



Knowing, feeling, and taking action: Evidence from implementing beggar stories in the social studies classroom in Jember, Indonesia

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Abstract

Jember is one of the regions facing persistent, unresolved problems with begging. The preventive, repressive, and curative measures to handle begging in Jember have no significant impact. Therefore, complementary approaches are necessary to provide more options for addressing this issue. Social Studies holds idealistic potential to address the issue of begging in Jember. The objective of this study is to analyze Berger's social construction among elementary school students through beggar stories, value-based reasoning, and reasoned decision-making in the social studies classroom. This study employs a qualitative approach through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). Conducted at Pelita Hati School in Jember, Indonesia, the research involved fifth and sixth-grade students. The results indicate that beggar stories and dynamic group discussions can enhance students' moral knowledge, moral feeling, and moral action. 1) Students demonstrated the ability to critically assess the phenomenon of begging not merely as an act of poverty, but as a complex social behavior; 2) Students also

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articulated moral judgments influenced by Jember's local cultural values and the principles of Pancasila; 3) As a moral action, students suggested pragmatic alternatives to solve the issue of beggars in Jember. The implications of this study are not only to bridge classroom learning and real-world issues, enhancing reflection, empathy, and social and ethical awareness, but also to establish a discourse-based approach in the Pelita Hati Elementary School context as a complementary means of addressing social issues. On the other hand, adopting balanced storytelling approaches is necessary to reduce the pedagogical risk of reinforcing stigma against the poor.

Keywords: *elementary education; focus group discussions; social construction; value-based reasoning; balanced storytelling.*

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INTRODUCTION

The presence of beggars reflects the complexity of a region's issues, ranging from economic problems, education, and employment availability to societal mental structures or public perceptions. Begging activities involving children, adults, and the elderly have been manifested in various forms, such as awe-awe (a local term), and acts considered as (Janah et al., 2023). Child begging in Dagbon of Northern Ghana has been manifested as child labour (Fuseini & Daniel, 2020), which represent the complexity of issues. The social reality of begging activities gives rise to several consequences: (1) Disruption of public order; (2) The emergence of stigmatization and discrimination; and (3) A cycle of poverty driven by the intergenerational continuity of begging (Desriyanti, 2007; Idza, 2023; Sridiyatmika, 2018). Jember Regency is one of the regions facing persistent, unresolved problems with begging.

Empirical data on begging in Jember Regency are limited. In 2015, there were 443 recorded beggars (Nusanto, 2017). In subsequent years, accurate data on the number of beggars in Jember has not been available. However, it is predicted that during the month of Ramadan, the number of beggars increases by approximately 20% compared to the previous year (Budi, 2025). The Social Affairs Office of Jember Regency has implemented various programs to address begging. These programs include: 1) Social outreach and education; 2) Family strengthening initiatives; 3) Establishment of service posts for the homeless and beggars; 4) Conducting public order enforcement operations (raids); 5) Optimizing the functions of the Regional Technical Implementation Unit for Social Rehabilitation (UPTD Liposos) and NGOs that work with the homeless and beggars; 6) Collaborating with the private sector to facilitate employment opportunities for the homeless and beggars (Imsiyah & Wahono, 2020; Nusanto, 2017). Former individuals classified under Social Welfare Problems (PMKS) have also been empowered by the Jember Regency Government to motivate other beggars to commit to a more independent and dignified life (Salsabila et al., 2024).

Despite these efforts, a cultural treatment has emerged as an informal social control mechanism, characterized by narratives that encourage people to ignore beggars and refrain

from giving them money (Nugroho et al., 2022, 2023). These efforts from the local government, former PMKS, and the broader community have been considered successful in addressing the issue of begging (D. S. Dewi et al., 2022). However, a 2023 study evaluating the preventive, repressive, and curative measures to handle begging in Jember Regency found that these efforts have not been effectively implemented and have shown no significant impact (Abyyu et al., 2023; Ardi K & Suryono, 2023)

From the perspective of Berger's social construction theory, the persistence of begging in Jember can be understood as the result of a dialectical process involving externalization, objectivation, and internalization (Berger & Luckmann, 2015; Dharma, 2018). Begging, initially a response to economic hardship, is externalized through daily practices and interactions in public spaces. There are fundamental factors influencing the motivation of individuals who engage in begging, particularly the limited access to employment opportunities and the relatively high-income potential from begging activities (Abyyu et al., 2023; Janah et al., 2023).

Over time, these practices become objectified, perceived by both beggars and the public as a 'normal' or even 'acceptable' aspect of social life, sometimes regarded as a legitimate form of work. This objectification has implications for the ineffective handling of beggars. Furthermore, it indicates that considerations of universal values do not fully constitute the social order (Abyyu et al., 2023; Ardi K & Suryono, 2023). That objectified reality is then internalized by individuals and communities, shaping beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that sustain the cycle of begging across generations. Such a socially constructed perception of begging poses challenges to existing preventive, repressive, and curative measures. Therefore, complementary approaches are needed to provide more options to addressing this issue (Fuseini & Daniel, 2020). Given the strategic role of education, Social Studies holds strong potential to contribute to the resolution of the begging phenomenon in Jember.

Several studies affirm the role of social studies in responding to socio-economic challenges such as poverty, unemployment, and homelessness for the purpose of developing good citizens. The main strategy is to integrate these social issues into the learning process. The Forum Theatre method, for instance, has been used to raise issues of refugees and homelessness to explore participants' experiences and interactions (Day, 2002). Similarly, the issue of bullying has been integrated into social studies learning to train students in practicing democracy (Gourd & Gourd, 2011). In Nigeria, social studies is positioned as a means to reduce poverty through the integration of entrepreneurial education (Oyibe & Eluu, 2015). Meanwhile, the integration of refugee and homelessness issues into the curriculum has also been shown to strengthen empathy and intercultural understanding (Harrison, 2017). Recent studies in Korea and Turkey indicate that the analysis of poverty, unemployment, and homelessness issues in social studies textbooks plays an important role in fostering students' critical awareness and encouraging their active involvement in seeking solutions to social problems (Choi & Park, 2022; Gökalp & Gökalp, 2024).

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Tabel 1. Relevance of begging activities to social studies content

Components of Begging Reality	Content Standards
Beggars; Working as beggars	Human
Public spaces (campuses, tourist attractions, train stations, malls)	Place and Environment
Begging as a livelihood	Social System
Public responses to beggars; Social institutions	Culture

Table 1 shows the relevance between the components of begging reality and social studies content standards, indicating that the issue of begging is worthy of integration into learning. Its implementation can take the form of using social stories, where beggar stories are used as learning content to help students construct their perceptions of the phenomenon and engage in discussions through value-based reasoning. This approach aligns with the Phase C social studies learning achievement, namely "students perform actions or make decisions related to daily life based on their understanding of the richness of local wisdom in their area and the scientific values within that local wisdom" (*Surat Keputusan Kepala Badan Standar Kurikulum dan Asesmen Pendidikan Nomor 033/H/KR/2022 Tentang Capaian Pembelajaran (CP)*, 2022). Beggar stories become learning content that presents a dilemma between ideal and non-conforming situations, thus encouraging students to make value-based considerations.

Elementary school is a crucial stage for students' moral and ethical development, where their characters are highly malleable for internalizing values such as empathy, responsibility, and social awareness (R. R. Dewi et al., 2021; Sayan, 2023). In this context, the implementation of social stories in the classroom has shown significant impacts, such as strengthening students' imagination (Kumpulainen et al., 2023), activating commitment to action (Shinas & Wen, 2022), and promoting conflict resolution (Amalia et al., 2024). Thus, beggar stories have the potential to serve as instructional content that not only facilitates active learning strategies (Bransford et al., 2000), but also enhances student engagement across behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions (Fredricks et al., 2004).

The potential of Social Studies in addressing the issue lies in its core objective: to help young people make informed and reasoned decisions (Schneider et al., 2002). Social studies also aim to introduce key concepts related to community life and its environment. Social studies potential can be further enhanced by incorporating Berger's social construction theory, which emphasizes that social reality is not simply discovered but dialectically created through human interaction (Berger & Luckmann, 2015; Dharma, 2018; Pramono et al., 2024). The Berger's perspective not only aids in understanding social reality but also serves as a tool to redefine certain social aspects (Schock, 2023; Suprijono, 2013).

Beggar stories are assumed to support the realization of the goals of Social Studies, namely, activating value-based reasoning and enabling students to make reasoned decisions (Manfra et al., 2023). The implementation of beggar stories considers Berger's social construction theory through the dialectical processes of externalization, objectivation, and internalization in the elementary Social Studies classroom. On one hand, social reality, such as the existence of

beggars and the inadequate efforts to address begging activities in Jember, is constructed through this dialectical social process. On the other hand, the dialectical construction of social reality can also serve as a tool to redefine the complexity of beggars' social realities. The implementation of beggar stories in the Social Studies classroom holds the potential to contribute to a complementary approach to the issue of begging from an educational perspective.

Therefore, the objective of this study is to analyze the impact of beggar stories on students' construction of social reality and to analyze their reasoning and decision-making abilities. The benefit of this research is that it can be used as a discourse's basis for a complementary approach to addressing social issues in the context of elementary school. In addition, this discourse basis can be further expanded to serve as a reference for future research, a consideration in implementing value-based decision-making learning, and a material for discussions on efforts to address social problems.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach using Focus Group Discussions (FGD). Focus Group Discussions (FGD) are facilitated group conversations to explore participants' perspectives, opinions, and experiences on a specific topic (Basnet, 2018). This method utilizes group dynamics to produce rich and detailed insights that are invaluable for understanding social phenomena, testing ideas, and informing policies or practices (Ho, 2024). The research approach used is phenomenology, using Berger & Luckmann (2015) social construction theory. The theory of social construction by Berger & Luckmann (2015) is employed to enhance the study, comprising three stages: (1) Externalization, (2) Objectivation, and (3) Internalization.

Initially, Externalization seeks to ascertain students' preliminary perceptions about beggars before they engage with narratives about them. Secondly, Objectivation aims to investigate how dialogues during the FGD influence students' comprehension of begging as a multifaceted social phenomenon. Third, Internalization examines the alterations in students' comprehension following the discussions, encompassing their value-based reasoning and ability to make reasoned decisions. This approach emphasizes that an individual's understanding of a phenomenon is constructed through interaction with societal structures (Dharma, 2018; Suprijono, 2013). It is applied in this study to explore how elementary school students construct their understanding of begging after being exposed to beggar stories in social studies lessons, as well as to analyze how group interactions influence their reasoning processes.

Research Subject

The subjects of the study were fifth and sixth-grade students at Pelita Hati Elementary School in Jember. Fifth and sixth-grade students have strong relevance to the learning outcomes of Phase C, which are related to the competence of making decisions concerning

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daily life based on their understanding of the richness of existing local wisdom. Meanwhile, students in the fourth grade or below do not have such relevance in the curriculum documents. The research subjects consisted of 33 students, who represented the total number of students in the fifth and sixth grades. The understanding derived from the 33 students does not represent the entire population in numerical terms; however, it can provide analytical or theoretical generalization, meaning that the findings can help in understanding similar phenomena in other contexts, such as value-based reasoning and social awareness among elementary school students.

Several considerations in selecting the research subjects were: 1) the low level of value-based reasoning among students at Pelita Hati Elementary School, and 2) the lack of students' awareness of social phenomena in their environment. This statement is based on the results of a preliminary diagnostic test conducted before the study, in which students were asked to answer essay questions designed to assess their value-based reasoning and awareness of social phenomena.

Tabel 2. Preliminary study

Context	Grade	Result
Value-based reasoning	Grade 5	Only 28.6% of students demonstrated excellent ability to describe contexts based on value-based reasoning.
Awareness of social phenomena	Grade 6	The percentage of students with excellent ability in describing value-based reasoning contexts is 42.1%.
	Grade 5	The percentage of awareness of social phenomena that falls into the good category is 21.4%.
	Grade 6	The percentage of awareness of social phenomena that falls into the good category is 52.6%.”

All 33 students participated as research subjects in the learning activities and focus group discussions. Among them, six students were identified as key informants because they had experience interacting with beggars. These experiences enabled them to provide richer contextual narratives during the FGD. However, the other 27 students were not passive participants; they actively engaged in the discussions by responding, reflecting, and negotiating meanings based on the information shared. In this way, the presence of key informants functioned as a catalyst for collective meaning construction rather than as exclusive data sources. This approach is consistent with Peter L. Berger's (2015) phenomenological framework, which emphasizes social construction through active two-way social interaction and shared interpretation. The involvement of students with lived experiences with beggars strengthened the dialogical process in the FGD discussions and enriched value-based reasoning and social awareness among all participants.

Tabel 3. Research subjects demography

Character	n	% of Research Subject
Student	33	100
Gender		

Character	n	% of Research Subject
Male	14	42.42
Female	19	57.58
Grade		
5	14	42.42
6	19	57.58

Data Analysis

The researcher acted as a key instrument and a participant observer, acting as the teacher for the fifth and sixth-grade students. This position allows researchers to collect data optimally through (FGD), documentation, and field notes. The data collected consisted of students' statements in response to the beggar stories and the questions posed by the researcher. This list of questions served as a research instrument to explore students' constructions of the concept of begging and their reasoned decision-making. The list of questions included: 1) Earning money through begging, does that count as work? 2) Why do beggars choose crowded places? 3) When there are beggars who are still young and healthy, why do you think they beg? 4) Do low levels of education and limited job opportunities trigger people to engage in begging activities? 5) If, at present, the number of beggars in Jember continues to increase, who can be held responsible? 6) What social norms conflict with the act of begging? 7) Which principle of Pancasila is being violated? 8) How can the number of beggars in Jember be reduced? These questions were designed to encourage students to engage in value-based reasoning.

This study employed an interactive approach for data analysis by Miles et al., (2014). Interactive approach encompasses data collection, data reduction, and displaying data. Initially, the transcription process was conducted through systematic field notes taken during learning activities as data collection. The researcher incorporated Jember's beggar stories into the social studies classroom by presenting several complex realities, including: (1) beggars interacting by presenting an identity of poverty to potential donors; (2) beggars bringing young children to stimulate the empathy of potential donors; (3) beggars leaving their begging locations using or being picked up by motorized vehicles; and (4) some beggars being persons with disabilities. As instructional content for social studies, the researcher posed the question, "Earning money through begging, does that count as work?" as the starting point for learning (Brophy et al., 2008) and the main question in the FGD.

Six students provided answers based on their experiences and perspectives, followed by other students sharing their viewpoints. The researcher acted as a teacher by actively responding to students' statements, while also acting as a researcher by systematically recording them. The researcher posed questions to each student, but only six students responded based on personal experience, contributing their perspectives on the reality of beggars. Other students followed and made an argument for sharing their viewpoints about the beggar. After students expressed their answers verbally, the researcher selected statements relevant to Table 1 of the social studies content and asked the selected students to write their responses on the board. If a student's response did not align with Table 1, the researcher

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provided feedback such as “good answer” and then moved on to another student to elicit a response that corresponded to Table 1. Once the responses were considered sufficient, the researcher photographed them to be transcribed into the coding table.

Tabel 4. Theme tree for coding

Theme	Category	Code
Human	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic behavior • Worker/non-worker
Place and Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location • Social environment • Economic environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public space • Interpersonal relations • Poverty & Job opportunity
Social System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Norms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Norms • Principle of Pancasila • Social Institution
Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethic • Moral Judgement

Secondly, data reduction was carried out using coding as outlined in Table 3, based on the predetermined theme tree for coding. A deductive coding approach was used to categorize students' statements about beggars based on pre-established thematic dimensions. Coding was performed by a single researcher to ensure consistency of interpretation. Data analysis was conducted manually by transferring field notes into a coding table, facilitating the process of grouping and interpreting students' responses. To strengthen the objectivity of the research, the coding results were discussed with colleagues to verify the consistency of the identified themes.

Third, displaying data is done by presenting a list that represents the essence of students' statements about beggars based on their experiences. This list is placed as a form of students' construction of the reality of beggars. The purpose is to make it easier for the researcher to see patterns, relationships, and differences in each student's statement. The researcher then draws provisional conclusions based on the displayed data and conducts data verification to ensure the validity and credibility of the data.

Validity and Credibility

In the verification process to ensure the validity and credibility of the data, the researcher utilized triangulation of approaches, that is, FGD, observation, and documentation, and member checking to ensure the validity and credibility of the data. Within the triangulation process of approaches, we twice asked the question -Do they work? to the students whose responses aligned with the codes, categories, and themes outlined in Table 1. Students were interviewed twice to allow them to expand and clarify their statements about their experiences with beggars, and to help the researcher understand the students' construction. In addition, member checking was conducted by providing feedback and confirming the students' statements after all participants had responded to the initial FGD questions. The researcher then presented the research notes, including the relevance of student statements to emerging themes

and categories, and asked students to respond as to whether the results aligned with their perspectives and experiences. In this way, data validity was strengthened because the researcher's interpretations were directly verified by the research subjects.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Students' Understanding of Social Reality: Externalization and Objectivation Dialectic

Students' understanding of social reality is measured based on the learning outcomes outlined in the IPAS Phase C curriculum. By the end of Phase C, the learning outcomes emphasize that when students demonstrate the ability to make decisions based on local wisdom, they are considered to have developed a deep understanding of social reality (*Surat Keputusan Kepala Badan Standar Kurikulum dan Asesmen Pendidikan Nomor 033/H/KR/2022 Tentang Capaian Pembelajaran (CP)*, 2022). This deep understanding comprises two essential components as mandated by the curriculum: (1) the ability to recognize the relevance of local wisdom values to social realities, and (2) the ability to solve problems. Simply put, the objective of the social studies classroom is to foster value-based reasoning and the ability to make reasoned decisions.

The beggar story in the social studies classroom, as explained through Berger's theory, constitutes an intersubjective world for the students (Berger & Luckmann, 2015). This intersubjectivity is reflected in complex realities, such as beggars presenting poverty identities, bringing children to evoke empathy, using motorized vehicles after begging, and some being persons with disabilities (Abyyu et al., 2023; Anjana, 2020; Fuseini & Daniel, 2020; Hansson & Jansson, 2021; Owusu-Sekyere et al., 2018; Setiawan, 2020; Sridiyatmika, 2018). The researcher employed the beggar story as instructional content and introduced the guiding question, "Earning money through begging, does that count as work?" (Brophy et al., 2008), as the main inquiry in the FGD. The intersubjectivity of these realities suggests that students construct diverse perspectives on beggars. Exploration of group conversations through Focus Group Discussions (FGD) is conducted to understand students' perceptions of the realities of begging in Jember.

Tabel 5. Students' constructions of the reality of begging

No.	Students' Constructions of the Reality of Begging
1.	Beggars employ strategies to gain sympathy and choose crowded locations
2.	Beggars often lie
3.	Beggars are lazy
4.	Begging is not a form of work
5.	Begging is inconsistent with the fifth principle of Pancasila.
6.	Begging does not align with the culture of hard work
7.	Begging violates social norms

Source: Researcher data processing results (2024)

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Externalization: Students' Initial Perceptions

Students construct an understanding of the reality of begging that reflects externalization, as explained through Berger's theory. This is demonstrated by students expressing their initial perceptions of begging based on their experiences, existing values, and daily interactions. Externalization is evident in students' perceptions that beggars employ strategies to gain sympathy, choose crowded locations, lie, are lazy, and that begging is not a form of work. Thus, the beggar story in the social studies classroom activates students' intentionality and becomes an object of their consciousness (Berger & Luckmann, 2015).

Students describe beggars in multiple layers, and these descriptions are strongly influenced by the social and cultural environment around them. First, students recognize that beggars employ strategies to elicit sympathy and that these strategies are optimized by choosing crowded locations. That finding is based on students' statements, especially Serenity (12 years old), *"At the traffic light near Junior High School 2, I often see one. Suddenly, they come close to the car window and ask for money. The person is quite old, probably can't work anymore, and has already fallen into poverty."* This finding is related to Leone (2012) study that states beggars strategically position themselves in high-traffic areas to optimize sympathy and earn money. Similarly, Prayoga (2024) study that shows beggars in urban Indonesian contexts employ localized presence and strategic positioning for earning money and survival. That's a pattern consistent with what Serenity observed.

Second, students claim that individuals engaged in begging often lie about their impoverished identity, based on Carlos (11 years old), *"Yep... not all beggars are truly poor."* This interpretation resonates with scholarly discussions on dramaturgical techniques, symbolic gestures, localized presence, strategic positioning, and micro-strategies (Leone, 2012; Prayoga, 2024; Sulastri et al., 2022) that support the thesis that begging constitutes a form of street theatre (Henry, 2009). However, Sulastri et al., (2022) warned that the lack of public or government response to the poor creates a cycle of beggars making exaggerated efforts to display their poverty identity, and this becomes necessary to survive.

Third, students construct a narrative that beggars are basically lazy. Highlight to Shella (11 years old) statement *"...If beggars earn that much money, then it seems they're just too lazy to work, Sir..."* This statement was a view that overlooks socio-economic barriers compelling individuals to beg. In fact, empirical studies highlight that begging is associated with several individual problems, such as a lack of social interaction, deepening inferiority, and loss of self-esteem and dignity, which contribute to the marginalization of beggars within society because they have no ties to society (Nurullah et al., 2024; Ojo & Benson, 2017).

The finding that students construct perceptions of beggars as "lazy" based on their social environment aligns with the analysis of Fu et al. (2025). This study demonstrates how children are socialized to understand the phenomena of death and grief through cultural narratives embedded in children's picture books (Fu et al., 2025). This study identified normalization strategies that shape children's understanding and construct reality through storytelling.

Similarly, this study reveals that students' perceptions of beggars are normalized through cultural narratives about laziness and the illegitimacy of begging. This study extends Fu et al. (2025) framework by demonstrating that Berger and Luckmann's dialectic operates not only through children's books but also through dialogical engagement with local social issues in the classroom.

Fourth, students claim that begging is not a form of work, perceiving it as irrelevant to economic activities. This claim is based on Adeline's (11 years old) statement, *“People who dress up as clowns and beg at the Argopuro intersection seem to be working. But begging itself is not a job.”* This statement suggests that students are applying their pre-theoretical knowledge to categorize social phenomena between performance-based solicitation and pure begging. While this reflects a moral judgment of unproductiveness (Onipede & Falana, 2022) research emphasizes that begging simultaneously functions as a survival strategy for those navigating structural socio-economic difficulties (Massey et al., 2010). Taken together, these student perceptions, as externalization, are not formed in isolation, but rather are embedded in broader social and cultural narratives that shape the way begging is interpreted and judged.

Such externalization has the potential to be continually maintained by students or even by the wider society, since the product of externalization is sui generis (Dharma, 2018). Essentially, externalization serves as a means for human beings to establish and maintain stable relationships with their social world (Berger & Luckmann, 2015; Dharma, 2018). At a more advanced stage, externalization produces continuous habituation, which is represented in an individual's patterns of action when responding to particular objects that are organized around the “here” and “now” (Berger & Luckmann, 2015). In simple terms, students' perceptions indicate a natural response to the reality of beggars.

These responses reflect students' perceptions and meaningful actions that have become routine, grounded in their common stock of knowledge as described by Berger (Pramono et al., 2024; Schock, 2023). The notion of the common stock of knowledge emphasizes that students' perceptions of beggars, particularly regarding lying and lazy beggars, are not merely an individual possession but a collective resource shaped by social interactions (Anriani & Nasution, 2024; Dharma, 2018). Long before Berger, Schutz introduced the concept of stock of knowledge at hand to explain how past experiences serve as a reference for interpreting new situations (Griselda Lopez, 2021; Ibrahim et al., 2024). Thus, it can be understood that students' perceptions of beggars are influenced by social and cultural structures, not merely by individual traits. Moreover, the continuity of externalization signifies the legitimacy of objective reality, wherein intersubjective experiences are transformed into a shared reality.

Objectivation: From Personal Views to Shared Reality

The objectivation stage emerged when, through FGD and classroom discussions, the previously externalized personal views are tested and negotiated within group conversations, thereby forming a shared social meaning that is regarded as objective reality. This process of

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objectivation is closely related to the social structures and institutions that guide human interaction. From early interactions with their environment, individuals develop characteristic typifications based on everyday experiences. These typifications are expressed through specific patterns of behavior when interacting with others, forming a shared understanding that helps organize social roles and the division of labor within the group. In this way, personal views that have been externalized and negotiated in discussions become part of the broader social framework, recognized as objective reality (Berger & Luckmann, 2015; Dharma, 2018; Schock, 2023). This process crystallized students' personal views into a shared moral framework, primarily articulated through Pancasila, the culture of hard work, and local social norms.

Oloan (12 years old) articulated this synthesis, “...*Actually, they are disturbing... and violating social norms... and begging is not in accordance with the practice of Pancasila, especially the fifth principle.*” Students place the fifth principle of Pancasila as an objective reality that delegitimizes begging as a unique form of objectivation in the Indonesian context. This contrasts with secular states, where condemnation of begging may be based solely on legal-rational grounds such as violations of public order. However, here, moral condemnation is integrated with state ideology. This finding extends Berger's theoretical framework by demonstrating that “objective reality” in the school environment is not simply a product of face-to-face interactions but is heavily mediated by the ideological apparatus of the curriculum, in this case, Pancasila education. While Azeem et al., (2023) highlight the structural economic drivers of begging in Pakistan, where millions are forced to beg due to a lack of opportunities (Azeem et al., 2023) this study shows that Indonesian students prioritize ideological-moral frameworks over structural analysis when evaluating the phenomenon. This does not mean students are unaware of structural factors, but rather that objectivation prioritizes the moral-ideological frameworks available through their educational experiences.

Interestingly, this moral objectivation is not monolithic or uncritical. Classroom discourse introduces a critical legal dimension as students engage with written regulations. Ezio (12 years old) argued, “...*After the discussion about Article 28 of the 1945 Constitution, it seems that the government is the one to blame...*” indicating students' awareness of inconsistencies between local regulations and higher-level constitutional law. This dialectic between local rules that state, “which prohibits begging and sanctions both beggars and those who give to them” (Peraturan Bupati Jember Nomor 40 Tahun 2014 Tentang Pedoman Penanganan Gelandangan Dan Pengemis Di Kabupaten Jember, 2014) and national law demonstrates that objectivation is not passive acceptance of dominant norms, but an active and contested process of meaning-making. As Hubert (2019) argues in his communicative constructivism, objectivation is an ongoing communicative achievement, not a passive absorption of taken-for-granted realities. This is often under-examined in Berger's description of objectivation as a “taken-for-granted” reality. Students do not simply absorb objective reality, but they are interrogating it through various legal and moral frameworks.

Externalization and objectification are moments within a dialectical process that occurs continuously. In the context of these FGD, students act simultaneously as social producers and consumers, where their personal views are expressed, tested, and negotiated collectively. This process is influenced by primary pre-theoretical knowledge, which includes rules, morals, words of wisdom, values, beliefs, myths, and various other forms of early knowledge (Dharma, 2018; Pramono et al., 2024). It is this primary knowledge that forms the basis for students to construct shared social meanings and collectively respond to what is regarded as objective reality.

The findings align with research that emphasizes that cultural context influences the process of reasoning and decision-making. Tang & Tang (2016) demonstrate that Chinese cultural norms strengthen students' decision-making and sense of responsibility, while American contexts show increased student activity in areas related to personal choice (Tang & Tang, 2016). In the Indonesian context, students' construction of reality is influenced by reasoning rooted in fundamental values, social norms, and local wisdom (NurSeki & Sepiarti, 2023; Yaqin et al., 2024). Based on narratives developed by students, it has developed an understanding of social realities, reflecting both moral knowing and moral feeling (Annisa et al., 2024; Susanti, 2022). The objectivation phase thus reveals that shared reality is not merely imposed but actively constructed through critical engagement with multiple normative frameworks.

Solving The Problem of Beggars: Student Internalization

Students' ability to solve basic problems is a representation of moral action. Several things, such as cultural characteristics, local wisdom, and values, are important aspects that underlie the problem-solving process (Susanti, 2022; Zandrato et al., 2020). Culture is an important factor in influencing value-based reasoning, shaping students' perspectives, and encouraging moral decision-making (Tang & Tang, 2016). Research shows that collective culture is a strengthening factor in collective awareness and positive attitudes of members (Liu et al., 2023). Value-based reasoning is a pedagogical approach that encourages students to make moral judgments about a phenomenon. This approach trains students to think critically by examining values and predicting their implications. This approach has been shown to improve students' ability to analyze complex issues, assess evidence, and make reasoned decisions by considering multiple perspectives and reflecting on the ethical dimensions of decision-making (Rombout, 2024).

The following are students' moral actions represented by decision-making in responding to the beggar's story.

Tabel 6. Solve the problem of beggars through student internalization

No. Solve The Problem of Beggars by a Student

1. The government must uphold the Indonesian Constitution, especially Article 28, which mandates the care and protection of the poor and neglected.
-

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-
2. Providing job training
 3. Place beggars in specific jobs that are easy to do
-

Source: Researcher data processing results (2024)

Table 4 above represents Berger's dialectic, specifically internalization. When students then take the results of the discussion and the objective reality back into their personal consciousness, influencing the way they evaluate social issues and make moral decisions, this reflects a more detailed aspect of internalization (Berger & Luckmann, 2015). In fact, internalization occurs at the initial point in the temporal sequence related to the dialectic of social construction. Internalization in an individual or a society can be detected when interactions of meaning manifest from the subjective processes of students, thereby becoming subjectively meaningful for the other students (Dharma, 2018; Pramono et al., 2024; Schock, 2023).

Students' Internalization process is illustrated in Table 4, where students proposed concrete solutions, such as enforcing Article 28 of the Constitution, providing job training, and placing beggars in specific jobs. These responses reflect internalization because students have integrated the outcomes of FGD as social interactions into their personal reasoning. As a result, their proposed solutions carry both moral and legal considerations, demonstrating how social discussions are transformed into individual, value-informed judgments.

First, students proposed that the government implement the Indonesian Constitution, especially Article 28, which mandates the care and protection of the poor and neglected. Article 28 emphasizes the existence of social protection efforts that include provision, prevention, promotion, and transformation to effectively resolve poverty issues. This includes government efforts to systematically change the mindset of the poor towards productivity and independence (Alyona, 2019). Second, students suggested providing job training to beggars. Selikhov (2024) explains that such problem-solving formulations can support improving beggars' capabilities as Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), enabling survival according to applicable norms. Third, students suggest that the authorities immediately place beggars in specific jobs that are easy to do. While this statement is quite naive, it relates to the Displacement Economies Framework concept of economic integration for displaced people. This involves overcoming legal and economic barriers to enable displaced individuals to contribute economically (Brown et al., 2024).

The analysis of students' construction of the reality of beggars in Jember and their proposed solutions shows a representation of value-based reasoning and decision-making abilities. Thus, the use of beggar stories can be said to be able to realize the goals of social studies. Several studies have shown that the use of beggar stories has various implications, such as the study of storytelling in social studies classrooms can increase both social and emotional intelligence (Zarifsanaiey et al., 2022). In other studies, the use of personal stories can influence decision-making in choosing a university (Burns, 2015), and storytelling becomes a tool for supporting social justice (Wångren, 2016). Moreover, social stories are identified as being able to help

promote social change (Hayvon, 2025). Therefore, the implications of this study are not only to bridge classroom learning with real-world issues, enhancing the reflection, empathy, social and ethical awareness, but also to make a discourse-based basis to address social issues in the context of Pelita Hati Elementary School.

The Implications: Make Discourses, Pedagogical Risk, and Balanced Storytelling

The use of social stories in the classroom demonstrates a significant impact on students' awareness of reality and can serve as a driver of citizenship transmission among students, as is the tradition in social studies. Students' perspectives on beggars and the problem-solving efforts they discussed indicate an attempt to understand the complexity of issues, both concerning beggars themselves and the broader social structures. This is reflected in the FGD processes in the classroom, which illustrate the dialectic of externalization, objectivation, and internalization. The dialectical process among students in the FGD represents a naturally occurring learning process (Liviani et al., 2023), through dilemmatic confrontations between the values of reality and the values of ideality. In addition, the use of beggar stories has implications for the development of discourse among students at Pelita Hati Elementary School.

Discourses are generally seen as a structured way of communication, not just separate sentences, but a way to build and reflect social relationships and realities. Traditionally, discourses were defined as language above the sentence, which focuses on the structure and function of language in communication (Guihua & Mi, 2023). But, in post-structuralist views, discourses were seen as a form of social practice where language plays a central role in shaping social realities and conflicts (Guihua & Mi, 2023). On the cognitive and ethical dimensions, discourses were also viewed as a mental phenomenon and a condition for social action, highlighting their role in constructing social meanings (Oleshkova, 2021). On the other hand, the influence of discourses in the social world can shape perceptions, social movements, and power dynamics. As exemplified by the Platform of People Affected by Mortgages (PAH), utilize discourse to highlight injustices and reshape societal narratives, these movements employ self-mediation strategies (Alonso-Muñoz & Casero-Ripollés, 2016).

Making a beggar story as discourse in a social studies classroom was like learning from social realities error (Sumantri et al., 2025). While discourse plays a crucial role in shaping social realities, it is also subject to manipulation and distortion. Similarly, the pedagogical risk of using beggar stories lies in reinforcing stigma against the poor, as it can perpetuate harmful narratives that frame poverty as the result of individual failings rather than structural inequalities. Individuals experiencing poverty often internalize these negative narratives, leading to feelings of shame and self-blame that can hinder their social mobility (Beddoe & Kedell, 2016). Moreover, poverty is frequently mischaracterized as a personal failure, overlooking structural factors such as economic inequality and systemic discrimination that contribute to it (Friedman et al., 2022). This duality highlights the need for critical engagement

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with the discourses that permeate society and raises concerns about the authenticity of the narratives that dominate public discourse.

To address these challenges, educators should adopt balanced storytelling approaches that incorporate diverse narratives. This involves presenting the lived experiences of those in poverty while situating these stories within broader socio-economic contexts, allowing students to understand the interplay between individual experiences and systemic realities (Semali, 2022). Teaching should also encourage critical analysis of the socio-political systems that perpetuate stigma, fostering students' ability to recognize both personal and structural dimensions of poverty (Shildrick, 2018). While balanced storytelling is essential, educators must remain vigilant, as some narratives may inadvertently reinforce stigma if not carefully framed (Sumantri et al., 2025). In addition to pedagogical risk as a challenge in implementing poverty-based Social Studies learning, another challenge is that many teachers cannot organize the learning process effectively (Mufid & Suprijono, 2024). It is necessary to motivate teachers to keep learning, one of which is by adopting thoughtful and nuanced approaches, educators can cultivate a deeper, use contextual understanding of systemic barriers (Hartutik et al., 2025) for a more empathetic understanding of poverty among students and practitioners.

CONCLUSION

The use of beggar stories in social studies aims to foster students' value-based reasoning and reasoned decision-making skills. The findings of this study indicate that fifth and sixth-grade students at SD Pelita Hati Jember possess the ability to comprehend social realities and participate in problem-solving. Through group discussions and reflective dialogue, students developed the perspectives that beggars are not only objects of pity but social actors adopting strategic behaviors, such as choosing crowded sites and bringing small children to evoke sympathy. The student exhibited knowledge of manipulative behaviors employed by certain beggars and commenced an evaluation of these behaviors in the context of cultural values and Pancasila. Students articulated perspectives such as “begging contradicts the fifth principle of Pancasila” and “beggars exhibit laziness,” indicating a developing comprehension of work ethic and prevailing social norms. Beggar stories have proven significance in enhancing reflective, empathetic, and ethical thinking capacities. The incorporation of beggar stories in social studies acts as a significant bridge between social dialogue and value awareness. Students develop moral knowledge, moral feeling, and moral action through comprehension, reflection, and discussion.

Beyond the classroom context, this study has broad implications for educational practice and policy. For curriculum developers, the integration of local social issues into elementary school social studies has proven effective in fostering critical awareness and values-based reasoning in students, in line with the National Curriculum's emphasis on contextual learning. For teachers and administrators, focus group discussions and dialogic pedagogy can shift students' initial stereotypes toward deeper structural understanding, making teacher

professional development in facilitating sensitive topics crucial for minimizing the reinforcement of stigma. At the policy level, education can be a long-term complementary approach to addressing social issues such as begging by fostering empathetic and critical public awareness and citizenry. Discourses born in the classroom can ultimately permeate families and communities, fostering a cultural shift in understanding and addressing poverty.

This study has limitations that open opportunities for future research. First, the findings cannot be generalized to broader contexts because the research was conducted in a single elementary school in Jember with a limited number of participants. Future research should replicate this approach across different geographic and cultural contexts to test whether the collective-ideological reasoning patterns found are unique to Indonesia or reflect broader Asian educational traditions. Second, the focus on Berger's theory limits the analysis to the sociological dimension, so integrating perspectives from moral psychology, critical pedagogy, or neuroscience is necessary for a more holistic understanding. Third, there is a pedagogical risk that beggar stories have the potential to reinforce stigma against the poor if not carefully framed. Therefore, longitudinal studies are needed to evaluate whether the observed increases in empathy and critical awareness are sustainable over the long term, and how teachers can be supported in implementing a balanced storytelling approach. Fourth, this study relies on focus group discussion data; therefore, a quantitative and ethnographic approach could provide a more complete picture of changes in student attitudes and interactions. Finally, scalability testing through partnerships with local education authorities is needed to generate evidence that can inform educational policy.

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