

Original Article

An Analysis of Civic Competence Among Senior High School Learners: Towards a Proposed Civic Competence Framework

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Abstract. Civic education is essential in preparing learners to become informed and participatory citizens in a democratic society. However, empirical studies examining the civic competence of senior high school learners in the Philippine context remain limited, particularly in assessing how learners demonstrate civic rights, civic virtues, civic responsibilities, and civic participation. Addressing this gap, this convergent parallel mixed-method study assessed the civic competence of Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) learners in one public integrated school in the City of Meycauayan during the School Year 2025-2026. Findings revealed that HUMSS learners demonstrated a moderate level of civic competence, with civic rights ranking highest and civic virtues lowest. Qualitative results indicated that learners are aware of civic values and responsibilities but exhibit moderate engagement in civic participation and community initiatives. These results affirm the Civic Competence Model of Hoskins (2025), which emphasizes the interaction of civic knowledge, values, and participation in developing active citizenship. Based on the findings, the study recommended strengthening experiential civic learning through service-learning, community engagement, and participatory civic education. The proposed civic competence framework aimed to bridge the gap between civic awareness and civic action among senior high school learners toward active citizenship.

Keywords: *Civic competence; Framework; Senior High School; Learners; Convergent parallel*

In contemporary democratic societies, civic education has become an essential component of preparing individuals to participate meaningfully in public life. Beyond acquiring civic knowledge, citizens are expected to engage in informed deliberation, collaborative problem-solving, and collective action to address societal challenges and promote the common good. In the same manner, the development of civic competence encompassing civic knowledge, civic values, and civic participation has emerged as a key goal of modern education systems (Levine & Kawashima-Ginsberg, 2015; Stokamer & Clayton, 2023). Effective civic education, therefore, requires not only the transmission of democratic principles but also the cultivation of critical thinking, civic responsibility, and active participation in community and political processes.

Published research underscored that civic competence is a multidimensional construct that integrates cognitive,

affective, and behavioral dimensions of citizenship. Learners must develop not only an understanding of civic rights and democratic institutions but also the motivation, efficacy, and collaborative skills necessary to address public concerns and implement civic initiatives (LeCompte et al., 2020). As a result, many educational institutions have strengthened civic education programs to address declining civic participation, political disengagement among youth, and increasing social polarization (Mouritsen & Jaeger, 2018). Schools are therefore increasingly viewed as crucial institutions for fostering democratic values, media literacy, social responsibility, and participatory citizenship. Within the Philippine educational context, the K-12 curriculum recognizes the importance of civic education in preparing learners to become responsible members of society. In particular, the Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) strand is designed to cultivate critical thinking, socio-cultural awareness, communication competence, and civic consciousness among senior high school learners, as these key areas are fundamental to democratic engagement and community leadership (Garcia-Esteban, 2020). Furthermore, it provided students with opportunities to explore civic rights, responsibilities, and participatory roles in society.

Despite these curricular intentions, concerns and challenges remain about the depth and effectiveness of implementing civic education in basic education. Several studies have reported that teachers face difficulties integrating civic education concepts into classroom practice due to limited training, insufficient instructional resources, and inconsistencies in curricular materials (Philippine Institute for Development Studies, 2022). These challenges often result in fragmented or superficial engagement with civic learning competencies, limiting not only the development of learners' civic competence but also their capacity to translate such competencies into meaningful civic engagement.

Moreover, empirical research examining civic competence among senior high school learners in the Philippine context remains limited. Existing studies on civic education often focus on curriculum design or on the acquisition of civic knowledge, with relatively little attention to assessing the multidimensional nature of students' civic competence. More critically, there is a notable gap in examining civic readiness and competence. The extent to which learners are prepared to apply civic knowledge, values, and skills in real-life contexts and actively participate in democratic processes. Magno (2022) emphasized the need for further empirical investigation into how civic education is implemented and how it influences learners' civic competence in basic education, particularly at the senior high school level, where learners are expected to develop civic awareness and engagement before transitioning to higher education or the workforce. However, the dimension of readiness remains underexplored, thereby weakening the connection between civic learning outcomes and actual civic participation.

Another significant gap in the literature concerns the limited use of established theoretical models to assess civic competence in local educational contexts. While international frameworks exist for evaluating civic competence, there is limited research that applies these models to analyze the civic competence of Filipino learners, particularly regarding how these competencies foster civic readiness. One of the most influential frameworks in citizenship education is the Civic Competence Model developed by Hoskins and colleagues (2012) and further elaborated in later work (Hoskins et al., 2012). The model conceptualizes civic competence as a multidimensional construct that integrates civic knowledge, civic attitudes and values, and civic participation, emphasizing that democratic societies rely on citizens who possess both an understanding of civic institutions and the motivation to participate in public life.

The Civic Competence Model emerged from comparative research on citizenship education across European democracies and was operationalized through the Civic Competence Composite Indicator (CCCI). The framework identifies key dimensions that shape civic competence, including participatory attitudes, citizenship values, social justice orientation, and civic knowledge and skills necessary for democratic engagement (Hoskins et al., 2012; Hoskins & Kerr, 2012; Hoskins et al., 2014). These dimensions reflect major traditions of citizenship education, which collectively emphasize the development of informed, responsible, and participatory citizens. Through this framework, civic competence is viewed not merely as a cognitive understanding of civic structures but as an integrated set of dispositions and behaviors that enable individuals to participate effectively in democratic processes. However, while the model robustly explains civic competence, its localized application remains limited, and its potential to explicate civic readiness and competence within the Philippine educational setting has not been sufficiently examined.

Empirical studies grounded in this model highlight the important role of educational environments in fostering

civic competence. These studies show that open classroom climates, civic-related discussions, and school-based civic engagement activities significantly contribute to the development of civic knowledge, political efficacy, and intended civic participation among young people (Hoskins & Janmaat, 2019; Pontes et al., 2019). However, global research also emphasizes that these educational experiences must be complemented by authentic opportunities for civic engagement beyond the classroom, such as community participation, service-learning activities, and youth-led civic initiatives (LeCompte et al., 2020). These developments reflect a broader shift in civic education from merely transmitting civic knowledge toward cultivating action-oriented citizenship. Nevertheless, there remains insufficient localized evidence on how these experiences concretely develop **civic** readiness and competence among Filipino learners, reinforcing the need for a context-specific investigation.

In the Philippine context, studies applying the Civic Competence Model remain limited. However, emerging local research demonstrates the framework's relevance for examining civic competence among Filipino citizens. For instance, Castillo (2024) applied the model in assessing civic competence within a community context and found that civic rights were generally well recognized, while civic virtues, civic responsibilities, and civic participation were only moderately manifested. These findings suggest a gap between civic awareness and actual civic engagement, indicating underlying issues in civic readiness. Guided by the Civic Competence Model, the present study adopts four interrelated dimensions of civic competence—civic rights, civic virtues, civic responsibilities, and civic participation—as key variables in assessing the civic competence of Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) learners. These dimensions represent the cognitive, affective, and behavioral components of civic competence and provide a comprehensive lens for examining how learners understand civic principles, internalize civic values, and demonstrate readiness for civic engagement within their communities.

Addressing the identified gaps in the literature, the present study aimed to assess and dissect the civic competence of Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) learners in a public integrated school in the City of Meycauayan for the School Year 2025–2026. Using a mixed-method approach, the study combined quantitative analysis to determine learners' levels of civic competence with qualitative inquiry to explore their perspectives and experiences related to civic engagement. The investigation is anchored on the Civic Competence Model as the theoretical framework guiding the analysis. The study contributes to the literature in two significant ways. First, it provided empirical evidence on the civic competence of senior high school learners in the Philippine educational context, thereby addressing the limited body of research on civic competence in local basic education settings. Second, the study extends the application of the Civic Competence Model by examining how its dimensions operate within the civic learning experiences of Filipino learners.

Based on the study's integrated findings, a Civic Competence Framework is proposed to strengthen civic competence among HUMSS learners. The framework aims to bridge the gap between civic awareness and civic action by providing structured opportunities for experiential civic learning, including service-learning initiatives, community engagement activities, and participatory civic education strategies. Through these pillars, learners were encouraged to translate civic knowledge and civic values into meaningful civic participation. Furthermore, the study sought to contribute both theoretically and practically to the field of civic education by providing evidence-based insights and programmatic strategies that support the development of informed, responsible, and actively engaged citizens capable of contributing to a democratic society in the 21st century.

Methodology

Research Design

The study utilized a mixed-methods research design, specifically a convergent parallel mixed-methods design. This research design involved collecting, analyzing, and integrating quantitative and qualitative research in a single study or a longitudinal program. This research design provided a better understanding of a research problem or issue than either research approach alone, qualitatively and quantitatively (Creswell & Poth, 2016). In this research design, the researcher collected and analyzed quantitative and qualitative data on the same phenomenon. Both data sets would be triangulated and subjected to in-depth analysis to assess the reality of the understudied variables. After this, the researcher would conduct the integration to assess gaps and the balance of learners' civic competence. The value of mixed methods research may be significantly increased by integrating quantitative and qualitative data (Bryman, 2006; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2023). Integrating the two data types has several benefits. The validity of quantitative findings may be evaluated using qualitative data. Both generating the qualitative sample and justifying its results can be done using quantitative data. Furthermore, the converged and integrated findings from the data will serve as the basis for developing a proposed civic education program.

Participants and Sampling Technique

This study involved senior high school learners enrolled in the Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) strand under the Academic Track, specifically those in Grade 11 and Grade 12 during the School Year 2025–2026. The researcher employed a universal sampling procedure, complemented by voluntary participation, as the sampling technique, considering that the entire population was accessible through a face-to-face (physical contact) modality.

A total of 34 respondents participated in the study. Of these, 28 learners (82.35%) were from Grade Level A, with a return rate of 93.3%, while 6 learners (17.65%) were from Grade Level B, achieving a 100% return rate. Overall, the study attained a high response rate of 96%. Data collection was conducted through a survey questionnaire distributed via Google Forms, which was shared with the target respondents through their respective group chats. Prior to participation, the researcher ensured that informed consent was obtained from all respondents, thereby upholding ethical standards in the study.

Research Instrument

This study used self-developed research instruments, specifically a survey questionnaire and an Interview Protocol Guide (IPG), to assess the civic competence of Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) learners and to explore their perspectives on civic engagement and community participation. Both instruments were grounded in the Civic Competence Model of Hoskins et al. (2012), which served as the theoretical basis for examining the cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions of civic competence. The model conceptualized civic competence as the integration of civic knowledge, civic values, civic responsibilities, and civic participation in democratic life.

For the quantitative phase, the researcher developed a Likert-scale survey questionnaire based on an extensive review of related literature and the domains identified in the Civic Competence Model. The instrument measured learners' level of civic competence across four key dimensions: civic rights, civic virtues, civic responsibilities, and civic participation. These dimensions reflected learners' understanding of democratic principles, commitment to civic values, sense of responsibility toward the community, and participation in civic-related activities. Responses were measured on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Least Competent) to 5 (Highly Competent), enabling the researcher to determine the level of civic competence demonstrated by the respondents. The survey questionnaire also underwent face validation and pilot testing following the proposal defense to assess its clarity, appropriateness, and usability. The Cronbach's alpha of the survey questionnaire was 0.88, indicating reliability and suitability for administration.

For the qualitative phase, the researcher used an Interview Protocol Guide (IPG) comprising open-ended questions to explore learners' experiences, insights, and perceptions regarding civic competence and civic engagement. The semi-structured format encouraged participants to provide detailed descriptions of how they understood civic rights and responsibilities, practiced civic virtues, participated in community initiatives, and perceived their role as responsible citizens within their communities.

Data Analysis Procedure

The quantitative data collected in the study were tabulated and analyzed using JAMOV, an open-source statistical software. Descriptive statistics, particularly the weighted mean and standard deviation, were used to determine the level and variability of civic competence among Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) senior high school learners. The weighted mean described the overall level of civic competence across the four dimensions of the study, while the standard deviation measured the consistency of the participants' responses. These statistical procedures provided a descriptive assessment of learners' civic competence across the domains of civic rights, civic virtues, civic responsibilities, and civic participation.

Following the quantitative phase, the study proceeded to the qualitative strand to further explain and elaborate on the patterns identified in the statistical findings. Semi-structured interview recordings were transcribed verbatim, and the transcripts, together with the researcher's field notes, served as the primary qualitative data sources. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis following the framework proposed by Braun & Clarke (2019). To ensure the rigor and credibility of the qualitative analysis, strategies such as peer debriefing and triangulation were employed. A researcher with expertise in qualitative research reviewed the coding procedures and thematic interpretations to confirm that the findings accurately represented the participants' perspectives.

The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings occurred during the study's interpretation phase. Using the joint display approach proposed by Creswell & Plano-Clark (2023), quantitative results were presented alongside qualitative themes and excerpts from participants. This process enabled the researcher to connect statistical patterns with learners' lived experiences and perspectives on civic engagement. Joint display matrices were constructed to align quantitative findings with the qualitative themes, facilitating a systematic comparison and interpretation of both data strands. The integrated analysis generated meta-inferences that provided a comprehensive understanding of learners' civic competence and the factors influencing their civic awareness, values, responsibilities, and participation. These insights served as the basis for developing a Civic Competence Framework to strengthen civic engagement and participatory citizenship among senior high school learners.

Ethical Considerations

This study strictly adhered to established ethical standards in the conduct of educational research involving human participants. Prior to data collection, informed consent was secured from all respondents, ensuring that participation was voluntary and based on a clear understanding of the study's purpose, procedures, and potential implications. Respondents were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any point without penalty. In addition, confidentiality and anonymity were upheld by ensuring that no personally identifiable information was disclosed at any point in the research. All data gathered was treated with strict confidentiality and was used solely for academic and research purposes.

The researcher ensured that the study posed no harm, physical, psychological, or social, to the respondents. The questions included in both the survey questionnaire and interview protocol were carefully designed to avoid sensitive or intrusive content. Data were securely stored and protected in password-protected digital files, and access was limited to the researcher. Ethical principles such as respect for persons, beneficence, and justice guided the entire research process. In addition, the study acknowledged the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools such as Grammarly and ChatGPT to support certain aspects of the research process, particularly language refinement, organization of ideas, and editing of written outputs. The use of AI was strictly limited to assistive functions and did not replace the researcher's intellectual responsibility in data collection, analysis, interpretation, and conclusion-making. All findings, interpretations, and scholarly insights remain the original work of the researcher. The integration of AI was conducted transparently, ensuring that it did not compromise academic integrity, authenticity, and rigor of the study.

Results and Discussion

Quantitative Phase

The quantitative phase presents the quantitative findings on the level of civic competence among Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) learners. Descriptive statistics, specifically the weighted mean and standard deviation, were used to determine the learners' level of civic competence across four dimensions: civic rights, civic responsibilities, civic participation, and civic virtues. The results provide an overview of how learners understand, internalize, and demonstrate civic-related knowledge, values, and behaviors within their social and community contexts.

Table 1. *Weighted Mean and Standard Deviation of Civic Competence of Humanities and Social Sciences Learners*

Civic Competence	Mean	SD	Rank	Interpretation
Civic Rights	3.34	0.87	1 st	Moderately Competent
Civic Responsibilities	3.13	0.79	2 nd	Moderately Competent
Civic Participation	2.95	0.84	3 rd	Moderately Competent
Civic Virtues	2.86	0.87	4 th	Moderately Competent
Average	3.07	0.84		Moderately Competent

As can be gleaned from the data analysis in Table 1, the overall civic competence of HUMSS learners is described as moderately competent, as evidenced by an overall mean of 3.07 and a standard deviation of 0.84. This indicates that learners demonstrate a moderate level of understanding and practice of civic-related values, responsibilities, and participation within their communities.

Among the four dimensions of civic competence, civic rights ranked first, with a mean score of 3.34 and a standard deviation of 0.87, indicating that learners have relatively stronger awareness and appreciation of social justice, equality, and respect for others' rights. This is followed by civic responsibilities, which ranked second with a mean of 3.13 and a standard deviation of 0.79, suggesting that learners moderately practice responsible behaviors such

as verifying information, following rules, and demonstrating integrity. Meanwhile, civic participation ranked third with a mean of 2.95 and a standard deviation of 0.84, implying that learners participate in community-related activities and discussions to a moderate extent. Lastly, civic virtues ranked fourth with a mean of 2.86 and a standard deviation of 0.87, indicating that while learners recognize the importance of compassion, responsibility, and concern for others, these values may not always translate into consistent civic actions or community engagement.

The standard deviations, ranging from 0.79 to 0.87, indicate moderate variability in learners' responses, suggesting that although most learners share similar perceptions of civic competence, slight differences exist in their experiences and levels of engagement in civic-related activities. Overall, the findings suggest that HUMSS learners possess a moderate level of civic competence, with stronger awareness of civic rights but relatively lower engagement in civic virtues and participation. This finding supports the idea that civic competence develops progressively through education, social interaction, and opportunities for civic engagement.

Studies emphasize that civic education plays a crucial role in developing students' democratic values, civic knowledge, and participatory skills, which enable them to become responsible and active members of society (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2023; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2021). Furthermore, research highlights that students' civic engagement and sense of responsibility are strengthened when schools integrate participatory learning experiences, community involvement, and democratic practices within the curriculum (Zaff et al., 2020).

Qualitative Phase

The qualitative phase of the study focuses on identifying the emergent themes related to the civic competence of Humanities and Social Sciences learners. In this phase, the researcher analyzes participants' narratives and responses to gain deeper insights into their experiences, perceptions, and practices regarding civic engagement and responsibility. The data are examined using the thematic analysis approach of Braun & Clarke (2019), which involves systematically coding the data, identifying patterns of meaning, and organizing them into significant themes. This process enables the researcher to capture rich qualitative evidence that explains and complements the study's quantitative findings.

Social Justice Awareness and Respect for Civic Rights

This theme reflects the learners' awareness of social justice, equality, and respect for others' rights within the community. Participants described civic competence as recognizing the dignity of every individual and supporting actions that promote fairness, inclusion, and the welfare of society. Their narratives highlight that understanding civic rights is closely linked with empathy, mutual respect, and responsible participation in community affairs.

Participant P09 shared: *"For me, genuine and meaningful participation in the community means actively being part of the activities, issues, and goals of our community – not merely as an observer, but as a participant who genuinely cares."*

Similarly, P17 explained: *"Being actively involved in activities that help others and contribute to the community in a responsible way and with genuine concern for others."*

In the same manner, P06 noted: *"Participation is not only about being present or taking part in activities; it also involves fulfilling responsibilities. It is not merely about money, but about the change that we want to achieve."*

Learners' narratives illustrate that civic rights are closely associated with participation grounded in fairness, empathy, and the pursuit of community improvement. They conceptualize civic rights not only as legal entitlements but also as shared social responsibilities that promote justice and collective welfare. This perspective is evident in their emphasis on meaningful participation in addressing community concerns, which demonstrates an awareness that civic rights operate within a framework of mutual respect and accountability. Songcayawon (2018) supports this view, noting that learners regard civic rights as both entitlements and communal obligations, fostering empathy and active community involvement. Such insights resonate with civic education scholarship, which highlights that civic competence entails not only understanding democratic principles such as equality, human dignity, and participatory rights, but also practicing them within social contexts (Levine & Kawashima-Ginsberg, 2019).

Learners' reflections further reveal that civic rights are perceived as both individual freedoms and communal duties, encouraging active engagement in initiatives that advance social justice and community well-being. This theme underscores their foundational grasp of fairness, empathy, and respect for others within their communities. Hylton (2018) reinforces this observation, reporting that respondents exhibited moderate to high awareness of human rights, particularly civil rights, and that awareness was positively correlated with experiences of responsible participation. Similarly, studies of university students suggest that civic literacy and social empathy are strong predictors of higher levels of civic engagement.

Taken together, these narratives demonstrate that learners interpret civic rights not merely as personal freedoms but as responsibilities requiring meaningful participation and concern for the common good. This awareness provides a crucial basis for cultivating deeper civic engagement and responsible citizenship among Humanities and Social Sciences learners. By linking civic rights to both individual entitlements and collective obligations, their perspectives highlight the transformative potential of civic education in shaping socially responsible and empathetic citizens.

Commitment to Civic Virtues and the Common Good

This theme reflects the learners' commitment to civic virtues such as kindness, humility, responsibility, and concern for others' welfare. Participants described civic competence as the ability to prioritize the common good, demonstrate compassion toward others, and contribute to community improvement. Their narratives reveal that civic virtues are expressed through ethical decision-making, empathy, and actions that promote collective well-being.

Participant P11 shared: *"As a member of the community, I have a responsibility to act not only for myself but for the welfare of the greater community."*

Similarly, P14 noted: *"I believe that simple acts of helping others and being a good person in everyday life are important contributions to the development of the community."*

In the same way, P18 expressed: *"Being a good citizen means showing respect, kindness, and concern for others in order to maintain unity within the community."*

Learners' narratives illustrate that civic virtue is closely associated with moral responsibility, empathy, and actions that benefit the wider community. They view civic virtues as essential qualities that guide responsible behavior and foster harmonious relationships within society. Participants emphasized compassion, cooperation, and ethical decision-making as expressions of responsible citizenship. Willems et al. (2012) support this perspective, explaining that civic virtues guide responsible citizenship by prioritizing collective welfare, compassion, and moral decision-making for social harmony. Research further highlights virtues such as tolerance, empathy, and humility, cultivated through education, aligning with learners' reflections on their everyday contributions to unity.

These insights indicate that civic competence involves not only understanding civic duties but also embodying values that encourage social solidarity and mutual respect. The findings of this study demonstrate that learners possess a developing commitment to civic virtues, reflected in their recognition of compassion, respect, and responsibility toward others. However, the moderate levels observed in the quantitative results suggest that while these values are acknowledged, learners may still require more opportunities to practice civic virtues through community engagement, service-learning activities, and collaborative initiatives. This theme, therefore, underscores the importance of moral responsibility, empathy, and ethical behavior in sustaining community well-being.

Supporting this, Pacatan et al. (2025) identified empathy and social accountability as civic dispositions fostered through community projects and reflective practices, promoting responsible participation. Similarly, the 2025 *Making of Civic Virtues* experiment across three countries demonstrated that school interventions can cultivate virtues such as responsibility for the common good. Complementary findings from a 2024 study revealed that civic education strategies strengthen students' responsible character through targeted learning approaches. Marcia and Petogo (2025) also emphasized that good citizenship embodies virtues such as concern for others,

which are cultivated through ethical development. Moreover, Philippine research in 2025 showed that teachers hold high perceptions of civic responsibility, which inform training for virtuous instruction, though these perceptions are not always directly tied to performance outcomes. Collectively, these studies advocate service-learning and collaborative initiatives as effective means of elevating moderate levels of virtue into sustained civic practice.

Taken together, the learners' narratives and supporting scholarship demonstrate that civic virtues are understood not merely as abstract ideals but as guiding principles for responsible citizenship. By linking moral responsibility, empathy, and ethical conduct to everyday participation, these perspectives highlight the transformative role of civic education in shaping socially responsible citizens who contribute to cooperation, respect, and social harmony within their communities.

Sense of Civic Responsibility and Accountability

This theme reflects the learners' understanding of civic responsibility and accountability as essential components of responsible citizenship. Participants described civic competence as the ability to act ethically, follow rules, and take responsibility for one's actions within the community. Their narratives emphasize that civic responsibility involves not only awareness of societal issues but also personal commitment to upholding rules, demonstrating integrity, and contributing to the welfare of others.

Participant P05 shared: *"For me, following the rules of the community is important because it helps maintain order and ensures the welfare of everyone."*

Similarly, P12 explained: *"As a citizen, I must be responsible for my actions because what I do can affect other people in the community."*

In the same way, P16 noted: *"Being responsible means doing what is right even when no one is watching and accepting one's mistakes when necessary."*

Learners' responses highlight that civic responsibility is strongly associated with ethical conduct, accountability, and adherence to community rules and expectations. Their narratives suggest that civic responsibility is perceived as a moral obligation that guides behavior within society. Timreck et al. (2025) affirm this view, noting that civic responsibility entails ethical conduct, accountability for actions, and upholding rules to maintain social order and collective well-being. Learners' reflections align with this perspective, emphasizing integrity, rule adherence, and acknowledgment of the consequences of one's actions. Such insights demonstrate that learners recognize their role as accountable members of the community whose behavior directly influences social harmony and collective welfare.

In the present study, moderate quantitative ratings on civic responsibility indicators suggest that learners already possess a developing sense of accountability and integrity. Pogrebinschi and Ross (2025) further emphasize the role of civic education in fostering responsibility, highlighting youth engagement in ethical participation and economic roles that reinforce accountability. Research defines civic responsibility as informed, committed action for the common good, stressing integrity even when unobserved. Civic-mindedness frameworks similarly describe it as recognizing community needs, acting with agency, and fostering social responsibility through empathy. These perspectives align with the learners' recognition of civic responsibility as both personal and collective, underscoring its role in sustaining social order.

However, the findings also imply that these values require further reinforcement through educational initiatives that promote ethical reasoning, community awareness, and responsible civic engagement. By providing opportunities for learners to practice responsible decision-making and participate in community initiatives, educational institutions can strengthen the translation of civic responsibility into consistent civic behavior. This theme, therefore, highlights the learners' recognition of integrity, accountability, and ethical conduct as essential to sustaining community welfare. As the OECD (2025) notes, civic responsibility is perceived as both a personal and collective obligation, reinforcing accountability as a cornerstone of responsible and participatory citizenship. Hence, the learners' narratives and supporting scholarship demonstrate that civic responsibility is not merely about compliance with rules but about cultivating ethical dispositions that sustain social harmony. By linking accountability and integrity to everyday participation, these perspectives highlight the transformative role of civic

education in shaping citizens who act responsibly for the common good.

Active Civic Participation in Community Development

This theme highlights the learners' perspectives on active civic participation as a means of contributing to community development and social improvement. Participants described civic competence as engaging in activities, discussions, and initiatives that address community needs and promote collective progress. Their narratives reveal that participation may occur through volunteer work, community programs, and communication platforms that promote social awareness and community action.

Participant P08 shared: *"I participate in community clean-up drives and barangay projects because I believe it is important to help maintain the cleanliness and order of our community."*

Similarly, P13 explained: *"I participate in community activities such as tree-planting and outreach programs because I want to help others and care for the environment."*

In the same way, P19 noted: *"I use social media to share information about social issues in order to encourage others to participate in activities that support the community."*

Learners' responses indicate that civic participation is understood as active engagement in community initiatives, environmental programs, and advocacy activities that promote collective well-being. Their narratives suggest that civic participation is viewed as an important avenue for advancing community development and improvement. Pacatan et al. (2025) affirm this perspective, noting that active civic participation involves hands-on contributions such as clean-ups, tree-planting, and social media advocacy to address community needs and foster progress. Research further defines civic participation as both individual and collective actions for public improvement, extending beyond awareness to practical involvement, with moderate participation often hinging on opportunities and institutional support. Participants emphasized the significance of engaging in community programs, volunteering in social initiatives, and using communication platforms to raise awareness about societal issues. These actions demonstrate learners' recognition that civic competence extends beyond awareness and requires active involvement in addressing community concerns. In relation to the present study, the moderate level of civic participation among learners suggests that while they acknowledge the importance of community involvement, their engagement may still depend on the availability of opportunities and institutional encouragement.

Schools, therefore, play a critical role in fostering civic participation by integrating service-learning programs, community outreach activities, and participatory civic education into the learning process. Bower et al. (2015) highlight the importance of youth-led organizing and service-learning initiatives that pair knowledge with collaborative issue-solving, supporting volunteerism and activism. Research on school-civic engagement trajectories further reveals that high academic involvement correlates with active community roles, suggesting that educational institutions can help learners translate civic awareness into meaningful contributions to community development. Moreover, learners' narratives underscore that civic engagement is perceived as an important means of addressing community issues and promoting social progress. Participation through volunteerism, community programs, and digital advocacy strengthens civic competence and encourages learners to become active contributors to community development. Perez-Duran (2024) emphasizes that community projects, debates, and digital tools can effectively translate civic awareness into tangible contributions for development and progress.

In sum, these findings highlight that civic participation is not merely about recognizing community needs but about actively engaging in initiatives that foster social progress. By linking awareness to action, learners demonstrate a growing commitment to civic competence. At the same time, schools and institutions provide the necessary structures to elevate moderate levels of participation into sustained civic engagement.

Data Integration Using Creswell (2013) Joint Display Method

The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings in this study is conducted using the joint display method proposed by Creswell & Plan-Clark (2023). This approach allows the researcher to systematically compare statistical results with qualitative themes to produce a deeper, more comprehensive interpretation of the phenomenon under investigation. In this study, the integration process enabled the researcher to examine how

the quantitative levels of civic competence among Humanities and Social Sciences learners correspond with their lived experiences and perspectives as expressed in the qualitative narratives. The integrated analysis provides a clearer understanding of the strengths and gaps in the development of civic competence across its four dimensions: civic rights, civic virtues, civic responsibilities, and civic participation.

Table 7. Joint Display Matrix and Meta-Inferences of Civic Competence

Civic Competence Dimensions	Quantitative Results (Mean & Interpretation)	Qualitative Theme	Supporting Participant Narratives	Integrated Meta-Inference
Civic Rights	M = 3.34, SD = 0.87 (Moderately Competent) – Highest ranked dimension	Social Justice Awareness and Respect for Civic Rights	“Being actively involved in activities that help others and serve the community in a responsible manner and with genuine concern for others.” (P17)	Social Justice Consciousness and Democratic Awareness
Civic Virtues	M = 2.86, SD = 0.87 (Moderately Competent) – Lowest ranked dimension; participation in extension activities rated least competent	Commitment to Civic Virtues and the Common Good	“I have a responsibility to act not only for myself but also for the welfare of the greater community.” (P11)	Empathy-Driven Commitment to the Common Good
Civic Responsibilities	M = 3.13, SD = 0.79 (Moderately Competent)	Sense of Civic Responsibility and Accountability	“I need to be responsible for my actions because they may affect other people.” (P12)	Ethical Accountability and Responsible Citizenship
Civic Participation	M = 2.95, SD = 0.84 (Moderately Competent)	Active Civic Participation in Community Development	“I participate in clean-up drives and tree-planting activities in our barangay.” (P08)	Active Engagement in Community Development

Meta-Inference 1: *Social Justice Consciousness and Democratic Awareness.* This theme reflects learners’ understanding of social justice, equality, and respect for democratic principles, emphasizing their recognition of individuals’ rights and dignity in a democratic society.

Meta-Inference 2: *Empathy-Driven Commitment to the Common Good.* This theme highlights learners’ internalization of moral values such as empathy, kindness, and compassion, which guide their commitment to promoting collective welfare and harmonious community relationships.

Meta-Inference 3: *Ethical Accountability and Responsible Citizenship.* This theme captures learners’ sense of duty to act with integrity, follow societal norms, and demonstrate accountability in their actions as responsible members of the community.

Meta-Inference 4: *Active Engagement in Community Development.* This theme reflects learners’ willingness to participate in civic activities, community initiatives, and collaborative efforts that contribute to societal improvement and democratic participation.

The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings indicates that HUMSS learners possess moderate civic competence, characterized by strong civic awareness but relatively low civic engagement. The qualitative narratives confirm that learners understand the importance of social justice, moral responsibility, accountability, and community participation, which correspond to the attitudinal and knowledge components of civic competence. However, the quantitative results reveal that these civic values are not always consistently translated into active civic participation.

This integrated interpretation aligns well with the Civic Competence Model of Hoskins et al. (2012), which emphasizes that civic competence develops through the interaction among civic knowledge, civic attitudes, and civic participation. The findings therefore suggest that while learners possess foundational civic values, structured experiential learning opportunities such as service-learning, community outreach programs, and participatory civic education are necessary to transform civic awareness into sustained civic action.

Proposed Civic Competence Framework for Senior High School Learners



Figure 1. Civic Competence Framework for Humanities and Social Sciences Learners (Hero, 2026)

The proposed Civic Competence Framework for HUMSS Learners illustrates the developmental pathway through which learners progress from civic awareness to civic action to active citizenship. Grounded in the study's integrated findings, the framework presents civic competence as a dynamic process in which civic rights, values, responsibilities, and participation interact within authentic civic learning experiences. At the center of the framework lies *Civic Competence Development*, the study's primary objective. This core highlights that civic competence goes beyond understanding democratic principles. The framework involves applying these principles through responsible behaviors and meaningful participation in community life.

At the core are the four interrelated pillars of civic competence: civic rights, civic virtues, civic responsibilities, and civic participation, based on the key dimensions of the Civic Competence Model of Hoskins et al. (2012). Each pillar reflects a key dimension of learners' civic development. Civic rights emphasize *social justice consciousness and democratic awareness*, highlighting learners' understanding of equality, fairness, and respect for others' rights. Civic virtues represent *empathy-driven commitment to the common good*, reflecting moral dispositions that guide learners toward collective welfare. Civic responsibilities underscore *ethical accountability and responsible citizenship*, emphasizing integrity, adherence to community norms, and recognition of one's role within society. Lastly, civic participation highlights *active engagement in community development*, demonstrating how learners translate civic awareness and values into concrete civic actions. These pillars operate in a continuous, interconnected cycle, suggesting that civic awareness nurtures civic values, which in turn guide responsible behavior and encourage active civic engagement.

The outer ring of the framework represents the broader civic developmental trajectory, moving from civic awareness to civic action, culminating in active citizenship. This progression reflects the study's integrated findings, which reveal that learners possess emerging civic knowledge and values but require greater opportunities for participation to fully manifest civic competence. Thus, civic competence is strengthened when learners are provided with authentic contexts where they can practice democratic engagement and community involvement. Furthermore, the framework demonstrates that civic competence develops through the integration of democratic awareness, moral commitment, responsible conduct, and participatory engagement. By aligning educational practices with these interconnected dimensions, schools can effectively cultivate learners who are not only aware of their civic roles but also capable of actively contributing to community development and a democratic society.

Implications of the Study

Based on the study's findings, several important implications for civic education, curriculum development, and educational practice may be drawn. These implications highlight how the results can inform educational policies and teaching strategies to strengthen civic competence among learners in the Humanities and Social Sciences. The findings suggest that while learners possess foundational civic awareness, they require stronger opportunities to translate civic knowledge into civic action. The moderate levels of civic competence across civic rights, civic virtues, civic responsibilities, and civic participation indicate that although learners understand democratic values such as fairness, empathy, and accountability, these values are not consistently practiced through community engagement. This underscores the need for civic education to emphasize experiential learning opportunities that situate learners in authentic contexts, as civic knowledge alone is insufficient without active participation and real-life application (Zaff et al., 2020). Experiential civic learning has been shown to significantly enhance civic engagement and political efficacy (Torney-Purta et al., 2015), making it essential for cultivating civic readiness.

The results also imply that civic virtues require stronger reinforcement through structured community engagement programs. The relatively lower ratings in civic virtues, particularly in participation in community extension activities, reveal a gap between learners' moral values and their actual civic behavior. Educational institutions may therefore need to integrate service-learning, volunteer programs, and community-based activities into the curriculum to strengthen the practical application of civic values. Service-learning has been found to significantly improve students' sense of social responsibility and civic commitment (Stokamer & Clayton, 2023), while civic engagement opportunities embedded within educational experiences enhance participatory attitudes and long-term involvement (LeCompte et al., 2020). Thus, integrating service-learning and community-based programs into the curriculum is essential for bridging this gap. The findings suggest that schools play a crucial role in fostering civic responsibility and participatory citizenship. Since learners demonstrated moderate competence in civic responsibilities and participation, educators should provide learning environments that encourage critical thinking, democratic dialogue, and collaborative problem-solving. Through these experiences, learners can develop the skills necessary to participate meaningfully in community affairs and civic initiatives. Civic learning in contemporary contexts highlights the importance of preparing learners for active participation in democratic processes through meaningful engagement in social issues (Halverson, 2025), underscoring the need for schools to intentionally cultivate participatory learning environments.

The study also indicates that civic competence develops progressively through sustained civic engagement and participatory learning experiences. Learners' civic competence is influenced by opportunities to participate in community activities, civic discussions, and social initiatives. Schools should therefore establish partnerships with local communities and civic organizations to create authentic civic learning experiences that strengthen students' civic engagement. Civic development is enhanced when learners have ongoing opportunities to engage with their communities and participate in real-world civic activities (Zaff et al., 2020). Research further shows that authentic civic participation and community involvement play a significant role in developing active and responsible citizens (Westheimer & Kahne, 2015).

Finally, the findings imply that civic education programs should adopt an integrated approach that combines civic knowledge, civic values, and civic participation. This approach aligns with the Civic Competence Model, which emphasizes that civic competence develops when learners understand democratic principles, internalize civic values, and actively participate in civic activities. Strengthening these interconnected dimensions can help cultivate socially responsible, participatory citizens who contribute to community development and a democratic society. Effective civic learning occurs when cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions are developed simultaneously (Hoskins & Janmaat, 2019), and holistic civic education frameworks are more effective in cultivating socially responsible and engaged citizens (Stokamer & Clayton, 2023). Moreover, the study underscores the need for enhanced civic education initiatives that bridge the gap between civic awareness and civic action, ensuring that learners not only understand civic principles but also actively practice them in their communities. Civic readiness requires not only knowledge and values but also the ability to critically engage, participate, and act within democratic contexts (Kahne & Bowyer, 2017). Contemporary civic education must also respond to evolving societal challenges, including misinformation and digital participation, which influence learners' civic engagement (Halverson, 2025). Developing contextualized civic education frameworks is therefore essential to ensure that learners become active, responsible, and civic-ready citizens.

Conclusions

The study affirms the applicability of Hoskins et al.'s (2025) Civic Competence Model for analyzing the civic competence of senior high school learners in the Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) strand, framing civic competence as the integration of knowledge, values, and participation. Findings show that while learners demonstrate awareness of civic rights, responsibilities, and values such as empathy and social responsibility, their overall competence remains moderate, civic rights ranking highest and civic virtues lowest, revealing a gap between internalized values and consistent enactment through participation. This suggests that although cognitive and affective components are present, the behavioral dimension requires strengthening, supporting the view that competence develops through the interaction of knowledge, values, and participatory experiences. Qualitative insights further reveal that learners associate civic competence with social justice, responsibility, and community engagement, though their participation tends to be occasional rather than sustained. To address this, the proposed Civic Competence Framework promotes active citizenship through integrated, experiential approaches such as service-learning and community engagement, thereby reinforcing the behavioral dimension and cultivating socially responsible citizens.

Based on these findings, several recommendations are offered. Schools should integrate civic awareness and action into curricula through service-learning, outreach, environmental initiatives, and issue-based discussions, providing meaningful opportunities for learners to apply knowledge and values in real contexts. Institutional support may be strengthened by partnerships with local government units, civic organizations, and community groups, while student organizations can be encouraged to lead civic initiatives to enhance leadership and participatory citizenship. Professional development for teachers, including workshops and Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions, can equip educators with strategies to embed civic education in classroom practice. From a programmatic perspective, institutions may adopt civic competence indicators as assessment frameworks and integrate related concepts, such as digital citizenship, global citizenship, and political literacy, through interdisciplinary and student-led initiatives. Opportunities for democratic participation within schools—such as leadership roles, governance, and collaborative decision-making—can further reinforce civic learning.

For future research, scholars may broaden the scope by including learners from different strands, schools, and geographic contexts to provide a more comprehensive understanding of civic competence. Longitudinal studies could examine how competence develops over time and how civic education programs influence awareness, values, and participation. Mixed-method and qualitative approaches may also yield deeper insights into learners' civic experiences, engagement, and perspectives on participation.

Contributions of Authors

Jesson L. Hero: conceptualization of the study, development of the research framework, data gathering, quantitative and qualitative data analysis, interpretation of findings, and manuscript preparation.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this study.

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