



**INTEGRATION OF MULTICULTURAL VALUES IN
ELEMENTARY SOCIAL STUDIES LEARNING: CONCEPTUAL
ANALYSIS BASED ON CHARACTER EDUCATION LITERATURE**

**INTEGRASI NILAI-NILAI MULTIKULTURAL DALAM
PEMBELAJARAN IPS SEKOLAH DASAR: ANALISIS KONSEPTUAL
BERDASARKAN LITERATUR PENDIDIKAN KARAKTER**

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis secara konseptual integrasi nilai-nilai multikultural berbasis pendidikan karakter dalam pembelajaran Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial (IPS) di sekolah dasar. Fokus penelitian ini diarahkan pada pemetaan nilai-nilai multikultural yang esensial, strategi integrasinya dalam pembelajaran IPS, dan dampaknya terhadap pembentukan karakter siswa dalam konteks masyarakat Indonesia yang multikultural. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian pustaka dengan mengkaji berbagai sumber pustaka berupa buku teks akademik, artikel jurnal nasional dan internasional yang terkemuka, dokumen kurikulum, serta hasil penelitian terdahulu yang relevan. Teknik analisis data dilakukan melalui analisis konten secara sistematis dengan tahapan identifikasi, klasifikasi tema, interpretasi, dan sintesis konseptual dari literatur yang dipilih. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa nilai-nilai multikultural seperti toleransi, empati, kesetaraan, keadilan sosial, dan penghormatan terhadap keragaman telah substansial terkandung dalam tujuan dan ruang lingkup pembelajaran IPS, namun masih bersifat implisit dan belum terintegrasi secara optimal dalam praktik pembelajaran. Integrasi nilai-nilai multikultural berbasis pendidikan karakter melalui pembelajaran IPS terbukti memiliki potensi untuk memperkuat pembentukan karakter sosial siswa, khususnya dalam pengembangan sikap toleran, demokratis, dan inklusif. Oleh karena itu, diperlukan penguatan desain pembelajaran IPS yang holistik, partisipatif, dan kontekstual agar pembelajaran IPS tidak hanya berorientasi pada aspek kognitif, tetapi juga pada internalisasi nilai-nilai dan pembentukan karakter multikultural siswa.

Abstract

This study aims to conceptually analyze the integration of multicultural values based on character education in Social Sciences (IPS) learning in elementary schools. The focus of the study is directed at the mapping of essential multicultural values, their integration strategies in social studies learning, and their impact on the formation of students' character in the context of a multicultural Indonesian society. This research uses the library research method by examining various library sources in the form of academic textbooks, reputable national and international journal articles, curriculum documents, and relevant previous research results. The data analysis technique is carried out through systematic content analysis with the stages of identification, theme classification, interpretation, and conceptual synthesis of selected literature. The results show that multicultural values such as tolerance, empathy, equality, social justice, and respect for diversity have been substantially contained in the goals and scope of social studies learning, but are still implicit and have not been optimally integrated in learning practices. The integration of multicultural values based on character education through social studies has been proven to have the potential to strengthen the formation of students' social character, especially in the development of tolerant, democratic, and inclusive attitudes. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen a holistic, participatory, and contextual social studies learning design so that social studies learning is not only oriented to cognitive aspects, but also to internalizing values and forming students' multicultural character.

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INTRODUCTION

Basic education has a very strategic role in shaping the character and mindset of students from an early age. At the elementary school (SD) level, the educational process is not only directed at mastering cognitive knowledge, but also at the formation of social attitudes, and national character (West Java et al., 2025; Dusalan, 2025). The Indonesian state, which is known for its plurality, makes basic education a laboratory to instill the values of tolerance in respecting differences in ethnicity, religion, culture, language, and social background as the foundation of a harmonious social life (Zuhri, 2025).

Indonesia as a multicultural country with a very high level of diversity. This is based on data from the Central Statistics Agency that Indonesia has more than 1,300 ethnic groups and hundreds of regional languages spread across various regions. This diversity is a national asset, but it has the potential to cause social conflicts if it is not managed through education oriented towards tolerance and social justice from elementary school age (Muhibbullah et al., 2025). In recent years, various social phenomena have shown an increase in intolerance, discrimination, and exclusivism among the community, including those involving adolescents. Reports from educational institutions and academic observations indicate that there are still bullying practices, social stereotypes, and disrespect for differences in the elementary school environment (Ubaidillah et al., 2023). This condition reflects that the internalization of multicultural values through formal education has not run optimally. Social Science (IPS) learning in elementary schools conceptually has an urgent position in instilling multicultural values for students. Social studies contains studies on social life, culture, human interaction, and diverse community dynamics (Aprilia et al., 2024). Therefore, social studies not only functions as a means of social knowledge transfer, but also as a vehicle for the formation of social attitudes, empathy, and multicultural awareness of students.

However, in the practice of social studies learning in elementary schools, various problems are still found, especially in the learning process that is too textual, oriented to memorize facts, and lacks contextualization with the reality of student diversity. Multicultural values have not been explicitly and systematically integrated into social studies learning objectives, materials, methods, and evaluations. So that social studies learning has not fully played a role as a transformative character education instrument. In addition, character education integrated into social studies learning tends to be normative and symbolic. The values of tolerance, mutual cooperation, and respect for differences are only conveyed as slogans or moral knowledge, without being internalized through learning experiences and daily life (Hermansyah et al., 2024). This is one of the reasons why character values have not been realized in the real attitudes and behaviors of students.

Various character education literature emphasizes that value education must be carried out in an integrated and sustainable manner in the learning process. Character education is not enough to be taught as a separate subject, but must be internalized in all subjects, including social studies (Aryani et al., 2021). The integration of multicultural values in social studies learning is one of the strategic approaches to address the challenges of diversity and moral degradation in elementary schools (Dewi et al., 2024). A multicultural approach in social studies learning requires teachers to develop teaching materials that are inclusive, contextual, and sensitive to students' cultural differences. Through the integration of multicultural values, students are invited to understand diverse social realities, develop mutual respect, and build awareness of the importance of peaceful coexistence in a pluralistic society.

Some of the research focuses more on the implementation aspect or field studies, while the comprehensive conceptual foundation of the relationship between social studies, multiculturalism, and character education still needs further deepening. Literature-based conceptual analysis is

important to formulate a strong theoretical framework related to the integration of multicultural values in social studies learning. Through a review of the character education literature, relevant and applicable concepts, principles, and integration strategies can be identified in the context of social studies learning in elementary schools.

The results of the literature analysis are expected to be able to provide a mapping of essential multicultural values, such as tolerance, social justice, empathy, equality, and respect for diversity. In addition, this study can also provide direction on the role of teachers, learning design, and the school environment in supporting the effective internalization of multicultural values (Dumilah et al., 2025). As a solution to the problem of social studies learning that is still cognitive and less value-oriented, the integration of multicultural values based on character education needs to be carried out systematically. This integration includes the formulation of learning objectives, the development of teaching materials, the selection of participatory learning methods, and evaluations that emphasize aspects of students' attitudes and character.

Therefore, academic efforts are needed to formulate the concept of integrating multicultural values in elementary social studies learning based on the study of character education literature. This study is targeted to be a conceptual reference for teachers and education researchers in curriculum development to develop social studies learning that is not only intellectually intellectually intelligent, but also forms the multicultural character of students. Thus, this article aims to conceptually analyze the integration of multicultural values in elementary school social studies learning based on the character education literature. This study is expected to be able to make a theoretical and practical contribution to the development of social studies learning that is oriented towards character building, strengthening tolerance, and managing diversity as the social capital of the Indonesian nation.

METHOD

This study uses *the library research* method to comprehensively examine the integration of multicultural values based on character education in social studies learning. *Library research* was chosen because the focus of this research study is conceptual and theoretical, namely examining ideas, concepts, and scientific findings that are relevant to multicultural education, character education, and social studies learning. The main sources of research data are academic textbooks, articles from reputable national and international journals, curriculum documents, and the results of previous research that are directly related to the topic of the study. This approach allows researchers to gain a deep understanding of the development of thought and conceptual frameworks that have been built in the educational literature (Mestika Zed, 2014).

The library research procedure in this article is carried out through several systematic stages, namely the identification and selection of library sources, the classification of the study theme, and the content *analysis* of selected sources (Creswell, 2015). At the identification stage, the researcher selected literature relevant to keywords such as multicultural values, character education, and social studies learning. Furthermore, the collected literature was critically analyzed to find patterns, similarities, and differences in the views of experts related to learning objectives, achievement indicators, and social studies learning evaluations. This analysis aims to build a complete and argumentative conceptual synthesis. The literature was selected based on the criteria of topic relevance, credibility of scientific sources, and direct relevance to the development of social studies learning at the elementary school level, with a focus on the value of tolerance, respect for diversity, and the formation of students' social character.

To guarantee the novelty and relevance of the study, the literature is limited to publication in the 2020-2025 time frame, while classical conceptual works remain selectively used as theoretical foundations. All selected sources were analyzed using *content analysis techniques* to systematically synthesize concepts, themes, and research findings, resulting in a comprehensive framework of understanding of the integration of multicultural education in elementary school social studies learning.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

1. Multicultural Values in Elementary Social Studies Learning

The results of the review of various primary school social studies learning literature show that multicultural values have been substantively contained in the goals and scope of social studies. Analysis of social studies textbooks, curriculum documents, and scientific articles on basic education shows that social studies materials contain studies on socio-cultural diversity, social interaction, community life, and national unity. The most dominant multicultural values identified include tolerance, respect for differences, cooperation, equality, social empathy, and social justice (Nuraeni et al., 2024).

These findings are in line with the multicultural education literature that places social studies as a strategic subject in building students' social awareness. Conceptual studies show that these multicultural values do not stand alone, but are integrated with the social studies learning goals in forming democratic and responsible citizens. However, these values appear more implicitly in the learning materials.

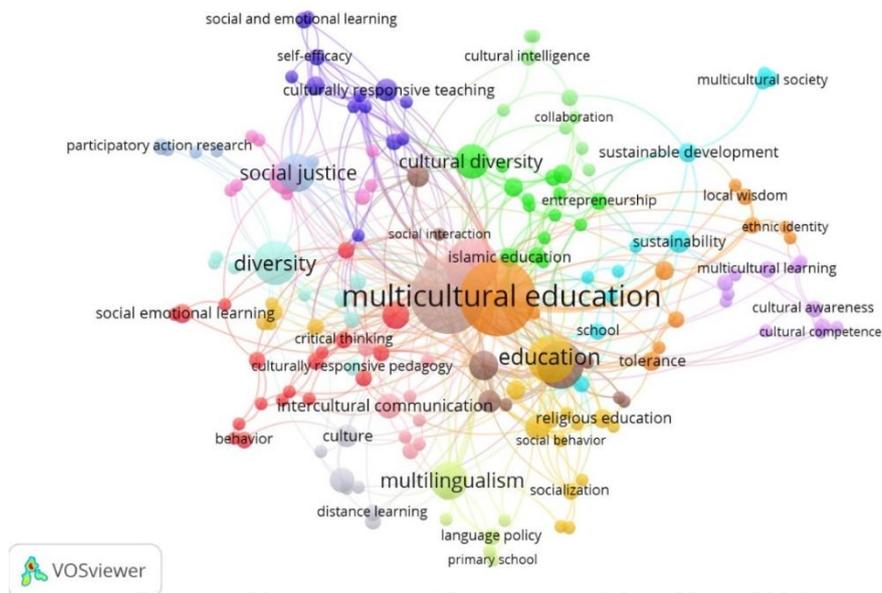


Figure 1. Visualization of Bibliometric Maps Using VOSviewer

Based on the bibliometric map visualization flow (VOSviewer) above, it is suggested that the value of multiculturalism in elementary social studies learning can be systematically analyzed through the interconnectedness of key concepts that form the scientific ecosystem of multicultural education. The network center shows the dominance of the term *multicultural education* which is closely connected to *education*, *diversity*, and *social justice*. This emphasizes that multicultural values in elementary social studies depart from an educational paradigm that places diversity as a

social reality as well as a normative foundation in learning. Social studies as a social subject inherently functions to build students' understanding of plural social structures, so that multicultural values become a core element, not just a complement.

The value of social justice appears to be an important cluster that is connected to *culturally responsive teaching*, *self-efficacy*, and *social and emotional learning*. In the context of elementary social studies learning, this indicates that the identification of multicultural values does not only stop at the recognition of differences, but also at the formation of fair, empathetic, and emotional awareness of students. Elementary social studies subjects play an important role in instilling the value of equality, respect for human rights, and rejection of discrimination from an early age through contextual and reflective learning (Mulyana, 2023). Furthermore, the cultural diversity cluster connected to *collaboration*, *cultural intelligence*, and *entrepreneurship* shows that the value of multiculturalism in elementary social studies includes the development of social and collaborative skills. This identification of multicultural values emphasizes the importance of the ability of students from different cultural backgrounds to understand differences as a source of social strength. In social studies learning practice, this can be realized through group discussion activities, local case studies, and collaborative projects that reflect the reality of a multicultural society.

The aspects of tolerance and cultural identity also emerge strongly through the relationship between *tolerance*, *ethnic identity*, *multicultural learning*, and *cultural awareness*. This shows that elementary social studies learning functions as a vehicle for internalizing the values of tolerance and respect for local ethnic and cultural identities. The identification of multicultural values in this aspect directs social studies teachers to help students understand differences in social identity positively, so that *cultural awareness* and cultural competence are formed from the basic education stage (Kapile, 2024).

Finally, the connection between *local wisdom*, *sustainability*, *religious education*, and *Islamic education* indicates that multicultural values in elementary social studies are contextual and sustainable. Multicultural values are inseparable from local wisdom and religious values that live in society. Therefore, the identification of multicultural values in elementary social studies learning includes the integration of values of tolerance, social sustainability, and intercultural harmony that are relevant to the local context of students. Thus, IPS SD plays a strategic role in forming a generation that is inclusive, characterful, and able to coexist in a multicultural society in a sustainable manner.

2. Integration of Multicultural Values Based on Character Education

The integration of multicultural values based on character education through social studies learning requires a reformulation of learning objectives so that it not only focuses on mastering cognitive aspects, but also on the formation of social attitudes and behaviors that reflect appreciation for diversity (Aprilia et al., 2024). Historically, the social studies curriculum in many national education contexts still places the learning goal on mastering knowledge about social, economic, and cultural phenomena. In fact, the ideal learning objectives should include affective dimensions such as tolerance, empathy, and social justice (Amanda & Rochmat, 2020). The social dimension includes the skills of interaction, collaboration, and participation in family and community life. From the perspective of character education, multicultural values emphasize that social studies learning must actually produce students who are not only intellectually intelligent, but also capable in religious, moral and social life in the face of pluralistic life dynamics.

The indicators of achievement in social studies learning are often still dominated by cognitive measures that are measured through written tests or multiple choices. Indicators such as "being able

to explain certain social concepts" or "remembering historical facts" are indeed important for evaluating knowledge mastery, but they do not reflect the depth of internalization of multicultural values. The integration of multicultural values requires more holistic indicators of achievement, including affective and social aspects, such as the ability to demonstrate tolerance in group discussions, the ability to resolve conflicts peacefully, and the ability to collaborate across differences as visualized in the following figure;

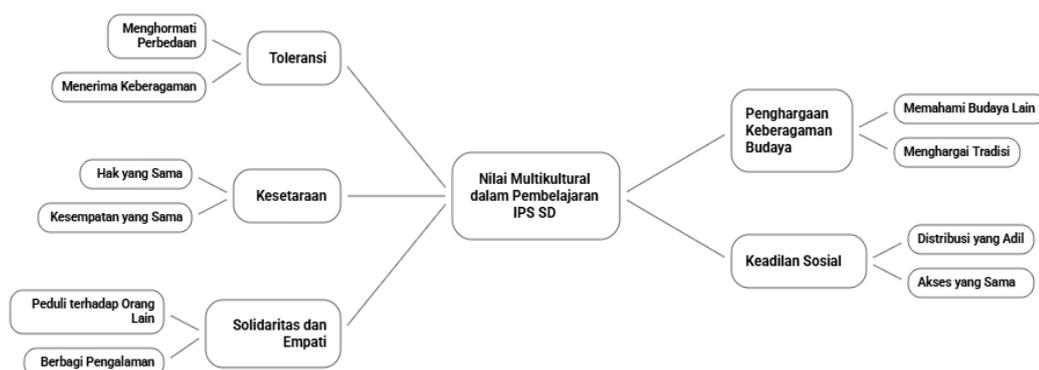


Figure 2. Integration of multicultural values in Social Studies Learning

This kind of indicator is rooted in affective and social theories in educational psychology that place attitudes, values, and interpersonal skills as important competencies that must be explicitly assessed in the learning process. The use of evaluation instruments that are solely written tests will produce a partial picture of the competencies of students. An alternative that is more appropriate to the integration of multicultural values is the use of authentic evaluations such as attitude observation in learning activities, reflection on students' journals on diversity experiences, performance assessments in collaborative projects, and portfolio assessments that reflect the learning process. This authentic evaluation allows educators to capture the internalized dynamics of students' values and character more thoroughly and contextually.

Structurally, the cognitive dominant objectives, indicators, and evaluations in social studies learning can be understood as a legacy of traditional pedagogical practices that emphasize mastery of content rather than character formation. However, from the perspective of multicultural character and value education, social studies learning must be seen as an arena to develop students' competencies in facing complex and plural social realities. The integration of multicultural values is inseparable from efforts to build social and moral competencies that enable learners to act ethically in the context of a heterogeneous society (Ramadhani et al., 2025).

The transformation of social studies learning towards the integration of multicultural values based on character education requires systemic and holistic orientation in the formulation of goals, achievement indicators, and evaluation. These changes must be supported by curricular commitments, teachers' professional capacity in designing affective and social learning, and the use of evaluation strategies that reflect the complexity of value learning (Sa'adah, 2024). Thus, learning objectives not only produce intellectually intelligent individuals but also morally responsible, achievement indicators reflect the development of social attitudes and skills, and learning evaluations provide a complete picture of learners' competencies in their social lives.

3. Social Studies Learning Strategies in Educational Literature

Social studies learning strategies in educational literature are understood as a systematic approach designed to develop students' knowledge, attitudes, and social skills in an integrated manner. Various studies have confirmed that social studies cannot be taught effectively through conventional learning strategies that are centered on teachers and memorization of material alone. On the other hand, social studies learning requires contextual, reflective, and participatory strategies so that students are able to understand social realities critically and relate them to daily life experiences (Alfigo et al., 2025). Therefore, the educational literature places social studies learning strategies as an important instrument in building social awareness and civic values. In the perspective of character and multicultural education, social studies learning strategies are directed at strengthening affective and social aspects through social-experience-based learning. The educational literature recommends strategies such as *problem-based learning*, *project-based learning*, and cooperative learning as relevant approaches. These strategies allow students to interact actively, work together in heterogeneous groups, and learn to appreciate differences in views and socio-cultural backgrounds (Putri et al., 2024). Thus, the social studies learning process not only transmits knowledge, but also facilitates the internalization of the values of tolerance, empathy, and social responsibility.

The educational literature emphasizes the importance of social studies learning strategies that are dialogical and reflective. Dialogical learning encourages students to discuss, argue rationally, and respect the opinions of others, while reflection helps students understand the social meaning and moral value of the material being studied. This strategy is in line with the goals of social studies as a civic education that prepares students to become critical and democratic individuals. Through reflection and dialogue, students not only understand social phenomena conceptually, but also develop ethical awareness in responding to diversity and social dynamics.

Literatur pendidikan menegaskan bahwa efektivitas strategi pembelajaran IPS sangat bergantung pada kemampuan guru dalam merancang dan mengimplementasikan pembelajaran yang integratif. Guru dipandang sebagai fasilitator yang menciptakan lingkungan belajar inklusif, kondusif, dan berorientasi pada nilai. Strategi pembelajaran IPS yang baik harus selaras dengan tujuan pembelajaran, indikator pencapaian, dan sistem evaluasi yang menilai aspek kognitif, afektif, dan sosial secara seimbang. Dengan demikian, strategi pembelajaran IPS dalam literatur pendidikan tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai teknik mengajar, tetapi sebagai pendekatan pedagogis yang berperan penting dalam pembentukan karakter dan penguatan nilai multikultural peserta didik.

4. The Impact of Multicultural Value Integration on Students' Character

The results of the literature analysis show that the integration of multicultural values in social studies learning contributes positively to the formation of students' social character. Various basic education studies explain that students who engage in value-based social studies learning show increased attitudes of tolerance, empathy, cooperation, and appreciation for differences (Desyani et al., 2025). Through learning that consciously accommodates cultural, religious, ethnic, and social backgrounds, students are accustomed to understanding the reality of plurality as something natural and valuable. This process encourages the development of affective awareness that is not only cognitive, but also reflected in an open attitude, acceptance of differences, and the ability to manage social prejudices and stereotypes that have the potential to trigger conflict (Cahyaningtyas & Rahayu, 2023).

Another impact can be seen in strengthening the values of empathy and social justice in students. The integration of multicultural values allows students to see social problems from various perspectives, so that they are not trapped in a single perspective. Through dialogue, group work, and experiential learning, learners learn to understand the feelings, needs, and interests of others, especially those from minority or marginalized groups. This condition contributes to the formation of characters who are sensitive to injustice and have a moral commitment to be fair and responsible in social interactions.

The integration of multicultural values has an effect on the development of democratic attitudes and the ability to interact socially constructively. Students are trained to express opinions politely, respect differences of views, and make decisions through deliberation and mutual agreement. This kind of learning experience strengthens the participatory and collaborative character, which is needed in community life. In the long term, the impact of integrating multicultural values on students' character is reflected in the formation of an inclusive personality oriented towards social harmony (Darajat et al., 2025). Students who are accustomed to multicultural values tend to have better social adaptability, an attitude of respect for differences, and a commitment to maintaining unity in diversity. This shows that the integration of multicultural values is not just a pedagogical strategy, but a strategic investment in building an ethical, civilized, and capable of peaceful coexistence in the midst of the complexity of a multicultural society.

Discussion

Social studies learning in elementary schools has a strong relevance to strengthening multicultural values because the substance of the study focuses on social life, interaction between people, and diverse community dynamics. Social education literature shows that social studies not only functions as a means of social knowledge transfer, but also as a vehicle for the formation of social awareness and democratic civic attitudes. In the context of a multicultural Indonesian society, social studies is a strategic medium to instill the value of tolerance and appreciation for differences from an early age.

Theoretically, Banks' view emphasizes that multicultural education must be integrated in social subjects so that students are able to understand social reality in a fair and inclusive manner (Mo'tasim et al., 2022). The results of the literature review show that multicultural values such as equality, empathy, and social justice are in line with the goals of social studies in forming responsible citizens. Thus, the integration of multicultural values in elementary social studies is not the addition of new material, but rather the strengthening of value orientation from existing learning. Character education provides a strong conceptual foundation for the integration of multicultural values in social studies learning. Lickona theory of character education emphasizes that character formation must include the dimensions of moral knowledge, moral feelings, and moral actions. Social studies learning allows these three dimensions to develop simultaneously through the study of social phenomena that are close to the lives of students (Thomas Lickona, 2016).

The character education literature shows that multicultural values such as tolerance, mutual respect, and social responsibility are part of the core character that must be instilled in elementary schools. The integration of these values in social studies learning can be done through the selection of inclusive materials, the use of diverse social examples, and the development of reflective activities that encourage students to understand the meaning of coexistence in differences. The results of the literature review show that the success of multicultural value integration is highly determined by the pedagogical strategies used by teachers. Social studies learning, which is still lecture and

differences as part of students' social literacy. Overall, the data flow in the visualization confirms that the relationship between multiculturalism and social science is integrative and mutually reinforcing (Ramadhan et al., 2025). Social studies provides conceptual and methodological tools for reading multicultural realities, while multicultural education translates those tools into pedagogical practices of transformational value. Thus, multicultural education within the framework of social studies is not only oriented towards social understanding, but also on the formation of citizens who have cultural sensitivity, commitment to social justice, and the ability to live together in harmony in a plural and dynamic society |

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of a literature-based conceptual study, it can be concluded that the integration of multicultural values in the learning of Social Sciences (IPS) in elementary schools has a high urgency in the context of a multicultural Indonesian society. Social studies learning substantially contains multicultural values such as tolerance, empathy, equality, social justice, and respect for diversity, but these values have not been fully internalized systematically in learning objectives, achievement indicators, learning strategies, and evaluation. This condition shows that social studies learning still tends to be oriented to the cognitive aspect and is not optimal in carrying out the function of forming students' social character.

This study also emphasizes that character education is a strong conceptual foundation in integrating multicultural values into social studies learning. Such integration demands a holistic and contextual approach to learning, which not only transmits social knowledge, but also facilitates learning experiences that encourage reflection, dialogue, and social interaction across differences. Participatory learning strategies, such as heterogeneous group discussions, project-based learning, and social case studies, have proven to be relevant for fostering tolerant, empathetic, and democratic attitudes in learners from an early age.

From a learning perspective, the integration of multicultural values based on character education in social studies contributes positively to the formation of students' character, especially in strengthening social awareness, the ability to interact inclusively, and commitment to social harmony. Students who are involved in social studies learning that are sensitive to diversity tend to have an open attitude, respect differences, and be able to manage social conflicts constructively. Thus, social studies learning plays a strategic role as a vehicle for the formation of citizens who have character, civility, and are able to coexist peacefully in a plural society.

Based on these findings, it is suggested that researchers further develop empirical studies through field research to test the effectiveness of the multicultural value integration model in social studies learning in various elementary school contexts. Further research can also examine the development of learning tools, affective evaluation instruments, and multicultural competency-based teacher training. Meanwhile, for educational institutions, policy commitments are needed to strengthen the integration of multicultural values in the social studies curriculum, increase the capacity of teachers through continuous training, and create an inclusive and democratic school culture so that social studies education truly functions as a strategic means in forming the multicultural character of students.

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