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## *GENDER AND LEARNING PERFORMANCE OF LEARNERS IN SCHOOL*

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study aimed to examine the gender and learning performance in Social Studies among learners of Kapalaran Elementary School, Danggagan District for the S.Y 2025-2026. The study utilized a descriptive-correlational research design to determine the gender and learning performance in school. The respondents of the study were the 120 learners in Kapalaran Elementary School. Through the use of survey questionnaires data was gathered. Statistical tools such as mean, standard deviation, t-test and Pearson r were employed to analyze the descriptive level of application and to determine whether a significant correlation and differences exist among the variables. The descriptive-correlational design was appropriate for this study as it not only measured the existing level of application but also explored how different factors relate to learners' performance in Social Studies. The result revealed that majority of the respondents were male learners and the level of the learning performance in terms of learners' participation shows a large extent and performance task interpreted as very large extent. The study showed a relatively balanced gender distribution among learners, allowing fair comparison of learning performance and indicating equal access to schooling for both males and females. Learners demonstrated high levels of participation and strong performance in tasks, reflecting an engaging and supportive learning environment that enhances academic outcomes. Gender was found to significantly influence learning performance, with female learners generally outperforming males, highlighting the importance of considering gender differences to improve instructional strategies. These suggest that schools may continue to promote gender balance in enrollment and participation. Administrators may ensure equal opportunities for both male and female learners in academic programs. Gender-sensitive policies may be strengthened to maintain inclusivity. Teachers may encourage equal participation in classroom activities. Guidance programs may be

implemented to support both genders academically. Continuous monitoring of gender distribution is recommended. This will help sustain balanced representation in future studies.

**KEYWORDS:** *gender, learning performance, learners' participation, performance task.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Many intermediate learners in basic education classrooms struggle to apply Social Studies concepts in real-life situations, despite being able to recall definitions and theories. Learners often approach the subject as memorization rather than as a practical guide to understanding societal issues and human behavior. For instance, students may know about citizenship and community participation but fail to demonstrate these values through civic engagement or responsible social behavior, limiting the development of critical thinking and decision-making skills. Teachers also face challenges connecting abstract concepts to students' local experiences, resulting in limited practical understanding. DepEd Memorandum No. 62, s. (2022) emphasizes performance-based and contextualized learning in Social Studies, while research by Bernardo (2021) highlights that Filipino learners exhibit strong factual recall but weak analytical application. These findings underscore the need for Social Studies education to not only inform learners but also transform their behavior and civic engagement.

To address these challenges, schools have implemented strategies such as contextualized learning, project-based activities, and community immersion programs that encourage real-world application of Social Studies concepts. Examples include local history projects, community mapping, and environmental advocacy campaigns, supported by classroom approaches like collaborative problem-solving and simulation exercises. Initiatives like the Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs) also prioritize practical outcomes over rote memorization. Despite these interventions, gaps remain due to limited teacher training, insufficient resources, and assessment tools that focus more on knowledge retention than applied skills (Cheng, 2022). This study is therefore significant in assessing the application dimension of Social Studies learning outcomes among intermediate learners. Insights gained can guide the development of targeted teaching strategies, teacher training programs, and community-based learning initiatives to ensure learners not only understand Social Studies concepts but can also apply them to address real-life challenges in their communities.

### *Conceptual Framework*

This study was anchored on the Social Cognitive Theory of Gender Development and Differentiation by Bussey and Bandura (2015), which posits that gender roles and behaviors are learned through observation, imitation, and reinforcement within social contexts such as family, school, and media. According to the theory, learners develop gendered behaviors by observing role models and interpreting societal expectations of masculinity and femininity, shaping their self-perception, academic interests, and engagement in subjects like Social Science. Gender is thus viewed as socially constructed rather than biologically fixed, influenced by cognitive and environmental interactions. In the context of intermediate learners, this framework helps explain how societal expectations and classroom dynamics influence students' motivation, participation, and performance. For example, boys and girls may receive different encouragement from teachers or peers, affecting confidence and involvement in discussions, research activities, and other social science tasks. Understanding these patterns allows educators to identify and address gender biases in teaching and curriculum design, promoting equitable learning opportunities.

Gender also affects learners' participation, academic achievement, and the application of Social Science knowledge in real-life contexts. Female learners often excel in tasks requiring comprehension, analysis, interpretation, and collaboration, while male learners may perform better in fact-based, analytical, or problem-solving activities. These differences influence classroom interaction, knowledge absorption, and mastery of social science concepts, contributing to variations in overall learning outcomes. Moreover, gendered tendencies shape how learners apply Social Science principles: females may emphasize empathy, collaboration, and community-oriented actions, whereas males may focus on logical reasoning and practical decision-making. Consequently, gender indirectly impacts not only knowledge acquisition but also the transformation of that knowledge into socially relevant behaviors, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills, highlighting the importance of gender-sensitive pedagogy in fostering holistic Social Science education.



## **Review of the Literature**

### **Learners' Participation**

Elizabeth G. Bailey (2020) shows that classroom gender composition and instructor gender influence female students' in-class participation and performance: classes with more female peers or a female instructor increased female participation and grades. That finding argues powerfully that participation is not only an individual trait but a social outcome shaped by classroom demographics and role models key considerations for Social Studies subjects that rely on group discussion and perspective-taking. Bailey's results imply that to improve participation-driven learning outcomes for girls, schools should consider peer group balance and teacher recruitment/training as levers. From a policy perspective, this study supports targeted, structural approaches (not just encouragement of individual students) to close participation gaps that affect Social Studies achievement. In short, Bailey provides empirical backing for the idea that gendered peer and teacher contexts materially alter learners' participation and thus their Social Science outcomes.

Cislaghi, B., & Heise, L. (2019) broadens the lens: it documents how systemic gender biases in curricula, teacher expectations, and school climates reduce girls' and boys' equal engagement across school subjects. The report argues that underrepresentation of women's perspectives and gendered stereotypes in materials and pedagogy discourages some students from participating meaningfully in social and civic topics central to Social Studies learning. This supports the contention that participation differences are embedded in institutional content and culture, not only in moment-to-moment classroom behaviors. Consequently, interventions to improve learners' participation in Social Studies must address curriculum reform, teacher professional development, and representation else participation gaps and outcome differences will persist. Cislaghi, B., & Heise, L. (2019) provides the macro evidence that individual classroom fixes alone are insufficient to eradicate gendered participation effects on Social Studies outcomes.

### **Performance Task**

Females' stronger performance in language-based tasks and overall GPA suggests gendered strengths that directly shape Social Studies outcomes, because Social Studies often relies on verbal reasoning and written expression. Tsaoasis (2022) used robust latent-variable methods and found that females score higher on verbal domains and GPA, which implies classroom assessment formats in Social Studies may systematically advantage girls. If teachers rely

heavily on essays, discussions, and reading comprehension, the assessment design can amplify existing gendered advantages rather than reflect neutral mastery. Therefore, improving fairness in Social Studies assessment requires attention to task variety and measurement invariance so observed gender gaps aren't artefacts of how we measure achievement. Ignoring these measurement issues risks overstating innate gender differences and missing pedagogical solutions that would raise achievement for all students.

Course gender composition and representation shape achievement by altering classroom norms and students' sense of belonging, which in turn affects grades in Social Studies. Bowman (2021) showed that the proportion of female students and presence of female instructors relate to course grades, indicating that representation at the classroom level matters for performance outcomes. In Social Studies where identity, perspective, and classroom dialogue frequently structure learning having diverse role models and balanced participation can reduce stereotype threat and motivate underrepresented groups. Consequently, policies that ignore gendered representation miss a lever that can improve academic achievement by changing social context rather than student ability. Any intervention aimed at closing achievement gaps should therefore target both instructor diversity and the gender climate within classes.

Disciplinary differences in pedagogy explain part of the gendered pattern in achievement: Social Studies' emphasis on narrative, critical reading, and argumentation tends to align with skills where girls often outperform boys. Crowther (2022) documented gender-based differences in GPA and completion measures, suggesting that program structure and assessment types influence which gender benefits academically. If Social Studies curricula privilege written argument and collaborative discussion, they may systematically reward the learning styles and behaviors more typical of female students. That does not mean male students lack capacity; rather, it indicates that instructional design and assessment choices mediate how gender translates into measured achievement. To achieve equity, educators should diversify teaching strategies and assessments to value multiple ways of demonstrating mastery.

Moreover, J. Scott-Barrett (2023) links classroom interactions that foster curiosity and creativity to higher-order outcomes, and those outcomes include the capacity to apply social-science ideas in unfamiliar situations because creative inquiry requires transfer and adaptation. The 2023 study documents how teacher moves that provoke inquiry open

pathways for students to test and use concepts in novel mini-projects, which is precisely application in practice. I argue that nurturing curiosity is not an optional enrichment activity but a mechanism for cultivating application-level competence: curious students experiment and adapt knowledge to new contexts. Thus, Scott-Barrett's findings imply that fostering curiosity and creative exploration should be a deliberate strategy to raise application outcomes in intermediate learners.

A study of L. Burnett (2020) provides quasi-experimental evidence that teaching historical-thinking skills (sourcing, contextualizing, corroborating) improves students' ability to use evidence and conduct tasks that require applied reasoning in social studies. Teaching those disciplinary practices moves learners from memorizing events to using evidence to solve historical problems a clear application outcome. Burnett's study supports the argument that when instruction foregrounds disciplinary practices, intermediate learners become better at transferring class learning to document-based tasks and civic reasoning. Therefore, to improve application-level outcomes, educators should center instruction on disciplinary methods, not only content lists. Burnett's results make a compelling case that disciplinary practice stronger application in social science learning.

Voyer and Voyer (2024), in their large-scale meta-analysis, found that female learners generally achieve higher grades than male learners across all levels of schooling, regardless of subject area. They argued that this difference may be attributed to girls' stronger self-regulation skills, classroom behavior, and compliance with school norms. However, they also noted that standardized test scores often show smaller gender differences, suggesting that assessment methods may favor learning behaviors more commonly exhibited by girls. This raises questions about whether traditional grading systems fully and fairly capture true learning performance.

Sadker and Zittleman (2019) highlighted how gender bias in classroom interactions affects learners' academic outcomes. Their studies revealed that teachers often give more attention, feedback, and instructional time to male learners, particularly in mathematics and science classes. Despite this, girls frequently outperform boys academically, indicating resilience but also pointing to systemic inequities. The authors argued that addressing unconscious gender bias in teaching practices is essential to improving learning performance for all learners, regardless of gender.

Fortin, Oreopoulos, and Phipps (2021) analyzed educational performance and concluded that non-cognitive skills, such as motivation and study habits, explain a significant portion of gender differences in school achievement. Their findings suggest that boys' lower performance is often linked to weaker engagement and higher rates of disengagement rather than lower ability. This supports the argument that schools must address learning attitudes and school climate alongside academic instruction.

Finally, Wang and Eccles (2022) investigated gender differences in academic motivation and engagement and found that girls generally display higher levels of behavioral and emotional engagement in school, which positively affects their learning performance. Boys, on the other hand, showed lower engagement levels, particularly in language subjects. The authors argue that increasing learner engagement through gender-sensitive teaching approaches can help narrow achievement gaps and improve overall school performance.

### **Research Methodology**

The study utilized a descriptive-correlational research design to determine the relationship between gender and learning performance in school. This design was selected because it allows the researcher to describe the current level of learners' abilities while also examining the relationship between relevant variables. These variables include gender, learners' participation, and performance tasks. Data for the study were collected through the use of survey questionnaires administered to the respondents. The questionnaires were designed to gather relevant information regarding learners' participation and their performance in assigned tasks. The respondents of the study were the one hundred twenty (120) learners in Kapalaran Elementary School, Dangcagan District, for the school year 2025-2026. This study utilized the complete enumeration sampling procedure, wherein all members of the target population will be included as respondents.

### **Findings**

This study produced the following findings:

Majority of the respondents were male learners.

Level of the learning performance in terms of learners' participation shows a large extent and performance task interpreted as very large extent.

There is significant relationship between gender and the learning performance among learners. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated “ There is no significant relationship between gender and the learning performance among learners” was rejected.

There is a significant difference on learners’ level of learning performance when they are grouped according to their gender. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated “ There is no significant difference on learners’ level of learning performance when they are grouped according to their gender” was rejected.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Drawing from the study's findings, the following conclusions can be made:

The study revealed that the majority of the respondents were male learners, although the difference between male and female learners was minimal. This indicates a relatively balanced gender distribution among the participants, allowing for fair comparison of learning performance. The presence of both genders in nearly equal proportions strengthens the validity of the findings. Gender representation did not limit participation in the study. The demographic profile suggests equal access to schooling for both male and female learners. This balance supports meaningful analysis of gender-related learning performance. Overall, the respondents adequately represented both genders in the school population.

The level of learning performance in terms of learners’ participation was found to be to a large extent, while performance tasks were interpreted as to a very large extent. This indicates that learners are actively engaged in classroom activities and are highly capable of completing performance-based tasks. Learners demonstrate confidence, motivation, and willingness to participate regardless of gender. The results reflect a positive and supportive learning environment. Active participation contributes significantly to improved academic outcomes. Performance tasks further enhance learners’ understanding and skills. Overall, high participation and strong performance task results signify effective teaching and learning processes.

The study found a significant relationship between gender and learning performance among learners. This indicates that gender is associated with differences in how learners perform academically. Although the relationship may not be strong, it is statistically meaningful. Gender plays a role in influencing learning outcomes. This suggests that learning performance is affected by gender-related factors such as motivation, engagement, or

learning strategies. The result highlights the importance of considering gender in educational analysis. Therefore, gender remains a relevant variable in understanding learners' academic performance.

The study also revealed a significant difference in the level of learning performance when learners are grouped according to gender. Female learners demonstrated higher learning performance compared to male learners. This suggests that female learners may be more engaged, motivated, or consistent in academic tasks. The difference indicates variations in learning behaviors between genders. However, both groups still showed relatively high levels of performance. The result emphasizes the need to address gender-based learning differences. Understanding these differences can help improve instructional strategies. Overall, gender significantly influences learners' level of learning performance.

Derived from the study's conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed:

Since the majority of respondents were male learners, schools may continue to promote gender balance in enrollment and participation. Administrators may ensure equal opportunities for both male and female learners in academic programs. Gender-sensitive policies may be strengthened to maintain inclusivity. Teachers may encourage equal participation in classroom activities. Guidance programs may be implemented to support both genders academically. Continuous monitoring of gender distribution is recommended. This will help sustain balanced representation in future studies.

Given the high level of learner participation and very large extent of performance task achievement, teachers may continue using interactive and performance-based teaching strategies. Collaborative activities such as group work, presentations, and discussions may be strengthened. Teachers may provide varied performance tasks to sustain learner engagement. Schools should support professional development focused on learner-centered instruction. Learners may be encouraged to actively participate regardless of gender. Instructional materials should remain inclusive and motivating. These strategies will help maintain and further improve learning performance.

Since a significant relationship exists between gender and learning performance, educators may consider gender-responsive teaching approaches. Teachers may adopt strategies that address diverse learning needs of male and female learners. School administrators may provide training on gender-sensitive instruction. Further studies may explore other factors

that influence learning performance alongside gender. Counseling and academic support programs may be tailored based on learners' needs. Understanding gender-related learning patterns can improve teaching effectiveness. This will help reduce performance gaps and promote equity.

In view of the significant difference in learning performance between male and female learners, targeted interventions may be developed to support lower-performing groups. Teachers may provide additional academic support and motivation, especially for learners who may struggle. Learning strategies that appeal to different learning styles may be incorporated. Schools may encourage mentoring and academic coaching programs. Parents may be involved in supporting learners' academic development. Continuous assessment should be conducted to monitor progress. These actions will help narrow performance differences and enhance overall learning outcomes.

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