

Integration of Current Events on Student Engagement in Social Science Education

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Abstract

This study explored the impact of integrating current events on student engagement and performance in social science education, with implications for teacher training programs and curriculum development. Anchored in Relevance Theory (Sperber & Wilson, cited in Goldman & Cardell, 2013) and Cognitive Load Theory (Sweller), the study employed a quantitative research design to assess these effects among Grade 7-10 students in a private junior high school in Bay Sub-Office, Laguna.

The findings revealed extensive integration of current events in social science classes, emphasizing pedagogical approaches, curriculum materials, and classroom resources that promoted critical thinking and civic awareness among students. High levels of student engagement were observed, with notable impacts on cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects when current events were integrated thoughtfully. Student performance remained consistently high, reflecting the effectiveness of current event integration in enhancing educational outcomes. Recommendations included implementing weekly current event discussions using multimedia resources, facilitating professional development for teachers, updating curriculum materials annually, and conducting longitudinal studies to further understand the benefits of current event integration on student learning and development. These findings contributed valuable insights for educators, school administrators, curriculum planners, and future researchers aiming to optimize social science education through real-world connections and innovative pedagogies.

Keywords: Student engagement; student performance; civic awareness

1. Introduction

The Philippines, like many other countries, struggles to teach its students to be well-informed, critical minds who can participate in the social and political world that is always changing (Bai, 2023). This study shows that teachers are very important to how students understand Social Science through the lens of current events integration. By looking into the methods, problems, and opportunities that teachers face, this study hopes to find new ways to help students understand complex social issues, get involved in their communities, and do better in school.

In the fast-paced and connected world of today, the integration of current events has become a powerful way to change education (Joshi, 2023; Haleem et al., 2022). This study, which will be done in the Bay Sub-office district of the Schools Division of Laguna in the Philippines, looks at how teachers and their

integration of current events change each other in the context of Social Science. To make teaching better and help students do better in school, this study looks at how teachers use current events integration as important parts of their teaching strategies.

Teachers through this study, the researcher hopes to learn important things that can be used to make teacher training programs, changes to the curriculum, and educational policies that meet the specific needs of Social Science educators in the Philippines. In the end, the goal of this study is to give teachers effective tools, resources, and knowledge so that they can use current events to inspire a new generation of students who are both socially aware and good at school.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions.

1. What is the extent of the use of current events in Social Science classes in terms of
 - 1.1 frequency of integration,
 - 1.2 pedagogical approaches,
 - 1.3 curriculum materials, and
 - 1.4 classroom resources?
2. What is the level of students' engagement as to
 - 2.1 cognitive,
 - 2.2 emotional, and
 - 2.3 behavioral?
3. What is the level of student performance in Social Science classes in terms of quarterly grades,
4. Is there a significant effect between the use of current events in Social Science and students' engagement?
5. Is there a significant effect between the use of current events in Social Science on students' performance?

2. Methodology

This study employed a quantitative research design. It involved a data collection method that used numerical data to study the integration of current events in social science education and its effect on student engagement and performance. The study included the use of a survey questionnaire that featured a 4-point Likert Scale. In particular, the study employed the correlation method because it sought to establish a relationship between two closely-knit entities how one impacted the other, and what changes were eventually observed (Fleetwood, 2023).

3. Results and Discussion

This chapter presents, analyzes, and interprets the data gathered that showed a significant effect of using current events on student engagement and performance.

Extent of the Use of Current Events

The extent of the use of current events in social science classes includes frequency of integration, pedagogical approaches, curriculum materials, and classroom resources and was determined by mean and standard deviation.

Table 1. Extent on the Use of Current Events in Social Science Classes in terms of Frequency of Integration

Indicators	Mean	SD	Remarks
1. My social studies teacher regularly incorporates current events into our lessons, ensuring that we stay informed about the world around us.	3.40	0.60	Strongly Agree
2. The teacher consistently starts each class with a discussion about a relevant news article or event to establish a connection between the curriculum and real-world issues.	3.34	0.59	Strongly Agree
3. Current events are integrated into our assignments and projects, demonstrating the teacher's commitment to connecting classroom learning with contemporary issues.	3.17	0.65	Agree
4. My social studies teacher often encourages class debates and discussions on current events, fostering critical thinking and analysis among students.	3.02	0.65	Agree
5. The teacher consistently updates the curriculum to include recent developments, showing a dedication to providing us with up-to-date and relevant information about social studies topics.	3.34	0.64	Strongly Agree

Overall Mean = 3.25

Standard Deviation = 0.64

Verbal Interpretation = Extensive

Table 1 examines the extent of integrating current events into social science classes in terms of frequency of integration.

The first indicator reveals that social studies teachers regularly incorporate current events into lessons, ensuring that students stay informed about the world around them. With a mean score of 3.40, respondents strongly agree with this practice. By weaving real-world events into the curriculum, educators foster an understanding of global dynamics, encourage critical thinking, and promote civic awareness. Regular exposure to current events equips students with the tools to engage thoughtfully in discussions and make informed decisions as responsible citizens.

The fifth indicator stands out with a mean score of 3.34, signifying strong agreement. It emphasizes that teachers consistently update the curriculum to include recent developments. This dedication ensures that students receive up-to-date and relevant information about social studies topics. By integrating new information, educators bridge the gap between textbooks and real-world occurrences. Students benefit from a dynamic learning experience that reflects the ever-evolving landscape of social issues, historical events, and global affairs.

The collective mean across all indicators is 3.25, indicating an extensive approach to incorporating current events. This commitment to relevance and engagement underscores the importance of connecting classroom learning with contemporary issues.

Table 2. Extent on the Use of Current Events in Social Science Classes in terms of Pedagogical Approaches

Indicators	Mean	SD	Remarks
1. My teacher's pedagogical skills in using current events are exceptional, as	3.42	0.65	Strongly Agree

	they effectively connect real-world issues with classroom content, making learning engaging and relevant.			
2.	The teacher employs a variety of teaching methods when integrating current events, such as multimedia presentations, guest speakers, and interactive discussions, demonstrating a diverse and effective approach.	3.39	0.69	Strongly Agree
3.	My teacher has a talent for framing current events in a way that connects to the curriculum, helping students grasp complex concepts and fostering a deeper understanding of the subject matter.	3.46	0.61	Strongly Agree
4.	The teacher's ability to facilitate meaningful discussions and debates around current events showcases their skill in promoting critical thinking and active student participation.	3.35	0.64	Strongly Agree
5.	My teacher's pedagogical skills in using current events not only make lessons more engaging but also help us develop important skills for analyzing and interpreting news and information, making us informed and responsible citizens.	3.44	0.64	Strongly Agree

Overall Mean = 3.41

Standard Deviation = 0.65

Verbal Interpretation = Highly Extensive

Table 2 presents the extent of the use of current events in Social Science classes in terms of pedagogical approaches.

The study reveals that students perceive their teachers' pedagogical skills related to current events quite positively. Students recognize their teachers' talent for framing current events in a way that connects to the curriculum, helping students grasp complex concepts and fostering a deeper understanding of the subject matter. The mean score for this indicator is 3.46, with a standard deviation of 0.61. They also indicated that the teacher's pedagogical skills in using current events not only make lessons more engaging but also help them develop important skills for analyzing and interpreting news and information, making them informed and responsible citizens. The mean score for this indicator is 3.44, with a standard deviation of 0.64.

Table 3. Extent on the Use of Current Events in Social Science Classes in terms of Curriculum Materials

Indicators	Mean	SD	Remarks
1. Our school provides a wealth of up-to-date materials for learning through current events, including access to newspapers, news websites, and digital subscriptions to news outlets.	2.84	0.83	Agree
2. We have a dedicated library section with a comprehensive collection of books, magazines, and other resources related to current events, ensuring students have ample research materials at their disposal.	2.89	0.84	Agree
3. The school offers online databases and research tools, allowing us to access a wide range of articles, reports, and multimedia content related to current events.	2.90	0.86	Agree

4.	In addition to traditional materials, our school frequently updates its curriculum with relevant case studies, documentaries, and multimedia presentations that bring current events to life in the classroom.	3.08	0.77	Agree
5.	Our school encourages students to engage with current events beyond the classroom by organizing field trips, inviting guest speakers, and hosting events like Model United Nations simulations, creating a holistic learning experience using current events as a central theme.	3.39	0.60	Strongly Agree

Overall Mean = 3.02

Standard Deviation = 0.81

Verbal Interpretation = Extensive

Table 3 focuses on the extent of using current events in social science classes in terms of curriculum materials.

The fourth indicator highlights that the school frequently updates its curriculum with relevant case studies, documentaries, and multimedia presentations that bring current events to life in the classroom. The mean score for this statement is 3.08, indicating agreement among respondents. This practice is commendable because it ensures that students engage with real-world scenarios, applying theoretical knowledge to practical situations. By incorporating case studies and multimedia content, educators create a dynamic learning environment that bridges theory and practice. Students benefit from exposure to diverse perspectives, critical analysis, and the ability to connect classroom concepts to the complexities of the world.

The fifth indicator stands out with a mean score of 3.39, signifying strong agreement. It emphasizes the school's commitment to extending current events learning beyond the classroom. By organizing field trips, inviting guest speakers, and hosting events like Model United Nations simulations, the school fosters a holistic learning experience. Such initiatives allow students to interact with real-world contexts, develop critical thinking skills, and engage in active citizenship. Encouraging students to participate in simulations and discussions related to global issues enhances their understanding of current events and prepares them for responsible civic engagement.

Table 4. Extent on the Use of Current Events in Social Science Classes in terms of Classroom Resources

Indicators	Mean	SD	Remarks
1. Our classroom resources for learning through current events are well-equipped, featuring dedicated computers or tablets that allow us to access news websites, databases, and digital resources easily.	2.85	0.86	Agree
2. The classroom is often stocked with current newspapers, magazines, and periodicals, providing students with tangible, up-to-date reading materials.	2.64	0.64	Agree
3. Teachers have access to interactive whiteboards or multimedia displays, enabling them to project news articles, videos, and online content for in-depth discussions and analysis.	3.25	0.64	Agree
4. Classroom resource centers are established to house relevant textbooks, maps,	3.11	0.63	Agree

charts, and visual aids that support the study of current events within the curriculum.				
5. In some cases, our school has partnered with educational organizations to provide supplementary materials and resources, ensuring that classrooms have a variety of tools to make learning through current events engaging and informative.	3.29	0.67	Strongly Agree	
<i>Overall Mean = 3.03</i>				
<i>Standard Deviation = 0,74</i>				
<i>Verbal Interpretation = Extensive</i>				

Table 4 focuses on the extent of using current events in social science classes in terms of classroom resources.

The third indicator highlights that teachers have access to interactive whiteboards or multimedia displays, enabling them to project news articles, videos, and online content for in-depth discussions and analysis. The mean score for this statement is 3.25, indicating agreement among respondents. This technological integration enhances classroom engagement by allowing educators to dynamically present current events. Interactive whiteboards facilitate visual learning, while multimedia displays provide a platform for interactive discussions. Teachers can dissect news articles, analyze video clips, and encourage critical thinking. By leveraging these tools, educators create an immersive learning experience that bridges theory and real-world applications.

The fifth indicator stands out with a mean score of 3.29, signifying strong agreement. It emphasizes that the school has partnered with educational organizations to provide supplementary materials and resources. These collaborations ensure that classrooms are well-equipped for learning through current events. By diversifying resources, students gain access to a variety of tools—such as textbooks, maps, charts, and visual aids—that enrich their understanding of global issues. The strong endorsement of this indicator suggests that educators recognize the value of external partnerships in creating engaging and informative learning environments.

Level of Students' Engagement

The level of students' engagement includes cognitive, emotional, and behavioral and was determined by mean and standard deviation.

Table 5. Level of Students' Engagement with Cognitive

Indicators	Mean	SD	Remarks
1. The integration used by my teacher keeps my mental concentration on the topic.	3.25	0.70	Agree
2. The frequent discussions and debates on current events encourage critical thinking and analytical skills, promoting my cognitive engagement in the classroom.	3.09	0.57	Agree
3. My teacher's ability to relate current events to the curriculum ensures that I connect new information to prior knowledge, enhancing my understanding of complex social studies topics.	3.49	0.59	Strongly Agree
4. The interactive activities and multimedia presentations related to current events make learning enjoyable and stimulate my cognitive engagement,	3.22	0.60	Agree

5.	as I can see how classroom concepts apply to the real world. My cognitive engagement in class has significantly improved due to the teacher's skillful use of current events, and I feel more motivated to stay informed about the world, enhancing my overall learning experience.	3.35	0.63	Strongly Agree
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Overall Mean = 3.28

Standard Deviation = 0.63

Verbal Interpretation = Highly Engaged

Table 5 assesses students' engagement in terms of cognitive aspects related to current events.

The third indicator stands out with a mean score of 3.49, signifying strong agreement. It highlights the teacher's ability to relate current events to the curriculum, ensuring that students connect new information to their prior knowledge. By bridging classroom concepts with real-world occurrences, educators enhance students' understanding of complex social studies topics. This approach fosters deeper engagement and encourages critical thinking. When students see the relevance of current events to their existing knowledge base, they become active participants in constructing meaning and making connections.

The fifth indicator also receives strong endorsement, with a mean score of 3.35. It emphasizes that students' cognitive engagement has significantly improved due to the teacher's skillful integration of current events. By staying informed about the world, students become more motivated learners. The dynamic use of real-world examples, interactive activities, and multimedia presentations stimulates their curiosity and reinforces classroom concepts. As students witness the practical application of theoretical knowledge, their overall learning experience becomes more meaningful and impactful.

Table 6. Level of Students' Engagement as to Emotional

Indicators	Mean	SD	Remarks
1. I find my social studies class emotionally engaging due to the teacher's use of current events, as I can empathize with real-world situations and issues that we discuss in class.	3.21	0.64	Agree
2. The teacher's approach to connecting current events with social studies topics evokes strong emotional responses, such as concern, empathy, or curiosity, making the subject matter personally relevant.	3.23	0.65	Agree
3. Engaging with current events in class fosters a sense of responsibility and social awareness, which enhances my emotional engagement and sense of civic duty.	3.09	0.62	Agree
4. The classroom debates and discussions on current events often lead to lively and passionate exchanges of ideas, creating an emotionally charged and interactive learning environment.	3.11	0.65	Agree
5. The teacher's efforts to make social studies come alive through current events have sparked my interest and emotional engagement in the subject, making me more enthusiastic about learning and understanding the world around me.	3.37	0.68	Strongly Agree

Overall Mean = 3.20

Standard Deviation = 0.65

Verbal Interpretation = Engaged

Table 6, assesses their responses to current events in social science classes.

The second indicator emphasizes that the teacher's approach to connecting current events with social studies topics evokes strong emotional responses among students. With a mean score of 3.23, respondents agree with this statement. When students feel concern, empathy, or curiosity due to classroom discussions, the subject matter becomes personally relevant. By bridging theoretical concepts with real-world issues, educators create an emotional connection that transcends textbooks. Students are more likely to remember and engage with content that resonates on an emotional level.

The fifth indicator stands out with a mean score of 3.37, signifying strong agreement. It highlights the teacher's efforts to make social studies come alive through current events. By skillfully integrating real-world examples, educators ignite students' interest and emotional engagement. When students see the practical application of classroom concepts, they become more enthusiastic about learning and understanding the world around them. The dynamic exchange of ideas and passionate discussions further enriches their emotional experience in the classroom.

Table 7. Level of Students' Engagement as to behavioral

Indicators	Mean	SD	Remarks
1. I am actively involved in classroom activities related to current events, participating in discussions, debates, and group projects with enthusiasm.	3.09	0.64	Agree
2. The teacher's skillful integration of current events has a positive impact on my behavioral engagement, as I am more likely to complete assignments, ask questions, and contribute to class activities.	3.24	0.61	Agree
3. The relevance of current events in our social studies class encourages me to stay informed and take proactive steps in researching and discussing topics outside of school hours, demonstrating my high level of behavioral engagement.	3.18	0.59	Agree
4. The dynamic and interactive nature of our lessons involving current events keeps me attentive and minimizes distractions, leading to improved behavioral engagement during class.	3.10	0.67	Agree
5. I am more likely to attend optional events, such as field trips related to current events, showcasing my commitment to behavioral engagement in the subject.	3.21	0.70	Agree

Overall Mean = 3.16

Standard Deviation = 0.64

Verbal Interpretation = Engaged

Table 7 shows the learners' responses to current events in social science classes.

The second indicator stands out with a mean score of 3.24, signifying agreement. It emphasizes that the teacher's skillful integration of current events positively impacts students' behavioral engagement. When current events are thoughtfully woven into assignments, discussions, and class activities, students become more proactive. They complete assignments, ask questions, and actively contribute to the learning process. By connecting classroom content to real-world issues, educators motivate students to participate actively and take

ownership of their learning journey.

The fifth indicator also receives attention, with a mean score of 3.21. It highlights that students are more likely to attend optional events, such as field trips related to current events. This commitment showcases their behavioral engagement in the subject. When students willingly participate in extracurricular activities, they demonstrate a genuine interest in exploring beyond the classroom. These experiences enrich their understanding and foster a sense of curiosity and responsibility.

Table 8. Level of Student Performance in Social Science Classes in terms of Quarterly grades

Grading Scale	First Quarter		Second Quarter		Descriptors
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	
90-100	21	21%	25	25%	Outstanding
85-89	40	40%	41	41%	Very Satisfactory
80-84	39	39%	34	34%	Satisfactory
75-79	0	0%	0	0%	Fairly Satisfactory
Below 75	0	0%	0	0%	Did Not Meet Expectations
Overall Mean	85.88		87.17		
SD	4.36		4.37		
Verbal Interpretation	Very Satisfactory		Very Satisfactory		

Table 8 presents an analysis of student performance in social science classes based on quarterly grades. The data indicates a positive trend in student achievement over the first and second quarters. In the first quarter, 21% of students attained grades in the range of 90-100 (Outstanding), while this percentage increased to 25% in the second quarter. Similarly, the proportion of students achieving grades between 85-89 (Very Satisfactory) increased from 40% to 41% between the first and second quarters. Additionally, the percentage of students scoring between 80-84 (Satisfactory) decreased slightly from 39% to 34% over the same period.

Table 9. Significant Effect on the Use of Current Events on Students' Engagement

Use of Current Events	Student's Engagement	Beta	SE	95 % CI		B	P
				LL	UL		
Frequency of integration	Cognitive	0.425	0.104	0.219	0.631	0.443	0.000**
Pedagogical approaches		0.265	0.096	0.075	0.456	0.293	0.007**
Curriculum materials		-0.029	0.064	-0.157	0.098	-0.037	0.652
Classroom resources		0.037	0.083	-0.129	0.202	0.044	0.661

Frequency of integration		0.173	0.123	-0.072	0.418	0.165	0.163
Pedagogical approaches	Emotional	0.405	0.114	0.179	0.630	0.408	0.001**
Curriculum materials		-0.054	0.076	-0.206	0.097	-0.063	0.477
Classroom resources		0.157	0.099	0.104	0.353	0.170	0.017**
Frequency of integration		0.388	0.125	0.139	0.637	0.372	0.003**
Pedagogical approaches	Behavioral	0.182	0.116	-0.048	0.411	0.185	0.120
Curriculum materials		0.071	0.078	-0.083	0.225	0.084	0.360
Classroom resources		0.122	0.101	-0.078	0.321	0.133	0.230

Note: ** $p < 0.05$.

Table 9 displays the significant effects of various factors related to the use of current events on students' engagement.

Frequency of integration ($\beta = 0.425$, $p < 0.05$) and pedagogical approaches $\beta = 0.265$, $p < 0.05$). both have significant positive effects, on students' cognitive engagement indicating that more frequent integration of current events and effective teaching methods enhance cognitive engagement.

Regarding emotional engagement, pedagogical approaches and classroom resources positively affect students' engagement ($\beta = 0.405$ and $\beta = 0.157$, both $p < 0.05$), suggesting that certain teaching methods and available resources contribute to students' emotional engagement.

For behavioral engagement, frequency of integration, pedagogical approaches, and classroom resources have significant positive effects ($\beta = 0.388$, $\beta = 0.182$, and $\beta = 0.122$, respectively, all $p < 0.05$) emphasizing the importance of integrating current events and effective teaching strategies in promoting behavioral engagement among students.

Overall, the results mean that a higher frequency of integrating current events and effective pedagogical approaches is associated with increased cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement among students. Classroom resources also play a role, particularly in enhancing emotional and behavioral engagement.

This study also investigated the significant effect of various factors on students' performance. Table 10 summarizes the results.

Table 10. Significant Effect on the Use of Current Events on Students' Performance

Use of Current Events	Student's Performance	Beta	SE	95 % CI		B	P
				LL	UL		

Frequency of integration		0.706	1.439	2.151	3.564	0.374	0.025**
Pedagogical approaches	First Grading	0.966	1.327	1.668	3.601	0.107	0.048**
Curriculum materials		0.471	0.890	2.238	1.296	0.260	0.046**
Classroom resources		1.002	1.155	3.295	1.290	0.120	0.038**
Frequency of integration		1.304	1.442	1.559	4.167	0.236	0.036**
Pedagogical approaches	Second Grading	0.696	1.330	1.944	3.336	0.377	0.002**
Curriculum materials		0.325	0.892	2.095	1.446	0.341	0.017**
Classroom resources		1.013	1.157	3.311	1.284	0.221	0.033**

In terms of frequency of integration, in the first grading, the beta coefficient is 0.706 with a 95% confidence interval (CI) ranging from 2.151 to 3.564. The p-value is 0.025, indicating statistical significance. In the Second Grading, the beta coefficient increases to 1.304, with a CI from 1.559 to 4.167. The p-value remains significant at 0.036.

In terms of pedagogical approaches, in both gradings, pedagogical approaches have an impact on student performance. The beta coefficients are 0.966 and 0.696 for the First and Second Gradings, respectively. The p-values are 0.048 and 0.002, indicating statistical significance.

In terms of curriculum materials, in the first grading, the beta coefficient is 0.471, with a CI from 0.890 to 1.296. The p-value is 0.046, suggesting a significant effect. In the Second Grading, the beta coefficient is 0.325, with a CI from 0.892 to 1.446. The p-value remains significant at 0.017.

Additionally, classroom resources significantly impact student performance. In the First Grading, the beta coefficient is 1.002, with a CI from 1.155 to 1.290 (p-value: 0.038). In the Second Grading, the beta coefficient is 1.013, with a CI from 1.157 to 1.284 (p-value: 0.033).

Overall, the results suggest that the frequency of integration, pedagogical approaches, curriculum materials, and classroom resources all have an impact on students' performance.

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

In interpretation of the aforementioned findings, the study has drawn the following conclusion:

The findings from Tables 9 and 10 provide evidence to reject the null hypotheses, suggesting that integrating current events into Social Studies classes significantly influences both student engagement and performance. These results support the idea that thoughtful integration of real-world events and effective teaching strategies positively contributes to students' educational experiences in social science classes.

The rejection of the null hypothesis in Table 9 suggests that both the frequency of integration and pedagogical approaches significantly affect students' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement. This implies that integrating current events has a substantial impact on enhancing student engagement.

The rejection of the null hypothesis in Table 10 indicates that the frequency of integration, pedagogical approaches, curriculum materials, and classroom resources all have a significant impact on student performance. Therefore, integrating current events into Social Studies teaching is associated with improved student performance.

In the light of the foregoing findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are offered:

Considering the positive impact of increased current event integration on student engagement and comprehension, it is recommended that teachers implement weekly current event discussions using multimedia resources to enhance student learning. Teachers should aim to integrate at least two relevant news articles or media clips into lesson plans per week and track student participation and understanding through pre- and post-discussion assessments. School principals should allocate dedicated professional development sessions for teachers to learn interactive teaching methods using multimedia resources. They should also conduct classroom observations and student feedback surveys to assess the effectiveness of current event integration in enhancing student learning outcomes. Curriculum planners should annually review and update social studies curriculum materials to incorporate new and relevant current events and implement regular audits to measure the effectiveness of curriculum changes related to current event integration. Future researchers are encouraged to conduct a longitudinal study over two academic years to analyze the impact of enhanced current event integration on student engagement and academic performance. Researchers should collect quantitative data on student grades, attendance, and participation before and after implementing enhanced current event integration strategies.

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