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The role of social studies learning in fostering tolerance and multicultural awareness of elementary school students through the SDGs approach

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ABSTRACT

The problem faced in learning in Elementary Schools is how to foster an attitude of tolerance and multicultural awareness amidst existing social diversity. Social Studies (IPS) learning can play a strategic role in overcoming these challenges. The main objective of this study is to examine the role of IPS learning in fostering an attitude of tolerance and multicultural awareness of elementary school students through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) approach. This study uses a qualitative approach with a literature review research design. The subjects in this study include relevant literature sources such as journal articles, books, and documents that discuss Social Studies learning, multicultural education, and SDGs integration. The data collection method is carried out using documentation techniques, and data analysis uses content analysis to extract relevant information. The results of the study indicate that Social Studies learning that integrates SDGs can increase social awareness and strengthen students' attitudes of tolerance towards cultural, social, and religious diversity. The conclusion of this study indicates that Social Studies learning with the SDGs approach can form a generation that is more tolerant and cares about diversity. The implication of this study is the importance of integrating SDGs values into the social studies education curriculum to create inclusive students who are ready to face global challenges.



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Introduction

Education is the key to the success of a country in facing the challenges of the globalization era. Countries that have an advanced education system will be able to compete in various fields such as politics, economics, and technology (Ardiansyah et al., 2019). Quality education is a long-term investment in building a young generation that is superior, able to compete, and brings progress to the nation in the future. By providing quality education, a country prepares the young generation to face challenges and take advantage of opportunities in the future. Education also plays an important role in developing students' character, skills, and potential.

Indonesia as a country rich in ethnic, religious, racial, cultural, and linguistic diversity faces great challenges in maintaining national unity and unity. In this context, education plays a central role in shaping students' character from an early age, especially in fostering tolerance and multicultural awareness. Social Science (IPS)

learning at the elementary school level is a strategic vehicle to equip students with an understanding of diversity and the importance of living in harmony in the midst of differences.

Social studies subjects not only convey factual knowledge, but also become a means of internalizing social and humanitarian values. Through social studies learning, students are introduced to plural social realities and are invited to develop an attitude of mutual respect, respect, and cooperation. Research conducted by Wahyuni (2020) shows that social studies learning can increase students' understanding of the importance of tolerance values in social life, especially if it is associated with the context of daily life. In addition, Oktaviana's (2024) research also strengthens these findings, by showing that multicultural education in social studies learning plays an important role in shaping the character of tolerance and respect for differences.

As the times develop, the learning approach also needs to be adjusted to be relevant to global issues. One of the approaches that can be integrated in social studies learning is the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) approach. The SDGs are a sustainable development agenda launched by the United Nations (UN), which includes the goal of creating an inclusive, equitable, and tolerant society. The integration of SDGs values in social studies learning allows students to understand that differences are strengths that must be taken care of for the realization of a peaceful and sustainable life.

Several studies have shown the effectiveness of the SDGs approach in learning. Research by Rahayu and Santosa (2022) revealed that the SDGs approach can increase students' social awareness and global insight, especially in understanding issues such as social justice, gender equality, and world peace. Therefore, linking social studies learning with the SDGs approach is a strategic step to foster tolerance and multicultural awareness from an early age.

Based on this description, this article aims to examine the role of social studies learning in fostering tolerance and multicultural awareness of elementary school students through the SDGs approach. This study is expected to contribute to the development of social studies learning practices that are not only based on the national curriculum, but also in harmony with global issues relevant to the lives of current and future students.

Method

This study uses the literature review method to analyze the role of social studies learning in fostering tolerance and multicultural awareness of elementary school students through the SDGs approach. The study process begins with the collection of relevant literature sources, including journal articles, books, and documents that discuss social studies learning, multicultural education, tolerance attitudes, and the integration of SDGs values in the context of basic education. Literature searches are conducted through electronic databases such as Google Scholar using key keywords such as "social studies learning", "tolerance", "multicultural", "SDGs", and "primary school". Furthermore, the literature obtained was selected based on inclusion criteria, namely publications within the last 10 years, relevant to the context of basic education and social studies learning, and discussed aspects of tolerance and multiculturalism that are integrated with the SDGs. After that, the selected literature was analyzed thematically to identify concepts, learning strategies, and research results related to instilling tolerance and multicultural awareness through social studies learning. The results of the analysis were then synthesized to build a comprehensive understanding of the role of social studies learning in supporting the achievement of SDGs goals in the elementary school environment. Using this literature review approach, the research aims to provide a systematic and in-depth picture as the basis for the development of an effective social studies learning model in fostering tolerance and multicultural awareness in elementary school students.

Results and Discussions

Based on the literature review conducted, it can be concluded that social studies learning in elementary schools (SD) has a significant role in fostering tolerance and multicultural awareness among students. Research that has been conducted shows that through social studies learning based on diversity values, students are introduced to various social, cultural, and religious aspects that exist in society. This helps students to understand the importance of mutual respect for each other and learn to live in harmony in the midst of differences. The following table presents a summary of findings from some of the relevant studies.

In this study, it was found that social studies learning which raises the theme of social, cultural, religious, and racial diversity in Indonesia is an important means to teach students about the importance of mutual respect for differences. For example, Wahyuni's (2020) research shows that social studies learning that involves discussions about ethnic and religious diversity in Indonesia can strengthen mutual respect between students. This happens because students are given an understanding of the various differences that exist in society, as well as the values that need to be maintained to realize unity.

Another important finding is that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) approach, in particular the 4th goal that focuses on quality and inclusive education, makes a strong contribution in introducing the concepts of social justice and gender equality to students. Research by Rahayu & Santosa (2022) shows that by integrating SDGs goals in social studies learning, students not only learn about diversity, but also about equality and human rights, which further broadens their global horizons. In addition to classroom learning, extracurricular activities were also found to have a significant role in fostering tolerance and multiculturalism among students. In research by Saputra (2024), extracurricular activities involving students from various cultural backgrounds, such as sports or art, help them learn to work together despite their differences. This activity strengthens the values of tolerance in students' daily lives.

Table 1. Result of the Study on Social Studies and SDGs Learning

Research	Key Findings	Relevance to Social Studies Learning in Elementasy School
Relevation (2020)	Social studies learning increases students' tolerance towards cultural and social diversity.	Emphasizing that social studies can form the character of tolerant students through understanding diversity.
Saputra (2024)	Extracurricular activities can strengthen tolerance through interaction between students with different backgrounds.	Showing that extracurricular activities support the development of multicultural values in social studies.
Rahayu & Santosa (2022)	The SDGs approach increases students' social awareness of social justice, gender equality, and appreciation for diversity.	Connecting social studies learning with the SDGs, strengthening education based on diversity and equality.

The results of this study show that Social Science (IPS) learning in elementary schools (SD) has a very important role in fostering tolerance and multicultural awareness in students. Social studies learning based on social, cultural, religious, and racial diversity provides students with a deeper understanding of the importance of mutual respect for differences. By studying various aspects of people's lives, students not only understand factual knowledge about diversity, but also learn to apply those values in their daily lives. As explained by Wahyuni (2020), social studies learning can lead students to appreciate the diversity that exists around them, including religious, racial, and cultural differences, as well as develop a higher attitude of tolerance.

In addition, the importance of integrating Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) values in social studies learning was also revealed. The SDGs approach, in particular the 4th goal that focuses on quality and inclusive education, provides a broader framework for teachers to teach the values of social justice, gender equality, and respect for diversity. As revealed by Rahayu & Santosa (2022), by integrating the SDGs in learning, students not only learn about the diversity in their environment, but also about global social challenges such as social inequality and human rights. This approach allows students to develop a more comprehensive understanding of global social issues, while shaping their character to become individuals who care about those issues, both locally and internationally.

Extracurricular activities also play an important role in strengthening multicultural values among students. In a study conducted by Saputra (2024), it was explained that activities such as sports, art, and religious activities can be an effective means of introducing students to cultural diversity. Through interaction in these various activities, students learn to work together despite having different cultural backgrounds. This activity helps students strengthen mutual respect and tolerance among themselves, which ultimately enriches their experience in dealing with the diversity that exists around them. Thus, extracurricular activities become a very important complement to strengthen formal learning in the classroom, which ultimately supports the development of a more inclusive and open student character and open to differences.

Although the results found are very relevant and provide a comprehensive understanding, this study has limitations because it relies only on secondary sources. Therefore, it is suggested that the next study involves direct observation in the field, where teachers and students can play a direct role in implementing and observing the implementation of social studies learning based on SDGs and multiculturalism. This approach will provide a clearer picture of the real impact of such learning in the classroom and how students respond to the values taught.

Conclusions

Social Science (IPS) learning at the elementary school (SD) level plays an important role in fostering tolerance and multicultural awareness among students, especially when integrated with the values of the Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs). This approach not only helps students to understand the importance of social, cultural, religious, and racial diversity, but also shapes their character to live in harmony in the midst of differences. By introducing the concepts of social justice, gender equality, and respect for diversity through the SDGs-based social studies curriculum, students can be more sensitive to global and local issues, and better prepared to play an active role in creating an inclusive and sustainable society. Therefore, the integration of SDGs in social studies learning is very important to produce a young generation that is tolerant, caring, and ready to face the challenges of an increasingly connected world.

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