

Integration of Wolio Palace Fortress in Social Studies Learning to Improve Understanding of Local Culture

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the integration of the Wolio Palace Fortress as a learning resource in Social Sciences (IPS) learning to improve students' understanding of local culture. The background of the research departs from the importance of culture-based education in strengthening the identity of the young generation in the midst of globalization. The research approach used is qualitative with a case study method. Data was collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation of social studies teachers, grade VIII students, school principals, and traditional leaders. Data analysis is carried out through reduction, presentation, and drawing conclusions by triangulation to ensure validity. The results of the study show that the use of the Wolio Palace Fortress in social studies learning is carried out through field visit strategies, class discussions, and group projects involving traditional leaders. The support of the principal through policies and facilitation of cooperation with cultural site managers strengthens the implementation of contextual learning. Students show an increase in understanding of local culture, characterized by the ability to explain the historical value and identity of the Buton Sultanate. The obstacles faced include limited references, lack of curriculum guidelines based on local culture, and lack of teacher training. This study recommends the development of thematic modules, teacher capacity building, and regional policy support to expand the implementation of local culture-based learning.

Keywords: *Wolio Palace Fortress; Social Studies Learning; Local Culture; Learning Resources; Contextual Education.*

INTRODUCTION

Education is an important means to build a generation that has knowledge and character. The educational process does not only focus on cognitive achievement, but also on strengthening cultural values. The success of education is reflected when students are able to understand, appreciate, and preserve local wisdom (Primanisa & Santoso, 2022). Social Sciences (IPS) subjects have a strategic role in realizing these goals. Social studies materials can be a bridge to introduce history, culture, and social life around students.

Changes in the educational curriculum in Indonesia are always directed to emphasize contextual learning. The Independent Curriculum provides a great opportunity for teachers to integrate local learning resources. Learning resources that are close to the student's environment are believed to be able to improve understanding and learning experience (Sari & Putra, 2020). The local context presents more meaningful and applicable learning. Education based on local culture can strengthen the nation's identity from an early age.

One form of relevant learning resources is cultural and historical sites. The Wolio Palace Fortress in Baubau City is a real example of a historical heritage full of value. The site keeps the

track record of the Buton Sultanate which is influential in the history of the archipelago. The historical and cultural values contained in it are relevant to social studies material. Teachers can use it to instill an understanding of local culture in students (Aprilianto & Suprpto, 2019).

The Wolio Palace Fort is not only a historical building, but also a symbol of the glory of the Buton people. The structure of the fort shows the superiority of the defense strategy and technological capabilities of the people of its time. The presence of this fortress is recognized worldwide as the widest fortress by Guinness World Records in 2016. This recognition adds a sense of pride for the local community and the Indonesian nation. Its use in learning can foster a sense of love for the homeland in the younger generation (Fitriani & Rahmawati, 2023).

Social studies education emphasizes the interconnectedness between history, social, economic, and culture. The use of the Wolio Palace Fortress in social studies learning allows students to learn these concepts contextually. Learning is no longer limited to textbooks alone. Students are invited to understand the real cultural reality in their environment (Asri, 2021). This concept is in line with the principle of hands-on experiential learning.

Junior high school students are at the stage of cognitive development who are already able to think in simple abstracts. They need a non-monotonous learning experience so that their motivation to learn is maintained. Local culture-based learning resources provide a fun learning atmosphere. The cultural values they encounter can enrich the conceptual understanding of social studies (Yusuf & Latif, 2024). This process reinforces the connection between theory and everyday reality. The integration of local learning resources requires teachers' creativity in managing learning. Teachers play the role of facilitators who are able to connect the material with students' lives. Learning planning based on local wisdom provides space for students to explore their environment (Kurniawan & Saputra, 2021). Learning activities become more interactive and collaborative. This kind of learning gives students the opportunity to think critically and reflectively.

Social studies learning that utilizes the Wolio Palace Fortress can be carried out through various strategies. Teachers can invite students to do field trips as a hands-on experience. Class discussions can be designed by involving traditional leaders or local cultural figures. Group projects can be focused on the historical, social, and cultural study of the fort. These activities enrich students' understanding of the cultural context being studied (Basri & Rahman, 2022).

The use of historical sites in learning is inseparable from challenges. Teachers often face limitations of local content-based curriculum references and guidelines. This condition makes most teachers only rely on textbooks. In the end, learning activities tend to be monotonous and do not touch the cultural context (Rahman & Wulandari, 2019). Students' opportunities to deeply understand the local culture are limited.

The involvement of school principals plays an important role in supporting the use of local learning resources. School policies can encourage collaboration with cultural site managers. Managerial support will facilitate the implementation of educational visits and culture-based activities. The principal also functions as a motivator for teachers to develop learning innovations. This support ensures the sustainability of the use of cultural sites as educational media (Fadilah & Ningsih, 2020). Indigenous leaders and the surrounding communities have a significant role in local culture-based learning. Their presence as resource persons enriches the information received by students. The cultural values conveyed are more authentic and contextual. Students' interaction with

traditional leaders can foster respect and social concern. The relationship between the school and the community has become closer (Marzuki & Nurhayati, 2022).

Understanding local culture has a great impact on the formation of students' character. Regional identity can be strengthened through the introduction of cultural heritage. Students who understand their cultural values tend to appreciate differences more. The attitude of tolerance, mutual cooperation, and love for the homeland grows from real experience (Hidayat, & Lestari, 2019). Social studies education with a local cultural approach answers the challenges of globalization that often erode traditional values.

The phenomenon of globalization brings foreign cultural flows that are easily accessible to students. This condition has the potential to weaken the love for local culture. Cultural heritage-based education is a solution to strengthen the cultural immunity of the younger generation. The use of the Wolio Palace Fortress can be an effective means for this purpose. This integration encourages students to remain rooted in local culture while being open to global developments (Susanto, 2023).

Previous research has shown that learning based on local wisdom is able to increase students' learning motivation. The results of the study also prove that there is an increase in students' understanding of cultural values. Creative teachers can connect social studies materials with the local context in a more meaningful way (Mulyasa, 2021). Previous studies support the importance of learning innovations based on local culture. The integration of the Wolio Palace Fortress is in line with these findings (Anwas, 2020).

This article focuses on the integration of the Wolio Palace Fortress in social studies learning at SMP Negeri 1 Baubau. The goal is to analyze the extent to which the use of these historical sites improves students' understanding of local culture. The study was carried out by examining learning strategies, the role of teachers, school support, and the contribution of traditional leaders. The research findings are expected to enrich the literature on local culture-based learning. The practical implications provide input for the development of curriculum and learning strategies in secondary schools.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. This approach was chosen because the purpose of the research focuses on an in-depth understanding of the integration process of the Wolio Palace Fortress in social studies learning. Data is collected in the form of words, narratives, and descriptions that describe the phenomenon in real life. Qualitative descriptive research allows researchers to explore the meaning of local culture-based learning practices. The main emphasis lies in the interpretation and understanding of the experiences of teachers, students, and indigenous leaders.

The location of the research is SMP Negeri 1 Baubau with the main subjects of grade VIII students, social studies teachers, school principals, and traditional leaders. Subjects were determined by purposive sampling techniques based on their involvement in Fort Based Learning of the Wolio Palace. Primary data was obtained through in-depth interviews, observation of learning activities, and documentation. Secondary data comes from curriculum documents, syllabus, and agency reports related to culture and education. The research instruments were in the form of interview guidelines, field notes, and observation sheets.

Data analysis is carried out through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The validity of the data is guaranteed by the triangulation technique of sources, techniques, and time. The results of the interviews were compared with observations and documentation to ensure the validity of the information. The analysis process was carried out simultaneously from the time the data collection took place until the end of the research. The researcher acts as the main instrument that interprets meaning and finds patterns from field data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The results of the study show that the Wolio Palace Fort has been used as a social studies learning resource at SMP Negeri 1 Baubau even though it is not optimal. Social studies teachers integrate fortresses in learning through field trips, group projects, and classroom discussions. Learning activities based on local culture make students more enthusiastic about participating in lessons. Students stated that it is easier to understand the history and cultural values because they interact directly with cultural sites. This activity also increases students' interest in learning and involvement in the learning process.

School principals play an important role in providing support for local culture-based learning programs. Support is manifested through policies that facilitate cooperation with fort managers and traditional leaders. Teachers get space to innovate in social studies learning. Traditional leaders contributed as resource persons who introduced Buton cultural values directly. This collaborative role strengthens the use of the Wolio Palace Fortress as a contextual learning resource.

Students' understanding of local culture increased after participating in learning based on the Wolio Palace Fortress. Students are able to explain the historical values, social structure, and local wisdom related to the Buton Sultanate. Their regional identity becomes stronger through a contextual learning process. The obstacles found include limited references, lack of local content-based curriculum guidelines, and lack of teacher training. Nevertheless, the potential for development is still wide open through thematic modules, professional training, and local government policy support.

Table 1.
Summary of Research Findings

Aspects	Key Findings
Teacher Strategy	Field visits, class discussions, group projects, involving traditional leaders
Principal's Support	Facilitation policy, cooperation with site managers, encouragement of innovation
The Role of Indigenous Leaders	Cultural resource persons, conveyors of historical values and local wisdom
Student Response	Enthusiasm, easier to understand history, increased motivation to learn
Impact on Students	Understanding of local culture increases, regional identity is stronger

Aspects	Key Findings
Constraints	Limited references, minimal curriculum guidance, lack of teacher training
Potential for Development	Thematic modules, professional training, local government policy support

Discussion

Social studies learning requires a connection between theory and socio-cultural reality. The integration of the Wolio Palace Fortress in learning is an effective strategy to connect abstract concepts with students' real experiences. Students gain the opportunity to learn about history, social structures, and culture through hands-on sources. Cultural site-based learning experiences strengthen the conceptual understanding of social studies. This supports the purpose of social studies education in instilling the value of the nation's character and identity (Basri & Rahman, 2022).

Teachers have a key role in utilizing the fortress as a learning resource. Teachers' creativity in planning field trips and contextual discussions makes learning more lively (Yusuf & Latif, 2024). The use of the surrounding environment as a learning medium motivates students to be more active. Local cultural values are obtained directly through interaction with traditional leaders. This strategy shows the effectiveness of contextual learning in improving understanding of local cultures.

The role of the principal also greatly determines the success of this program. Managerial support creates a conducive atmosphere for teachers to innovate. School policies that facilitate cooperation with cultural site managers have a positive impact. Teachers feel more free to develop learning activities based on local culture. This condition strengthens the implementation of contextual social studies learning (Anwas, 2020).

The involvement of indigenous leaders in learning is an important factor. The information provided is authentic and in-depth about history and local wisdom. According to Susanto (2023), students gain a more meaningful learning experience through interaction with them. The value of respect for tradition and culture is instilled through direct communication. This enriches the affective aspect of students in social studies learning.

The increase in students' understanding of local culture can be seen from the ability to explain the history of the Wolio Palace Fortress. Students were able to mention the function of the fort, the value of mutual cooperation, and the identity of the Buton Sultanate. This understanding is stronger than textbook-based learning alone. Real context provides experiences that are difficult to obtain through conventional methods. The integration of cultural sites has been proven to strengthen social studies learning outcomes (Hidayat & Lestari, 2019).

Local culture-based learning is in line with the spirit of the Independent Curriculum. The curriculum provides space for teachers to adapt learning to the environmental context (Mulyasa, 2021). The Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) emphasizes the theme of local wisdom. The use of the Wolio Palace Fortress is in line with the direction of the policy. This implementation shows the relevance between national education policy and field practice.

The results support previous findings that affirm the importance of contextual learning. Research by Primanisa et al. (2022) shows that learning based on local wisdom increases students'

learning motivation. The findings of this study confirm that the integration of cultural sites has a similar positive impact. Students not only understand concepts, but also internalize cultural values. This evidence strengthens the argument for the importance of social studies learning innovation.

The limitation of references and curriculum guidelines is the main challenge. Teachers often rely on personal creativity without clear direction. This condition creates a gap in learning practices between teachers. Some teachers are able to carry out field activities, while others are limited to conventional methods. This difference has an impact on the quality of students' cultural understanding. The lack of teacher training is also an obstacle. Teachers need capacity building in developing learning based on local culture. Professional training will help teachers design more varied learning strategies (Sari & Putra, 2020).

The support of educational institutions and local governments is urgently needed. This collaboration can improve the quality of social studies learning based on cultural sites. Students show high enthusiasm when studying in a real environment. Field trip activities provide a learning experience that is different from the classroom routine. Experiential learning makes it easier for students to understand the material (Fadilah & Ningsih, 2020). The positive response of the students shows a high relevance between local learning resources and learning needs. This kind of activity can be a model for other schools.

Learning based on the Wolio Palace Fort also contributes to the formation of students' character. The values of mutual cooperation, tolerance, and pride in local culture are instilled directly. Students learn to appreciate ancestral heritage through real-life experiences. Regional identity becomes stronger in students. These characters are very important to face the challenges of globalization. Globalization brings a rapid flow of foreign culture into teenagers. This condition has the potential to weaken students' love for local culture (Aprilianto & Suprpto, 2019).

Cultural site-based learning is an effective cultural fortress. Students are invited to be proud and maintain their own cultural identity. This awareness will help them stay rooted in local values in the modern era (Rahman & Wulandari, 2019). The role of the surrounding community also needs to be considered in culture-based learning. Collaboration between schools and the community will create synergies that are mutually beneficial. The community plays a role as a source of information, supervisors, as well as supporters of educational activities. Community involvement increases the sense of belonging to cultural heritage. This can strengthen efforts to preserve local cultural sites.

This research shows that local learning resources do not only enrich learning materials. These learning resources also improve students' emotional connection with their environment. Students feel closer to the history and traditions of their area. This closeness fosters a collective awareness of the importance of preserving culture. Social studies learning is an effective means of inheriting noble values (Asri, 2021).

The positive impact of the integration of the Wolio Palace Fortress is also seen in the social aspect. Students learn to work together in group projects that emphasize the value of mutual cooperation. Discussions with traditional leaders to practice communication skills and respect (Kurniawan & Saputra, 2021). Activities with friends increase solidarity among students. Learning becomes a space for the formation of more comprehensive social competencies. The obstacles found should be the basis for policy improvement.

Local governments can issue local content-based curriculum guidelines. Thematic modules based on local culture can be arranged to support teachers. Policy support will expand the use of

cultural sites in learning. This innovation can be a model for the development of education based on local wisdom in various regions (Fitriani & Rahmawati, 2023).

The results of this study prove that the integration of the Wolio Palace Fortress in social studies learning has a significant impact. Students' understanding of local culture is enhanced through contextual learning experiences. The support of the principal, the role of teachers, and the involvement of traditional leaders strengthen the success of learning (Marzuki & Nurhayati, 2022). The obstacles faced can be overcome through teacher training and policy support. The implications of this research provide a new direction for the development of local culture-based education.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study shows that the integration of the Wolio Palace Fortress in social studies learning at SMP Negeri 1 Baubau is able to improve students' understanding of local culture. Teachers' strategies through field visits, class discussions, and group projects have proven to be effective in enriching the learning experience. The support of the principal and the involvement of traditional leaders strengthened the use of the fort as a learning resource. The students' understanding of local culture increases, characterized by the ability to explain the history, values, and identity of the Buton Sultanate. The obstacles faced include limited references, lack of curriculum guidelines, and lack of teacher training.

Teachers are expected to continue to develop creativity in integrating learning resources based on local culture. School principals need to strengthen managerial support and open cooperation with cultural site managers. Local governments should provide local content-based curriculum guidelines as well as thematic modules to assist teachers. Educational institutions need to provide professional training related to culture-based learning innovations. The community and traditional leaders are advised to continue to collaborate with schools to preserve and introduce cultural values to the younger generation.

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