

Impact Analysis of Lifelong Learning, Ethical Considerations, and Sustainability Issues on Teachers' Perspectives in Social Studies Education

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Abstract. This study examined the influence of lifelong learning practices, ethical considerations, and sustainability issues on teachers' perspectives in social studies education in Lianga District, Surigao del Sur. Using a quantitative comparative design, data were gathered from 114 licensed social studies teachers through a validated survey instrument. Descriptive statistics, one-way analysis of variance, and linear regression were employed to determine categorical levels, significant differences, and predictive relationships among variables. Results revealed high levels of lifelong learning practices and ethical considerations, and generally high integration of sustainability issues, although curriculum integration of sustainability remained moderate. Teachers' perspectives on social studies education were extensive, reflecting a strong commitment to critical thinking, inclusivity, and civic responsibility. Significant differences were found in teachers' perspectives when grouped according to levels of professional responsibility, and regression analysis identified lifelong learning and ethical considerations as significant predictors, with sustainability issues contributing meaningfully to the overall model. The findings underscored the importance of sustained professional development, ethical literacy, and contextualized sustainability integration in strengthening instructional quality. Implications pointed to the need for targeted capacity-building programs.

KEY WORDS

1. lifelong learning 2. ethical considerations 3. sustainability issues

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1. Introduction

Social Studies teachers are increasingly expected to perform roles that go beyond content delivery. Their work now involves continuous professional renewal, careful handling of moral and civic issues, and the integration of sustainability-oriented discussions. These demands require teachers to remain reflective, adaptable, and responsive as they help learners understand society and participate responsibly in community life. Across international education systems, Social Studies teachers work within varied curriculum standards, political cultures, and professional expectations. Continuous learning is therefore necessary for teachers to remain informed about emerging civic issues, instructional approaches, and global trends. Yet opportunities for quality professional development remain unequal, especially in resource-constrained contexts, limiting some teachers' capacity to provide relevant and critical learn-

ing experiences (Eikeland & Johannesen, 2024). Teachers also face ethical pressure when lessons involve contested social realities such as human rights, migration, historical injustice, and political conflict. In some settings, community expectations or official narratives may influence what teachers feel safe to discuss. The challenge is to uphold balanced, evidence-informed, and inclusive instruction while avoiding harm to learners and the school community (Gorman & Rowland, 2022). Sustainability adds another layer of complexity to Social Studies instruction. Climate change, resource depletion, and environmental injustice require learners to understand links between local experience and global responsibility. However, the ways sustainability is interpreted differ across cultural, economic, and political contexts; hence, teachers need appropriate resources, contextualized examples, and pedagogical support to present these issues meaningfully (Thwe & Kálmán, 2023). In the Philippine context, the demand for lifelong learning among Social Studies teachers is intensified by curriculum reforms, evolving social concerns, and the need for learner-centered instruction. Although DepEd provides professional development activities, teachers in rural and underserved areas may encounter barriers related to distance, cost, workload, and limited access to training. These limitations may affect their readiness to use updated teaching strategies and relevant social content (Origenes et al., 2024). Ethical teaching is likewise a continuing concern in Philippine Social Studies classrooms. Topics such as colonial memory, civic rights, social inequality, and political participation require teachers to present multiple perspectives with sensitivity. When teachers anticipate negative reactions from parents, administrators, or local actors, they may avoid difficult conversations; consequently, opportunities for developing critical and democratic citizenship may be reduced (Fernandez et al., 2022). Sustainability education is particularly relevant in the Philippines because of the country's exposure to climate-related hazards and environmental degradation. Social Studies teachers are positioned to connect these issues with citizenship, governance, and community action. However, limited training, instructional materials, and differences in learners' prior knowledge can make classroom integration difficult, requiring stronger support for teachers (del Valle, 2023). In Lianga District, Surigao del Sur, these concerns are shaped by local realities. Teachers assigned to remote barangays may have fewer professional learning opportunities because of travel, financial, and logistical constraints. They may also exercise caution when discussing Indigenous Peoples' experiences, local conflicts, and socio-political concerns. At the same time, the district's exposure to environmental risks makes sustainability instruction necessary. These conditions justify the conduct of the present study.

2. Methodology

This chapter describes the procedures followed in conducting the study. It includes the research design, respondents and sampling procedures, research instrument, data gathering steps, ethical safeguards, and statistical tools used to answer the research questions.

2.1. Research Design—The study used a quantitative comparative-correlational design. This design was appropriate because the study examined differences in teachers' perspectives according to levels of foundational competence and also determined the influence of lifelong learning practices, ethical considerations, and sustainability issues on teachers' perspectives in Social Studies Education. Factorial Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to com-

pare mean differences across categorical levels of the independent variables and to determine whether these levels produced significant differences in teachers' perspectives. This method was suitable because the study involved multiple competence domains that could vary by level. In the present study, factorial ANOVA tested whether teachers' perspectives differed when respondents were grouped according to lifelong learning practices, ethical considerations, and sustainability issues. This allowed the researcher to determine which competence areas were associated with significant differences in perspective. The use of ANOVA helped identify the areas where teachers' perspectives varied, while regression analysis provided evidence on which foundational competence domains significantly predicted those perspectives. Together, these analyses strengthened the empirical basis of the study's conclusions.

2.2. Ethical Consideration—This section explains the ethical safeguards observed to protect the rights, welfare, dignity, and privacy of the teacher-respondents. The discussion covers social value, informed consent, vulnerability, privacy and confidentiality, risk and benefit management, justice, transparency, researcher qualification, conflict of interest, adequacy of facilities, and community involvement. **Social Value.** The study had social value because it generated evidence on how Social Studies teachers understand lifelong learning, ethics, and sustainability in relation to their professional perspectives. The findings may contribute to improved teacher support, professional development, and curriculum implementation in the district. **Informed Consent.** Before participation, the researcher explained the purpose of the study, procedures, voluntary nature of participation, possible risks and benefits, and the right to withdraw without penalty. Respondents were given the opportunity to ask questions before answering the questionnaire. **Vulnerability of Respondents.** The researcher recognized that

teachers could feel vulnerable when reporting perceptions about professional practice. To address this concern, participation was kept voluntary, no coercion from school authorities was allowed, and confidentiality safeguards were explained clearly. **Privacy and Confidentiality.** Personal identifiers were not included in the analysis and presentation of findings. Responses were treated anonymously, and access to the data was limited to the researcher for academic purposes only. **Risks and Benefits.** The study involved minimal risk. Possible discomfort from answering professional-practice questions was addressed by allowing respondents to skip items or withdraw. The expected benefit was the generation of information that may improve Social Studies instruction and teacher development. **Justice.** Respondents were selected according to clear inclusion criteria and were treated fairly during the research process. The sampling procedure aimed to represent Social Studies teachers from the participating schools so that varied experiences could be considered. **Transparency.** The researcher communicated the purpose, methodology, data use, and expected dissemination of results to the respondents. The study's findings were intended for academic reporting and possible improvement of teacher support and instructional practice. **Researcher Qualification.** The researcher had academic preparation in educational research and professional exposure to school practices. Proper research procedures were observed to ensure that respondents' experiences were treated with objectivity and respect. **Conflict of Interest.** The researcher declared that no personal, institutional, or professional interest influenced the conduct of the study. The study was undertaken solely for academic purposes, and no position or connection was used to pressure respondents or affect their answers. To strengthen credibility, the researcher ensured that the study design, instrument administration, data handling, and reporting procedures were aligned with ethical

and academic expectations in educational research.

The researcher maintained professional boundaries with the participating schools and clarified that the purpose of the study was to gather evidence that may inform Social Studies instruction and teacher development, not to evaluate individual teachers.

Adequacy of Facilities. The researcher ensured that data collection was conducted in a setting that allowed respondents to answer comfortably and without unnecessary distraction. Questionnaires and materials were prepared in an accessible and understandable format. **Community Involvement.** Coordination with school authorities and relevant stakeholders was undertaken before data collection. This helped ensure that the study was contextually appropriate and respectful of school procedures. Adequate facilities and materials were provided during data collection. These measures supported the completeness, accuracy, and voluntary nature of respondents' answers. Community coordination also promoted transparency and local relevance. By informing school stakeholders of the study's purpose and procedures, the researcher encouraged cooperation while maintaining the confidentiality of individual responses.

2.3. Research Respondents—The respondents of the study were Social Studies teachers from Lianga District, Surigao del Sur Division. The district had a population of 160 Social Studies teachers, from which a sample of 114 respondents was determined using Slovin's formula at a 5% margin of error. The sample was distributed proportionately across the participating schools. The participating schools included Davisol Elementary School, Manyayay MG Demo School, Diatagon Elementary School, Diatagon Barangay Elementary School, R. Moreno Integrated School, San Isidro Integrated School, St. Christine National High School, St. Christine Elementary School, and Neptune Elementary School. Respondents

were reached through appropriate online and face-to-face arrangements depending on school accessibility and teacher availability. The researcher coordinated with school authorities to ensure orderly distribution and retrieval of the survey instruments. The inclusion criteria required respondents to be licensed teachers handling Social Studies in the study locale, had at least one year of teaching experience, and were willing to participate voluntarily.

2.4. Research Instrument—The study used a structured survey questionnaire adapted and modified from concepts in related literature and studies, including Mathé and Sandahl (2023), which discussed the definition of political issues in Social Studies Education. The instrument was revised to fit the study's focus on lifelong learning practices, ethical considerations, sustainability issues, and teachers' perspectives. The researcher reviewed relevant literature to identify indicators that were conceptually aligned with the study variables. The adapted items were modified for clarity, contextual fit, and suitability to the experiences of Social Studies teachers in Lianga District. The questionnaire was composed of two major parts. The first part measured the categorical level of foundational competence for professional responsibility in terms of lifelong learning practices, ethical considerations, and sustainability issues. The second part measured the extent of teachers' perspectives on Social Studies Education. Items were designed to capture teachers' views on professional growth, instructional relevance, ethical teaching, civic formation, and sustainability integration. The survey instrument was subjected to reliability testing using Cronbach's alpha at the .05 level of confidence. This procedure assessed the internal consistency of the items and helped determine whether the instrument could produce reliable responses for the intended constructs. The first part of the questionnaire used a three-point categorical scale to classify respondents' levels of

lifelong learning practices, ethical considerations, and sustainability issues.

Scoring Scale for Lifelong Learning Practices, Ethical Considerations, and Sustainability Issues

Score	Level	Interpretation
3	High	The lifelong learning practices, ethical considerations, and sustainability issues are always manifested.
2	Moderate	The lifelong learning practices, ethical considerations, and sustainability issues are sometimes manifested.
1	Low	The lifelong learning practices, ethical considerations, and sustainability issues are rarely manifested.

Descriptive Rating Scale for Teachers' Perspectives on Social Studies Education

Scale	Descriptive Rating	Interpretation
4.20–5.00	Very Extensive	The teachers' perspectives on social studies education are always manifested.
3.40–4.19	Extensive	The teachers' perspectives on social studies education are oftentimes manifested.
2.60–3.39	Moderately Extensive	The teachers' perspectives on social studies education are sometimes manifested.
1.80–2.59	Less Extensive	The teachers' perspectives on social studies education are rarely manifested.
1.00–1.79	Not Extensive	The teachers' perspectives on social studies education are not manifested.

2.5. *Data Gathering Procedure*—The data gathering procedure followed the requirements of Rizal Memorial Colleges, Inc. The researcher prepared formal communication letters describing the purpose of the study, respondents, ethical safeguards, and procedures for administering the questionnaire. Permission to Conduct the Study. In July 2025, the researcher secured permission from the research adviser, the Dean of the Graduate School, and relevant school authorities before proceeding with the

data collection activities. Orientation and Consent. In August 2025, after the colloquium, the researcher oriented the respondents on the purpose of the study, their rights as participants, and the voluntary nature of their participation. Informed consent was obtained before questionnaire administration. Administration of the Instrument. During the last week of August 2025, the researcher distributed and retrieved the questionnaires using a systematic procedure. The process ensured that responses were complete,

organized, and gathered within the approved schedule. Retrieval and Checking. Upon collection, the researcher reviewed the questionnaires for completeness and consistency. Incomplete or unclear responses were handled according to the established data management procedure.

2.6. Data Analysis—Mean Scores and Standard Deviation. Mean scores and standard deviations were used to answer research questions 1 and 2, particularly the categorical level of foundational competence and the extent of teachers' perspectives on Social Studies Education. *Analysis of Variance.* Factorial ANOVA was used to answer research question 3 by determining whether teachers' perspectives significantly differed when grouped according to levels of lifelong learning practices, ethical considerations, and sustainability issues. *Assumption Testing.* Levene's test was applied to ex-

amine the homogeneity of variance assumption before interpreting the ANOVA results. A non-significant result supported the appropriateness of the ANOVA interpretation. *Linear Regression.* Linear regression was used to answer research question 4 by identifying which among lifelong learning practices, ethical considerations, and sustainability issues significantly influenced teachers' perspectives on Social Studies Education. All data processing and analysis were performed using JASP software. After the results were generated, discussions and interpretations followed.

3. Results and Discussion

This chapter presents the analysis of how foundational competence for professional responsibility, specifically lifelong learning, ethical considerations, and sustainability issues, relates to teachers' perspectives on Social Studies Education. The discussion follows the sequence of the research questions and interprets the results in light of related literature and theory.

*3.1. Foundational Competence for Professional Responsibility among Teachers—*Recent scholarship shows that teacher professional responsibility now includes continuous learning, ethical judgment, and sustainability aware-

ness. Ben-Eliyahu (2021) described sustainable learning as a way of maintaining adaptability, while other contemporary studies emphasize that teachers must develop competencies that respond to changing instructional and civic demands.

The summary table shows that teachers demonstrated a generally strong level of foundational competence in terms of lifelong learning practice, ethical considerations, and sustainability issues. Among the three foundational competence dimensions, lifelong learning practice obtained the highest mean of 2.53, interpreted as High. This indicates that teachers continu-

ously engage in professional development, update their instructional strategies, and recognize the importance of lifelong learning in improving Social Studies instruction.

Ethical considerations also obtained a High rating, with a mean of 2.50. This suggests that teachers give importance to fairness, respect for diverse viewpoints, inclusive classroom di-

Table 1

Summary of Teachers' Foundational Competence and Perspectives on Social Studies Education

Dimension	Mean	Descriptive Interpretation	Key Result
Lifelong Learning Practice	2.53	High	Teachers actively engage in professional development and recognize lifelong learning as important in improving instructional quality and student achievement.
Ethical Considerations	2.50	High	Teachers demonstrate awareness of fairness, respect, inclusivity, and ethical responsibility in handling classroom discussions and learner interactions.
Sustainability Issues	2.49	High	Teachers acknowledge the importance of sustainability in Social Studies instruction, although active integration of sustainability concepts still requires strengthening.
Teachers' Perspectives on Social Studies Education	4.25	Very Extensive	Teachers strongly value Social Studies as a subject that promotes lifelong learning, ethical awareness, civic responsibility, and sustainability-oriented learning.

alogue, and responsible handling of sensitive social issues. The result implies that ethical responsibility is an essential part of how teachers manage Social Studies instruction and classroom interaction.

Sustainability issues received a mean of 2.49, also interpreted as High. Although this result indicates that teachers recognize the value of sustainability in Social Studies education, it was the lowest among the three foundational competence dimensions. This suggests that while teachers are aware of sustainability concepts, there may still be a need to strengthen the consistent integration of sustainability themes in lesson planning, classroom activities, and curriculum delivery.

Meanwhile, teachers' overall perspectives on Social Studies Education obtained a mean of 4.25, interpreted as Very Extensive. This indicates that teachers highly value Social Studies as

a discipline that develops professional growth, ethical awareness, civic responsibility, critical thinking, and sustainability-oriented learning. Taken together, the results suggest that teachers perceive Social Studies Education as a meaningful platform for preparing learners to become informed, responsible, and socially aware citizens.

3.2. Significant Difference in Teachers' Perspectives on Social Studies Education Based on Foundational Competence for Professional Responsibility—The ANOVA results showed a significant difference in teachers' perspectives on Social Studies Education when respondents were grouped according to levels of lifelong learning practices, $F(7, 27) = 2.957, p = .020$. This means that teachers with stronger lifelong learning engagement tended to report more favorable perspectives toward Social Studies Education.

Table 2
Factorial ANOVA Test of Teachers' Perspectives on Social Studies Education Based on Foundational Competence

Cases	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
MEAN_A	1.750	7	0.250	2.957	.020
MEAN_B	0.729	6	0.122	1.438	.237
MEAN_C	2.696	6	0.449	5.316	< .001
MEAN_A × MEAN_B	1.183	11	0.108	1.273	.291
MEAN_A × MEAN_C	1.893	13	0.146	1.723	.113
MEAN_B × MEAN_C	1.721	9	0.191	2.263	.049
MEAN_A × MEAN_B × MEAN_C	0.000	0	–	–	–
Residuals	2.282	27	0.085	–	–

Note. Type II Sum of Squares. MEAN_A, MEAN_B, and MEAN_C refer to the foundational competence dimensions used in the analysis.

3.3. Impacts on Teachers' Perspective on Social Studies Education—The regression model showed that the baseline model, M0, ex-

plained no variance in teachers' perspectives on Social Studies Education ($R^2 = .000$, adjusted $R^2 = .000$). When lifelong learning prac-

tices, ethical considerations, and sustainability issues were entered in Model 1, the explained variance increased to 36.2% ($R^2 = .362$, adjusted $R^2 = .342$). This result is consistent with Rodriguez-Gomez, Muñoz-Moreno, and Ion (2024), who linked sustained professional learning with stronger pedagogical practices. It also supports the broader view that ethics and

sustainability contribute to how teachers understand their professional role in Social Studies instruction. Cronqvist (2025) emphasized ethics as central to professional responsibility. Similarly, Shih and Chuang (2024) confirmed that integrating sustainability issues into teaching strongly predicts positive perspectives on Social Studies education.

Table 3
Impacts on Teachers' Perspectives on Social Studies Education

Model	Predictor	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	Decision
M ₀	Intercept	4.258	0.051	–	82.796	< .001	–
M ₁	Intercept	1.892	0.345	–	5.478	< .001	–
	MEAN_A	0.514	0.136	0.361	3.784	< .001	Reject Null
	MEAN_B	-0.088	0.167	-0.063	-0.528	.598	Accept Null
	MEAN_C	0.516	0.160	0.386	3.232	.002	Reject Null

Note. M₀ = null model; M₁ = regression model. *B* = unstandardized coefficient; *SE* = standard error; β = standardized coefficient. MEAN_A, MEAN_B, and MEAN_C refer to the foundational competence dimensions. Decisions were based on a .05 level of significance.

The significance of lifelong learning as a predictor supports Rodriguez-Gomez, Muñoz-Moreno, and Ion (2024), who emphasized that self-regulated learning contributes to teachers' long-term competence. Teachers who actively pursue professional growth may be more prepared to improve their instructional decisions and respond to curriculum changes. Meanwhile, the non-significant effect of ethical considerations may be understood through Cronqvist's (2025) view that ethics is foundational to teacher professionalism. Since ethical responsibility is expected of all teachers, it may show less variation as a predictor than lifelong learning or sustainability integration. The first null hypothesis stated that there is no significant difference in teachers' perspectives on Social Studies Education when teachers are grouped according to foundational competence for pro-

fessional responsibility. Based on the ANOVA results, the hypothesis was rejected for lifelong learning practices and sustainability issues but retained for ethical considerations. The second null hypothesis stated that none of the domains of foundational competence significantly influences teachers' perspectives on Social Studies Education. The regression results led to the rejection of the null hypothesis for lifelong learning practices and sustainability issues, while it was retained for ethical considerations. The findings support Transformative Learning Theory because teachers with high lifelong learning engagement demonstrated stronger perspectives on Social Studies Education. This suggests that reflective and continuing professional learning may influence how teachers interpret their role and improve their classroom practice. The findings also align with Social Constructivism be-

cause teachers' perspectives appear to be shaped by professional interaction, classroom realities, and community-related concerns. Social Studies instruction is not developed in isolation but through dialogue with learners, colleagues, and the local context. Critical Pedagogy is reflected in the emphasis on ethical dialogue, civic awareness, and sustainability concerns. Teachers' very extensive perspectives suggest that they see Social Studies as a space for examining so-

cial realities and promoting learner participation in meaningful civic issues. Finally, the results align with Systems Thinking because sustainability issues significantly predicted teachers' perspectives. This indicates that teachers who recognize the interconnections among environment, society, governance, and citizenship are more likely to view Social Studies as a holistic and future-oriented discipline.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations derived from the findings on foundational competence for professional responsibility and teachers' perspectives on Social Studies Education. The discussion focuses on lifelong learning practices, ethical considerations, sustainability issues, significant differences, and predictors of teachers' perspectives.

4.1. Findings—The study found that teachers demonstrated a High level of foundational competence across the three domains. Lifelong learning practice ($M = 2.53$), ethical considerations ($M = 2.50$), and sustainability issues ($M = 2.49$) were all interpreted as High, indicating that teachers generally possess strong professional responsibility in these areas. Teachers' perspectives on Social Studies Education were rated Very Extensive ($M = 4.25$). This finding means that teachers strongly value the subject as a means for promoting civic understanding, ethical awareness, professional growth, and sustainability-oriented learning. The ANOVA results showed significant differences in teachers' perspectives when grouped according to lifelong learning practices and sustainability issues. However, ethical considerations did not produce a significant difference, indicating that ethical responsibility may be consistently valued across teacher groups. Regression analysis revealed that lifelong learning practices ($\beta = 0.361, p < .001$) and sustainability issues ($\beta = 0.386, p = .002$) significantly predicted teachers' perspectives on Social Studies Education. Ethical considerations did not significantly predict

the dependent variable.

4.2. Conclusions—Based on the results and findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn: Teachers in Lianga District demonstrate a High level of foundational competence in lifelong learning practices, ethical considerations, and sustainability issues. Their responses indicate that professional growth, fairness, inclusivity, and environmental responsibility are recognized as important components of Social Studies teaching. Teachers' perspectives on Social Studies Education are Very Extensive. This shows that they view the subject as a meaningful avenue for developing civic awareness, reflective thinking, ethical judgment, and sustainability-oriented citizenship among learners. Significant differences in teachers' perspectives were observed for lifelong learning practices and sustainability issues, but not for ethical considerations. This suggests that professional learning and sustainability engagement create greater variation in teachers' views than ethics, which appears to be generally embedded in professional practice. Among the three domains, lifelong learning practices and sustainability issues are the strongest predictors of teachers' per-

spectives on Social Studies Education. These findings indicate that continuous professional development and sustainability integration are key areas for strengthening Social Studies instruction.

4.3. Recommendations—Based on the conclusions drawn from the findings, the following recommendations are offered: Since teachers already demonstrate High competence in lifelong learning, ethics, and sustainability, school leaders and policymakers may sustain and expand professional development programs that deepen these areas through contextualized training, mentoring, and collaborative learning opportunities. Given the Very Extensive perspectives of teachers, schools may institutionalize Social Studies-focused professional learning communities and Learning Action Cells. These mechanisms may allow teachers to share strate-

gies for integrating civic issues, ethical dialogue, and sustainability concepts in classroom practice. Because significant differences were found in relation to lifelong learning and sustainability, targeted interventions may be provided for teachers with lower exposure to these domains. Training may focus on reflective practice, local sustainability issues, and practical approaches for teaching complex social concerns. As lifelong learning and sustainability were confirmed as significant predictors, school heads and supervisors may prioritize programs that combine continuous professional learning with Education for Sustainable Development. Future researchers may also examine other factors that could explain teachers' perspectives, such as school support, curriculum resources, and community context.

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