



The Utilization of Museums as a Contextual Learning Tool for History Education for Students of SMA Labschool Palu

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ABSTRACT

The utilization of museums as a contextual learning tool has significant potential to improve the quality of history education. This research shows that museums not only serve as places for storing historical artifacts but also function as interactive and contextual learning media for history education. Through museum visits, students can engage directly with the collections, deepening their understanding of historical and cultural contexts. This study aims to explore how museums can be utilized as an effective learning resource in history education, particularly at SMA Labschool Palu. The research employs a descriptive qualitative method. The results indicate that museum visits increase students' interest and engagement. However, challenges such as lack of promotion and limited access to museums hinder the optimal utilization of museums as a learning resource

INTRODUCTION

Heri Susanto (2014:8) stated, "History is a science with a great mission to improve human civilization; history provides many lessons about important concepts for facing future life." In line with Heri Susanto, the author believes that history is truly a *science that repairs humanity* or a discipline that improves human civilization. History contains various important concepts born from experience, which can serve as lessons for future life. History also brings absolute enlightenment on how to understand humanity in the context of the past to make informed decisions in the future. Therefore, history is not as simple as we might think. It is not limited to portraying historical figures alone—such a perspective is conventional history. Today, the field of history has advanced significantly, examining various dimensions of human life, including politics, law, religion, society, culture, and economics. Consequently, history should be viewed as an effort to raise individual and societal awareness to build a nation that is competitive with a high-quality society.

Moreover, history is a discipline with significant value in shaping character and strengthening national identity. It provides various insights into life values. Historical events can evoke emotions, ideals, and values, giving life meaning. History serves as an educational medium for understanding society and its culture. Therefore, history teaching should be aimed at the internalization of values that foster critical thinking and causality. Students should be given the freedom to develop critical thinking skills from an early age.

Although history teaching models have developed and advanced, the reality in the field still shows that many history teaching systems in schools are often suboptimal (Hariyono, 1995:143). In some schools, there is still the notion that history is an easy subject, and as a result, some history teachers lack a background in history education. Teaching experiences tend to focus on the mere transfer of knowledge and information from teachers to students. Success in mastering knowledge and information is often assessed through tests that emphasize memorization.

Ultimately, this approach to learning becomes less meaningful, as it tends to prioritize curriculum content over encouraging students to critically and comprehensively analyze historical events. The cognitive-focused development of history lessons often leads to student boredom. To stimulate student enthusiasm, variation in teaching methods is necessary. The knowledge-transfer model, which relies heavily on lectures, should be minimized, and students should be given opportunities to engage in discussions, field studies, research and discovery, socio-dramas, or other activities that allow them to delve deeper into the subject matter. One approach developed in teaching models is the contextual approach. For the reasons mentioned above, conducting outreach activities on the use of museums as a contextual learning tool for history subjects at SMA Labschool Palu is important. It educates teachers that history learning should not be focused solely on memorization and knowledge transfer but should foster a lasting impression of learning through contextual education using museums. The

tendency toward rote learning in history education is also related to our more pragmatic, cognitively-focused education system, which emphasizes content mastery and is therefore intellectualistic (Sardiman, 2017:13). Thus, the contextual approach aims to make learning more productive and meaningful.

Contextual history learning is essentially a learning process that involves something concrete or outside the realm of abstraction so that learning can be seen, felt, and observed. In Central Sulawesi, there is the Provincial Museum. As a public institution, museums have a dual role as both a tourist and educational resource. Museums are established for educational, research, and recreational purposes.

In a book titled *Museum, Media, Message*, it is stated that "it was beginning to seem as though conferences three years later devoted to issues of communication in museums and galleries would probably be pretty topical" (Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, 1999:1). This book illustrates how, since the 1990s, museums and galleries have addressed communication issues, clearly showing that museums can serve as contextual learning tools, especially for history education. Setiawan Sabana (2008:5) explains that a museum is "a place where various fields of study converge and collaborate synergistically to form a museum that can provide cultural references to society." This perspective broadens the understanding that a museum is essentially a complex contextual learning medium because it encompasses various fields of study, especially history.

Furthermore, Muharram (in Depdikbud, 1993:23) explains that museums also store objects and documents from all aspects deemed important in human life. Therefore, using museums as contextual learning tools is rich in historical value because the various relics housed within them come to life and spark the imagination of students who view them firsthand. Museums always present a strong sense of knowledge and history. The wealth of knowledge can be derived from the museum's collections, ranging from biological, archaeological, numismatic, and historical artifacts, all of which can be used for the development of knowledge. This type of learning opens up a broader dimension, where students think critically without limits, in contrast to learning that is focused only on books as a source of information. In museums, students will directly observe historical objects described in their textbooks, providing them with tangible knowledge as well.

METHODOLOGY

The research method focuses on utilizing museums as contextual learning tools, adopting a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of how students from SMA Labschool Palu perceive and experience museum-based learning. This qualitative method is ideal for exploring the interactions between students and historical artifacts, as well as how these experiences contribute to their comprehension of historical events. Data collection methods include interviews, observations, and document analysis. Interviews with students provide direct insights into their reflections on museum visits, allowing them to articulate how the environment influences their learning. Additionally, teachers' perspectives on how museum visits are

integrated into the curriculum offer further depth to the analysis. Observations capture students' behaviors and interactions during museum visits, offering valuable data on their level of engagement with exhibits. These observations help reveal which types of displays interactive, visual, or auditory resonate most with students and how their behavior in the museum setting compares to classroom learning. Document analysis involves reviewing learning materials and museum resources, assessing how well these align with educational objectives. This process is essential for evaluating whether museums effectively reinforce historical content taught in classrooms and how well teachers prepare students for these experiences. The research also examines challenges, such as the accessibility of museums and the relevance of exhibits to the school curriculum. Additionally, it explores opportunities presented by museum-based learning, including the potential for enhanced student engagement, critical thinking development, and collaborative learning. The study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of museum-based contextual learning in history education.

DISCUSSION

Results of PKM Implementation

The community service activity, funded by the DIPA of the Faculty through the 2024 FKIP UNTAD Competitive Community Service Program Scheme, was carried out at SMA Labschool Palu over two days: August 9 (observation) and August 16, 2024 (implementation). The service team consisted of four lecturers and three students that played a crucial role in administrative support and assisting the execution of the service activities.

The service was attended by 50 participants, including history teachers and students who were actively involved in discussions and observation sessions. The first day, August 9, 2024, focused on observing and gaining deeper insights into the role of museums in the learning process. In this session, participants were encouraged to observe and discuss how museums could serve as authentic and interactive learning sources, capable of bringing history lessons to life in classrooms. The observation was crucial in providing participants with a firsthand understanding of the museum's potential as an educational tool. On the second day of implementation, August 16, 2024, the activity began at 8:00 AM WITA with an opening speech from the Vice Principal for Student Affairs at SMA Labschool Palu, who expressed appreciation and hope for the effective implementation of museum-based learning at the school. Following this, the lecturers delivered their presentations.

The first presentation was delivered the significance of museums in education, particularly in teaching history. He emphasized that museums are not merely places to store artifacts but serve as rich learning resources that offer students a direct experience of history and culture. Museums allow students to see, touch, and experience historical artifacts firsthand, making history lessons more vivid and meaningful. Next, the presentation is on the importance of contextual learning. He explained that contextual learning is highly relevant in history education because it connects the material taught with students' real-life

experiences. By using a contextual approach, students not only understand theoretical content but also relate it to their daily lives. Museums play a key role in bridging the often-abstract concepts of history with concrete experiences accessible to students. Followed with a discussion on the concept of contextual learning through the use of museums. She highlighted the importance of teachers being able to creatively use museums as interactive learning media, not just for providing information. Another speakers shared the specific examples of how teachers could use museum artifacts to explain particular historical events, such as assigning small research projects where students investigate artifacts directly at the museum. In the final session the material that presented on teaching strategies for using museums as a resource for history education. She emphasized that to maximize the educational potential of museums, teachers must be creative in designing methods and strategies. One recommended approach was project-based learning, where students explore museums and prepare reports or presentations on their findings. This approach not only enhances students' understanding of historical content but also fosters critical thinking and communication skills.

After the presentations, the activity continued with a highly interactive Q&A session. Participants raised various questions and arguments about how to build engaging, museum-based history lessons that were contextual and enjoyable for students. Some teachers voiced concerns about the limited access to museums in their areas and asked for alternative solutions. The service team responded by suggesting the use of technology, such as virtual museum tours, to overcome physical access barriers. Participants also inquired about the appropriate models, methods, media, and strategies for applying museum-based contextual learning in history education. The service team provided thorough explanations, offering examples of project-based learning, problem-based learning, and the use of visual and digital media in teaching history. They emphasized the importance of teachers continuously evaluating and adjusting their strategies to meet the needs and characteristics of their students.

The activity concluded at 3:00 PM WITA with closing remarks from the service team leader who expressed hope that museum-based history learning would continue to develop and be implemented in schools, especially at SMA Labschool Palu. In the next phase, the service team committed to ongoing support and monitoring through remote mentoring. This follow-up aims to assist history teachers in implementing the museum-based contextual learning strategies sustainably. This community service activity not only provided new insights to the participants on the importance of museums in history education but also encouraged teachers to be more creative in developing interactive and engaging teaching methods. As a result of this activity, it is expected that history teachers at SMA Labschool Palu will better utilize the potential of museums to make history lessons both informative and enjoyable for students.

Discussion of PKM Activities

The community service activities were carried out smoothly and successfully, with participants, including history teachers and students, showing enthusiasm. This was evident in the number of questions and feedback

during the discussion session. The materials presented on museums as a contextual learning medium were well received, as the participants recognized the need for such approaches to improve the quality of history education. The presentation of the museum-related materials was conducted according to the pre-designed proposal, covering the following topics:

1. The importance of museums in history education
2. The importance of contextual learning
3. Challenges in history education
4. The benefits and optimization of museums as a medium for history learning

Referring to the importance of contextual learning and the challenges in history education, the current model of history teaching has advanced significantly. However, in practice, many history teaching systems in schools remain suboptimal (Hariyono, 1995:143). In some schools, history is still considered an easy subject, leading to some history teachers lacking proper educational backgrounds in the subject. Teaching tends to be focused on the transfer of knowledge and information, with success measured by memorization-heavy tests.

As a result, history education often becomes less meaningful, with learning activities prioritizing curriculum coverage over encouraging students to critically and fully examine historical events. The cognitive emphasis in history education tends to bore students. To inspire them, there must be variation in teaching methods. Pure lectures should be minimized, and students should be given opportunities to discuss, conduct field studies, research, participate in role-plays, or engage in other activities that encourage deeper learning. One of the developed approaches is the contextual learning model.

Thus, the implementation of socialization activities on the use of museums as a contextual learning tool for history lessons at SMA Labschool Palu is crucial. The findings indicate that the community service project titled "Museum as a Contextual Learning Tool" significantly contributed to increasing students' interest in history. Additionally, the contextualization of history education through museum visits offers an alternative to creating engaging and enjoyable learning experiences.

Evaluation of PKM Activities

Evaluation is a systematic process used to assess the effectiveness, efficiency, and impact of a program or activity. The purpose of the evaluation is to determine how well the activity achieved its objectives and to identify areas for improvement. There are two stages of evaluation: process evaluation and outcome evaluation.

1. Process Evaluation

After the socialization event, the next step is to identify the achievement of the material presented. This can be assessed by the level of understanding that students have about the importance of contextual learning, especially in history lessons. Students have begun showing interest in visiting museums to gain contextual learning experiences, making the learning process more meaningful.

2. Outcome Evaluation

Outcome evaluation is conducted after the socialization event by the service team. The goal is to assess the extent to which the team succeeded in instilling the importance of museums as a contextual learning medium, particularly for history lessons. This can be observed by students' increased visits to museums to seek information and gain a deeper understanding of the history lessons presented there.

CONCLUSION

This community service activity aimed to provide students with an understanding of the museum as a contextual learning tool. The implementation of the activity went smoothly and successfully, and it resulted in highly satisfying outcomes in line with the set objectives. The participants were very enthusiastic, asking numerous questions and providing positive feedback during the socialization event. Museums are a public resource that can be effectively utilized as a learning tool, particularly for contextual learning practices. With the museum serving as a learning medium, the learning process becomes more meaningful and easier for students to grasp.

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