Strengthening Identity Through the Integration of Local History in the Learning Curriculum

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Abstract
In Indonesia, with its rich cultural diversity, strengthening identity is increasingly important for both individuals and communities. The integration of local history into learning curriculums is one method to achieve this strengthening of identity. This research aims to examine how the integration of local history can reinforce identity. The study employs a literature review approach, gathering data and information from various sources, including books, articles, and journals. The collected data encompasses theories on identity, previous research on local history integration, and practices of local history integration. The findings indicate that integrating local history strengthens identity in three ways: (1) developing a sense of belonging and connection with the community, (2) enhancing understanding of cultural roots, and (3) developing critical thinking skills and problem-solving abilities. The research concludes that the integration of local history is an effective strategy for strengthening identity.

Keywords: local history, learning curriculum, strengthening identity.

INTRODUCTION
Globalization is often viewed as a process that homogenizes culture and identity across the world (Magu, 2015). In the era of globalization, where the flow of information and culture is rapid and unrestricted between countries, there tends to be an adoption of global values, norms, and cultures (Pieterse, 2019).

Therefore, understanding and maintaining local identity is crucial.

The term “identity” is a multi-dimensional construction that describes “society's concept of who they are, what kind of people they are, and how they relate to others” (Abrams, D., & Hogg, 2006). Identity encompasses an individual or group's personality, beliefs, and
qualities (Leary & Tangney, 2011), allowing for a sense of uniqueness, continuity, and affiliation (Waterman Alan, 1984). There are many forms of identity, including gender/sexual, social, ethnic, religious/spiritual, personal, and cultural.

Another identity linked to one's residence includes national, regional, urban, and local identities. Urban and local identities largely refer to people living in urban areas, less associated with someone's cultural origin/background as they answer “where do I live?” rather than “where do I belong?” (Paasi, 2003). Cultural identity, and to some extent regional identity, encompasses the history, culture, traditions, and customs adopted by a community in a specific area.

From a pedagogical and psychological standpoint, the ever-changing post-modern environment negatively impacts adolescents’ identity formation. They are forced to continuously redefine their identities, leading to confusion and vulnerability to internal conflict pressures (Bendle, 2002). On the other hand, locality and culture can be foundations for identity formation, as both require a sense of togetherness that can unify various overlapping and coexisting elements like gender, sexuality, religion, race, ethnicity, and more (Tomlinson, 2003). If culture was thick in the past, it is now thinning, especially in urban areas due to diverse populations and multiculturalism. This shift has moved the basis of social unity to proximity of location and local identity.

Local refers to a specific village, area, or administrative region like a city or county. It's the story or traces of the past related to a particular community in a specific area. These traces can be physical or non-physical, such as temples, history books, monuments, gates (physical), and traditions, beliefs, ceremonies (non-physical) (Sudarwani, 2015).

Tinja, Y., Towaf, S. M., & Hariyono, (2017) state that the uniqueness of history in an area can be seen as an element of local intelligence. From the historical events in our environment, there is much to learn and glean. Though sometimes overlooked, local history has significant impact and relevance for the future. This confirms the importance of local history, not just in the educational context but also in uncovering values applicable in social life (Febriani et al., 2018).

Local history plays a vital role in shaping national history. Based on the idea that each history has its uniqueness, Margana, (2010) states that fundamentally, all history is local. In the Indonesian national context, national history can be seen as a political manifestation of various local histories. The importance of local history in the national narrative can be attributed to the
geographical locations where certain events occurred. The diverse themes emerging from local history studies provide valuable contributions to the national historical narrative.

As explained, Budhisantoso, the Director of History and Traditional Values of the Directorate General of Culture in the first Local History Seminar in 1983, stated that local history with national connections holds the same importance in terms of information, inspiration, and imperatives for understanding the past and present, as well as planning the future of Indonesia as a nation of Bhineka Tunggal Ika. Local history also plays a crucial role in reinforcing primordial identities as a counter to modernization and globalization that cause disorientation, dislocation, and alienation for unprepared societies (Warto, 2017).

Recent research has highlighted the importance of teaching history with a focus on local perspectives in helping students develop social identity and historical awareness. Dagostin & Molin, (2022) emphasize the importance of integrating local context into history education. They show that this approach not only strengthens students’ social identity but also deepens their understanding of social realities. This research suggests the need for student-centered and contextual education, where the local context becomes a key tool for more effective history learning.

In the Asian context, particularly Korea, Kwang, Hoon, (2023) offer strategic suggestions for the history education curriculum. They propose three major changes: first, renaming the local curriculum to a municipality-province curriculum; second, focusing the local curriculum on specific subjects rather than a general curriculum; and third, integrating the local curriculum in the development of class-based curriculum that supports national and school curricula. They argue that stabilizing locally developed and applied curricula in local areas is key to unlocking the future of education in Korea.

Meanwhile Moraes do Nascimento et al., (2022) explore the role of Local History in basic education. They emphasize the importance of the Local History approach for (re)constructing and identifying local identities, considering cultural elements, as a way to reduce globalization’s impact on identity.

Their results show that Local History plays a crucial role in Heritage Education and memory building, contributing to the process of constructing relevant identities. In summary, these studies demonstrate that a Local History-focused approach in history education has significant potential in shaping students’ social identities, deepening historical awareness, and responding to globalization challenges by maintaining local identities. These three
studies are closely linked in terms of the importance of local history in education.

Therefore, questions arise about the urgency of local history in the current curriculum. How can local history be placed alongside other historical narratives, and what impact does it have on students’ learning processes? In this context, this paper will discuss the urgency of integrating local history into the learning curriculum, hoping to provide new perspectives in designing more inclusive, relevant curricula that enhance the quality of history education in schools.

Studying local history is vital for enriching students’ insights into the diversity and socio-cultural dynamics in Indonesia. Integrating local history into the curriculum is not just about adding content but also about strengthening identity, enhancing pride in cultural heritage, and developing students’ critical thinking about their social and cultural environments.

METHOD

This study employs a literature review approach, focusing on collecting and analyzing data from existing literature sources. The population in this study consists of literary works covering identity theory, previous research on local history integration, and relevant practices. The data collection technique involves systematic and organized searches across various academic databases, online libraries, and scientific publication sources. To ensure data validity, this study applies the technique of source triangulation.

Several of the books reviewed are White, (2014); Waterman Alan, (1984); Rowse, (1963). Creswell, (2015) in "Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches," emphasizes the importance of using various data sources in research. In line with this, Matthew B Miles, A Michael Huberman, (2014) highlight that source triangulation can be achieved by comparing data from various sources such as literature, interviews, and observations.

Therefore, this study employs source triangulation to compare and check the consistency of information from various sources, ensuring that the conclusions drawn are based on strong and accountable evidence. This step is crucial to ensure that the conclusions are based on evidence that is both robust and reliable.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Understanding and Benefits of Local History”

Local history is the study that explores events occurring within a limited geographical area. “Local” refers to a small area, usually defined by territorial boundaries or cultural similarities. In Indonesia, local history is often referred to as regional history.
In the Western world, other terms frequently used include community history, neighborhood history, or nearby history. Local pertains to the history of a specific location, with boundaries set by the historian writing it (Abdullah, 1985). This aligns with the views of (Carrol, 2003), who highlights the importance of local history as a way to understand the past in a specific geographical context. This approach emphasizes that history is shaped not only by major events at the national or global level but also by incidents, individuals, and communities at the local scope.

Furthermore, Wasino (2009) explains that local history holds a position beneath national history. However, this does not mean that local history is always related to national history. Local history can include events related to broader historical occurrences, such as at the regional, national, or even international levels. Local history focuses on researching history from the most basic socio-geographical analytical units, such as villages, sub-districts, or districts (Bhar, 2015).

Purnamasari & Wasino, (2011) reassert that local history can be defined as a series of past events involving a specific community from a particular geographical area, encompassing incidents at more specific locations such as villages, certain places, or administrative areas like cities and counties.

The writing of local history has profound relevance, not only in an academic context but also in communal development. It allows communities to delve into the experiences of previous generations and understand their heritage. Local history also serves as a bridge for other communities to comprehend and appreciate the unique traditions and cultures of a region. The critical role of local history in maintaining stability in various aspects of a region cannot be overlooked.

Supardi, (2014) emphasizes that the flexibility of local history reveals various aspects, ranging from family history, social interactions at the local level, contributions of local heroes in fights from local to national levels, to the origins of an ethnic group and various events that occur at the community level.

History lessons play a crucial role in helping students understand and analyze various historical phenomena. The study of local history plays a role in strengthening the collective memory of a community, weaving togetherness, and increasing care based on shared experiences imprinted in history. This collective memory is vital as it reflects the combination of knowledge, memories, and information embraced by a community and contributes to its identity (Roediger & Abel, 2015).

Some relevant examples of local history studies include research by

Integration of Local History into the School Curriculum

The curriculum, as an essential component of education, is continually updated to align with changes in society. This necessitates innovation and adaptation to remain relevant to the needs of contemporary society. The three core elements of the curriculum are learners, social context, and teaching materials. The ultimate goal of the curriculum is to create quality educational outputs, recognized through the awarding of diplomas (Hamalik O, 2013).

In this framework, the curriculum refers to a set of subjects that students must complete throughout their education to gain recognition in the form of a diploma (Sanjaya, 2008). Eshach, (2007) defines the curriculum as a series of activities involving all experiences gained by learners, both in formal and informal contexts, in efforts to achieve educational goals.

The curriculum can be likened to an organism with various essential parts. These parts are known as curriculum components, which include goals, content or material, delivery methods, and media or evaluation methods (Sukmadinata N.S, 2002). However, the definition of the curriculum continues to evolve along with advances in educational theory and practice. Given the various opinions regarding the definition of the curriculum, it is theoretically challenging to establish one definition that can depict all these perspectives. Research has identified various dimensions in understanding the curriculum.

Wiji et al., (2021) dissects the curriculum into three aspects: the curriculum in its substantive capacity, the curriculum as a system, and the curriculum in the context of the field of study. In the first dimension, the curriculum is viewed as a blueprint or design of learning activities for students in a school environment, or it can also be interpreted as a series of targeted goals to be achieved.

The curriculum, in some respects, can refer to a document that covers educational objectives, teaching materials, teaching methods, schedules, and evaluations. This curriculum document manifests as a written agreement that has been jointly approved between those who design the curriculum, education policymakers, and stakeholders from the community.

In the second dimension, the curriculum is seen as an element of the
educational system in schools, even extending to the overall education system and extension into the structure of society. A curriculum system involves personnel structure and procedures in compiling, implementing, assessing, and updating the curriculum. The aim of this system is to produce a well-organized curriculum and ensure that it remains relevant and dynamic. In the third dimension, the curriculum is seen as a field of study in its own right, namely the study of the curriculum itself.

Sukmadinata N.S, (2002) interprets the curriculum through three perspectives: as science, as a system, and as a plan. In the context of science, the curriculum is studied based on its concepts, basic assumptions, various theories, and fundamental principles that underlie the curriculum. Meanwhile, when viewed as a system, the curriculum is placed in the context of its relationship with other systems, involving its components, and how the curriculum is applied at various levels, types, and pathways of education, including its management.

In the view as a plan, the curriculum involves various types of plans and designs. This includes general plans applicable to all levels and types of education or may be specific to certain levels and types of education. It also encompasses designs made based on various factors such as concepts, objectives, content, processes, and student needs.

Based on the various definitions of the curriculum presented, it can be concluded that the curriculum is a series of plans and arrangements related to objectives, materials, and teaching materials, accompanied by evaluation as a reference in the implementation of the learning process to achieve specific educational goals.

The coherence of the curriculum is very important, which includes: 1) alignment of the curriculum with expectations, needs, situations, and social evolution; and 2) harmonization among the components of the curriculum, namely the suitability between objectives and materials, methods that match the materials and objectives, and evaluations that are in line with the methods, materials, and set objectives (Sukmadinata N.S, 2002).

In the scope of local history, the curriculum serves as a foundation in the practicality of History (Abidin, 2020). The idea of the practicality of history can be traced from Rowse, (1963) perspective on the relevance and function of history. According to Rowse, history has the potential equivalent to natural sciences in contributing to the career development of students.

The statement by Rowse, (1963) about the practical applications of history in career prospects and job opportunities
suggests that history, often perceived as a purely academic or theoretical subject, has tangible, real-world benefits similar to those offered by the sciences. This perspective challenges the common notion that history is less applicable or less valuable in practical terms compared to scientific fields.

According to Rowse, the practical dimension of history is an essential aspect of studying the past. Rowse emphasizes that learning history is not only about knowing historical events that have moral value for students but also has a practical function, which is to help students in getting jobs and advancing their careers.

Following this opinion, Oakeshott, (1999) adds by conceptualizing two categories: “the historical pasts” (history written by historians for academic study) and “the practical past” (history used in everyday life). This view of Oakeshott is further deepened by White, (2014), who emphasizes the importance of the practicality of history by examining the relationship between “the historical past” and “the practical past”.

In his view, White, (2014) underlines the concept of “the practical past” as a form of history different from what is usually written by historians. This concept refers more to history that has been directly experienced and shared by many people. This means that it is not just about events recorded in history books, but about historical experiences that live in the collective memory of society.

This practical history plays an important role in shaping the way we view the world. These historical experiences become the foundation in the way we perceive reality, solve problems, and make value judgments in everyday life. In other words, these shared historical experiences greatly influence our mindset and decisions in real situations.

Interestingly, White, (2014) also emphasizes that situations faced in everyday life often are situations never encountered by famous historical figures. This means that although we may learn from the achievements or mistakes of historical heroes, there are aspects of real life that can only be understood through our own collective experiences, not through formal historical narratives.

The essence of history, according to the view of “the practical past”, lies in the application of history in everyday life. This concept of the practicality of history highlights the importance of history in providing practical benefits for everyday life. Therefore, the main goal of teaching history should not only focus on normative-political aspects but also emphasize the practical benefits for the wider community.

Implementing Local History in the Curriculum
Integrating local history into the educational curriculum requires a
strategic approach to maximize its benefits and relevance for students. Local history, with its unique and contextual characteristics, provides an opportunity to explore historical aspects that may not be covered in national or global historical narratives.

Firstly, one key strategy is to conduct in-depth studies of relevant local historical materials for integration. A research-based approach ensures that the taught material reflects the historical reality and uniqueness of the local community. This ensures that students gain authentic and deep insights into the history of their community.

Secondly, teacher training is a crucial element in this process. Teachers need to be equipped with the knowledge and skills to teach local history in an engaging and relevant way. Ampartzaki Maria, (2016) asserts that teaching local history requires a deep understanding and appreciation of the nuances and complexities of local stories, and teachers play a key role in conveying this to students.

Thirdly, collaboration with local historians and institutions such as museums or local archives can enrich teaching materials and provide additional context. According to Marcus, A., Stoddard, J., & Woodward, (2017), collaboration between schools and local institutions can provide access to rich resources, from artifacts to historical documents, that can deepen students' understanding.

Using active and participatory teaching methods, such as field trips to historical sites or community-based projects, can enhance student engagement and understanding.

Integrating local history into the curriculum requires well-planned strategies, support from various parties, and an active and participatory approach. Through this approach, students can gain a deeper and more contextual understanding of history and how it shapes the identity of their community.

The Practical Application of Local History as a Strengthening of Identity

Local history is a vital aspect of education that provides additional nuances for students to understand their heritage and background. Knowing local history allows students to relate historical narratives to their own experiences, adding a more profound personal dimension to their learning process.

Local history not only presents stories from the past but also highlights local wisdom and community values that can be foundational in shaping students' character. Bruner, (1996) stresses the importance of context in education, noting that when students receive information that is contextual and relevant to their lives, they value and remember it more. In this context, local
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History cultivates pride and identity in cultural heritage and community. This is reinforced by Lowenthal, (1985), who states that understanding one’s local history can enhance appreciation for cultural heritage and community pride.

Understanding local history is not just about understanding the past but also about developing critical thinking skills. Wineburg, (2001) articulates how investigating history from various viewpoints sharpens students’ analytical thinking abilities. The importance of local history in educating students about the interaction between humans and their environment is also undeniable. As explained by William Crono, (1992), understanding the dynamics between humans and nature in the past provides valuable insights into contemporary sustainability issues.

Furthermore, local history provides a lens for understanding global events. As Chartofili & Fokides, (2019) reveals, analyzing local history can be a solid foundation for understanding the dynamics and complexities of the world. As part of the educational curriculum, local history also plays a role in enhancing national identity and nationalism, especially in the modern era.

This is emphasized by Wijayanti (2017), who states that introducing local history can enhance historical awareness, critical thinking skills, and the spirit of nationalism in learners. In conclusion, local history not only enriches students’ understanding of the past but also gives them the skills and perspectives needed to actively and responsibly contribute to society, both locally and globally.

Local history plays a central role in carving and affirming the identity of individuals and society as a whole. When one understands the background and origins of their community, they gain a deep understanding of their culture.

Moreover, knowing the history of a particular place can deepen one’s emotional connection to that place, who notes that a special bond is formed when we understand the historical significance of the land we stand on. Through local history, we see how cultural heritage shapes a community’s collective identity. This history also guides communities when faced with changes and challenges, providing lessons from the past to make better decisions for the future, a principle well articulated.

However, most importantly, local history builds and strengthens a sense of togetherness among community members. Shared stories from the past can be a binder that unites society. In conclusion, local history is not just a record of past events in a place but also a reflection of the identity and heritage of a community. It provides insights into our origins, helps us understand our values, and strengthens our identity as part of a larger community.
Implementation of Local History in Learning

The implementation of local history in schools has significant potential in providing a new dimension to history education. By delving into the background and heritage of specific areas, students can build a deeper connection with the material they learn. Local history offers the chance to view significant events in a more intimate and personal context, which can enhance students' curiosity and understanding.

Digital Games: The application of cutting-edge technology can enhance the teaching quality of local history. Digital gaming media, for instance, allows students to "live" and interact within reconstructed historical environments. In this context, history is no longer just a series of facts and dates, but becomes an immersive interactive experience. Digital games offer a rich learning environment where students can explore and actively participate in historical narratives.

Virtual Tours are also an effective method for bringing students closer to historical locations without leaving the classroom. Virtual tours enable students to explore historical sites from the comfort of their classroom. Through Virtual Tours, an authentic experience of a place can be presented in detail, allowing students to feel the ambiance of the location without being there physically. This helps in enriching their understanding of a place's historical context.

A study by Wu & Lai, (2021) shows that Virtual Tours can enrich the learning experience by providing visual context and additional information that can enhance students' understanding of historical events. Additionally, other media can be used to improve the quality of teaching local history. For example, podcasts offer an audio approach that allows students to listen to narratives, interviews, or dramatizations of local historical events. Interactive media like digital maps can also be utilized.

Digital maps enable students to visually explore local historical locations, while providing additional information, photos, or related video recordings. Research by Bednarz et al., (2006) indicates that digital maps facilitate spatial learning, giving students the opportunity to connect historical events with specific geographical locations.

Virtual Reality (VR) is another promising technology. With VR, students can be “transported” to specific eras or places, providing them with an immersive experience in exploring local history. VR offers students the opportunity to experience historical events firsthand, fostering a sense of empathy and deeper understanding. By combining these technologies with traditional teaching methods, local history education can be delivered in a more innovative and
engaging way, ensuring that students gain a comprehensive understanding of their community's heritage and history.

Challenges and Obstacles in Integrating Local History

Incorporating local history into the educational curriculum promises more meaningful learning for students. However, there are various challenges that might be faced in this effort.

First, many schools struggle due to a lack of sufficient resources to obtain relevant local history teaching materials. As emphasized, the already dense national history curriculum often makes it difficult to insert local history materials, as stated by (Mignolo, 2012).

Second, not all teachers have expertise in local history, necessitating further training to teach it effectively (Brown, 1987). Additionally, viewing local history can present biases or subjective views of past events, making it crucial to teach with sensitivity and precision to avoid conflicts in interpretation, as noted by (Hoopes, 2014).

Third, the challenge of obtaining primary sources or authentic local historical documents is another obstacle, something stressed by (Aditya N, 2021) Nevertheless, with the right approach and resources, local history still holds great potential to enrich students' learning experiences.

Government and Community Support Needed

The development and integration of local history into the education system heavily depend on support from both the government and the community. The government plays a crucial role, ranging from allocating specific budgets for local history, revising the educational curriculum, to providing training for teachers.

As stated by Moraes do Nascimento et al., (2022) without the right political support and policies, the integration of local history could face many challenges. To support this, the government must invest in local history research, the provision of educational materials, and also establish museums or local history education centers, as emphasized by (Marcus, A., Stoddard, J., & Woodward, 2017).

Equally important, the community has a crucial role as they are the primary source of local historical information. Collaboration between the community and educational institutions can lead to the exchange of stories, artifacts, and other relevant resources, ensuring authentic and in-depth learning, as mentioned by (Semih AKTEKİN, 2010).

Furthermore, local history education should not only focus within the school context. Through seminars, workshops, and visits to historical sites, the community can gain a better understanding and appreciation of their
cultural and historical heritage, in line with the views of (Achille & Fiorillo, 2022).

Meanwhile, the private sector also has a significant role. Many organizations and companies show interest in supporting local history initiatives, whether through funding, resources, or other special programs. Such partnerships can strengthen and extend the impact of local history education, as emphasized by (White, 2014).

Moreover, local history education in schools can encourage the community to appreciate their culture and heritage more, and this can trigger further initiatives for the preservation of traditions and culture, as asserted by (Goodarzparvari et al., 2018). With combined support from the government, community, and private sector, local history can become an integral part of the education system, ensuring that future generations continue to understand and appreciate their local heritage and stories.

CONCLUSION

Integrating local history into education is not just an academic activity; it is a transformative journey. It is a powerful tool for fostering strong and diverse identities, empowering students to connect with their past, engage with the present, and shape their future. Delving into the dynamic narratives embedded in the local landscape fosters not only a sense of belonging but also equips generations to build a more inclusive and brighter future. Through education related to local history, future generations are given the opportunity to uncover, appreciate, and preserve the narratives and heritage of their area.

To implement the integration of local history into the learning curriculum, significant support is needed from both the government and the community. The government plays a key role in this process, especially in allocating sufficient funds to support local history initiatives. Moreover, active community involvement is crucial, particularly in developing curricula and teaching activities relevant to local history. Teachers also need specialized training so they can deliver local history material in an engaging and effective way. Furthermore, establishing specific institutions for local history, like museums, can be a progressive step in introducing the community to their local heritage. Education about local history should not only be focused in schools but also expanded to include the wider community through various activities. Finally, involvement from the private sector in funding or providing other resources can enrich and broaden the scope of local history education, creating a richer and well-integrated learning environment.
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