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Implementation of Social Science-Based Social Studies Education Theories in Social Studies Learning in Grade V at SD Negeri 060816

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ABSTRACT

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This study aims to analyze the implementation of social studies-based educational theories in fifth-grade social studies learning in Elementary School 060816. The theories used include constructivism, humanism, socioculturalism, behaviorism, cognitivism, and cybernetics. This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collection techniques through interviews with fifth-grade teachers and observations of learning activities. The results show that teachers view social studies as more than just memorization, but a means of developing students' social attitudes, character, and social skills. The material is adapted to everyday life to make it more contextual, while the dominant methods used are group discussions, contextual learning, and problem-based learning. Students' differences in background are not a barrier but are instead utilized through heterogeneous group work that fosters tolerance and cooperation. Thus, the implementation of social studies-based educational theories has been proven to increase students' activeness, understanding, and social skills. This study confirms that social studies learning in elementary schools needs to be continuously developed through innovative, participatory, and real-life approaches.

Keywords

Social Studies, Educational Theories, Contextual Learning, Elementary School

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INTRODUCTION

Social Studies (IPS) is one of the essential subjects in elementary school that aims to equip students with an understanding of social life. Through Social Studies, students are not only introduced to basic knowledge of history, geography, economics, and sociology but are also guided to develop social attitudes, moral values, and life skills. Thus, Social Studies plays a strategic role in shaping the character of the younger generation so they can adapt to their environment and contribute positively to society.

However, in practice, Social Studies learning in elementary schools often faces challenges. Many students perceive Social Studies as a memorization-based subject that is monotonous and uninteresting. The material is often presented textually and rarely linked to daily life, which makes students fail to see its real-world benefits. This condition contradicts the purpose of Social Studies, which should instill applicable values and social skills. To address this issue, teachers are required to be more creative in selecting appropriate methods and strategies that suit the students' conditions.

Educational theories grounded in social sciences can serve as the basis for teachers to design more meaningful Social Studies instruction. Constructivist theory emphasizes the importance of students' active involvement in constructing their own knowledge. Humanistic theory reminds us that learning must consider students' emotional needs and potential. Sociocultural theory highlights the role of the environment and social interaction in learning, while behaviorist theory focuses on reinforcing positive behaviors. Meanwhile, cognitive and cybernetic theories provide frameworks for processing information and using appropriate learning media.

Based on these considerations, this study was conducted to analyze how these educational theories are applied in Social Studies learning at SD Negeri 060816. The focus of the research is to understand how teachers perceive Social Studies, what strategies they employ, and how they address students' diverse backgrounds during instruction. Therefore, this study is expected to provide a concrete picture of the role of Social Studies in shaping students' social attitudes while offering relevant and innovative teaching practices in elementary schools.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design. Qualitative research is commonly used to explore community life, behaviors, and social activities. The research subject was the fifth-grade teacher at SD Negeri 060816 who teaches Social Studies. Data were collected through direct interviews with the teacher and observations of classroom activities.

The collected data were analyzed through three stages: (1) data reduction, which involved simplifying and selecting essential information; (2) data presentation in a more comprehensible form; and (3) drawing conclusions from the findings. To ensure data accuracy, the researcher applied source triangulation by comparing the results of teacher interviews with observation notes taken during the learning process (Zahroni et al., 2024; Lubis & Ritonga, 2023; Lubis, 2024).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study reveal that Social Studies (IPS) learning in grade five of SD Negeri 060816 is not limited to transferring knowledge but also focuses on shaping students' social attitudes. Teachers emphasized contextual learning by connecting material with students' daily experiences, such as the practice of *gotong royong* and caring for the environment. This approach aligns with the constructivist perspective, which emphasizes that learning becomes more meaningful when linked to real-life contexts (Safitri, 2024). The teacher also facilitates students to reconstruct knowledge through group discussions and peer collaboration, enabling them to integrate new concepts with prior experiences. This finding shows that Social Studies has the potential to serve as a platform for integrating knowledge, skills, and values into meaningful character formation (Umar et al., 2023).

The implementation of Social Studies learning reflects the constructivist approach, where the teacher actively involves students in knowledge-building activities. For example, during lessons on cultural diversity, students were asked to share experiences from their families and communities. This strategy reflects the idea that learning is constructed through interaction and participation rather than passive reception (Zahroni et al., 2024). Furthermore, problem-based learning practices in the classroom encourage students to think critically in identifying and solving social problems. According to Sarnoko et al. (2024), problem-based and constructivist models are highly feasible to improve higher-order thinking skills among elementary students. These findings confirm that constructivist principles are not only theoretical but also practical and effective in real classroom situations.

Humanistic learning theories were also observed in this study. Teachers not only conveyed material but also paid attention to students' emotions and learning motivations. When students were hesitant to speak, the teacher encouraged them gently, creating a supportive learning climate. Such practices align with Anggraini et al. (2025), who emphasize that humanistic approaches in Social Studies prioritize "humanizing students" in the learning process. By giving recognition and respecting each student's potential, the teacher built self-confidence and enthusiasm for learning. This perspective proves that Social Studies is not merely about academic achievement but also about nurturing students' holistic growth, including emotional, social, and moral aspects.

The sociocultural dimension of learning is highly visible in this classroom context. Students in SD Negeri 060816 come from diverse cultural and family backgrounds. Instead of being treated as challenges, these differences are positioned as assets in learning. For instance, students are asked to share

customs from their ethnic groups, which enriches class discussions. This practice aligns with Vygotskian principles that emphasize the role of social interaction and culture in shaping knowledge (Daulay et al., 2025). It also supports the finding of Ritonga et al. (2022), which states that educational innovation in primary schools must embrace diversity to build tolerance and inclusivity. Thus, Social Studies functions not only as knowledge transmission but also as a medium for character and multicultural competence development.

From the behavioral perspective, reinforcement strategies were implemented effectively. The teacher gave verbal praise to active students and provided recognition when they contributed ideas during group discussions. Such reinforcement increased student participation and motivation, consistent with the principles of behaviorism that emphasize behavior changes as responses to stimuli (Shahbana & Satria, 2020). Positive reinforcement not only encouraged active learning but also cultivated desirable classroom behaviors such as cooperation, respect, and discipline. This shows that behaviorist strategies remain relevant when integrated appropriately with modern approaches, especially in Social Studies learning which requires shaping positive social behavior.

Cognitive and cybernetic aspects were also reflected in the way teachers structured lesson materials. The material was presented systematically, starting with simple concepts and gradually progressing to more complex ones. In addition, the teacher used visual aids and local examples to help students process information effectively. This reflects the cognitive view that learning requires mental processes such as attention, memory, and organization (Pahleviannur et al., 2022). Furthermore, from a cybernetic perspective, teachers acted as facilitators who designed effective information pathways to help students interpret and internalize knowledge. This approach strengthened students' understanding while minimizing the perception of Social Studies as a memorization-heavy subject.

Another important finding is the integration of parental involvement in supporting Social Studies learning outcomes. Teachers reported that students who received support from parents were more engaged and responsive in class. This confirms the study by Lubis, Ramadani, et al. (2024), which found that parental involvement significantly influences children's learning experiences. In the Social Studies context, collaboration between school and home becomes crucial, especially in instilling values such as cooperation, respect, and social responsibility. Parental roles complement teacher efforts, ensuring that Social Studies values are practiced consistently both in school and in family life.

The role of teachers as facilitators and motivators was central to the success of Social Studies learning at SD Negeri 060816. Teachers not only conveyed material but also guided students in critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration. According to Lubis, Simanjuntak, et al. (2025), effective teaching strategies—such as using questioning techniques—can stimulate student engagement and improve comprehension. This finding strengthens the argument that Social Studies requires teachers to be more than knowledge transmitters; they must be facilitators of students' intellectual and social growth. The role of teachers as motivators also ensures that students maintain their enthusiasm in facing challenges during the learning process.

In terms of character development, Social Studies learning has demonstrated significant contributions. Students were trained to practice values such as discipline, cooperation, and respect for differences, which are essential for developing strong character. Lubis (2023) highlights that educational programs in schools play a crucial role in optimizing student character formation. Social Studies at SD Negeri 060816 reflects this by embedding character values in every lesson. Thus, beyond academic outcomes, Social Studies has succeeded in preparing students to become socially responsible individuals capable of contributing positively to their communities.

Overall, the integration of constructivist, humanistic, sociocultural, behaviorist, cognitive, and cybernetic approaches has created a holistic Social Studies learning model. This combination makes learning not only more meaningful and engaging but also effective in developing cognitive, social, and emotional competencies. The findings confirm that Social Studies should not be viewed as a subject full of memorization but as a vehicle for shaping knowledge, attitudes, and life skills simultaneously (Lubis & Ritonga, 2023). With these practices, Social Studies learning in elementary schools can truly serve its purpose: to build a generation that is academically competent, emotionally mature, socially responsible, and culturally inclusive.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that Social Studies learning in the fifth grade of SD Negeri 060816 has applied various educational theories from the social sciences, including constructivist, humanistic, sociocultural, behaviorist, cognitive, and cybernetic approaches. The teacher does not merely focus on memorization but strives to link lessons with students' real-life experiences, making learning more contextual and meaningful.

The methods used—such as group discussions, cooperation, and problem-based learning—successfully improved students' participation, understanding,

and social attitudes. Students' diverse backgrounds were not seen as barriers but as opportunities to cultivate tolerance, mutual respect, and collaboration. Therefore, Social Studies in elementary schools has proven to play a vital role in shaping a generation that is not only academically intelligent but also socially responsible, environmentally conscious, and prepared to live harmoniously in society.

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