



A Six-Phase Integrative Model for Teaching Indonesian Language, Civic Education, and Social Studies to Strengthen Literacy and Character Among Elementary Madrasah Students

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Article Info	Abstract
<p>Article history:</p> <p><i>Received:</i> 2026-05-01</p> <p><i>Revised:</i> 2026-05-02</p> <p><i>Accepted:</i> 2026-05-03</p> <p>Keywords: <i>six-phase integrative model; literacy; character education; Madrasah Ibtidaiyah; cross-curricular learning</i></p> <p>This is an open-access article under the CC BY-SA license. Copyright © 2025 by Author. Published by Yayasan Mujtahidin Sajimah Selong (Musa Foundation), Indonesia.</p>	<p>This article examines and formulates a six-phase integrative model for the learning of Indonesian Language, Civic Education, and Social Studies as a conceptual strategy to strengthen the literacy and character of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah students. This study is motivated by the literacy challenges faced by Indonesian students and the need for a learning design capable of linking essential competencies, character development, and the distinctive culture of madrasahs. This research employs a qualitative, literature-based approach with a conceptual synthesis design. Sources were identified through Google Scholar, GARUDA, and official policy documents, prioritizing empirical studies from 2021–2025 and selectively utilizing classical theoretical references as a conceptual foundation. From 36 initial documents, 17 core sources were selected based on relevance, novelty, educational level, and conceptual contribution. Analysis was conducted through source reduction, coding, categorization, cross-source comparison, and thematic interpretation. The synthesis results indicate that Indonesian Language provides tools for receptive and productive literacy; Civic Education (PPKn) offers moral, civic, and ethical orientation; while Social Studies (IPS) provides a context for social inquiry that fosters empathy, cooperation, and responsibility. The formulated model consists of six phases: text and theme orientation, critical reading, civic dialogue, social inquiry, collaborative action, and reflective consolidation. This article concludes that cross-curricular integration in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah can simultaneously strengthen literacy and character if supported by contextual planning, formative assessment, and a consistent madrasah literacy culture.</p>

INTRODUCTION

Basic education serves as the primary foundation for developing students' literacy, character, and social skills. At the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) level, literacy cannot be narrowly understood as merely the ability to read texts, but also as the ability to comprehend information, interpret meaning, evaluate ideas, communicate opinions, and apply knowledge to make decisions in daily life. Therefore, strengthening literacy among MI students must be integrated into holistic learning, not treated as a separate, supplementary activity detached from classroom instruction.

Indonesia's literacy challenges remain quite serious. The 2022 PISA report indicates that Indonesian students' reading performance remains below the OECD average, and only about a quarter of students achieve at least Level 2 in reading proficiency (OECD, 2023). This situation indicates that literacy instruction in elementary schools and



madrasahs needs to be directed toward activities that are more meaningful, contextual, and encourage active student engagement. Literacy cannot be built solely through routine reading exercises but must be developed through activities such as text comprehension, discussion, writing, reasoning, and connecting reading materials to students' social experiences.

National curriculum policy directions also provide space for more integrated learning. Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Regulation No. 12 of 2024, subsequently amended by Ministry of Elementary and Secondary Education Regulation No. 13 of 2025, emphasizes the importance of a curriculum that is adaptive, relevant to advancements in science and technology, and attentive to the socio-cultural diversity of students. Within this framework, learning is not only directed toward mastering subject matter but also toward strengthening competencies, character, and meaningful learning experiences. For MI (Madrasah Ibtidaiyah), this direction is crucial because madrasahs have a dual mandate: to develop academic skills while simultaneously fostering students' moral character and social responsibility.

Theoretically, this article is based on three foundations. First, curriculum integration theory posits that learning experiences become more meaningful when knowledge is not taught in isolation but is connected through themes, issues, and activities relevant to students' lives (Beane, 1997). Second, literacy is understood as a social practice involving reading, writing, dialogue, interpretation, and the creation of meaning within specific contexts (Kern, 2000). Third, character education concerns not only moral knowledge but also moral feelings and moral actions manifested in habits and actual behavior (Lickona, 1991).

In the context of MI, the integration of learning is of strong urgency because students not only need to understand the subject matter but also learn to use that knowledge to act courteously, responsibly, and with care, and to live together in diversity. Indonesian Language, Civic Education (PPKn), and Social Studies (IPS) are three subjects that have strong substantive overlaps. Indonesian Language develops reading, listening, speaking, and writing skills. Civic Education (PPKn) guides students toward the values of Pancasila, rights and obligations, shared rules, deliberation, and responsibility. Social Studies (IPS) presents the context of community life, diversity, the environment, simple economic activities, and social issues surrounding students.

A number of studies over the past five years have shown that these three subjects contribute to strengthening literacy and character, although they are often still discussed separately. In Indonesian language learning, character values can be internalized through texts, language ethics, and listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills (Jamjam, 2022). In Civic Education (PPKn) instruction, character education is central to learning as it directly relates to values, norms, responsibility, and students' civic practices (Pertwi et al., 2021). Meanwhile, Social Studies (IPS) instruction plays a role in fostering empathy,

social concern, cooperation, and understanding of community life (Iyan et al., 2022; Sari & Faizin, 2023).

At the institutional level, madrasah literacy culture is also a crucial factor. Strengthening elementary madrasah students' literacy requires consistent practice, an engaging reading environment, teacher support, madrasah policies, and sustained activities (Aini et al., 2025; Rahman & Baihaqi, 2024). Marmoah et al. (2022) emphasize that a school's literacy culture will be stronger if managed through consistent planning, organization, implementation, and evaluation. In the context of madrasahs, Zarkasi et al. (2025) demonstrate that the integration of literacy-based knowledge can help connect academic domains, Islamic values, and student competency development in a more holistic manner.

Nevertheless, a review of previous research reveals several gaps. First, studies on Indonesian Language, Civic Education (PPKn), and Social Studies (IPS) are still largely conducted in isolation. Second, literacy is often narrowly defined as the habit of reading, whereas it encompasses the ability to comprehend, reason, engage in dialogue, write, and generate meaning. Third, character education is often positioned as general advice or habit formation, rather than being designed as an active, reflective, and problem-based learning experience. Fourth, the context of MI, which draws strength from religious culture, habit formation, and community closeness, has not yet been fully translated into a systematic cross-curricular learning model.

Based on these gaps, this article aims to: (1) map the conceptual contributions of Indonesian Language, Civic Education (PPKn), and Social Studies (IPS) instruction toward strengthening literacy and character among MI students; (2) synthesize relevant research and policy documents from the past five years; and (3) formulate a six-phase integrative model for Indonesian Language, Civics Education, and Social Studies instruction as a conceptual framework for MI teachers in designing, implementing, and assessing literacy and character education.

METHOD

This article employs a qualitative, literature-based approach with a conceptual synthesis design. This design was chosen because the focus of the study is not to test the effectiveness of an intervention in the field, but rather to construct a conceptual framework for learning integration based on theory, research findings, and relevant policy documents. The literature review in this article is positioned as an analytical process to identify patterns of relationships between concepts, assess the contributions of previous research, and formulate propositions for a cross-curricular learning model.

Source searches were conducted via Google Scholar, GARUDA, and official documents from educational institutions. The keywords used include "learning integration," "elementary school Indonesian language," "elementary school Civic Education," "elementary school Social Studies," "Madrasah Ibtidaiyah literacy,"

“Madrasah Ibtidaiyah character,” “elementary school character education,” and “Madrasah literacy culture.” Prior research was prioritized within the 2021–2025 timeframe to align with the latest educational policies and practices. Classic theoretical references, such as Beane (1997) , Kern (2000) , and Lickona (1991) , were selectively retained as they serve as a conceptual foundation that remains relevant.

The selection process was conducted in several stages. The first stage yielded 36 initial documents related to literacy, character, integrated learning, Indonesian language, Civic Education (PPKn), Social Studies (IPS), Islamic Elementary School (MI), or elementary school. The second stage involved reading the titles, abstracts, and research focuses, leaving 24 documents. The third stage involved a more in-depth reading of the content to assess direct relevance to the integration of literacy and character education. From this process, 17 core sources were identified and used as the basis for conceptual synthesis.

Table 1. Selection criteria for study sources

Selection Aspects	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Topic Relevance	Discusses literacy, character, integrated learning, Indonesian language, Civic Education, Social Studies, Islamic Elementary School, or elementary school.	Not directly related to the focus on literacy and character or learning in elementary education.
Timeframe	The latest empirical and conceptual articles are prioritized from 2021–2025.	Older sources without theoretical or conceptual contributions that are still relevant.
Educational context	Based on MI/SD or having clear implications for elementary learning.	Focused on other levels without conceptual relevance to MI/SD.
Conceptual contribution	Contains findings, arguments, or models that can be synthesized into learning integration.	Is duplicative, too general, or does not provide learning implications.
Availability of information	The source’s identity, focus, findings, and implications can be adequately identified.	Bibliographic data or the content of the source is insufficient for responsible analysis.

The research instrument consists of a data extraction matrix containing the source’s identity, the study’s purpose or focus, the educational institution’s context, key concepts, main findings, and implications for learning integration. This matrix is used to ensure that the synthesis is not merely a summary of the sources but generates relationships between concepts that can be formulated into a learning model.

Data analysis is conducted through five stages. First, source reduction is performed by eliminating documents that do not align with the study’s focus. Second, initial coding is applied to main themes, such as the contribution of Indonesian Language, the contribution of Civic Education (PPKn), the contribution of Social Studies (IPS), madrasah literacy culture, character education, and assessment. Third, adjacent codes are grouped into conceptual categories. Fourth, a comparison of sources was conducted to identify patterns of similarity, differences, and gaps in the study. Fifth, the results of the

comparison were interpreted into propositions for an integrative learning model. To ensure the accuracy of the interpretation, the author conducted a cross-check between theoretical sources, research articles, and policy documents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Synthesis of Previous Research and Research Position

The synthesis of sources indicates that strengthening literacy and character in MI students cannot be sufficiently achieved through the addition of reading activities or the implementation of standalone moral. Such strengthening must be embedded at the core of learning through activities that connect text, values, and social context. Within a curriculum integration framework, learning experiences become more meaningful when students not only receive content but also analyze issues, discuss values, observe social realities, create works, and reflect on their actions.

Previous research has identified four main trends. First, every subject contributes to literacy and character, but implementation remains largely sectoral. Second, literacy is still often understood as merely reading, whereas it encompasses the ability to comprehend, evaluate, communicate, and generate meaning. Third, character education is still often conveyed through advice or general habits; it is not always designed as a process of thinking and acting in concrete situations. Fourth, MI has unique potential through religious culture, habits, community closeness, and Islamic values, but this potential has not yet been widely developed into an operational learning integration design.

Table 2. Synthesis of representative sources in the development of an integrative model

Source	Focus	Key Findings/Contributions	Implications for the Integrative Model
Yulianti et al. (2021)	School literacy and a love of reading	Literacy habits can foster reading interest and a love of reading among elementary school students.	Literacy programs need to be integrated with classroom activities and madrasah routines.
Pertiwi et al. (2021)	Civics and Character Education	Character values can be integrated into Civic Education indicators, activities, and assessments.	Civics serves as a space for clarifying values, rules, rights, obligations, and ethical decisions.
Jamjam (2022)	Indonesian Language and the Internalization of Values	Language skills, language ethics, and meaningful texts can support character development.	Indonesian serves as the gateway to receptive and productive literacy in an integrative model.
Iyan et al. (2022)	Social Studies and Social Character	Social Studies strengthens empathy, compassion, cooperation, and understanding of the social context of community life ().	Social Studies provides a real-world social context for literacy and character education.

Source	Focus	Key Findings/Contributions	Implications for the Integrative Model
Marmoah et al. (2022)	School literacy culture management	Literacy culture is stronger when managed through consistent planning, implementation, and evaluation.	Subject integration needs to be supported by the madrasah's literacy ecosystem.
Aini et al. (2025)	Strengthening Reading Literacy in MI	Literacy programs that are engaging and relatable to students can increase reading engagement in MI.	The model should utilize texts and activities appropriate to the world of elementary school children.
Zarkasi et al. (2025)	Integration of Madrasah-Based Literacy Knowledge	Literacy can serve as a bridge for integrating knowledge, values, and Islamic contexts in madrasahs.	The model needs to provide space for madrasah religious and cultural values in a contextual manner.
Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Regulation No. 12 of 2024; Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education Regulation No. 13 of 2025	Curriculum policy framework	The curriculum is designed to build competencies, character, and learning relevant to socio-cultural diversity.	The model must align with contextual learning, essential content, and character building.

Table 2 indicates that previous research has provided key components for developing an integrative model, but few have explicitly integrated Indonesian Language, Civic Education (PPKn), and Social Studies (IPS) into a single learning pathway. Therefore, the purpose of this article is not only to summarize previous research but also to establish conceptual relationships between literacy, civic values, social context, and madrasah culture within a learning model that can serve as an initial reference for MI teachers.

Conceptual Contributions of Indonesian Language, Civic Education, and Social Studies

Indonesian serves as the primary means of strengthening literacy. Through activities such as reading, listening, dialoguing, writing responses, summarizing, and presenting ideas, students learn to understand information while organizing their thoughts. From the perspective of literacy as a social practice, language proficiency extends beyond technical skills; it becomes a tool for constructing meaning-, articulating reasons, responding to others' opinions, and reflecting on experiences. Therefore, Indonesian provides receptive and productive literacy tools that enable character values to be discussed, written about, and accounted for.



Civics Education (PPKn) serves as a normative and civic anchor. Through PPKn, students learn to understand rights and obligations, shared rules, the values of Pancasila, diversity, deliberation, responsibility, and concern for others. Without the PPKn dimension, literacy integration can easily be limited to technical reading and writing skills. PPKn ensures that the information students read, discuss, and write is directed toward moral considerations, civic attitudes, and actions aligned with shared values.

Social Studies provides a real-world social context so that literacy and values are not abstract concepts. Through Social Studies, students learn to connect texts with community life, the environment surrounding the madrasah, their parents' occupations, simple economic activities, cultural diversity, environmental hygiene, and local social issues. Such contexts allow values to be observed, analyzed, discussed, and put into action. Thus, IPS serves as a bridge between the world of texts and students' social world.

These three contributions complement one another. Indonesian Language provides the tools to understand and express ideas; Civic Education (PPKn) provides guidance on values and ethical decisions; Social Studies (IPS) provides a social arena to test meanings and actions. Integration becomes strong when teachers not only place all three within a single theme but also design a learning sequence that guides students from reading texts, understanding issues, weighing values, observing reality, producing work, to reflecting on behavior.

A Six-Phase Integrative Model for the Learning of Indonesian Language, Civic Education, and Social Studies in Elementary Madrasah

Based on this synthesis, this article formulates a six-phase integrative model for the learning of Indonesian Language, Civic Education, and Social Studies to strengthen literacy and character among MI students. This model is thematic, text-based, value-oriented, and linked to social issues relevant to students' lives. This model is not intended as a rigid procedure but rather as a framework that teachers can adapt according to the class, theme, learning outcomes, and madrasah culture.

This six-phase integrative model consists of six phases: text and theme orientation, critical reading, civic dialogue, social inquiry, collaborative action, and reflective reinforcement. These six phases are designed so that literacy and character development do not occur in isolation but are integrated into a single sequence of learning experiences.

Table 3. Six-Phase Integrative Model for Indonesian Language, Civic Education, and Social Studies Learning to Strengthen Literacy and Character in Elementary Madrasah Students

Phase	Core Activities	Subject Contributions	Literacy and Character Outcomes	Formative Assessment Indicators
Text and Theme Orientation	Teachers present texts, images, stories, or social issues that are relevant to students' lives.	Indonesian activates vocabulary; Civic Education introduces values; Social Studies introduces social context.	Curiosity, readiness to read, attention to the theme.	Students are able to identify the theme, predict the text's content, and connect the theme to prior experiences.
Critical reading	Students read or listen to texts, identify main ideas, key information, word meanings, and the text's message.	Indonesian is central to text comprehension, inference, response, and linguistic reasoning.	Reading comprehension, attention to detail, listening skills, and initial thinking.	Students are able to identify explicit information, summarize content, and provide simple text-based responses.
Civic dialogue	Students discuss rules, rights and responsibilities, appropriate attitudes, and moral reasons related to the text's content.	Civics is dominant in clarifying the values of Pancasila, responsibility, tolerance, discipline, and deliberation.	Honesty, responsibility, respect for others' opinions, and the courage to express opinions politely.	Students are able to express opinions with reasons, listen to peers, and choose attitudes aligned with shared values.
Social Inquiry	Students observe their environment, conduct simple interviews, identify issues, or compare local social conditions.	Social Studies is central to the analysis of community life, social relations, diversity, the environment, and problem-solving.	Empathy, cooperation, social awareness, and contextual critical thinking.	Students are able to connect text content with environmental facts and explain social issues in simple terms.
Collaborative Action	Students create posters, brief reports, reflective texts, presentations, simple campaigns, or role-play.	Indonesian language and literature strengthen the text; Civic Education provides a moral compass; Social Studies provides contextual content.	Writing, speaking, collaboration, creativity, leadership, and responsibility.	Students are able to produce clear literacy products through collaboration, work together, and demonstrate responsibility within a group.



Phase	Core Activities	Subject Contributions	Literacy and Character Outcomes	Formative Assessment Indicators
Reflective reinforcement	Teachers and students reflect on learning and connect it to madrasah practices.	The three subjects are integrated through reflective journals, feedback, and behavioral follow-up.	Internalization of values, commitment to behavior, and a culture of sustainable literacy.	Students are able to identify the values learned and formulate concrete actions they can take.

The model in Table 3 shows that the best integration occurs when teachers choose themes that are close to the students' world, such as madrasah environmental cleanliness, living harmoniously in diversity, mutual cooperation, traditional markets, energy conservation, or caring for friends. These themes are then developed through texts appropriate to the students' reading level. In the orientation phase, teachers build students' attention and initial experiences. In the critical reading phase, students are trained to understand the text's content carefully. Following that, the civic dialogue phase guides students to discuss values, rules, rights, responsibilities, and appropriate attitudes.

The social inquiry phase is a key point because students do not merely discuss values in the abstract but connect them to real life. For example, on the theme of school environmental cleanliness, students can read descriptive texts about a clean environment, discuss the responsibilities of the school community in Civic Education, and then observe trash spots around the classroom or schoolyard through Social Studies. Through this process, students not only comprehend the text but also learn to connect information with social action.

The collaborative action phase transforms literacy products into both evidence of learning and a medium for character development. Students can create posters encouraging cleanliness, write brief reports on their observations, devise slogans, present discussion outcomes, or role-play a class meeting. These products should be assessed not only for linguistic accuracy but also for clarity of ideas, relevance of values, cooperation, responsibility, and social awareness. Thus, assessment measures not only cognitive outcomes but also the literacy process and manifestations of character.

The reflective consolidation phase serves to connect learning with madrasah culture. Teachers can use simple reflection journals, class agreements, reading corners, duty rotations, the practice of greetings, queuing, discipline, and madrasah literacy programs as follow-up activities. At this point, character education does not remain merely a slogan but becomes a habit that is observed, given feedback on, and consistently reinforced.

From a pedagogical perspective, this model has several implications. First, lesson planning should begin with shared themes and integrative objectives, rather than a list of standalone topics. Second, elementary school teachers need to select texts that are



appropriate for students' developmental levels, rich in values, and relevant to their social context. Third, formative assessment must integrate aspects of literacy, understanding of values, and observable behavior. Fourth, madrasah culture needs to be linked to intracurricular activities so that character building occurs consistently. Fifth, this model aligns with the direction of the Merdeka Curriculum, which provides space for contextual, collaborative, and character-strengthening learning.

Nevertheless, this model has limitations because it was formulated through conceptual synthesis and has not yet been empirically tested in MI classrooms. The number of core sources is also limited, and most originate from the Indonesian context. Therefore, further research is needed to test the feasibility, effectiveness, and variations in the implementation of this model across different madrasah characteristics, including urban and rural madrasahs, those with strong literacy facilities, and those with limited learning resources.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the conceptual synthesis, the integration of Indonesian Language, Civic Education (PPKn), and Social Studies (IPS) has a strong foundation for strengthening MI students' literacy and character in an integrated manner. Indonesian Language provides receptive and productive literacy skills through reading, listening, speaking, and writing activities. Civic Education (PPKn) provides orientation on values, morals, citizenship, and ethical decision-making. Social Studies (IPS) provides a social context so that the values and information students learn become concrete, observable, and can be manifested in daily actions.

The main findings of this article indicate that teaching practices still tend to be fragmented, the understanding of literacy is often narrowly confined to reading activities, and character education is not always designed as an active, reflective, and contextual learning experience. Therefore, this article proposes a six-phase integrative model: text and theme orientation, critical reading, civic dialogue, social inquiry, collaborative action, and reflective reinforcement. This six-phase integrative model positions the text as the entry point to literacy, civic values as the moral compass, the social context as the space for inquiry, and madrasah culture as the foundation for character development.

The recommendation from this article is that MI teachers need to develop thematic lesson plans that connect literacy outcomes, character values, and social issues in the students' surrounding environment. Madrasahs need to strengthen the literacy ecosystem through habit formation, reading facilities, teacher role modeling, and consistent programs. Future research should empirically test this model to obtain evidence regarding its feasibility, effectiveness, and the factors supporting and hindering its implementation in various MI contexts.



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