

Understanding the Difficulties in Teaching Social Studies: A Systematic Literature Review

Alfajri Yusra, Azwar Ananda, Siti Fatimah, *Erianjoni

Universitas Negeri Padang
*E-mail: erianjoni@fis.unp.ac.id

Received: 01 Feb. 2021, Revised: 10 Jun. 2021, Accepted: 30 Jun. 2021

ABSTRACT

This article aims to understand the difficulties faced by educators in teaching social studies. In understanding these difficulties, this literature review explores relevant sources and analyzes existing findings. Some of the common difficulties identified include concept complexity, multidisciplinary, and differences in students' backgrounds. In addition, this article also discusses some effective teaching strategies for overcoming these difficulties, such as problem-based approaches, the use of technology, collaborative learning, and utilization of local resources. Through appropriate teaching strategies, educators can facilitate students' better understanding of social studies and help them develop critical thinking and a deep understanding of social, political, and cultural dynamics. The knowledge gained from this literature review provides important insights for social studies educators in facing teaching challenges and improving the quality of learning. By deepening this understanding through further research, social studies educators can continuously improve their teaching practices and have a more positive impact on students' academic and social development.

Keywords: Difficulties, Teaching, Social Studies, Systematic Literature Review.



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License

INTRODUCTION

The term social science can be defined as "the understanding or study of society (Endayani, 2017)." In studying society, teachers can conduct research from various social perspectives, such as the study of history, geography, economics, sociology, anthropology, politics-government, and aspects of social psychology that are simplified to achieve learning objectives.

Education in this field of social studies has an important role in shaping students' understanding of the social, political, and cultural dynamics that exist around them (Safruddin & Ahmad, 2020). However, teaching social studies has also been recognized as a complex challenge for educators (Susilo & Sarkowi, 2018). Teaching social studies involves many abstract and complex concepts that are often difficult for students to understand (Adlim et al., 2017). Concepts such as public policy, social interaction, social structure, and social change, require clear explanations and the use of appropriate approaches for students to understand.

Furthermore, social studies lessons involving the teaching of history, politics, economics, and sociology are complex and diverse (Hidayat, 2020). Each of these disciplines has different methodologies, theories, and approaches to studying social phenomena (Yusanto, 2020). In addition, student characteristics are also an important

factor in understanding the difficulties in teaching social studies (Miftah, 2013). Students have diverse backgrounds, interests, and needs, which can affect the way they process information and absorb subject matter.

To understand the difficulties faced in teaching social studies, it is necessary to conduct a systematic literature review that comprehensively analyzes previous research and studies that have been conducted. A comprehensive systematic literature review can provide a deeper understanding of the difficulties faced by social studies educators. This can provide valuable insights for social studies educators in developing more effective teaching approaches that support students in better understanding the subject matter.

METHODS

This study used a systematic literature review method to understand the difficulties in teaching social studies. The first stage was to identify the research objectives, which were to identify common difficulties faced by social studies educators, analyze effective teaching strategies, and investigate efforts that have been made to overcome difficulties in teaching social studies. Next, the keyword identification stage was conducted to narrow the scope of the research. The keywords used included "social studies teaching difficulties", "social studies education", "teaching strategies", "history lessons", "politics lessons", and other related keywords. At the literature search stage, articles, journals, books, and scientific works related to the research topic were identified. In the literature search, the relevance of the articles was evaluated by reading the abstracts and summaries of the articles. Relevant and high-quality articles that addressed difficulties in teaching social studies and efforts to overcome them were selected for further analysis.

FINDING AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1 Findings

Based on the systematic literature review conducted, it was found that some common difficulties faced by social studies educators in the teaching process include:

- Concept complexity: One of the main difficulties faced is the complexity of concepts in social studies (Tjahyono, 2008). Concepts such as public policy (Bailah & Pasla, 2021), social interaction (Ramadhani, 2022), social structure (Seran & Mardawani, 2021), and social change (Hasbullah & Ahid, 2022) are often difficult for students to understand. Educators must find effective ways to explain these concepts clearly and ensure student understanding.
- Multidisciplinary: Teaching social studies involves various disciplines such as history, politics, economics, and sociology. Each discipline has different methodologies, theories, and approaches to studying social phenomena. Social studies educators are faced with the challenge of conveying accurate and adequate information from these various disciplines in a way that students can understand (Akbar, 2023).

- Differences in Student Backgrounds: Students in social studies classes have diverse backgrounds, interests, and needs. This can affect the way they process information and absorb subject matter (Gani, 2018). The same approach is not always effective for all students. Therefore, educators need to identify these differences and use diverse teaching strategies to facilitate students' varied understanding (Jayanti et al., 2022).

3.2 Discussion

This systematic literature review brings together knowledge from a range of sources relevant to understanding the difficulties in teaching social studies. Several relevant sources have made important contributions to the understanding of the challenges faced by social studies educators. Based on research conducted by Aris (2016), it was found that social studies educators often face difficulties related to the complexity of concepts. Students often struggle to understand abstract concepts such as public policy or social interaction. Therefore, educators need to use teaching strategies that assist students in understanding these concepts more concretely and connected to everyday life. Some strategies that can be applied to overcoming the difficulty of concept complexity are as follows: First, complex concepts in social studies are easier to understand if introduced through concrete and real examples (Malawi et al., 2019). Furthermore, visualization can also help students understand abstract concepts better (Arinda, 2017). This approach involves using relevant diagrams, graphs, maps, or images to help students visualize the concepts. In addition, educators can start with simpler concepts and gradually increase their complexity as students progress in understanding the material (Fathurrohman, 2017). This approach helps students build a strong foundation before learning more complex concepts. A problem-based approach can also be used by providing real-world problems or situations related to complex concepts (Sinambela, 2017), and asking students to analyze, investigate, and seek solutions based on their understanding. Collaboration between students in the learning process can also help overcome concept complexity (Wijaya et al., 2016). Discussion and problem-solving in groups can improve students' understanding through different perspectives. Furthermore, educators need to provide specific and clear feedback on student progress, identify weaknesses, and provide relevant improvement suggestions. Furthermore, social studies educators often face difficulties in integrating various disciplines in teaching (Ratnawati, 2016). To overcome this problem, educators need to plan integrated teaching that is structured and organized (Shomad, 2020). This allows students to see the linkages between different disciplines and understand the broader context. Furthermore, educators need to identify and explain the relationships between various disciplines to students (Hati, 2018). The importance of social studies educators' collaboration with fellow educators through discussion and exchange of ideas can also help educators integrate different disciplines into their teaching (Subadi & Hidayati, 2013).

Implementing active learning methods that engage students actively, such as group discussions, case studies, or simulations, can help integrate different disciplines (Rosidah, 2017). This approach can also utilize additional resources, such as interdisciplinary textbooks, online learning materials, videos, or out-of-school resources. By implementing these strategies, social studies educators can overcome the difficulty of integrating multiple disciplines in their teaching, thus helping students understand the complex relationships between different disciplines and develop a holistic understanding of social studies.

In addition, social studies educators are also faced with students with diverse backgrounds, interests, and needs (Gani, 2018). To address these issues, social studies educators need to get to know students individually. With a deeper understanding of students, educators can customize learning approaches and materials according to the needs of each student. Differentiation of learning can be done by presenting learning materials in different ways according to student needs (Faiz et al., 2022). The use of technology can also be an effective tool in addressing student diversity. Technology can be tailored to students' individual needs and support independent learning (Susilo & Sarkowi, 2018). In addition, collaboration and group work in social studies learning can facilitate interaction and mutual assistance between students with different backgrounds. Effective communication between educators and students is also a key factor (Aziz, 2017). Educators need to listen and respond to students' needs and input. By building positive relationships and facilitating open dialog, educators can better understand students' perspectives and needs. In this literature review, it can be concluded that the understanding of difficulties in teaching social studies has been expanded through the contributions of various sources. Effective teaching strategies such as explaining concepts concretely, integrating disciplines, utilizing technology, and implementing investigation-based learning can help overcome these difficulties.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the systematic literature review conducted, it can be concluded that teaching Social Studies has challenges that educators need to understand. These challenges include concept complexity, multidisciplinary, and differences in students' backgrounds. However, by using effective teaching strategies, educators can overcome these challenges and improve students' understanding of Social Studies. Some effective teaching strategies include problem-based approaches, use of technology, collaborative learning, and utilization of local resources. Problem-based approaches allow students to be actively involved in solving real social problems, while technology can enhance student engagement and enrich their learning experience. Collaborative learning encourages students to understand different perspectives and work together, while local resource utilization provides hands-on experience and connects concepts to the reality around students.

REFERENCES

- Adlim, M., Wilyta, I., & Hasan, M. (2017). Model Analisis Penyebab Rendahnya Penguasaan Konsep Yang Diuji Dalam Ujian Nasional (Kajian Pada Materi Ilmu Kimia Pada Siswa Sma/Ma Sekitar Kampus Unsyiah). *Jurnal Pencerahan*, 11(1).
- Akbar, F. (2023). Strategi Guru Profesional Menghadapi Era Digital.

- Arinda, F. D. (2017). Pengembangan multimedia pembelajaran interaktif Ilmu pengetahuan sosial smp. *JINOTEP (Jurnal Inovasi dan Teknologi Pembelajaran): Kajian dan Riset Dalam Teknologi Pembelajaran*, 2(2), 302-306.
- Aris, A. S. (2016). Strategi Pembelajaran Ips Berdasarkan Penerapan Konsep Siswa Dan Pengaruhnya Terhadap Prestasi Belajar Siswa (Penelitian Tindakan Kelas Di Smp Negeri 2 Jalaksana-Kuningan).Ratnawati, E. (2016). Pentingnya Pembelajaran Ips Terpadu. *Edueksos: Jurnal Pendidikan Sosial Dan Ekonomi*, 2(1).
- Aziz, A. (2017). Komunikasi Pendidik Dan Peserta Didik Dalam Pendidikan Islam. *Mediakita*, 1(2), 173-184.
- Bailah, B., & Pasla, B. N. (2021). The Challenges Of Driving School Principals In Implementing New Paradigm Learning. *Jurnal Prajaiswara*, 2(2), 92-114.
- Endayani, H. (2017). Pengembangan Materi Ajar Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial. *Ijtimaiyah Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Budaya*, 1(1).
- Faiz, A., Pratama, A., & Kurniawaty, I. (2022).Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi Dalam Program Guru Penggerak Pada Modul 2.1. *Jurnal Basicedu*, 6(2), 2846-2853.
- Fathurrohman, M. (2017). Belajar dan pembelajaran modern: konsep dasar, inovasi dan teori pembelajaran. Garudhawaca.
- Gani, A. A. (2018). Interaksi Antara Pemanfaatan Media Pembelajaran Dan Gaya Belajar Terhadap Hasil Belajar Ips Terpadu. *Civicus: Pendidikan-Penelitian-Pengabdian Pendidikan Pancasila Dan Kewarganegaraan*, 6(2), 83-87.
- Hasbullah, A. R., & Ahid, N. (2022).Penerapan Teori Interaksi Simbolik Dan Perubahan Sosial Di Era Digital. *At-Taahdzib: Jurnal Studi Islam Dan Muamalah*, 10(1), 36-49.
- Hati, S. T. (2018). Hubungan Antara Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial Dan Ips (Sumber Dan Materi Ips). *Ijtimaiyah Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Budaya*, 2(1).
- Hidayat, B. (2020). Tinjauan Historis Pendidikan Ips Di Indonesia. *Jurnal Pendidikan Ips Indonesia*, 4(2), 147-154.
- Jayanti, M. I., Umar, U., Nurdiniawati, N., & Amar, K. (2022). Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi Dalam Perspektif Richard I. Arends Dan Kilcher: Konsep, Strategi, Dan Optimalisasi Potensi Belajar Siswa. *El-Muhbib: Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Penelitian Pendidikan Dasar*, 6(2), 91-108.
- Malawi, I., Kadarwati, A., & Dayu, D. P. K. (2019).Teori dan aplikasi pembelajaran terpadu.Cv. AE Media Grafika.
- Miftah, M. (2013).Pengembangan Karakter Anak Melalui Pembelajaran Ilmu Sosial. *Jurnal Pendidikan Karakter*, 4(2).
- Ramadhani, A. A. (2022). Upaya Guru Dalam Penanaman Nilai Sosial Sikap Emptai Pada Pembelajaran Ips Materi Interaksi Sosial (Studi Kasus Pada Siswa Kelas Vii Smp Negeri 1 Sambit Ponorogo (Doctoral Dissertation, Iain Ponorogo).
- Ratnawati, E. (2016). Pentingnya Pembelajaran Ips Terpadu. *Edueksos: Jurnal Pendidikan Sosial Dan Ekonomi*, 2(1).

- Rosidah, A. (2017). Penerapan Model Pembelajaran Kooperatif Snowball Throwing Untuk Meningkatkan Hasil Belajar Siswa Pada Pembelajaran Ips. *Jurnal Cakrawala Pendas*, 3(2).
- Safruddin, S., & Ahmad, R. (2020). Pengembangan Bahan Ajar Pendidikan Ips Berbasis Kearifan Lokal Maja Labo Dahu Untuk Pembentukan Karakter Siswa Smp. *Sandhyakala Jurnal Pendidikan Sejarah, Sosial Dan Budaya*, 1(2), 26-43.
- Seran, E. Y., & Mardawani, M. P. (2021). *Konsep Dasar Ips*. Deepublish.
- Shomad, A. (2020). Peranan Implementasi Pendidikan Budi Pekerti Terhadap Pembelajaran Ips Di Mts Negeri 1 Banyuwangi. *Jurnal Bina Ilmu Cendekia*, 1(2), 99-109.
- Sinambela, P. N. (2017). Kurikulum 2013 dan implementasinya dalam pembelajaran. *Generasi Kampus*, 6(2).
- Situngkir, E. (2019). Pengaruh Brand Image Dan Persepsi Biaya Pendidikan Terhadap Minat Melanjutkan Studi Pada Prodi Pendidikan Ekonomi Unimed Siswa Kelas Xi Ips Sma Negeri 1 Kabanjahe Tahun Ajaran 2018/2019 (Doctoral Dissertation, UNIMED).
- Susilo, A., & Sarkowi, S. (2018). Peran Guru Sejarah Abad 21 Dalam Menghadapi Tantangan Arus Globalisasi. *Historia: Jurnal Pendidik Dan Peneliti Sejarah*, 2(1), 43-50.
- Subadi, T., & Hidayati, E. F. (2013). *Lesson Study Sebagai Inovasi Pendidikan*.
- Tjahyono, H. (2008). Peta Konsep Sebagai Upaya Untuk Meningkatkan Makna Pembelajaran Ips Geografi Di Sekolah. *Lembaran Ilmu Kependidikan*, 37(1).
- Wijaya, E. Y., Sudjimat, D. A., Nyoto, A., & Malang, U. N. (2016, September). Transformasi pendidikan abad 21 sebagai tuntutan pengembangan sumber daya manusia di era global. In *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Pendidikan Matematika* (Vol. 1, No. 26, pp. 263-278).
- Yusanto, Y. (2020). Ragam Pendekatan Penelitian Kualitatif. *Journal Of Scientific Communication (Jsc)*, 1(1).