



Local history as a pillar of sustainable, culturally responsive social studies: Public secondary teachers' perspectives

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Abstract

Integrating local history into Social Studies can strengthen culturally responsive education and support the sustainability of learning by increasing relevance, identity affirmation, and civic awareness. This qualitative study examined how public secondary school teachers in the Philippines incorporate local history into the K-12 Social Studies curriculum, the perceived benefits of this approach, barriers to implementation, and recommendations for sustainable curriculum improvement. Using a basic qualitative research design, sixteen Social Studies teachers from four public secondary schools in Tangub City, Misamis Occidental were purposively selected and interviewed using a semi-structured protocol. Interview data were transcribed verbatim and analysed through Braun and Clarke's six-phase thematic analysis. Findings revealed five major themes emphasizing; 1) teachers integrate local history in the instructional process as a motivational tool, in learning activities and assessments, and in lesson discussions; 2) local history integration enhances student engagement and participation and fosters cultural pride and heritage appreciation; 3) local history as a pedagogical resource simplify complex content; 4) structural barriers in implementation includes inadequate access to local historical resources and time constraints exacerbated by curricular demands; and 5) strengthening culturally responsive social studies through the development of innovative localized instructional materials and building institutional partnerships and teacher capacity. The study positions local history integration as a transformative, not peripheral, pedagogical strategy that can advance culturally responsive and sustainable Social Studies education in the Philippine context. It strengthens cultural identity, deepens civic awareness, and promotes meaningful learning—thereby supporting sustainable education through culturally responsive curriculum design—while also revealing systemic gaps that require institutional support and curriculum innovation, underscoring that local history should be positioned not as a supplementary add-on but as a core pillar of equitable and sustainable Social Studies education in the Philippine context.

Keywords: Culturally responsive pedagogy; Local history integration; Social Studies curriculum; Sustainable education; Teacher perspectives

1. Introduction

Social Studies is a cornerstone of the Philippine educational curriculum, fostering students' cultural sensitivity, civic participation, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills while broadening their global perspectives and instilling values essential for nation-building. As an integrative discipline drawing on the social sciences, Social Studies equips learners with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed for active and responsible citizenship (Crisolo et al., 2021; Yetişensoy & Rapoport, 2023). Recent studies underscore its enduring relevance, highlighting its role in preserving cultural heritage, promoting economic awareness, and connecting learners to the past in ways that inform present and future decision-making (Crisolo et al., 2021). In this sense, Social Studies contributes to sustainable education by supporting long-term civic competence, cultural continuity, and inclusive participation—outcomes that strengthen education systems beyond immediate classroom performance.

Integrating local history into the Social Studies curriculum has gained increasing attention as a pedagogical approach that strengthens cultural identity, fosters pride in heritage, and enhances civic engagement. Evidence shows that contextualizing learning through local history allows students to develop stronger connections to their communities, deepen their appreciation of cultural roots, and retain knowledge more effectively (Mutiani et al., 2023; Najib, 2025; Sariyatun &

Marpelina, 2024). Furthermore, such integration cultivates critical inquiry as students analyze and empathize with the lived experiences of people in their immediate environment (Crocco & Marino, 2017; Oguzhan, 2015). Beyond knowledge acquisition, local history strengthens students' sense of place, thereby reinforcing civic responsibility, social trust, and active participation (Ernst, 2022; Stefaniak et al., 2017). Importantly, culturally grounded learning also aligns with sustainable education goals by promoting equity and relevance, particularly in diverse communities where national narratives may not fully reflect local identities and experiences.

In the Philippine context, emerging research highlights both the promise and the challenges of embedding local history within the Social Studies curriculum. Awa-Ao and Roperez (2024) and Colminar and Padullo (2023) report that learners demonstrate a strong interest in local history, which enhances their engagement and sense of community identity. However, despite these positive outcomes, no standardized framework exists for incorporating local history into the national curriculum. Teachers often rely on contextualization, adapting lessons through both conventional and non-traditional resources, and creating localized instructional materials to make content more relevant. While these efforts reflect innovation, they also underscore the heavy responsibility placed on teachers as frontline agents of curricular localization and point to the need for institutional capacity-building to sustain culturally responsive practice over time. Where available, access to curated materials—including school-community partnerships, local archives, and digitally accessible resources—can further support sustainable implementation by reducing individual teacher burden and improving consistency across schools.

Implementation, however, remains uneven. Persistent challenges include the lack of appropriate instructional materials, insufficient teacher training, and the limited availability of local historians as resource persons. Frequent curriculum revisions and the absence of explicit policy guidelines further complicate the integration of local history into classroom instruction (Awa-Ao & Roperez, 2024; Colminar & Padullo, 2023). As a result, students often demonstrate only a superficial understanding of their local histories, and the connection between historical knowledge and appreciation of cultural heritage remains unclear (Santos, 2021). Recommendations from prior studies include establishing local study centers, strengthening teacher capacity, and institutionalizing local history across all grade levels (Crocco & Marino, 2017). From a sustainable education perspective, these recommendations also imply the need for system-level supports—such as coherent curriculum guidance, resource infrastructures (including repositories of localized materials), and professional learning structures—so that local history integration is not dependent solely on individual teacher initiative.

Despite these insights, the literature reveals a limited number of empirical studies that systematically examine how public secondary school teachers in the Philippines integrate local history into their Social Studies instruction. Existing works are primarily descriptive or focused on isolated classroom practices, leaving a gap in understanding the broader pedagogical, curricular, and policy implications. Addressing this gap, the present study investigates how local history is incorporated into the secondary Social Studies curriculum from the perspectives of public school teachers. Specifically, it examines current practices, perceived benefits, and integration challenges to provide recommendations for educators and policymakers. By situating teachers' experiences at the center of analysis, this study contributes to ongoing efforts to localize the Social Studies curriculum and strengthen its cultural relevance within the Philippine K-12 system, while also informing sustainable curriculum development through institutional supports that can maintain culturally responsive practice at scale.

2. Literature Review

A growing body of research highlights the importance of integrating local history into Social Studies to contextualize learning, strengthen cultural identity, and promote civic engagement. Local history enriches curricula by connecting community events, figures, and traditions with national and global narratives, thereby situating students' lived realities within broader historical frameworks (Mutiani et al., 2023; Sariyatun & Marpelina, 2024). Teachers play a central role in this

process as curriculum leaders, developing lessons that draw on local narratives, artifacts, and oral histories to promote historical empathy and critical citizenship (Güllühan & Bekiroğlu, 2022; Hristova, 2019; Sapphasuk & Jatuporn, 2020). Beyond classroom discussions, project-based approaches such as community landmark research or oral history interviews have been shown to cultivate historical skills, empathy, and place attachment, thereby enabling learners to situate themselves more meaningfully within their communities (Crocco & Marino, 2017; Mbatha & Moreeng, 2024; Perrotta et al., 2024). From a sustainable education perspective, these practices support long-term civic capacity, cultural continuity, and equitable participation by making curriculum more relevant to diverse learners and communities.

Pedagogical strategies for integrating local history extend beyond traditional narratives. Teachers incorporate cultural practices, local festivals, and heritage sites as teaching resources, sometimes adopting interactive and gamified approaches to heighten student engagement (Mutiani et al., 2023). Through these methods, local history serves as a vehicle for promoting multicultural awareness, strengthening cultural identity, and building civic trust. Importantly, lessons often highlight marginalized voices and underrepresented perspectives, encouraging learners to reflect on diversity and their roles as active citizens critically (Cavallaro et al., 2018; Kuwoto, 2025; Najib, 2025; Stefaniak et al., 2017). This equity-oriented emphasis aligns with sustainable education goals by reducing cultural exclusion and strengthening inclusive civic learning. Such constraints also raise sustainability concerns, as implementation becomes dependent on individual teacher initiative rather than institutional capacity and support.

Despite these benefits, significant barriers hinder the effective integration of local history into curricula. Many teachers report limited knowledge of historical research methods and uncertainty about how to effectively contextualize lessons (Da Silva et al., 2023; Güllühan & Bekiroğlu, 2022). Standardized assessment requirements and rigid curricular competencies frequently lead educators to prioritize national content over local narratives. The shortage of textbooks, teaching guides, and contextualized instructional materials further compounds these challenges (Goksu & Somen, 2019; Mutiani et al., 2023). In some contexts, resistance arises from dominant cultural narratives or the contested nature of local histories, complicating classroom discussions of sensitive issues such as colonial legacies and racial inequalities (Da Silva et al., 2023; Washington & Seay, 2024). Limited collaboration between schools and local communities likewise restricts the authenticity and richness of classroom integration (Da Silva et al., 2023).

Scholars consistently emphasize that effective integration of local history requires contextualized content, well-prepared teachers, and inquiry-based pedagogy. Local examples, artifacts, and oral histories can make abstract concepts more concrete and relatable (Ernst, 2022; Güllühan & Bekiroğlu, 2022; Mutiani et al., 2023). Professional development programs are crucial for equipping teachers with the historical, methodological, and pedagogical skills necessary to effectively localize Social Studies instruction (Crocco & Marino, 2017; Oguzhan, 2015; Sapphasuk & Jatuporn, 2020). Equally important is the development of localized materials and digital resources, particularly in under-documented regions (Ogorodnikova, 2022; Sariyatun & Marpelina, 2024). digitally supported local-history ecosystems (e.g., open educational resources, school-community repositories, and locally curated digital archives) can improve access, reduce teacher workload, and enhance the scalability and sustainability of culturally responsive instruction—provided that digital access and capacity gaps are addressed. Finally, scholars advocate for pluralistic approaches to local history, ensuring that classroom narratives incorporate diverse cultural voices and avoid privileging dominant perspectives (Kuwoto, 2025).

In summary, the literature demonstrates that while local history holds transformative potential for Social Studies education, its integration remains constrained by structural, pedagogical, and cultural barriers. International studies offer rich models of localized pedagogy; however, empirical research on how Filipino teachers navigate these opportunities and challenges is scarce. This gap highlights the need for studies that capture teachers' lived experiences and instructional practices in integrating local history into the K-12 Social Studies curriculum in the Philippines. By addressing this gap, the present study advances both theoretical understanding and practical

recommendations for localizing education within culturally diverse societies. It also informs sustainable education and digital transformation debates by identifying the institutional supports and resource infrastructures needed to sustain culturally responsive Social Studies at scale.

3. Method

3.1. Research Design

This study used a basic qualitative research approach, which is especially useful for capturing rich, detailed accounts of participants' perspectives in their own words. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) describe this approach as the most common "type" of qualitative research: a basic interpretive study. The main goal of a basic qualitative study is to discover and interpret these meanings. This method was suitable because the aim was not to develop a theory or analyze the core of a phenomenon, but to offer a clear, factual, and nuanced description of Social Studies teachers' experiences, perceptions, and recommendations regarding the integration of local history into the secondary curriculum. This methodological choice helped provide a comprehensive understanding of current practices, perceived benefits and challenges, and practical strategies to improve the cultural relevance of Social Studies education.

3.2. Research Setting and Participants

This study was conducted in the Department of Education [DepEd] – Division of Tangub City, Misamis Occidental, Philippines, which comprises eight districts and 65 public schools serving learners from elementary (K–10) to senior high school (Grades 11–12), including 15 junior high schools (six integrated) and 11 senior high schools that cater to both urban and rural communities. This aligns with the Philippine K–12 reform's goal of providing equitable access to quality education (Department of Education, 2017). Eight public secondary schools were purposively selected to capture varied institutional contexts, resource levels, and community linkages, with 16 Social Studies teachers participating in interviews. Purposive sampling was employed to ensure the inclusion of information-rich cases (Palinkas et al., 2015; Patton, 2015), guided by criteria requiring at least 3 years of teaching experience in Social Studies, a current teaching assignment, demonstrable integration of local history into instruction, and a willingness to participate. Consistent with Creswell and Poth's (2018) assertion that qualitative research benefits from engaging participants with direct, relevant experience, this selection enabled the collection of nuanced narratives highlighting both opportunities and challenges in culturally responsive Social Studies pedagogy. Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the participants.

Table 1

Demographic Profile of the Participants

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Sex</i>	<i>Assigned School</i>	<i>Years of Teaching Experience</i>
P1	48	Female	National High School	21
P2	53	Female	National High School	28
P3	33	Male	National High School	9
P4	46	Female	Integrated School	12
P5	38	Female	Integrated School	9
P6	34	Female	National High School	8
P7	48	Female	National High School	22
P8	35	Female	National High School	10
P9	32	Female	National High School	7
P10	42	Female	Integrated School	19
P11	36	Female	Integrated School	11
P12	35	Female	National High School	11
P13	38	Female	National High School	10
P14	29	Female	National High School	6
P15	34	Female	National High School	5
P16	31	Female	National High School	6

3.3. Research Instrumentation

Data were gathered using a semi-structured interview guide that, as Edwards and Holland (2013) highlight, enables in-depth exploration of participants' perspectives while aligning with the

study's aims. The guide was developed through a systematic process based on relevant theoretical and methodological frameworks. The initial question set was created after a thorough review of the literature on local history integration, Social Studies pedagogy, and teacher professional practices. Question design was informed by phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994) to capture teachers' lived experiences, Shulman's (1986) Pedagogical Content Knowledge [PCK] framework to focus on instructional strategies and curriculum choices, the Teacher Sensemaking Framework (Spillane et al., 2001) to investigate perceived benefits and challenges, and constructivist curriculum theory to generate questions on improving curriculum integration. This theoretical foundation ensured all questions aligned conceptually with the study's research goals.

The interview guide went through a multi-step validation process before pilot testing. The study's research adviser and panel members performed face and content validation. Simultaneously, expert review was conducted by a Social Studies teacher, a sociologist, and a research expert to ensure conceptual clarity, relevance, and suitability for qualitative research. The research editor checked for grammatical and structural issues to improve readability. During these stages, reviewers suggested simplifying technical terms for better understanding and reorganizing questions to allow a natural progression from general to specific experiences. These suggestions were added to the updated guide.

A pilot test was carried out with three Social Studies teachers who were not part of the main study. They assessed each question for clarity, understandability, and relevance to the context. Their feedback identified minor ambiguities and suggested follow-up prompts to encourage deeper reflection. In response, several questions were rephrased for better clarity, and extra probing questions were added to ensure thorough data collection, following Bryman and Bell's (2019) guidelines for refining qualitative tools. The final interview guide, therefore, is a carefully developed, theory-based, and systematically tested instrument aimed at capturing teachers' lived experiences in a way that is clear, contextually relevant, and methodologically robust.

3.4. Data Gathering Procedure

Following institutional protocol, approval to conduct the study was first obtained from the college administration, after which permission was secured from the Department of Education, Tanguib City Division Office. Letters of request were then sent to school principals, and upon their endorsement, informed consent forms were distributed to all participants. The researchers personally explained the study's purpose, scope, and ethical safeguards to ensure that participation was voluntary.

Interviews were conducted in June 2025, coinciding with preparations for *Brigada Eskwela*. Seven participants chose interview locations such as their homes or public spaces, while most sessions took place on school premises; two interviews were conducted online via virtual conferencing tools. Each session followed a semi-structured, dialogic format, lasting 25–35 minutes, and encouraged open discussion of teaching practices and experiences. With participant permission, all interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and prepared for analysis. As a gesture of appreciation, each participant received a small token.

3.5. Data Analysis

Thematic analysis served as the primary analytical approach, enabling a systematic examination of participants' perspectives on integrating local history into the Social Studies curriculum. Audio-recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework. In the familiarization phase, transcripts were read repeatedly to gain an in-depth understanding of the content. Initial coding involved systematically tagging relevant excerpts that aligned with the research questions, ensuring rigor and consistency. Related codes were then clustered into broader categories representing emergent themes to maintain conceptual coherence. The review phase refined these themes for internal homogeneity and external distinctiveness, while the defining and naming phase articulated their scope and analytical focus. Finally, the findings were synthesized into a coherent narrative, integrating participant quotations

with scholarly interpretation to advance discussions on culturally relevant pedagogy.

3.6. Credibility

To establish credibility in this study, the researchers used several strategies aligned with Lincoln and Guba's (1985) principles of trustworthiness and were transparent about methodological limitations. Prolonged engagement was achieved through in-depth interviews with 16 Social Studies teachers from 8 public secondary schools, which enabled the researchers to gain a detailed understanding of participants' experiences, teaching methods, and perspectives on incorporating local history into the Social Studies curriculum. The diversity of participants in terms of school location, teaching experience, and resource access enhanced the richness and representativeness of the data.

Peer debriefing was used during data analysis. The student researchers regularly discussed emerging codes, themes, and interpretations with the research adviser, critically evaluating and refining their analytical decisions to ensure rigor and minimize personal bias. Additionally, direct quotations from participants were included throughout the findings to provide authentic evidence of teachers' lived experiences, maintaining transparency and grounding interpretations in participants' own words.

Audit trails were kept to record all coding decisions, theme development, and revisions during the data analysis process. The researchers' reflective journaling also supported critical self-reflection, helping them recognize and reduce potential biases.

The combination of prolonged engagement, systematic peer debriefing, use of participant quotations, audit trails, and reflexivity provided a reasonable assurance that the findings faithfully reflect the experiences and perspectives of Social Studies teachers regarding the integration of local history into the K-12 curriculum.

3.7. Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to established ethical principles for qualitative research (Bryman & Bell, 2019), ensuring respect for autonomy, confidentiality, and data integrity. Ethical clearance was obtained from the researchers' institution, and authorization to conduct the study was secured from the Department of Education, Tangub City Division Office. Participation was voluntary, with informed consent obtained after participants received a clear explanation of the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits. Consent forms were signed to indicate agreement, and participants were reminded that withdrawal was possible at any stage without consequence.

Confidentiality was maintained by using pseudonyms and securely storing all research materials in compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (R.A. 10173). To minimize researcher bias, reflexivity was practiced throughout data collection and analysis, with the researchers acknowledging and critically examining their assumptions. These measures upheld the trust between researchers and participants, ensuring that the study met both legal requirements and the moral responsibility inherent in ethical scholarly inquiry.

4. Findings and Discussion

Sixteen Social Studies teachers were interviewed to describe how they integrate local history into the current K-12 social studies curriculum, the perceived benefits of this approach, the barriers they encountered during integration, and systemic recommendations for improving the current curriculum as a basis for future policies. Using a semi-structured interview guide, transcripts were analyzed using the steps outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006) for thematic analysis. This study focused on four main questions: a) How did you incorporate local history into the current social studies curriculum? b) What are the perceived benefits of integrating local history to enhance cultural relevance in social studies curriculum? c) What are the barriers that hinder the inclusion of local history in the curriculum? and d) What recommendations can you suggest to help innovate the integration of local history into the current secondary social studies curriculum?

Findings revealed five major themes with its subthemes; 1) instructional integration of local

history in social studies including local history as a motivational tool, local history in learning activities and assessments, and local history in lesson discussions; 2) local history as a catalyst for student engagement and cultural identity, which includes enhancing student engagement and participation and fostering cultural pride and heritage appreciation; 3) local history as a pedagogical resource for simplifying complex content; 4) structural constraints in integrating local history, which includes inadequate access to local historical resources and time constraints exacerbated by curricular demands; and 5) strengthening culturally responsive social studies through localized resources and institutional collaboration, including development of innovative localized instructional materials and building institutional partnerships and teacher capacity.

Table 2

Teachers' Incorporation of Local History in Social Studies Curriculum

Major Theme	Subthemes	Sample Transcripts	Participants	f
Instructional Integration of Local History in Social Studies	Local History as a Motivational Tool	"I have been able to integrate local history into my Araling Panlipunan lessons, especially during the motivation part before the main lesson." - P1	P1, P2, P12, P14, P15, P16	6
	Local History in Learning Activities and Assessments	"...I am more on relating it to the activities and assessments we have..." - P3	P2, P3, P6, P8, P9, P10, P11	7
	Local History in Lesson Discussions	"I incorporate local history into my Social Studies lessons by naturally weaving it into the topics we discuss." - P4	P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P9, P10, P11, P13	9

4.1. Instructional Integration of Local History in Social Studies

The data revealed that Social Studies teachers systematically incorporate local history across different instructional phases, demonstrating its value as both a pedagogical resource and a cultural anchor. Teachers emphasized that integrating local history not only enriches lesson content but also makes abstract concepts more tangible and relatable to students. Three distinct subthemes emerged: (a) the use of local history as a motivational tool, (b) its incorporation in learning activities and assessments, and (c) its infusion in lesson discussions. Together, these subthemes illustrate how teachers adapt local narratives to foster cultural relevance, contextual learning, and student engagement.

4.1.1. Local history as a motivational tool

Several teachers highlighted that they strategically use local history during the motivation phase of their lessons to establish immediate relevance and spark student interest. As one participant shared:

I have been able to integrate local history into my Araling Panlipunan lessons, especially during the motivation part before the main lesson...I usually connect it with significant events, places, and figures that shaped our city and relate those to the topic at hand. Sometimes, I show pictures (P1).

Similarly, others emphasized that incorporating local events before the lesson helps students personally connect to broader concepts:

Before I begin my classes, I integrate these topics as a form of motivation to connect them to our lessons and help my students relate through their own experiences (P12).

These accounts indicate that the motivational phase functions as a pedagogical entry point for linking students' lived experiences to curricular content. By anchoring national and global topics in familiar local events, places, and figures, teachers enact culturally relevant pedagogy in which learners' backgrounds serve as a bridge to new knowledge (Gay, 2018). Such contextualization may also support the sustainability of learning by strengthening relevance and inclusion, thereby encouraging sustained participation and deeper engagement among diverse learners. This

interpretation is consistent with studies suggesting that local narratives can foreground diversity, promote multicultural awareness, and foster active citizenship (Cavallaro et al., 2018; Kuwoto, 2025; Sapphasuk & Jatuporn, 2020). Likewise, drawing on community traditions, oral histories, and local wisdom can make lessons more relatable and meaningful, enhancing comprehension and learner connection to content (Güllühan & Bekiroğlu, 2022). Notably, teachers' use of visual materials (e.g., showing pictures) points to a practical, low-threshold resource pathway: access to locally curated digital image collections or school-community repositories could help teachers use reliable materials more consistently and reduce individual preparation demands, strengthening capacity for sustained culturally responsive instruction.

4.1.2. Local history in learning activities and assessments

Teachers also integrated local history into their activities and assessments, enabling students to engage actively with their cultural heritage. For example, one teacher explained:

I also include it in the activities I give my students—using examples that are closely related to our topic...The same goes for the assessments we give—we try to make them relevant to the students' local experiences (P2).

Another emphasized designing tasks that link local heritage to classroom learning:

From national events, I assign community-based tasks that require students to explore their local history (P6).

Many teachers employed experiential and participatory approaches, including oral histories, interviews with elders, and visits to heritage sites. One teacher described:

I use barangay records, family heirlooms, interviews with elders, and sometimes organize field trips to nearby historical sites (P8).

Similarly, another highlighted:

I integrate local history by localizing the lessons for my students. For example, I ask them to research local events here in Tangub and conduct interviews with elders. When we discuss governance, I use examples from the local government structure and major projects such as the Panguil Bay Bridge (P10).

These practices demonstrate how teachers move beyond textbook instruction, immersing students in authentic sources that deepen their historical understanding and cultivate pride in their cultural heritage.

Such approaches align with international scholarship. In Indonesia, for example, local history, such as that of the Banjar Sultanate, has been incorporated into Social Studies curricula to align with national periodization, making learning both relevant and engaging (Mutiani et al., 2023; Sariyatun & Marpelina, 2024). In Turkey, models for teaching local history have been shown to increase students' historical empathy and community connection (Güllühan & Bekiroğlu, 2022; Oguzhan, 2015). Similar findings underscore the importance of participatory projects, eyewitness accounts, and experiential fieldwork in fostering critical thinking and civic responsibility (Cavallaro et al., 2018; Perrotta et al., 2024). Interpreted through a sustainable education lens, embedding local history in activities and assessments strengthens cultural continuity and civic learning by positioning students as active meaning-makers who engage with community knowledge and authentic sources. However, while these activities are promising, challenges remain in consistently assessing local history learning outcomes, particularly due to limited resources, insufficient teacher expertise, and the demands of a dense national curriculum (Güllühan & Bekiroğlu, 2022; Sariyatun & Marpelina, 2024).

4.1.3. Local history in lesson discussions

Finally, participants emphasized that lesson discussions offered a natural opportunity for integrating local history into broader curricular themes. One teacher noted:

I have been able to integrate local history into my Araling Panlipunan classes, especially during our discussions. This typically occurs when discussing significant historical events...Since Tangub is known as the Christmas Symbols Capital of the Philippines, I use that as a way to relate local events

to our topics (P4).

Others described how contextualization enhanced learning:

When we tackle topics like governance, I bring in discussions about the structure and history of Tangub City's local government. When we cover culture and traditions, I include our local festivals, customs, and key historical events that helped shape our city (P5).

Similarly, participants highlighted that making lessons relevant to students' lived contexts increased engagement:

Honestly, students do not care what is in the textbook unless you make it relatable to their own experiences or local history. That is the only time they begin to see its actual value (P13).

These findings confirm that incorporating local history into discussions transforms abstract and distant concepts into authentic, community-connected learning. Such discussion-based contextualization can also be read as a sustainability-oriented instructional practice, as it strengthens relevance, belonging, and inclusive participation—conditions that support sustained engagement and meaningful learning over time, particularly for learners whose identities and experiences are often underrepresented in standardized narratives. Mitchell and Elwood (2012) argue that contextualizing heritage within curriculum units enhances civic relevance, while Hristova (2019), Marino and Crocco (2012), and Oguzhan (2015) highlight how artifacts, celebrations, and oral traditions strengthen engagement and deepen understanding. Internationally, Social Studies curricula that integrate local content—such as regional histories in Indonesia—demonstrate how alignment between local and national narratives fosters both identity formation and historical empathy (Mutiani et al., 2018; Sariyatun & Marpelina, 2024). In addition, student-generated digital storytelling, for instance, can serve as an assessment-aligned extension of discussion-based learning by capturing local narratives in a shareable format while reinforcing historical meaning-making and civic relevance (Robin, 2008).

Table 3

Teachers' Perceived Benefits of the Integration of Local History in the Social Studies Curriculum

Major Theme	Subthemes	Sample Transcripts	Participants	f
Local History as a Catalyst for Student Engagement and Cultural Identity	Enhancing Student Engagement and Participation	"When we include local history, we observe its effectiveness—students become more engaged and attentive." – P2	P1, P2, P3, P4, P6, P7, P8, P9, P12, P14	10
	Fostering Cultural Pride and Heritage Appreciation	"It helps the students appreciate and value their own culture and heritage." – P9	P2 P7, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P15, P16	9
Local History as a Pedagogical Resource for Simplifying Complex Content		"I believe one of the most valuable benefits of integrating local history is how it helps in contextualizing complex topics." – P5	P3, P5, P13	3

4.2. Local History as a Catalyst for Student Engagement and Cultural Identity

Teachers consistently highlighted the integration of local history into the Social Studies curriculum as a powerful pedagogical tool that not only captures student interest but also cultivates cultural pride and identity. Analysis of the transcripts revealed two key subthemes: (1) enhancing student engagement and participation, and (2) fostering cultural pride and heritage appreciation. Collectively, these subthemes demonstrate how contextualizing lessons within the students' immediate community transforms Social Studies from abstract knowledge into lived, meaningful experiences that reinforce both academic and civic development.

4.2.1. Enhancing student engagement and participation

Teachers observed that grounding lessons in local historical narratives significantly heightened

students' attentiveness, curiosity, and willingness to participate in classroom activities. As one teacher emphasized:

I notice that students become more active in Araling Panlipunan topics. You can see how attentive they become in class. For them, it is not just about learning; it becomes more like an adventure for their imagination (P1).

Similarly, another participant affirmed that integrating local history made students:

...more engaged and attentive...they enjoy participating in discussions more. In the past, they thought Social Studies was just about sitting and listening. However, now, they are more involved in class activities and discussions (P2).

The local context served as a bridge between abstract concepts and lived realities, enabling students to engage more authentically with lessons. One participant noted:

I relate lessons to the local context, which helps engage students and turn them into active learners (P3).

This was echoed by P4, who observed that students' eagerness to participate often surpassed expectations:

Sometimes, I have not even finished asking a question, and they are already raising their hands, excited to share their thoughts with the class (P4).

For others, the relational connection between classroom content and community experience enhanced comprehension and attentiveness:

It connects to their own experiences or things they have seen in their community, so they participate more willingly (P6).

Teachers further emphasized that engagement extended beyond mere attentiveness, fostering expressive participation. As P9 explained:

When we begin discussing local topics, students become more vocal—especially when they can relate to stories from their own families or barangays. It helps them see history as something alive and meaningful to them personally (P9).

Similarly, P12 and P14 highlighted how contextualization translated into active listening and a willingness to learn:

The students become more engaged and willing to listen to me because they can relate to the historical events we discuss, especially those that happened right here in Tangub City (P12).

These accounts collectively suggest that local history operates as a bridge between abstract historical concepts and students' lived realities, thereby motivating authentic and sustained participation. Prior studies similarly emphasize that the use of contextualized learning materials that reflect students' communities enables stronger connections to the content, which in turn enhances motivation and engagement (Laeen et al., 2019; Mutiani et al., 2023; Najib, 2025; Stefaniak et al., 2017). This finding also resonates with Colminar and Padullo (2023), who argued that integrating local narratives fosters deeper learner participation by situating lessons within meaningful contexts. From the standpoint of sustainable education, heightened attentiveness and sustained participation are not merely "engagement outcomes" but enabling conditions for equitable learning opportunities, as relevance-driven participation can help reduce disengagement and support continued learning among students whose experiences are often peripheral in standardized narratives.

4.2.2. *Fostering cultural pride and heritage appreciation*

Beyond engagement, teachers underscored how local history instruction deepens students' appreciation of their cultural identity and heritage. P2 noted the immediate impact of this approach:

They develop a deeper understanding of their hometown, which makes them proud. This is evident on social media—when students learn about their own local stories, their pride in their community

increases.

Likewise, P7 added that students become:

...prouder of their roots when they learn that their hometown has a rich history that's truly worth studying (P7).

Teachers also stressed the transformative role of local history in shaping civic responsibility and cultural awareness. As P9 explained:

It helps the students appreciate and value their own culture and heritage. It enhances their awareness of their identity and instills a sense of pride in belonging to their community. Students learn about the history and accomplishments of their city, including Tangub's festivals, notable leaders, and cultural practices (P9).

P11 offered a similar observation:

It encourages deeper understanding and cultural pride. Many students become more interested when they discover that their own families may have played a role in local historical events. It also helps them better understand and connect with their cultural identity (P11).

This sense of cultural rootedness was echoed by others, who highlighted the way students begin to recognize their role in a broader community narrative. P15 remarked that:

Students learn about their own community's achievements, values, and traditions, and they develop a stronger sense of belonging and appreciation for the efforts that shaped Tangub into what it is today (P15)

For P16, this connection often becomes personal:

They also begin to develop a sense of community when they discover their heritage, values, and traditions, like realizing, 'Hey, our surname is connected to this or that!' That sense of pride transforms learning into something enjoyable (P16).

The findings affirm that contextualizing Social Studies through local history not only enhances cultural rootedness but also strengthens civic values and social cohesion. Integrating community-based narratives into the curriculum contributes to shaping a national identity that is inclusive, diversity-oriented, and grounded in local heritage (Danugroho, 2024). Parallel findings reinforce this claim: Awa-ao and Roperez (2024) found that oral histories and traditions strengthen cultural identity, while Stefaniak et al. (2017) reported that local history fosters place attachment, civic engagement, and social trust. Similarly, Sariyatun and Marpelina (2024) observed that embedding local history in Indonesian classrooms cultivates a sense of belonging and deepens understanding of cultural roots.

4.3. Local History as a Pedagogical Resource for Simplifying Complex Content

Another significant benefit of integrating local history is its role in simplifying abstract or complex concepts in Social Studies. By anchoring lessons to familiar experiences and contexts, teachers create a bridge between theoretical knowledge and lived realities, thereby enhancing comprehension. Participants highlighted how local history provides a concrete reference point, making abstract topics less intimidating and more memorable.

As one teacher emphasized:

I have seen that one of the most valuable benefits of integrating local history is how it helps in contextualizing complex topics... As modern Social Studies teachers, we constantly collaborate to improve how we deliver lessons every day in a way that makes it easy for my students to understand what I am going to discuss with them by giving real-life examples, especially those happening here in our city (P3).

Similarly, another participant explained:

I believe one of the most valuable benefits of integrating local history is how it helps in contextualizing complex topics. I try to relate lessons to local life so students can better visualize what we are talking about—and more importantly, so they can remember it better, which helps us understand more easily (P5).

These teacher accounts underscore how local historical narratives serve as pedagogical

scaffolding, transforming abstract curricular content into accessible, meaningful knowledge. In alignment with constructivist approaches, teachers deliberately select local historical events, figures, and cultural practices that resonate with students' contexts while still aligning with national curriculum standards (Mutiani et al., 2023; Sariyatun & Marpelina, 2024). In doing so, local history not only enriches the curriculum but also serves as a culturally responsive teaching strategy that promotes a deeper understanding, long-term retention, and the transfer of abstract concepts into real-world contexts. This finding aligns with prior research. Jasper-Abowei and Victor-Ishikaku (2023) demonstrated that contextualized learning enhances cognitive engagement and critical thinking by situating knowledge within students' immediate environments. Similarly, Yilmaz and Krakus (2018) reported that place-based education methods significantly improve student achievement in Social Studies. These studies reinforce the present findings, highlighting how grounding abstract content in local history not only aids comprehension but also cultivates higher-order thinking skills.

Table 4

Teachers' Perceived Barriers to the Implementation of Local History in Social Studies Curriculum

Major Theme	Subthemes	Sample Transcripts	Participants	f
Structural Constraints in Integrating Local History	Inadequate Access to Local Historical Resources	"I have encountered some challenges, especially with the lack of accessible and well-documented local historical materials here in Tangub." - P7	P1, P2, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11	10
	Time Constraints Exacerbated by Curricular Demands	"...I am more on relating it to the activities and assessments we have..." - P3	P3, P9, P11, P12, P13, P14, P15, P16	8

4.4. Structural Constraints in Integrating Local History

While Social Studies teachers recognize the value of integrating local history, they face structural barriers that limit its consistent and meaningful implementation. Two significant challenges emerged from the participants' narratives: (1) the inadequate access to local historical resources and (2) the time constraints imposed by curricular demands. Together, these issues highlight how systemic limitations hinder teachers' capacity to contextualize Social Studies instruction that reflects community heritage.

4.4.1. Inadequate access to local historical resources

Teachers consistently emphasized the scarcity of accessible, reliable, and structured local historical materials, which hampers their ability to design lessons grounded in community heritage. As P1 explained:

One of the main issues is the lack of accessible and well-documented local historical materials. Local records are often incomplete or not digitized, making it hard to include verified content in our lessons.

Similarly, P2 noted that most textbooks remain national or global in scope, forcing teachers to conduct independent research to supplement their lessons.

Several participants shared how they addressed this gap through resourcefulness and collaboration. For instance, P5 recalled compiling materials from the Tangub City Tourism Office and archives into handouts and visual aids.

At the same time, P6 highlighted reliance on oral histories, saying:

When we try to search for information about local heroes, there are no formal records, only stories passed down from elders... I also took the initiative to gather information from the Tangub City Tourism Office, local government records, and interviews with community elders.

Others reinforced this strategy by collaborating with cultural institutions. As P7 explained:

I collaborate with local historians and the city's cultural offices. I also encourage students to

document stories from their communities.

The problem, however, remains systemic. As P9 stated bluntly:

Yes, especially the lack of published materials or structured modules specifically about Tangub City's local history.

P10 echoed this, underscoring the absence of localized teaching resources in standard textbooks.

Collectively, these accounts illustrate that although teachers employ adaptive strategies, the lack of institutional support and published resources remains a persistent obstacle. This scarcity of primary sources and authentic local historical documents echoes earlier findings in other Philippine regions. For instance, Awa-ao and Roperez (2024) reported that K-12 educators in Samar faced severe shortages of printed references, digital archives, and institutional support for local content development. Similarly, Angeles and Rabago (2025) documented that teachers in northern Philippines faced parallel difficulties due to the absence of locally tailored instructional materials. Such experiences reinforce previous scholarship highlighting that resource limitations constrain teachers' ability to integrate local history effectively (Mutiani et al., 2023; Sariyatun & Marpelina, 2024).

4.4.2. Time constraints exacerbated by curricular demands

In addition to the lack of resources, teachers pointed to limited instructional time as a significant barrier. Given the breadth of the Social Studies curriculum, teachers struggle to integrate local history within the constraints of rigid time frames. As P3 reflected:

Challenges are part of teaching, and a major one is time management. Some topics are broad and challenging to explain, so I have to break them down into smaller, more understandable parts. Time constraints make it harder to integrate local history as we would like.

This concern was echoed across multiple accounts. P9 noted:

Another challenge is time constraints; it is often difficult to allocate enough time for more in-depth discussions on local content.

Similarly, P11 emphasized:

...the limited time we have is a significant challenge. Araling Panlipunan covers broad topics, so it is often hard to fit everything in.

Other participants reiterated that while materials may be available online, the actual limitation lies in the compressed teaching schedule. As P13 observed,

What we lack now is time. Time to thoroughly emphasize our lessons. Nevertheless, again, it varies depending on each case or situation.

This resonates with P16's concern:

Even in the case of Tangub, while some information is accessible online, our teaching time is still too limited to explore it deeply.

These accounts highlight that the dense, standardized curriculum often relegates local history to a peripheral role. Studies affirm that teachers worldwide face similar struggles when balancing mandated curricular coverage with the integration of local knowledge. For instance, Moobola and Mulenga (2020) emphasized how rigid timetables limit teachers' capacity to incorporate contextual content without sacrificing other competencies. Levstik and Barton (2022) further argued that without sufficient time to explore community histories, students are deprived of opportunities to develop personal connections to the subject matter. Thus, even when materials are available, time constraints prevent their meaningful integration, undermining efforts to cultivate deeper historical understanding.

Table 5

Teachers' Recommendations for the Improvement of Integration of Local History in Social Studies Curriculum

Major Theme	Subthemes	Sample Transcripts	Participants	f
Strengthening Culturally Responsive Social Studies through Localized Resources and Institutional Collaboration	Development of Innovative Localized Instructional Materials	"I recommend the inclusion of localized modules as part of the official curriculum, along with training for teachers on how to develop contextualized lesson plans. To make integration more effective and engaging, I suggest using technology and multimedia like videos, interactive timelines, virtual tours, and online archives." - P7	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, P15, P16	16
	Building Institutional Partnerships and Teacher Capacity	"I encourage LGUs to collaborate with schools in developing localized history modules and to provide training for teachers to become more effective in teaching these topics." - P3	P1, P3, P4, P5, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11	9

4.5. Strengthening Culturally Responsive Social Studies through Localized Resources and Institutional Collaboration

Teachers strongly emphasized that sustaining the integration of local history into the Social Studies curriculum requires both innovative instructional resources and supportive institutional structures. Their insights highlight two key strategies: the development of localized instructional materials that utilize digital and interactive tools, and the establishment of strong partnerships among schools, local government units [LGUs], and cultural institutions to provide both content and capacity-building support for teachers.

4.5.1. Development of innovative localized instructional materials

Participants widely recommended creating localized, multimedia-based learning resources to make local history more engaging, accessible, and relevant. Several teachers emphasized the importance of community-based historical mapping and digital content, which would provide students with systematic access to verified historical information. For example, P1 proposed:

...establishing community-based historical mapping and creating localized learning materials in collaboration with LGUs and local historians.

At the same time, P3 and P4 echoed the call for developing modules, activity sheets, and other digital content tailored to Tangub's history and culture.

Technology integration was highlighted as a critical strategy to align pedagogy with the interests of digital-native learners. P2 recommended using school-donated smart TVs to showcase "videos and interactive timelines." At the same time, P7 and P10 advocated for the use of virtual tours, interactive maps, and documentaries to immerse students in the city's heritage. These recommendations point to a practical digital transformation pathway that is directly connected to instruction: locally curated digital resources (timelines, maps, documentaries, virtual tours) can extend classroom discussion into multimodal learning experiences and improve access to local-history content where print materials are limited.

P12 and P13 further suggested leveraging student-created vlogs and digital projects around local festivals and events such as the Dalit Festival, the Christmas Symbols celebration, and the Panguil Bay Project, as these encourage both creativity and cultural pride. Such student-generated multimedia work can also function as authentic assessment evidence (e.g., narrative explanation,

source use, community interpretation), supporting more consistent evaluation of localized learning outcomes when paired with clear performance criteria and rubrics.

Notably, some teachers argued for DepEd to recognize such localized materials to ensure their sustainability formally. As P6 stressed:

Local history should be treated as a living subject...a tool to help students shape their identity, develop critical thinking, and become involved in their community.

These perspectives position localized instructional materials not as supplemental aids but as essential pedagogical resources for advancing culturally responsive Social Studies. From a sustainable education standpoint, formal recognition and institutionalization (e.g., DepEd endorsement, shared repositories, and routine updating of materials) are central to sustaining localization beyond individual teacher initiative and ensuring continuity across cohorts and schools. This is supported by Dorji et al. (2025), who found that ICT teachers employ technology-integrated pedagogies to foster students' ethical, cultural, and digital competencies and to enhance their learning experiences and engagement. Setiawati et al. (2021), who emphasized the importance of historical learning media that draw on local materials to strengthen historical understanding in schools. In addition, community-based historical mapping and partnerships with local government units/local historians directly address sustainability and quality assurance concerns by strengthening verification processes and building an ecosystem of shared responsibility for local-history knowledge and resources.

4.5.2. *Building institutional partnerships and teacher capacity*

Equally emphasized was the need for institutional collaboration to support teachers in integrating local history effectively. Many participants argued that partnerships with LGUs, heritage councils, and cultural offices could ensure access to verified historical resources while fostering shared ownership of local heritage. As P3 and P4 explained, localized teaching modules "require partnership with our local government units," while P5 and P7 similarly stressed collaboration with historians and cultural workers to develop contextually rich content. Such partnerships can also function as quality-assurance mechanisms by supporting verification processes and strengthening the credibility of localized content used in classrooms.

Beyond resource provision, participants highlighted the importance of teacher training and professional support. P8 recommended "*training for teachers on how to develop contextualized lesson plans*." At the same time, P9 underscored that teacher capacity-building must be paired with "*DepEd recognition of localized supplements*," so that teachers are empowered both institutionally and professionally. P10 and P11 further suggested partnerships with institutions such as Handurawan, the City Heritage and Tourism Offices, and cultural associations, which could serve as collaborators in content development or even as guest lecturers in classrooms. In addition to improving content access, these collaborations may strengthen the sustainability of implementation by distributing responsibility across institutions rather than relying solely on individual teacher initiative.

Collectively, these accounts highlight that teacher agency alone is insufficient without broader systemic support. Effective integration of local history requires institutional embedding, collaborative development, and formal recognition through continuous capacity-building initiatives. This is particularly significant given that not all teachers possess expertise in local history, which may lead to uncertainty or hesitation in adopting oral or community-based historical methods (Güllühan & Bekiroğlu, 2022; Sariyatun & Marpelina, 2024). As Uthaisa et al. (2023) argue, curriculum change necessitates collective effort among teachers, policymakers, and community stakeholders to design culturally grounded materials. Similarly, Pagbilao et al. (2023) found that a triangular support system—comprising LGU financial backing, school-based initiatives such as Lesson Study, and DepEd policy support—was critical in sustaining localized educational practices. From a sustainable education perspective, these forms of institutionalization (policy recognition, financing, and professional learning structures) are central to maintaining culturally responsive practice over time and scaling it more equitably across schools. Without such

systemic collaboration, attempts to integrate local history may lack both sustainability and long-term impact (Sariyatun & Marpelina, 2024). Moreover, the partnership model described by participants can be extended to digitally supported collaboration (e.g., shared repositories for vetted materials and lesson exemplars), which would strengthen continuity and access while aligning localized practice with broader digital transformation efforts—provided that teacher capacity and governance for content use are addressed.

5. Conclusion

This paper highlights the significant role of integrating local history into the K-12 Social Studies curriculum in Philippine education. Although the current curriculum guide primarily emphasizes specific learning competencies for each area of Social Studies, teachers have the authority to contextualize, indigenize, and localize each topic to ensure students can easily understand and grasp the knowledge. Based on the findings, important implications have been made.

First, the instructional integration of local history, whether as a motivational tool, embedded in activities and assessments, or woven into discussions, demonstrates how teachers contextualize Social Studies to make it culturally relevant, engaging, and accessible. This result stresses that incorporating local narratives transforms Social Studies into a living subject, deeply connected to students' immediate communities while simultaneously linking them to larger historical and civic processes. Such contextualization supports sustainable education by strengthening relevance and inclusion, thereby enabling more equitable and sustained participation in learning.

Second, integrating local history into Social Studies fosters two critical outcomes: it enhances student engagement by making lessons more relatable and participatory, and it nurtures cultural pride by deepening students' appreciation of their heritage and identity. These outcomes demonstrate that local history is not only a pedagogical tool but also a catalyst for cultivating active, culturally grounded learners, underscoring its vital role in curriculum design and culturally responsive teaching. In sustainability terms, these outcomes contribute to long-term civic learning and cultural continuity—core conditions for educational quality beyond short-term achievement.

Third, local history emerges as an effective pedagogical tool for simplifying complex Social Studies concepts. By contextualizing lessons through familiar cultural and community experiences, teachers not only make abstract content more accessible but also foster stronger connections between knowledge and lived realities. This approach highlights the dual value of local history as both a cultural resource and a cognitive scaffold, reinforcing its potential as a vital strategy in promoting meaningful learning. This reinforces the value of culturally grounded instruction as a durable approach for supporting comprehension and engagement across diverse learners.

Fourth, teachers' accounts reveal that the integration of local history is constrained not by lack of will or pedagogical creativity, but by structural barriers, predominantly the absence of adequate localized resources and the limited time allotted within an already overloaded curriculum. These constraints reduce opportunities for deeper engagement with local heritage, often forcing teachers to rely on fragmented or improvised materials. Addressing these systemic challenges requires institutional investment in localized resource development and curriculum adjustments that allow teachers the flexibility to embed local history into Social Studies instruction meaningfully. Without such system-level support, localization is difficult to sustain and remains uneven across classrooms and schools.

Lastly, teachers emphasized that the sustainable integration of local history in Social Studies hinges on two interrelated strategies: the creation of innovative, localized instructional materials and the establishment of strong institutional partnerships. By leveraging technology, digital media, and community-based resources, teachers can make local history more engaging and relevant for students. Equally, collaboration with LGUs, cultural institutions, and DepEd ensures that such efforts are systematically supported and formally recognized. Together, these approaches not only enhance classroom practice but also institutionalize culturally responsive pedagogy that strengthens students' cultural identity and civic awareness. The findings also indicate a feasible digital transformation pathway: locally curated digital resources (e.g., multimedia modules,

interactive maps/timelines, virtual tours, and student-created digital outputs) and shared repositories developed with community partners can improve access to vetted materials and reduce individual teacher preparation burden, thereby strengthening the continuity and scalability of culturally responsive Social Studies.

In essence, the findings assert that integrating local history is not a peripheral practice but a transformative approach to Social Studies instruction. It strengthens cultural identity, deepens civic awareness, and promotes meaningful learning, while also highlighting systemic gaps that require institutional support and curriculum innovation. Positioning local history as a core pillar of culturally responsive—and sustainable—education requires coordinated policy guidance, capacity-building, and resource infrastructures that enable teachers to implement localized pedagogy consistently and equitably across contexts. As such, the study underlines the need to position local history not merely as a supplement but as a vital pillar of culturally responsive education in the Philippine context.

6. Recommendations

The findings of this study highlight the importance of strengthening the integration of local history in Social Studies education in Philippine secondary schools. Local history should be recognized not as supplementary content but as a core instructional approach that helps contextualize national and global narratives, making lessons more meaningful, engaging, and accessible to learners. This requires stronger curriculum and policy support from the Department of Education and school leadership, including clearer guidance on localization practices and the use of verified local historical sources. The study also underscores the need for the development of localized instructional materials through collaboration among teachers, local government units, cultural institutions, heritage organizations, and local historians. Such partnerships can support the production of accurate, authentic, and sustainable resources that reflect community cultural and historical assets. In addition, teacher professional development remains essential in helping educators effectively integrate local history into classroom instruction, learner-centered activities, and assessment practices, particularly through inquiry-based and performance-oriented approaches. The use of digital technologies likewise offers significant opportunities for enhancing the delivery of localized content through multimedia and interactive learning experiences that resonate with students' everyday contexts. Finally, the sustainability of local history integration depends on addressing structural conditions such as time allocation, access to verified and digitized resources, and consistent institutional support. Taken together, these conditions suggest that the meaningful and equitable integration of local history in Social Studies requires a coordinated system-level effort that supports teachers, values local knowledge, and promotes culturally responsive and sustainable educational practice.

7. Limitations of the Study

Several limitations bound this study. First, triangulation of data sources or methods was not conducted, as the study relied solely on semi-structured interviews; no classroom observations or document analyses were conducted, which limited the richness of the findings. Second, member checking—returning transcripts or findings to participants for verification—was not undertaken, which could have further enhanced the trustworthiness of the interpretations due to time constraints linked to undergraduate thesis deadlines and locational disadvantage. These limitations are addressed in the study to ensure transparency and guide future research. Third, the study focused only on selected public secondary schools in Tuguegarao City, Philippines; therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to all Philippine schools or other contexts. Fourth, participants were limited to Social Studies teachers; perspectives from students, administrators, and community stakeholders were not included. Finally, resource constraints prevented the exploration of how localized materials are developed and implemented across schools.

Future studies should adopt a mixed-methods design that incorporates classroom observations, curriculum document analysis, and student perspectives to provide a more holistic understanding

of the integration of local history. Comparative research across Philippine regions could examine how varying cultural and institutional contexts shape implementation. Longitudinal studies may also be valuable in assessing how sustained use of localized history impacts students' cultural identity, critical thinking, and civic participation over time. Finally, action research involving teacher-LGU collaborations could generate practical models for developing and institutionalizing localized instructional resources.

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Data availability: The data generated and analyzed during the study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Declaration of interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Ethics declaration: Although the institution does not yet have a formal Ethics Review Board, the study underwent institutional approval processes, secured permission from the Department of Education–Tangub City Division, and obtained consent from school principals and participants. Informed consent was obtained after participants were briefed on the study's purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits, with assurance of voluntary participation and the right to withdraw at any time. Confidentiality was maintained through the use of pseudonyms and secure data storage, in compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (R.A. 10173). The study adhered to established ethical principles of qualitative research, ensuring respect for autonomy, confidentiality, and integrity. Reflexivity was practiced throughout the research process to minimize bias.

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