

## **OPTIMIZING THE APPLICATION OF STUDENT CHARACTERS IN LEARNING SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**Dewi Sri Wahyuni \*<sup>1</sup>**

Universitas Alkhairaat, Indonesia  
Email : dewi031104016@gmail.com

**Indah Suciati**

Universitas Alkhairaat, Indonesia  
Email : ndahmath@gmail.com

**Nasim Taha**

Universitas Alkhairaat, Indonesia  
Email : assegafnasim@yahoo.co.id

### **Abstract**

This literature review aims to look at optimizing the application of student character in social studies learning. Social studies learning has an important role in forming student character. Students who have mental strength and good morals will certainly be able to have a personality with character. This can differentiate him from other students. Social studies learning in forming students' character is certainly not an easy thing, it requires continuous struggle to produce results that are in line with national education goals. One of the main objectives of social studies learning in schools is to be responsible for building students' character to become good and useful citizens. Social studies education is actually very closely related to character education. This can be seen from the formulation and objectives, that character education or values education also aims to make students become good citizens. Social studies learning has similarities with character education in that both have the aim of making students good citizens, concerned about existing social and environmental problems, and also both have a high sense of nationality.

**Keywords:** Optimization, Character Application, Social Studies Learning

### **INTRODUCTION**

Currently, Indonesia is being hit by a prolonged, multi-dimensional crisis and is described as a nation experiencing a decline in quality. The moral decadence of teenagers who have no manners, steal, use illegal drugs, like

---

<sup>1</sup> Correspondence author

staying up late are triggers for increased crime and decreased work ethic (Rahman, H., et al, 2017).

The problems mentioned above arise because of the erosion of national character values. Currently, character education has become an urgent need in this country. Therefore, the Ministry of National Education continues to strive to roll out the master design for character education and training materials to strengthen learning methodologies based on values to build and develop the nation's competitiveness and character (Khairunisa, N, 2017). This shows that every development effort must always be directed at having a positive impact on character development. The government thinks that the right effort to build and develop the Indonesian nation so that it has good, superior and noble character is through education.

Educational institutions are a strategic forum for forming, developing and directing the next generation of this nation. In the next twenty years, we can see what the quality of education will be like for this nation. It is very appropriate if the character improvement mission initiated by the minister of national education is implemented through improving the curriculum. This noble ideal should receive support from all elements of society and educational institutions (Maladerita, W., & Anwar, S, 2023).

Social studies learning has an important role in forming student character. In his research, Ali Ibrahim Akbar (Marhayani, D. A, 2018) explained that a person's success is only determined 20% by hard skills and the remaining 80% by soft skills. This explanation shows that it is very important to build character in students. Students who have mental strength and good morals will certainly be able to have a personality with character. This can differentiate him from other students. Social studies learning in forming students' character is certainly not an easy thing, it requires continuous struggle to produce results that are in line with national education goals.

For the school level, the organization of social studies subject matter adheres to an integrated approach, meaning that subject matter is developed and compiled not referring to separate scientific disciplines but rather referring to aspects of students' real life (factual/real) according to age characteristics and level of thinking development, and habits of attitude and behavior. In the Permendiknas document (2006) it is stated that IPS examines a set of events, facts, concepts and those related to social sciences (Hardiansyah, F, 2022).

The direction of the social studies subject is motivated by the consideration that in the future students will face serious challenges because

life in the global community is always changing all the time. Therefore, social studies subjects are designed to develop knowledge, understanding and analytical skills regarding the social conditions of society as they enter dynamic social life (Hardiansyah, F, 2022).

In instilling character in students, a teacher needs a strategy. Teacher strategy is one of the important factors in determining the success of educational implementation, even in implementing character (Tuerah, P. R., et al, 2019). Apart from using several methods in delivering material, it must also be supported by example or habituation of good attitudes, without habituation and providing good role models, instilling character will be difficult to achieve the expected goals, and this is the teacher's task. One of the tasks of a social studies teacher is to set a good example and get used to behaving as well. Thus, the strategy is basic to the success of cultivating student character (Amin, M., et al, 2022).

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

The study in this research is qualitative with literature. The literature study research method is a research approach that involves the analysis and synthesis of information from various literature sources that are relevant to a particular research topic. Documents taken from literature research are journals, books and references related to the discussion you want to research (Earley, M.A. 2014; Snyder, H. 2019).

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Education as Character Formation**

Character formation is an integral part of Islamic education. This aims to shape a person's personality to behave honestly, well, have a sense of responsibility, be able to respect and appreciate other people, be fair, and so on. Character formation in education cannot only recognize or memorize types of characters, but must go through habituation and real practice in everyday life (Arthur, J, 2019).

A teacher not only educates but also carries out the task of caring for and ensuring that good character can emerge in students and can encourage them so that they can be actualized in everyday life. Important principles in education whose main aim is to shape the character of students, include: (Maccarini, A. M, 2016).

1. Humans are creatures who are influenced by two aspects, namely the truth that exists within them and external drives or conditions that influence their consciousness.
2. The concept of education in order to build the character of students really emphasizes the importance of unity between beliefs, words and actions.
3. Character education prioritizes the emergence of students' personal awareness to sincerely prioritize positive character within themselves.
4. Character education directs students to become *ulul albab* humans who not only have the awareness to continue developing themselves, pay attention to problems, their environment, and improve their lives according to the knowledge and character they have. A person's character is determined by what they do based on their free choice.

### **Character Building Strategies and Methods**

#### **A. Character Education Strategy**

In its implementation, strategies that can be used to implement character education in schools include (Suhifatullah, M. I., et al, 2021).

##### **1. Integration in daily activities**

###### **a) Exemplary**

This example/role model activity can be carried out by supervisors, school principals, administrative staff at schools.

###### **b) Spontaneous activities**

Spontaneous activities are activities that are carried out spontaneously at that very moment. This activity is usually carried out when the teacher finds out that the student's attitude/behavior is not good, such as asking for something by shouting, scribbling on the wall.

###### **c) Reprimand**

Teachers need to reprimand students who engage in bad behavior and remind them to practice good values so that teachers can help change their behavior.

###### **d) Environmental Conditioning**

The school atmosphere is conditioned in such a way by providing physical facilities, for example: providing rubbish bins, wall clocks, slogans about character that are easy for students to read, school rules/regulations that are posted in strategic places, so that they are easy for students to read. .

###### **e) Routine activities**

Routine activities are activities that students carry out continuously and consistently at all times. Examples of these activities are praying before and after carrying out activities, saying hello when meeting other people, cleaning the class, praying the Dhuha circumcison prayer in congregation, shaking hands with the teacher when entering the school/madrasah gate.

2. Integration in programmed activities

This strategy is implemented after the teacher first makes a plan for the values that will be integrated in certain activities. This is done if the teacher considers it necessary to provide the necessary understanding or moral principles

B. Character Education Method

In the educational process, including character education, educational methods are needed that are able to instill good character values in students, so that students not only know about morals (character) or moral knowing, but they are also expected to be able to feel morals (moral feeling), carrying out morals or moral action which is the main goal of character education (Prasetya, B., & Cholily, Y. M, 2021). In this regard, educational methods that educators can consider in internalizing character education for all students are:

1. Hiwar or Conversation Method
2. Qishah or Story Method
3. Proverbs or Parables Method
4. Uswah or Exemplary Method
5. Habituation Method
6. Discipline Cultivation Method
7. Integration and Internalization Method
8. 'Ibrah and Mau'idah method
9. Targhib and Tarhib Method (Promises and Threats)
10. Creating a conducive atmosphere (Hur, Y., et al, 2022).

**Perspective of Social Studies Learning in schools**

A. Social Science Theory

Social science can be interpreted as all fields of knowledge regarding humans in their social context or as members of society. Therefore, every science that studies and examines aspects of human life in society is part of social science (Good, A. J., et al, 2010). Aspects of human life consist of: social interactions, culture, material needs, education, norms

and regulations, psychological attitudes and reactions, geography, and so on. These aspects then produce social sciences (IIS) such as Sociology, Anthropology, Economics, Education, Law, Social Psychology, Geography, History, and so on. In subsequent developments, based on a structural approach, these sciences have developed into more detailed scientific branches (Singer, A. J, 2008).

Studying social sciences is intended to lead students to understand the basic concepts of social sciences in terms of their material and formal objects and their scope. The material object of social science is humans, especially human behavior in groups. The formal object of social science is a review of which aspects and for what purposes human behavior is studied. Special human behavior that is described in the context of the interests of what social science studies are, that is the discipline of social science (Zevin, J, 2015).

From this fact it can be concluded that social science is essentially a combination or collection of sciences about human behavior. For example, human behavior in space, scarcity aspects, time aspects, culture aspects, power aspects, psychological aspects, culture aspects, society aspects, will produce discipline. -the disciplines of geography, economics, history, politics, psychology, anthropology, sociology, and so on.

#### B. Social Sciences Education in Indonesia

If we trace it to existing sources, in Indonesia there are concepts or subjects that have been included in social studies learning but are not yet called IPS. Sapriya (Hidayat, B, 2020) believes that the existence of PIPS in the education system in Indonesia cannot be separated from the curriculum system that has been in effect in Indonesia. It has been stated by a number of experts that in embryonic curricular terms, PIPS in formal education institutions or schools in Indonesia was included in the 1947 curriculum, the 1952 centered curriculum, the 1964 curriculum and the 1968 curriculum.

In line with the above, Hamid Hasan (Hidayat, B, 2020) stated that in the 1964 Middle School curriculum structure there were two groups of subjects. The first group is called the basic group and the second group is called the creative group. The basic group is a group consisting of a number of subjects that are considered to be the most dominant in developing students' personalities in accordance with the qualities that students are expected to have as formulated in the educational objectives. The subjects included in this basic group are Indonesian history and Indonesian

geography. Apart from these two subjects, in this basic group there are other subjects such as Indonesian and civics. Meanwhile, the copyright group has World History and World Geography subjects.

Even though it is not yet called a social studies subject, the content or content in the 1964 curriculum and previously had discussions about social studies education. In the period 1945-1964 the term IPS was not yet known in Indonesia. However, learning that has the same characteristics as social studies has emerged. This can be understood from the existence of history, geography, civics and cooperative subjects which are taught separately in elementary schools, and economics, sociology and anthropology subjects in secondary schools (Achwan, R., et al, 2020).

Social studies education that is growing in Indonesia cannot be separated from the chaotic situation, including in the world of education as a result of the G30S/PKI persistence which was finally overcome and then a new order was born after being led by the old order for some time (Rakhmani, I., & Sakhiyya, Z , 2024).

Broadly speaking, the development of social studies education in Indonesia is interpreted in two ways, social studies education for universities and social studies education for primary and secondary schools. According to M. Numan Somantri (Syafitri, M. A., et al, 2022). Social studies education for primary and secondary schools is defined as a simplification or adaptation of the disciplines of social sciences and humanities, as well as basic human activities that are organized and presented scientifically and psychologically pedagogically for educational purposes. Meanwhile, the meaning of social studies education for higher education is a selection of social sciences and humanities disciplines as well as basic human activities that are organized and presented scientifically and psychologically for educational purposes. He also stated that the difference is in terms of simplification and selection of scientific disciplines and so on. This opinion means that social studies education in universities and primary and secondary schools has different content. The difference is in the terms simplification and selection, even though the study material is the same source taken from the social sciences discipline.

#### C. Social Sciences Learning Paradigm

According to Barr, et al. (Bolacchi, G, 2008) Social studies learning is taught from three perspectives that are not the same as each other. The three main traditions are as follows:

1. Social science lessons which are a reference in the state.

2. Lessons that are aimed at social sciences.
3. Social science lessons as an active reference

Apart from that, there is also the view of Woolever, R. M., & Scott, K. P. (1988) where they formulated that there are five views or perspectives in teaching social studies. These five perspectives are not independent or stand alone but may be a combination of one perspective and another. These five perspectives include:

1. Social Studies Learning as a Transmission of Citizenship

Social studies learning as a citizenship transmission is a process of cultural inheritance in a particular society where the aim is to develop students into good citizens who are in accordance with the norms that apply in society and are accepted in their country. The cultural inheritance that is taken is cultural values that are good and that are in accordance with the agreement of the community and the country.

2. Social Studies Learning as a Social Science for Society

Learning social sciences as a social science is based on the assumption that students are able to think critically, are able to observe and are able to do things that can be done by those who are experts in social sciences. The aim of this education is to create citizens who are able to learn and think well, as practiced by social scientists. When social studies is taught as a science, namely social science.

3. Social Studies is taught as a personal development for students

First, the goal of IPS is to develop all the potential that exists in students, be it cognitive, physical, social, and also emotional in students. If the potential within students is able to be channeled well, it will give rise to a sense of self-confidence in students. So it is hoped that IPS will be able to develop this so that they can collaborate to realize goals and be able to solve existing problems.

4. Social Studies is taught as a process of rational decision making and social action

The main aim of IPS is for students to be able to set goals and act rationally. In making rational decisions, intellectual abilities and skills are needed to be able to read problems and solve these problems. And usually the problems that exist in society are contextual, meaning that the problems occur around where students live.

5. Social Studies is Taught as Reflective Inquiry

Inquiry learning introduces concepts to students inductively. Where when learning, the inquiry approach includes the process of



thinking from specific things to general things, where the teacher introduces several examples of specific concepts. Students learn from these examples and then provide conclusions by making statements according to the characteristics of the concept. When social studies studies reflective inquiry, the important emphasis is on what efforts we make to motivate students to think. Teachers help students use logic and carry out scientific research. If in the past IPS learned by memorizing and remembering as an old habit, now we have to provide innovation by applying the "inquiry method" and also "critical thinking" (Sina, A., et al, 2023).

### **Character Formation Through Social Sciences Learning**

In social studies learning, students are instilled with some knowledge of the values that exist in several social sciences, this aims to shape students' character in preparing themselves for the future to become good and useful citizens of society. So it can be said that one of the main objectives of social studies learning in schools is to be responsible for building students' character to become good and useful citizens. Social studies education is actually very closely related to character education. This can be seen from the formulation and objectives, that character education or values education also aims to make students become good citizens (Agung, L, 2011).

Social studies learning plays an important role in forming the character of the Indonesian nation. This is because social studies learning has similarities with character education, both of which aim to make students become good citizens, care about existing social and environmental problems, and also have a high sense of nationality. However, social studies learning is seen by society as an unimportant subject. This results in students' views of social studies subjects being less interested. Thus, it can be ascertained that the social studies learning process is not optimal, which impacts the social studies learning objectives as part of the character formation process which cannot be achieved properly (Maladerita, W., & Anwar, S, 2023).

### **CONCLUSION**

Social studies education for primary and secondary schools is defined as a simplification or adaptation of the disciplines of social sciences and humanities, as well as basic human activities that are organized and presented scientifically and psychologically pedagogically for educational purposes. Meanwhile, the meaning of social studies education for higher education is a

selection of social sciences and humanities disciplines as well as basic human activities that are organized and presented scientifically and psychologically for educational purposes. He also stated that the difference is in terms of simplification and selection of scientific disciplines and so on.

Social studies learning has an important role in forming student character. However, learning social studies in forming students' character is certainly not an easy thing, it requires continuous struggle to produce results that are in line with national education goals. Social studies learning has similarities with character education in that both have the aim of making students good citizens, concerned about existing social and environmental problems, and also both have a high sense of nationality.

## REFERENCES

- Achwan, R., Ganie-Rochman, M., Alamsyah, A. R., & Triana, L. (2020). University reform and the development of social sciences in Indonesia. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 78, 102269.
- Agung, L. (2011). Character education integration in social studies learning. *Historia: Jurnal Pendidik dan Peneliti Sejarah*, 12(2), 392-403.
- Amin, M., Mahanal, S., & Rohman, F. (2022). Analyzing the Contribution of Critical Thinking Skills and Social Skills on Students' Character by Applying Discovery Learning Models. *International Journal of Education and Practice*, 10(1), 42-53.
- Arthur, J. (2019). *The formation of character in education: From Aristotle to the 21st century*. Routledge.
- Bolacchi, G. (2008). A new paradigm for the integration of the social sciences.
- Earley, M. A. (2014). A synthesis of the literature on research methods education. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 19(3), 242-253.
- Good, A. J., Heafner, T., Rock, T., O'Connor, K. A., Passe, J., Waring, S., & Byrd, S. (2010). The de-emphasis on social studies in elementary schools: Teacher candidate perspective. *Current Issues in Education*, 13(4).
- Hardiansyah, F. (2022). The Implementation Of Democratic Character Education Through Learning Of Social Science Materials Of Ethical And Cultural Diversity In Elementary School. *Journal of Innovation in Educational and Cultural Research*, 3(2), 234-241.
- Hidayat, B. (2020). Tinjauan Historis Pendidikan IPS di Indonesia. *Jurnal Pendidikan IPS Indonesia*, 4(2), 147-154.

- Hur, Y., Yeo, S., & Lee, K. (2022). Medical students' self-evaluation of character, and method of character education. *BMC Medical Education*, 22(1), 271.
- Khairunisa, N. (2017). The Implementation of Value Clarification Technique (VCT) Learning Model to Improve Social Care Character in Social Science Learning. *International Journal Pedagogy of Social Studies*, 2(1), 153-161.
- Maccarini, A. M. (2016). On character education: Self-formation and forms of life in a morphogenic society. *Italian Journal of Sociology of Education*, 8(Italian Journal of Sociology of Education 8/1), 31-55.
- Maladerita, W., & Anwar, S. (2023). Literature Study: Application Of Character Education In The Formation Of Social Attitudes Nationality Of Students Through Social Studies Learning. *International Journal Of Humanities Education and Social Sciences*, 2(4).
- Marhayani, D. A. (2018). Pembentukan Karakter Melalui Pembelajaran Ips. *Edunomic Jurnal Pendidikan Ekonomi*, 5(2), 67. <https://doi.org/10.33603/ejpe.v5i2.261>
- Prasetya, B., & Cholily, Y. M. (2021). Metode Pendidikan karakter Religius paling efektif di sekolah. *Academia Publication*.
- Rahman, H., Thalib, S. B., & Mahmud, A. (2017). Integrated character education in social sciences with contextual teaching and learning approach. *The New Educational Review*, 48, 53-64.
- Rakhmani, I., & Sakhiyya, Z. (2024). Inequalities and social sciences in neoliberal Indonesia. *International Social Science Journal*, 74(251), 9-23.
- Sina, A., Dini, A., & Nurhalimah, N. (2023). Paradigma Pembelajaran IPS Dan Permasalahannya. *Faidatuna*, 4(2), 164-174.
- Singer, A. J. (2008). *Social studies for secondary schools: Teaching to learn, learning to teach*. Routledge.
- Snyder, H. (2019). Literature review as a research methodology: An overview and guidelines. *Journal of business research*, 104, 333-339.
- Suhifatullah, M. I., Sutarman, S., & Thoyib, M. (2021). Character education strategies in improving students' spiritual intelligence. *International Research Journal of Management, IT and Social Sciences*, 8(2), 155-162.

- Syafitri, M. A., Arifin, M. H., & Wahyuningsih, Y. (2022). Peranan teknologi informasi dalam pendidikan IPS untuk anak sekolah dasar. *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai*, 6(1), 4411-4414.
- Tuerah, P. R., Santie, Y. D. A., Lonto, A. L., & Pangalila, T. (2019). Character Education on Students in Social Science Faculty at Manado State University. In 1st International Conference on Education Social Sciences and Humanities (ICESSHum 2019) (pp. 512-517). Atlantis Press.
- Woolever, R. M., & Scott, K. P. (1988). Active learning in social studies: Promoting cognitive and social growth. (No Title).
- Zevin, J. (2015). Social studies for the twenty-first century: Methods and materials for teaching in middle and secondary schools. Routledge.