

Development of a Problem-Based Learning Social Studies Teaching Module Containing the Local Wisdom of Pemalang Batik to Increase Middle School Students' Motivation and Learning Engagement

Munasikhah¹, Sitti Hartinah², Hanung Sudiby³

Magister Pedagogi Pascasarjana Universitas Pancasakti Tegal, Indonesia^{1,2,3}

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Abstract

Social Studies (IPS) learning plays a strategic role in shaping students' social understanding, character, and cultural awareness. However, social studies learning at the junior high school level still faces the problem of low learning motivation due to conventional approaches that lack context. This condition is also found in Pemalang Regency, which has unique socio-economic characteristics and local wisdom potential in the form of batik that has not been optimally utilized in learning. This study aims to develop a Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model for social studies education that incorporates the local wisdom of Pemalang batik as an effort to improve the relevance and quality of learning. The research used a Research and Development (R&D) approach with the ADDIE model, limited to the Analyze, Design, and Develop stages. The research subjects included subject matter experts, learning model experts, and social studies teachers at three junior high schools in Pemalang Regency. Data collection was conducted through document analysis, limited interviews, literature studies, and expert validation. Data analysis was conducted qualitatively and quantitatively using a four-point Likert scale. The results showed that the PBL-based social studies learning module containing local wisdom of Pemalang Batik met the criteria of "Suitable" to "Very Suitable" based on the validators' assessment. This module was considered to have theoretical and practical validity and the potential to support contextual, meaningful, and oriented learning.

Keywords: Local Wisdom of Pemalang Batik; Junior High School Social Studies Learning; Problem-Based Learning

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□ Corresponding author:

Email Address: munasikhah07@gmail.com

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Introduction

Education is a strategic foundation for national development because it functions to shape the overall quality of human resources. UNESCO (2021) affirms that education is the most effective means of transforming the world through the formation of individual knowledge, character, and skills. In



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Indonesia, education is positioned not only as an instrument for cognitive development but also as a vehicle for internalizing moral, social, cultural, and spiritual values. This educational function aligns with the mandate of Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System. This regulation emphasizes that education is directed at developing the full potential of students. Thus, national education has a mandate to create individuals who are faithful, have character, are intelligent, and skilled. This comprehensive educational orientation demands learning that is not mechanistic. The learning process needs to be designed to be relevant to the social realities of students. Without this approach, national education goals will be difficult to achieve optimally.

Global developments marked by the industrial revolution 4.0 and digital transformation have placed new demands on education. The World Economic Forum (2020) identified 21st-century skills, including critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication, as core competencies. These skills cannot be developed through rote-based learning. Education is required to adopt an approach that encourages active student participation. Traditional teacher-centered learning models are increasingly less relevant to today's needs. In this context, learning must be contextual and based on real-world problems. Pedagogical transformation is urgently needed to enable students to adapt to social change. Passive learning has the potential to reduce student motivation. Therefore, learning innovation is a key prerequisite for improving the quality of education.

Social Studies (IPS) plays a strategic role in equipping students with an understanding of social, economic, cultural, and political realities. Through IPS, students are expected to develop social awareness and sensitivity to their surroundings. However, various studies show that IPS learning is still perceived as a boring subject that relies heavily on memorization. Sapriya (2017) noted that the lack of variety in learning methods leads to low motivation to learn IPS. This condition hinders the achievement of IPS's goal of developing critical and democratic citizens. Non-contextual IPS learning tends to distance students from their social realities. As a result, students find it difficult to see the relevance of the material to everyday life. This situation demands a more meaningful learning approach. Without pedagogical innovation, IPS learning has the potential to lose its transformative power.

Social studies education is also closely linked to the development of students' character and morals. Emile Durkheim's thinking positions education as the primary means of socializing social values and norms. Recent studies on moral education emphasize that schools function to foster discipline, solidarity, and collective consciousness in students. In the complex context of modern society, the function of moral education becomes increasingly important. Social studies, as a social science subject, has great potential to internalize these values. However, this potential will not be optimal without an appropriate learning approach. Learning that focuses solely on knowledge transfer neglects students' affective dimensions. Therefore, social studies education must be designed to foster empathy and social responsibility. The integration of moral values into social studies learning is a fundamental necessity. This emphasizes the role of social studies in building students' character sustainably.

Pemalang Regency is a region with socio-economic characteristics dominated by the agricultural and fisheries sectors. These conditions create a unique social context for students in the area. Education data shows that the school participation rate in Pemalang is relatively high, but the quality of learning still faces challenges. Inequality in facilities and teacher distribution across regions impacts the quality of learning. Furthermore, the educational background of parents, most of whom have only primary education, impacts support for learning at home. Family economic conditions also influence student engagement in learning. Some students must contribute to family economic activities, limiting study time. This situation results in low learning motivation, particularly in social studies. Therefore, social studies learning in Pemalang requires a contextual and adaptive approach. This approach must be able to accommodate students' real social realities.

Learning motivation is a key factor determining the success of the learning process. Deci and Ryan (2000), through their Self-Determination Theory, emphasize the importance of intrinsic motivation in sustainable learning. Intrinsic motivation develops when the needs for autonomy,

competence, and relatedness are met. Various studies in Indonesia show that learning motivation significantly influences academic achievement. However, learning motivation in social studies at the junior high school level remains relatively low. Economic factors, the learning environment, and monotonous teaching methods are the main causes. Students tend to lose interest when the material is not connected to real life. Therefore, teachers have a strategic role in creating a motivating learning environment. Relevant and meaningful learning can increase student engagement. Therefore, increasing learning motivation should be a primary focus in developing social studies learning.

Problem-Based Learning (PBL) is a learning model considered effective in increasing learning motivation. PBL positions students as active participants in the learning process through solving real-life problems. This model encourages students to think critically, collaborate, and integrate various concepts. Several studies have shown that PBL can significantly improve motivation and learning outcomes in social studies. Fauzi (2021) and Sudarsono (2020) reported an increase in student participation and learning interest through the implementation of PBL. PBL also aligns with the demands of the Independent Curriculum, which prioritizes student-centered learning. In the context of social studies, PBL allows students to directly understand social phenomena. However, the effectiveness of PBL is maximized when linked to the local context. Therefore, integrating local wisdom into PBL is a relevant strategy. This approach makes learning more contextual and meaningful for students.

Local wisdom is a source of values and social practices that develop within a community. Koentjaraningrat (2009) emphasized that local wisdom serves as a guideline for community life. In social studies learning, local wisdom can be an authentic learning resource. Pemalang Regency boasts various local wisdoms, such as traditional markets, sea almsgiving, batik, and rice farming. This potential has not been optimally utilized in social studies learning. Social studies material is still dominated by national textbooks that lack contextualization. As a result, students find it difficult to relate the material to their social realities. Integrating local wisdom into PBL can increase the relevance of learning. Students not only understand concepts but also appreciate their regional cultural values. This approach also strengthens students' cultural identity and social character. Thus, local wisdom becomes a strategic element in innovative social studies learning.

Based on the above description, the low motivation to learn social studies in Pemalang Regency is a multidimensional problem. Pedagogical, socio-economic, educational policy, and cultural factors interact to influence this condition. Conventional learning models have proven incapable of addressing this challenge. Therefore, learning innovations that are oriented towards students and the local context are needed. Problem-Based Learning (PBL) based on local wisdom is seen as a relevant strategic solution. This approach allows students to learn through real-world problems in their surroundings. In addition to increasing motivation, PBL-based learning also develops 21st-century skills. The integration of local cultural values enriches students' learning experiences. Thus, developing a PBL-based social studies learning model and local wisdom has both academic and practical urgency. This research is expected to make a significant contribution to improving the quality of social studies learning at the junior high school level.

Methodology

This study uses a Research and Development (R&D) approach with the aim of developing a Problem-Based Learning (PBL)-based social studies learning model incorporating the local wisdom of Pemalang batik. Development research was chosen because it focuses on the process of designing and refining learning products that are contextual and relevant to student characteristics. The approach used is descriptive qualitative, which allows researchers to explore learning needs, the context of local wisdom, and describe in depth the process of developing the learning model.

The development model used was ADDIE, but this study was limited to the Analyze, Design, and Develop stages. The Analyze stage aims to identify learning needs, characteristics of seventh-grade students, and the potential for integrating local wisdom into Pemalang batik. The Design stage focused

on designing the PBL model structure and learning support tools. Furthermore, the Develop stage produced a revised learning product based on expert input. The Implement and Evaluate stages were not conducted, so testing the model's effectiveness was not included in the scope of this study.

The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 4 Pemalang, SMP Negeri 2 Pemalang, and SMP Negeri 2 Taman, in Pemalang Regency, Central Java. The locations were selected purposively, considering the suitability of the school context, the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, and the potential integration of local batik wisdom into seventh-grade social studies learning.

The sampling technique used purposive sampling, with research subjects including social studies subject matter experts, PBL learning/model experts, and practicing social studies teachers. The number of validators consisted of three people, each representing the scientific aspect, learning design, and product usability. Students were not directly involved because the research was limited to the development stage, but student characteristics were still considered during the needs analysis stage.

Data collection was conducted through document analysis, limited interviews, literature review, and expert validation. Document analysis was used to review the social studies curriculum and materials, interviews to explore learning needs, literature review to strengthen the theoretical foundation, and expert validation to assess the product's feasibility. Validation data was obtained through assessment sheets and qualitative input, which served as the basis for product revisions.

Data analysis was conducted qualitatively and quantitatively. Qualitative data were analyzed through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Meanwhile, quantitative data were obtained from the validator's assessment using a four-level Likert scale, which was then converted into a percentage of feasibility using the following formula:

$$\text{Percentage of Eligibility} = \frac{\text{Score Obtained}}{\text{Maximum Score}} \times 100\%$$

The results of the feasibility percentage are then interpreted based on the criteria in Table 1.

Table 1. Criteria for Interpreting Product Validation Scores

Eligibility Percentage	Category	Information
85% – 100%	Very Worthy	The product can be used without revision.
70% – <85%	Worthy	The product can be used with minor revisions.
55% – <70%	Quite Decent	Product needs revision
40% – <55%	Less than worthy	Product needs major revision
<40%	Not feasible	Product cannot be used

Product feasibility testing is conducted at the Develop stage through expert validation. A learning product is deemed feasible if it meets the minimum criteria for the "Feasible" category. The feasibility test results are used as the basis for determining revisions and to ensure that the PBL-based social studies learning model containing local wisdom of Pemalang batik has theoretical and practical validity as a basis for further research at the implementation stage.

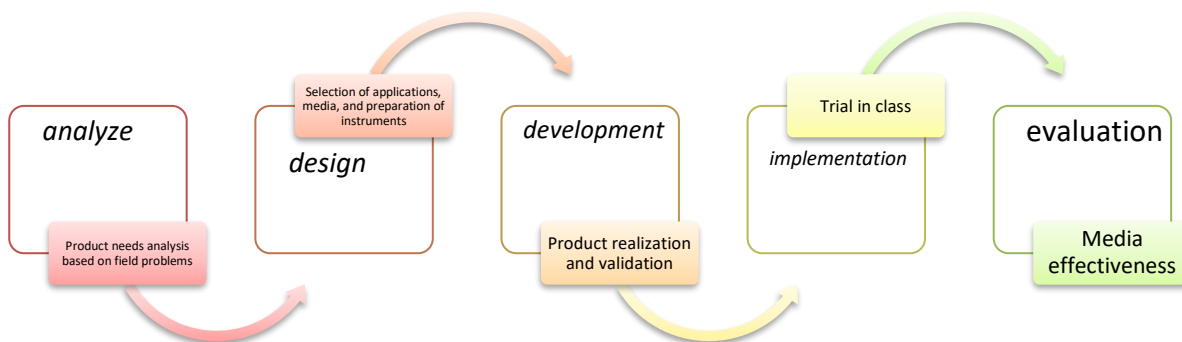


Figure 1. Product Development Stages Adapted from the ADDIE Model

Results and Discussion

The results of the implementation of the teaching module indicate that the application of Problem Based Learning (PBL)-based social studies learning integrated with the local context has a positive impact on student learning engagement. Based on the learning implementation as stated in the module, students are actively involved from the problem orientation stage to the final reflection of the learning. The problems raised are derived from the social reality in the students' environment, thus making it easier for students to understand the context of the problem. Group discussion activities show an increase in student participation compared to the conventional learning previously used. Students do not only act as recipients of information, but also as subjects who construct knowledge collaboratively. The results of class observations show that students are more confident in expressing opinions and arguments. Interactions between group members are more dynamic and directed. This indicates that the teaching module is able to create a participatory learning atmosphere.

From a cognitive perspective, learning outcomes demonstrate an increased understanding of social studies concepts related to socioeconomic and environmental topics. The evaluation questions presented in the learning module require students to analyze problems, not simply memorize facts. Students are able to relate the concepts learned to real-world conditions. Students' answers demonstrate critical thinking skills in identifying the causes and effects of social phenomena. Furthermore, students are able to propose relevant solutions to the problems discussed. This reflects the achievement of learning objectives that emphasize problem-solving. The learning module also encourages students to utilize various learning resources, both from books and their surroundings. The use of local learning resources enriches students' perspectives. Thus, the learning module contributes to improving the quality of students' conceptual understanding.

In the affective domain, learning outcomes indicate an increase in student motivation and interest in learning social studies. Students demonstrated greater enthusiasm throughout the learning process, as evidenced by their active participation in questions and discussions. Linking learning to everyday life made the material more meaningful to students. Social values such as cooperation, responsibility, and social awareness also developed during the learning process. The learning module explicitly designed group activities that required collaboration. Students learned to respect differences of opinion within the group. Empathy for social issues in their environment began to develop. These findings indicate that the learning module impacted not only students' cognitive but also their affective aspects.

In the psychomotor domain, learning outcomes demonstrated that students were able to develop presentation and communication skills. Each group was asked to present the results of their discussions in front of the class. Students demonstrated increased confidence in conveying their thoughts. This activity trained them to structure arguments systematically and logically. Furthermore, students learned to use simple media to support presentations. The learning module provided space for students to express their ideas creatively. Teamwork skills were also developed through the division of tasks within the

group. This demonstrates that learning focuses not only on the end result but also on the process. Thus, the learning module is able to develop 21st-century skills in a balanced manner.

Conclusion

The development of a social studies learning module based on Problem Based Learning (PBL) and the local wisdom of Pemalang Batik was designed as an effort to support the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, which emphasizes contextual, meaningful, and student-centered learning. This module is designed by systematically integrating Learning Outcomes, Learning Objectives, and Learning Objective Flows, so that social studies learning can take place in a directed manner and in accordance with student characteristics. The application of the PBL model in the social studies module encourages students to actively identify and solve real socio-cultural problems in their surroundings. The integration of the local wisdom of Pemalang Batik provides an authentic context that enriches the understanding of social studies concepts and fosters a caring attitude, a sense of pride in local culture, and character in accordance with the Pancasila Student Profile. Thus, this module functions not only as a teaching tool but also as a medium for strengthening students' character and cultural identity.

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