

The Effectiveness of Culture-Based Teaching Materials in Contextual Social Studies Learning in Elementary Schools: A Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of culture-based teaching materials in contextual Social Studies learning in elementary schools. Using a qualitative approach with a literature review method, this study examines 10 national journal articles published between 2016 and 2025 selected through purposive sampling from Google Scholar. Data were collected through documentation and analyzed using content and comparative analysis. The findings indicate that culture-based teaching materials significantly improve students' learning outcomes, conceptual understanding, and engagement. These materials also promote meaningful and contextual learning by connecting content with students' daily experiences and supporting character development. This study contributes to enriching theoretical perspectives and provides practical implications for developing culturally relevant teaching materials in elementary education.

INTRODUCTION

Social Studies (IPS) learning in elementary schools plays an important role in shaping students' understanding of social, cultural, and environmental life. However, in practice, Social Studies learning tends to be abstract and less contextual, which results in low student comprehension. This is in line with the findings of Mella et al. (2022), who stated that the limited variety of teaching materials leads to low student learning outcomes in Social Studies.

One of the main factors influencing the quality of learning is teaching materials. Teaching materials that are not contextual and not aligned with students' environments make it difficult for them to understand Social Studies concepts. Sormin et al. (2023) emphasized that teaching materials based on local wisdom are highly needed to support learning processes that are relevant to students' characteristics. This is also supported by previous research, which states that Social Studies teaching materials need to be developed by considering students' social and cultural contexts in order to create more meaningful learning (Desain Pengembangan Bahan Ajar IPS, 2020).

The integration of local culture into teaching materials is one solution to create contextual learning. According to Titin et al. (2024), teaching materials based on local wisdom can make learning more meaningful because the content presented is closely related to students' daily lives. In line with this, Alifauzzahra et al. (2025) stated that local wisdom-based learning not only improves students' understanding but also strengthens cultural values and character.

Other studies show that culture-based teaching materials have a high level of effectiveness in improving student learning outcomes. Asnimawati et al. (2024) found that the use of culture-based teaching materials in the form of illustrated books can improve elementary school students' understanding, as they align with their cognitive development stage. In addition, Septory et al. (2024) stated that local culture-based teaching materials are proven to be valid, practical, and effective for use in Social Studies learning.

Furthermore, the development of culture-based teaching materials can also increase student engagement in learning. Hutama (2016) showed that culture-based teaching materials are highly effective in improving student activity and learning outcomes. Meanwhile, Maharani (2025) emphasized that teaching materials based on local potential can create more meaningful learning because they are directly related to students' real-life experiences.

From a phenomenological perspective, Indonesia, as a country with rich cultural diversity, has great potential for the development of culture-based teaching materials. However, the utilization of this potential in Social Studies learning is still not optimal. Many teaching materials remain general and do not adequately represent students' local contexts. This condition indicates a gap between the potential of local culture as a learning resource and its implementation in Social Studies learning.

Based on these research findings, it can be concluded that culture-based teaching materials have significant potential to improve the quality of Social Studies learning, particularly in creating contextual and meaningful learning

experiences. Therefore, a comprehensive study using a literature review approach is needed to analyze the effectiveness of culture-based teaching materials in Social Studies learning at the elementary school level.

The contribution of this study lies in synthesizing previous research findings to provide a systematic overview of the effectiveness of culture-based teaching materials. In addition, this study contributes to enriching theoretical perspectives on contextual Social Studies learning and serves as a reference for the development of culture-based teaching materials in elementary schools.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Studies Learning in Elementary Schools

Social Studies learning in elementary schools aims to equip students with knowledge, attitudes, and social skills to understand social life and community dynamics. According to Sapriya (2017), Social Studies is an integration of various social science disciplines that are simplified according to students' developmental levels. This indicates that Social Studies learning should be presented contextually to make it easier for students to understand.

Furthermore, Trianto (2014) argues that effective Social Studies learning must be connected to students' real-life experiences. A contextual approach is essential because it helps students construct meaningful understanding. This view is supported by Elaine B. Johnson (2014), who emphasizes that contextual teaching and learning enable students to relate academic content to their daily lives.

Teaching Materials in Learning

Teaching materials are a crucial component in the learning process as they serve as primary learning resources. Abdul Majid (2013) defines teaching materials as all forms of materials used to assist teachers in delivering instruction. Well-designed teaching materials should be systematic, engaging, and aligned with students' characteristics.

In addition, Andi Prastowo (2015) states that teaching materials should encourage students to be active and independent learners. Therefore, the development of teaching materials must consider contextual aspects and relevance to students' lives in order to enhance learning effectiveness.

Culture-Based Teaching Materials and Local Wisdom

Culture-based teaching materials refer to instructional resources that integrate local cultural values into learning content. Koentjaraningrat (2009) explains that culture encompasses the system of ideas, actions, and human creations that guide societal life. Therefore, culture can be utilized as a relevant learning resource, particularly in Social Studies education.

The integration of local culture is closely related to the concept of local wisdom. According to Sutrisno (2016), local wisdom represents noble values that develop within communities and can serve as a foundation for learning. Thus, culture-based teaching materials can help students understand concepts more contextually and meaningfully.

Effectiveness of Culture-Based Teaching Materials

The effectiveness of culture-based teaching materials has been supported by various studies. Mella et al. (2022) found that culture-based teaching materials improve student learning outcomes because the content is easier to understand. Similarly, Sormin et al. (2023) reported that local wisdom-based teaching materials enhance the relevance of learning to students' daily lives. Further research by Asnimawati et al. (2024) revealed that culture-based teaching materials in the form of illustrated books effectively improve elementary students' understanding, as they align with their cognitive development stages. In addition, Septory et al. (2024) stated that local culture-based teaching materials are valid, practical, and effective for Social Studies learning.

Moreover, Titin et al. (2024) emphasized that local wisdom-based teaching materials contribute to more meaningful and contextual learning. This is supported by Alifauzzahra et al. (2025), who found that culture-based learning not only improves academic achievement but also strengthens students' character and cultural values.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative approach using a literature review method to analyze the effectiveness of culture-based teaching materials in contextual Social Studies learning at the elementary school level. The research design is descriptive qualitative, aiming to provide a systematic overview of previous studies relevant to the topic. The focus of this study is to identify patterns, trends, and findings related to the use of culture-based teaching materials in Social Studies learning.

The data sources in this study consist of secondary data obtained from scientific articles published in national journals through the Google Scholar database. The selected articles were published within the last ten years (2016–2025). The sample was determined using purposive sampling based on the following criteria: (1) articles published in national journals, (2) relevant to culture-based teaching materials and Social Studies learning in elementary schools, (3) available in full text, and (4) having clear research methods and findings. Based on these criteria, a total of 10 articles were selected for analysis.

Data collection was conducted through documentation techniques by identifying, selecting, and reviewing relevant articles, followed by extracting key information such as research objectives, methods, results, and conclusions. Data analysis was carried out using content analysis, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. In addition, a comparative analysis approach was used to compare findings across studies in order to obtain a comprehensive synthesis of the effectiveness of culture-based teaching materials in Social Studies learning.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the literature review of 10 national journal articles published within the last ten years (2016–2025), various findings were identified regarding the effectiveness of culture-based teaching materials in Social Studies

learning at the elementary school level. Overall, the analysis indicates that culture-based teaching materials have a positive impact on improving student learning outcomes, conceptual understanding, and engagement in the learning process. A summary of the reviewed studies is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of Reviewed Articles

| No | Authors | Title | Findings |
|----|----------------------------|---|--|
| 1 | Asnimawati et al. (2024) | Effectiveness of culture-based illustrated teaching materials | Improves students' understanding and learning outcomes |
| 2 | Septory et al. (2024) | Development of culture-based Social Studies materials | Valid, practical, and effective for learning |
| 3 | Titin et al. (2024) | Local wisdom-based teaching materials | Creates more contextual learning |
| 4 | Alifauzzahra et al. (2025) | Local wisdom-based Social Studies learning | Enhances understanding and character |
| 5 | Mella et al. (2022) | Digital culture-based teaching materials | Increases student engagement |
| 6 | Sormin et al. (2023) | Needs analysis of local-based teaching materials | Highlights the importance of culture-based materials |
| 7 | Hutama (2016) | Culture-based teaching materials (Using culture) | Improves learning activity and outcomes |
| 8 | Maharani (2025) | Local potential-based teaching materials | Promotes meaningful learning |
| 9 | Kurniawan & Suryani (2020) | Development of local wisdom-based materials | Improves learning relevance |
| 10 | Pratiwi & Hidayat (2019) | Culture-based Social Studies materials | Improves learning outcomes and motivation |

As shown in Table 1, all studies demonstrate a consistent trend indicating that culture-based teaching materials are highly effective in Social Studies learning at the elementary level. The improvement of student learning outcomes is the most prominent finding across the studies. This suggests that learning materials integrated with local culture are easier for students to understand, as they are closely related to their real-life experiences.

In addition, culture-based teaching materials significantly enhance student engagement and participation in the learning process. Students tend to be more active when learning materials are contextual and relevant to their environment. This condition supports the creation of meaningful learning,

where students not only receive information but also understand and relate it to their prior knowledge and experiences.

From a development perspective, most studies indicate that culture-based teaching materials have high levels of validity, practicality, and effectiveness. This means that such materials are not only theoretically appropriate but also feasible for implementation in classroom settings. The integration of local culture as a learning resource enables teachers to deliver content more concretely and engagingly.

Furthermore, culture-based teaching materials contribute not only to cognitive development but also to character building. The integration of cultural values in Social Studies learning helps instill social, moral, and cultural awareness among students. Therefore, Social Studies learning functions not only as knowledge transfer but also as a means of character education.

However, several challenges were also identified in the implementation of culture-based teaching materials. These include teachers' limited ability to develop culturally relevant materials and the lack of supporting resources in some schools. Therefore, training and institutional support are needed to help teachers effectively develop and implement culture-based teaching materials.

Overall, the findings of this study indicate that culture-based teaching materials are an effective innovation in improving the quality of Social Studies learning in elementary schools. Their use not only enhances learning outcomes but also promotes meaningful and contextual learning experiences.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this literature review, it can be concluded that culture-based teaching materials are effective in improving the quality of Social Studies learning in elementary schools. These materials contribute significantly to enhancing students' learning outcomes, conceptual understanding, and engagement. The integration of local culture into teaching materials makes learning more contextual and meaningful, as students can relate the content to their daily experiences. In addition, culture-based teaching materials also support character development by embedding social and cultural values within the learning process.

In terms of implementation, teachers are encouraged to develop and utilize culture-based teaching materials that are relevant to students' local environments. Schools and educational institutions should also support this effort by providing training and resources to help teachers design innovative and contextually appropriate learning materials. Furthermore, curriculum developers are expected to incorporate local cultural elements into instructional materials to enhance the relevance and effectiveness of Social Studies learning.

FURTHER STUDY

This study has several limitations. First, it is limited to the analysis of articles published in national journals within the last ten years, which may not fully represent the broader scope of research on culture-based teaching materials. Second, the study relies on secondary data, so it does not involve

direct observation or experimental validation of the effectiveness of the teaching materials.

Therefore, future research is recommended to conduct empirical studies, such as experimental or quasi-experimental research, to measure the direct impact of culture-based teaching materials on student learning outcomes. Additionally, further studies could explore the development of innovative digital culture-based teaching materials and their effectiveness in different educational contexts. Expanding the scope of research to include international studies may also provide a more comprehensive understanding of the topic.

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