

The urgency of learning social studies (IPS) in forming pluraris character and increasing the existence of Indonesian culture in elementary schools

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20 mey 2023
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Abstract: This study aimed to examine the urgency of Social Studies (IPS) learning in forming pluralist characters and increasing the existence of Indonesian culture in elementary schools. The method used is a literature review, by collecting and analyzing relevant sources related to the role of Social Studies in character building and cultural preservation. Important findings from this study indicated that social studies learning has a vital role in providing an understanding of Indonesia's cultural diversity, encouraging tolerance, respecting cultural differences, and increasing student awareness of the importance of maintaining the existence of Indonesian culture. Thus, Social Studies learning in elementary schools is an effective means of forming the pluralist character of students and strengthening the existence of Indonesian culture. The results of this research are expected to provide a deeper understanding of the urgency of Social Studies (IPS) learning in facing the challenges of globalization and strengthening the cultural identity of Indonesia among elementary school students.

Keywords: Cultural Existence, Social Studies of Elementary School, Pluralistic Character

PRELIMINARY

Education plays a central role in shaping the character and national identity (Lestari, 2018). In Indonesia, Social Studies (IPS) learning in primary schools holds significant urgency in forming students' pluralistic characters and enhancing the existence of Indonesian culture (Marhayani, 2017). As a multidisciplinary subject, Social Studies (IPS) provides a profound understanding of various aspects of social life, culture, history, geography, economy, and politics. The objective of IPS education in primary schools is to develop students' comprehension of Indonesian society's cultural aspects.

In the context of a diverse archipelagic nation with thousands of islands and hundreds of different ethnic groups, IPS assists students in understanding and appreciating the cultural diversity that exists. IPS learning also provides opportunities for students to study cultural history, get acquainted with cultural figures who play a role in preserving and developing culture and comprehend the role of culture in building national identity.

Amidst the currents of globalization and rapid technological advancements, the existence of Indonesian culture often faces threats from foreign cultural influences. Therefore, IPS learning plays a crucial role in preserving and enhancing the existence of Indonesian culture (Herimanto & Winarmo, 2010). Through IPS, students are taught about the importance of preserving and safeguarding cultural heritage that constitutes the nation's identity. They learn about cultural values, such as local wisdom, traditions, customs, arts, and regional languages.

The diversity and richness of culture in Indonesia are valuable assets for the nation. In a civilization with numerous ethnicities, beliefs, and customs, preserving culture is of utmost importance. To enhance the existence of Indonesian culture, education in Social Studies (IPS) holds great significance. Through IPS learning, students can learn about the history, geography, and culture of Indonesia, helping them understand and appreciate cultural diversity while fostering their sense of nationalism.

IPS also assists students in understanding the cultural values embraced by Indonesian society, such as cooperation, honesty, and togetherness. IPS learning is vital in enhancing the cultural diversity of Indonesian society. Through IPS education, students can comprehend and appreciate cultural diversity by studying the history and cultural values of Indonesia and fostering a strong sense of nationalism. Therefore, it is essential to continually improve IPS learning and integrate it effectively into the Indonesian curriculum. Overall, IPS learning plays a significant role in enhancing the existence of Indonesian cultural heritage. Through IPS education, students can understand, appreciate, and preserve the culture of Indonesian society. IPS learning also contributes to promoting the existence of Indonesian culture on the international stage (Lasmawan, 2019).

Therefore, there is a need for support and attention from all parties to enhance the quality of IPS learning in Indonesia. In doing so, IPS learning plays a crucial role in

enhancing the existence of Indonesian cultural heritage. IPS learning can help students understand, appreciate, and preserve the culture of Indonesian society while increasing students' social awareness of cultural diversity and social issues prevalent in the community.

Therefore, all stakeholders need to make efforts to improve the condition of IPS learning in Indonesia and strengthen the existence of Indonesian cultural heritage through IPS learning. IPS learning also teaches students about the importance of preserving the culture of Indonesian society. In this learning process, students are taught various efforts to preserve cultures, such as the development of traditional arts, protection of cultural sites, and preservation of ancestral cultural heritage. By understanding the significance of cultural preservation, students are expected to actively engage in the preservation of Indonesian cultural heritage.

In addition to being a means of preserving culture, IPS learning can also help enhance the existence of Indonesian cultural heritage on the international stage. Through IPS learning, students are taught about Indonesia's role in the global community and how the culture of Indonesian society is recognized and appreciated internationally. Indeed, students can take pride in Indonesian cultural heritage and introduce it to the international community. In a broader context, IPS learning also has a positive impact on developing students' pluralistic character (Syamsul, 2005). Students are taught to appreciate differences, build cooperation, show empathy, and respect pluralism within society. IPS learning in primary schools serves as a critical foundational step in shaping students' inclusive, tolerant, and appreciative character towards diversity.

The aims of this research are 1) to analyze the urgency of Social Studies learning in forming a pluralist character among elementary school students. 2) Evaluating the contribution of Social Studies learning to increase the existence of Indonesian culture in the elementary school environment. 3) Identify the factors that influence the effectiveness of social studies learning in forming a pluralist character and increasing the existence of Indonesian culture in elementary schools. 4) Develop strategies and recommendations to strengthen social studies teaching to maximize the formation of a pluralist character and increase the existence of Indonesian culture in elementary schools. 5) Testing the effectiveness of implementing Social Studies learning strategies

in forming a pluralist character and increasing the existence of Indonesian culture in elementary schools.

With the aim of this research, it is hoped that it can help understand the importance of IPS learning in shaping pluralistic character and strengthening the existence of Indonesian culture in primary schools. The findings of this research are expected to contribute to the development of more inclusive curriculum and learning approaches, promoting cultural diversity among primary school students.

The results of this research are expected to provide a better understanding of the urgency of IPS learning in shaping pluralistic character and enhancing the existence of Indonesian culture in primary schools. This research also aims to offer recommendations to educators and policymakers in the field of education to enhance IPS learning with an approach that is more oriented toward pluralistic character and the existence of Indonesian culture.

METHOD

The method used in this research is a literature review, which involves examining various relevant sources regarding the role of IPS learning in shaping pluralistic character and enhancing the existence of Indonesian culture in primary schools. A literature review is a process of compiling, reviewing, and evaluating literature that is pertinent to the research topic or specific study (Lexy, 2012; Sugiyono, 2017). This involves searching, reading, and synthesizing information from various published literary sources, including journal articles, books, theses, research reports, and other electronic sources.

The purpose of a literature review is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the research topic being studied, identify existing knowledge gaps, evaluate the consistency and applicability of existing research, and describe the conceptual framework used in the research. Literature reviews also help researchers to identify trends, findings, or conflicts in research that has been done before.

The literature review process involves the following steps:

1. Determine the scope and boundaries of research topics.
2. Finding and collecting relevant literature sources through databases, libraries, and online sources.

3. Read and evaluate selected literature sources to determine applicability, methodology, findings, and arguments relevant to the research topic.
4. Organize the information found within a coherent and structured framework.
5. Analyze and synthesize findings from the reviewed literature to identify patterns, similarities, or differences between existing studies.
6. Summarize and present the review literature logically and cohesively.

A literature review is an important step in research because it provides a solid knowledge base on the topic under study, helps formulate appropriate research questions, and informs the theoretical or conceptual framework to be used in research. In addition, literature reviews also help identify further research needs and provide a solid foundation for new contributions to knowledge in relevant fields (Dantes, 2017; John, 2016). In the literature review process, the important findings identified were that social studies learning can provide an understanding of cultural diversity, promote tolerance and respect for cultural differences, and increase student awareness of the importance of maintaining the existence of Indonesian culture.

RESULTS

The results of a literature review regarding the urgency of Social Studies learning in forming a pluralist character and increasing the existence of Indonesian culture in elementary schools show that Social Studies learning has an important role in developing a pluralist character in students. Indeed, IPS learning can also contribute to enhancing the existence of Indonesian culture in primary schools. Through the learning materials that encompass an understanding of history, traditions, culture and the richness of Indonesia, students can develop a sense of pride in their cultural heritage and strengthen their commitment to preserving Indonesian culture. The importance of utilizing relevant teaching approaches, such as active learning, experience-based learning, and contextual learning, is also highlighted in the literature (Lestari, 2023). Although there are challenges in implementing social studies learning, such as limited resources and limited teacher understanding, there are also opportunities to improve Social Studies learning, such as involving local communities, collaboration between subjects, and developing an inclusive curriculum. Thus, based on the results of the literature review, it can be concluded that social studies learning has great urgency in

forming a pluralist character and increasing the existence of Indonesian culture in elementary schools, with recommendations for developing effective strategies for implementing relevant and supportive Social Studies learning in the elementary school context.

DISCUSSION

A. Social Studies Relations with Plural Characters

The relationship between learning Social Studies (IPS) in elementary schools and the formation of plural character in students is very close. IPS not only provides an understanding of social, economic, political, and geographical aspects but also plays a role in shaping the attitudes and values that underlie pluralistic character (Muslich, 2015). Firstly, IPS learning introduces students to the cultural diversity in Indonesia and the world. Through IPS, students are taught about various traditions, customs, and cultural diversity present in society. They learn to appreciate and respect differences in culture, religion, ethnicity, and language. Consequently, IPS learning helps students become more tolerant, open-minded, and inclusive towards cultural diversity.

Secondly, IPS learning also provides students with the opportunity to study the history of the nation and the struggles of key figures in maintaining diversity and unity in Indonesia. They learn about values such as brotherhood, cooperation, and social justice, which form the foundation for building a pluralistic society. By understanding this history and these values, students can internalize positive attitudes and apply them in their daily lives (Winataputra, 2007). Furthermore, IPS learning also teaches students about human rights, democracy, justice, and freedom of speech. Students are allowed to participate in discussions, debates, and simulations of social-political life. They learn to listen to others' opinions, understand different perspectives, and reach agreements in the face of differing views. This develops their abilities in communication, collaboration, and teamwork, regardless of cultural or background differences.

Therefore, IPS learning in elementary schools plays a crucial role in shaping students' pluralistic character. Through this education, students are taught to appreciate cultural diversity, understand and respect differences, and cultivate inclusive and tolerant attitudes. IPS learning also provides a foundation for developing attitudes of mutual respect, tolerance, and adaptability in a pluralistic society (Mahendra, 2023). In

the era of globalization and evolving social changes, the formation of pluralistic character in students through IPS learning becomes highly significant. This not only impacts their lives in school but also brings benefits in navigating the increasingly complex and diverse society. Therefore, it is essential for schools to pay serious attention to IPS education and ensure that students have learning experiences that support the solid development of pluralistic character.

B. Social Studies Relations in Improving Indonesian Culture

Based on the results of a literature review that has been carried out the relationship between IPS and the improvement of Indonesian culture can be explained as follows:

1. **Deep Understanding of Indonesian Culture:** Through Social Studies learning, students are introduced to in-depth knowledge of Indonesian culture (Rohmatilahi et al., 2022). They learn about the history, traditions, cultural richness, arts, languages, and values inherent in Indonesian society. A profound understanding of this culture helps students develop a sense of pride and appreciation for their own culture.
2. **Respect for Cultural Diversity:** Social Studies learning also teaches students to appreciate and respect the cultural diversity that exists in Indonesia (Widiastuti, 2015). They learn about various tribes, religions, languages, and traditions that exist in Indonesian society. By understanding this diversity, students are expected to be able to develop tolerance, respect differences, and communicate effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds.
3. **Preservation of Cultural Heritage:** Social Studies learning also includes an understanding of the importance of preserving Indonesia's cultural heritage. Students are allowed to study cultural preservation efforts such as preserving historic buildings, traditional dances, arts and crafts, and others (Karolina & Randy, 2021). This helps students understand the importance of protecting and preserving Indonesian culture for future generations.
4. **Enhanced National Identity:** Through Social Studies learning, students can develop a strong sense of national identity. They study the values, symbols, and social bonds that shape Indonesian identity. By understanding and appreciating Indonesian culture, students become more proud of their national identity and

feel motivated to contribute to strengthening the existence of Indonesian culture in the future.

Thus, IPS has an important role in enhancing Indonesian culture by providing deep understanding, respect for cultural diversity, preservation of cultural heritage, and enhancement of national identity. Through effective Social Studies learning, students can become agents of change who promote and preserve Indonesian culture in schools and society at large (Alidawati, 2019).

C. Challenges and Opportunities

Based on the results of a literature review regarding the urgency of Social Studies learning in forming a pluralist character and increasing the existence of Indonesian culture in elementary schools, several challenges and opportunities that need attention are identified:

Challenge:

1. **Limited Resources:** One of the main challenges is limited resources, both in terms of learning materials, facilities, and the number of teachers who are competent in teaching Social Studies (Fidhea & Nursaptini, 2020). These limitations may affect the effective implementation of social studies learning in elementary schools.
2. **Congested Curriculum:** In a dense primary school curriculum, the time allotted for Social Studies lessons may be limited. This can hinder students' deep understanding of Indonesian culture and the formation of a pluralist character.
3. **Limited Teacher Understanding:** Another challenge is the teacher's limited understanding and knowledge regarding the urgency and effective teaching strategies in Social Studies learning. Teachers need to understand how important IPS learning is in forming a pluralist character and increasing the existence of Indonesian culture so that they can convey material appropriately.
4. **Lack of School Environment Support:** Effective implementation of Social Studies learning also requires support from the school environment, including the principal, school staff, and parents. Lack of awareness and support from the school environment can be a challenge in achieving the expected Social Studies learning goals.

Opportunity:

1. **Collaboration with Local Communities:** One important opportunity is to involve local communities in Social Studies learning. By collaborating with community figures, cultural experts, and local scholars, students can have direct experiences with Indonesian culture and develop a sense of love and pride for their cultural heritage.
2. **Inclusive Curriculum Development:** There is an opportunity to develop a more inclusive curriculum by adding more Indonesian cultural content in Social Studies lessons. This can strengthen the existence of Indonesian culture in elementary schools and provide opportunities for students to recognize and appreciate the cultural diversity of their country.
3. **Improved Teacher Training:** Through better training and professional support, teachers can increase their understanding of the urgency of Social Studies learning and develop effective teaching strategies (Susanto, 2016). This training can help teachers become better facilitators in building a pluralist character and increase students' understanding of Indonesian culture.
4. **The Use of Digital Technology and Learning Resources:** Another opportunity is the use of digital technology and learning resources to support Social Studies learning (Miarso, 2007). By utilizing digital resources, students can gain wider access to information, videos, images, and interactive learning resources that can enrich their experiences in understanding Indonesian culture.

By paying attention to these challenges and taking advantage of these opportunities, Social Studies learning in elementary schools can effectively shape a pluralist character and enhance the existence of Indonesian culture.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of a literature review regarding the urgency of Social Studies learning in forming a pluralist character and increasing the existence of Indonesian culture in elementary schools, it can be concluded that Social Studies learning has a very important role in achieving this goal. Through Social Studies learning students can gain a deep understanding of Indonesian culture, develop an

attitude of tolerance, respect for differences, and build a strong national identity. Social Studies learning also contributes to the preservation of Indonesia's cultural heritage, fosters a sense of pride in one's own culture, and respects cultural diversity in society. The importance of using learning approaches that are relevant and involve students actively is also a focus in the literature.

Despite challenges in implementation, such as limited resources and limited teacher understanding, opportunities to improve Social Studies learning can also be identified. Therefore, there is a need for ongoing efforts to develop effective Social Studies learning strategies, strengthen collaboration with local communities, and increase teachers' understanding of the urgency and benefits of Social Studies learning in forming a pluralist character and strengthening the existence of Indonesian culture in elementary schools. Thus, the conclusions of this literature review underscore the importance of Social Studies learning in forming a pluralist character and increasing the existence of Indonesian culture in elementary schools, it also provides recommendations for necessary steps to be taken in the context of education.

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