



## Implementation Of Social Studies In Elementary Schools In The National Curriculum In Private Schools

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**Abstract.** *The purpose of this study is to investigate how Social Studies is taught in private primary schools using the National Curriculum framework, namely the Independent Curriculum. The study focuses on teaching methods, character education integration, and the various enabling and impeding elements that influence curriculum implementation. To gain a thorough understanding of instructors' experiences presenting the curriculum, a qualitative research approach with a basic qualitative design was employed. Three teachers from grades 4, 5, and 6 at MIS Hayatul Islamiyah, Depok, were selected using purposive sampling, and the population consists of social studies instructors at private primary schools. Semi-structured interviews accompanied by field notes and documentation were used to gather data. An open-ended interview guide encompassing topics such as lesson planning, teaching techniques, evaluation tactics, and the integration of character education served as the primary tool. As teachers navigate opportunities and challenges in connecting their curriculum with national education goals, the data reveal a range of dynamics in the implementation process. In addition to offering suggestions for improving the standard of Social Studies education moving forward, this study provides a comprehensive overview of current practices in private school settings.*

**Keywords:** *social studies, elementary, curriculum, private schools*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The implementation of Social Studies plays an important role in shaping students' character and understanding of society. By teaching fundamental ideas and social realities, Social Science Education helps students develop their social character. It prepares them to be citizens who uphold moral principles and social skills in their dealings with others (Wuwur & Suciptaningsih, 2023). Additionally, by incorporating regional cultural elements and coordinating educational methods with national objectives, the application of social science education effectively fosters the growth of students' character, which in turn fortifies their moral and social skills in elementary school students (Wardani et al., 2023). Indeed, studies demonstrate that social studies instruction fosters cognitive abilities and has a major influence on students' personality development, increasing their capacity for responsible, sympathetic, and socially acceptable behavior.

The novel state nevertheless poses difficulties, especially when it comes to striking a balance between cognitive education and character development. Character education in elementary schools is hampered by the current focus on cognitive development since it does not sufficiently address affective components like moral ideals and character, which leads to problems like student dishonesty and a lack of discipline (Yuliani et al., 2024). Many factors, such as a lack of teacher understanding and student conduct that frequently demonstrates non-

compliance with character values, make it difficult to incorporate character education into school curricula, which in turn affects the balance between cognitive and character education in private schools' national curricula (Asri, 2023). The significance of ensuring children's academic and moral growth through an integrated strategy that merges character development with cognitive learning is underscored by this condition.

The importance of social studies to children's development has recently been revealed in a study. The study highlighted the need to incorporate community service, moral education, and social purpose into the educational curriculum to create well-rounded individuals who are ready to engage in society. Social studies lessons are essential to character education in elementary schools because they instill fundamental values in students that will serve them well both inside and outside the classroom. The national curriculum of private schools must follow the current social studies curriculum. (Mafrudin, 2023).

According to Mukhturolieva (2025), interactive teaching methods such as group discussions and role-plays not only make students more engaged and motivated, but also help them understand theoretical subjects better. That is why it is important to investigate the challenges faced by educators when using these methods in the classroom. In various classroom settings, this will ensure the effectiveness of interactive methods, both in theory and practice.

A lot of schools are having trouble getting social studies into the standard curriculum. There are a number of challenges that private schools have when trying to incorporate a social studies curriculum, such as a lack of qualified teachers, insufficient financing, and problems with curriculum implementation. It becomes increasingly challenging to achieve good learning outcomes in social studies due to all of these factors (Mboozi et al., 2024). As a result, private institutions require ongoing government and stakeholder assistance as well as innovative solutions to overcome these challenges and deliver the best social studies education possible.

Education is structured according to the goals, content, and techniques outlined in a set of plans and programs called the curriculum (Sucipto et al., 2023). As a nationwide framework, the Independent Curriculum seeks to raise educational standards by outlining guidelines for educators. But there are a lot of problems with implementing the curriculum in primary schools, particularly private schools. Some of these problems include teachers not being prepared, not having enough resources, and not comprehending the curriculum (Kosim, 2023; Fatimatuzzahra et al., 2023). Teachers' and administrators' motivation and support are crucial to the success of curriculum implementation efforts (Karlina et al., 2024).

Consequently, primary school students and teachers alike will need substantial institutional backing and continuous professional development opportunities if the national curriculum is to be successfully implemented.

This study's overarching goal is to learn more about the state of social studies education in private primary schools and how they implement the national curriculum. Problems with curriculum implementation, insufficient funding, unprepared teachers, and striking a balance between character and cognitive education are some of the main obstacles that schools face. In addition, the study delves into the ways in which interactive teaching approaches may elevate student engagement and understanding. The objective is to offer perceptive suggestions that encourage comprehensive student growth in private school environments and back up sufficient social studies instruction.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

Using a qualitative approach, this study delves deeply into how private primary schools have included Social Studies (IPS) courses into their curricula in accordance with the national curriculum. The researchers chose the basic qualitative study approach because it enables them to thoroughly investigate field learning practices, such as the IPS curriculum's use of social skills and the difficulties instructors encounter during implementation (Balbağ, 2023). A qualitative technique was proposed to capture reality in depth, as this research is focused on field implementation practices and the dynamics experienced by instructors in implementing the social studies curriculum.

All told, three fourth-, fifth-, and sixth grade Social Studies (IPS) instructors participated in this research. In their classes, these teachers were already implementing the National Curriculum, so they knew firsthand how it worked. The research was administered at Hayatul Islamiyah Private Islamic Elementary School (MIS), situated in Cinangka, Depok City. The site was selected using a purposive sampling technique based on several considerations: (1) the school consistently applied the National Curriculum in its Social Studies instruction; (2) it demonstrated a variety of teaching methods suitable for qualitative exploration; and (3) the school administration was cooperative in providing access and flexible scheduling for direct classroom observation and teacher interviews. This purposive approach ensured that the collected data accurately represented authentic curriculum implementation practices within a real-world educational setting.

Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data with three elementary school teachers who teach social studies at private schools in Depok City. The participants were

intentionally chosen because they had at least three years of experience teaching social studies. Each interview took place once, in person, at the school, specifically in the teachers' lounge, and lasted approximately 30 minutes on average per participant. The sessions were recorded on video and supplemented with field notes to ensure comprehensive data capture. The open-ended interview questions were centred on how private elementary schools implement the national curriculum. Prior to the interviews, the researcher obtained permission from the school administration and consent from the teachers while also explaining the study's objectives and assuring them of the confidentiality of the information provided.

The interview data was examined using thematic analysis. Data transcription, coding, classification, and the identification of major themes that represent the experiences and viewpoints of the teachers were among the steps in this research. To fully understand the underlying significance of each participant's responses, the procedure was carried out iteratively and reflectively.

A thorough understanding of the social studies curriculum's implementation in private primary schools was ensured through manual analysis, which was tailored to meet the study's objectives. Since the primary goal of this study was to document the perspectives of instructors as key agents in curriculum delivery, actual classroom observations were not conducted. The method selection was also impacted by time and access constraints during data gathering.

### **3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Three primary school teachers who were in charge of instruction were interviewed in-depth as part of this study's qualitative research methodology, social Studies. The participants included: (1) Mrs Nurhayati, S.Pd—grade 4 teacher (2) Mr Syahidul Hak, S.Pd—grade 5 teacher (3) Mrs Rusmiati, S.Pd—grade 6 teacher. The interviews explored five core dimensions related to the delivery of Social Studies in primary education, namely lesson planning, teaching practices, student assessment and evaluation, integration of social and character values, and the availability of school resources and institutional support.

According to the teachers who were questioned, they created the Learning Implementation Plan (RPP) by coordinating it with the current national curriculum. The lesson plans are created thematically, considering the peculiarities of the students as well as the material's applicability in regional contexts. Every learning goal is well-defined and related to the daily lives of the pupils. The educators also view the National Curriculum, including the Independent Curriculum, as adaptable and responsive to the specific needs and contexts of different school environments.

In classroom practice, the lecture method remains the most commonly used approach for providing topics. Fortunately, teachers have been using more participatory techniques, such as responses to questions and open-ended discussions, in an attempt to boost student engagement. They are aware that genuine learning occurs. When students are actively engaged in their education, they react enthusiastically when given the chance to express their opinions, according to Ms. Nurhayati. Mr Syahidul Hak emphasized how crucial it is to keep the classroom atmosphere lively and interesting. At the exact same time, Ms Rusmiati saw that her pupils found social studies more engaging and relevant when they participated in class discussions.

Teachers use simple visual aids like globes, maps, and images to help pupils better understand the material. Students can better grasp abstract ideas like spatial geography and cultural diversity with the aid of these materials. According to Ms Rusmiati, visual aids are very helpful when it comes to helping children grasp complex ideas. However, the institution's lack of resources continues to be a significant barrier. Many classrooms lack projecting equipment, and internet availability varies. These circumstances limit the capacity of educators to be creative in the way they offer education and make it more difficult to integrate digital resources.

Instructors noted that overall student engagement was high, particularly when discussion-based learning strategies were used. Students enthusiastically participated by voicing their viewpoints, posing queries, and exhibiting critical thinking abilities. It was believed that this kind of involvement was crucial to developing pupils' capacity for interactions with other and rational thoughts. Students' enthusiastic participation also made the learning environment livelier as well as more entertaining.

Teachers apply a variety of valuation techniques. These consist of introspective exercises, individual assignments, and project-based assessments intended to evaluate the cognitive, behavioural, and affective domains. Students are guided in identifying their strengths and areas for improvement through the systematic creation of evaluation criteria and the provision of constructive feedback. The long-term success of schools and students is the goal of this assessment approach.

Integrating character education into social studies lessons is also highly stressed by the instructors. Lessons incorporate both overt (during conversations) and covert (by modeling good behaviour) core principles including accountability, honesty, respect for variety, and collaboration. For example, Ms. Nurhayati stresses the need of working together in groups to foster a sense of mutual support. Both Mr. Syahidul Hak and Ms. Rusmiati, in an effort to

cultivate empathy and civic consciousness in their pupils, often include current social topics into their teachings.

Textbooks and instructional media are provided by the school, however there is still a lack of adequate technical infrastructure. Lessons might be less interesting and less technology-driven due to a lack of IT resources and unreliable connectivity. Teachers are hoping that with better facilities and more institutional support, social studies curriculum can adapt to meet the needs of today's students.

#### **4. FINDINGS**

According to this study's results, social studies classes at MIS Hayatul Islamiyah, Depok follow the national curriculum, namely the Independent Curriculum, which the instructors there see as flexible enough to accommodate their students' requirements and the school's specific circumstances. A lot of teachers still use lectures as their main mode of instruction, but they also often use interactive approaches like question and answer sessions and class debates to raise student engagement. This combination method was effective since children are usually more engaged and enthusiastic during participation activities. Teachers use simple visual aids, such as maps, pictures, and globes to help students understand complex ideas. These tools are useful for explaining difficult subjects such as geography and cultural diversity. Despite these efforts, the implementation of more innovative teaching practices is hampered by limited infrastructure, including inadequate digital tools and unreliable internet access in the classroom. However, teachers employ a variety of assessment techniques such as project work and reflective assignments and offer direct, constructive feedback to support students' academic progress. In addition, values-based education is seamlessly integrated into the curriculum, encouraging fundamental character traits such as civic duty, honesty, and cooperation through cooperative group projects.

#### **5. CONCLUSION**

The implementation of Social Studies in private elementary schools within the framework of the national curriculum shows a genuine effort to combine academic learning with character development. Teachers adapt lesson plans in accordance with the Independent Curriculum and incorporate interactive strategies to increase student participation. Teachers remain committed to teaching fundamental values, such as cooperation, integrity, and citizenship, despite technological infrastructure constraints. To achieve optimal learning outcomes, ongoing support in the form of teacher development and improvement of school

facilities is essential. Strengthening these areas will allow Social Studies education to play a more significant role in fostering students' intellectual and moral development.

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