



## The Role of Peers in Students' Affective Development in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in Social Studies Subjects

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### Article Info

#### Article history:

Received Dec 24, 2024

Revised Jan 20, 2025

Accepted Feb 22, 2025

Online First Feb 25, 2025

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#### Keywords:

Affective Development  
Cooperation  
Peer Roles  
Responsibility  
Tolerance

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose of the study:** This study aims to analyze the role of peer influence in the affective development of sixth-grade students in Social Science at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Hidayatul Mubtadiin Jambi, focusing on social attitudes such as tolerance, cooperation, and social responsibility amid Indonesia's multidimensional crisis.

**Methodology:** His research uses a descriptive qualitative method, collecting data through interviews and documentation from students, Social Science teachers, and homeroom teachers. The data were analyzed thematically using qualitative data analysis software.

**Main Findings:** The study found that peers have a significant influence on students' affective development, particularly in tolerance, cooperation, and social responsibility. Students demonstrated tolerance by listening to differing opinions, helping peers in need, and participating in group cooperation, although some students remained passive.

**Novelty/Originality of this study:** This study highlights the importance of peer influence in fostering social attitudes in the classroom. It provides new insights into how social interactions can affect students' affective development and offers recommendations for educators on managing social dynamics in the classroom to create a more positive learning environment.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

A significant factor influencing students' affective development is their social environment, particularly peer groups [1], [2]. Peer groups are individuals of similar age or developmental level who frequently interact in daily life [3]. At the elementary school or Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level, students spend considerable time with their peers, whether in class, during extracurricular activities, or in informal settings. These interactions significantly impact their affective development, as students learn to adapt, understand emotions, and internalize social norms through peer relationships [4], [5]. Through these interactions, students not only learn to adapt but also develop crucial social competencies such as empathy and an understanding of social norms.

Vygotsky's social development theory emphasizes that students' development is greatly influenced by social interactions [6], [7]. In line with this, peer interactions offer opportunities for collaborative learning, empathy building, and conflict resolution. Additionally, peer groups serve as role models, shaping students' attitudes and behaviors. When students observe their peers demonstrating empathy or cooperation in completing group tasks, they tend to emulate such behaviors [8], [9]. Thus, peer interactions not only foster personal growth but also enhance the learning environment by promoting positive behaviors and attitudes.

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**Journal homepage:** <http://cahaya-ic.com/index.php/JSKE>

Recent studies reinforce the significant role of peer groups in shaping students' social and emotional competencies, particularly in Social Studies learning. Previous studies have found that peer interactions not only enhanced students' social skills but also helped them internalize key social values such as tolerance, fairness, and cooperation [10]. Other research highlights that students involved in collaborative learning environments developed stronger communication and empathy skills, which are essential components of Social Studies education [11]. These findings further emphasize that peer groups are crucial for not only social development but also for enhancing affective learning outcomes in Social Studies.

Moreover, peer groups have been shown to play a vital role in shaping students' social attitudes, helping them become more sociable and well-adjusted individuals in the future. Peers serve as key moderators in character and social attitude development by providing support, encouragement, and motivation essential for personal growth [12], [13]. Research on the role of peers in shaping students' morals in Ponorogo further confirms that peer influence is crucial in personality and moral development, especially during adolescence [14]. Peers are significant sources of information that shape students' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors, as they spend substantial time together at school, making these interactions highly influential. When these peer interactions are harnessed properly, they not only benefit individual students but also foster a more inclusive and collaborative classroom atmosphere. This reinforces the idea that peer groups are not merely social collectives but also agents that facilitate students' affective development.

Preliminary observations of sixth-grade students at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Hidayatul Mubtadiin Jambi revealed that many students exhibit low social attitudes. This is evident from behaviors such as reluctance to express opinions when prompted by teachers, difficulty in collaborating with classmates, and a tendency to interact only with specific peers. Additionally, some students show a lack of engagement in Social Studies lessons, leading to lower academic performance. These behavioral patterns suggest that the students' affective development, which is critical for their overall growth, is not being adequately nurtured through current teaching practices. Furthermore, observations indicate that cooperative learning strategies and student interactions are not optimally implemented in the classroom. Lessons are often individual-focused, lacking essential social skills integration. Some students fear expressing their thoughts, struggle with teamwork, and even ridicule peers for incorrect responses. These issues contradict the objectives of Social Studies education, which aims to cultivate students' interpersonal intelligence, including empathy, social sensitivity, communication skills, and the ability to build positive social relationships.

The main gap in social studies learning lies in the difference between the objectives aimed at developing interpersonal intelligence and the reality in the field, which tends to prioritize cognitive aspects alone. Previous research has shown that classroom learning often focuses on individual academic achievements, such as mastery of subject matter, while neglecting the development of social skills, such as cooperation, empathy, and effective communication [15]-[17]. This creates an imbalance in student development, where students may excel in understanding concepts but lack the social attitudes essential for everyday life. Further to this, other research highlights the importance of affective learning strategies, such as value clarification and cognitive moral modeling, in shaping students' attitudes and values [18]. However, its implementation in the classroom remains limited, as learning activities continue to prioritize individual tasks over collaborative discussions that could foster social values. As a result, student interactions, which should serve as a key mechanism for internalizing these values, are often underutilized.

Building on this gap, compared to previous studies, there is still a lack of exploration on how social interactions in the classroom can be optimized to develop students' affective domains. Therefore, a learning approach that integrates more social and affective experiences is needed so that students not only achieve academic excellence but also develop essential social skills crucial for their overall growth.

To address this gap, this study aims to analyze in depth the extent to which peer groups influence students' affective development in Social Studies learning at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Hidayatul Mubtadiin Jambi. Unlike previous studies, which have primarily focused on cognitive aspects or general peer interactions, this research specifically examines the role of peer influence on social attitudes such as tolerance, cooperation, and social responsibility within a structured classroom setting. This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach, utilizing thematic analysis with qualitative data analysis software, which differs from previous research that often relied on quantitative methods or broad observational studies. By investigating the role of peer groups in shaping students' social attitudes, this research seeks to provide insights into how peer interactions can be better integrated into classroom strategies to improve both social and academic outcomes. Additionally, the study focuses on a specific population sixth-grade students at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Hidayatul Mubtadiin Jambi offering a more context-specific analysis compared to prior studies that examined broader educational levels. In addition, this study highlights the novelty in the approach to Social Studies education by emphasizing the integration of affective aspects in social interaction-based learning strategies.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

### 2.1 Types of Research

This study uses a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. Qualitative research is a research method that aims to understand the phenomenon of what is experienced by the research subject holistically and by means of description in the form of words and language, in a specific natural context and by utilizing various natural methods [18]-[20]. Qualitative research with a descriptive type is intended to describe a number of variables related to the problem being studied [22], [23]. This research was conducted at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Hidayatul Mubtadiin Jambi on grade VI students who were also research subjects to describe variables related to the role of peers in the affective development of grade VI students in the subject of Social Sciences.

### 2.2 Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through two main techniques, namely interviews and documentation. Interviews were conducted with five informants consisting of three sixth grade students, one social studies teacher, and one homeroom teacher. Interviews were conducted face-to-face using semi-structured interview guidelines, which were designed to explore information related to the role of peers in students' affective development. Each interview focused on aspects of tolerance, cooperation, and social responsibility. The following is Table 1. the interview grid used in this study:

Table 1. Interview outline

| Aspect         | Indicator  | Item Number |
|----------------|--|-------------|
| Tolerance      | Respecting friends' opinions even if they are different                      | 1,2         |
|                | Helping friends who are having difficulties                                  | 3           |
| Cooperation    | Actively participate in group assignments and divide tasks well              | 4,5         |
|                | Willing to resolve differences of opinion in group work in a positive manner | 6           |
| Responsibility | Completing assignments on time   | 7           |
|                | Giving positive responses to group mates' negligence                         | 8           |

Based on table 1. The aspect of student tolerance is shown by respecting different opinions and helping friends who are having difficulties. Cooperation is reflected through active roles in groups, dividing tasks well, and resolving differences of opinion positively. Responsibility is seen from completing tasks on time, responding positively to friends' negligence, and managing responsibilities in class or school activities.

In addition to interviews, documentation is also used as a data collection tool, which includes notes and photographs of teaching and learning activities that are relevant to the role of peers in students' affective development. This documentation aims to enrich interview data and provide visual evidence of social dynamics in social studies learning.

### 2.3 Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis technique in this study used three stages of Miles & Huberman, namely data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions [20], [24], [25]. Sugiyono stated that reducing means making a summary, choosing the main points, focusing on important things, looking for themes and patterns, and discarding those considered unnecessary [26], [27]. In this study, field data was described using data reduction, which produced themes and patterns regarding the role of peers in developing students' affective aspects in social studies learning in grade VI Madrasah Ibtidaiyah . Next, the Data Presentation Stage, in the form of interview data with narrative text. This data presentation is very important to continue the next step, namely drawing conclusions. In this study, what is meant by narrative text is a series of sentences that describe and explain the role of peers in developing students' affective aspects. The next step is to draw conclusions. The researcher draws conclusions regarding the role of peers in developing the affective aspects of grade VI Madrasah Ibtidaiyah students in social studies learning.

### 2.4 Research Procedures

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach to understand the role of peers in the affective development of grade VI students at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Hidayatul Mubtadiin Jambi in social studies. The research was carried out in several stages: preparation, data collection, data analysis, and conclusion drawing.

In the preparation stage, the researcher conducted initial observations to identify phenomena related to students' affective development and peer interactions. An interview guide was designed, focusing on tolerance, cooperation, and social responsibility. Data collection was done through semi-structured interviews with five informants: three students, one social studies teacher, and one homeroom teacher, complemented by documentation (field notes and photos) of relevant learning activities.

Data analysis followed Miles & Huberman's model, involving data reduction (categorizing based on themes), presentation (narrative text describing peer roles), and conclusion drawing. To ensure the validity of the findings, techniques like observation extension and triangulation were used to confirm the accuracy and consistency of the data regarding peer interactions and students' affective development [28], [29].

The following is a flowchart of the procedures carried out in this study to understand the role of peers in the affective development of grade VI students at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Hidayatul Mubtadiin Jambi in social studies subjects.

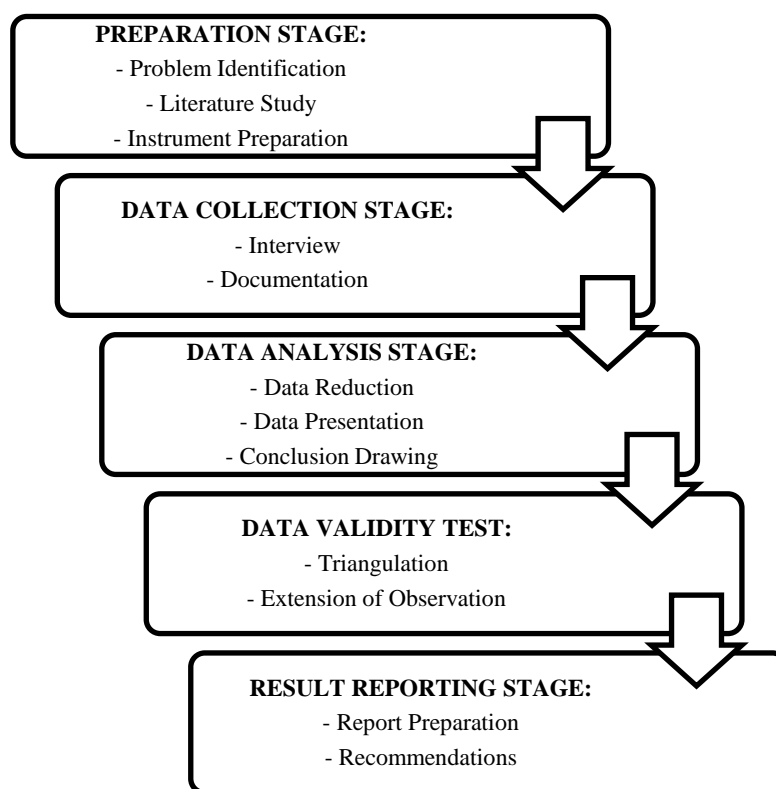


Figure 1. Research Flow Diagram

### 3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 Result

Based on the results of interviews and documentation, it was found that peers play a significant role in the affective development of grade VI students in social studies learning. The following are the results of the interviews that have been conducted.

Summary of the results of interviews with 3 students:

Tolerance: *"If a friend has a different opinion, I usually listen first, so that everyone feels heard. I have also helped friends who have difficulties, for example when they don't know how to answer a question, I help explain. It feels good because we become closer."*

Cooperation: *"In groups, we usually divide tasks according to ability. I was once tasked with recording the results of the discussion and reporting to the front. I think it's easier to work with friends, because we can exchange ideas if someone doesn't understand."*

Social Responsibility: *"If given an assignment in a group, I try to do it as soon as possible so as not to bother my friends. There have been times when someone forgot to bring an assignment, we usually remind them or help them. It feels bad if I have to work alone."*

Results of interviews with social studies teachers:

Tolerance: *"I see that most students have begun to appreciate differences of opinion, especially if given the opportunity to discuss in class. They seem more tolerant when there are differences of opinion, although they still need guidance so that minor conflicts do not occur."*

Cooperation: *"Cooperation is one of the main goals in social studies learning, and I see it developing positively. Students are more often active in group discussions, sharing roles and being responsible for their*

*respective tasks. However, some students still tend to stand out, so I always give them direction so that they care more about their group members."*

*Social Responsibility: "Social responsibility begins to be seen in the attitudes of students who are willing to remind friends who forget their assignments or help those who are having difficulties. Sometimes, I see some students being more dominant in the group, but I encourage them to share responsibilities. Overall, they have begun to show a sense of responsibility for the common task."*

Interview Results with the Homeroom Teacher VI:

*Tolerance: "In their daily lives, students have begun to be able to accept differences of opinion, although sometimes the teacher's intervention is needed to resolve the problem. I often observe them appreciating differences when given time for group discussions or presentations."*

*Cooperation: "The tendency to cooperate is quite visible in this class. Students appear enthusiastic when given group assignments and usually work quite effectively. However, there are some students who still do not participate enough and prefer to remain silent or wait for orders. I continue to try to direct them to be active and not only rely on more dominant friends."*

*Social Responsibility: "Students' social responsibility is quite developed, especially when they are faced with assignments or activities that involve all class members. They like to help friends, especially if they see someone having difficulties. I also often remind them of the importance of supporting each other and being responsible, so that they get used to these values from an early age."*

### 3.2. Discussion

Discussion of the results of interviews with students, social studies teachers, and sixth grade homeroom teachers showed that peers play a crucial role in shaping students' affective aspects, especially in terms of tolerance, cooperation, and social responsibility. Based on the interviews, sixth grade students began to show an understanding of tolerance, where they realized the importance of respecting differences of opinion. Students mentioned that when there were differences of opinion in a group or discussion, they tended to listen first so that everyone felt respected. Students also shared their experiences of helping friends who were having difficulties, for example when someone did not understand the lesson. This gave students a feeling of happiness and strengthened relationships between friends. The social studies teacher and sixth grade homeroom teacher observed something similar; they saw that students, when given the opportunity to discuss, could be more tolerant of differences. However, the teacher noted that some students still needed guidance in managing differences so that they did not end in conflict. This shows that tolerance among students is still developing and the role of teachers in teaching how to communicate and respect other opinions is still needed. In learning activities, both discussions and group activities help students develop a tolerant attitude, especially in dealing with differences of opinion that may arise.

In terms of cooperation, sixth grade students began to understand the importance of working in a team, where they share roles and adjust tasks to their respective abilities. They acknowledged that working in groups was more effective because they could discuss and exchange ideas, especially when facing difficulties. Several students also revealed that they took turns playing roles in the group, for example as a recorder or presenter of discussion results. Students found it easier to understand the material because they could rely on their peers as a place to ask questions. The social studies teacher observed that students' cooperation skills developed through group discussions, where they actively shared roles and were responsible for their respective tasks. However, the teacher noted a tendency for some students to dominate or stand out more. To overcome this, the teacher provided direction for them to care more about friends who might be more passive, so that cooperation values could be more evenly distributed among students. The sixth grade homeroom teacher also observed students' tendency to work well together, but noted that there were still some students who were passive or preferred to wait for instructions rather than be actively involved. This shows that students' cooperation skills are still developing and require reinforcement from the teacher. With guidance, students can be more actively involved in groups and understand the importance of each group member's contribution.

In terms of social responsibility, sixth grade students showed an awareness that was beginning to form in maintaining shared tasks and helping friends in need. Students stated that they felt responsible for completing tasks on time so as not to burden their group mates. In some cases, they also actively reminded friends who might have forgotten or helped those who had difficulty understanding the task. According to students, this experience gave them satisfaction and fostered a sense of togetherness. The social studies teacher observed that students' sense of social responsibility began to develop through interactions in groups, especially when they reminded or helped each other. Although there was a tendency for some students to be more dominant in the group, the teacher tried to encourage them to share responsibilities so that each student felt they had an equal role. The homeroom teacher also saw the development of students' social responsibility improving, especially when they participated in activities involving the entire class. In this situation, students were more motivated to help friends who were having difficulties and support each other so that tasks could be completed well. The homeroom teacher emphasized the

importance of getting students used to being responsible for each other so that social values could be internalized from an early age.

Overall, the interview results show that peers have a significant influence in developing students' affective aspects. Interactions between students, especially in group learning situations and discussions, are an effective means for students to understand and apply values such as tolerance, cooperation, and social responsibility. In this context, the role of teachers as facilitators is very important, because students still need guidance to develop affective attitudes consistently and in various situations. Teachers and homeroom teachers also play a role in creating a conducive atmosphere so that students feel comfortable expressing their opinions, working together, and being responsible. In terms of tolerance, teacher guidance helps students to be more accepting of different views and appreciate the diversity of opinions in the group. This can reduce the potential for conflict and strengthen students' ability to communicate well. Likewise, in terms of cooperation, direction from teachers can ensure that each group member plays an active role and does not only rely on more dominant students. With balanced cooperation, each student can feel appreciated and get the opportunity to hone their social skills.

The findings of this study are in line with previous studies on the role of peer interaction in the development of students' social skills. Previous studies have emphasized its importance in developing students' social attitudes, such as responsibility, tolerance, and cooperation [30]. Through group work, students learn to respect the opinions of others, share tasks fairly, and improve communication and empathy skills. Research shows that group interaction not only strengthens social relationships but also forms attitudes of mutual respect and help, which are essential in community life. In addition, other studies have shown that peers have a significant role in shaping students' social skills, including in aspects of cooperation, self-confidence, and emotional support [31]. This study also emphasizes that positive relationships with peers can increase the self-confidence and independence of students with disabilities, while negative interactions can have the opposite effect. In addition, the role of teachers as facilitators in guiding social interactions is also an important factor in creating an inclusive learning environment. Thus, this study is in line with Vygotsky's view on the importance of social interaction in students' affective development. These findings further confirm that peer interactions are a crucial element in shaping students' affective development, particularly in Social Studies learning.

The findings of this study align with Vygotsky's theory, which emphasizes that social interaction plays an important role in students' affective development. The concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) suggests that students learn social skills such as responsibility, tolerance, and cooperation through interactions with peers and teacher guidance. However, these findings can also be compared with Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which highlights the importance of observational learning. In this context, students not only develop social attitudes through direct interactions but also by observing their peers' behaviors and imitating positive social actions. Unlike Vygotsky's theory, which focuses on social mediation, Bandura emphasizes the role of reinforcement and modeling in shaping behavior [32]. This suggests that the integration of both theories can provide a more comprehensive approach to developing students' social attitudes in Social Studies learning.

Understanding the role of peer interactions in affective development is also crucial in the context of education policy. In relation to educational policies in Indonesia, this study supports the implementation of Kurikulum Merdeka, which encourages student-centered learning with an emphasis on social-emotional development. The Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia has emphasized the importance of Profil Pelajar Pancasila, which includes fostering gotong royong (cooperation), critical thinking, and social responsibility—all of which are reflected in this study's findings. Programs such as Project-Based Learning (PBL) and Collaborative Learning have been recommended as part of the curriculum to strengthen students' social skills [33]. Furthermore, the implementation of Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter (PPK) in Indonesian schools also aligns with this research, as it promotes tolerance, cooperation, and responsibility in daily school activities. By incorporating structured peer interaction strategies into Social Studies learning, teachers can better support the government's vision of producing students with strong affective and social competencies.

These findings highlight the need for schools to integrate structured peer collaboration activities into the curriculum to maximize social learning. Future research could explore the effectiveness of specific school programs, such as extracurricular activities or community service projects, in further enhancing students' affective development.

Meanwhile, the aspect of social responsibility requires strengthening efforts from teachers and homeroom teachers, especially in encouraging students to be aware of their roles in the group. Through the experience of sharing responsibility, students learn that the success of group assignments does not only depend on one individual, but is the result of collective work. By reminding and helping each other, students are accustomed to caring about common interests, which ultimately strengthens the social bonds between them. This attitude can be a strong foundation for their affective development in the future, especially in facing more complex social challenges [34]. In addition, the development of affective aspects such as tolerance, cooperation, and social responsibility in the school environment provides long-term benefits for students. These three aspects are not only important for academic success, but are also relevant to shaping students' character and attitudes in social life. A tolerant attitude helps students appreciate cultural differences and views that they may encounter outside the school environment.

Cooperation trains them to work effectively in teams, which is an important skill in the world of work [35]. Meanwhile, social responsibility fosters awareness of the importance of individual contributions to common welfare, which is the basis of a harmonious society, especially in social studies learning that encourages the formation of students' social attitudes.

Given the significance of affective learning in social development, it is essential to align these findings with the broader educational framework of Social Science. Social science is a science that studies the social way of life based on aspects of history, economics, sociology, anthropology, psychology, geography, and philosophy that are taught in school and college [36], [37]. Social science studies all fields of science related to humans, namely social in a society [38], [39]. Through social science learning at all levels of school, it is expected to produce golden generations who have good social attitude values. The success of social science learning cannot be separated from the role of a teacher as a facilitator, motivator, educator, and inspirator for students. The instillation of social attitudes must begin early so that they can be applied in everyday life in society. Students find it easier to understand social attitudes from examples in the form of actions such as those carried out by peers [40], [41].

Ideally, through social studies learning, it can improve the 4Cs that students must master. The 4Cs include Critical Thinking, Creative Thinking, Collaboration, and Communication, which means students can think critically, think creatively, work well together, and communicate well [42], [43]. Social studies are tasked with developing students' potential to be sensitive to social problems that occur in society and have a positive mental attitude in dealing with problems in everyday life. Social studies learning at the elementary school/Islamic elementary school level aims to shape students to be active, have good attitudes, respect each other and become good citizens in social life in society [44], [45]. Through social studies learning activities, students are required to have social attitudes, such as tolerance, cooperation, and social responsibility, which align with the findings of this study regarding the role of peer interaction in students' affective development.

Social studies as a subject that contains knowledge and has a humanistic goal can be a bridge for society to realize the dual role of individual beings and social beings. Therefore, social studies subjects have an important role as a means of instilling social attitudes in students through the learning process in the classroom [46]. The results of these findings are an important reference for educators to integrate learning methods that facilitate social interactions that support students' affective development.

#### 4 CONCLUSION

Based on the conducted research, it can be concluded that peer groups have a significant influence on the affective development of sixth-grade students at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Hidayatul Mubtadiin Jambi. Peers act as social agents who help students understand and internalize social values, making peer interactions in both social and academic contexts contribute to shaping social attitudes such as tolerance, cooperation, and social responsibility. These findings align with the objectives stated in the introduction, where the role of peer groups in social studies learning has been proven to positively impact students' affective development. To effectively integrate affective values into social studies learning, teachers are encouraged to implement several strategies. First, they should design cooperative learning activities, such as group discussions, project-based learning, and role-playing exercises, to enhance students' social interactions and encourage empathy. Second, educators should incorporate structured reflection sessions where students analyze and discuss social issues, allowing them to connect their experiences with real-life ethical dilemmas. Third, teachers can serve as role models by demonstrating positive social behaviors, fostering a classroom culture that values respect, inclusivity, and collaboration. Additionally, educators should provide direct guidance in conflict resolution and interpersonal communication skills, helping students navigate social challenges in a constructive manner.

For further research, future studies could explore the role of parental involvement in supporting students' affective development, investigating how collaboration between teachers and parents can enhance value internalization. Another potential avenue is examining the use of educational technology in fostering affective learning, such as digital storytelling, interactive social simulations, or online collaborative platforms. Moreover, expanding the scope of this research to higher educational levels could provide insights into the long-term influence of peer interactions on students' affective development.

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