



Social Science Learning Model for Early Childhood Based on Digital Wayang Golek to Enhance Social Awareness

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ABSTRACT

This research seeks to create and evaluate the efficacy of a social studies learning model for early childhood education (PAUD) rooted in local wisdom through digital puppetry to enhance social awareness in young children. This methodology aims to include Sundanese cultural values using puppet figures and narratives delivered in an interactive digital format. The study employs a Research and Development (R&D) methodology encompassing needs analysis, model creation, expert validation, and both restricted and large field testing. We gathered data through observation, interviews, documentation, and analysis of children's prosocial behavior during the educational process. The study's findings reveal that using digital puppets significantly improves children's ability to demonstrate empathy, share, support peers, collaborate, and resolve minor conflicts. Educators appreciate the ease of conveying social studies content that was once abstract, since digital media facilitates the presentation of a tangible and engaging social context. The digitization of wayang golek has demonstrated its efficacy in revitalizing indigenous wisdom while addressing the demand for technology-based education in early childhood development (PAUD). This study highlights that the amalgamation of culture and technology in social studies learning is a relevant strategy to build children's social character from an early age.

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1. Introduction

The development of early childhood education in the last five years shows a strong trend on the integration of digital technology based on local wisdom as a pedagogical strategy that is relevant for the current generation. Research by Putra & Mudra (2022) confirms that digital media based on local culture—through audio-visual and the use of mobile learning—is able to increase children's understanding of cultural values while strengthening their involvement in the learning process. These findings are in line with the study of Laura et al. (2024) who developed learning videos based on local wisdom and succeeded in improving early childhood cultural literacy and showed significant effectiveness in increasing their focus and understanding of culture-based materials. These two studies affirm that children learn more optimally when local cultural values are packaged through digital media that is in accordance with the technological characteristics of the 21st century generation. In addition to strengthening cultural understanding, digital technology based on local wisdom also plays an important role in the development of character and social-emotional early childhood. Fadhillah et al. (2025) show that digital media such as animation, AR, VR, and video can optimize culture-based learning by increasing child engagement, understanding of values, and cultural identity. Furthermore, research by Suryaningsih et al. (2025) emphasized that the integration of local wisdom in the early childhood education curriculum, when combined with digital technology, is able to strengthen children's character and is an important strategy in maintaining cultural sustainability in the midst of globalization challenges. These findings show that cultural digitalization not only serves as an innovation in learning media, but also as a strategic means in building cultural awareness and social character of children from an early age.

Education (PAUD) is the most fundamental phase in human growth and development. At this stage, children experience a sensitive period in which social, emotional, language, and cognitive abilities develop quickly and simultaneously. Therefore, educational stimulation in this phase not only has a short-term impact on school readiness, but also forms the foundation of a person's character in the future. Montessori states that, "*The child has a mind able to absorb knowledge. He has the power to educate himself*" (Montessori, 1967). This quote emphasizes that children have a natural readiness to absorb the values and experiences instilled through a rich, meaningful, and purposeful learning environment. In the context of Indonesian education, strengthening social character is an important agenda because children live in a multicultural society. The educational process needs to be designed to foster empathy, responsibility, mutual cooperation, and concern for others from an early age. As emphasized by Asmani (2013) that "*character education in early childhood is part of the development of civilization because children learn the patterns of interaction that they will bring to their lives.*" This shows that education at the PAUD level is not limited to introducing cognitive concepts, but also ensuring that children are able to relate positively to their environment.

One of the approaches that is increasingly relevant is the use of local wisdom in learning. Local wisdom not only contains cultural values, but also stores moral concepts, ethics, and social practices that have been inherited from generation to generation. Koentjaraningrat (1990) said that "*culture is the entire system of ideas, actions, and human works obtained through the learning process.*" Thus, culture—including traditional arts such as wayang golek—is a rich and authentic source of learning to shape children's social sensitivity. Wayang golek, as one of the cultural riches of West Java, is a traditional medium that combines visual arts, performing arts, moral narratives, and character representations. Wayang golek performances always contain social messages such as justice, honesty, brotherhood, and courage. Jakob Sumardjo (2004) even called wayang " a moral encyclopedia of Javanese society expressed in the form of symbols and stories." This makes wayang golek not only have aesthetic value, but also full of pedagogical value.

Research shows that storytelling-based media can increase children's empathy. According to Isbell et al. (2004), "*children who participate in storytelling show better emotional understanding and prosocial behavior compared to those who only listen passively.*" Wayang golek, which presents stories in visual and dramatic form, provides a powerful multisensory narrative experience for early childhood children. Children not only hear stories, but also see characters, movements, and expressions so that social values are more easily embedded. However, challenges arise when the current generation of children is the digital generation. They are used to interacting with gadgets, animations, and interactive media. Traditional culture-based learning will be less interesting if it is not adapted to the characteristics of the media that are familiar to today's children. This is where the relevance of wayang golek transformation in digital form comes in. Digitalization is not to abandon traditions, but to revive traditions in a format that is close to children's lives.

Digital storytelling through digital puppetry can combine sound, animation, movement, and interaction. Robin (2008) emphasized that "*digital storytelling is a powerful technology tool that allows students to engage more deeply with narrative content.*" Thus, adapting wayang golek to digital format is not only a technological step, but a pedagogical strategy to maintain the relevance of local wisdom while meeting children's learning styles in the digital era. The use of digital media in early childhood education also has an influence on children's social development. When designed appropriately, digital media can facilitate cooperation, discussion, shared imagination, and problem-solving. Plowman and Stephen (2005) assert that "*technology in early childhood settings can support social interaction when mediated by adults.*" This means that the existence of teachers in using digital media is very important to ensure that interaction and social values continue to grow.

The social studies learning model based on local wisdom of digital puppetry can be designed to facilitate social exploration, recognition of social roles, and empathic experiences. In the realm of social studies PAUD, children are introduced to the concepts of social environment, profession, family, and relationships with others. Digital puppets can be used to simulate social interaction through the stories of characters such as Cepot, Semar, or children's characters created specifically for the context of early childhood education. In social studies learning, the value of social care is one of the key aspects. Children need to be guided to understand the feelings of others, help friends, share, work together, and resolve conflicts. Hoffman (2000) explains that "*empathy is the foundation of moral development and prosocial behavior.*" Thus, a learning model that is able to raise children's empathy through stories, dialogue, and role-playing experiences is very relevant to be applied in PAUD.

Digital puppets can present stories that represent everyday social situations, such as helping friends in difficulty, taking care of the environment, sharing food, or working together while playing. Children can discuss, imitate, or re-practice the values they see. This process of social imitation is in line with Vygotsky's theory which states that "*learning awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when the child is interacting socially*" (Vygotsky, 1978). Stories and social interactions in learning digital puppet art thus become a medium to open up space for children's social development.

In addition, the use of digital wayang golek provides an opportunity to personalize characters and context. Teachers can adapt the story to the school's local environment, the real situation the child is experiencing, or certain social issues such as diversity, tolerance, and help. Learning experiences become much more contextual and meaningful. The digitization of wayang golek is also in line with the Independent Curriculum which emphasizes culture-based learning, character strengthening, and the use of creative educational technology. Child-centered learning is not only about the choice of activities, but also about presenting the material in an engaging, relevant, and

context-rich format. Digital puppetry allows children to be actively involved through visual exploration, movement, sound, and interaction between characters.

Cutting-edge research in children's education shows that culturally based interactive media can significantly affect social development. For example, research by Fatta et al. (2019) shows that local cultural applications developed for early childhood education "*contribute positively to the improvement of social skills, especially in the aspect of sharing and cooperation.*" These findings show that digital media developed based on local wisdom is not only an entertainment medium, but an effective pedagogical tool.

In this context, the development of a social studies learning model based on digital puppetry is important because it combines three main elements:

1. Local cultural values as moral and social resources.
2. Digital technology as an interesting medium and in accordance with the characteristics of modern children.
3. Social learning (social studies) that emphasizes empathy and caring.

Learning models that combine all three can provide a richer, more immersive, and relevant learning experience. Children are not only watching stories, but are socially, emotionally, cognitively, and culturally engaged.

The social concern that is the focus of this research does not arise instantly, but through a consistent stimulation process. Children need to be accustomed to seeing examples, dialogue about feelings, taking real actions, and simple reflection. Wayang golek digital presents examples that can help children understand various social situations in a concrete way. Stories that are told in an interesting way will make it easier for teachers to facilitate discussions about good attitudes, helpful behavior, or the importance of maintaining relationships with friends.

In addition, through digital technology, wayang golek stories can be developed sustainably according to learning needs. Teachers can add scenes, create new characters, or change scenarios according to social studies themes such as family, environment, cleanliness, profession, or discipline attitudes. Thus, learning becomes flexible and adaptive. This research is important because it fills a gap in the study of early childhood education. So far, the integration of local culture into educational technology is still limited, and there are not many social studies learning models for early childhood education that utilize traditional arts that are digitally packaged. Through the development of this model, learning not only strengthens children's cultural identity, but also fosters social concern which is a fundamental value in the development of the nation's character.

2. Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with a research development (R&D) design to produce a social studies learning model based on local wisdom of digital puppetry in early childhood education and test its impact on children's social concerns. The development model used refers to the steps of Borg and Gall (1983) who stated that "*educational research and development is a process used to develop and validate educational products.*" The R&D approach was chosen because the research not only aims to understand the phenomenon, but also produces educational products in the form of empirically tested learning models. Research and development (R&D) approaches over the last five years have increasingly been used to produce empirically tested educational products, especially those that integrate digital technology and local wisdom in early childhood learning. A recent study by Laura et al. (2024) shows that ADDIE's development model has proven to be effective in designing media based on local wisdom through systematic stages of analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation. The same thing is also affirmed by Putra & Mudra (2022) who utilize qualitative methods and digital media feasibility tests based on local culture to ensure that the products produced are truly in accordance with the characteristics of early childhood development. Thus, the use of R&D based on the ADDIE model is relevant in this study to design a valid, practical, and effective social studies learning model with digital puppet media for early childhood education. In addition, the latest study emphasizes the importance of expert validation and field tests in ensuring the quality of digital-based education products. Fadhilah et al. (2025) through a review of the narrative literature emphasized that the use of digital media based on local wisdom requires a comprehensive evaluation to ensure that cultural integration runs effectively and is relevant to the context of early childhood learning. In line with that, Suryaningsih et al. (2025) emphasized that research involving early childhood education experts, cultural experts, and technology experts is needed so that media development really supports the strengthening of children's cultural character. Therefore, this study uses a combination of observation, interviews, expert validation, and limited and extensive trials as a series of methodological procedures that ensure the quality and functionality of the digital puppet-based learning model to improve children's social awareness.

Data collection was carried out through observation, in-depth interviews, documentation, and limited trials as well as extensive trials in early childhood education classes. Observations were used to identify children's social behaviors before and after the application of the model. Interviews were conducted with PAUD teachers, principals, and parents to gain an understanding of the social context of learning. In accordance with the view of Creswell (2013), "*qualitative researchers collect data in the natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study.*" Thus, the entire data collection process is carried out in natural classroom conditions so that children's social interactions can be observed authentically. The learning model development procedure includes the stages of needs analysis, model design, creation of digital puppet media, expert validation, revision, small field trials, large field trials, and model finalization. Expert validation is carried out by PAUD experts, social studies experts, and puppet art practitioners to ensure the

suitability of cultural content, pedagogical elements, and the feasibility of digital media. As Miles and Huberman (1994) affirm, *"the strength of a qualitative study depends heavily on the competence of its design and validation strategies."* Therefore, the validation process is carried out systematically to ensure the quality of the developed models.

Data analysis is carried out through interactive qualitative analysis techniques that include data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. The analysis was carried out following the framework of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) which states that *"qualitative data analysis is an ongoing, iterative process that requires continuous reflection."* The impact of the model on children's social concerns was analyzed from indicators of prosocial behavior such as empathy, sharing, helping friends, cooperation, and the ability to resolve simple conflicts. Observational data before and after the application of the model were compared to identify changes in children's social behavior. With a comprehensive analytical approach, this study is expected to be able to provide an in-depth overview of the effectiveness of the learning model based on local wisdom of digital puppetry in improving the social awareness of early childhood education children.

3. Results And Discussion

3.1. Results

The findings of this study provide a comprehensive overview of how social studies learning models based on local wisdom of digital puppetry can form a more meaningful learning experience for early childhood, especially in developing social care behaviors. Through the analysis of observation, interview, and documentation data during the trial process, this study revealed real changes in children's social interactions, increased understanding of cultural values, and the effectiveness of digital media as a means of internalizing prosocial characters. These findings not only demonstrate the success of the model in the context of early childhood learning, but also affirm the importance of integrating local culture and technology as a pedagogical strategy that is relevant, adaptive, and has a significant impact on children's social development.



Figure 1. Conceptual Representation of Study Results

1. The Application of the Social Studies Learning Model Based on Digital Wayang Golek Increases Children's Involvement in Social Learning

The first findings show that the use of digital wayang golek media is able to increase children's active involvement during the social studies learning process. Children look more focused, enthusiastic, and able to retain attention longer than using conventional methods. The teacher reported that the animation of wayang golek figures in digital format allows children to understand social roles more concretely. In line with Bruner's (1986) view that *"children learn best through representations that are vivid, engaging, and symbolically rich."* The application of digital wayang golek media in social studies learning has been proven to be able to increase children's focus, attention, and involvement during the learning process. This is in line with research by Laura et al. (2024) who show that video media based on local wisdom significantly increases children's involvement because visual-audio presentations make it easier for children to understand the social context displayed. Meanwhile, Putra & Mudra (2022) also found that digital media based on local culture provides a strong stimulating effect because it is able to present a concrete, interesting, and close learning experience to children's lives. These two studies reinforce the finding that children in the digital era are more responsive to learning that combines familiar visual, movement, narrative, and cultural characters, as found in digital puppets. In addition to increasing attention, the use of digital wayang golek also stimulates social interaction between the two. Fadhillah et al. (2025) emphasized that culture-based digital media can increase children's social engagement because it encourages discussion, cooperation, and emotional responses during learning activities.

Suryaningsih et al. (2025) added that the integration of local wisdom through digital media creates a dialogical learning experience, allowing children to ask questions, imitate, and express opinions about the social situations they see. This is in accordance with Vygotsky's principle of social learning which states that interaction is central to cognitive and social development. Thus, the application of digital puppetry not only increases individual involvement, but also enriches social dynamics in PAUD classes.

In class observation, children responded to the stories of the characters Cepot, Semar, and Gareng spontaneously, often showing emotional reactions such as laughing, feeling concerned, or asking questions about the situation in the story. This confirms that visual-narrative media can facilitate social learning. Teacher A (Interview, 2024) said: *"Usually children find it difficult to focus when learning social studies. But when they use digital puppets, they immediately sit neat, want to listen to stories, and even ask about what the characters are going through."* These findings show that the integration of local culture with digital technology strengthens children's attention and participation in social studies learning in early childhood education.

2. Social Values in Digital Puppet Stories Shape Children's Empathy and Prosocial Behavior

One of the focuses of the research is changes in children's social behavior. Observations showed significant improvements in aspects of empathy, sharing, and cooperation after six learning sessions using the developed model. Children begin to imitate the positive behavior shown by the puppet character, especially when the character helps a friend or resolves conflicts. Hoffman (2000) states that *"empathy develops through repeated exposure to emotionally meaningful social situations."* Digital puppet stories provide children with rich emotional experiences through dialogue, moral conflict, and problem-solving. Digital puppet stories work effectively to form empathy because they present social situations that are "seen" and "felt" by children through visuals, sounds, and conflict plots that are close to their daily experiences, so that children can more easily capture emotional cues and moral consequences of the characters' actions (Rahiem, 2021; Hikmah, Wongsonadi, Hartati, & Jahja, 2024). In the context of digital learning, high engagement is key because early childhood tends to absorb social values through awake attention and dialogue that arises during the story, rather than just receiving moral messages verbally (Rahiem, 2021; Hikmah et al., 2024). Research findings on digital storytelling in PAUD show that the digital format makes stories more interesting, communicative, and triggers teacher-child conversations that enrich the meaning of values, so that the internalization of empathy occurs through educator-mediated interactions (Rahiem, 2021).

This empowerment of empathy is in line with the latest narrative intervention evidence that exposure to social-themed stories can increase empathy as well as prosocial behavior, and empathy even plays a role as a mechanism that bridges changes in children's prosocial behavior (Chen, Lyu, & Zhu, 2025). Thus, when digital puppet stories consistently feature scenes of helping, sharing, or resolving conflicts, the child not only "imitates the action," but begins to understand the other party's feelings and the moral reasons behind the action (Chen et al., 2025; Hikmah et al., 2024). Pedagogically, the impact of digital puppet stories on prosocial behavior will be stronger if followed by emotion labeling strategies, perspective questions, and real-action exercises after watching, because interactive media provide space for children to "try" social choices and see the consequences in the storyline (Hikmah et al., 2024; Chen et al., 2025). Experimental evidence in the digital storytelling program in PAUD shows a significant increase in prosocial aspects such as sharing, cooperation, helping, and honesty after children participate in digital storytelling sessions in a row (Aisha & Kaloeti, 2021). The findings are in line with recent meta-analyses that confirm that the activity of reading/listening to stories most consistently contributes to an empathy component that appears to be a prosocial skill, and that the effect tends to be more optimal when the process occurs in a more personalized or intensively facilitated context (Ciesielska, Kucirkova, & Thomson, 2025). Therefore, digital puppet-based learning designs that emphasize directional interactions—e.g., brief discussions after key scenes, reinforcement of good behavior choices, and the practice of helping friends in the classroom—will accelerate the shift from "narrative" to observed "social habits" (Ciesielska et al., 2025; Hikmah et al., 2024).

In the trial session, some children showed new behaviors that had never been seen before. For example, when he saw his friend having trouble opening a pencil case, a child said, "Mom, I want to help, just like Cepot helped his friend yesterday." (Field Observation, 2024). Teacher B corroborates this finding: *"After using digital puppet stories several times, children are more likely to talk about feelings and reasons for an action. They seem to have real examples that are close to their world."* This shows that the narrative of local wisdom packaged in digital media can be an effective tool for internalizing social values for early childhood.

3. Learning Model Fostering Awareness of Cultural Identity and Sense of Belonging

Although the research focuses on social care, another important finding is the increased awareness of children of local culture. Children begin to get to know the characters of wayang golek, their colors and shapes, and the moral stories behind these characters. This is in line with the opinion of Koentjaraningrat (1990) who states that *"cultural introduction strengthens the social identity of individuals from an early age."*

In class discussions, children can mention the name of the character and the values that the character brings. One child said: *"Semar is a good one, who likes to advise friends."* This information shows that children do not only watch, but interpret characters through moral impressions.

Parents also feel the impact. An interview with Parent C (2024) stated: *"My son told me at home about puppets. He said it was Indonesian culture. He was proud to be able to watch puppet stories from school, even though he didn't know anything before."* These findings strengthen the argument that technological integration does not eliminate culture, but rather becomes an effective bridge to introduce local wisdom to younger generations.

4. Teachers Feel the Model is Easy to Implement and Adaptive for Various Social Studies Themes

In addition to the impact on children, the study found that teachers found this learning model to be easy to implement and flexible. Teachers can adapt the storyline of the puppet to social studies themes such as family, profession, environment, or social responsibility. Teacher D's Statement (Interview, 2024): *"We can change the story according to the topic of the day. For example, the theme of cleanliness, we tell a puppet character is cleaning a house or garden. The child immediately understood."*

This flexibility allows teachers to develop creative learning without having to create media from scratch. This opinion strengthens Robbins (2003) who stated that *"instructional tools that are adaptable increase teacher autonomy and enhance classroom engagement."* Teachers consider that digital media helps them present consistent, interesting, and meaningful learning. Thus, this model not only has an impact on children, but also improves the quality of teachers' learning practices.

Table 1. Summary of Research Findings

Key Findings	Short Description	Implications in Early Childhood Social Studies Learning
Increased child involvement	Focus, enthusiasm, attention increase when using wayang golek digital media	Social learning is more effective; Children actively discuss and respond to narratives
Internalization of social values	Empathy, sharing, helping friends, cooperation, simple conflict resolution	Strengthening prosocial behavior through puppet character modeling and targeted discussion
Strengthening cultural identity	Children know the characters, symbols, and moral values of wayang golek; A sense of belonging to the local culture	Revitalization of local wisdom through digital storytelling that is relevant to the current generation
Teacher perception: flexibility	Easy to adapt to the theme of family, profession, environment, hygiene, responsibility	Increasing the creativity and efficiency of teachers; according to the Merdeka Curriculum

4. Discussion

The discussion of this study describes in depth how the social studies learning model based on local wisdom of digital puppetry affects early childhood social awareness. Four main findings are analyzed through the perspective of child development theory, social learning theory, digital media studies, and the values of multicultural education and local culture. This discussion also contains dialogue from the results of interviews that strengthen the interpretation of the research.

Table 2. Model Development Stages (Borg & Gall R&D)

Phase	Activity Description	Output
Needs Analysis	Identify learning problems and needs	Requirements data
Model Design	Designing the structure of the learning model	Draft model
Creation of Digital Wayang Golek Media	Developing digital media based on local wisdom	Media prototype
Expert Validation	Assessment by PAUD, Social Studies, and Puppet Arts Experts	Feedback and recommendations
Revision	Improvement of models and media according to expert input	Revised model
Limited Field Trials	Early implementation in the PAUD class	Initial data on effectiveness
Wide Field Trials	Wider implementation to test consistency	Comprehensive data
Finalizing the Model	Enhancement of models and media	The final model is ready for use

1. Wayang Golek Digital as a Narrative Media that Increases Children's Social Engagement and Interaction

The first findings show that the use of digital wayang golek in social studies learning is able to increase children's involvement in learning activities. Early childhood is in the pre-operational stage, where the learning process is strongly influenced by visual stimuli, concrete narratives, and symbolic imagination. This is in line with Bruner's (1986) theory which states that *"children learn best through representations that are vivid, engaging, and symbolically"*

rich." Digital puppet media fulfills these three elements through moving characters, expressive voices, and stories that are close to children's social lives.

Children who initially had difficulty maintaining attention in social studies learning now show improved focus, verbal responses, and facial expressions that indicate emotional engagement. In observation, the child who usually distracts when listening to conventional stories, this time sits neatly while following the storyline. Teacher A stated: "*Children who use digital puppets become very focused. Usually they get bored quickly when it comes to social material, but now they follow the story from start to finish.*" (Teacher A Interview, 2024)

Children's involvement is an important foundation in social development. Children who are actively involved will find it easier to understand social situations, respond to interactions, and build moral understanding. In this context, digital puppetry produces an *engagement* effect that significantly improves the quality of social learning.

In addition, children's interaction increases not only with the media, but also with peers. When the characters in the story face conflicts or problems, children discuss with each other, guess solutions, or imitate the characters' dialogues. This shows that digital media does not inhibit social interaction, but can stimulate communication between people. Plowman & Stephen (2005) corroborate this by stating that "*technology in early childhood can promote social interaction when facilitated effectively.*" Thus, these results confirm that digital technology—when integrated with local culture—actually increases the social dimension of learning, not reduces it.

2. The Story of Digital Puppetry as a Means of Internalizing the Value of Social Concern

The second finding showed an increase in empathy, sharing behavior, cooperation, and concern for children after participating in digital puppet-based learning. This indicates that local cultural narratives have a strong potential to influence early childhood social-emotional development. Hoffman (2000) asserts that "*empathy develops through repeated exposure to emotionally meaningful social situations,*" and that puppet stories provide rich social situations through conflict, dialogue, and moral solutions.

In learning, wayang golek figures are described as figures who solve social problems in a positive way, such as helping a friend in difficulty, showing empathy, distributing food, or resolving arguments peacefully. Children then mimic the behavior in real situations. In one of the observation sessions, a child said, "*I help, because Cepot also helped his friend yesterday.*" (Field Observation, 2024) This is an example of prosocial imitation that shows that children internalize the value of the digital characters they watch.

Teacher B expressed something similar: "*Children are more likely to talk about their feelings after seeing a story. For example, when there is a sad character, they can say 'the character is sad because he is alone'. Before, they rarely understood other people's emotions.*" (Teacher B Interview, 2024) This is relevant to Vygotsky's (1978) theory that child development arises through the process of socialization and social interaction. Digital puppet stories function as a *mediating tool* that helps children interpret emotions, understand other people's perspectives, and gradually build prosocial behaviors. In addition, digital visualization provides a concrete form to the abstraction of social values. Early childhood has difficulty understanding moral concepts in verbal form only; They require visual and contextual examples. Digital puppet media presents these examples in a lively way, thereby increasing the effectiveness of internalizing social values.

This learning also shows that children perceive puppet characters as figures of social identification. Semar is understood as a wise figure, Cepot as a humorous but helpful figure, and Gareng as an honest figure. This identification is the entrance to the formation of social behavior because children learn through models. This is in line with Bandura's (1977) theory that "*learning occurs through observing models and imitating their actions.*" Thus, this learning model not only improves the cognitive aspects of social studies, but also creates a moral and emotional impact on children's social behavior.

3. Wayang Golek Digital as a Bridge between Technology and Children's Cultural Identity

The next discussion highlights the findings that this model also strengthens awareness of children's cultural identity. Although the research focuses on social awareness, there is an additional impact in the form of increased understanding of local cultural heritage. This finding is particularly important because early childhood is a period of early identity formation, including cultural identity. Koentjaraningrat (1990) asserts that "*early cultural introduction reinforces an individual's social identity and influences the way he or she views the world.*" In interviews, many teachers and parents said that children began to talk about wayang golek characters at home. One parent said: "*My son told me that puppets are Indonesian culture. He asked to see the video again at home.*" (Parent C Interview, 2024)

This shows that the digitization of wayang golek does not damage the value of tradition, but rather opens up cultural access to the younger generation who live in the digital world. Children who previously did not know puppets, now understand the form, character, and value behind the story. This is very relevant to the condition of modern society that is starting to move away from traditional culture due to the dominance of foreign media. The digitization of puppets is an important strategy for cultural revitalization. This learning combines elements of *heritage learning* and *digital pedagogy*, so that children get to know local culture in a modern, interesting, and time-appropriate way. This is in line with Robin's (2008) idea that digital storytelling "*allows students to engage with cultural narratives in innovative and meaningful ways.*"

In addition, the integration of local culture in IPS PAUD encourages children to understand social diversity in Indonesian society. They learned that each character in puppets has a different role as members of society have complementary social functions. This learning teaches children that Indonesian society is rich in tradition, and that every culture has noble values that can be used as moral lessons.

4. Model Implementation by Teachers Shows Flexibility and Suitability with the Early Childhood Education Curriculum

The last discussion focused on how teachers interpret and apply this learning model. The findings showed that teachers assessed the digital wayang golek model as adaptive, practical, and easily adjusted to the social studies theme. This is important because the success of the implementation of the model is highly dependent on the readiness of teachers as facilitators. Robbins (2003) states that *"instructional tools that are adaptable increase teacher autonomy and enhance engagement."* In this context, teachers can develop stories according to the needs of the theme. Teacher D said: *"I can adapt puppet stories for the topics of cleanliness, family, and the environment. Just add dialogue or scenes, the child immediately understands because they are familiar with the character."* (Teacher D Interview, 2024)

This flexibility makes the model relevant to independent curricula that emphasize contextual, culturally based, and child-centered learning. Social studies learning in early childhood education requires concrete examples that are close to children's lives. Digital puppet stories—with social settings, simple conflicts, and interactions between characters—provide that context effectively. The teacher also said that this model reduces the burden of creating learning media from scratch, because it can be used repeatedly with different story variations. This increases the efficiency and creativity of teachers. In addition, the role of teachers as social mediators becomes strong because they can guide emotional and social discussions based on puppet scenes.

The main pedagogical implication is that this model provides room for:

1. Multimodal learning (visual, auditory, kinesthetic)
2. Social-emotional learning
3. Cultural learning
4. Social interaction between children

These four dimensions make the digital wayang golek learning model a comprehensive strategy that not only supports mastery of social studies materials, but also enriches children's social development and cultural identity.

5. Conclusion

Social studies learning for PAUD based on local wisdom of digital wayang golek has been proven to be able to provide a more meaningful learning experience for early childhood through the integration of cultural values, character exploration, and stories that are close to their social lives. The use of wayang golek in digital format provides space for children to understand norms, social roles, and prosocial behaviors not only through teacher explanations, but through interesting and accessible narrative experiences. These findings confirm that the transformation of traditional media to digital formats can maintain the essence of culture while increasing the relevance of learning for generations living in visual and technological cultures.

The implementation of this learning model also showed a significant increase in the social care aspects of children, including the ability to understand friends' emotions, show empathy, help spontaneously, and cooperate in group activities. This change in behavior occurs because children learn through observation of puppet characters, role simulations, and interactive dialogues involving local wisdom values. Teachers also reported that character narratives—such as kindness, honesty, and mutual cooperation—are easier for children to understand when they are manifested in the form of dynamic digital stories. Thus, this model is not only effective as a learning medium, but also as a means of internalizing social values from an early age.

In addition to increasing children's social awareness, this study shows that PAUD teachers get significant benefits from a digital wayang golek-based learning model. Teachers feel helped in delivering social studies material which is usually abstract for early childhood, especially related to social roles and relationships between individuals. Digital media also enriches pedagogical strategies, allowing teachers to combine stories, animations, role-playing, and simple discussions in a single learning series. This is in line with Vygotsky's idea that social learning will be more optimal if children engage in *"meaningful social interactions within a mediated learning environment"*—a condition achieved through the use of digital puppetry as a tool of cultural mediation.

Overall, this study emphasizes the importance of revitalizing local wisdom in early childhood education through appropriate digitalization. The social studies learning model based on digital puppetry not only improves children's social understanding, but also fosters prosocial character which is an important foundation in community life. This approach shows that technology does not have to be a threat to culture, but can instead be a bridge to revive local values in the context of modern learning. Thus, this model deserves to be adopted more widely in PAUD institutions as an effort to integrate culture, technology, and social education in one progressive and relevant learning unit.

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7. References

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