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Email: ijireditor7@gmail.com

The Internalization Of Democratic Values Through Social Studies Learning At MA Islamiyah Senori Tuban

¹Rifai, ²Anggraeni Ratridite Sudarso, ³Deni Pratiwi

^{1,2,3} Institut Agama Islam Al-Fatimah Bojonegoro, Indonesia.

¹rifai@iai-alfatimah.ac.id, ²anggraeniratridite@gmail.com, ³denypratiewie7@gmail.com.

Correspondence Email: rifai@iai-alfatimah.ac.id.

Abstract: This study investigates the internalization of democratic values through Social Studies learning at MA Islamiyah Senori Tuban. Education serves as a key mechanism for developing civic responsibility, critical thinking, and participatory attitudes among students. A qualitative case study design was employed to explore classroom practices and student experiences in an Islamic educational context. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and classroom observations involving teachers, students, and school stakeholders. The analysis reveals that democratic values such as tolerance, responsibility, and active participation are fostered through interactive learning strategies, including group discussions, collaborative projects, and election simulations. Students demonstrate increased engagement, confidence, and awareness of democratic processes when involved in experiential activities. Variations in participation levels and difficulties in understanding abstract civic concepts remain evident among some students. Institutional support, teacher competence, and resource availability influence the effectiveness of implementation. The findings indicate that participatory learning environments strengthen democratic character formation and provide meaningful learning experiences. The study contributes to the understanding of how democratic and religious values can be integrated within Social Studies education.

Keywords: Social Studies Learning, Democratic Values, Active Learning, Islamic Education

INTRODUCTION

Education functions as a central mechanism for shaping students' character and cultivating democratic values. Schools serve as social institutions where individuals learn norms, responsibilities, and patterns of participation that reflect broader societal expectations. Democratic education emphasizes the development of critical thinking, civic responsibility, and active engagement in collective life. These competencies are particularly relevant in plural societies such as Indonesia, where cultural, religious, and ethnic diversity requires citizens to practice tolerance and mutual respect in everyday interactions (Banks, 2017). Educational settings play a decisive



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role in preparing young people to navigate such complexity through value-based learning experiences.

The integration of democratic values within formal education has been widely associated with the promotion of civic competence. Civic competence includes knowledge of democratic systems, skills for participation, and dispositions that support ethical engagement in society. Research highlights that students who experience participatory learning environments tend to demonstrate higher levels of civic awareness and social responsibility (Reichert et al., 2018). Classroom environments that encourage dialogue, inquiry, and reflection provide opportunities for students to internalize democratic principles in meaningful ways. This perspective positions education not only as knowledge transmission but also as a transformative process that shapes attitudes and behaviors.

Social Studies (SS) occupies a strategic position in fostering democratic values due to its interdisciplinary nature. The subject integrates history, sociology, politics, and economics, allowing students to explore societal structures and civic processes. Exposure to topics such as governance, human rights, and democratic movements enables students to understand the foundations of democratic life. Pedagogical approaches that emphasize interaction and participation strengthen this process by connecting theoretical knowledge with lived experiences (Fitchett & Heafner, 2018). Learning activities that involve discussion, role-play, and collaborative inquiry create space for students to articulate opinions, negotiate perspectives, and engage in collective decision-making.

Student engagement represents a key factor in the effectiveness of democratic education. Active participation in classroom activities enhances both cognitive understanding and affective commitment to democratic values. Empirical studies indicate that students who participate in simulations and collaborative tasks develop stronger skills in communication, empathy, and problem-solving (Knowles et al., 2018). These competencies contribute to the formation of democratic dispositions that extend beyond classroom settings. Engagement-based learning also



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supports the development of agency, enabling students to perceive themselves as active contributors to society.

Islamic educational institutions provide a unique context for integrating democratic values with religious teachings. Principles such as *musyawarah* (deliberation), justice, and collective responsibility resonate with democratic ideals and offer culturally relevant foundations for civic education. Educational practices in Islamic schools often emphasize moral development alongside academic learning, creating opportunities to align religious values with democratic principles (Tan, 2014). This alignment supports the formation of students who are both ethically grounded and socially engaged. The integration of these values requires intentional curriculum design and pedagogical strategies that reflect both religious and civic dimensions.

MA Islamiyah Senori Tuban represents an example of an institution that seeks to embed democratic values within its educational practices. The school has implemented an integrative curriculum that incorporates democratic themes into Social Studies learning. Classroom activities include discussions, collaborative projects, and simulations designed to promote participation and critical engagement. These practices aim to create a learning environment where students experience democratic processes directly rather than learning them in abstract terms. Such experiential approaches strengthen the connection between knowledge and practice.

The implementation of democratic education within school settings is influenced by several contextual factors. Limitations in infrastructure can restrict the availability of learning resources and interactive spaces. Variations in teachers' pedagogical competence affect the consistency of instructional practices. External social environments also shape students' perceptions and behaviors, sometimes reinforcing values that differ from those promoted in school (Schulz et al., 2018). These conditions highlight the need for continuous support and adaptation in educational practices to ensure effective value internalization.

This study explores how democratic values are practiced within Social Studies learning at MA Islamiyah Senori Tuban. Attention is directed toward classroom interactions, instructional strategies, and institutional support systems that influence the learning process. The study also



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examines the challenges that arise in implementing democratic education within an Islamic school context. Insights from teachers and students provide a deeper understanding of how democratic values are experienced and interpreted in everyday learning activities.

The contribution of this study lies in its focus on active learning practices within a religious educational setting. The findings offer perspectives on how democratic and religious values can be integrated in a complementary manner. This approach provides an alternative framework for understanding civic education in contexts where cultural and religious dimensions play a significant role.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design to investigate how democratic values are internalized through classroom practices in Social Studies learning. A qualitative framework allows an in-depth understanding of participants' experiences, perceptions, and interactions within their natural setting. The case study design focuses on a bounded system, enabling detailed exploration of processes, meanings, and contextual influences that shape learning practices (Yin, 2018).

Research Site

The research was conducted at MA Islamiyah Senori Tuban, located in East Java, Indonesia. The school represents an Islamic educational institution that integrates religious values with general subjects, including Social Studies. The selection of this site reflects its relevance to the study focus, particularly its efforts to incorporate democratic values within classroom learning activities.

Participants

Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in the teaching and learning process. This technique ensures that selected individuals possess relevant knowledge and experience related to the phenomenon under investigation (Palinkas et al., 2015). The participants included Social Studies teachers, students from Grade XI and XII, the school



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principal, and educational staff. These groups provide multiple perspectives that enrich the understanding of how democratic values are practiced and experienced within the school environment.

Data Collection

Data were collected through in-depth interviews and classroom observations. Interviews were conducted with teachers, students, and school stakeholders to capture their perspectives on instructional practices, student engagement, and value internalization. Open-ended questions were used to allow participants to express their experiences in detail. Classroom observations focused on learning activities such as group discussions, simulations, and collaborative tasks. Observational data provided direct insight into student participation, teacher strategies, and classroom dynamics. The combination of these methods supports data triangulation, enhancing the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Data Analysis

Data analysis followed a thematic approach involving several stages. The process began with data reduction through coding and organization of interview transcripts and observation notes. Categories were developed based on recurring patterns and meaningful units of information. Themes were then interpreted to explain how democratic values are internalized in classroom contexts. This analytical process allows the identification of relationships between instructional practices and student experiences, leading to a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Classroom Practices in Democratic Learning

Findings from interviews and classroom observations reveal that teachers at MA Islamiyah Senori Tuban embed democratic values through structured interactive learning practices. Instructional strategies include group discussions, election simulations, and collaborative assignments designed to encourage participation and shared responsibility. These approaches



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situate students as active contributors in the learning process rather than passive recipients of information.

Group discussions serve as a primary method for facilitating democratic interaction. During these sessions, students are encouraged to articulate their opinions, respond to differing perspectives, and negotiate meaning collectively. Teachers guide discussions by posing open-ended questions related to civic issues, governance, and social responsibilities. This practice fosters communicative competence and respect for diversity of thought. The classroom environment reflects a dialogic space where students experience democratic engagement in real time. Such interaction aligns with research indicating that dialogic teaching supports civic reasoning and participatory skills among learners (Hess & McAvoy, 2015).

Election simulations represent another key instructional strategy observed in this study. These simulations involve students in processes resembling real electoral systems, including candidate nomination, campaign activities, voting procedures, and result evaluation. Students assume various roles, including candidates, voters, and election committees. This experiential approach enables learners to understand democratic procedures beyond theoretical explanation. Observational data indicate that students demonstrate enthusiasm and active involvement during simulation activities. Participation in these exercises strengthens their understanding of fairness, transparency, and accountability within democratic systems. Empirical studies support the effectiveness of simulation-based learning in enhancing civic engagement and procedural knowledge (Parker et al., 2013).

Collaborative assignments further reinforce democratic values by requiring students to work collectively toward shared goals. Tasks often involve problem-solving activities related to social issues, requiring students to deliberate, distribute responsibilities, and reach consensus. This process cultivates cooperation, tolerance, and mutual respect. Students learn to manage disagreements constructively, which reflects key aspects of democratic culture. The collaborative nature of these assignments contributes to the development of interpersonal skills essential for



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civic participation. Research highlights that collaborative learning environments promote social cohesion and democratic dispositions (Johnson & Johnson, 2009).

Classroom observations indicate that teachers play a crucial role in structuring these activities. Teachers act as facilitators who create inclusive spaces for dialogue and participation. Instructional practices emphasize student-centered learning, allowing flexibility in expressing ideas and engaging in inquiry. This pedagogical orientation reflects a shift from traditional teacher-centered instruction toward participatory learning models. Such approaches align with contemporary perspectives on civic education that emphasize experiential and inquiry-based learning (Kahne & Westheimer, 2006).

Despite the effectiveness of these practices, variations in implementation were observed across different classrooms. Differences in teachers' pedagogical skills influence the depth of student engagement. Some teachers demonstrate strong facilitation skills, enabling balanced participation among students. Other classrooms show limited interaction, with discussions dominated by a small number of students. These variations highlight the importance of teacher competence in sustaining democratic learning environments.

Student Experiences

Students' perspectives provide valuable insight into how democratic values are internalized through classroom activities. Interview data indicate that students experience increased motivation when learning involves active participation. Activities such as discussions and simulations create a sense of ownership in the learning process. Students express greater interest in lessons that allow them to contribute ideas and engage in meaningful dialogue.

Direct involvement in election simulations contributes significantly to students' understanding of democratic processes. Students report that participating in simulated voting activities enhances their awareness of electoral procedures and civic responsibility. They gain practical insight into concepts such as representation, fairness, and accountability. These experiences bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world application. Research



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suggests that experiential learning enhances students' civic knowledge and fosters a sense of political efficacy (Levy, 2013).

Students also report that collaborative assignments support the development of social and emotional competencies. Working in groups requires negotiation, empathy, and adaptability. Students learn to respect diverse perspectives while striving toward collective outcomes. This process strengthens their ability to engage constructively in social interactions. The development of these competencies is essential for sustaining democratic practices in broader societal contexts.

Challenges emerge in students' understanding of abstract concepts related to rights and responsibilities. Some students indicate difficulty in connecting theoretical discussions with practical implications. Concepts such as constitutional rights, civic duties, and legal frameworks require higher levels of cognitive processing. Students with limited prior knowledge or exposure to civic issues may struggle to grasp these ideas fully. This finding aligns with research highlighting the complexity of teaching abstract civic concepts in secondary education (Abowitz & Harnish, 2006).

Variation in participation levels among students also becomes evident. While many students actively engage in discussions and simulations, others remain passive or hesitant to contribute. Factors influencing participation include confidence levels, communication skills, and prior learning experiences. Classroom dynamics and peer interactions also shape students' willingness to participate. Teachers who establish supportive and inclusive environments tend to facilitate higher levels of engagement.

Students express positive attitudes toward democratic learning practices despite these challenges. They perceive interactive methods as more meaningful compared to conventional lecture-based instruction. The opportunity to engage in dialogue and collaborative activities enhances their sense of belonging within the classroom community. This sense of belonging contributes to the development of democratic identity and civic awareness.

School Support and Policy Context



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The institutional context plays a significant role in shaping the implementation of democratic learning practices. MA Islamiyah Senori Tuban demonstrates a commitment to integrating democratic values within its curriculum. School policies emphasize character education, civic responsibility, and participatory learning. These principles are reflected in the design of Social Studies instruction and extracurricular activities.

Curriculum integration serves as a key mechanism for embedding democratic values across learning areas. Social Studies subjects incorporate themes related to governance, human rights, and social justice. Teachers are encouraged to connect these themes with students' lived experiences. This approach supports the development of contextual understanding and relevance in learning. Research indicates that curriculum integration enhances the coherence of civic education and strengthens value internalization (Avery et al., 2013).

School leadership also contributes to the promotion of democratic learning. The principal and educational staff support the use of interactive teaching methods and provide opportunities for professional development. Training programs and workshops aim to enhance teachers' pedagogical skills in facilitating participatory learning. These initiatives reflect an institutional commitment to improving instructional quality.

Constraints related to infrastructure and resources influence the effectiveness of implementation. Limited access to learning materials, technological tools, and flexible classroom spaces restricts the range of instructional strategies that can be employed. Teachers often rely on available resources to design activities, which may limit innovation. Resource constraints represent a common challenge in educational settings, particularly in developing contexts (OECD, 2019).

Professional development emerges as a critical factor in sustaining democratic education. Teachers require continuous support to refine their instructional practices and adapt to evolving educational demands. Differences in teachers' experience and training affect their ability to implement interactive methods effectively. Structured training programs and collaborative learning communities among teachers can address these gaps.



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External social influences also shape the implementation of democratic values. Students' experiences outside school, including family and community environments, contribute to their perceptions of democracy. In some cases, these influences may not align with the values promoted in school. This dynamic creates tension between formal education and social realities. Educational institutions must navigate these complexities by fostering critical reflection and dialogue among students.

The findings highlight the interconnected nature of classroom practices, student experiences, and institutional support. Democratic value internalization emerges as a dynamic process shaped by multiple factors. Effective implementation requires alignment between instructional strategies, student engagement, and institutional policies.

Synthesis and Theoretical Implications

The findings of this study reinforce the significance of active learning in civic education. Classroom practices that emphasize participation, dialogue, and collaboration contribute to the development of democratic competencies. Students benefit from experiential learning opportunities that connect theoretical concepts with practical applications. This approach supports the formation of civic identity and social responsibility.

The study also underscores the importance of contextual factors in shaping educational outcomes. Institutional support, teacher competence, and resource availability influence the effectiveness of democratic learning practices. These findings suggest that educational reform efforts should address both pedagogical and structural dimensions.

The integration of democratic values within an Islamic educational context provides a unique perspective on civic education. Religious principles such as deliberation and justice offer culturally relevant foundations for democratic learning. This integration demonstrates that democratic values can be adapted to diverse cultural and religious settings.

Observational Insights

Classroom observations provide direct evidence of how democratic values are enacted in everyday learning interactions. The observed learning sessions indicate a high level of student



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engagement during simulation activities and structured discussions. Students actively contributed ideas, responded to peers' arguments, and demonstrated willingness to participate in collective decision-making processes. This pattern reflects the emergence of a participatory classroom climate where learners experience democratic practices through action rather than abstraction.

During simulation activities, students displayed confidence in assuming roles and expressing viewpoints. Election simulations encouraged students to engage in structured procedures such as campaigning, voting, and evaluating results. These activities created a dynamic learning environment in which students navigated real-life democratic processes in a simplified context. Observational notes show that students were attentive, responsive, and motivated to take part in each stage of the activity. This level of engagement indicates that experiential learning strategies foster deeper involvement compared to passive instructional methods. Research suggests that experiential civic learning enhances both knowledge retention and democratic attitudes among students (Geboers et al., 2013).

Discussion-based learning also revealed important aspects of student interaction. Students demonstrated the ability to articulate arguments, provide justification, and respond to differing perspectives. Respectful dialogue was observed in most classroom interactions, indicating the presence of norms that support democratic communication. Teachers facilitated discussions by encouraging equal participation and guiding students toward constructive exchange of ideas. These practices contributed to the development of critical thinking and deliberative skills. The ability to engage in reasoned discussion represents a key component of democratic competence (Mercer & Howe, 2012).

A closer examination of participation patterns shows variation among students. While a majority engaged actively, a smaller group remained less involved in discussions and collaborative tasks. These students tended to observe rather than contribute, often requiring encouragement from teachers to participate. Differences in participation may be influenced by individual confidence, communication skills, and prior learning experiences. Classroom culture also plays a role in shaping participation dynamics. Students who perceive the environment as supportive are more



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likely to engage actively. Research highlights that inclusive classroom climates are essential for ensuring equitable participation in civic learning contexts (Quintelier & Hooghe, 2013).

The presence of varied participation levels suggests that democratic learning requires deliberate strategies to include all students. Teachers who employ scaffolding techniques and structured participation formats can support less active learners in becoming more engaged. Small-group discussions, guided questioning, and role assignment provide opportunities for broader involvement. Observational findings indicate that when such strategies are applied, participation becomes more evenly distributed among students.

Non-verbal behaviors observed during classroom activities further illustrate student engagement. Students maintained eye contact, took notes, and interacted with peers during discussions. These behaviors indicate attentiveness and cognitive involvement. In simulation settings, students displayed enthusiasm through active movement, collaboration, and task completion. The combination of verbal and non-verbal engagement reflects a holistic learning experience that integrates cognitive, social, and emotional dimensions.

The observational data also highlight the role of teacher facilitation in shaping classroom dynamics. Teachers who actively monitor participation and provide constructive feedback create environments that support democratic interaction. Clear instructions, structured activities, and supportive feedback contribute to effective learning experiences. Variations in teacher facilitation styles influence the overall quality of student engagement. Classrooms led by teachers with strong facilitation skills demonstrate higher levels of interaction and inclusivity.

These findings suggest that observational insights provide valuable evidence of how democratic values are practiced in real time. Student engagement, participation patterns, and teacher facilitation emerge as key elements in the internalization process. The classroom becomes a microcosm of democratic society, where students learn through participation, dialogue, and shared responsibility.

Implementation Constraints



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The implementation of democratic learning practices is shaped by several contextual constraints that influence both effectiveness and consistency. One prominent factor relates to the availability of educational resources. Limited access to instructional materials, technological tools, and flexible learning spaces restricts the range of pedagogical strategies that teachers can employ. Classrooms with constrained resources often rely on conventional teaching methods, which may reduce opportunities for interactive and participatory learning. Resource limitations have been identified as a persistent challenge in implementing innovative educational practices, particularly in developing educational contexts (UNESCO, 2021).

Variation in teachers' instructional approaches represents another significant constraint. Differences in training, experience, and pedagogical orientation affect how teachers design and implement learning activities. Some teachers demonstrate proficiency in facilitating discussions and simulations, creating inclusive and engaging classroom environments. Other teachers rely on more directive approaches that limit student participation. These variations lead to inconsistencies in the quality of democratic learning experiences across classrooms. Teacher competence plays a decisive role in shaping student engagement and learning outcomes. Research indicates that effective teacher professional development enhances instructional quality and supports the adoption of student-centered practices (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

External social environments also influence the internalization of democratic values. Students' experiences outside school, including family interactions and community norms, contribute to their understanding of social and political life. In some cases, these external influences may not align with the democratic values promoted in school settings. This discrepancy creates challenges for educators who aim to reinforce consistent value systems. Students may encounter conflicting messages that affect their interpretation of democratic principles. Studies on civic socialization highlight the importance of alignment between school and community contexts in fostering democratic attitudes (Neundorf et al., 2016).

Cultural factors further shape the implementation of democratic education. Norms related to authority, hierarchy, and communication influence how students and teachers interact in the



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classroom. In some contexts, students may hesitate to express opinions openly due to respect for authority or fear of making mistakes. Such cultural dynamics can limit participation and reduce opportunities for dialogue. Teachers need to navigate these cultural expectations while promoting open and inclusive communication.

Institutional constraints also play a role in shaping implementation. School policies may support democratic education in principle, yet practical limitations affect execution. Time constraints within the curriculum can restrict opportunities for extended discussions and simulations. Administrative demands and assessment requirements may prioritize content coverage over participatory learning. These factors create tension between policy intentions and classroom realities.

The interplay of these constraints affects the depth and consistency of democratic value internalization. Students' learning experiences vary depending on the extent to which these challenges are addressed. Classrooms that successfully mitigate these constraints demonstrate stronger engagement and more meaningful learning outcomes. Addressing these challenges requires coordinated efforts at multiple levels, including policy, institutional support, and teacher development.

Pedagogical Implications

The findings of this study suggest several implications for strengthening democratic education within school contexts. A central consideration involves the development of teachers' pedagogical competence. Ongoing professional development programs provide opportunities for teachers to refine their skills in facilitating participatory learning. Training initiatives that focus on discussion techniques, simulation design, and collaborative learning strategies enhance teachers' ability to create inclusive classroom environments. Effective professional development is characterized by sustained engagement, practical application, and collaborative learning among educators (Desimone & Garet, 2015).

Improvement of learning facilities represents another important dimension. Access to flexible classroom spaces, instructional media, and technological tools supports the



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implementation of interactive learning strategies. Learning environments that allow movement, collaboration, and access to resources enhance student participation. Investment in educational infrastructure contributes to the sustainability of innovative teaching practices. Adequate facilities enable teachers to design varied learning experiences that align with democratic principles.

The broader application of participatory methods across subjects strengthens the integration of democratic values within the curriculum. Democratic learning should not be limited to Social Studies but extended to other disciplines. Interdisciplinary approaches allow students to apply democratic principles in diverse contexts, reinforcing their relevance and applicability. Collaborative projects, problem-based learning, and inquiry-based approaches can be adapted across subject areas to support democratic engagement.

Partnerships with external institutions offer opportunities to enrich learning experiences. Collaboration with community organizations, local government institutions, and civic groups provides students with exposure to real-world democratic practices. These partnerships create authentic learning contexts that extend beyond the classroom. Students gain insights into civic participation, governance, and social responsibility through direct engagement with community actors. Research highlights the value of community-based learning in fostering civic engagement and social awareness (Zaff et al., 2010).

Attention to inclusive pedagogy is essential for ensuring equitable participation among students. Teachers should adopt strategies that accommodate diverse learning needs and encourage all students to contribute. Structured participation formats, differentiated instruction, and supportive feedback mechanisms promote inclusivity. Creating a safe and respectful classroom climate enhances students' confidence in expressing ideas.

Reflective practice among teachers also contributes to continuous improvement. Teachers who engage in self-evaluation and collaborative reflection can identify areas for development and adapt their instructional approaches. Professional learning communities within schools provide platforms for sharing experiences and best practices.



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The integration of democratic values within Islamic educational contexts offers opportunities for contextualized pedagogy. Religious principles such as justice, consultation, and collective responsibility can be aligned with democratic concepts. This integration supports culturally relevant teaching practices that resonate with students' identities and experiences.

These pedagogical implications emphasize the need for a comprehensive approach that addresses instructional practices, institutional support, and community engagement. Democratic education requires sustained commitment and adaptation to changing educational contexts. Effective implementation contributes to the development of students who are capable of participating actively and responsibly in society.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the internalization of democratic values in Social Studies learning is strongly supported by participatory and experiential instructional practices. Classroom activities such as discussions, collaborative projects, and election simulations create meaningful opportunities for students to engage in democratic processes. Students develop the ability to express opinions, respect differing perspectives, and participate in collective decision-making. These experiences contribute to the formation of civic awareness, responsibility, and tolerance. The findings also indicate that learning environments characterized by active engagement promote deeper understanding compared to conventional instructional approaches. Students show higher motivation and confidence when they are directly involved in learning activities that reflect real-world democratic practices. Democratic values are not only understood cognitively but also practiced through social interaction and collaboration.

The effectiveness of democratic value internalization is influenced by several contextual factors. Variations in teacher competence affect the quality of classroom interaction and student participation. Limitations in educational resources restrict the implementation of innovative teaching strategies. External social environments shape students' perceptions of democratic values, sometimes creating inconsistencies between school-based learning and everyday



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experiences. These conditions highlight the need for comprehensive support at institutional and pedagogical levels. Continuous professional development for teachers, improved learning facilities, and the integration of participatory methods across subjects can enhance the sustainability of democratic education. Collaboration with external institutions can provide authentic learning experiences that connect classroom learning with broader social contexts. The integration of democratic principles with Islamic values such as deliberation and justice offers a culturally relevant framework for civic education. This approach supports the development of students who are capable of participating actively and responsibly in a democratic society.

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Email: jjireditor7@gmail.com

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