


Development of Social Studies Curriculum Integrating Local and Global Contexts for Character Strengthening

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Abstract

This research aims to develop a social studies curriculum that is integrated with local and global contexts to strengthen the character of the nation in elementary school students. The development was carried out in response to the need for a curriculum that is able to bridge the gap between local wisdom values and global issues within the framework of the Independent Curriculum and the Pancasila Student Profile. This study uses the Research and Development (R&D) method with the Borg & Gall model approach which is modified into six main stages: preliminary study, curriculum design, expert validation, revision, limited trial, and final revision. Product validity was tested by five experts, practicality was assessed by teachers and students, and effectiveness was measured through a pre-test and post-test design of one group on 41 students. The results showed that the curriculum developed was very valid (88.6%), practical (positive response of 92% of teachers and 88% of students), and statistically effective ($t = 10.42$; $p < 0.05$) in improving students' social behavior. These findings suggest that a local-global integrated social studies curriculum can be an innovative approach to character-based contextual learning.

Keywords

character strengthening; curriculum; social studies

INTRODUCTION

Social Sciences (IPS) is a subject that fundamentally plays a role in shaping students' personalities so that they have social insight, civic awareness, and responsibility as part of society (Umar & Haryanto, 2023). Social studies not only aims to convey knowledge about social, economic, political, and cultural life, but also instill life values that reflect the nation's identity (Zummi et al., 2020). In the context of basic education, social studies has

a strategic role in facilitating students to understand the dynamics of community life and develop critical thinking skills, social empathy, and concern for the social environment (Kim et al., 2021; Takumi et al., 2021). Therefore, social studies learning is not only a vehicle for mastering concepts, but also as a medium for education on values and characters that are relevant to the needs of the 21st century.

Social studies learning in elementary school is the initial foundation in shaping students' social mindsets. Students begin to be introduced to the immediate social environment, applicable norms, cultural diversity, and the mutual relationship between individuals and society (Umar & Haryanto, 2023). However, social studies learning in elementary schools still faces various challenges in its implementation. Teachers often use conventional learning approaches and are oriented towards memorizing facts, thus hindering the development of students' critical thinking skills and reflective abilities towards social realities (Wulandari & Nawangsari, 2024). The teaching materials presented tend to be textual and less connected to the real lives of students, both in local and global contexts (Jumriani et al., 2021). This creates a distance between the student's world and the material being studied, which ultimately has an impact on the lack of internalization of values in the learning process.

This condition is inseparable from the characteristics of the national curriculum which is still experiencing tension between the interests of national standards and local contextual needs (Syamsiar et al., 2023). Although the 2013 Curriculum has adopted a thematic and integrative approach, as well as encouraged character building, its implementation in the field is still limited to administrative and instructional aspects. The Merdeka Curriculum recently introduced by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology offers a more flexible, differentiation, and student-based approach (Syamsiar et al., 2023; Wulandari & Nawangsari, 2024). With an emphasis on the Pancasila Student Profile, the Independent Curriculum seeks to integrate the dimension of the nation's noble values with global life skills (Natalia et al., 2021). However, there are not many models or curriculum tools specifically designed to support social studies learning that links local contexts to global issues within the framework of character education.

In the face of increasingly complex and global social realities, it is important to develop a social studies education curriculum that is integrated between local and global

contexts within the framework of character education in primary schools (Muzakkir et al., 2024). The context of cultural wisdom values, community history, and local social practices is a social capital that can be a meaningful source of learning (Jumriani et al., 2021). Meanwhile, global issues such as environmental sustainability, peace, and social justice are an important part of shaping students' sensitivity to the wider world (Lee & Harris, 2020). The integration of these two contexts in the social studies curriculum has the potential to create a more holistic, meaningful, and transformative learning experience. This approach is believed to be able to strengthen students' national identities without closing themselves off from the ever-evolving global reality.

Several previous studies have examined the integration of local values in social studies learning as well as the importance of global education at the primary level. For example, a study by Natalia et al (2021) emphasizes the need to strengthen local values in social studies learning as a bastion of cultural identity, while Shahjahan et al (2022) highlight the importance of global education to foster cross-cultural awareness. However, these studies are still partial and have not led to the development of a curriculum model that systematically combines the two approaches in a single unit. There has not been much research that focuses on the development of social studies curriculum based on local-global integration that has been empirically tested in the context of Indonesian elementary schools. This shows that there is a research gap that needs to be filled through a more systematic and applicable approach.

This research aims to develop an integrated social studies education curriculum in local and global contexts to strengthen the nation's character in elementary school students. The curriculum model developed is expected to be able to provide an alternative social studies learning design that is more adaptive to student needs, as well as support the achievement of the Pancasila Student Profile dimension. In the context of globalization and the demands of 21st-century education, an integrative approach between local and global contexts is becoming increasingly relevant to be developed. Therefore, the results of this study are expected to be able to enrich alternative curriculum models that are more responsive to social dynamics and the nation's character values, as well as encourage transformative social studies learning practices since elementary education.

METHOD

Types and Approaches to Research

This research uses a research and development (R&D) approach that aims to produce a curriculum product in the form of a social studies learning model in elementary schools that is integrated with local and global contexts to strengthen the character of the nation. The development model used refers to the Borg & Gall development model which has been modified according to the context of basic education in Indonesia and the limitations of research time. This research is applicable and solutive, because it not only explains the phenomenon, but also produces a prototype curriculum that is ready to be used by social studies teachers in elementary schools. The R&D approach was chosen because it bridges the need between theory and educational practice, by involving a design process, expert validation, field trials, and continuous revision. This method is in accordance with the research objectives to produce a relevant, valid, and applicable curriculum design, as well as allow testing of the effectiveness of the product in a real context.

Research Subject and Location

This research was carried out in two public elementary schools in the Magetan Regency area, which were selected purposively based on considerations of representativeness and affordability. The main criteria in choosing a location is a school that has implemented the Independent Curriculum on a limited basis and has teachers who actively teach social studies subjects at the grade IV level. This location was chosen to ensure that the context of the implementation of the developing curriculum can be authentically captured in the curriculum model development process.

The research subjects consist of three main categories, namely experts, teachers, and students. First, expert informants include lecturers and practitioners who have competence in the fields of basic education curriculum, social studies education, and character education. These experts are involved in the validation stage of the content and curriculum structure developed. Second, elementary social studies teachers are key subjects because they are direct users of the curriculum in the field. Teachers are involved from the stage of identifying needs, designing, to product testing. Third, elementary school students in grade IV are direct recipients of the tested curriculum model. The involvement of students is intended to observe the effectiveness of learning in the aspect of understanding the material

and internalizing character values. Subjects were purposively selected to ensure suitability with the research objectives and the effectiveness of a limited trial designed within the scope of curriculum development based on local and global contexts.

Research Procedures

This research follows research and development (R&D) procedures by referring to the Borg & Gall model which has been modified to be more contextual and applicable in the context of primary education. The curriculum development process is carried out through six main stages, starting from preliminary studies to final product revisions.

Table 1. R&D Stages

Stages	Activity Description
Preliminary Studies	Analyze existing curriculum, interview teachers, review policy documents, and identify curriculum gaps.
Curriculum Model Design	Preparation of curriculum structure, thematic content, integration of local-global values, and formulation of character-based learning outcomes.
Expert Validation	Products are consulted with curriculum experts and social studies experts through validation sheets and FGDs.
Initial Product Revision	Product improvement based on expert input.
Limited Trial	Implementation of the curriculum in two social studies classes, observation of the learning process, and collection of teacher and student perception data.
Final Revision	Finalize the curriculum based on the results of the trial and reflection on implementation.

The first stage is a preliminary study, which aims to identify the needs and problems that exist in the current social studies curriculum. This activity includes the analysis of national curriculum documents, interviews with teachers, and a review of character education policies and the integration of local and global values in learning. The second stage is the design of curriculum products, which includes the preparation of curriculum structure, the formulation of learning outcomes, the selection of thematic content, the integration of local and global values, and character-based learning strategies. The result of this stage is in the form of an initial draft of the integrated elementary school social studies curriculum. The third stage is expert validation, where the curriculum draft is evaluated by curriculum experts, social studies education experts, and character education experts through content validation techniques and focused group discussion forums (FGDs). Input from experts then becomes the basis for the fourth stage, namely the revision of the initial product, which improves the structure, content, and feasibility of the

curriculum. Furthermore, in the fifth stage, a limited trial of curriculum products was carried out in two classes involving teachers and students. This trial aims to assess the applicability, understanding of students, and the effectiveness of integrating local and global values in the learning process. This process is systematically observed and documented by researchers. The last stage is the final revision, which is the improvement of the curriculum model based on the results of implementation reflection and feedback from users. The final result is a curriculum product that has been validated and ready to be recommended for widespread use in elementary schools.

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection in this study was carried out through four main techniques that were adjusted to the needs at each stage of development. Documentation study, which includes a review of the Independent Curriculum document, teaching tools used by teachers, as well as policy documents on character education and Pancasila Student Profiles. This technique aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the current curriculum structure and the space for integrating local values and global issues in them. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with social studies teachers, principals, and education experts. This interview is designed to explore teachers' perceptions, challenges, and needs towards the development of a more contextual and characterful social studies curriculum. This technique allows researchers to obtain rich and contextual data as curriculum design materials.

In the implementation stage of the trial, participatory observation is used to observe the learning process, student involvement, and how local and global values are internalized through classroom activities. These observations are complemented by systematic field records to document learning practices in a naturalistic manner. Validation and perception questionnaires were compiled in the form of a Likert scale to obtain quantitative data on the level of curriculum feasibility from the perspective of experts, teachers, and students. This instrument consists of several indicators, such as clarity of structure, relevance of content, meaningful learning, and potential for character strengthening (Conoyer et al., 2022). Data from the questionnaire is used as a basis for empirically determining the feasibility of the product.

Table 2. Eligibility Scale

Average Score (%)	Eligibility Categories
85–100	Highly Worth It
70–84	Proper
55–69	Fairly Eligible (revision needed)
< 55	Not Eligible

Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis in this study was carried out in mixed methods, namely using qualitative descriptive approaches and inferential quantitative statistics. The goal is to obtain a complete picture of the quality of the curriculum developed, including aspects of validity, practicality, and effectiveness. Qualitative data is analyzed to assess the context, user perception, and dynamics of the learning process, while quantitative data is used to measure changes in student behavior in a measurable manner through statistical tests.

Qualitative analysis was carried out on data from interviews, classroom observations, and field notes, using data reduction techniques, thematic categorization, and interpretation of meaning. This data is used to describe teachers' perceptions of the practicality of the curriculum, student involvement during learning, and challenges that arise during the implementation process. To support qualitative outcomes, quantitative analysis is used to measure the level of product validity, perception of practicality, and effectiveness of the product against changes in student behavior. Quantitative data from expert validation sheets and teacher-student perception questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics, with the calculation of average scores and conversions into eligibility categories.

Effectiveness testing was carried out through a one-group pretest-posttest design, which was given to 41 grade IV students from two elementary schools. The measurement instrument is in the form of a Likert scale questionnaire that has been validated, containing character indicators such as mutual cooperation, responsibility, tolerance, and social concern. The average pre-test and post-test values were analyzed using a paired sample t-test with the help of SPSS software. This analysis aims to find out whether there is a statistically significant difference between before and after learning using the developed curriculum. The significance value ($p\text{-value}$) < 0.05 is a reference to statistically declare the effectiveness of the product.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

This research produces an elementary school social studies curriculum product that is integrated between local and global contexts to strengthen the nation's character. The product is developed through six stages of research and development, from preliminary studies to the final revision of the curriculum. To determine the quality of the product, an analysis was carried out on the validity of the content, practicality of use, and effectiveness of implementation.

Validity of the Curriculum Development Results

Product validation was carried out by five experts consisting of two curriculum experts, two social studies education experts, and one senior teacher who is experienced in the development of learning modules. Validation was carried out on several aspects, namely: content feasibility, clarity of structure, relevance of local-global context, character meaning, and integration between components. The assessment was carried out using a Likert scale validation sheet of 1-5 and converted into a percentage to obtain the final score. The validation results showed that the average overall score reached 88.6%, which was categorized as "very valid". The content feasibility aspect obtained the highest score (92%), followed by the significance of character values (89%) and the relevance of local-global themes (87%). The experts appreciated the preparation of learning outcomes based on the Pancasila Student Profile which was considered quite operational. However, input was given to simplify the narrative in the teaching module to be more appropriate for the age of elementary school students, as well as to strengthen the visual component of local culture in the learning media.

Table 3. Validation Results Summary

Validation Aspects	Average Score (%)	Category
Content Eligibility	92%	Highly Valid
Curriculum Structure	88%	Highly Valid
Local-Global Context	87%	Highly Valid
Character Value	89%	Highly Valid
Component Integration	86%	Highly Valid
Overall Average	88,6%	Highly Valid

Curriculum Practicality Based on Teacher and Student Perception

The practicality of the curriculum was tested through limited implementation in two grade IV elementary schools, each for four meetings. Teachers who teach are given guidelines and teaching modules based on the curriculum developed. After implementation, teachers and students fill out a questionnaire on the clarity of the curriculum, ease of use, relevance of the material, and interest in learning.

The results of the questionnaire showed that 92% of teachers stated that the curriculum was easy to use, both in terms of teacher guidance, learning flows, and contextual student activities. The teacher also said that learning became more lively because it raised topics that were close to students' lives. For example, in the theme "Environment and Surrounding Culture," students were asked to make a presentation of their family's local culture and compare it with cultures from other countries. The teacher mentioned that this approach is very helpful in fostering mutual respect for differences and strengthening a sense of pride in one's own culture.

From the student side, 88% stated that they are more interested in social studies learning with the new curriculum. They find it easier to understand the material because it is associated with personal experiences and reinforced by challenging group activities. Students also revealed that they prefer to discuss real events and see how Indonesian culture and other cultures can be compared without feeling alienated. Nonetheless, some technical constraints were reported by teachers, such as limited thematic learning time and the need for additional visual learning media to reinforce the concept of globalization. This shows that although the curriculum is considered practical, further training and the development of supporting media are needed for wider application.

Effectiveness of the Curriculum

To test the effectiveness of the curriculum developed, pre-test and post-test tests were carried out on 41 students from two elementary schools. The social character assessment instrument consists of 20 attitude statements that reflect the dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile, especially on the indicators of mutual cooperation, social concern, responsibility, and tolerance. After the learning process using a local and global integrated curriculum, students' average post-test scores showed a significant improvement compared to the pre-test. The results of statistical analysis are presented in the following table:

Table 4. Pre-Test and Post-Test and T-Test Results

Statistics	Pre-Test	Post-Test	Difference
Number of Respondents (N)	41	41	-
Average Score	68,20	82,75	+14,55
Standard Deviation	7,12	6,89	-

Table 5. Paired Sample t-Test Results

Statistics	Value
Value t	10,42
Degree of freedom (df)	40
p-value (2-tailed)	0,000

Based on the results of the paired sample t-test, a t-value of 10.42 was obtained with a degree of freedom (df) = 40 and a significance value (p-value) = 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). This shows that there is a statistically significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores after the implementation of the social studies curriculum developed. The average increase of 14.55 points reflects an increase in students' social behavior, especially in mutual cooperation, care, and tolerance.

These findings show that the curriculum developed is not only valid and practical, but also effective in improving the social character attitudes of elementary school students. A curriculum that links local and global materials succeeds in creating a meaningful and contextual learning experience, thus having an impact on improving students' social awareness in a real way. Teachers who observed the learning process during the trial also confirmed positive changes in student interaction, both in group work and during discussions. Students are more open to appreciating differences, show empathy for social issues, and be able to relate local cultural values to global issues relevant to their lives. Thus, the results of this effectiveness test strengthen the conclusion that the curriculum developed has a real contribution to the formation of the nation's character through social studies education in elementary schools. The curriculum product deserves to be further recommended in large-scale tests and as an innovative model of value-based contextual learning.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study show that the development of an elementary school social studies curriculum that explicitly integrates local and global contexts is able to increase the relevance of learning, strengthen the internalization of character values, and encourage

students' active participation in the learning process. This is in line with the idea of Anugrah et al (2024) regarding the need for a multicultural curriculum that not only emphasizes knowledge transfer, but also the development of social identity and the ability to understand diversity. The integration between local culture and global issues in social studies learning is an important key in forming individuals who have cultural roots as well as openness to the complexity of the world (Frank Angelo, 2023). The curriculum developed in this study implements this through thematic approaches and project-based learning that allows students to relate their personal experiences to global dynamics contextually.

From an international perspective, these findings confirm the relevance of the "glocal curriculum" approach, a concept that emphasizes the importance of education that is rooted in local identity, but open to global realities (Jumriani et al., 2021; Moslimany et al., 2024). This kind of curriculum not only builds cognitive knowledge (Takumi et al., 2021), but also forms global awareness and cross-cultural empathy from an early age (Muzakkir et al., 2024). In the context of basic education in Indonesia, where the society is very socially and culturally heterogeneous, this approach is very important to strengthen social cohesion while preparing the younger generation to face the challenges of an interconnected world (Hwang et al., 2023). Therefore, the success of this curriculum in improving social understanding and students' positive attitudes towards differences shows that this integrative approach is not only conceptual, but also practical and has a real impact in the classroom.

The results of this study also support the importance of an effective curriculum-based character education approach, not just relying on incidental activities, but must be structured and integrated in all aspects of the curriculum (Natalia et al., 2021; Zummi et al., 2020). Through the social studies curriculum developed, character values such as mutual cooperation, social responsibility, tolerance, and care are not only taught explicitly, but also internalized through collaborative and reflective learning activities (Muzakkir et al., 2024). This can be seen from the increase in students' post-test scores as well as increased active involvement in discussions and group work.

The findings of curriculum effectiveness also correlate with international studies on "value-based education," which emphasize that social learning in children must be based on real context and the active role of students (Haryanti, 2023; Wulandari & Nawangsari,

2024). Students who engage in value exploration through hands-on experience will find it easier to form social skills and critical thinking (Busey et al., 2023; Kartal, 2020). This approach is also reflected in curriculum design that places students as active subjects in understanding local social issues such as cultural traditions, social conflicts, to global issues such as peace and environmental sustainability (Moslimany et al., 2024). Therefore, local-global integration in the social studies curriculum is not only a pedagogical instrument, but also a strategy to form global citizens based on national values.

The national policy context also provides significant space for the success of this curriculum (Natalia et al., 2021). The Merdeka Curriculum and the Pancasila Student Profile initiative explicitly encourage flexibility, contextualization, and character strengthening in primary education (Wulandari & Nawangsari, 2024). However, preliminary findings from this study show that the implementation of the curriculum in the field is still not optimal due to the limited operational and contextual thematic curriculum guidelines (Natalia et al., 2021). The curriculum model developed in this study serves as a concrete response to these needs. This academically and empirically validated product can be an implementive reference for teachers and schools (Conoyer et al., 2022) in developing social studies learning that is meaningful, adaptive, and aligned with the direction of national policies and global challenges (Curtis & Green, 2021).

Thus, the main contribution of this research lies not only in the development of curriculum as a product, but also in an integrative model that combines three important aspects: value-based education, context-based, and global education in one learning framework (Moch Fitran Naufaldy et al., 2024; Moslimany et al., 2024; Popp et al., 2021). In a broader context, this study shows that the transformation of character education in elementary schools is not enough to be done normatively, but must be realized in curriculum design based on students' real needs, local relevance, and openness to the world. Therefore, this kind of curriculum has the potential to be replicated in the context of basic education in other developing countries that are facing similar challenges in integrating traditional values and globalization in formal education.

CONCLUSION

The development of the Elementary School Social Sciences (IPS) curriculum that is integrated between local and global contexts is effectively able to increase the relevance

of learning, strengthen character education, and build students' social awareness of the surrounding environment and global reality. The curriculum designed based on local values and global issues, with collaborative and reflective learning strategies, has proven to be very valid based on expert assessments, practical according to the perception of teachers and students, and statistically effective in improving students' social character behavior, as evidenced by the results of pre-test and post-test tests. This curriculum model clearly answers the challenges of implementing the Independent Curriculum and Pancasila Student Profile at the elementary school level, as well as contributing to global education practices that prioritize contextual approaches and universal human values. Although the results of this study show significant potential, limitations remain, especially in the scope of implementation which is still limited to two schools and the use of a quasi-experimental design of one group without a control group. Therefore, it is recommended that further research conduct trials on a broader scale, involve variations in sociocultural contexts, and adopt stronger experimental designs to measure the effectiveness of the curriculum more deeply and ensure sustainability.

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