MEANINGFUL LEARNING IN SOCIAL STUDIES: AN EXPLORATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study is to determine the underlying dimensions that characterize meaningful learning in social studies. It utilized an exploratory factor instrument analysis research design. Respondents were randomly selected for equal opportunity to be included in the survey. A researcher-made instrument was utilized which was developed for a focus group discussion (FGD). The validity of items was determined through the Content Validity Ratio (CVR). Item statements that passed the threshold of 0.80 were selected as part of the survey scale. A 60-item instrument was developed and utilized as a data collection tool administered to 380 junior high school students chosen through random sampling. Using Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with parallel analysis using GeominQ rotation, only 34 items met the criterion for a cut-off factor loading of .40 and above, forming the simple five-factor structure. Results of EFA yielded the five (5) dimensions of meaningful learning in social studies. Using thematic analysis, these five factors were labeled as: enriching and inclusive learning environment; enhancing civic awareness and critical thinking; promoting character development and social responsibility; utilizing technology and establishing clear guidelines; and interactive and fun learning. The findings of this study underscore the multifaceted nature of meaningful learning in social studies and the essential components required to cultivate it effectively.

SDG Indicator: Indicator: #4 (quality education)

Keywords: social studies, meaningful learning, exploratory factor analysis, thematic analysis, junior high school

1. Introduction

Social studies have often been perceived as uninteresting and boring (Akhan *et al.*, 2023). Students tend to become passive and bored because they view it as a rote subject focusing

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on memorization, resulting in less meaningful learning experiences. This poses challenges for educators who struggle with student engagement and motivation across its diverse sub-disciplines (Crisolo *et al.*, 2021). Difficulties with memorizing concepts and adapting to teaching strategies are the reasons for the lack of interest and motivation in the subject, resulting in lower grades and poorer academic performance (Cosme, 2019).

In the United States, social studies education faces significant challenges, with American students showing lower proficiency in history, civics, and geography. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) report from 2018 states that eighth-graders' scores in U.S. history and geography have declined since 2014, while scores in civics have shown no improvement (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020). This is alarming since these subjects are crucial pillars of a comprehensive social studies curriculum, making the results particularly disappointing.

In the Philippines, the proficiency of students in social studies (*Araling Panlipunan*) is very disheartening. Only 10% of junior high school students are proficient in *Araling Panlipunan* while moving up to the next grade level (Philippine Business for Education, 2021). This is reflected in the National Achievement Test results, where Grade 10 students have consistently shown low proficiency in SY 2017–2018 and SY 2018–2019 (DepEd, 2022). Moreover, the most recent 2020 National Achievement Test (NAT) results indicate a persistent trend of low proficiency in the subject, with Davao City `scoring 42.4%, Region XI at 40.6%, and the national Mean Percentage Score (MPS) at 40.9%. These disappointing figures can be explained by a study from the Far Eastern University Public Policy Center, which found that *Araling Panlipunan's* teaching heavily emphasizes rote memorization, with students evaluated on retaining dates, names, and places. The study recommends shifting to methods that foster critical thinking, which is crucial for navigating today's information-rich world (Muyot, 2022). Furthermore, according to Peñalba *et al.* (2020), social studies instruction, especially history instruction, should provide a more meaningful learning experience by allowing students to critically analyse historical texts while drawing on their shared experiences and past content knowledge. Thus, it underscores the need for targeted interventions, curriculum enhancements, and pedagogical innovations to elevate student competency and understanding in *Araling Panlipunan* across the nation.

Meaningful learning in social studies occurs when students can apply their knowledge effectively (DepEd, 2019) and engage in dynamic instructional activities that foster holistic development (Kavanagh *et al.*, 2019). Thus, instructional and assessment strategies should focus on targeting meaningful learning. While several studies have successfully defined and described meaningful learning, there is still little research on how students perceive and experience it, especially in social studies. Also, research on identifying and measuring factors contributing to meaningful learning in social studies remains limited despite its importance (Ghazali & Nordin, 2019), highlighting a critical gap in the field.

Curriculum networks of information, abilities, convictions, and attitudes centered on enduring understanding, crucial issues, significant concepts, and objectives are created by meaningful social studies. This approach emphasizes designing a curriculum

that goes beyond memorization to foster a deeper understanding of key concepts and skills while shaping students' beliefs and attitudes, encouraging them to become informed, engaged citizens.

Based on the meaningful learning paradigm developed by Howland *et al.* (2014), Ghazali and Nordin (2019) determined the elements that evaluate meaningful learning experiences among Malaysian university students. Cooperative learning, active learning, authentic learning, constructive learning, and deliberate learning are five fundamental components that their study identifies. Although the results highlight how important these factors are in shaping meaningful learning experiences in the 21st-century educational landscape, the coverage and application are more general rather than subject-specific.

Also, Ghazali (2020) developed another instrument called the MeLearn (Meaningful Learning Scale) to measure the aspects of student's meaningful learning experiences. The scale is still general rather that subject-specific, despite the fact that the research offers insightful information.

Recently, Méndez Hinojosa and Segura Arévalo (2022) designed and evaluated the Strategies for Meaningful Learning Scale (SMLS) to measure the use of learning strategies promoting meaningful learning. The results confirmed an eight-dimensional structure, including conceptual maps, guided discussion, box diagrams, synoptic tables, positive-negative-interesting (PNI), graphical representations, objectives and intentions, and summary. Although non-probabilistic sampling was used, which warrants a cautious interpretation of the results, the scale presents adequate psychometric properties for measuring the frequency of strategy use that promotes meaningful learning.

Even though meaningful learning has been a focus of several previous studies, scholars still cannot agree on what constitutes meaningful learning, its components, or the items to be used to measure it (Ghazali,2020). It has also been described what meaningful learning should be but little research has been done to develop new scales that could assess and identify the modern dimensions of meaningful learning, especially in social studies. Additionally, prior research has mostly concentrated on developing 21st-century social studies skills (Farisi, 2016; Rogayan *et al.*, 2021; Sugiyanto *et al.*, 2018), internationalizing social studies education (Boonying & Chatruprachewin, 2017; White, 2018), learning in the 21st-century environment (Sunamo *et al.*, 2020; Wahyuningtyas, 2019), and 21st-century teaching strategies in social studies (Eghareyba & Iyamu, 2020). This implies that there hasn't been much scholarly focus on assessing meaningful learning experiences in social studies.

Therefore, knowing the elements of meaningful learning in social studies is crucial for empowering teachers to choose effective teaching methods and classroom interventions. Schools can apply the study's recommendations to enhance social studies education, while administrators and policymakers can use these insights to guide curriculum emphasis and improve student performance. Additionally, this study will contribute to research by providing new knowledge in the meaningful teaching of social studies and uncovering critical areas that have been previously underexplored.

Finding the fundamental elements that define meaningful learning in social studies is the aim of this research. The results of this investigation will offer additional information in the effective teaching of social studies considering that it contributes significantly to our students to be socially aware and responsible citizens in the future.

Facilitating meaningful learning anchors in the constructivist approach to education, initially conceptualized by Ausubel (2000), who assumes that new knowledge must be acquired from interesting material (meaningful) to the learner and connected to their prior knowledge. Furthermore, social studies education imparts knowledge, helps the development of values, cultivates cultural sensitivity, stimulates community involvement, and expands one's global viewpoint, making it still relevant in 21st-century society (Crisolo *et al.*, 2021).

This study is anchored in Novak's Human Constructivism philosophy of education in order to identify the fundamental elements of meaningful learning in social studies. According to Novak's Human Constructivism, human empowerment for commitment and duty results from the constructive integration of thinking, feeling, and doing, which is supported by meaningful learning. Therefore, effective learning will only take place when educational experiences force students to make connections between their knowledge in the cognitive, emotional, and psychomotor domains.

Furthermore, Novak's approach conceptualizes meaningful learning as an objective that shifts away from rote learning by drawing on David Ausubel's Assimilation Learning Theory. His concept highlights meaningful learning as a process that entails connecting new material to preexisting frames of knowledge that the students must decide to use but that the instructor supports (Novak, 1998).

This study applied Howland *et al.*'s (2014) meaningful learning framework to identify the key factors defining meaningful learning in social studies across five dimensions: intentional (goal-directed/regulatory), authentic (complex/contextual), and cooperative (collaborative/conversational), active (manipulative/observant), constructive (articulative/reflective). These characteristics provide the theoretical and analytical framework guiding this research. Each of these attributes is explained in detail.

Howland *et al.* (2014) claim that meaningful learning is active because it necessitates that students be actively involved in a task that involves manipulating the environment's parameters and objects while also seeing the outcomes of their actions. Also, it is considered constructive, indicating that while activity is required, it is not enough to provide meaningful learning. In order to understand the lessons that their activity has to teach, students must express what they have done and think back on their observations and activities. There is frequently a gap between what students see and what they comprehend as a result of new experiences. That is when meaningful learning begins.

Moreover, it is *intentional, meaning* learners think and learn more when students actively and consciously work towards a cognitive goal of fulfilling an intention. Students are being purposeful and learning in a meaningful way when they use computers to plan and execute daily work or to build and carry out a method to investigate a problem they wish to solve.

Furthermore, it is *authentic*. The majority of recent studies on learning have demonstrated that learning activities that are simulated in case-based or problem-based learning environments or embedded in relevant real-world tasks are not only easier to understand and retain, but also more reliably applied to novel contexts. Learning should be incorporated into practical, real-world situations so that students can practise applying concepts rather than abstracting them into rules that are learnt and then applied to other pre-made problems.

Finally, meaningful learning is *cooperative*. Humans collaborate in learning and knowledge-building groups by nature, taking advantage of one another's abilities and using one another's expertise to complete tasks and solve issues. Most of the time, communication between parties is necessary for collaboration. Students must socially negotiate a common understanding of the task and the methods they will use to finish it in order to participate in group learning. Engaging in knowledge-building communities both within and beyond the classroom teaches students that there are multiple ways of looking at the world and solutions to most of life's problems. Conversation should be encouraged since it is the most natural way to create meaning.

In addition, Jean Piaget's constructivism theory lends credence to this research. He believes that cognitive development is the consequence of an interaction between assimilation, incorporating new information into existing schemas and accommodation, which drives progress through these stages.

Furthermore, it is supported by Lev Vygotsky's social constructivism theory. According to Vygotsky, meaningful learning takes place through social interaction and collaboration, in which learners assimilate knowledge and abilities with the assistance of more knowledgeable peers. This strongly supports Howland's theory.
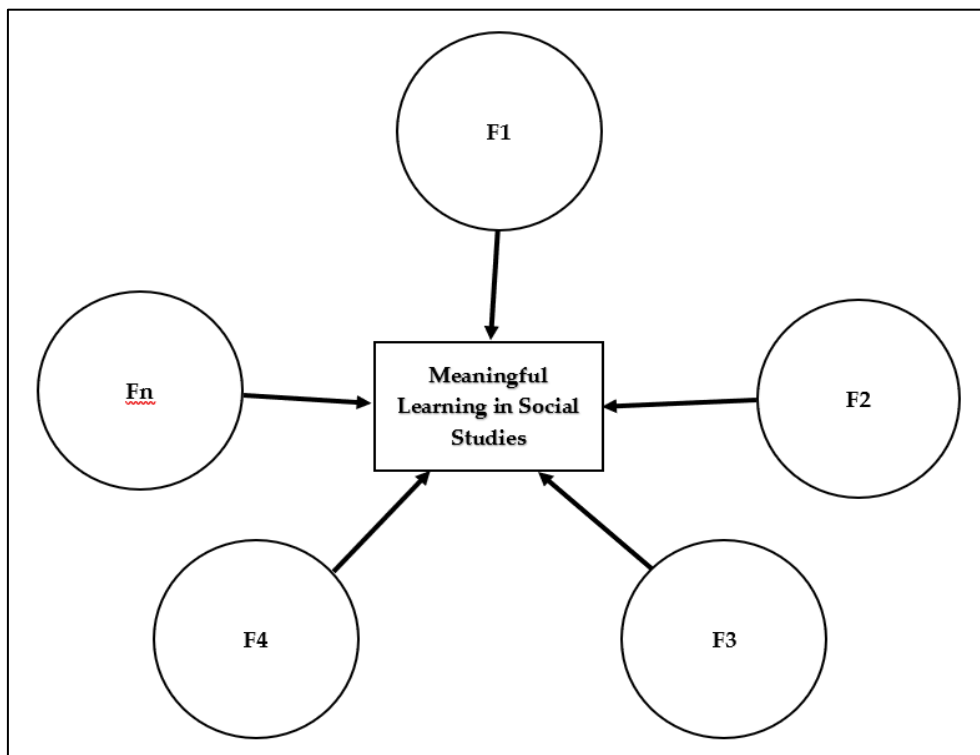

Figure 1: The Conceptual Framework of the Study

The conceptual framework of the study is represented graphically in Figure 1, which highlights the important aspects of the latent variable known as "*meaningful learning in social studies*." This diagram explains the interconnected elements that define meaningful learning within the context of social studies education.

The framework illustrates the dimensions of meaningful learning in social studies. By defining these dimensions, the figure offers a comprehensive overview of the various facets contributing to the construct meaningful learning. This study operates under the assumption that meaningful learning within this domain is not a singular concept but rather a complex construct with various dimensions. It theorizes that achieving meaningful learning in social studies is contingent upon numerous factors denoted as F1, F2, F3, and so forth. These factors are believed to exert an influence on the overall meaningful learning experience within the realm of social studies education. By recognizing the multidimensional nature of meaningful learning in this context and acknowledging the diverse array of influences at play, the study endeavors to construct a comprehensive framework that captures the intricate interplay between these factors to attain meaningful learning outcomes.

Thus, understanding meaningful learning is crucial for teachers as it aids in devising courses and materials that enhance learning. It helps teachers design curricula that ensure students effectively absorb the lessons delivered. Teachers should provide relevant introductory content before introducing new concepts to connect the dots between what the learner knows and the new material.

2. Method

2.1 Study Participant

Students enrolled in junior high school at one of the public high schools in Davao City served as the study's respondents. Throughout each phase of the study, two separate groups of respondents were involved.

In the initial phase, the first set consisted of 25 students purposively selected to participate in a focus group discussion (FGD). Purposive sampling was employed in this phase due to the specific need for participants capable of providing relevant information, which is essential for FGDs (Morgan, 1988 as cited in O. Nyumba, 2018). The purpose of the FGD was to gather preliminary responses and significant statements to inform the creation of a scale meant to quantify and identify aspects of students' relevant social studies learning experiences in social studies. The significant statements derived from the FGD served as the foundation for formulating the items included in the scale.

In the second phase, a new group of respondents comprised randomly selected 380 Grade 7 to Grade 10 students completed the developed scale during the survey's actual administration. Random sampling was utilized to ensure that each individual had an equal opportunity to be a part of the sample, adhering to a chance procedure for specific selection (Zedeck, 2014). Additionally, this study adhered to the ideal samples of 300 respondents for Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to yield meaningful results (Costello & Osborne, 2005; Yong & Pearce, 2013). Previous studies employing EFA have

typically involved sample sizes exceeding 300, with 60% of such studies incorporating more than 300 participants (Koyuncu & Kılıç, 2019).

Furthermore, only respondents who fulfilled the following inclusion requirements were included in the study: enrolled as junior high school students for the school year 2023-2024; voluntary participation in the study; (3) possession of a device such as a smartphone, laptop, or desktop, with internet connectivity; and (4) provision of valid informed consent and assent forms.

2.2 Materials and Instrument

A constructed interview guide for a focus group discussion (FGD), which includes a set of open-ended questions and prompts designed to stimulate discussion and gather diverse perspectives on the topic, was crafted. This guide is carefully crafted to ensure that all relevant areas are explored while allowing flexibility for participants to express their views. The guide starts with general questions and gradually moves to more specific ones, aiming to delve into various aspects of the subject. To ensure that the survey questions are relevant and comprehensive, it was validated and approved by the panelist of this study. Comments and suggestions from the validators were taken into consideration.

A scale was developed utilizing insights from the focus group discussion, systematic literature review, and other relevant sources. Key statements extracted from the interviews formed the basis for constructing items on the scale. The scale consists of two parts: the first part collects personal data from respondents, while the second part assesses the factors that contribute or influence the meaningful learning experiences of respondents in social studies.

The scale utilizes Likert-type responses, with options encompassing from 1 to 5. In this scale, 1 denotes "Strongly Disagree", 2 signifies "Disagree", 3 indicates "Maybe/Neutral", 4 corresponds to "Agree", and 5 implies "Strongly Agree" on the item statements that influence or characterise meaningful learning experience in social studies.

To ensure that the research instrument effectively measures its intended constructs, content validity was employed. The degree to which the scale's items accurately reflect the whole content domain is measured by content validity (CV). The validity of the items was evaluated and decided by experts in the instrument's topic domain. Expert assessments of the CV were used to produce the Content Validity Ratio (CVR), a numerical figure that represents the instrument's level of validity. In this study, ten experts scrutinized the tailored scale but only the item statements surpassing the 0.80 cutoff were retained in the scale, while those failing to meet the criteria were excluded, as proposed by Davis (1992) for newly developed instruments. However, according to a widely recognised standard, an item or scale's validity must be established with a CVR of at least 0.78 (Frey, 2018).

2.2 Design and Procedure

This study utilized an exploratory factor analysis research design to establish a functional scale that determines the factors characterizing meaningful learning in social studies.

When a researcher wants to follow up on qualitative discoveries with quantitative analysis, they employ the exploratory-sequential technique. Researchers who wish to create a new tool, taxonomy, or treatment plan will find this two-phase strategy especially helpful (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

In this study, qualitative data were initially gathered through focus group discussions to obtain essential statements for constructing a questionnaire or scale. Subsequently, the developed scale was utilized to gather quantitative data on observable variables/factors from respondents, and Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was employed to extract meaningful learning factors in social studies from the quantitative dataset. This approach is generally valuable for identifying crucial variables (Phase 1) when variables are not fully understood, paving the way for subsequent quantitative analysis (Phase 2). It also aids in the development and testing of theories, as well as the enhancement of existing instruments and therapeutic approaches (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2017).

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) is a technique used to separate a limited number of underlying dimensions from a larger set of related measures. It involves the exploration of observed data to unveil the latent variables that account for the relationships among a broader array of observable (manifest) variables (Zedeck, 2014). EFA was utilized to determine whether there are one, two, or more dimensions underlying items that can effectively measure meaningful learning in social studies. EFA operates on the premise that observable variables, referred to as manifest variables, can be condensed into fewer latent variables, known as constructs that share a common variation (Yong & Pearce, 2013).

Moreover, EFA works along a procedure termed "reducing dimensionality" (Costello and Osborne, 2005; Yong and Pearce, 2013). Hence, in identifying the factors characterizing meaningful learning in social studies, a group of manifest variables could be reduced to become one dimension. Several variables are reduced to one in this regard. This is the essence of reduced dimensionality in EFA. When a researcher wants to determine how many factors influence manifest variables and determine which manifest variables are more closely associated, they employ exploratory factor analysis (EFA) (DeCoster, 1998). A factor or latent variable is a collection of the most associated manifest variables (DeCoster, 1998; Yong & Pearce, 2013). Thus, EFA is the most appropriate statistical analysis to be used for the present study.

A scale derived from the results of focus group discussions served as the research tool in this investigation. Before data collection, a scale was developed and validated by subject experts. After validation, all required documents were submitted to the University of Mindanao Ethics Review Committee (UMERC) for approval. Once approved, a formal request was sent to the Schools Division Superintendent for permission to conduct the study, followed by submission to the principal's office of the target school for authorization to conduct the study on school premises.

To conduct the study, the research problem was defined by identifying the research question. The optimal research approach (EFA) was then chosen after a comprehensive literature analysis was carried out to ascertain the research design and

methodology. Following that, the study design is implemented, determining sample size, sampling methods, and data collection instruments while keeping ethical considerations like informed consent and confidentiality in mind. After collecting the data, appropriate data analysis techniques were applied. Finally, a synopsis of the results, a discussion of their ramifications, and recommendations for further study were provided.

In order to assess the suitability of the data for exploratory factor analysis and the overall significance of the correlation matrix, the Bartlett test was utilised to assess the factorability of both the entire set of variables and individual variables using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy.

The study is being carried out in compliance with the ethical guidelines of the University of Mindanao, and all participants have received informed consent forms to make sure they are completely aware of the study's purpose, potential hazards, and their freedom to discontinue participation at any moment without incurring any fees. Furthermore, the study minimizes potential physical and psychological harm to participants and ensures the confidentiality of sensitive information.

3. Results and Discussion

In this section, the data collected and the results of the analysis are presented. The results are systematically outlined, including tests of sampling adequacy and sphericity, latent roots criterion of extracted factors, Cattell's scree plot, rotated component matrix, extracted factors characterizing meaningful learning in social studies, and proposed meaningful learning in social studies framework. A thorough discussion is also included to clarify and explain the results.

3.1 Tests of Sampling Adequacy and Sphericity
The Bartlett test helps determine if there is sufficient statistical correlation within the set of variables to support exploratory factor analysis. Likewise, each variable's appropriateness for inclusion in the study is revealed by the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy. This provides a foundational level of statistical correlation among variables and does not merely derive factors before conducting exploratory factor analysis. Also, this ensures that the resulting factor structure is based on a meaningful and objective correlation within the set of variables (Hair *et al.*, 2019). The results for evaluating sampling sphericity and adequacy are displayed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Measures of Sampling Adequacy and Sphericity

Measurement		Value
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.936
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. X^2	17198.16
	Df	1770
	Sig. (p-value)	.000

The KMO index, ranging from 0 to 1, is recommended to have a minimum value of 0.6 for reliable factor analysis (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO)

index assesses the likelihood of data convergence by comparing observed correlation coefficients and partial correlation coefficients. The KMO index, ranging from 0 to 1, is recommended to have a minimum value of 0.6 for reliable factor analysis (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Kaiser (1974) categorized KMO values as follows: above .90 as marvelous, in the .80s as meritorious, in the .70s as middling, in the .60s as mediocre, in the .50s as miserable, and less than .50 as unacceptable. Based on Table 1, the KMO yielded a value of 0.936 or "marvelous" indicating that the sampling is adequate (Kaiser, 1974). Similarly, Hutcheson & Sofroniou (1999) described this result as "superb" as cited by Field (2009). This suggests the suitability of the data for structure detection using factor analysis.

Additionally, Bartlett's test of sphericity yielded a significant result (X^2 = 17198.160, df = 1770.000, $p < .001$), indicating that correlations between items were sufficiently large affirming the suitability of the dataset for factor analysis. Bartlett's test determines if exploratory factor analysis is suitable by examining the entire correlation matrix for significant correlations among variables. A statistically significant result indicates the presence of sufficient correlations, supporting the appropriateness of factor analysis (Hair *et al.*, 2019). These statistical measures collectively underscore the robustness of the data and affirm its appropriateness for extracting meaningful factors in the analysis.

3.2 Latent Roots Criterion of Extracted Factors

The latent roots criterion, which looks at the total variance explained, is usually used to define a conventional result of exploratory factor analysis. Finding the factors' eigenvalues and the variance corresponding to each one yields this outcome. The Kaiser's criterion, often known as the eigenvalue rule, was applied in this investigation. This rule states that only factors with an eigenvalue of 1.0 or above are kept for additional study. A factor's eigenvalue indicates the percentage of overall variance that may be accounted for by that particular factor (Pallant, 2011). Five factors can be identified from the collection of items that were the topic of factor analysis, according to the results of the latent root criterion, which are shown in Table 2. Thirty-five percent of the data changes can be explained by these five dimensions or factor structures.

Table 2: Latent Roots Criterion of the Extracted Factors

Factors	Eigenvalues	Sums of Squared Loadings	% of variance	Cumulative Variance %
Factor 1	16.893	8.358	0.139	0.139
Factor 2	2.430	4.197	0.070	0.209
Factor 3	1.821	2.980	0.050	0.259
Factor 4	1.731	2.878	0.048	0.307
Factor 5	1.582	2.865	0.048	0.355

In Table 2, the latent root criterion reveals the five factors extracted from the dataset through factor analysis that characterize meaningful learning in social studies. These identified factor structures are as follows:

1) Factor 1, with an eigenvalue of 16.893 and a variance of 0.139;
2) Factor 2, with an eigenvalue of 2.430 and a variance of 0.070;
3) Factor 3, with an eigenvalue of 1.821 and a variance of 0.050;

4) Factor 4, with an eigenvalue of 1.731 and a variance of 0.048;
5) Factor 5, with an eigenvalue of 1.582 and a variance of 0.048.

These factors represent distinct dimensions of meaningful learning in the context of social studies education, each contributing to the overall understanding of the subject matter. The eigenvalues indicate the amount of variance explained by each factor, with Factor 1 explaining the highest variance, followed by Factors 2, 3, 4, and 5, respectively. The eigenvalues indicate the amount of variance in the data explained by each factor, with higher eigenvalues suggesting greater importance or relevance of the respective factors in explaining the observed patterns in the dataset. Additionally, the variance percentages provide insights into the proportion of total variance accounted for by each factor, highlighting their relative significance in capturing the underlying structure of meaningful learning in social studies.

3.3 Cattell's Scree Plot

The factors that can be retrieved from the data were also determined using Cattell's scree test (Cattell, 1966). This process involves plotting the eigenvalue of each factor and analysing the plot to identify the point at which the curve changes direction and turns horizontal. Cattell recommends keeping all of the components above the elbow or breaking in the plot because these factors explain most of the variance in the dataset (Pallant, 2011).
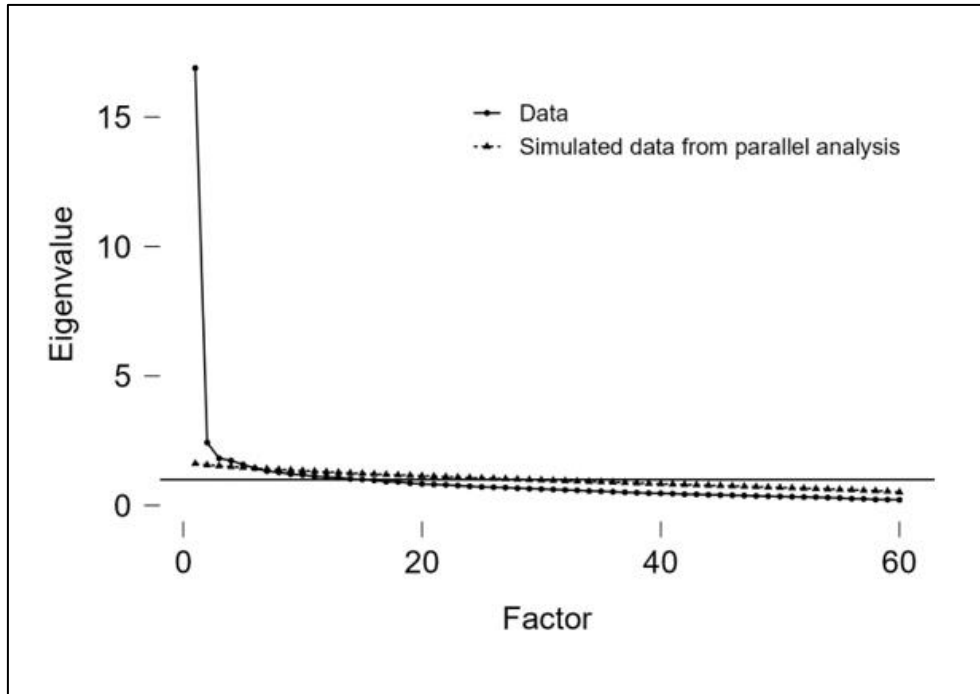

Figure 2: Cattel Scree Plot

Figure 2 demonstrates that, by placing a straight edge across the lower portion of the roots, there are five (5) factors before the curve nearly becomes a straight line. All factors with eigenvalues of 1.00 or higher were considered. Consequently, the analysis

suggests that extracting five (5) factors is appropriate. Thus, the choice to retain the five variables or components was supported by the scree plot analysis.

3.4 Rotated Component Matrix

The data's factor structure was ascertained by applying exploratory factor analysis. According to Hair *et al.* (2019), exploratory factor analysis is a statistical technique used to investigate the connections between a large number of variables and clarify these variables by locating shared underlying dimensions or factors. The goal is to minimise information loss while condensing the information present in multiple original variables into a smaller collection of variates (factors).

Parallel analysis, utilizing principal components (PC) with an oblique rotation (geominQ), was employed. Parallel Analysis (PA) has consistently demonstrated accuracy in establishing the threshold for significant components, variable loadings, and analytical statistics during the decomposition of a correlation matrix (Franklin *et al.*, 1995). According to Çokluk and Koçak (2016), several studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of the parallel analysis method in determining the number of factors, with literature consistently showcasing favorable results. Additionally, various facilitative techniques, such as regression methods, interpolation tables, and mean eigenvalues, have been developed to enhance the ease of implementing parallel analysis. Parallel analysis, according to Pallant (2011), involves comparing the magnitude of the eigenvalues with those obtained from a randomly generated dataset of the same size. From the random dataset, only the eigenvalues that outperform their counterparts are kept. Compared to Kaiser's criterion and Cattell's scree test, which both have a tendency to overestimate the number of components, this approach to figuring out how many to keep has proven to be more accurate (Hubbard & Allen, 1987; Zwick & Velicer, 1986).

Additionally, factor rotation optimises a variable's loading on a single factor to produce a simpler and more practically meaningful factor solution by simplifying the factor matrix's rows and columns (Hair *et al.*, 2019). The geominQ rotation method was utilized to enhance the interpretation of the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) results, accommodating correlated items (Beseler & Rautiainen, 2022).

In this study, only items with factor loadings of at least .40, as per the criteria set by Pett, Lackey, and Sullivan (2003), were considered for placement under a specific factor. Employing a value of .40 implies that an observed variable (items) shares more than 15% of its variance ($.4^2 = .16$) with the factor it is associated with. This criterion ensures the inclusion of only those variables (items) that exhibit a robust association with the factor, facilitating meaningful factor interpretation. Table 3 presents the Rotated Component Matrix showing the factor structure and loadings of the items.

In Table 3, only 34 out of the initial 60 items met the criterion for a cut-off factor loading of .40 and above. Each of the five factors has a label based on the type of objects it contains, and the 34 items are put into the five-factor structures.

Table 3: Rotated Component Matrix

Item No.	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
51	0.688				
35	0.681				
42	0.667				
48	0.645				
47	0.644				
36	0.637				
39	0.626				
54	0.581				
41	0.56				
34	0.503				
17	0.469				
52	0.443				
49	0.44				
16	0.433				
43	0.428				
26	0.42				
40	0.415				
22		0.573			
59		0.498			
60		0.494			
19		0.474			
5		0.47			
4		0.439			
8			0.556		
7			0.449		
6			0.407		
32				0.539	
38				0.489	
31				0.442	
53				0.42	
56				0.404	
29					0.572
28					0.549
23					0.428

Note: Applied rotation method is geominQ.

3.5 Extracted Factors Characterizing Meaningful Learning in Social Studies

Table 4 displays the thirty-four (34) distinct items that were retained, along with their factor loadings corresponding to specific factors. Notably, no cross-loadings were observed between factors. A thorough analysis of the items within each factor revealed the existence of five distinct factors or dimensions for meaningful learning in social studies, namely: Enriching an Inclusive Learning Environment, Enhancing Civic Awareness and Critical Thinking, Promoting Character Development, and Social Responsibility, Utilizing Technology and Establishing Clear Guidelines, and Interactive and Fun Learning. Crucially, all items within these factors exhibit pattern coefficients exceeding the minimum threshold of 0.40, indicating robust factor loadings.

Additionally, each item is categorized according to the attributes or characteristics of meaningful learning it represents based on its nature (Howland *et al.*, 2014).

Table 4: Extracted Factors Characterizing Meaningful Learning in Social Studies

Item	Extracted Factors (Dimensions)	Loading
	Factor 1: Enriching and Inclusive Learning Environment	
51	I learn more when the teacher knows a lot about the lesson.	0.688
35	I feel interested when the teacher teaches with skill and enthusiasm.	0.681
42	I observe how the teacher keeps things in order to make our class a good place for learning.	0.667
48	I receive clear explanations from the teacher to help me with tough subjects like math and science.	0.645
47	I see how social studies is taught in a way that it relates to real-life situations.	0.644
36	I become engaged when the teacher creates lessons that fit the learning interests and preferences of students.	0.637
39	I get interested when the teacher makes lessons to be relatable to our lives.	0.626
54	I feel a friendly and inclusive classroom that makes us want to participate more and have better learning experiences.	0.581
41	I feel inspired when the teacher talks about people in history who did good things to our society.	0.56
34	I get interested when the teacher is approachable and fair with students.	0.503
17	I get interested when my teacher includes everybody in open discussions.	0.469
52	I appreciate when the teacher gives correct information during discussions.	0.443
49	I learn better when the teacher uses role-playing in teaching a lesson	0.440
16	I enjoy class discussions more when my teacher is excited and knowledgeable about the subject.	0.433
43	I feel motivated when the teacher gives clear information and exciting activities in their lessons.	0.428
26	I learn how to appreciate and respect other cultures.	0.420
40	I get excited when the teacher encourages us to ask questions, analyze problems, and evaluate historical events.	0.415
	Factor 2: Enhancing Civic Awareness and Critical Thinking	
22	I like doing projects, essays, debates, and presentations about our community to check what I've learned.	0.573
59	I get better at making smart decisions to help our community.	0.498
60	I learn more about the news, politics, citizenship, and culture.	0.494
19	I learn how the government, countries, economies, and resources work.	0.474
5	I become more aware of the issues our society face nowadays.	0.47
4	I learn how to think of new ways to solve problems by studying events in history.	0.439
	Factor 3: Promoting Character Development and Social Responsibility	
8	I can develop my character into that of a good citizen.	0.556
7	I learn how to be a responsible member of the community through participation.	0.449
6	I explore important topics in social science to feel more comfortable and knowledgeable about our community.	0.407
	Factor 4: Utilizing Technology and Establishing Clear Guidelines	
32	I get interested when the teacher uses technology for visual aids.	0.539
38	I find social studies more engaging when the teacher uses PowerPoint and guided notes in teaching the lessons.	0.489
31	I understand the lesson better when visual aids are used.	0.442

53	I learn about important economic issues in our country.	0.420
56	I notice the teacher sets clear rules and limits in our teacher-student relationship.	0.404
	Factor 5: Interactive and Fun Learning	
29	I enjoy it when the teacher helps me think to solve problems while making the lesson more interesting and fun to learn.	0.572
28	I feel excited when the teacher encourages us to actively participate and apply what we've learned.	0.549
23	I enjoy speaking to people in public discussions.	0.428

Factor 1 comprises 17 items, each demonstrating pattern coefficients ranging from 0.415 to 0.688. The lowest pattern coefficient (0.415) corresponds to the statement, "*I get excited when the teacher encourages us to ask questions, analyze problems, and evaluate historical events*," while the highest coefficient (0.688) is attributed to the statement, "*I learn more when the teacher knows a lot about the lesson*."

Moreover, all 17 items under this factor, given their emphasis on various aspects of effective teaching, encompassing knowledgeable and enthusiastic instructors, clear explanations, the relevance of lessons to real-life scenarios and student interests, nurturing an inclusive and amiable classroom ambiance, deployment of diverse teaching methodologies such as role-playing and interactive discussions, cultivation of critical thinking skills, and promotion of cultural appreciation. In essence, the overarching theme revolves around the creation of an environment wherein students feel motivated, supported, and actively engaged in their learning journey. Thus, this factor is appropriately labeled as "*Enriching and Inclusive Learning Environment*."

Furthermore, according to Molina Roldán *et al.* (2021), the potential for rich and varied learning exchanges among diverse students is one of the most significant aspects of inclusive educational environments. Educators can boost student engagement, motivation, and academic performance by fostering an inclusive learning environment that validates students' identities and acknowledges their lived experiences. To attain the intended learning objectives for students, core academic instruction in inclusive settings is advised (Jackson, Ryndak, & Wehmeyer, 2008–2009). According to Kurth *et al.* (2020), inclusive social studies education is both practical and successful for both school staff and students with an intellectual or developmental disability (IDD). Molina Roldán, *et. Al* (2021) discovered that students in inclusive classrooms learn to respect others, accept differences, and acknowledge different abilities, which promotes the development of new friendships. They also learn about skills related to helping others participate and learn, how to be patient, and how to feel good about helping others learn and behave better. Finally, they benefit from the cognitive effort needed to explain themselves as well as from the contributions of their peers.

A total of ten items (51, 35, 48, 52, 16, 40, 60, 19, 6, 31) belong to the Constructive Learning (CNL) characteristic. The main idea conveyed in these statements is that effective teaching characterized by the teacher's knowledge, enthusiasm, clear explanations, and interactive approach significantly enhances learning. When students are actively engaged with social science content, they can relate it to their own experiences, and construct their own understanding through exploration, interaction,

and critical thinking, making them create outputs and reflect on it to make improvements.

However, Factor 2 comprises six items, each demonstrating pattern coefficients ranging from 0.439 to 0.573. The lowest pattern coefficient (0.439) corresponds to the statement, "*I learn how to think of new ways to solve problems by studying events in history*," while the highest coefficient (0.573) is attributed to the statement "*I like doing projects, essays, debates, and presentations about our community to check what I've learned*."

The common thread among the six items under this factor revolves around engaging in activities that promote critical thinking and civic awareness. Through participation in such projects and discussions, individuals not only hone their critical thinking skills but also develop a heightened awareness of contemporary issues and societal challenges. Moreover, delving into topics such as news, politics, citizenship, and culture facilitates a better understanding of governance, economics, and societal structures. Furthermore, the analysis of historical events serves as a valuable tool for cultivating innovative problem-solving approaches. Ultimately, these activities contribute to the promotion of informed citizenship and active civic engagement among individuals. Therefore, this factor structure is appropriately labeled as "*Civic Awareness and Critical Thinking*."

Due to the intricacy of the subject of social studies, this component is crucial to the curriculum. The preparation of students for civic involvement is largely dependent on civics and social studies curriculum, especially those that prioritise character education (Sim & Chow, 2018; Reichert & Torney-Purta, 2019). Abudu and Fuseini's (2014) study revealed that civic education accounts for the difference in civic awareness between those who wish to participate in community service and those who do not. Additionally, civic awareness raises the likelihood that an individual will engage in civic activities, so curricula should include civic engagement and civic awareness.

Seven items (42, 49, 22, 5, 4, 29, and 28) belong to the Active Learning (ACL) characteristic. These items discuss various engaging and dynamic activities that enhance the learning experience which elicits active learning. Activities that involve students doing and reflecting on their work are referred to as active learning (Bonwell & Eison, 1991). According to Howland *et al.* (2014), in order for learning to be meaningful, students must actively participate in activities that allow them to change parameters and objects in their surroundings and see the outcomes of their choices. By actively interacting with materials and information and assessing the results of those actions, learners actively participate in learning activities rather than passively listening. Active learning can maximise learning and support students' meaningful learning experiences (Ananda Kumar, 2023).

Factor 3 comprises three items, with pattern coefficients ranging from 0.407 to 0.556. The lowest pattern coefficient (0.407) corresponds to the statement "*I explore important topics in social science to feel more comfortable and knowledgeable about our community*," while the highest coefficient (0.556) is attributed to the statement "*I can develop my character into that of a good citizen*."

The common theme among the three statements under this factor revolves around individuals actively participating in community endeavors to cultivate qualities that contribute to being a good citizen. Engaging in the exploration of topics in social science not only enhances understanding but also fosters a sense of comfort and knowledge about the community. This empowerment enables individuals to make informed decisions and positively contribute to society. In essence, the factor structure is appropriately labeled as *"Character Development and Social Responsibility,"* as it encapsulates the notion of individuals' growth and their role in contributing to the betterment of their community.

This component is true to the nature of learning social studies. To be more precise, social science education improves emotional intelligence, awareness, comprehension, attitude, care, and social responsibility, all of which are components of education ideals. This increased awareness and sense of social responsibility leads to tangible behavioral changes in students, such as increased cooperation and assistance to those in need. Additionally, social science education plays an important role in shaping national character. Similar to values education or character education, its goal is to develop students into responsible citizens who are concerned about societal and environmental issues and have a strong sense of national identity. As a result, there is an urgent need to incorporate character education into Social Science education, as it aligns with the development of socially conscious individuals who are deeply invested in the well-being of their communities and nation (Leo Agung 2015).

Meanwhile, eight items (47, 39, 41, 26, 59, 8, 7, 53) are related to Authentic Learning (AUL). The essence of these statements is that students are more engaged and inspired in social studies when lessons are made relatable to real-life situations. They develop an appreciation for history and other cultures, learn to make informed decisions, build good citizenship and character, understand economic issues, and become responsible community members through active participation. These statements relate to the authentic learning dimension proposed by Howland *et al.* (2014) as they emphasize the importance of connecting educational content to real-life situations. Authentic learning involves complex, contextualized tasks that are relevant and meaningful to students' lives. According to Stein, Isaacs, and Andrews (2004), as cited by Ananda Kumar (2023), authentic learning experiences are those that are personally relevant to the learner and situated in a proper social milieu. Additionally, rather than abstracting concepts into rules that are learnt and applied to pre-made situations, learning should be integrated into real-world, practical contexts that enable students to practise and apply these ideas in meaningful ways (Howland *et al.*, 2014).

Factor 4 comprises five items, each demonstrating pattern coefficients ranging from 0.404 to 0.539. The statement that has the lowest pattern coefficient (0.404) is "*I notice the teacher sets clear rules and limits in our teacher-student relationship,*" while the statement that has the highest coefficient (0.539) is "*I get interested when the teacher uses technology for visual aids.*"

The common theme running through the five statements in this factor is students' preference for technology-driven visual aids like PowerPoint presentations and guided

notes, which improve engagement and comprehension in subjects like social studies. Furthermore, the incorporation of significant economic issues into the curriculum emphasizes the importance of real-world content in education. Furthermore, students value teachers who establish clear rules and boundaries because they foster a structured and respectful teacher-student dynamic that promotes learning. This factor structure, appropriately labeled "*Utilizing Technology and Establishing Clear Guidelines*," encapsulates the concept of utilizing technology-driven visual aids while establishing clear boundaries to facilitate effective learning experiences for students.

Social studies teachers can use technology to enhance their classes by including multimedia components such as music, graphics, and video clips, particularly in PowerPoint. Teachers must devote time and effort to creating these types of presentations, but the results can be significant improvements in students' understanding and engagement with social studies material (Griggs, 2010). Ilhan and Oruc (2016) demonstrated in their study that, unlike in traditional classroom settings, the use of multimedia techniques as a technology application improved students' academic performance in social studies classes.

Four items (54, 17, 56, 23) are related to Cooperative Learning (COL). These statements emphasize collaboration, communication, and mutual support among students in the learning process, which creates an inclusive, structured, and participatory classroom environment that enhances student engagement and learning outcomes. Hence, cooperative learning is achieved in these scenarios. According to Hsbollah and Hassan (2022), students must collaborate, communicate, and complement each other's knowledge and skills to solve problem-based learning (PBL) problems. According to Howland *et al.* (2014), students who engage in knowledge-building communities both within and outside of the classroom come to understand that there are a variety of viewpoints and approaches to solving challenges in life. Encouraging discussion is essential, as it is the most natural way for students to construct meaning and deepen their understanding.

Factor 5 comprises three items, each demonstrating pattern coefficients ranging from 0.428 to 0.572. The lowest pattern coefficient (0.428) corresponds to the statement "*I enjoy speaking to people in public discussions.*" while the highest coefficient (0.572) is attributed to the statement "*I enjoy it when the teacher helps me think to solve problems while making the lesson more interesting and fun to learn.*" Each statement in this factor expresses a desire for active involvement in the learning process, whether through problem-solving with teacher assistance, active participation and application of knowledge, or participation in public discussions. They all reflect a student-centered approach to education, whereby students are motivated to actively participate, stimulate, and engage in their own learning experiences, leading to a greater comprehension and appreciation of the material. This factor structure is appropriately labeled "Interactive and Fun Learning," emphasizing the importance of effective teaching practices in motivating and empowering students to actively engage with the curriculum and develop a love of learning.

There are five items (36, 34, 43, 32, 38) that are related to Intentional Learning (INL). These statements suggest that motivated students develop interest and set specific learning goals, which enhances their engagement in learning activities. Because they are accomplishing an intention, students think and learn more when they are actively and consciously working towards a cognitive goal (Howland *et al.*, 2014). Even if the learner does not instantly articulate the goal, they must embrace and adopt it for the learning to have meaning. When learners evaluate their learning according to their objectives, they understand more and are better prepared to apply the knowledge they have produced in new contexts (Jonassen & Strobel, 2006). Learners are purposeful and engaged in meaningful learning when they skilfully plan out how to complete daily chores or create and carry out a strategy to investigate a problem they wish to solve, according to Howland *et al.* (2014).

Additionally, the factor analysis's findings are consistent with the meaningful learning paradigm proposed by Howland *et al.* (2014). Table 4 categorizes each item within specific dimensions of meaningful learning in social studies according to the five characteristics of meaningful learning: ACL-Active Learning, CNL-Constructive Learning, INL-Intentional Learning, AUL-Authentic Learning, and COL-Cooperative Learning.

3.6 Developed Meaningful Learning Social Studies Framework

Meaningful learning in social studies encompasses a holistic approach that goes beyond rote memorization of facts and dates. It aims to cultivate critical thinking, civic engagement, empathy, and a deeper understanding of society and its complexities. As depicted in Figure 2, the exploratory factor analysis has identified five valid dimensions of meaningful learning in social studies in the context of junior high school students. These five factors are labeled as follows:

a) Enriching and Inclusive Learning Environment,
b) Civic Awareness and Critical Thinking,
c) Character Development and Social Responsibility,
d) Utilizing Technology and Establishing Clear Guidelines, and
e) Interactive and Fun Learning. These dimensions represent integral components of a comprehensive, meaningful learning model, essential for the effective teaching of social studies. Collectively, these factors explain 35.5 percent of the variations observed in the data, as derived from responses provided by the students.

It is suggested that teachers focus on these five key components to enhance and strengthen the effective teaching of social studies, thereby creating a more conducive, significant, and purposive learning experience. This framework offers valuable insights for teachers and educational administrators to create innovative teaching strategies to engage students to take an active role in their learning process. This will develop and reinforce their application of acquired knowledge in social studies in real-life situations.
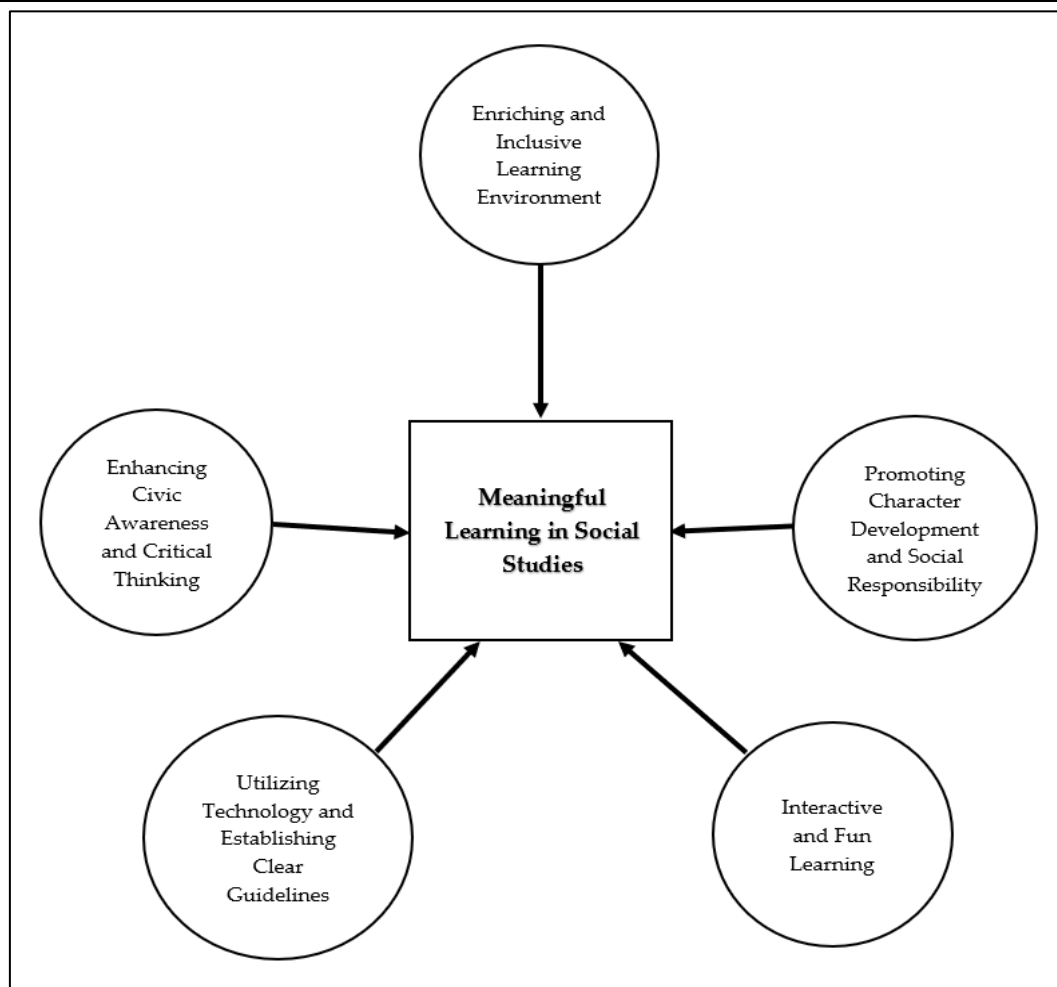
Figure 2: Meaningful Learning in Social Studies
Framework. Showing the Five Extracted Factors

In creating a meaningful learning experience in social studies, the learning environment must be enriching and inclusive. It acknowledges the diversity of perspectives, experiences, and backgrounds within the classroom. It fosters an atmosphere where all students feel valued and respected, encouraging them to share their viewpoints and engage in discussions. By exposing students to a variety of perspectives, they develop a broader understanding of social issues and historical events, leading to a more comprehensive grasp of the subject matter.

This not only deepens understanding of the subjects but also broadens knowledge. Howland *et al.* (2014) assert that action is required but not sufficient. In order to understand the lessons that their activity has to teach, students must express what they have done and think back on their observations and activities. There is frequently a gap between what students see and what they comprehend as a result of new experiences. Students construct their knowledge and articulate their understanding by doing reflection (Hsbollah & Hassan, 2022).

Second, the teaching and learning process allows the enhancement of civic awareness and critical thinking. Social studies education plays a crucial role in fostering civic awareness and critical thinking skills. By studying topics such as government,

politics, economics, and global issues, students develop an understanding of their roles and responsibilities as active citizens in a democratic society. They learn to analyze information critically, evaluate sources, and form informed opinions. This empowers them to participate meaningfully in civic life, advocate for social justice, and engage in democratic processes.

Hence, critical thinking instruction in the classroom is crucial for enhancing students' ability to challenge presumptions, assess arguments, and form well-informed opinions in the various social studies fields of study. This helps students develop a methodical understanding of the world, including its people, places, cultures, systems, and issues (Lim, 2014). Being a competent democratic citizen, according to Westheimer (2008) developing critical thinking skills and critically analysing important societal assumptions are both necessary for being a competent democratic citizen. He and his colleagues argue that critical thinking is essential for democratic individuals to properly examine social, political, and economic systems and to consider group tactics for exposing injustice and resolving systemic issues (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004).

Third, the teaching of the subject promotes character development and social responsibility. Social studies education goes beyond academic knowledge to promote character development and a sense of social responsibility. Through the study of history, geography, and culture, students gain insights into human behavior, ethical dilemmas, and the consequences of individual and collective actions. They develop empathy, respect for diversity, and a commitment to social justice. By exploring the interconnectedness of local, national, and global communities, students are encouraged to become responsible and compassionate global citizens.

Similarly, social studies education has a close relationship with character and value education. Social studies' main objective is to assist students in becoming decent citizens. It is an important tool for developing the next generation's strong national character and spirit (Khairunisa, 2017). Furthermore, social studies learning develops students' ability to be sensitive to a social problem in the surrounding community, which can assist students in overcoming the problems that arise on a daily basis in themselves and the surrounding community (Maladerita *et al.*, 2023).

The teaching enhances the learning through visuals and clarity. Visual aids such as maps, charts, graphs, primary sources, and multimedia resources enhance learning by providing visual representations of complex concepts and historical events. They help students visualize abstract ideas, make connections between different pieces of information, and deepen their understanding of the subject matter. Clear and concise explanations facilitate comprehension and retention, enabling students to grasp key concepts more effectively.

Varga (2017) also stresses the significance of clearly defining boundaries between students and professors. Teachers should assert their authority from the start of the school year without becoming tyrannical, authoritarian, or rigid. It is equally important for instructors to maintain their approachability as it is for them to create and enforce boundaries. Englehart (2009) asserts that an authoritative style offers a channel of communication that promotes student success and instruction. While establishing the

boundaries required for a respectful relationship and an efficient learning environment, a teacher who maintains an authoritative stance with their students also sets the tone for comfort and personal growth by being receptive to their needs.

Interactive and fun learning helps to effectively encourage students to participate during class. interactive learning activities such as debates, simulations, collaborative projects, and Socratic discussions promote active engagement and critical thinking. They encourage students to question assumptions, analyze evidence, and articulate their thoughts effectively. By actively participating in discussions and activities, students develop communication skills, teamwork abilities, and a deeper appreciation for diverse perspectives. Students are inspired to become lifelong learners by interactive learning experiences, which also provide them a sense of control over the educational process.

This component must be considered when teaching social studies because, according to a study by Suraji *et al.* (2018), students' interest in and performance in the history curriculum can be improved by employing an engaging teaching method, particularly when it comes to enhancing their sense of patriotism and national identity. Fun teaching techniques can produce a laid-back learning atmosphere that enhances creativity, problem-solving, and social skills. By encouraging students to explore new ideas freely, these strategies improve their capacity for critical thought and productive group work. Additionally, content students are more likely to take an active part in class discussions and activities, which makes the classroom a livelier and more interesting place to learn (Mokhtar *et al.*, 2023).

Hence, an enriching and meaningful learning experience in social studies is characterized by an enriching and inclusive learning environment, civic awareness and critical thinking, character development, and social responsibility, utilizing technology and establishing clear guidelines, and interactive and fun learning. By integrating these factors into social studies curriculum and instruction, educators can inspire students to become informed, empathetic, and responsible citizens who actively contribute to society.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study underscores the multifaceted nature of meaningful learning in social studies and the essential components required to cultivate it effectively. Through exploratory factor analysis, five key dimensions of meaningful learning have been identified: an enriching and inclusive learning environment, enhancing civic awareness and critical thinking, promoting character development and social responsibility, utilizing technology and establishing clear guidelines, and interactive and fun learning. These dimensions encapsulate the core elements necessary for fostering deep understanding, critical inquiry, and active citizenship among junior high school students.

As the study suggests, all items within the five dimensions of meaningful learning in social studies align with Howland *et al.*'s (2014) framework, which emphasizes that collaborative, active, constructive, purposeful, and genuine learning is what makes learning worthwhile. Each dimension in social studies of meaningful learning

incorporates a combination of these attributes, reflecting the comprehensive nature of meaningful learning as proposed by Howland *et al.* (2014).

Hence, it is proposed that the educators should:

a) prioritize creating active and inclusive social studies classrooms that integrate interactive activities, discussions, and projects to foster critical thinking, civic engagement, and cultural competence;

b) Integrate technology to enhance instruction and ensure equitable access to digital resources, facilitating collaborative learning experiences;

c) foster a classroom culture that celebrates diversity and empowers students to become active citizens, promoting meaningful learning experiences and preparing them for democratic participation;

d) attend professional development among teachers to enhance pedagogical content knowledge and instructional strategies in social studies education.

Policymakers should prioritize giving enough and a sustainable budget for technology improvement, providing civic engagement for students and involving students in community-based project programs. Ensuring equitable access to high-quality instruction and diverse and inclusive meaningful learning environments that prepare students for active citizenship.

Future research should explore innovative instructional strategies and assessment practices in social studies education, such as inquiry-based and project-based learning approaches. Investigating the impact of culturally responsive teaching practices and inclusive curriculum designs on student learning outcomes and equity is also imperative. Additionally, research on how educational policies and accountability measures influence instructional practices and curriculum decisions in social studies classrooms is essential for informing evidence-based practices.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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