

INTEGRATION OF SOCIAL EDUCATION IN THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

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Abstract

This research examines the importance of integrating social education in the school curriculum as an effort to prepare students to face social challenges in the modern era. This study uses the literature analysis method. The results show that the integration of social education in the curriculum can improve students' social intelligence, ability to empathise and understanding of contemporary social issues. However, effective implementation requires adequate teacher training, policy support and continuous evaluation. The study concludes that the integration of social education in the school curriculum is a key strategy in shaping a generation that not only excels academically but also has the necessary social skills to contribute positively in society.

Keywords: integration, social education, curriculum, school.

Introduction

Education is an important tool in shaping a generation that is not only academically smart, but also has good social skills. In the era of globalisation and rapid technological development, there is a tendency for social skills and empathy among the younger generation to decline (Sitopu et al., 2024); (Guna et al., 2024); (Fawait et al., 2024)..

Today's youth, often referred to as the digital native generation, grew up in a very different environment than previous generations. They are exposed to digital technology from an early age and spend most of their time interacting through the screens of electronic devices. As a result, many of them have difficulty building meaningful interpersonal relationships and demonstrating empathy in face-to-face interactions. Research shows that excessive social media use can reduce the ability to read non-verbal cues and understand others' emotions, which are important components of social skills (Wang et al., 2023). (Wang et al., 2023).

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This decline in social skills and empathy has a significant impact on various aspects of young people's lives. In the school environment, it can lead to increased cases of bullying and social isolation. In a broader context, the lack of social skills may affect their future career prospects, as many jobs require the ability to collaborate and communicate effectively. (An, 2023). Furthermore, decreased empathy can result in reduced social cohesion and participation in community activities. Therefore, it is important for educational institutions and society to take proactive measures to address this issue, such as through the integration of social-emotional education in the curriculum and encouraging direct interaction between individuals (Kavanagh, 2021). (Kavanagh, 2021).

The current school curriculum tends to focus more on the development of cognitive aspects and less on the social-emotional aspects of students. Social education is often only inserted in certain subjects or becomes part of optional extracurricular activities. As a result, not all students get equal opportunities to develop their social skills. (Syakhrani & Aslan, 2024); (Judijanto et al., 2024).

The integration of social education in the school curriculum is important to form a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent, but also has social sensitivity, empathy and good interaction skills. This is in line with the objectives of national education as stated in Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, which emphasises the importance of developing the potential of students to become human beings who are faithful, noble, healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens. (Dandan et al., 2023)..

Therefore, this study aims to examine strategies for integrating social education in the school curriculum, identify challenges that may be faced, and analyse the impact of such integration on students' social skills development.

Research Methods

The study in this research uses the literature research method. Literature research method, also known as literature study or literature review, is a research method that focuses on collecting and analysing information from various written sources relevant to the research topic. (Jelahut, 2022); (JUNAIDI, 2021).

Results and Research

Concept of Social Education

Social education is a learning process that aims to develop an individual's ability to interact, communicate and adapt to their social environment. This education includes the cultivation of values, norms, and social skills needed to become effective and responsible members of society. (Aldana et al., 2023).. Through social education, individuals are prepared to understand and appreciate cultural diversity, resolve conflicts peacefully, actively participate in community life, and develop empathy and

concern for others. Social education is not only limited to formal learning at school, but also includes daily experiences and interactions in the family, community and wider society, all of which contribute to the formation of a person's character and social competence. (Sartika & Fransiska, 2024)..

The main objective of social education is to mould individuals who are able to play an active and positive role in society. It aims to develop social awareness, interpersonal skills and ethical values necessary to live harmoniously in a diverse community. Through social education, individuals are expected to understand and respect the rights of others, have sensitivity to social issues, be able to collaborate effectively, and contribute to the well-being of the community. (Iksal et al., 2024); (Irwan et al., 2024). In addition, social education also aims to instil a sense of social responsibility, develop critical thinking skills about social issues, and prepare individuals to become active citizens and participate in the democratic process. (Dandan et al., 2023).. Thus, social education not only focuses on individual development, but also on the formation of a more just, inclusive and sustainable society.

Social education consists of several important components that are interrelated and support each other. Firstly, social knowledge is a foundation that includes an understanding of history, culture, government systems, economics and contemporary issues. This component provides the context and background necessary to understand social dynamics. Secondly, social skills which include the ability to communicate effectively, conflict resolution, teamwork, and decision-making. These skills are essential for daily interaction and active participation in society. Third, social values and attitudes, such as empathy, tolerance, fairness, and social responsibility, which shape individuals' character and influence their behaviour in social contexts. (Aldana et al., 2023)..

The fourth component is practical experience, which gives individuals the opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills in real-life situations, whether through community service projects, simulations, or extracurricular activities. The fifth is global awareness and multiculturalism, which helps individuals understand and appreciate cultural diversity and global issues. Sixth, media and information literacy, which is important in the digital age to help individuals become critical consumers of information and responsible producers of content. (Farid & Ali, 2024). Finally, citizenship education, which prepares individuals to actively participate in democratic processes and understand their rights and responsibilities as citizens. All these components work together to form individuals who are socially competent and able to contribute positively to Society (Vera-Gajardo & Ferrés, 2020)..

School Curriculum

The curriculum is a set of plans and arrangements regarding the objectives, content, and subject matter as well as the means used as guidelines for organising learning activities to achieve certain educational objectives. It is the core of the formal education process that includes not only a list of subjects, but also planned learning experiences, both inside and outside the classroom. The curriculum serves as a guide for educators in designing, implementing and evaluating the learning process, as well as ensuring that learners acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes in accordance with established educational standards. (Juliani & Aslan, 2024). In addition, the curriculum also reflects the values and educational priorities of a society, and adapts to social change, technology, and global needs, so that it continues to develop and update over time to meet the demands of the times and the needs of learners (Ikhlas et al., 2024)..

The curriculum component consists of several important elements that are interrelated and support each other to achieve the set educational goals. First, curriculum objectives are the main foundation that determines the direction and goals of education. These objectives usually include cognitive, affective and psychomotor aspects that are expected to be achieved by learners. Second, the content or learning materials that include knowledge, skills and attitudes that will be taught to learners. Third, learning strategies that include methods, techniques, and approaches used to deliver the material and achieve learning objectives. Fourth, media and learning resources that support the learning process, including textbooks, teaching aids, technology, and other resources. (Park, 2022).

The fifth component is evaluation, which is an assessment process to measure the achievement of learning objectives and the effectiveness of the curriculum as a whole. Sixth, the timing or allocation of lesson hours for each subject or learning activity. Seventh, curriculum management which involves planning, implementing and monitoring the implementation of the curriculum at the school and classroom levels. Finally, the curriculum development component which includes the process of periodically reviewing and updating the curriculum to ensure its relevance to the times and the needs of learners. All these components work together in an integrated system to create meaningful and effective learning experiences for learners. (Sinha, 2023).

Curriculum development is a dynamic and ongoing process of planning, designing, implementing and evaluating educational programmes to meet the needs of learners and the changing demands of society. The process involves a wide range of stakeholders, including educators, curriculum experts, policy makers, parents and communities, to identify educational objectives, select relevant content, design effective learning strategies and develop appropriate assessment systems. (Maina, 2023). Curriculum development also considers factors such as scientific and technological developments, socio-cultural changes, labour market needs, and national and international education policies. The ultimate goal is to create a curriculum that is

flexible, adaptive, and responsive to change, so that it can prepare learners to face the challenges of the future with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed in their personal, professional, and responsible citizenship (Constantin & Popovici, 2023). (Constantin & Popovici, 2022)..

Curriculum Integration

Curriculum integration is an approach to curriculum development and implementation that aims to connect and unify different disciplines, concepts, skills and learning experiences into a cohesive and meaningful framework. This approach seeks to remove traditional boundaries between different subjects, creating holistic and contextualised learning, and enabling learners to understand the interconnections between different areas of knowledge. (Basri & Abdullah, 2024). Curriculum integration encourages deeper understanding, critical thinking and the ability to apply knowledge in real-life situations, utilising a variety of learning methods such as project-based, thematic or interdisciplinary learning. The ultimate goal is to prepare learners to deal with the complexities of the real world in a more comprehensive and relevant way, while developing 21st century skills such as creativity, collaboration, communication and problem-solving. (Algabri, 2020).

Models of curriculum integration are conceptual frameworks used to design and implement an integrated approach to learning. Some commonly used models include multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary models. (Hidayat et al., 2023). The multidisciplinary model involves teaching themes or concepts from different disciplinary perspectives, while maintaining interdisciplinary boundaries. The interdisciplinary model further integrates two or more disciplines, creating a deeper synthesis of knowledge and skills. Meanwhile, the transdisciplinary model goes beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries, focusing on complex problems or questions that require cross-disciplinary perspectives to solve. (Al-Hidayah & Wahyuni, 2020)..

Other models that are also significant in curriculum integration include problem-based learning, project-based learning and thematic learning. Problem- and project-based learning engage students in authentic and collaborative inquiry to solve real-world problems or create meaningful products, while thematic learning organises the curriculum around a central theme that connects different disciplines. (Li, 2024). Each of these models has unique characteristics and strengths, and the selection of an appropriate model depends on the learning objectives, educational context and learners' needs. Effective application of these models can increase the relevance of learning, deepen conceptual understanding, and develop higher-order thinking skills in learners. (Adawiah, 2021).

Curriculum integration provides significant benefits in the learning process and learner development. Firstly, it increases the relevance and contextualisation of learning by linking different disciplines, so that learners can understand the

interrelationship between concepts and their application in real life. Second, curriculum integration encourages the development of critical thinking, creativity and problem-solving skills, as learners are exposed to complex situations that require analysis from multiple perspectives. Third, this approach can increase learners' motivation and engagement in learning, as the material presented is more holistic and meaningful. Fourth, curriculum integration helps develop collaboration and communication skills, and supports deeper and longer-lasting learning. Fifth, this approach is more efficient in the use of learning time as it avoids redundancy of material between subjects. Finally, curriculum integration is more in line with the demands of an increasingly complex and interdependent modern world, better preparing learners to face the challenges of the 21st century. (Sarbaini et al., 2022)..

Strategies for Integrating Social Education in the Curriculum

Social education integration strategies in the curriculum are systematic efforts to integrate social aspects into various subjects and learning activities. One of the main approaches is through thematic learning, where social themes such as justice, diversity or civic responsibility can be the main focus that connects various disciplines. For example, in discussing the theme of social justice, students can analyse historical events, study economic concepts related to inequality, and explore literary works that address social issues. This approach allows students to understand the complexity of social issues from multiple perspectives (Arnadi et al., 2021).

Another effective strategy is through project or problem-based learning that focuses on contemporary social issues. Students can be involved in projects that require them to research, analyse and propose solutions to social problems in their community or even on a global scale. For example, a project on plastic waste reduction could involve scientific studies on environmental impacts, public policy analyses and public awareness campaigns. This approach not only integrates social education into various subjects, but also develops important skills such as research, problem-solving, and advocacy. (Harris et al., 2021).

The use of technology and digital media can also be a powerful strategy in integrating social education. Social media platforms, blogs or online forums can be used as tools to discuss social issues, collaborate with students from different backgrounds and expand global understanding. Digital simulations or serious games designed specifically for social learning can provide immersive experiences that help students understand complex social dynamics. In addition, the use of data and digital visualisation can help students analyse social trends and make evidence-based inferences. (Huang & Jong, 2020).

Finally, social education integration strategies can also involve partnerships with communities and out-of-school organisations. Field trips, interviews with community leaders or community service projects can provide hands-on experiences that enrich

students' understanding of social issues. Collaboration with museums, libraries or other cultural institutions can expand learning resources and provide a richer context for social and cultural understanding. These strategies, when implemented in a holistic and integrated manner, can significantly increase the relevance and impact of social education in the school curriculum.

Challenges and Barriers to Social Education Integration

The integration of social education into the curriculum faces some significant challenges and barriers. One of the main challenges is resistance to change within established educational systems. Many educators and administrators may be comfortable with traditional approaches that separate subjects, and reluctant to adopt a more integrated approach. (Tubagus et al., 2023); (Aslan & Shiong, 2023). Curriculum change often requires a paradigm shift in the way of thinking about education, which can create discomfort and uncertainty. In addition, there are concerns that a focus on social issues may reduce time spent on "core" academic material that is often the focus of standardised tests. (Legbo, 2022).

Another significant challenge is the lack of adequate training and professional development for teachers. Integrating social education requires specialised pedagogical skills, including the ability to facilitate discussions on sensitive topics, integrate multiple perspectives and connect social issues with other subject matter. Many teachers may feel unprepared or uncomfortable discussing complex or controversial social issues in the classroom. (Jr, 2020). In addition, the lack of appropriate resources and learning materials can be a major obstacle. The development or acquisition of quality and relevant learning materials for integrated social education can require a significant investment of time and funds (Chukwudi & Usman, 2023)..

Political and social barriers can also pose a major challenge to the integration of social education. Social issues are often controversial and can spark debate or conflict in the school community. Some parents or community members may object to the discussion of certain topics in schools, concerned that this may affect their children's values or beliefs. Political pressure or overly restrictive education policies may also limit the flexibility of schools in integrating social education. In some cases, concerns about 'indoctrination' or bias in the teaching of social issues can lead to resistance to social education initiatives. (Mustaqim & Azani, 2024).

Finally, practical challenges such as time and resource constraints can be significant barriers. School curricula are often already packed, and finding space to integrate social education can be difficult. Budget constraints can also limit schools' ability to implement new programmes or provide the necessary training. (Supriadi & Khurniawan, 2023).. In addition, assessment and evaluation of integrated social education can be challenging. Measuring complex and often qualitative social learning outcomes can be difficult, especially in an education system that relies heavily on

standardised and quantitative assessments. Overcoming these challenges requires a long-term commitment, support from various stakeholders and a flexible and adaptive approach to the implementation of integrated social education. (Badeni & Saparahayuningsih, 2021).

Impact of Social Education Integration on Students

The integration of social education into the curriculum has significant and diverse impacts on students. One of the main impacts is increased student awareness and understanding of complex social issues. Through integrated social education, students gain a deeper understanding of issues such as inequality, social justice, environmental sustainability and cultural diversity. This helps them develop a broader and more critical perspective of the world around them. (Sarsour & Hammoud, 2021).. Students become better able to recognise the connections between different aspects of social life and understand how social issues are interrelated. This ability is crucial in preparing them to become informed and actively engaged citizens in an increasingly complex and globalised society. (Liou, 2020).

The second important impact is the improvement of students' critical and analytical thinking skills. Integrated social education encourages students to analyse information from different points of view, evaluate sources of information and make informed judgements. They learn to question assumptions, identify biases, and consider the consequences of different actions or policies. This learning process also enhances students' problem-solving and decision-making skills. (Jeong, 2023). Students not only learn about social problems, but are also encouraged to think about potential solutions and consider the implications of different approaches in addressing those problems. These skills are invaluable, not only in an academic context but also in their future personal and professional lives. (Fakhrurrozi et al., 2023)..

The integration of social education also has a significant impact on the development of students' empathy and social-emotional skills. Through the exploration of social issues and diverse perspectives, students learn to understand and appreciate the experiences and viewpoints of others. They develop the ability to see the world through the eyes of others, which is an important foundation for empathy and cross-cultural understanding. This process also helps students develop better communication skills, especially in discussing sensitive or controversial topics. (Kim, 2021). They learn to listen actively, express their opinions in a constructive way, and engage in meaningful dialogue with people who may have different views. The development of these social-emotional skills is crucial in preparing students to interact effectively in a diverse and interconnected society. (Zuhri & Syamsi, 2023)..

Finally, the integration of social education has a positive impact on students' motivation and engagement in learning. By linking subject matter to relevant real-world issues, integrated social education makes learning more meaningful and interesting for

students. They can see a direct connection between what they learn at school and their daily lives and the world around them. (Nurdiana et al., 2023); (Muharrom et al., 2023). This can increase students' curiosity and interest in learning, encouraging them to explore topics more deeply outside the classroom. In addition, this approach often involves active learning methods such as problem-based projects, group discussions, and community engagement, which can increase students' participation and involvement in the learning process. As a result, students not only acquire knowledge, but also develop a sense of social responsibility and a desire to contribute positively to their society. (Syarifah & Ifadah, 2023).

Conclusion

The integration of social education in the school curriculum is an important step in shaping a generation that is not only academically intelligent, but also has high social intelligence. This approach aims to prepare students to face challenges in an increasingly complex society. By incorporating social aspects into various subjects, students are expected to develop the ability to interact, empathise and understand the social dynamics around them. It also helps to create a learning environment that is more holistic and relevant to everyday life.

The successful integration of social education in the curriculum depends on the commitment of all parties, including policy makers, educators and the community. Adequate training is required for teachers to effectively integrate social aspects in their teaching. In addition, continuous evaluation and adjustment of this integration method is essential to ensure its relevance to the times. With the right approach, the integration of social education in the school curriculum can be a catalyst in shaping a generation that is not only intelligent, but also highly socially sensitive and ready to contribute positively to society.

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