrate considerable enthusiasm, motivation, and emotional investment in their learning experiences.

The results highlight that while students exhibit a positive emotional connection to Social Science learning, there may be opportunities to enhance their self-motivation and emotional self-awareness further. Encouraging goal-setting activities and fostering a supportive learning environment may help strengthen their emotional engagement and personal investment in academic success.

Fostering students' participation and identification is now an effective way to improve school attendance, address truancy, and reduce dropout rates (Virtanen et al., 2014).

Level of Student Engagement in Social Science Class in Terms of Participation

Results indicate that student engagement in Social Science in terms of participation is generally highly observed, with an overall mean of 4.12 (SD = 0.75). Among the indicators, the highest mean was recorded for asking questions when I did not understand the teacher (M = 4.49, SD = 0.56), followed closely by collaborating with group activities (M = 4.40, SD = 0.55), both of which were excellently observed. The result suggests that students are strongly willing to seek clarification and work with peers, highlighting the effectiveness of student-centered and inquiry-based learning approaches in fostering engagement.

These findings emphasize the need for strategies that encourage more inclusive and dynamic classroom discussions.

As supported by Alioon and Delialioğlu (2017), such as structured debates, peer mentoring, and interactive activities, to ensure that all students actively contribute and engage in learning the potential to make teaching and learning processes more intensive, improve student self-regulation and self-efficacy.

Level of Student Engagement in Social Science Class in Terms of Performance

The results reveal a **highly observed** performance engagement, with an overall mean of 4.16 (SD = 0.89). The result indicates that while students generally perform well in their Social Science classes, there are differences in their confidence, test performance, and overall academic success.

Overall, the results suggest that students are engaged in performance, which is reflected in their good grades and test results. However, the variability in confidence levels highlights the need for interventions that boost students' self-efficacy and test-taking strategies. Teachers can address this by providing more formative assessments, personalized feedback, and confidence-building activities to enhance students' belief in their ability to succeed.

Active student engagement due to using technology, careful planning, sound pedagogy, and appropriate tools are vital, based on the findings of Englund et al. (2017), as technology can amplify great teaching. Still, great technology cannot replace poor teaching.

Summary on the Level of Student Engagement in Social Science Class

It summarizes student engagement in social science classes. It reveals an overall mean of 4.21 (SD = 0.40), which falls under the qualitative description of **Excellently Observed**. The result indicates that students generally demonstrate strong engagement in various aspects of learning, including skills, emotions, participation, and performance.
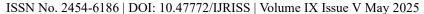
Overall, the findings indicate a strong level of student engagement in Social Science, particularly in skill-based learning. To further enhance engagement, educators may consider incorporating more interactive strategies to boost participation, providing emotional support mechanisms to help students manage academic stress, and reinforcing confidence-building activities to improve overall performance.

Moreover, Al-Sakkaf et al. (2019) operationalized engagement from a behavioral perspective. Most articles did not clearly define engagement, which is no longer considered acceptable in student engagement research.

Correlation Analysis Between the level of Use of Innovative Learning Strategies and Student Engagement in Social Science Class

Presents the correlation analysis between innovative learning strategies and student engagement in Social Science. The analysis reveals varying relationships across different dimensions of engagement, as indicated by Spearman's rho values and their corresponding p-values.

The correlation between *innovative learning strategies* and *student engagement* was weak and statistically insignificant (**r = 0.033, p = 0.849**). The result indicates that while individual dimensions of engagement, such as skills, emotion, participation, and performance, show varying relationships with different innovative

strategies, there is no strong overarching correlation between the general use of innovative learning strategies and overall student engagement. This finding suggests that the effectiveness of innovative strategies may depend on contextual factors such as implementation methods, student readiness, and teacher facilitation.

The findings highlight the benefits and challenges of incorporating innovative learning strategies in Social Studies education. While these strategies enhance student participation and performance, they may also introduce difficulties with skill development and emotional engagement.

Eccles (2016) supported the idea that motivation is an antecedent to engagement; it is the intent and unobservable force that energizes behavior, whereas student engagement is energy and effort in action, an observable manifestation.

Results of One-way ANOVA of the Students' Level of Engagement in Social Science Class

The one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine whether there are significant differences in students' levels of engagement in social science across the four engagement domains: **Skills, Emotional, Participation, and Performance.**

The results show that among the four engagement domains, *skills engagement* had the highest mean (**M = 4.38, SD = 0.51**), indicating that students demonstrated a high level of competence in applying learned skills in their Social Science classes

Since *Skills* had the highest engagement level, it suggests that Social Studies classes effectively equip students with the necessary competencies for academic success. However, the lower means for *Participation* and *Performance* imply that some students may not be as actively engaged in class discussions or may face difficulties translating their engagement into improved academic outcomes.

The results also highlight the need for a balanced instructional approach. Teachers may consider implementing strategies to reinforce student participation through interactive discussions, collaborative learning activities, and project-based learning. Furthermore, since emotional engagement is essential in motivation and academic achievement, incorporating student-centered approaches that foster a supportive and engaging classroom environment can help enhance participation and performance.
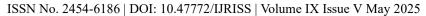
The findings of Payne (2017) support this claim. Thus, while students exhibit a strong overall level of engagement in Social Science, there is room for improvement, particularly in maintaining high participation and translating engagement into consistent academic performance. Strengthening interactive and reflective learning practices may enhance student involvement and learning outcomes.

SUMMARY

The study revealed that innovative learning strategies in Social Science classes were always observed with an overall mean = 4.67, SD = 0.14). Among the strategies, *Art Performance* (M = 4.84, SD = 0.07) was the most frequently utilized, followed closely by *Creative Assignments* (M = 4.82, SD = 0.11). *Field Work* (M = 4.36, SD = 0.42) had the lowest mean but was still consistently observed.

Student engagement in Social Science was generally high, with an overall mean of 4.21 (SD = 0.40), categorized as excellently observed. Among the engagement domains, *Skills* had the highest mean (M = 4.38, SD = 0.51), indicating that students can apply their learning. *Emotional* (M = 4.18, SD = 0.64), *Participation (*M = 4.12, SD = 0.75)*, and *Performance* (M = 4.16, SD = 0.89) were also rated highly observed.

The correlation analysis showed mixed relationships between innovative learning strategies and student engagement. *Fieldwork* had a strong negative correlation with *skills engagement* (rho = -0.756, p < .001) and overall engagement (rho = -0.759, p < .001), suggesting that while fieldwork is used, it may not always translate into skill development. However, *creative assignments* and *art performance* showed weak or insignificant correlations with most engagement aspects. Participation and performance showed significant positive

relationships with *fieldwork* (rho = 0.363 and 0.464, respectively, p < .05), indicating that experiential learning may enhance student involvement and academic outcomes when effectively implemented.

The one-way ANOVA results indicated significant variations in student engagement across the four domains, with *Skills* having the highest engagement (M = 4.38, SD = 0.51) and *participation* having the lowest (M = 4.12, SD = 0.74). Students are more confident in their skill development but may not participate as actively in class discussions and activities. These findings highlight the need for more interactive, student-centered instructional strategies to enhance participation and engagement.

CONCLUSIONS

The study revealed that student engagement in Social Science classes is generally high. Skills are the most developed aspect, followed by emotion, performance, and participation. The frequent use of innovative learning strategies, such as art performance, creative assignments, and fieldwork, suggests that teachers actively incorporate diverse instructional approaches.

However, the correlation analysis indicated that while some strategies positively contribute to participation and performance, others, such as fieldwork, may not always enhance skill development as expected. The one-way ANOVA results further emphasize variations in engagement levels, highlighting the need for strategies that foster active participation to complement students' strong skill development.

These findings emphasized the importance of effectively selecting and implementing innovative learning strategies to maximize student engagement in Social Science. While creative and experiential methods enrich learning experiences, educators must align these strategies with students' needs to ensure balanced development across all engagement domains.

Considering this study's findings, it is great to say that not all strategies equally contribute to engagement. With fieldwork showing some challenges in fostering skill-related engagement, educators can enhance participation, sustain emotional engagement, and strengthen performance by refining instructional approaches, ultimately fostering a more interactive and meaningful Social Science learning environment.
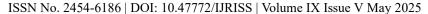
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