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Publication details, including author guidelines

URL: <https://jurnal.iicet.org/index.php/jppi/about/submissions#authorGuidelines>

Editor: Hengki Yandri

Article History

Received: 26 Jul 2025

Revised: 23 Aug 2025

Accepted: 5 Sept 2025

How to cite this article (APA)

Andarista, R., Agung S, L., & Ediyono, S. (2025). Implementation of Bible integration to increase the value of multiculturalism in integrated social studies learning at christian junior high school. Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Indonesia.11(3), 28-35.
<https://doi.org/10.29210/020254289>

The readers can link to article via <https://doi.org/10.29210/020254289>

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JPPI (Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Indonesia)

ISSN: 2502-8103 (Print) | ISSN: 2477-8524 (Electronic)



Indonesian Institute for Counseling, Education and Therapy



Implementation of Bible integration to increase the value of multiculturalism in integrated social studies learning at christian junior high school

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Article Info

Article history:

Received Jul 26th, 2025

Revised Aug 23th, 2025

Accepted Sept 5th, 2025

Keywords:

Bible Integration

Merdeka Belajar Curriculum

Multicultural Values

Social Studies

Christian School

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to determine the application of the actualization of Bible integration through Integrated Social Studies learning using the Independent Learning Curriculum. This study uses a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design that seeks to reveal events in actual conditions. This study took place in several private Christian schools in Surakarta City. This study involved 17 teachers and 30 students in grades 7, 8, and 9 of Pelita Nusantara Kasih Surakarta Christian Middle School, with diverse religious and regional backgrounds. The key informants were social studies teachers, while additional informants were students as research subjects. The data collection techniques used were observation and interviews, interactive model data analysis techniques from Miles and Huberman (quoted) in the form of data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. To test the validity of the data, a credibility test was used through triangulation and member checking. This study found that Christian schools have students with diverse ethnic, racial, and religious backgrounds. Through the integration of the Bible in social studies learning, students are guided to show respect and concern amidst the diversity of tribes, races, and religions in a multicultural school environment.



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Introduction

Diversity is an inevitable necessity in society. Forgetting diversity in education is an unnoticed gap that brings social problems. Thus, multicultural education becomes an important gap that brings about dialogical maturation, not only of each individual but of the entire society itself (Crowder, 2015; Nera, 2015). In efforts to develop Indonesia, the idea of multiculturalism has become a strategic issue which is a non-negotiable demand. The reason is that Indonesia is a nation born with multicultures where

culture cannot be seen only as wealth (which is exalted) but must be placed in relation to survival as a nation.

Christian schools have students from diverse ethnic, racial, and religious backgrounds. Although the majority of students and educators in Christian schools are Christian, it was found in the field that there are students who follow other religions, such as Catholicism, Buddhism, and even Islam. Through the integration of the Bible in social studies learning, students are guided to show respect and care amidst the ethnic, racial, and religious diversity within the multicultural school environment (Suardana, Darmawan, & Runtukahu, 2023). Christian schools have students from diverse ethnic, racial, and religious backgrounds. Although the majority of students and educators in Christian schools are Christian, it was found in the field that there are students who follow other religions, such as Catholicism, Buddhism, and even Islam. Through the integration of the Bible in social studies learning, students are guided to show respect and care amidst the ethnic, racial, and religious diversity within the multicultural school environment (Feinberg & Layton, 2013; Witoro, 2022; Ys, 2020).

The Bible. (n.d.). Proverbs 17:17. In New International Version. A friend shows love at all times, and is a brother in trouble. Challenges and opportunities in national insight. In National Insight Education: Challenges and Dynamics of the Struggle of Indonesian Intellectuals (p. 32). Jakarta: LPSP and Gramedia Widiasarana Indonesia. Geographical, cultural and ethnic reality, this archipelago is inhabited by hundreds of tribes with diverse cultures as well as different beliefs and religions. This fact encouraged the pioneers of independence in the era of idealization of struggle to adhere to the understanding that a nation is a group of people who have the same historical background, fate, goals and aspirations (Musadad & Adha, 2022; Oryan & Ravid, 2019).

This formula unites all ethnic groups in Indonesia into one nation. And it was this formulation that empirically succeeded in bringing the Indonesian nation to the gates of independence. The development of education in Indonesia often experiences changes and improvements to the curriculum, as this is planned or drafted by the central government to be implemented in every school. The Bible. (n.d.). Proverbs 8:33. In New International Version. Listen to instruction, and you will become wise; do not neglect it.

In essence, social studies learning in schools (SMP) which is integrated aims to make this subject more meaningful for students so that the organization of learning materials is adapted to the environment, characteristics and needs of students (Kochhar, 2000; Sapriya, 2009). In this way, students can master the dimensions of learning at school, namely: "mastering knowledge, skills, attitudes and values and action" (Sapriya, 2009). The integrated learning approach in social studies is often called an interdisciplinary approach. The integrated learning model is essentially a learning system that allows students, both individually and in groups, to actively seek, explore and discover concepts and principles holistically and authentically (Alma & Ap, 2003; Russell III & Waters, 2021).

Based on this view, social studies learning in the classroom today needs to foster student motivation. The use of technology-based learning media can help memory and effectiveness in Social Studies learning which contains various abstract and complex social concepts and phenomena, so that the use of various learning resources can concretize all abstract concepts, in order to facilitate students' understanding of the material covered, delivered by the teacher (Akbarwati, Supriyanto, & Trimurtini, 2024). The use of Bible implementation to increase the value of multiculturalism through Integrated social studies learning certainly has its own challenges when implemented using Merdeka Belajar Curriculum and is interesting to study.

Method

This type of research uses a qualitative approach, while the approach uses a phenomenological design which attempts to reveal events that are in accordance with the actual conditions, so it really depends on: 1) perception; 2) understanding; 3) understanding; and 4) a person's assumptions (Bungin, 2011; Fetterman, 1988). This research is of a descriptive qualitative type, where this research is research that explores a problem and creates an in-depth understanding of important phenomena (Arikunto, 2006b). The data collected is based on words obtained from a small group of individuals so that the point of view of the research participants can be known. This research uses a qualitative approach, which is a

research method that emphasizes in-depth data exploration to obtain high-quality research results. In other words, the qualitative approach is a research mechanism that relies on descriptive explanations in the form of words or sentences, carefully and systematically arranged from data collection to interpretation and reporting of research findings (Bungin, 2011; Fetterman, 1988). Researchers build a holistic and complex picture through analysis of data collected in natural situations.

Qualitative research is research that explores a problem to develop a detailed understanding of the phenomenon that is the topic. Data is collected from a small group of data sources that describe the whole phenomenon. The data is then analyzed to obtain an interpretation with a broader meaning about a research result (Bhangu, Provost, & Caduff, 2023; Creswell, 2015). Qualitative research includes interpretive and naturalistic approaches to the subject of study, seeking to understand things in their natural context (Arikunto, 2006a). Qualitative research includes the collection of various empirical data such as case studies, personal experiences, introspection, interviews, observation results, document studies that describe the meaning of a research subject (Bhangu et al., 2023; Denzin & Lincoln, 2009). This type of research is considered appropriate to use because this research aims to explore a phenomenon in depth by using key data sources.

The phenomenon to be observed is about the actualization of Bible integration instilled in Integrated Social Studies learning at Christian Middle Schools in Surakarta City to strengthen the multicultural values of students. The results of the research conducted are in the form of general descriptive data. Data analysis was carried out through interactive model analysis. The interactive model is a series of processes consisting of three types of interconnected process stages, namely; data reduction, data presentation, and verification or conclusion (Asipi, Rosalina, & Nopiyadi, 2022). Data reduction is the process of simplifying data from all data collected using an anticipatory mechanism to eliminate data that is not very relevant to the problem in the research. Strict selection was carried out on the data that had been collected through the process of summarizing data, coding data, formulating themes, grouping data, and writing data in narrative form.

Then the data presentation process is a process of constructing solid, structured and easy-to-understand information so that the data can then be analyzed to draw conclusions. Then the last is verification or drawing conclusions, where interpretation of the data presented is carried out, determining the meaning of the data presented, confirmation by triangulation, cross-checking the findings, and then following up on existing findings (Creswell, 2015; Miles & Huberman, 1984).

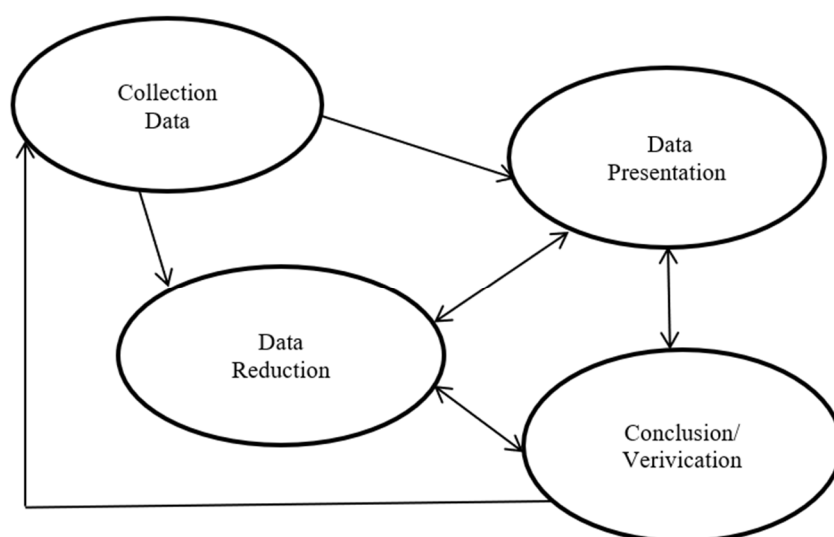


Figure 1 Interactive Model Qualitative Analysis Techniques (Miles & Huberman, 1984)

Creswell discusses the stage of verification or drawing conclusions in qualitative research, including data interpretation, determining the meaning of the data, confirmation through triangulation, cross-checking of findings, and follow-up on existing results (Creswell, 2015).

In their work, Huberman and Miles explain the importance of the verification process in qualitative research, including the use of triangulation to ensure the validity of findings and the drawing of legitimate conclusions (Miles & Huberman, 1984). Both references provide a comprehensive understanding of the verification process in qualitative research, which involves data interpretation, confirmation through triangulation, and drawing valid conclusions.

Results and Discussions

This research uses data from several informants, respondents, places, activities, documents and archives related to the actualization of Bible integration in Integrated Social Studies learning in several private Christian schools in Surakarta City through the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum which is implemented in each school to strengthen values, multiculturalism in students. The Junior High School (SMP) level is in the Phase D stage (Junior High School level 13-15 years). In Phase D, the elements of religious morality are mapped which can be seen in the following table:

Table 1. Flow of Religious Moral Elements

Elements of Knowing and Appreciating Culture Phase D (Junior High School Level 13-15 years)	
Sub-element	End of Phase D
Know and love God Almighty	Understanding God's presence in everyday life and linking their understanding of God's qualities or attributes with the concept of humans' role on earth as responsible creatures of God.
Understanding religion/belief	Understand the meaning and function of the main elements of religion/belief in the Indonesian context, read the holy book, and understand the teachings of religion/belief related to the relationship between humans and the universe.
Implementation of Worship Rituals	Carrying out worship regularly and independently in accordance with religious/belief guidance, as well as participating in celebrations of major holidays.

Source: Tim Penyusun. Naskah Akademik Profil Pelajar Pancasila (Rev. 01-11-2021). 2020. Jakarta: Badan Penelitian dan Pengembangan dan Perbukuan Kementrian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan

The Merdeka Belajar Curriculum provides space for the development of students' character and morality, which aligns closely with the goal of integrating biblical values into learning (Yunita, Zainuri, Ibrahim, Zulfi, & Mulyadi, 2023). Biblical values such as love for others, honesty, and social responsibility can serve as a foundation for shaping students' character, making them not only academically competent but also moral and socially responsible (Suratman & Th, 2023).

The Merdeka Belajar Curriculum also emphasizes the importance of character development and problem-solving, which can be optimized through the teaching of biblical values that encourage students to think critically when facing social and moral challenges. "As children we are naturally curious, yet suspicious and apprehensive when placed in different or unfamiliar environments (Saripudin & Komalasari, 2016). As we encounter cultural differences, we generally rely on our subconscious frames of reference to analyze, compare, and make judgments about the value and validity of other cultures and endeavor to continuously reinforce our embedded beliefs and perceptions about self and others (Efendi & Lien, 2021; Sampaleng, 2023).

That's what makes us as humans resourceful, creative, and adaptable but at the same time fearful and intolerant of others. However, with our growing global economic and political interdependence, we must prepare our teacher candidates and future workforce to be morally cognizant of, genuinely respectful toward, and effectively prepared to appropriately interact with the diverse cultures they will encounter in a global society (Arviansyah & Shagena, 2022; Brown, 2006).

One of the principles of the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum is to provide students with the opportunity to learn according to their interests and needs (Hattarina, Saila, Faradilla, Putri, & Putri, 2022). This allows teachers to integrate biblical values more flexibly and in alignment with the ongoing learning context.

Table 2. Flow of Elements of Development of the Dimensions of Faith, Fear of Almighty God, and Noble Morals

Elements of Personal Morals Phase D (Junior High School Level 13-15 years)	
Sub-element	End of Phase D
Integrity	Dare and consistently convey the truth or facts and understand the consequences for yourself and others.
Take care of yourself physically, mentally and spiritually	Identify the importance of maintaining a balance of physical, mental and spiritual health and strive to balance physical, social and religious activities.

Source: Tim Penyusun. Naskah Akademik Profil Pelajar Pancasila (Rev. 01-11-2021). 2020. Jakarta: Badan Penelitian dan Pengembangan dan Perbukuan Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan

The integration of biblical values in Integrated Social Studies learning supports the strengthening of students' character, such as teaching the importance of cooperation (based on biblical teachings about love) or making fair and honest decisions (based on teachings about justice and truth). The development of faith, piety, and noble morals in students is a multifaceted process that involves various approaches and strategies. These include integrating religious teachings into the curriculum, fostering a supportive environment, and engaging the community and parents in the educational process. Such efforts contribute to the formation of students' character and moral values (Waluyo & Al Muchtar, 2023).

Table 3. Flowchart of Development of the Global Diversity Dimension

Elements of Knowing and Appreciating Culture Phase D (Junior High School Level 13-15 years)	
Sub-element	End of Phase D
Explore culture and cultural identity	Understand cultural change over time and according to context, both on a local, regional and national scale. Explaining self-identity which is formed from national culture.
Explore and compare cultural knowledge, beliefs and practices	Understand cultural dynamics that include everyday understandings, beliefs and practices in personal and social contexts.
Foster a sense of respect for cultural diversity	Understand the importance of preserving and celebrating cultural traditions to develop Indonesian personal, social and national identity and start working on preserving culture in everyday life.

Source: Tim Penyusun. Naskah Akademik Profil Pelajar Pancasila (Rev. 01-11-2021). 2020. Jakarta: Badan Penelitian dan Pengembangan dan Perbukuan Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan.

The Merdeka Belajar Curriculum emphasizes flexible, student-centered learning that allows for the comprehensive development of competencies, including attitudes, knowledge, and skills. In this context, Integrated Social Studies serves as a platform to develop students' understanding of various social, economic, political, and cultural aspects in a comprehensive manner (Ramadan & Tabroni, 2020). The thematic approach in Integrated Social Studies aligns well with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum, which supports interdisciplinary learning. This enables students to learn in a more contextual way, connecting various social concepts to their real-life experiences, while developing critical thinking and collaborative skills (Sahrandi & Bahri, 2023). Phase D in this program emphasizes the importance of intercultural communication, understanding the influence of culture on language use, as well as the ability to recognize and manage risks in cross-cultural interactions. This aligns with view that a deep understanding of one's own culture and others is the first step in building harmonious and effective relationships (Brown, 2006; Darwis, Abdullah, Wibawa, & Rahim, 2022).

In Integrated Social Studies learning, the integration of biblical values is implemented through various topics such as economics. The economics lesson teaches biblical values that can be applied, such as justice, truth, and good leadership, by connecting biblical principles of justice and truth with the study of government systems and laws, such as in biblical stories about justice (e.g., the story of

wise Solomon) (Uge, Neolaka, & Yasin, 2019). It also conveys teachings about good leadership based on the principle of servant leadership, as exemplified by Jesus (Matthew 20:26-28). In history lessons, the implementation of biblical values can be integrated into values such as justice, forgiveness, and love by using biblical stories, such as the stories of just or unjust kings (e.g., King David or King Saul), to teach the concept of justice in history. It also encourages students to reflect on how the principle of forgiveness in the Bible can be applied in relationships between nations or individuals throughout history (Boiliu, 2025).

Based on research conducted at Pelita Nusantara Kasih Christian Junior High School, several challenges were identified in implementing biblical values through learning, particularly in Integrated Social Studies. The issues found include the following not all schools have guidebooks or learning modules to help teachers connect academic topics with biblical principles. Some students may come from families with different beliefs, so this approach requires sensitivity to ensure there is no discrimination or coercion. Biblical values are often not explicitly included in the national curriculum, making it difficult for teachers to balance value integration with academic demands. Teachers sometimes struggle to establish a direct relevance between biblical values and modern students' life situations, such as issues related to technology, social media, or popular culture challenges. Students, especially older ones, sometimes show resistance to the implementation of religious values, which they perceive as too formal or less relevant to their lives.

The school plans to address the challenges encountered in implementing biblical values in learning by conducting regular evaluations and reflections. This includes routinely assessing the effectiveness of integrating biblical values into the learning process and involving students and teachers in the reflection process to ensure that these values are relevant and impactful (Wilhoit, 1991). Pelita Nusantara Kasih Christian Junior High School also involves parents and the community by organizing seminars or workshops with church communities to strengthen Christian values in the school and encouraging parents to support the teaching of biblical values at home. The school conducts character-based activities by involving students in learning activities that instill values such as love, honesty, responsibility, and cooperation, as well as holding group discussions to analyze the moral values contained in biblical texts.

Conclusions

As students in Christian schools with diverse backgrounds, building multiculturalism must be guided by the teachings of the Christian faith through the implementation of the Bible. Association and cooperation with people of different ethnicities, cultures, customs, habits, perspectives, ways of thinking and different religions are expected to further strengthen faith in God. Based on this view, social studies learning in the classroom today needs to foster student motivation. The use of technology-based learning media can help memory and effectiveness in Social Studies learning which contains various abstract and complex social concepts and phenomena, so that the use of various learning resources can concretize all abstract concepts, in order to facilitate students' understanding of the material covered. delivered by the teacher. The use of Bible implementation to increase the value of multiculturalism through Integrated IPS learning certainly has its own challenges when implemented using Merdeka Belajar Curriculum. The integration of the Bible into education at the junior high school level aims to develop students' character based on Christian values. This approach focuses on fostering moral and spiritual growth as well as critical thinking skills guided by biblical principles.

Bible integration in learning at the junior high school level provides significant benefits in shaping students' character according to Christian values. However, its successful implementation highly depends on teacher training, school policy support, and the selection of methods that are relevant to the subjects taught. The connection between Integrated Social Studies learning, biblical values, and the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum lies in the effort to create a learning experience that focuses not only on mastering academic content but also on the holistic development of students' character based on Christian values. The Merdeka Belajar Curriculum provides flexibility in integrating these values in a way that is relevant, contextual, and aligned with the developmental needs of students. I hope this

summary provides a clear overview of the implementation of Bible integration in learning at the junior high school level.

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