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Implementing Social Studies Learning Strategies to Develop Social Interaction among Fourth Grade Students at MI Muhammadiyah Trimulyo

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the study: This study aims to analyze the implementation of Social Studies learning strategies in developing social interaction among fourth grade students at MI Muhammadiyah Trimulyo. The study also aims to identify how interactive classroom activities encourage students' participation, communication, cooperation, and confidence during the learning process.

Methodology: This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design conducted at MI Muhammadiyah Trimulyo. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and documentation techniques involving the principal, teachers, and fourth grade students. Data validity was examined using triangulation techniques, while data analysis applied inductive qualitative analysis through data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing.

Main Findings: Findings revealed that Social Studies learning strategies such as group discussions, collaborative assignments, and question-and-answer activities improved students' social interaction during classroom learning. Students became more active in asking questions, answering discussions, cooperating with peers, and expressing opinions confidently. Interactive learning activities also encouraged communication, participation, and teamwork among students, creating a more active and socially supportive classroom environment.

Novelty/Originality of this study: This study specifically examines the implementation of Social Studies learning strategies in developing social interaction among students at an Islamic elementary school context. Previous studies mainly focused on character education and tolerance, while this research highlights classroom interaction, collaborative learning, and communication development during Social Studies instruction at the madrasah ibtidaiyah level, contributing new insights into elementary social learning practices.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education in the modern era is not only oriented toward cognitive achievement but also emphasizes the development of students' character and social abilities. Schools play an important role in shaping students' social

attitudes so that they are able to live harmoniously within multicultural societies [1], [2]. Social Studies learning is considered one of the most relevant subjects for instilling values of social interaction, cooperation, tolerance, and mutual respect among students [3], [4], [5]. Through Social Studies learning, students are expected not only to understand social concepts theoretically but also to apply them in their daily lives. Therefore, the learning strategies implemented by teachers have a significant role in developing students' social interaction at the elementary school level.

Problems related to students' social interaction are still frequently found in the learning process at elementary schools, particularly among students who tend to form friendships based on specific groups. A lack of respect for differences in social backgrounds and limited cooperation among students have become challenges that require serious attention [6], [7]. Based on preliminary observations conducted at MI Muhammadiyah Trimulyo, several students were found to interact only with certain peers and showed limited openness toward other classmates. This condition leads to the formation of small exclusive groups that hinder the development of students' overall social attitudes [8], [9]. If this situation is not addressed appropriately, it may negatively affect both the learning process and students' social character development at school.

Several previous studies have discussed teachers' strategies in fostering students' social and character values. A study conducted by Novita Meliana examined Islamic Education teachers' strategies in promoting students' religious tolerance through humanistic and communicative learning approaches [10], [11]. Another study by Syaiful Rizal highlighted classroom teachers' strategies in developing students' character values through habituation, integrated learning, and extracurricular activities. These studies indicate that teachers' strategies play an essential role in shaping students' social character within the school environment [12], [13]. However, previous research has mainly focused on character education and tolerance in general rather than specifically examining Social Studies learning strategies in developing elementary students' social interaction.

Based on the review of previous studies, there is still a research gap that needs further investigation. Earlier studies have not specifically explored the implementation of Social Studies learning strategies used by teachers to develop students' social interaction at the madrasah ibtidaiyah level [14], [15]. In addition, most studies have emphasized general character education without linking it directly to the Social Studies learning process in the classroom [16]. In fact, Social Studies has characteristics that are closely related to the development of social attitudes, cooperation, and interaction among students [17], [18]. Therefore, further research is needed to specifically examine how the implementation of Social Studies learning strategies can be used to develop students' social interaction in Islamic elementary schools.

This study is important because social interaction is one of the fundamental skills that students should develop from an early age. Good social interaction skills can help students build cooperation, increase tolerance, and create a harmonious learning environment. Teachers, as learning facilitators, are responsible for selecting learning strategies that optimally support students' social development [19], [20]. Appropriate Social Studies learning strategies can create active, communicative, and collaborative learning environments that encourage students to respect differences among their peers. [21] Thus, this study is expected to contribute to the development of more effective Social Studies learning practices in fostering students' social attitudes.

The novelty of this study lies in its focus on the implementation of Social Studies learning strategies in developing social interaction among fourth grade students at MI Muhammadiyah Trimulyo. This study not only examines the learning strategies used by teachers but also explores how these strategies are implemented to build social relationships among students within the madrasah environment [22]. Furthermore, this study employs a descriptive qualitative approach to obtain an in-depth understanding of students' social interaction processes during classroom learning activities. The context of research conducted in a madrasah ibtidaiyah also provides additional value because studies on Social Studies learning strategies in Islamic-based elementary schools remain limited. Therefore, this study is expected to enrich academic discussions regarding Social Studies learning and the development of students' social interaction at the elementary school level.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

2.1. Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research approach with a descriptive design to explore the implementation of Social Studies learning strategies in developing students' social interaction at MI Muhammadiyah Trimulyo. Qualitative research was chosen because it allows researchers to obtain in-depth information related to social phenomena occurring naturally in the classroom environment [23]. The descriptive approach was used to describe systematically the learning strategies implemented by teachers and students' social interaction during the learning process [24]. This study focused on understanding behaviors, interactions, and classroom activities through direct observation and communication with participants. Therefore, the qualitative descriptive approach was considered appropriate for providing a comprehensive understanding of the research phenomenon.

2.2. Research Participants and Data Sources

The participants of this study consisted of the principal, fourth grade teacher, and fourth grade students of MI Muhammadiyah Trimulyo. The study used both primary and secondary data sources to support the validity of the findings. Primary data were obtained directly from the fourth grade teacher through interviews and classroom observations related to Social Studies learning strategies. Secondary data were collected from school documents, learning records, photographs, and other supporting documents related to the research topic. These various data sources were used to provide a deeper understanding of the implementation of Social Studies learning strategies in developing students' social interaction.

2.3. Data Collection Techniques

Data collection in this study was conducted through interviews, observations, and documentation techniques. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with the principal, teachers, and students to obtain detailed information regarding the learning strategies implemented in the classroom. Observations were conducted directly during Social Studies learning activities to examine students' social interaction and classroom participation. Documentation techniques were used to collect supporting data, including school profiles, lesson plans, photographs, and other educational documents related to the study. The combination of these techniques enabled the researcher to obtain comprehensive and reliable data regarding the implementation of Social Studies learning strategies.

Table 1. Data Collection Techniques

Technique	Participants	Purpose
Interview	Principal, teacher, students	To obtain information about learning strategies and social interaction
Observation	Fourth grade students	To observe classroom interaction during Social Studies learning
Documentation	School documents	To support and strengthen research findings

2.4. Data Validity and Data Analysis

To ensure the trustworthiness of the data, this study applied triangulation techniques by comparing data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation. The triangulation process was conducted to examine the consistency of information from different participants and research methods. Data analysis was carried out using an inductive analysis technique, in which the researcher interpreted findings based on empirical data collected in the field. The analysis process involved data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing to produce meaningful interpretations of the research findings. Through these procedures, the study was expected to generate valid and credible findings regarding the implementation of Social Studies learning strategies in developing students' social interaction.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. School Profile of MI Muhammadiyah Trimulyo

MI Muhammadiyah Trimulyo is one of the Islamic elementary schools located in Sekampung District, East Lampung Regency. The school was established through community participation and support from local figures who donated land for educational purposes. Since its establishment, the school has continuously developed its educational facilities and improved the quality of learning activities. The school carries the vision of becoming an Islamic madrasah that excels academically and gains public trust through quality education. In supporting the learning process, the school is equipped with classrooms, a library, a prayer room, and other facilities that facilitate students' academic and social development.

Table 2. General Profile of MI Muhammadiyah Trimulyo

Aspect	Description
School Name	MI Muhammadiyah Trimulyo
Location	Sekampung District, East Lampung
Educational Level	Islamic Elementary School
Total Teachers	17 Teachers
Total Students	275 Students
Vision	Islamic, high-achieving, and trusted madrasah

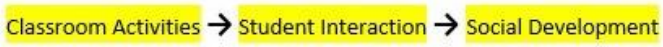


Figure 1. Learning Environment at MI Muhammadiyah Trimulyo

3.2. Implementation of Social Studies Learning Strategies

The findings revealed that the teacher implemented several learning strategies to develop students' social interaction during Social Studies learning activities. The strategies included classroom discussions, question-and-answer sessions, collaborative learning, and task-based activities that encouraged students to communicate actively with their peers. The teacher also provided opportunities for students to express opinions, answer questions, and participate in group discussions during classroom learning. These learning activities created interactive classroom situations that encouraged students to interact socially and cooperate with one another. As a result, Social Studies learning was not only focused on cognitive achievement but also contributed to students' social skill development.

Table 3. Social Studies Learning Strategies Implemented by the Teacher

Learning Strategy	Purpose	Impact on Students
Question and Answer	Encourage participation	Improve communication skills
Group Discussion	Build cooperation	Increase social interaction
Collaborative Tasks	Develop teamwork	Improve peer relationships
Classroom Presentation	Increase confidence	Encourage active participation

The interview results indicated that students tended to become more active when the teacher used interactive learning strategies rather than conventional lecture methods. Several students showed enthusiasm in asking questions and discussing learning materials with classmates during group activities. Observations also showed that students who were previously passive gradually became more involved in classroom interaction when collaborative strategies were implemented consistently. In addition, the teacher provided motivation and positive reinforcement to students who actively participated in learning activities. Therefore, the implementation of interactive Social Studies learning strategies significantly contributed to the development of students' social interaction in the classroom.

3.3. Students' Social Interaction during Learning Activities

The results of classroom observations demonstrated that students' social interaction developed through various learning activities conducted during Social Studies lessons. Students actively communicated with their classmates during group discussions, collaborative assignments, and classroom question-and-answer sessions. Several students demonstrated confidence in expressing opinions, while others preferred interacting with peers before communicating directly with the teacher. Although some students still appeared shy and less confident during classroom interaction, most students showed improvement in participation and cooperation during the learning process. These findings indicate that classroom interaction plays an important role in supporting students' social development at the elementary school level.

Table 4. Observation Results of Students' Social Interaction

Indicator	Category
Participation in discussion	Good
Asking questions	Moderate
Answering questions	Moderate
Cooperation with peers	Good
Confidence in communication	Moderate



Figure 2. Development of Students' Social Interaction

Based on interview findings, several students stated that they felt more comfortable interacting with classmates during group activities because they could exchange ideas and solve problems together. Some students preferred asking questions to their peers before asking the teacher because they felt less nervous communicating with friends. Meanwhile, highly active students showed strong confidence in answering questions and participating in classroom discussions. The teacher also explained that assigning collaborative tasks could help students become more open and cooperative during classroom activities. Consequently, Social Studies learning strategies contributed positively to improving students' communication, cooperation, and social confidence.

Findings from this study indicate that the implementation of Social Studies learning strategies contributed positively to the development of students' social interaction in fourth grade at MI Muhammadiyah Trimulyo. Interactive learning strategies such as group discussions, question-and-answer activities, and collaborative assignments encouraged students to participate actively during classroom learning. Students demonstrated increased confidence in communicating with peers and teachers throughout the learning process. Teachers also played an important role in creating an interactive and supportive classroom atmosphere that facilitated students' participation. These findings suggest that Social Studies learning can become an effective medium for developing students' social skills at the elementary school level.

Results of the study also showed that students' social interaction developed through cooperative learning activities conducted during classroom instruction. Students who initially tended to be passive gradually became more involved in discussions and collaborative tasks when teachers consistently applied interactive learning strategies. Classroom observations revealed that students preferred learning activities that allowed them to communicate and work together with peers. In addition, positive reinforcement provided by teachers encouraged students to express opinions and answer questions more confidently. Therefore, implementing interactive Social Studies learning strategies was able to support both students' academic participation and social development simultaneously.

Several previous studies support the findings of this research regarding the importance of teacher strategies in developing students' social attitudes and character values. Research conducted by Novita Meliana explained that communicative and humanistic learning approaches could improve students' tolerance and social attitudes within the school environment [25] . Similarly, a study by Syaiful Rizal emphasized that teachers' strategies significantly influenced students' character formation through collaborative and interactive learning activities. Findings of the present study strengthen previous research by demonstrating that Social Studies learning strategies can also improve students' social interaction during classroom learning [26], [27]. However, this study specifically focuses on Social Studies learning at the madrasah ibtidaiyah level, which has received limited attention in earlier studies.

Novelty of this study lies in its focus on implementing Social Studies learning strategies to develop students' social interaction within an Islamic elementary school context. Unlike previous studies that mainly emphasized character education or tolerance in general, this research specifically examines how Social Studies learning activities contribute to social interaction development among students. This study also highlights the importance of classroom interaction as an essential component of the learning process in madrasah ibtidaiyah education [28]. Furthermore, findings provide empirical evidence regarding students' participation, communication, and cooperation during interactive learning activities. Consequently, this research contributes new insights into integrating Social Studies learning with social skill development at the elementary education level.

Several important implications can be drawn from this study for educational practice, particularly in elementary school learning environments. Teachers are encouraged to implement interactive and collaborative learning strategies to improve students' communication and social participation during classroom activities [29]. Social Studies learning should not only emphasize cognitive achievement but also facilitate the development of

social attitudes and interpersonal skills among students. Schools may also support teachers by creating learning environments that encourage active participation and cooperative learning experiences [30], [31]. As a result, implementing interactive learning strategies can help create more meaningful and socially engaging classroom learning processes.

Several limitations should also be considered in interpreting the findings of this study. Research was conducted only in one Islamic elementary school with a limited number of participants, which may affect the broader applicability of the findings. In addition, this study mainly focused on qualitative observations and interviews without involving quantitative measurements of students' social interaction development. Findings were also limited to classroom learning activities during Social Studies lessons and did not examine students' social interaction outside the classroom environment. Therefore, future research is recommended to involve broader research settings and mixed-method approaches to obtain more comprehensive findings regarding Social Studies learning strategies and students' social development.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Social Studies learning has a positive and significant influence on students' social sensitivity, particularly in strengthening empathy, social awareness, self-awareness, and mutual respect among students. Findings revealed that effective learning implementation through interactive classroom activities and active student participation contributed to the development of positive social attitudes within the educational environment. Results of the regression analysis further confirmed that Social Studies learning plays an important role in shaping students' social character and interpersonal awareness. These findings are aligned with the objectives presented in the introduction, which emphasized the importance of Social Studies learning as a medium for developing students' social sensitivity amid contemporary social challenges. In addition, this study provides a broader understanding that Social Studies learning should not only focus on cognitive achievement but also prioritize students' social and emotional development as part of character education. Future studies are recommended to involve larger samples, different educational contexts, and additional variables in order to expand the application and development of research related to Social Studies learning and students' social sensitivity.

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