
COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES AND HISTORICAL AWARENESS OF GRADE 4 LEARNERS

***Ruth A. Billones**

Department of Education Philippines.

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*Corresponding Author: Ruth A. Billones

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to assess the learners' comprehension strategies and historical awareness in San Fernando District II, school year 2025-2026. This study used a descriptive-correlational research design. Descriptive-correlational research involves collecting and describing information without altering the environment. It entails a one-time interaction with groups of participants, during which data were gathered, analyzed, classified, and tabulated to derive meaningful interpretations. The result revealed that the learners demonstrated a high level of proficiency in multiple comprehension strategies, including summarization, vocabulary development, compare and contrast, guided reading, and making inferences. Moreover, the learners exhibited a high level of historical awareness, reflecting a strong understanding of historical concepts and contexts. The learners' historical awareness can be associated with their use of comprehension strategies namely, summarization, vocabulary development, compare and contrast, guided reading, making inference, indicating that effective comprehension skills contribute to greater historical understanding. These suggest that learners may continue to actively practice and refine their comprehension strategies such as summarization, vocabulary development, and making inferences to strengthen their historical awareness further. Teachers are encouraged to integrate targeted exercises that promote these strategies into daily lessons to enhance students' engagement and understanding of historical content. School administrators and curriculum planners may prioritize the incorporation of explicit instruction on comprehension strategies within the history curriculum. Providing professional development for teachers on advanced strategies like guided reading and compare and contrast techniques will help sustain high levels of historical awareness among learners.

KEYWORDS: *comprehension strategies, summarization, vocabulary development, compare and contrast, guided reading, making inference, learners' historical awareness.*

INTRODUCTION

Engaging with historical texts can be challenging for students due to limited contextual knowledge and insufficient critical thinking skills necessary to analyze past events meaningfully. Many learners tend to focus on memorizing facts rather than interpreting cause-and-effect relationships or understanding multiple perspectives. Research indicates that promoting historical awareness requires explicit teaching of comprehension strategies, such as sourcing, contextualization, and corroboration, to help students navigate complex historical narratives (Wansink et al., 2021). Without these strategies, learners often interpret history passively, resulting in shallow understanding and reduced interest in civic engagement (Endacott & Brooks, 2023). Therefore, enhancing historical comprehension demands a deliberate integration of strategy instruction with content knowledge to support critical historical thinking.

In the Philippines, learners face additional challenges in developing historical awareness, including a lack of comprehensive historical content in school curricula, the prevalence of misinformation on social media, and diminishing interest in history as a subject. Historical distortion and revisionism have also contributed to misconceptions about key events, such as martial law and colonial rule, while oversimplified textbook narratives often limit critical thinking and deeper analysis (Brophy, 2019). These factors hinder students from forming a well-rounded understanding of the nation's past and its relevance to present-day issues. Integrating effective comprehension strategies within the social studies curriculum has been shown to help learners connect historical events to contemporary realities, fostering informed citizenship and a deeper engagement with historical content (Aguimlod et al., 2023).

Primary school instruction often emphasizes word recognition and decoding, but these skills alone do not guarantee comprehension. Some fluent readers still struggle to grasp the meaning behind texts (Hudson et al., 2020), and teachers may inadvertently limit comprehension development by summarizing texts for students or providing insufficient support due to a lack of knowledge about strategy instruction (Banditvilai, 2020). Incorporating strategies such as questioning, summarization, and text-based discussion allows learners to critically engage with historical content, recognize cause-and-effect relationships, and broaden their historical awareness (Alghonaim, 2020). This study, therefore, aims to

identify the comprehension strategies employed by learners in Social Studies in the San Fernando II District and examine their short- and long-term effects on historical awareness, critical thinking, and the ability to make connections between past and present events.

Conceptual Framework

This study is anchored on the Dual Coding Theory (DCT), a cognitive theory proposed by Allan Paivio in 1971, which emphasizes the significant role of mental imagery in learning and memory. The theory posits that the brain processes information through two distinct channels: the verbal system, responsible for linguistic information, and the nonverbal or visual system, which handles images and symbols. Learning is more effective when both verbal and visual inputs are integrated, rather than relying on a single mode of processing (Paivio, 1986). Paivio and Clark (2011) further describe three levels of processing within or between these systems: representational, referential, and associative. Representational processing occurs when a stimulus, such as a word or image, activates its corresponding mental representation. Referential processing involves cross-system activation, such as an image triggering a word or vice versa, supporting tasks like object naming and grammar learning. Associative processing links additional related information to strengthen memory recall.

Dual Coding Theory is particularly relevant in educational contexts, including language learning, because using verbal and nonverbal codes together enhances comprehension and retention. For example, foreign language learners remember new vocabulary more effectively when words are paired with images or sounds (Paivio & Clark, 2011). However, the theory faces a limitation known as the concreteness effect: abstract concepts are harder to visualize and, therefore, less likely to benefit from dual coding. Concrete words, which can be processed both verbally and visually, are generally easier to remember, highlighting the need for strategies that make abstract ideas more tangible.

To overcome this limitation, educators can use metaphors, analogies, real-life examples, and digital tools such as infographics, concept maps, or animated videos to anchor abstract concepts in visual representations. Mayer (2021) suggests that combining multimedia instruction with dual coding principles not only increases student engagement but also promotes deeper learning by connecting new information to prior knowledge. By applying these strategies, learners can develop more comprehensive and lasting understandings, even for complex or theoretical content. Despite its constraints, Dual Coding Theory remains a

widely applicable framework across educational settings, with empirical evidence supporting its effectiveness in improving memory and learning. The conceptual framework of this study is illustrated in Figure 1.

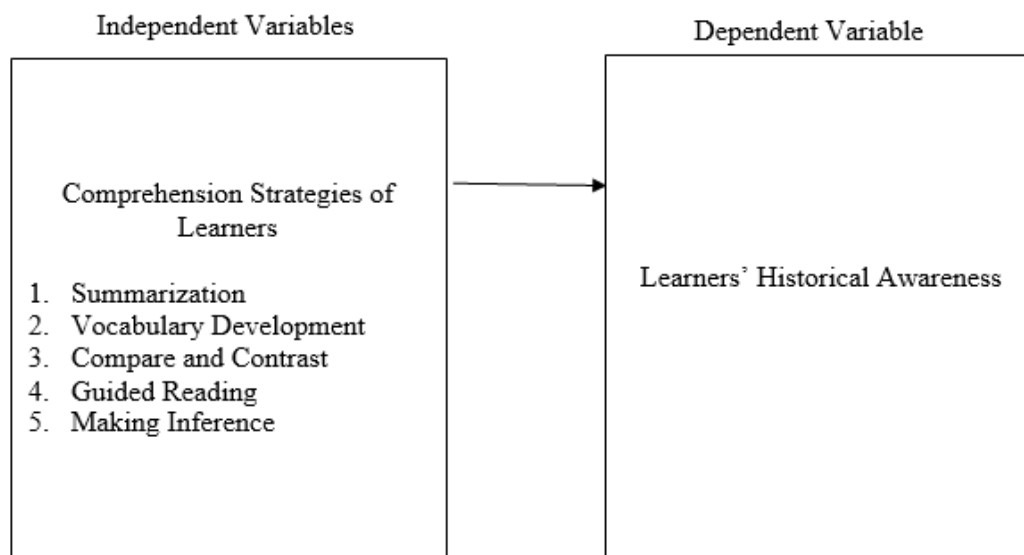


Figure 1. Schematic diagram of the study showing the relationship of the independent and dependent variables of the study.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to assess the learners' comprehension strategies and historical awareness in San Fernando District II, school year 2025-2026. Specifically, this study will answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of learners' comprehension strategies in terms of summarization, vocabulary development, compare and contrast, guided reading, and making inference?
2. What is the level of learners' historical awareness?
3. Is there a significant relationship between learners' comprehension strategies and historical awareness?

Delimitation of the Study

This study examined the relationship between comprehension strategies and historical awareness of Grade 4 learners in San Fernando II District, Division of Bukidnon, during the 2025–2026 school year. The independent variables included key comprehension strategies such as summarization, vocabulary development, compare and contrast, guided reading, and

making inferences. The study assessed how these strategies will be related to the dependent variable—learners’ historical awareness—measured during the first grading period.

Review of the Literature

Comprehension Strategies

Comprehension in social studies is an active process where students construct meaning by connecting prior knowledge, personal experiences, and text information. Strategies like summarization, vocabulary development, comparing and contrasting, guided reading, and making inferences help students engage with complex historical texts and retain new information. Explicit instruction in these strategies improves understanding, promotes critical thinking, and supports students in analyzing multiple perspectives, distinguishing primary and secondary sources, and contextualizing historical events. Technology-enhanced learning, such as digital tools and multimedia resources, further supports comprehension by providing interactive and accessible ways to explore content (Alghonaim, A. S. 2020).

Teachers play a crucial role in modeling these strategies and gradually releasing responsibility to students, enabling them to apply techniques independently. Effective use of comprehension strategies not only strengthens reading skills but also fosters historical awareness, civic competence, and informed decision-making. By integrating these strategies consistently, educators can create more engaging and meaningful learning experiences, promoting deeper understanding and critical analysis of historical events (Aguimlod, C. A. P., Tanduyan, M., Trangia, E., & Genelza, G. 2023).

Summarization

Summarization allows students to condense information while retaining essential meaning, helping them identify key ideas, understand relationships between details, and grasp overarching themes. Effective summarization involves deleting unnecessary details, analyzing content meaningfully, and recognizing text structures. When students practice summarization, they strengthen critical thinking, comprehension, and long-term retention. Guided instruction, modeling, and tools such as graphic organizers help learners internalize this skill and apply it independently (Almekhlafi, A. G., Ismail, S. A., & Hassan, A. A. 2020).

Integrating summarization with other strategies, like questioning and predicting, promotes metacognition and reflective learning. Regular practice across content areas, particularly social studies, helps students extract key information from dense texts and enhances historical

awareness. Combining summarization with writing tasks allows students to articulate understanding clearly, reinforcing comprehension and encouraging analytical reading habits (Alzahrani, K. S. 2023).

Vocabulary Development

Teaching relevant vocabulary before reading social studies texts significantly improves comprehension. Strong vocabulary helps students interpret content, connect new terms with prior knowledge, and engage deeply with concepts. Strategies such as pre-teaching key terms, using K-W-L charts, and linking lessons to real-world applications foster vocabulary acquisition while promoting schema-based learning. Activating prior knowledge enhances students' inferencing abilities and helps bridge gaps for diverse learners (Banditvilai, C. 2020).

Culturally responsive vocabulary instruction strengthens comprehension and long-term retention by connecting new words to students' experiences. By integrating vocabulary teaching into daily lessons, educators can create meaningful learning contexts, increase student engagement, and enhance confidence. Research shows that vocabulary development is essential for content mastery, particularly in understanding technical and conceptual material in social studies (Bartz, C. J. 2016).

Comparing and Contrasting

Comparing and contrasting helps students understand relationships, distinctions, and connections between historical events, concepts, or individuals. Explicit instruction using structured approaches allows learners to analyze similarities and differences, relate new knowledge to prior learning, and develop critical thinking skills. Graphic organizers, such as Venn diagrams and T-charts, visually support this strategy, making complex information more accessible and promoting retention (Brophy, C. 2019).

When combined with collaborative discussions and writing activities, comparing and contrasting encourages higher-order thinking, synthesis of information, and argument development. This strategy improves students' comprehension, engagement, and ability to recall key content. By linking visual and verbal information, teachers enhance cognitive processing and accommodate diverse learning styles, promoting analytical and reflective learning in social studies classrooms (Butterfuss, R., Kim, J., & Kendeou, P. 2020).

Guided Reading

Guided reading involves teachers leading students through texts in small groups, providing personalized support and scaffolding comprehension. It promotes critical thinking, question formulation, and the construction of connections within texts. Cooperative learning within guided reading fosters discussion, peer teaching, and shared exploration of historical perspectives, improving engagement and comprehension while supporting literacy development (Capin, P., Stevens, E. A., Stewart, A. A., Swanson, E., & Vaughn, S. 2020).

This approach allows students to interpret texts from multiple viewpoints, enhancing perspective-taking and contextual understanding. By structuring group activities with roles, goals, and reflective discussions, guided reading ensures active participation and deeper cognitive engagement. In social studies, guided reading strengthens understanding of historical content, encourages collaborative knowledge construction, and promotes empathy and civic awareness (Connor, C. M., et.al. (2020).

Making Inferences

Inference-making helps students draw conclusions and interpret meaning beyond explicit text, relying on prior knowledge, vocabulary, and schema development. Young learners can practice inference through oral narratives, pictures, videos, and gradually more complex texts. Direct instruction in inferencing helps students clarify text clues, predict outcomes, and understand character perspectives, fostering critical thinking and reasoning skills (De La Paz, et. al. (2022).

Building strong vocabulary knowledge is essential for successful inferencing, as it enables students to comprehend implicit meaning in sentences and passages. Teachers support inference-making by scaffolding experiences from concrete to abstract, posing strategic questions, and connecting new information to prior knowledge. Structured inference instruction enhances comprehension, analytical skills, and the ability to process information in social studies contexts (Endacott, J. L., & Brooks, S. 2023).

Historical Awareness

Historical awareness involves understanding, interpreting, and appreciating history, often influenced by teaching methods, local culture, and engagement with content. Inquiry-based methods, such as research projects and investigations, encourage critical thinking, active participation, and deeper comprehension of historical events. Studies highlight gaps in

students' knowledge of local history and culture, underscoring the need for strategies that foster meaningful connections and cultural appreciation (Etumnu, S. U. 2018).

Promoting historical awareness requires not just delivering content but creating opportunities for analysis, interpretation, and contextualization. Culturally responsive pedagogy and collaborative projects help students relate history to their experiences, enhancing comprehension, identity formation, and civic awareness. When learners engage emotionally and cognitively with historical content, they develop a more profound understanding of the past and its relevance to contemporary society (Fitria, T. N. 2023).

Research Methodology

This study used a descriptive-correlational research design. Descriptive-correlational research involves collecting and describing information without altering the environment. It entails a one-time interaction with groups of participants, during which data were gathered, analyzed, classified, and tabulated to derive meaningful interpretations. Furthermore, this design aims to identify relationships between variables and enable predictions based on existing knowledge. In this study, the researcher collected data through a survey questionnaire on learners' comprehension strategies and historical awareness. The study then examine the relationship between these variables, analyzing and correlating the data through quantitative methods. The study will take place in San Fernando II District, within the Division of Bukidnon. San Fernando, Bukidnon, has a rich history rooted in its formation. It was originally part of the territories of Maramag and Malaybalay. This study employed simple random sampling to ensure that every Grade 4 learner in the district has an equal chance of being selected, making the sample representative of the population.

FINDINGS

Table 1 Level of learners' comprehension strategies in terms of summarization,

Indicator	Mean	SD	Interpretation
In learning Social Studies, I...			
Skim the text I am going to summarize.	3.86	1.248	High Level
Identify the main points that the author makes.	3.72	1.304	High Level
Underline topic sentences and key facts.	3.58	1.291	High Level
Label areas that I want to refer to.	3.53	1.251	High Level
Identify the areas that I do not understand.	3.35	1.277	High Level
Overall	3.61	0.757	High Level

The data in Table 1 indicates that learners in Social Studies demonstrate a high level of comprehension strategies in summarization, with an overall mean of 3.61. Among the indicators, skimming the text before summarizing received the highest mean (3.86), suggesting that students are proactive in previewing material to identify key ideas. Other strategies, such as identifying main points (3.72), underlining topic sentences and key facts (3.58), and labeling important areas (3.53), also show consistent high engagement. Even identifying areas of difficulty (3.35) reflects a positive awareness of comprehension gaps, which is crucial for improving understanding. The relatively low standard deviation values indicate that most learners consistently apply these strategies, demonstrating a reliable and systematic approach to summarization.

The implications of these findings suggest that students are generally capable of independently processing and condensing Social Studies content, which can enhance overall learning outcomes and retention of information. Teachers can build on this high level of engagement by providing structured activities that further refine these skills, such as guided summarization exercises, graphic organizers, and peer-review sessions. Encouraging learners to reflect on areas they find challenging can also promote metacognition and targeted intervention. Overall, reinforcing and expanding these strategies will likely strengthen students' critical thinking, comprehension, and ability to extract essential knowledge from complex historical texts.

Table 2 Level of learners' comprehension strategies in terms of vocabulary development.

Indicator	Mean	SD	Interpretation
<i>In Learning Social Studies, I...</i>			
Explain the word in my own words.	3.94	1.184	High Level
Create a drawing, symbol, or diagram to represent the word.	3.88	1.309	High Level
Talk about the word with my classmates to learn more.	3.73	1.203	High Level
Review and improve my vocabulary notebook entries.	3.68	1.106	High Level
Understand the new word through a simple explanation or example.	3.57	1.337	High Level
Overall	3.76	0.824	High Level

The data in Table 2 shows that learners exhibit a high level of comprehension strategies in vocabulary development, with an overall mean of 3.76. Students most frequently explain new words in their own words (3.94) and create visual representations, such as drawings or diagrams, to reinforce understanding (3.88). Collaborative discussions with classmates (3.73),

reviewing vocabulary notebooks (3.68), and understanding new words through examples (3.57) also received high ratings. The relatively low standard deviations indicate consistency in students' use of these strategies, suggesting that learners actively engage with new vocabulary in multiple ways to support comprehension in Social Studies.

These findings imply that learners are effectively building vocabulary skills that enhance their understanding of historical and social concepts. Teachers can further support this development by incorporating activities such as peer teaching, vocabulary games, and visual mapping exercises, which reinforce both meaning and retention. Additionally, encouraging students to connect new terms to prior knowledge or real-world examples can strengthen comprehension and application. Overall, the high level of vocabulary strategy use suggests that learners are well-prepared to decode complex texts, participate in discussions, and construct meaningful summaries in Social Studies.

Table 4 Level of learners' comprehension strategies in terms of compare and contrast.

Indicator	Mean	SD	Interpretation
<i>In learning Social Studies, I...</i>			
Carefully consider two or more texts I am being asked to read about.	3.93	1.087	High Level
Get the general overview and mark things I consider important.	3.71	1.239	High Level
Make up a list with which column for things the text share and things they do not.	3.62	1.309	High Level
Make list of the key similarities and differences in the texts.	3.59	1.196	High Level
Identify connections and distractions that pop up as I read the text.	3.55	1.297	High Level
Overall	3.68	0.793	High Level

The data in Table 4 indicates that learners demonstrate a high level of comprehension strategies in comparing and contrasting, with an overall mean of 3.68. Among the indicators, carefully considering multiple texts received the highest mean (3.93), suggesting that students actively engage with content to analyze similarities and differences. Other strategies, such as obtaining an overview and marking important information (3.71), making columns to organize shared and differing information (3.62), listing key similarities and differences (3.59), and identifying connections or distractions while reading (3.55), also reflect consistent high engagement. The relatively low standard deviation shows that learners consistently apply these strategies, demonstrating systematic thinking and effective use of analytical skills when processing Social Studies content.

The implications of these findings suggest that students are capable of critically evaluating multiple sources and identifying key patterns in information, which enhances comprehension and retention. Teachers can further strengthen this skill by integrating graphic organizers such as Venn diagrams, T-charts, or concept maps, and pairing these tools with group discussions or writing exercises. Encouraging students to articulate the connections and distinctions they observe not only reinforces understanding but also fosters higher-order thinking, critical analysis, and engagement with historical or social concepts. This structured approach prepares learners to better synthesize information and make meaningful interpretations of complex texts in Social Studies.

Table 5 Level of learners' comprehension strategies in terms of making inference.

Indicator	Mean	SD	Interpretation
<i>In learning Social Studies, I...</i>			
Use what I know to make a guess about what I do not know.	3.84	1.275	High Level
Make a judgment that can be supported just as I could reasonably infer.	3.72	1.292	High Level
Use the clues in the text to figure out what is not directly said.	3.59	1.178	High Level
Draw conclusions about the text's meaning and purpose.	3.55	1.205	High Level
Read between the lines in the studied text.	3.52	1.243	High Level
Overall	3.64	0.832	High Level

The data in Table 5 indicates that learners demonstrate a high level of comprehension strategies when it comes to making inferences in Social Studies. Among the indicators, learners reported the highest mean score (3.84) for using prior knowledge to make guesses about unknown information, suggesting that students actively connect new content to what they already know. Similarly, the ability to make judgments supported by reasonable inference (mean = 3.72) and using textual clues to understand implicit meaning (mean = 3.59) also fall within the high-level range. These findings suggest that learners are not only attentive to the explicit content of the texts but are also capable of interpreting underlying meanings and supporting their understanding with evidence. The overall mean of 3.64 reinforces that, as a group, learners consistently employ strategies to infer meaning beyond the literal text. This indicates that while learners are generally confident in making inferences, there may be room to further develop deeper analytical skills, such as synthesizing information across multiple sources or recognizing subtle textual nuances.

Table 6 Level of learners' historical awareness.

Indicator	Mean	SD	Interpretation
I will not change the shape/color of historical objects	3.97	3.862	Highly Aware
I respect my friend' opinions and listen to them carefully.	3.94	1.218	Highly Aware
I believe that past experiences shape my ability to solve problems effectively.	3.91	1.199	Highly Aware
It is believed that history is not just about expanding knowledge.	3.80	1.148	Highly Aware
If I visit a historical heritage site, I will not damage historical objects	3.77	1.131	Highly Aware
I realize that history talks about the experiences of a group in the past.	3.73	1.238	Highly Aware
Through history, the development of culture itself can be realized.	3.73	1.131	Highly Aware
I will not buy and sell historical relics	3.69	1.276	Highly Aware
I am reminded by the past that I must take action for the future.	3.68	1.179	Highly Aware
I believe history can teach me about what I have done.	3.66	1.232	Highly Aware
Through history, I realize the values of the past that help me face the present.	3.64	1.226	Highly Aware
I understand that history helps me see how present actions affect the future.	3.62	1.120	Highly Aware
I believe it is historical experience that shapes national identity.	3.62	1.341	Highly Aware
If I discover unknown historical relics, I will report them to the authorities.	3.62	1.267	Highly Aware
Through history, I learned that our nation was shaped by past events.	3.61	1.293	Highly Aware
I realize that history can direct me to appreciate cultural values.	3.57	1.224	Highly Aware
If I see a friend scribbling on historical relics, I will reprimand him.	3.50	1.354	Highly Aware
Overall	3.71	0.734	Highly Aware

The results in Table 6 show that learners exhibit a high level of historical awareness, as evidenced by the consistently high mean scores across all indicators. The highest-rated items reflect learners' respect for historical artifacts and ethical behavior, such as not altering historical objects (mean = 3.97) and respecting friends' opinions (mean = 3.94). This suggests that learners not only recognize the importance of preserving tangible history but also value interpersonal understanding in discussing historical topics. Additionally, learners acknowledge the practical significance of history in shaping problem-solving skills (mean = 3.91) and influencing future actions (mean = 3.68), indicating an awareness that historical knowledge is not merely academic but relevant to personal and societal development.

The overall mean of 3.71 further confirms that learners are highly aware of historical concepts and their implications. Indicators related to understanding cultural values, national identity, and the ethical treatment of relics consistently fall within the “highly aware” range, highlighting learners’ recognition of both the intangible and tangible aspects of history. Slightly lower scores, such as intervening when a friend mishandles artifacts (mean = 3.50), may indicate areas where learners are less confident in taking proactive steps, though overall awareness remains strong. These findings reflect a robust foundation in historical consciousness, demonstrating that learners appreciate the lessons of the past, respect historical heritage, and are capable of connecting historical knowledge to present and future contexts.

Table 7 Test of significant relationship between learners’ comprehension strategies and historical awareness.

Variable	r	p-value	Interpretation
Summarization	.629	.000	Significant
Vocabulary Development	.686	.000	Significant
Compare and Contrast	.775	.000	Significant
Guided Reading	.777	.000	Significant
Making Inference	.777	.000	Significant
Overall	.836	.000	Significant

The data in Table 7 demonstrates a strong and statistically significant relationship between learners’ comprehension strategies and their historical awareness. Each individual comprehension strategy—summarization ($r = 0.629$), vocabulary development ($r = 0.686$), compare and contrast ($r = 0.775$), guided reading ($r = 0.777$), and making inference ($r = 0.777$)—shows a positive correlation with historical awareness at a p-value of 0.000, indicating that these relationships are highly unlikely to be due to chance. This suggests that learners who actively employ comprehension strategies tend to have higher levels of historical awareness, implying that effective reading and interpretation skills contribute meaningfully to understanding and valuing historical concepts.

The overall correlation coefficient of 0.836 further underscores a very strong positive relationship between comprehension strategies as a whole and historical awareness. This indicates that the collective use of strategies significantly enhances learners’ ability to grasp historical knowledge, appreciate cultural values, and make informed judgments about the past. In practical terms, this finding emphasizes the importance of fostering a variety of

reading comprehension techniques in Social Studies education, as doing so not only improves academic skills but also strengthens learners' awareness of history and their capacity to connect past experiences to present and future contexts.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

The learners demonstrated a high level of proficiency in multiple comprehension strategies, including summarization, vocabulary development, compare and contrast, guided reading, and making inferences.

The learners exhibited a high level of historical awareness, reflecting a strong understanding of historical concepts and contexts.

The learners' historical awareness can be associated with their use of comprehension strategies namely, summarization, vocabulary development, compare and contrast, guided reading, making inference, indicating that effective comprehension skills contribute to greater historical understanding.

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

The Learners may continue to actively practice and refine their comprehension strategies such as summarization, vocabulary development, and making inferences to strengthen their historical awareness further. Teachers are encouraged to integrate targeted exercises that promote these strategies into daily lessons to enhance students' engagement and understanding of historical content.

School administrators and curriculum planners may prioritize the incorporation of explicit instruction on comprehension strategies within the history curriculum. Providing professional development for teachers on advanced strategies like guided reading and compare and contrast techniques will help sustain high levels of historical awareness among learners.

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