



The implementation of social empathy values in social studies learning at junior high schools

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Abstract

One of the challenges identified in education is that many teachers still have limited comprehension of the concept of character education and the practical methods for applying it in the classroom, including in social studies lessons. When character education is not sufficiently stimulated during learning activities, students risk failing to recognize and develop the positive character traits expected to emerge, one of which is social empathy. This research examines the strategies employed by teachers in applying social empathy indicators, as well as to analyze the percentage of implementation for each indicator within social studies instruction. The study adopted a survey method with a descriptive qualitative design. The participants consisted of 23 teachers representing all junior high schools in Madiun City. Data collection was conducted through a Likert-scale questionnaire measuring seven indicators of social empathy, complemented by interviews to enrich the findings. The results reveal that teachers generally integrate social empathy indicators by linking lesson content to real-life contexts. Indicators of social empathy categorized as high include Affective Response, Self-Other Awareness, and Perspective Taking. In contrast, indicators placed in the sufficient category are Affective Mentalizing, Emotion Regulation, and Macro Perspective Taking.

The implementation of social empathy values in social studies learning at junior high schools in Madiun city

Meanwhile, Understanding Context falls into the moderate category. The findings of this study imply that teachers should place greater emphasis on strengthening two specific indicators of social empathy that remain underdeveloped, namely Contextual Understanding of Systemic Barriers (CU) and Macro Self-Other Awareness or Perspective Taking (MSP).

Keywords: *values; social empathy; social studies learning.*

Received: 28-12-2024; Accepted: 26-09-2025; Published: 30-10-2025.

INTRODUCTION

Exploring the definition of character education further reveals that it is related to several crucial aspects. Understanding character education encompasses a number of important elements. Komalasari & Didin (2022) explain that character is related to moral strength that has positive connotations, not neutral ones. Thus, character education is interpreted as an effort to shape attitudes and behavior patterns that originate from good moral dimensions. In practice, character education emphasizes the habit of positive habits so that students can behave in accordance with prevailing values and norms (Sari & Faizin, 2023). Values and norms form the primary foundation for human behavior, aligning with universal values (Roni & Jariyah, 2020). Positive behavior is a character trait that must be cultivated through various efforts, one of which is through the implementation of character education in schools.

Ideally, character education should be introduced early on, starting from elementary school to secondary school (Sunarno et al., 2024). However, its implementation in schools faces a number of obstacles. One of the main obstacles comes from teachers. Many teachers still lack an understanding of the concept of character education and how to integrate it into learning (Emiasih, 2011). In line with the results of research by Saputro et al. (2023), it is known that teachers still have limited knowledge and strategies in implementing character education, especially in the aspect of social awareness. The learning methods used are generally still verbal and are not closely related to learning activities that are in line with character values. This is inseparable from time constraints due to the dense curriculum and the demand to achieve academic targets. In addition, character education is often considered an additional task, not an integral part of the learning process. Another obstacle arises in the implementation technique, where teachers often use methods that are not in accordance with the students' level of development. To be effective, methods must be adapted to the stages of children's cognitive development, as emphasized by Vygotsky's cognitive development theory, which emphasizes the role of social, cultural, and environmental interactions in the learning process (Rahmelia & Wijayanti, 2025). Therefore, teachers' understanding of character education and how to apply it is very important, considering that teachers play a role not only in transferring knowledge but also in transferring values. Teachers also have the function of motivating, mobilizing, channeling, and directing students' attitudes and behaviors (Panjaitan et al., 2024). Thus, a deep

understanding of character education and its implementation techniques is the main foundation for teachers to achieve the goals of character education in schools.

Apart from the teacher factor, character education issues also arise from within the students themselves. Fathoni (2024) revealed that character problems among students are reflected in the prevalence of bullying cases in schools. This phenomenon of bullying is closely related to the suboptimal internalization of character education. In addition, external factors such as promiscuity, gadget use, the negative impact of television programs, and the influence of family and school also shape students' character (Naashiruddin & Junanto, 2023). These conditions illustrate the weak moral quality of students. Freud et al., (1974) explains that the structure of the human personality is divided into the id, ego, and superego, which influence individual behavior. If these internal factors are not in harmony with positive character values, the process of internalizing character education in students will be hampered. Without adequate stimulation through learning at school, students are at risk of not understanding and not having the positive character that should be obtained through daily learning activities. In fact, the integration of character values in the curriculum plays an important role in shaping students' morality and attitudes for the better (Khozin et al., 2021). Furthermore, the application of character education values can facilitate students in the learning process because these values contain positive elements that support the creation of more effective learning experiences (Lestari et al., 2022). Based on this, it can be emphasized that the integration of character values in learning activities has a strategic position in shaping students' personalities in the school environment.

Character education in schools emphasizes the cultivation of values that are considered essential for students' personal development. These values can be embedded within classroom activities and linked to particular subjects (Lubis et al., 2023). In the context of social studies, for instance, character values can be incorporated by aligning them with the subject matter taught (Afandi, 2011). This perspective is supported by studies highlighting that the integration of character education in schools can effectively take place through social studies (Sari, 2021). Consequently, social studies serve as a strategic medium to convey moral values, ethics, and social responsibility that reflect the realities of society. Overall, Social studies lessons contribute significantly to the goal of shaping students' morality, ethical behavior, and social awareness.

The mission of character education corresponds with the primary objectives of Social Studies, which aim to develop students into responsible citizens equipped with knowledge, skills, and social consciousness beneficial to themselves, their communities, and the wider nation. To realize these goals, the learning process extends beyond cognitive knowledge and psychomotor skills, encompassing moral or affective dimensions as well (Iyan et al., 2022). From an empirical standpoint, character education aligns closely with Indonesia's national educational aims. Nevertheless, Devi (2021) points out that although the current orientation of education in Indonesia emphasizes character formation, schools tend to prioritize the

The implementation of social empathy values in social studies learning at junior high schools in Madiun city

acquisition of general knowledge and social skills rather than fostering social empathy. In fact, the vision, mission, and goals of education should be consistently implemented in daily classroom practices. Hence, character education holds a crucial position to be integrated into learning, especially to nurture empathy.

Research findings also suggest that adolescents' empathy skills, particularly among students, have shown a tendency to decline over time (Lestari et al., 2020). Such skills are further shaped by an individual's intellectual grasp of empathy-related values (Suprayogi & Rachmawati, 2022). A key challenge in education today lies in the limited incorporation of character values into classroom activities, which results in students displaying low levels of empathy in their everyday interactions. Therefore, teachers are expected to design Social Studies strategies that strengthen students' character, with a particular focus on enhancing empathy (Cahyo et al., 2023).

Empathy, however, does not emerge automatically but is cultivated through a developmental process. Cooper, (2011) defines this process scientifically as the capacity to share in another's feelings, rooted in chemical mechanisms within the human body. Furthermore, empathy is strongly connected to social competence, where higher social skills tend to correlate with greater empathy sensitivity, enabling individuals to build relationships that make others feel comfortable. For students, empathy plays a vital role in shaping them into moral and thoughtful individuals who can positively contribute to society. In practical learning, empathy may be nurtured through emotional synchronization that occurs between teachers and students. Such synchronization is fostered when classroom activities allow teacher-provided stimuli to elicit meaningful responses from learners. When teachers weave social aspects like empathy into their lessons, stronger connections with students can be established. Thus, teachers occupy a pivotal role in cultivating empathy, embedding it into students' daily learning experiences (Fransiska et al., 2023).

Empathy is classified into two main categories, namely interpersonal empathy and social empathy (Segal, 2018). Social empathy is built on several important components, namely Affective Response (AR), Affective Mentalizing (AM), Self-Other Awareness (SOA), Perspective Taking (PT), Emotion Regulation (ER), Contextual Understanding of Systemic Barriers (CU), and Macro Self-Other Awareness or Perspective Taking (MSP). In the context of social empathy, interpersonal empathy is automatically included. This is because social empathy indicators are an extension of interpersonal empathy indicators. Aspects that fall under the category of interpersonal empathy include AR, AM, SOA, PT, and ER. When these five indicators are combined with CU and MSP, the entire framework of social empathy is formed.

Interpersonal empathy arises through subconscious reflection on behaviors we have observed or performed in the past. In contrast, social empathy is a way of thinking that requires a person to truly delve into context and meaning, so that it does not stop at simply understanding the circumstances of others. Because its scope is broader, social empathy provides individuals with the opportunity to deeply understand the life experiences of various social groups.

Therefore, these two types of empathy have their own components that can be integrated into social studies learning, depending on the extent to which teachers are able to apply them in the classroom. Teachers who possess creativity and innovation usually have a variety of ideas and concepts that can create a meaningful learning process (Supriatna & Maulidah, 2020) . This creativity is an important part of applying social empathy in social studies so that it can become a means for students to develop social sensitivity. Thus, students are expected to be able to practice social empathy in their daily lives. Efforts to foster empathy must essentially involve providing knowledge as well as direct experience. In this way, students can learn to put themselves in other people's shoes and, at the same time, reflect on themselves (Nirmala et al., 2020).

This study focuses on how teachers apply seven indicators of social empathy in the social studies learning process. These indicators are a combination of five interpersonal empathy indicators, namely Affective Response (AR), Affective Mentalizing (AM), Self-Other Awareness (SOA), Perspective Taking (PT), and Emotion Regulation (ER), which are then expanded with two macro-scale indicators, namely Contextual Understanding of Systemic Barriers (CU) and Macro *Self-Other Awareness or Perspective Taking* (MSP). By including these two additional indicators, the scope of this study becomes broader and presents a more comprehensive understanding of social empathy in the context of social studies learning. This connection is important considering that social studies subjects are directly related to the social realities of a diverse society, in terms of religion, ethnicity, culture, social conditions, history, and politics. Therefore, students should not only be trained to have empathy for their own group, but also need to be taught to be able to empathize with other groups that are different from them. For this reason, teachers are required to be able to integrate all aspects of social empathy into social studies learning activities in the classroom.

So far, studies on social studies learning related to empathy are still general in nature. Previous studies have not specifically reviewed the application of social empathy in social studies learning because they have focused more on the interpersonal empathy of students. For example, the effect of social studies learning on interpersonal empathy attitudes using several indicators, such as willingness to listen attentively, ability to see issues from other people's perspectives, sensitivity to others' feelings, responsibility in completing individual tasks, and readiness to accept the consequences of one's actions (Fitriyah & Yasri, 2024). Another difference can be found in the research by Muthohharoh et al. (2023), which used the Value Clarification Technique learning model to measure and instill awareness of interpersonal empathy values in students through an easy-to-understand approach. Meanwhile, Wahyuningsih & Oktavia (2022) applied a conflict resolution model to increase interpersonal empathy in social studies learning. Thus, it is important for educators to design social studies learning that is not only oriented towards mastery of material but also integrates social values that encourage the growth of interpersonal empathy and social awareness. This effort is expected to produce a generation that is caring, sensitive, and responsible towards society

The implementation of social empathy values in social studies learning at junior high schools in Madiun city

(Nasution & Aqilla, 2025). For example, the social studies learning media *Megoak-Goakan* contains elements of cooperation, sportsmanship, and communication between participants that can develop social-emotional skills, including interpersonal empathy, tolerance, and the ability to control emotions (Ardhianasih et al., 2025).

The urgency of research on the application of social empathy indicators in social studies learning is very high, considering that the goal of social studies is not only to convey factual knowledge but also to shape students' character. Based on previous studies, more attention has been given to interpersonal empathy, so teachers need to encourage social empathy in learning activities. Therefore, social studies material should be contextualized with the daily lives of students, especially since junior high school students are in an important phase of social development that is crucial for the formation of social empathy. The integration of social empathy values in social studies learning at the junior high school level can help students understand the social realities of other groups, not only emphasizing similarities but also teaching acceptance of differences. In this case, teachers have a strategic role in fostering students' social empathy through social studies learning.

One of the character values that can be instilled through social studies learning is social empathy. Aprianti et al. (2022) explain that the values in social studies are in line with the norms and culture of Indonesian society, making them easier for students to understand and accept. Through this learning process, students can realize that they are part of a wider social community and have social responsibilities, including developing empathy for different social groups. In line with this, Muslim (2020) emphasizes that the development of students' social competencies through social studies learning can encourage empathetic behavior. This enables students to better understand their social roles in society and foster attitudes of responsibility and social solidarity in their daily lives.

This study aims to identify teachers' techniques in integrating social empathy indicators into social studies learning activities and to determine the percentage of application of each indicator. From an academic perspective, the results of this study are expected to serve as a reference in understanding social studies learning at the junior high school level in Madiun City with an approach that integrates social empathy values. Thus, this study can provide a theoretical contribution for readers to understand the strategies applied by teachers in implementing social studies learning oriented towards instilling social empathy values. In terms of practical benefits, the results of this study can be used as evaluation material for teachers regarding which social empathy indicators have been optimally implemented in social studies learning, as well as which indicators still need to be strengthened.

METHOD

The procedures undertaken in this research are explained in greater detail as follows:

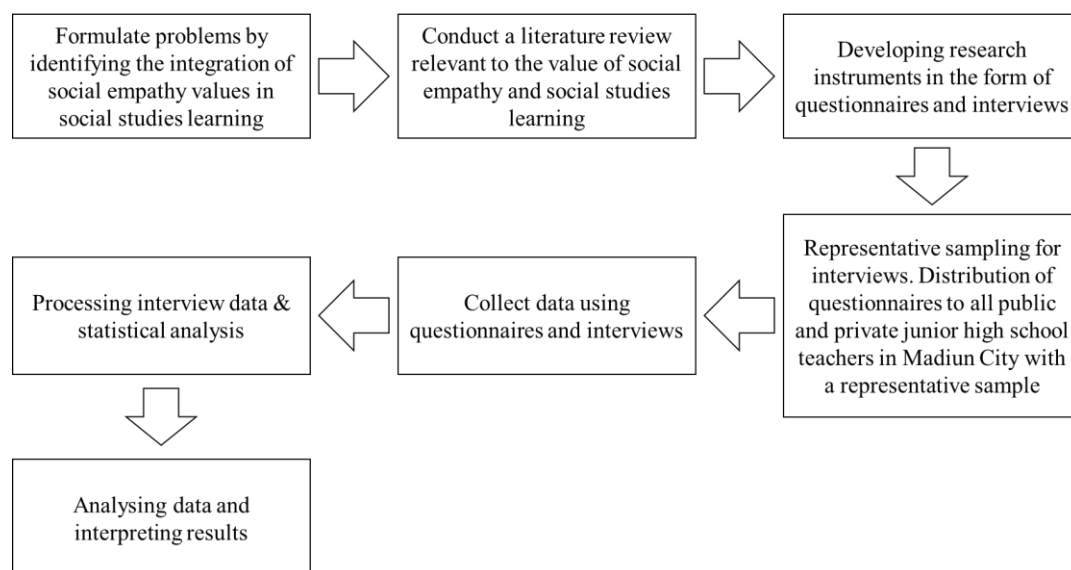


Figure 1. Research flow

This study used a survey method. According to Creswell (2012) survey research is conducted by studying samples from the existing population to produce quantitative data on trends, attitudes, and public opinion. In the context of this study, the survey method is used to obtain descriptive data on teachers' techniques in integrating social empathy indicators and numerical data related to the application of social empathy values in social studies learning in Madiun City. The survey method was chosen based on the researcher's objective to describe the implementation process, the approaches used, and the pedagogical basis in social studies learning oriented towards instilling social empathy values, so that the actual conditions in the field could be understood comprehensively. In addition, survey research was also considered capable of identifying patterns of teachers in implementing social studies learning that integrates social empathy values. A qualitative research approach was used to complement the field data.

The research population included all social studies teachers in public and private junior high schools in Madiun City, totaling 40 people, with a sample of 23 social studies teachers representing each school. Madiun City was chosen as the research location because there had been no previous research specifically examining the implementation of social studies learning with the integration of social empathy values in this area. The sample was determined using purposive sampling, namely, 23 social studies teachers from 23 different schools in Madiun City. The selection criteria for respondents were teachers who had implemented social studies learning by integrating social empathy values. From the results of a preliminary study through observation and interviews with 40 teachers, 23 teachers were found to meet the criteria to be

The implementation of social empathy values in social studies learning at junior high schools in Madiun city

respondents. Another consideration for selecting teachers at junior high schools in Madiun City was that they had never been the subject of research related to the integration of social empathy values in learning.

The research variables were related to the techniques and percentage of indicators of the application of social empathy values in social studies learning. The specific objective of this study was to determine how the seven indicators of social empathy were implemented in social studies learning in all junior high schools in Madiun City, namely Affective Response (AR), Affective Mentalizing (AM), Self-Other Awareness (SOA), Perspective Taking (PT), Emotion Regulation (ER), Contextual Understanding of Systemic Barriers (CU), and Macro Self -*Other Awareness or Perspective Taking* (MSP). For quantitative data collection, a questionnaire with a Likert scale in the form of positive statements with a range of answers from one to five was used. Meanwhile, qualitative data were obtained through interviews to explore more in-depth information about the application of social empathy indicators in social studies learning. Quantitative data analysis was performed using descriptive statistics through Microsoft Excel to process the questionnaire results, while qualitative data was obtained using interview guidelines that served to supplement the information from the questionnaire.

This research employs a Likert scale consisting of five types of positive statements, and the criteria for scoring are detailed in Table 1.

Table 1. Likert scale calculation guidelines

No	Description	Score
1	Very often	5
2	Often	4
3	Quite often	3
4	Not often	2
5	Very rarely	1

Source: Sugiyono (2007)

The classification categories derived from the Likert scale questionnaire are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Likert scale calculation guidelines

No	Value Range	Category
1	84-100	Very High (VH)
3	68-83	High (H)
4	52-67	Sufficient (S)
5	36-51	Medium (M)
6	20-35	Very Low (VL)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Implementation of Social Empathy Indicators in Social Studies Learning

The application of social empathy indicators in social studies learning is based on seven main components. The indicators established include affective response (AR), affective

mentalizing (AM), self-other awareness (SOA), perspective taking (PT), emotion regulation (ER), contextual understanding of systemic barriers (CU), and macro self-other awareness or perspective taking (MSP). The application of each social empathy indicator can be explained as follows:

Teachers' methods of stimulating students to indirectly experience other people's experiences (affective response) are generally more related to everyday events, while their relevance to subject matter is still relatively rarely used. This is because events that are close to students' daily lives are easier to understand and more effective as concrete examples. One technique used by teachers is to provide direct examples to students so that they can imagine what it is like to be in someone else's position. This effort helps shape students' character from an early age through habits developed in social studies learning activities.

In certain materials relevant to social empathy values, for example, when discussing sociology in social interaction, teachers emphasize that each individual has their own strengths and weaknesses. Teachers also provide illustrations of what it is like to live with special needs, so that students are encouraged to be more tolerant and empathetic towards others. Thus, it can be concluded that the teacher's technique in integrating the affective response indicator has been carried out through social studies learning. Teachers play a role in stimulating students to be able to indirectly experience the experiences of others, which then elicits student reactions to the stimuli provided.

Teachers implement Affective Mentalizing by connecting lesson material to real-life experiences in students' daily lives. For example, when discussing social interaction, teachers present an illustration of a teenage girl who comes home late at night and becomes the subject of gossip among her neighbors. From this example, students are invited to examine the reasons why the community responds in this way, assess whether the teenager's behavior is in accordance with norms, and understand the forms of social sanctions that may arise. In addition, teachers also often invite students to imagine what it would be like to be in the position of a child who cannot attend school due to limitations. During the learning process, teachers emphasize the importance of studying diligently and developing concern for the fate of others who are less fortunate than they are, such as children who have to drop out of school or cannot attend school at all.

Meanwhile, the application of the Self-Other Awareness indicator in social studies learning is carried out through reflection on the subject matter studied by relating it to students' daily lives. Various techniques were used. For example, when discussing material about humans as social, economic, and moral beings, the teacher directed students to think about what humans would be like if they lived without morals, which was described as humans without a conscience. The teacher also touched on the practice of corruption, explaining that such behavior arises because individuals work without adhering to moral values, thereby ignoring the ethics around them. From this, students are expected not to imitate such deviant behavior. In addition, when teaching the topics of self-awareness and family in the first theme, the teacher

The implementation of social empathy values in social studies learning at junior high schools in Madiun city

uses case studies by reviewing the jobs of the students' parents. Through this approach, students can see the diversity of family conditions, including those with economic limitations. From this reflection, students are encouraged to assess their own family conditions and strive to make their families proud. For students from lower-middle-class families, teachers emphasize the importance of hard work to improve their standard of living. Thus, the difficulties that families have experienced in the past will not be repeated, and families will feel proud of their achievements.

The application of the Perspective Taking indicator in social studies learning, which cognitively encourages students to imagine and feel the experiences of others as if they were in that position (stepping into someone else's shoes), has been carried out by teachers. The technique used is to link the subject matter to the students' daily experiences in a contextual manner, especially at the apperception stage. Given the breadth of material in the textbook, teachers need to be selective in choosing parts that can be linked to the value of empathy. Nevertheless, efforts to foster social awareness are still made by providing real examples that are close to the students' lives. In this way, teachers try to instill an understanding that humans are social beings who need to be sensitive to their environment. This strategy is applied in the early stages of learning with the hope that students will not only acquire knowledge but also be able to apply it in real life. Therefore, the Perspective Taking integration technique used by teachers is not always directly related to the subject matter but rather to the students' daily life experiences.

The application of the Emotion Regulation indicator in social studies learning is carried out by teachers through real situations experienced by students, even though they are not always directly related to the subject matter. For example, when a student experiences a misfortune, the teacher encourages their friends to foster empathy by providing support. In addition, teachers also emphasize the importance of understanding the conditions of students who experience academic difficulties and are often ignored during group activities and discussions. Teachers encourage students to imagine how they would feel if they were in a similar situation. In this way, students are encouraged to understand that everyone can experience learning obstacles in certain subjects, so mutual respect and assistance are very necessary.

The strategies used by teachers in social studies to help students understand the life experiences of different groups through knowledge of historical context and the influence of barriers in the social, political, and economic systems of society (Understanding Context) are still limited. Teachers' efforts to foster this understanding are usually realized through the presentation of direct examples based on real facts surrounding the students. For example, when explaining the role of the Chinese community in Indonesia, teachers emphasize that the nation's struggle was not only carried out by the indigenous people, but also by some Chinese people who made important contributions. They were able to interact with the local community, understand the language, and get to know Javanese cultural characteristics. The arrival of Chinese people in Indonesia was also explained as a result of conflict in their country of origin,

forcing them to adapt and survive. The teacher also emphasized that the Chinese community is known for its clan system and high solidarity, so they always support each other when facing difficulties. Another example was shown to students from the Minang ethnic group in West Sumatra. The teacher explained that this region produced great national figures such as Mohammad Hatta, Sutan Sjahrir, and Tan Malaka. This encouraged students to feel proud of their ethnic identity, because the figures of the nation's struggle came from various ethnic groups, not just Javanese. In addition, the teacher also explained religious differences. For example, for Catholic students, the teacher tried to help other students understand and respect these differences so that their friends would not feel like a minority.

The application of Macro Perspective Taking in social studies learning is more often associated with actual social phenomena, although it is not always directly in line with the material being studied. Teachers use various techniques to stimulate students to understand the lives of other groups and to cognitively imagine what it feels like to be in their position. A frequently used example is the conflict in Palestine. Teachers describe the conditions of Palestinian society, which lives in a tense situation, an unfavorable environment, difficulties in meeting basic needs, numerous casualties due to war, the destruction of public facilities, and declining health quality. After that, students are invited to reflect and imagine how they would feel if they had to live as Palestinians in such difficult conditions.

Percentage of Implementation of Social Empathy Indicators in Social Studies Learning

In the context of applying social empathy values in social studies learning, the Affective Response indicator is realized through learning statements that aim to stimulate students to be able to feel other people's feelings indirectly or unconsciously. Based on the data in Table 3, the overall score was 79, with the highest score being 5 and the lowest score being 1. The average score was 3.43 with a standard deviation of 1.24, and the questionnaire response rate was 68.70%. Based on this percentage, it can be concluded that the implementation of Affective Response in social studies learning was in the high category.

Table 3. Results of the analysis of the implementation of social empathy indicators in social studies education

No	Type	Σ	Max	Min	Mean	Standard Deviation	Percentage (%)	Category
1	<i>Affective Response</i>	79	5	1	3.43	1.24	68.70	H
2	<i>Affective Mentalizing</i>	72	5	1	3.13	1.01	62.61	S
3	<i>Self-Awareness</i>	79	5	1	3.43	1.12	68.70	H
4	<i>Perspective Taking</i>	90	5	1	3.91	0.95	78.26	H
5	<i>Emotion Regulation</i>	72	5	1	3.1	1.18	62.61	S
6	<i>Understanding Context</i>	59	4	1	2.57	0.84	51.30	M
7	<i>Macro Perspective Taking</i>	62	4	1	2.70	0.76	53.91	S

Source: Research process

The implementation of social empathy values in social studies learning at junior high schools in Madiun city

Furthermore, the Affective Mentalizing indicator is manifested through learning statements that encourage students to imagine an event and experience it as if they themselves were in that situation. The results of data processing in Table 3 show a total score of 72, with the highest score being 5 and the lowest being 1. The average score obtained was 3.13 with a standard deviation of 1.01, while the questionnaire results percentage reached 62.61%. Based on these achievements, the implementation of Affective Mentalizing in social studies learning is in the sufficient category.

The Self-Other Awareness indicator in social studies learning is demonstrated through learning statements that emphasize strengthening students' self-awareness to foster empathetic responses. Based on Table 1, this indicator obtained a total score of 79, with a maximum score of 5 and a minimum score of 1. The average score was 3.43 with a standard deviation of 1.12, and the questionnaire result percentage was 68.70%. From these findings, it can be concluded that the implementation of Self-Other Awareness in social studies learning is in the high category.

The Perspective Taking indicator in social studies learning is manifested through learning statements that direct students to cognitively process the experiences of others as if they themselves were experiencing them (being in the position of others). Based on the data in Table 1, it is known that the implementation of Perspective Taking obtained a total score of 90, with the highest score being 5 and the lowest score being 1. The average score was 3.91, with a standard deviation of 0.95 and a questionnaire result percentage of 78.26%. Referring to this percentage, the implementation of Perspective Taking in social studies learning is categorized as high.

Furthermore, the Emotion Regulation indicator was realized through learning statements designed to train students to be able to feel other people's feelings without being burdened by the intensity of the experience. Based on Table 1, the implementation of this indicator obtained a total score of 72, with the highest score being 5 and the lowest score being 1. The average score was 3.13, with a standard deviation of 1.18 and a questionnaire response rate of 62.61%. Thus, the application of Emotion Regulation in social studies learning was in the sufficient category.

The Understanding Context indicator in social studies learning is demonstrated through learning statements that emphasize students' understanding of the life experiences of different groups by paying attention to the historical context and the impact of obstacles in the social, political, and economic systems. Based on the data in Table 1, this indicator obtained a total score of 59, with the highest score being 4 and the lowest score being 1. The average score was 2.57, the standard deviation was 0.84, and the questionnaire result percentage was 51.30%. From these results, it can be concluded that the implementation of Understanding Context in social studies learning is in the moderate category.

The Macro Perspective Taking indicator is implemented through learning statements that aim to stimulate students to be able to understand the lives of groups that are different from

them and to cognitively process what it feels like to live as part of another group. Based on Table 1, the implementation of this indicator received a total score of 62, with the highest score being 4 and the lowest score being 1. The average score was 2.70, with a standard deviation of 0.76 and a questionnaire response rate of 53.91%. Referring to this percentage, it can be concluded that the implementation of Macro Perspective Taking in social studies learning is in the adequate category.

Based on the teacher questionnaire data regarding the implementation of social empathy, the respective percentages can be seen in Figure 1 below. These results provide an overview of the extent to which each social empathy indicator is implemented in social studies learning.

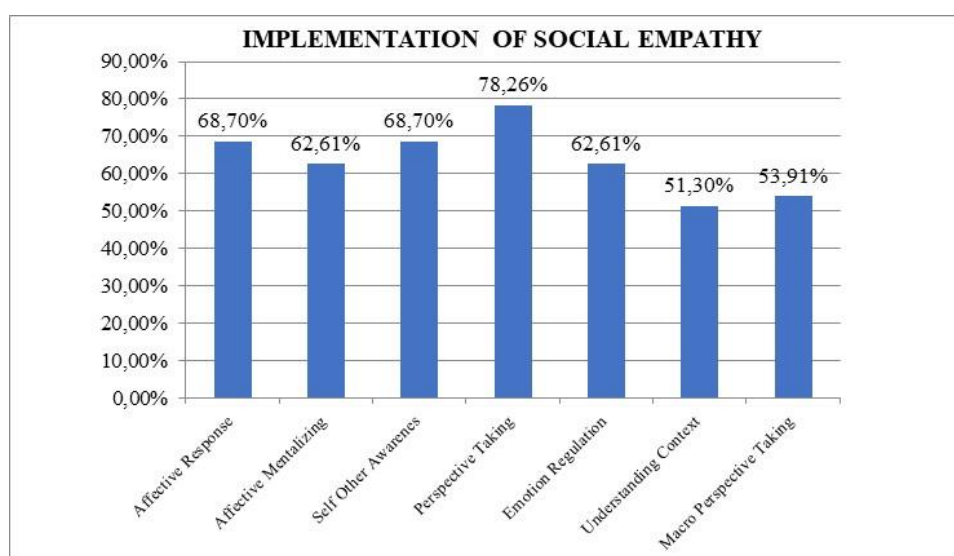


Figure 2. Graph of the implementation of social empathy indicators in social studies learning

Based on Figure 1, it can be concluded that the application of social empathy in social studies learning is reflected through seven main indicators. The indicator with the highest achievement is Perspective Taking, with a percentage of 78.26%. This shows that teachers' efforts in managing learning that encourages students to cognitively process the experiences of others by putting themselves in their position are at a relatively high level. Conversely, the indicator with the lowest result is Understanding Context, which only reaches 51.30% and is classified as moderate. This achievement indicates that teachers still conduct learning aimed at fostering students' understanding of other groups' experiences through historical, social, political, and economic contexts with moderate frequency.

The Affective Response indicator scored 68.70%, which is in the high category. This means that teachers quite often provide stimuli in learning that allow students to indirectly feel the emotional experiences of others. Meanwhile, the Affective Mentalizing indicator showed a result of 62.61% and was in the sufficient category. These findings show that teachers strive to encourage students to imagine an event as if they themselves were experiencing it, although the intensity of its application is still at a moderate level.

The implementation of social empathy values in social studies learning at junior high schools in Madiun city

The Self-Other Awareness indicator also scored 68.70%, which is categorized as high. This data confirms that teachers are quite consistent in fostering students' awareness to respond empathetically to others in their learning activities. Furthermore, the Emotion Regulation indicator obtained a percentage of 62.61%, the same as Affective Mentalizing, both of which are classified as adequate. This means that teachers try to train students to be able to understand other people's feelings while maintaining emotional balance so as not to be burdened by the intensity of the other person's experience, although the application is still at a moderate frequency.

Finally, the Macro Perspective Taking indicator showed a result of 53.91% and was categorized as adequate. Based on this achievement, it can be understood that teachers strive to guide students to understand the lives of others who are different from themselves and to foster the ability to imagine what it is like to live as part of another group, although these efforts are still carried out with moderate frequency.

Discussion

Based on the data obtained in the field, further analysis can be conducted on the application of social empathy values in social studies learning implemented by junior high school teachers in Madiun City. The findings show differences in the application categories for each indicator. The application categories for social empathy values are divided into high, medium, and low levels, which reflect how often teachers integrate social empathy values into classroom learning activities.

Social empathy indicators that fall into the high category include Affective Response (68.70%), Self-Other Awareness (68.70%), and Perspective Taking (78.26%). Meanwhile, the moderate category is indicated by Affective Mentalizing (62.60%), Emotion Regulation (62.61%), and Macro Perspective Taking (53.91%). The moderate category is indicated by the Understanding Context indicator (51.30%). Teachers apply these indicators either by directly relating them to the teaching material or by connecting them to real-life situations around the students.

Conceptually, social empathy includes five indicators of interpersonal empathy and two indicators of macro empathy. When viewed from the achievement percentage, the five indicators of interpersonal empathy, namely Affective Response (AR), Affective Mentalizing (AM), Self-Other Awareness (SOA), Perspective Taking (PT), and Emotion Regulation (ER) obtained higher results than the two macro indicators, namely Contextual Understanding of Systemic Barriers (CU) and Macro Self -Other Awareness/Perspective Taking (MSP). These findings indicate that the implementation of empathy values in social studies learning is more dominant in the interpersonal domain. This is in line with the view that empathy is an important prerequisite for the development of effective interpersonal behavior while maintaining the quality of social relationships (Gee et al., 2021). Several previous studies also confirm that interpersonal empathy is more crucial because it focuses on deeply understanding individual

feelings and experiences and building strong emotional bonds. Therefore, interpersonal empathy is considered more relevant in personal relationships than social empathy, which has a broader scope. Although the macro indicator scores were relatively lower, overall social empathy values have been successfully integrated into social studies learning in junior high schools in Madiun City.

Furthermore, the data shows that teachers often stimulate students to feel the emotional experiences of others indirectly through the Affective Response indicator, which is in the high category with a percentage of 68.70%. This indicates that the integration of these indicators in social studies learning is carried out with a fairly high frequency. Stenlund et al., (2024) emphasize that affective responses are part of reasoning that should be considered in effective learning. In line with this, (Kruglanski et al., 2025) explains that affective responses to certain situations are influenced by students' recent experiences. This occurs because students can imagine the stimuli provided by teachers during the learning process.

Based on the available data, it appears that teachers encourage students to imagine an event and try to feel it as if they were experiencing it themselves. This is related to the Affective Mentalizing indicator, which falls into the sufficient category with a percentage of 62.60%. Thus, the frequency of application of the Affective Mentalizing indicator in social studies learning can be said to be at a moderate level. From the techniques applied by teachers, it can be seen that although efforts to integrate this indicator have been made, the intensity is not yet high. The Affective Response component, which is the only aspect of affective empathy in the Empathy Assessment Index (EAI), describes the spontaneous and unintentional reactions that arise when observers receive emotional stimuli from outside, such as facial expressions, body language, touch, or the intonation of other people's voices. These stimuli can evoke similar emotional representations in the observer's mind, both positive emotions (e.g., happiness, joy, enthusiasm) and negative emotions (e.g., anger, sadness, fear, or disgust). Within the conceptual framework of Social Cognitive Neuroscience (SCN) on empathy, this response arises due to the activation of the perception-action coupling mechanism that underlies the shared representation of behavior and emotion. That is, when a person observes the emotions displayed by others through expressions or actions, the observer's brain forms a representation of those emotions and feels them as if they were their own (de Waal & Preston, 2017; Decety & Jackson, 2004, 2006; Hoskins, 2021; Segal, 2018). Therefore, teachers need to stimulate students' affective mentalization abilities in the learning process.

Furthermore, the data shows that the application of the Self-Other Awareness indicator (i.e., encouraging the emergence of empathetic responses in students' awareness) is in the high category with a score of 68.70%, equivalent to the achievement in the Affective Response indicator. This shows that teachers quite often foster empathetic awareness in students through learning activities. From the strategies applied, it can be seen that efforts to integrate this indicator have been carried out with high frequency. The Self-Other Awareness theory is rooted in the theory of objective self-awareness, which describes the mental state when a person

The implementation of social empathy values in social studies learning at junior high schools in Madiun city

voluntarily directs their attention to themselves and treats themselves as an object of observation. This theory assumes that voluntary attention is usually focused on one object, either oneself or the environment, and a person can shift their focus between the two, but cannot consciously focus on both at the same time. The direction of this attention is determined by external stimuli, where stimuli that allow individuals to maintain an objective observer position will increase self-awareness (Quanquan, 2024). Self-Other Awareness or self-differentiation from others reflects a person's ability to realize that the emotions they feel originate from other people, not themselves. This indicator is part of cognitive empathy and works through top-down information processing. This awareness helps observers avoid personal distress and the unconscious transmission of emotions (de Waal & Preston, 2017; Hoskins, 2021; Segal, 2018). Therefore, teachers need to continue to stimulate Self-Other Awareness in students, considering that they have both self-awareness and awareness of others. This can help students shift their focus from their personal feelings to consideration for the feelings of others.

The application of Perspective Taking in social studies learning ranked highest compared to other indicators, with an achievement of 78.26%. This shows that teachers quite often integrate perspective-taking skills into learning activities. Social perspective itself is a process in which observers try to understand the thoughts, feelings, and motivations of others as a basis for building social interactions, establishing relationships, maintaining mental health, improving well-being, and achieving various other goals (Gehlbach & Mu, 2023). In other words, students are trained to imagine what it feels like to be in someone else's situation. This process involves a mental shift between putting oneself in another person's experience and returning to one's own perspective.

Furthermore, based on the data obtained, the integration of Emotion Regulation in social studies learning was in the sufficient category with a percentage of 62.61%. This is related to the efforts of teachers in helping students to be able to feel the emotions of others without being burdened by the intensity of the emotional experiences of the target. With this achievement, it can be concluded that the application of the Emotion Regulation indicator occurs with a frequency equivalent to Affective Mentalizing and Macro Perspective Taking. In this context, students practice experiencing and expressing emotions as a form of response, interaction, and adjustment to the social and physical environment. Emotion regulation itself is the skill of maintaining emotional balance when facing affective experiences triggered by the emotional state of others. This ability allows observers to understand the affective reactions of the target without becoming overly immersed in those emotions or focusing only on themselves. In addition, emotional regulation is also an important skill that supports other cognitive processes, such as affective mentalizing, self-other awareness, and perspective taking (Hoskins, 2021; Segal, 2018). Therefore, teachers need to develop emotional regulation skills through various learning activities.

Meanwhile, the application of Understanding Context in social studies learning is in the moderate category, with an achievement of 51.30%, making it the indicator with the lowest

value compared to other indicators. This condition shows that the frequency of its application is still moderate. Understanding Context is a basic psychological ability that allows a person to understand and interpret the mental state of others. This process occurs when individuals infer the thoughts of others by combining causal clues and indirect cues from broad contextual information, often obtained from previous interactions. In other words, understanding context is highly dependent on recognition of a person's background and life history (Zhou et al., 2025). In the framework of social empathy, teachers need to encourage students to recognize the challenges and obstacles faced by other groups. When teachers talk about “walking in someone else's shoes,” they are fostering students' awareness to try to deeply understand past events that may influence a group's behavior in the present.

The application of Macro Perspective Taking in social studies learning was adequate, with an achievement of 53.91%. This result shows that the score for the Macro Perspective Taking indicator is in the same category as Affective Mentalizing and Emotion Regulation. Thus, teachers' efforts to integrate this indicator into social studies learning can be said to have been carried out with adequate frequency. In this context, social empathy is a concept that has the potential to improve intergroup relations. Social empathy is a framework that emphasizes a macro perspective and contextual understanding of the systemic barriers faced by marginalized groups (Fisher et al., 2023). The social empathy perspective encompasses a broader view, namely, seeing situations on a large scale by considering the influence of external factors. One way to apply this is by inviting students to imagine being in the position of others who are different from them, whether in terms of race, gender, sexual orientation, abilities, age, social class background, or other characteristics. Therefore, teachers need to strive to instill Macro perspective-taking skills through social studies learning.

In this way, teachers not only teach social empathy in terms of recognizing emotions, but also involve cognitive and emotional responses aimed at interacting with others in a more meaningful way. If educators have a strong basic understanding of social empathy and use an intersectional approach, students will be encouraged to develop compassion, understanding, and patience towards people whose lives are different from theirs (Reed & Caswell, 2021).

CONCLUSION

The application of social empathy values in social studies learning, which is categorized as high, is indicated by the indicators Affective Response (68.70%), Self-Other Awareness (68.70%), and Perspective Taking (78.26%). Meanwhile, the indicators in the moderate category are Affective Mentalizing (62.60%), Emotion Regulation (62.61%), and Macro Perspective Taking (53.91%). The indicator in the moderate category is Understanding Context (51.30%). In general, teachers apply social empathy values in social studies learning through their relevance to the subject matter and by connecting them to the real-life experiences of students.

The implementation of social empathy values in social studies learning at junior high schools in Madiun city

Social empathy itself is a combination of five interpersonal empathy indicators and two macro indicators. When viewed in terms of percentage, the five indicators of interpersonal empathy, namely Affective Response (AR), Affective Mentalizing (AM), Self-Other Awareness (SOA), Perspective Taking (PT), and Emotion Regulation (ER), show higher achievements than the two macro indicators, namely Contextual Understanding of Systemic Barriers (CU) and Macro Self -Other Awareness or Perspective Taking (MSP). These findings indicate that the application of empathy values in social studies learning is more prominent in interpersonal aspects. Although the achievement of the two macro indicators is lower, overall, all social empathy indicators have been integrated into social studies learning in junior high schools in Madiun City.

The results of this study also show that teachers are still not fully optimal in applying social empathy in social studies learning activities in the classroom. Therefore, further efforts are needed from teachers to understand and develop learning techniques that can improve the application of the two social empathy indicators that are still low, namely CU and MSP. Teacher creativity in connecting these two indicators, both with teaching materials and with the reality of students' daily lives, is one strategy that can be pursued.

The method used by teachers to stimulate students to experience the experiences of others unintentionally (Affective Response) is generally done by relating it to everyday life, while a direct connection with the material is still rarely done. For Affective Mentalizing, teachers usually connect the subject matter with the daily realities of students. The integration of the Self-Other Awareness indicator is more often done through reflection on the material being studied, and then linked to the real experiences of students. In Perspective Taking, teachers use a contextual approach, especially in apperception activities, by connecting the learning material to everyday life. Meanwhile, the application of the Emotion Regulation indicator is not always linked to the subject matter, but is more directed at students' real experiences that are relevant to their social lives. For the Understanding Context indicator, teachers use methods of providing direct examples that students can observe from their environment. The Macro Perspective Taking indicator is stimulated more through its connection to actual social reality, although it is not always directly related to the subject matter.

Referring to the limitations of this study, which only focuses on the application of social empathy indicators in social studies learning in junior high schools in Madiun City, it is recommended that further research focus on the two indicators that are not yet optimal, namely CU and MSP. Future research is also expected to offer solutions in the form of learning strategies or techniques that can strengthen the application of these two indicators. Thus, intensive steps are needed to strengthen the still weak aspect of social empathy so that it is more comprehensively integrated into social studies education.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The researcher would like to express sincere appreciation to the school administration and all social studies teachers at SMP Madiun city for their participation as respondents in this study. Special thanks are also extended to the Education Office of Madiun City, the National Unity and Political Body of Madiun City, the Library and Archives Office of Madiun City, as well as all other individuals and organizations that provided support and assistance, ensuring the successful completion of this research.

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