



## Integrating Social Capital and Ethnopedagogy in Social Studies: Fostering Cultural Identity and Community Resilience in Indonesia

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### Abstract

Integrating the concept of social capital is ideal for developing social studies materials. This article aims to explore the synergy between the concept of social capital in practice and an ethnopedagogical approach that prioritizes local wisdom in social studies education in Indonesia. The method used in compiling this article is a literature review with the application of a SWOT analysis. The SWOT analysis yields strategic insights for the development of both approaches. The findings indicate that integrating ethnopedagogy into social studies can strengthen interpersonal relationships, increase community awareness, and revitalize cultural identity amidst globalization. Developing social capital through collaborative learning has been shown to foster critical thinking, empathy, and active participation in citizenship. This study proposes a conceptual model that aligns the dimensions of social capital; bonds, connections, and relationships—with ethnopedagogical strategies to achieve culturally responsive social studies learning. However, challenges such as cultural homogenization, limited teacher capacity, and symbolic cultural representations need to be addressed through policy support, professional development, and curriculum reform that respects indigenous epistemologies. Integrating these two approaches offers a transformative pathway to developing culturally grounded, socially connected, and democratically minded learners.

[Integrasi konsep modal sosial menjadi pendekatan yang relevan dalam pengembangan materi pembelajaran Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial (IPS). Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi sinergi antara konsep modal sosial dan pendekatan ethnopedagogi yang menekankan pemanfaatan kearifan lokal dalam pendidikan IPS di Indonesia. Metode yang digunakan adalah studi kepustakaan (literature review) dengan penerapan analisis SWOT untuk mengidentifikasi kekuatan, kelemahan, peluang, dan tantangan dalam pengembangan kedua pendekatan tersebut. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa integrasi ethnopedagogi dalam pembelajaran IPS dapat memperkuat hubungan interpersonal, meningkatkan kesadaran sosial masyarakat, serta merevitalisasi identitas budaya di tengah arus globalisasi. Pengembangan modal sosial melalui pembelajaran kolaboratif terbukti mampu menumbuhkan kemampuan berpikir kritis, empati, dan partisipasi aktif peserta didik sebagai warga negara. Studi ini menawarkan model konseptual yang menghubungkan dimensi modal sosial—*bonding*, *bridging*, dan *linking social capital*—dengan strategi ethnopedagogi untuk mewujudkan pembelajaran IPS yang responsif terhadap konteks budaya. Namun demikian, tantangan seperti homogenisasi budaya, keterbatasan kapasitas guru, dan kecenderungan representasi budaya yang bersifat simbolik perlu diatasi melalui dukungan kebijakan, pengembangan profesional pendidik, serta reformasi kurikulum yang menghargai epistemologi lokal. Integrasi kedua pendekatan ini berpotensi menjadi strategi transformatif dalam membentuk peserta didik yang berakar pada budaya, memiliki keterhubungan sosial yang kuat, serta berorientasi pada nilai-nilai demokrasi dan kewarganegaraan yang berkelanjutan.] © The Authors.

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## 1. Introduction

Integrating social capital and ethnopedagogy in social studies is a promising approach to strengthening cultural identity and community resilience in Indonesia. Social capital includes social networks, norms, and values that enable cooperation in society, while ethnopedagogy utilizes local wisdom and cultural values in education. The combination of these two concepts can effectively strengthen social relations and preserve cultural values in facing the increasingly complex challenges of globalization. Social capital plays a crucial role in enhancing community resilience, especially in the face of public emergencies. A study in Shanghai showed that different types of social capital—bonding, bridging, and linking—have different impacts on community identity and social resilience. Bonding and linking social capital significantly enhance community identity and resilience, while bridging social capital still needs to be strengthened to be more effective in strengthening social cohesion [1]. These findings indicate that building social capital in a community strengthens internal solidarity and increases the community's ability to adapt to social change.

In Indonesia, especially in disaster-prone areas, social capital in the form of cultural capital plays a role in increasing community resilience. Local wisdom that is passed down from generation to generation allows communities to be better prepared and respond to disasters [2]. For example, communities with a strong cultural heritage tend to develop more proactive disaster mitigation behavior. It emphasizes the importance of integrating cultural insights into national disaster management policies so that mitigation strategies can align with the community's social characteristics [3]. Ethnopedagogy is rooted in local wisdom and plays an important role in multicultural education in Indonesia. As implemented by the Minangkabau community in West Sumatra, the culture-based education model instills local cultural values into the educational curriculum. This approach not only increases students' cultural awareness and social sensitivity but also strengthens cross-cultural communication. The practical implementation of ethnopedagogy can be a means of creating better social cohesion in a multicultural society [4].

The formation of students' cultural identity is an important issue in pedagogical discussions. Studies in Russia show that cultural identity can be built through educational programs that integrate historical and cultural heritage into the curriculum. This approach emphasizes that education is not only a means of imparting knowledge, but also a tool for strengthening national and regional identities [5]. Thus, ethnopedagogy has great potential to help students understand and internalize the cultural values that are part of their identity. This creates a clear gap where, ideally, ethnopedagogy can be applied in various subjects, including social studies. By integrating the concept of social capital, ethnopedagogy can be implemented to strengthen the local context in Indonesia.

Integrating social capital and ethnopedagogy has strengthened cultural identity in specific communities. For example, in Muara Badak Ulu Village, social capital plays a role in maintaining the cultural identity of the fishing community. Trust, norms, and social networks facilitate coordinated actions in preserving local traditions and strengthening values such as cooperation and mutual assistance. Thus, integrating social capital and ethnopedagogy can effectively increase community resilience and strengthen cultural identity [6], [7]. Community-based education integrating social, cultural, and religious values is also proposed to strengthen cultural identity and promote social harmony in a multicultural society [4]. This approach emphasizes strong character formation and a deep understanding of cultural identity. This is in line with the principle of ethnopedagogy, which prioritizes local value-based learning as a basis for strengthening students' social and cultural identity [4], [5].

Integrating social capital and ethnopedagogy in social studies offers various benefits, there are still challenges in balancing traditional cultural values with the demands of globalization. Cultural identity formation is dynamic and requires continuous adaptation and negotiation of values. Studies on cross-cultural adaptation show that the success of multicultural education depends on the flexibility of learning strategies in accommodating diverse cultural elements while strengthening social resilience and cohesion. The article's novelty lies in its analysis of the position of social studies in a more contextual and relevant way, and in its contribution to creating a more inclusive and resilient society as it faces

global challenges. Therefore, the aim of the article is to analyze the potential integration of social capital and ethnopedagogy in social education as an effective strategy for building cultural identity and increasing community resilience.

## 2. Method

This study uses a literature review design to analyze the integration of social capital and ethnopedagogy in social education in Indonesia. The literature review was selected to explore relevant concepts, theories, and empirical findings from various academic sources, including scientific journals, books, and research reports. The focus of this literature review is to identify how social capital and ethnopedagogy have been applied in social education and to explore their impact on cultural identity and community resilience. Literature sources were collected from leading scientific databases, with consideration of the relevance, currency, and credibility of the publications. The selection of literature used was based on the credibility of articles published in reputable international journals. Therefore, the researcher used the website scispace.com or other literature search engines [8], [9].

Data obtained from the literature study were analyzed using SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis to identify strengths, challenges, opportunities, and threats in integrating social capital and ethnopedagogy in social education. Strengths are analyzed from the effectiveness of social capital and ethnopedagogy in enhancing cultural identity and social cohesion. Weaknesses include limitations in implementation, such as the lack of supportive policies or challenges in curriculum alignment. Opportunities focus on the potential for developing educational models based on social capital and ethnopedagogy, including national policy support and global trends in culture-based education. Threats include external factors, such as the impact of globalization and shifts in cultural values, that can hinder the effectiveness of this approach. With this approach, this study is expected to provide strategic insights into integrating social capital and ethnopedagogy in social education and to offer recommendations for their development in Indonesia based on ideal frameworks.

## 3. Results and Discussion

This section will present the results and discussion separately. The intended description is as follows:

### 3.1 Result

The integration between culture, social capital, and Social Studies (IPS) in the Independent Curriculum shows an interdisciplinary approach that broadens the meaning of learning [10]. This model connects local knowledge with global competencies, strengthening context-based learning that conventional approaches have poorly accommodated. For example, when studying the topic "Social Interaction in Daily Life" in grade VII, teachers can explore the practice of cooperation in the Dayak Meratus community as a representation of local social capital that is still sustainable today.

Social studies in the Independent Curriculum is no longer just about conveying theory but instead becomes a means of empowering local cultural values [11], [12]. These values strengthen students' identities as part of a community. The topic "Social Life of Indonesian Society" in grade VII, for example, can be explained through traditional practices such as Customary Institution Deliberation in South Kalimantan, which reflects the function of local social institutions in maintaining social harmony and upholding customary norms. The suitability of this model with the principles of the Independent Curriculum is seen in the flexibility of learning, which is adapted to the student's context [13]. Social studies teachers are given the freedom to design meaningful and experience-based learning. In the topic "Social Change and Globalization" in grade IX, teachers can invite students to analyze the impact of modernization on the floating market tradition in Banjarmasin as a real example of social change that directly affects their lives.

The strong linkage to the local cultural context poses challenges regarding replication and generalization [10], [14]. Areas that have experienced high modernization or rapid urbanization, such as coastal areas that have lost the social function of traditional fishing communities, often do not have cultural resources that can be utilized in contextual learning [13], [15]. As a result, students lose the opportunity to learn from their immediate environment.

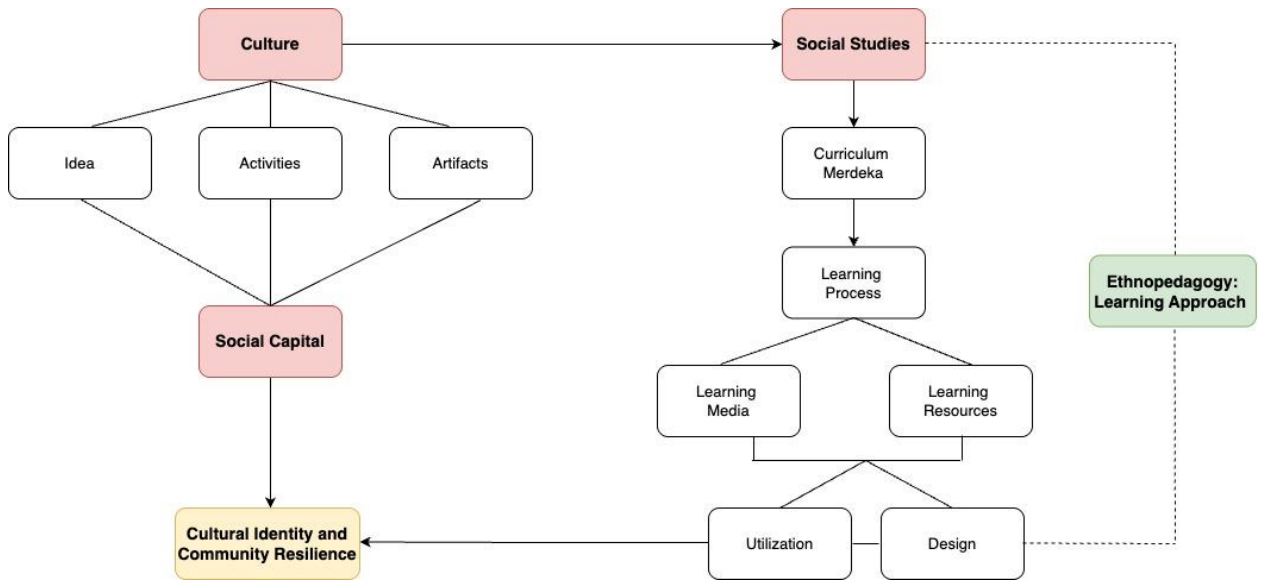


Figure 1. Integration of Culture, Social Capital, and Social Studies

Table 1. SWOT Analysis of Cultural Integration, Social Capital, and Social Studies

|   | Strengths (S)  | Weakness (W)   |
|---|--|--|
| <b>Integration of Culture, Social Capital, and Social Studies</b> | <p><b>Multidisciplinary Integration in Learning</b><br/>This diagram reflects an interdisciplinary approach to education that connects culture, social capital, and social studies. This approach enriches learning by linking cultural elements (ideas, activities, artifacts) to social capital, which in turn strengthens cultural identity and community resilience.</p> | <p><b>Dependence on Specific Cultural Context</b><br/>This model relies heavily on local cultural diversity, which can be challenging to implement in areas with limited access to cultural resources or experiencing rapid modernization.</p>   |
|   | <p><b>Support for Independent Curriculum</b><br/>This concept strengthens learning based on local character and cultural wisdom in the Independent Curriculum. This model supports the principles of contextual, adaptive, and experience-based learning, thereby increasing the relevance of teaching materials to students' lives.</p>                                     | <p><b>Limitations in Standardization of Learning Evaluation</b><br/>The use of ethnopedagogical approaches can make standardizing learning evaluations difficult. Each community has different values and norms, making it challenging to develop evaluation instruments that can be applied widely.</p> |
|   | <p><b>Strengthening Community Identity and Resilience</b><br/>Integrating social capital with culture in social studies learning enables the strengthening of cultural identity and community resilience. This contributes to preserving cultural heritage and builds students' critical and social thinking skills.</p>   | <p><b>Educator Readiness in Implementation</b><br/>Not all educators have a deep understanding of cultural integration in learning. A lack of training for teachers on this approach can hinder the effectiveness of its implementation in the classroom.</p>  |
|   | <p><b>Ethnopedagogical Approach as a Contextual Method</b><br/>The use of ethnopedagogy as a learning approach provides flexibility in designing and utilizing culturally based learning resources. This has the potential to increase student engagement because the</p>  | <p><b>Gaps in the Utilization of Media and Learning Resources</b><br/>Despite efforts to design and utilize culture-based learning media, not all schools can access adequate resources. This can create disparities in implementation across regions.</p>   |

learning material is closer to the reality of their lives.

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#### Opportunities (O)

##### **Raising Awareness of Culture-Based Education**

With increasing attention to culture-based education and local wisdom, this model can be a reference for more inclusive education policies based on society's social realities.

##### **Technology Support in Culture-Based Learning**

Technology can be used to document and disseminate culture-based learning, such as by digitizing local culture-based learning resources or developing community-based learning platforms.

##### **Collaboration with Local Communities and Institutions**

With the relationship between culture, social capital, and social studies, this model opens up opportunities for collaboration between schools, indigenous communities, and research institutions to develop a more contextual and applicable curriculum.

##### **Support from National Education Policy**

This concept is in line with the Merdeka Belajar policy, which emphasizes the importance of learning that is relevant to students' socio-cultural context. With policy support, this model can be more easily implemented at various levels of education.

#### Threats (T)

##### **Globalization and Cultural Homogenization**

The increasingly strong current of globalization can threaten the preservation of local culture, so this concept may face challenges in maintaining its relevance amidst rapid social change.

##### **Resistance to Unconventional Approaches**

Most education systems are still based on conventional approaches prioritizing standard curriculum and quantitative evaluation. More conservative education stakeholders may resist a more contextual ethnopedagogical approach.

##### **Lack of Infrastructure and Resources**

In some areas, especially remote ones, limited infrastructure and educational resources can hinder the optimal implementation of this approach.

##### **Lack of Awareness and Appreciation of Local Culture**

If the community does not have sufficient awareness of the importance of culture in education, then the implementation of this model could experience obstacles in terms of community participation and support.

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### 3.2 Discussion

Based on the figure and table SWOT analysis above, the ethnopedagogical approach's flexibility supports students' emotional and intellectual involvement. In the "People, Places, and Environment" topic in grade VII, students can be invited to map land use based on local wisdom, such as the system *shifting cultivation or field* implemented by Indigenous communities. This project can be packaged as a project-based assessment (PjBL), which is carried out by the Merdeka Curriculum [11], [16]. The obstacles arise in preparing evaluation instruments that can fairly assess competency achievement in various contexts [17], [18]. Evaluation of social studies learning based on local values is often qualitative and contextual, making it challenging to create a universally applicable assessment rubric [19]. For example, how can we objectively assess students' understanding of the value of togetherness in traditional *village gatherings* if all students do not experience the social context?

Social capital in social studies allows for active community involvement in learning. In the "Community Economic Activities" topic in grade VIII, parents or local business actors such as rattan farmers, sasirangan craftsmen, or Barito River fishermen can be involved as resource persons for learning based on direct experience. This builds a sense of ownership of the educational process and broadens students' understanding of the social realities in their environment. However, teacher readiness is a crucial issue in implementing this model. Many social studies teachers have not systematically been trained to integrate local culture into teaching materials. For example, in the topic of "The Role of Citizens in the Context of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia" in grade IX, there are still few teachers who

can raise local democratic practices such as *customary hall deliberation* as a form of substantial democracy in the life of Indigenous communities.

Access to learning resources is also a significant challenge. Schools in areas with limited infrastructure often do not have local cultural documentation, such as oral history archives, old photos, or cultural artifacts. In local history lessons in South Kalimantan, for example, teachers often have difficulty finding narratives about the Banjar people's resistance to colonialism, even though this topic is very contextual in the material "Struggle Against Colonizers". Technological advances open up great opportunities for digitizing and distributing local cultural content. Schools can utilize digital media to record cultural practices, create simple documentary videos, or develop interactive maps containing local socio-cultural information based on student participation. In the Merdeka Curriculum, this can be integrated into the Pancasila student profile strengthening project. The threat of globalization leading to homogenization of values is a serious concern. Local traditions such as *maunjun* (gathering in the river while netting fish), which used to be a typical Banjar social activity, are now starting to be replaced by a technology-based consumer culture. In social studies, this change can be used as material for critical discussions regarding the impact of globalization on local social structures [20], [21].

The Merdeka Belajar policy, which emphasizes diversity and contextualization, provides legitimacy to this local culture-based approach. Social studies teachers are now not only teachers but also facilitators who design learning based on students' social reality [13], [22]. In the topic "Maps and Remote Sensing" in grade VIII, teachers can invite students to map river basins based on the life experiences of the people around them. Resistance to non-conventional approaches still occurs, especially from those accustomed to the old curriculum model that emphasizes cognitive aspects and uniform evaluation. This hinders learning innovation, including compiling authentic assessment rubrics following local socio-cultural characteristics. Great opportunities arise from collaboration between schools and local communities. In the topic of "Economic Activities Based on Regional Potential" in grade VIII, the involvement of local business actors, craftsmen, and farmers can be a source of authentic learning. This collaboration strengthens the learning process and opens up a path to strengthening the community economy through appreciation of local potential.

Decentralization of education in the Merdeka Curriculum allows schools to develop operational curricula based on local culture. However, this autonomy needs to be supported by teacher training, provision of resources, and strengthening of school management in order to be able to implement the curriculum effectively and contextually. Infrastructure gaps, especially in 3T areas, remain a structural problem that hinders the equitable implementation of this approach. Schools that do not have internet access, social studies laboratories, or even libraries will be left behind in exploring local wisdom-based learning and cross-disciplinary projects promoted by the Merdeka Curriculum.

Community awareness of the importance of culture-based education is a major factor in the success of this approach. Without community support, participation in providing local resource persons, artifacts, or stories will be minimal. Therefore, schools must actively socialize the benefits of this approach, for example, through community activities or *student work titles* that showcase the results of culture-based learning. Social studies plays a central role in shaping students' character through the development of cultural and social literacy [23]. This literacy includes the ability to theoretically understand social phenomena and the skills to reflect on and respond to social conditions that develop in society. In the context of the Independent Curriculum, cultural and social literacy is an important foundation for building a deep and meaningful understanding of students' real lives in their surroundings. Strategic approach to building this literacy is exploring local history. Students learn about the past chronologically and understand the roots of their cultural identity by exploring events, figures, and historical narratives that grow from the surrounding community [24]. Activities such as interviews with community leaders, exploring local historical sites, and rewriting village history become concrete practices that strengthen the connection between social studies material and students' socio-cultural realities.

Community economic practices can also be used as relevant and contextual learning resources. In topics such as economic activities, distribution of goods and services, or socio-economic changes, teachers can invite students to observe local production patterns, such as agriculture, crafts, or traditional trade. This approach allows students to understand economic concepts in abstraction and through direct, down-to-earth experience. Social mapping projects based on neighborhood units (RW) or villages also have the potential to increase students' social awareness. Students can map social structures, resource potential, and problems their communities face through this activity. For example, mapping access to clean water, places of worship, educational facilities, or disaster-prone areas become a learning tool that simultaneously encourages observation skills, spatial analysis, and social responsibility.

The SWOT analysis that has been reviewed show that the main strength of this integrative approach lies in its ability to contextualize learning according to the student's social environment. With this approach, social studies learning becomes more relevant and down-to-earth because students not only learn concepts from textbooks but also see, feel, and understand how the concepts are applied in their daily lives. This relevance builds stronger learning motivation and deeper engagement. However, implementing this approach faces structural challenges in the national education system. One of the main obstacles is the school culture, which is still trapped in the conventional and standardized learning paradigm. Teachers are often limited by administrative burdens, demands for exam scores, and minimal training that allows them to develop culture-based learning and social capital. As a result, although the Independent Curriculum has opened up space for innovation, not all schools can utilize it optimally.

Limited access to locally-based educational resources is another significant challenge. Not all schools have local historical documentation, culturally-based learning media, or collaborative networks with the community. This makes the contextual approach often dependent on the initiative of individual teachers who care about local culture. Therefore, a support system is needed to encourage and facilitate cultural integration institutionally, not just on a personal basis [25]. In this context, the approach that integrates culture and social capital in social studies cannot be understood merely as an alternative pedagogical strategy. It is a transformative movement that challenges the old educational logic that focuses on homogenization and universalization of material. Cultural integration not only enriches learning content but also fosters students' critical awareness and social identity so that they can become agents of change in their communities [26], [27].

Furthermore, social studies connected to students' social reality can restore the authentic function of education: building people who think critically, are rooted in their culture, and are ready to face the complexity of global challenges [20]. In the context of globalization, which tends to erode local wisdom, culture-based education plays a role as a balance between modernity and tradition. It teaches students not to be uprooted while remaining open to the dynamics of the times [28]. Thus, cultural and social literacy development in social studies learning becomes an unavoidable urgency in building an inclusive, contextual, and socially just education system. The Independent Curriculum, which opens up space for differentiation and strengthening local contexts, must be followed by all parties' commitment to building an education ecosystem that supports local values without losing global competitiveness [29]. In this case, social studies have a moral and strategic responsibility to ensure that the transformation of education towards this direction is carried out meaningfully and sustainably.

#### 4. Conclusion

This research demonstrates that integrating culture and social capital into social studies learning within the Merdeka Curriculum significantly increases the relevance and meaningfulness of students' learning. Through an ethnopedagogical approach, social studies learning is no longer limited to conventional theoretical delivery but becomes a vehicle for empowering local wisdom values that strengthen cultural identity and community resilience. A SWOT analysis identified that the model's primary strength lies in its ability to

contextualize learning materials within students' social realities, as reflected in the integration of local cultural practices such as customary deliberations, the Dayak Meratus mutual cooperation system, and the Banjarmasin floating market tradition into social studies topics. Furthermore, the Merdeka Belajar policy, which emphasizes differentiation and local contextualization, provides legitimacy and space for social studies teachers to design experiential learning, enabling students not only to understand abstract concepts but also to reflect on and respond critically and responsibly to social conditions in their environments.

This research has several limitations that should be acknowledged. This model of cultural integration and social capital relies heavily on the availability of local cultural resources, making it difficult to replicate in areas that have experienced high modernization or rapid urbanization, which erodes traditional practices. Further research is recommended to develop a structured, sustainable teacher-training model to improve pedagogical competence in integrating culture and social capital. Comparative research across regions with diverse cultural characteristics is also needed to test the transferability of this model. In addition, the development of authentic assessment instruments that can measure cultural and social literacy validly and fairly needs to be a priority, along with exploring the use of digital technology to document and distribute local cultural content as an inclusive and equitable social studies learning resource.

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