
The Development and Problematic of Social Studies Education in Indonesia

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Abstract

This study explores the development of social studies education in Indonesia and analyzes the issues in the practice of learning in school. The social sciences subjects in Indonesia began to be taught in schools in 1975. From time to time, the social studies education has been constantly experiencing growth both didactically and methodically. Recently, in the Decree of the Minister of National Education No. 22 (2006), it is recommended that the social sciences education or learning should be integrated, but for didactic methodical reasons, integrated social studies education is still not implemented well in many schools.

Introduction

Social studies is an important subject for students, because the lesson develops their skills for living in a society as well as citizens of the world. Social studies education is a form of simplification of the knowledge of humanities, social sciences or natural sciences that are relevant to be applied in daily life. The fundamental difference between Social Sciences and Social Studies education is that the earlier term is in order to learn the basic concepts of social sciences to expand further, while the latter is to learn the basic concepts of social sciences to be applied in daily life.

Life is always faced with choices. Each option must have an impact, whether positive or negative. Unfortunately, we should choose among these options, even not choosing is also a choice. One of the objectives of the social studies education is to develop student's skills as a decision maker in their real life problems. NCSS (1994:3) suggests the main purpose of the Social studies education is to promote the competence of citizens, which is an activity designed to help students develop their ability, "to make reasoned and

informed choices as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world.”

Life in society is always changing from time to time, so that the Social studies education is required to always be updated, in accordance with the existing challenges. Therefore, this makes the teaching of Social studies is always challenging and always needed to help students develop the ability to respond those changes.

Social studies as an effort to develop the citizens’ capabilities in responding to the challenges of this era was originally developed in America in 1916, later adopted by many countries including Indonesia. The implementation of Social studies education was certainly different in each country depending on the differences of constraints and challenges. In this paper the development of Social studies education in Indonesia will be analyzed and explained, along with a variety of problems, and find a way out of how the Social studies education should be held.

The Development of Social Studies in Indonesia

Social studies education was introduced in Indonesia since the release of the curriculum in 1975. Before the birth of the Social studies, in Indonesia actually a subject that has similar characteristics in the 1968 Curriculum, namely Citizenship Education, has developed. Evidence of similar characteristics can be seen from the didactic/methodical instructions in the curriculum which stated that the Citizenship Education in the 1968 curriculum was the fabric of the elements of Earth Sciences, History, and Civics. Further, giving the citizenship education can be started from any of the above elements. The element used as the starting point is always intertwined with other elements, so that the citizenship education is a sense of unity. Judging from the didactic/methodical instructions, it can be said that the Citizenship Education subject can be equated with Social Studies.

In the 1975 curriculum Social studies are defined as human sciences in the environment. The study of social studies include the activities of human life in groups, called communities, using political science, economics, history, sociology, anthropology, and so on. Further, it is explained in curriculum that the implementation of Social studies education leads to the formation of attitudes on the basis of *Pancasila* (*The Indonesian basic ideologie content of Five Principles*). The curriculum structure at the junior level includes such subjects as Pancasila Moral Education, History, Geography/Demography, and Cooperative Economics; while the high school the subjects include Pancasila Moral Education, History, Geography/Demography, Anthropology, Culture,

Cooperative Economics, and Accounting.

The basic objective of Social studies education in the 1975 curriculum is shaping the students' attitudes on the basis of Pancasila. This is based on the fact that in 1965 there was a Communist rebellion; so as to prevent the recurrence of the rebellion, it is necessary to incorporate the state ideology Pancasila in education in schools. The target of good citizenship is to develop in a learning attitude to live based on Pancasila ideology. The name of social studies in the 1975 curriculum refers to the social studies in the United States based on the consensus of our experts in the National Seminar on Civic Education in 1972 in Tawangmangu, Solo (Sapriya, 2009:19; Winataputra S. Udin, 2010,1.30-1.31).

Compared to the 1968 curriculum, the concept of social studies in the 1975 curriculum listed four important things to be noticed: 1) Pancasila Moral Education got strengthening, and the teaching of this subject is separated from Social studies in order to transmit to the basic aspects of cultural heritage 2) Integrated social studies for Elementary Schools; 3) In Junior High Schools the Social studies is an umbrella for History, Geography/Demography, Cooperative Economics; 4) at the high school level Social studies is taught separately and is divided into such subjects as Pancasila Moral Education, History, Geography/Demography, anthropology, Culture, Cooperative Economics, and Accounting; 6) put more emphasis on the goal (Dep. P and K, 1975; Winataputra S. Udin, 2010:1.31).

In the 1975 curriculum, learning is emphasized more on achieving goals. In the early progress of this curriculum it is recommended that each teacher make lesson units known as the PPSI model. Each unit contains General Instructional Objectives (TIU), Special Instructional Objectives (ICT), Method, Content, Learning Media, Teaching and Learning Activities, and Evaluation.

After the 1975 curriculum, in 1984 a new curriculum was introduced and known the 1984 Curriculum. If the 1975 curriculum emphasizes on the goal, then the 1984 curriculum emphasizes on the process. This curriculum recommends that every subject should apply the process skills approach in the teaching-learning activities. Conny Semiawan, one of curriculum developers, said that approach is the development of process skills which enable students to learn the system by developing the skills of knowledge acquisition process so that learners will discover, develop its own facts and concepts, and cultivate attitudes and values required by in a specific learning goal. Since the enactment of this 1984 curriculum, students began to consider the role of the teaching-learning process. At the moment there appeared a better approach to enable students in learning which is known as Students Active Learning (Cara Belajar

Siswa Aktif, CBSA). Social studies education too began to change from teacher-centered to student-centered approach.

Social Studies Nowadays in Indonesia

In 1998 there was a monetary crisis, which affected all aspects of Indonesian daily life, including the regime change and democratization demands. After the end of the Suharto regime (Called Reformation Era), a new curriculum was born in 2004, known as the Competency-Based Curriculum (KBK), and then refined to be the 2006 curriculum which is known as Education Unit Level Curriculum (KTSP).

In the new curriculum it is stated that Social studies education should contribute to the progress and public welfare. This is because the welfare is suspended not only from the results of natural resources, but also be supported by intellectual capital, social, and beliefs. Social studies are also required to respond positively the developments of information, science and technology, and learning demands with local needs. These reforms are also intended to improve the relevance of the program with real life around the students.

The urgent problem of Social studies education as outlined in the 2006 curriculum cannot be fully implemented at schools. Social studies education at schools still tends to be based on memorization.

Renewal of Social Studies Education: From Separated to Integrated

Some suggestions update Social studies education has been widely performed, but in the implementation of learning at schools in Indonesia is still beyond expectation. In the Decree of the Miniter of National Education No. 22 (2006) it is mentioned that the Social studies is a blend of various social sciences such as Sociology, Geography, Economics, History. Nevertheless, because in it there are no examples in a classroom practice, Social studies are still taught separately or discretely. The Social studies teachers at the school generally still emphasize the cognitive understanding of how children can understand the concept of the materials so that they can workout both school and national exams, which still totally emphasizes on the understanding of simple information from history and social sciences.

In order to implement the Miniter's decree, then an integrated model of Social studies education was developed. An integrated learning model was developed, for example in the Decree of the Miniter of National Education No. 22 (2006) the Standar Content has set SK (Standard Competence, identical to General Instructional Objectives) and KD (Basic Comptenece, identical to Special Instructional Objectives) for each of the subjects such as: history,

geography, economics, and sociology, but still have not described in an integrated of Social studies. To teach Social studies in an integrated way, an effort is pursued to reconstruct the standard content in order that each basic competence of each subject becomes integrated and interconnected in a matter of learning materials.

The reconstruction of the standar content can be developed through the two models, namely integrated and correlated (connected) models. The reconstruction steps of both models will be described in the following descriptions:

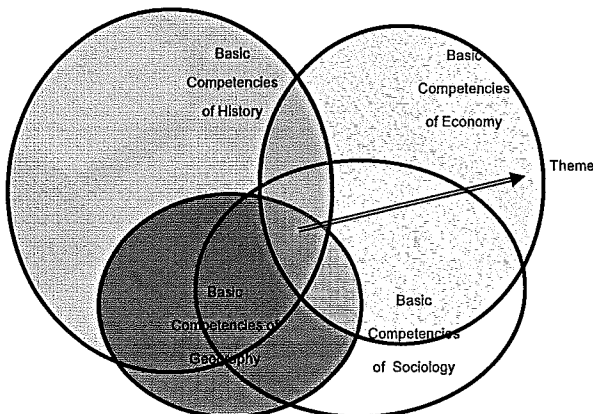
1. Integrated Model

Integrated model intended by the development team is to use an interdisciplinary approach whose concepts are overlapped with each other to become integrated. The steps of blending based on this model can described are as follows:

- a. Identify the subject matter or some basic competences (KD) from several subjects, including in the social studies (history, geography, sociology, economics).
- b. Formulate themes captured from the KDs of some subjects in Social studies.
- c. Design syllabus and lesson plans
- d. Develop teaching materials.

Integrating the teaching of Social studies of this model is described as follows:

Figure 1. Integrated Model in Social Studies Education



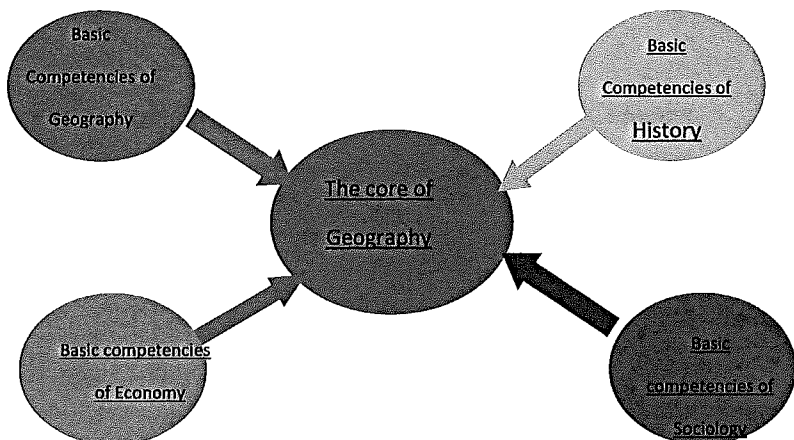
In this model the concept (see the middle slices), or can be called the theme or topic, can be developed based on

- (1) The issue or event that actually happens in the community, such as disasters, brawl, elections, the discovery of historic sites, and so forth;
- (2) The main potentials that exist somewhere, such as plantations, Borobudur Temple, The Role of the Solo River, tourism and so on;
- (3) The problems that exist in society such as slum housing, water pollution, juvenile delinquency, traffic congestion, drugs, and so on. In this model, SK and KD from various fields of social sciences which have similarities can be appointed as a concept or theme.

2. Connected/Correlated Model

Connected or correlated model is a connection which is derived from a basic competence (Indonesian=Kompetensi Dasar (KD))/materials and be determined the relationship with other Basic Competencies/materials/aspects. Connected model of integrated learning is applied by linking a Basic Competencies or a subject with a Basic Competencies or another subject. Integration in Social studies using connected/correlated model can be described as follows:

Figure 2. The Correlated Model in Social Studies Teaching



Source: Tim pengembang pembelajaran IPS: Konsep dan Pembelajaran, 2010. Direktorat Jenderal Manajemen Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah, Kementerian Pendidikan Nasional.

Some Difficulties During the Implementation at Schools

Social studies education is intended to answer the current real life conditions. From academic point of view, social studies are expected to help students build a deeper understanding of how to know, how to apply what they know, and how to participate in planning the future. Social studies education focuses on the specific contributions of history, social sciences, humanities, arts, natural sciences and other disciplines, and simultaneously provide an umbrella for unified multiple disciplines. The basic concept of the integrated and correlated integrated model for social studies education is theoretically a great way to teach Social studies in an integrated manner, but we still find many difficulties in the implementation.

Some difficulties in the implementation of integrated learning include the following: First, an integrated social studies learning which is applied in Indonesia suggested begins not from a certain subject or actual issues or problems that exist in society, or the potential problems in certain areas; instead, the teacher should first identify any basic competence that appears in one semester in subjects belonging to the social studies (history, economics, geography, and sociology subject matter). After that, the teacher can find a theme that covers the basic competencies, where sometimes it is difficult to look for a unifying theme for each objective of the basic competencies. Second, the curriculum does not explain if any social studies learning consisting of subjects of history, economics, geography, and sociology should be done in that way. Third, if found to be a unifying theme, the basic competencies presented in a subject are not addressed in the learning, so the purpose of learning the history of social studies, economics, geography, and sociology as outlined in the standard competence (Indonesian=Standar Kompetensi (SK)) and basic competenced (Kompetensi Dasar (KD))) is blurred. Fourth, the implementation of the social studies test achievement, both in national final exams and in college entrance exams, still prioritize the cognitive knowledge of history, economics, geography, and sociology.

Closing

In the social studies integrated and correlated learning models, as described above, the teacher should choose a theme. The theme can be taken from existing or potential problems in society; yet in practice, there are still many teachers who have difficulty in determining the theme. The cause is that the determined theme should cover from a variety of basic competencies in science, history, geography, economics, and sociology which have been sometimes difficult to put together. So the lesson here is not based on the

problem, but based on the theme decision that can cover the various sciences in the basic competences. Another weakness of this integrated and correlated model is when it will be done, because there is no specific time suggested in the national standard of curriculum for integrated learning. Therefore, the learning expectation as described in the curriculum can not be implemented, and social studies learning in schools is still oriented on textbooks or on memorization of basic concepts of history, geography, economics, and sociology.

The purpose of social studies education is not about how to integrate the various disciplines of social sciences and humanities, but how to develop children's ability in solving the problems of citizenship by using the multidiscipline knowledge of history, geography, economics, and sociology and so on in an integrated way. For that reason the social studies learning model should be emphasized on the aspects of how to develop the learner's ability to think or solve the problems of citizenship. Solving the problem of citizenship that can begin from history, geography, economics, and sociology and put the problems to be solved in an integrated way. Children's competence to understand the concept of scientific history, geography, economics, and sociology are also required to solve social problems in the daily life of the students. With this model the social studies learning objectives that lead to the creation of more competence citizens can be realized and implemented at schools.

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