

Strengthening the Ecopedagogical Literacy Model of Multicultural Values in Lasem's History, Based on Generative AI ChatGPT, to Support Cultural Tourism Among Students

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Abstract

Lasem's multicultural tourism has great potential but has not yet been fully utilised. One way to raise awareness and interest in Lasem's tourism is through education, particularly the use of multicultural history teaching materials. History teachers play a vital role in introducing the Chinese, Javanese and Islamic cultural heritage that shapes Lasem's identity. The challenge faced is the low level of teachers' ability to write and present historical material, due to limited access to sources and the underutilisation of AI technology. Using the Participatory Action Research (PAR) methodology, this community engagement programme offers training for history teachers across Rembang Regency through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) organised by the MGMP at SMA Negeri 1 Sumber. Activities include an introduction to digital archives, text scanning using Google Lens, and text processing using ChatGPT prompts. Targeted outputs include copyrighted tutorial videos, journal article publications, highlight videos, and mass media coverage. It is hoped that this initiative will enhance the quality of history education whilst optimising the utilisation of Lasem's tourism potential.

Keywords

Ecopedagogy Literacy; Multiculturalism; AI ChatGPT; Cultural Tourism.

INTRODUCTION

The teaching of history in Indonesia is often trapped in the stereotype of being a boring subject with little relevance to pupils' lives. Many pupils believe that history has no direct connection to their lives, let alone their future, and so they drift further away from understanding their nation's history (Hasan, 2019). This situation has become a significant issue in the field of history education. One of the main causes is a teaching approach that places too much emphasis on memorising dates, names of figures, and places, without exploring the meaning and values contained within them. Consequently, pupils fail to appreciate the depth or relevance of

historical events, and fail to grasp the values that should foster a sense of patriotism.

In order to improve the quality of education, the government has introduced the Merdeka Curriculum as an alternative to the previous curriculum. The Merdeka Curriculum is designed to respond to the challenges of the modern era by providing learning experiences that are relevant, flexible, and focused on developing the potential of pupils.

In the context of history learning, this curriculum emphasises a more flexible and interactive approach, grounded in critical understanding, so that it is not limited to methods focused

solely on rote learning (Syamsuridhawati & Bahri, 2025). The approach adopted emphasises freedom, creativity, and project-based and problem-based learning, which encourage pupils to develop 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, collaboration and communication.

Nevertheless, the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum still faces various challenges, particularly for history teachers in integrating local content that is both informative and engaging. This is also felt by history teachers in Rembang Regency. Based on initial interviews with history teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Rembang (3 December 2024), it was found that the majority of teachers still face difficulties in designing Merdeka Curriculum-based lessons that are integrated with local content, such as the history of Lasem. Conversely, current teaching practices tend to rely heavily on textbooks published by the Ministry, which are conventional in nature and offer little flexibility. This situation is one of the factors hindering innovation in the teaching of history.

On the other hand, the history of Lasem is rich in multicultural values stemming from the interaction of Chinese, Javanese and Islamic cultures. This cultural fusion

is reflected in the town's architecture, which blends Javanese, Chinese and Arabic styles (Cahya Adhitya et al., 2023). The acculturation between Chinese and Islamic cultures is also particularly evident in religious architecture, for example in the roof of the Grand Mosque of Lasem, which incorporates Chinese design elements

(Ayuningrum, 2017). This potential should be harnessed as contextual teaching materials capable of fostering historical awareness whilst promoting an understanding of cultural diversity. However, teachers' limited skills in writing and developing locally-relevant teaching materials, coupled with a lack of understanding regarding the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology, present significant barriers.

Through initial discussions with secondary school history teachers in Rembang Regency, several key issues were identified: (1) teachers' limited skills in innovating teaching materials; (2) a lack of understanding regarding the use of AI to design locally-based history teaching materials; and (3) a lack of adequate skills in utilising Lasem's multicultural history teaching materials, which are based on the values of multiculturalism. In response to these issues, collaboration is required between the Rembang Regency History Teachers' Working Group (MGMP) and Semarang State University through a community service programme. The proposed solutions include training on the use of AI in the creation of multicultural-based Lasem history teaching materials, regular monthly mentoring throughout the programme, and the establishment of an online communication group to provide ongoing technical support. Through this approach, it is hoped that history teachers will be able to develop teaching materials that are relevant, contextual and innovative, thereby transforming pupils' perceptions of history learning whilst strengthening their multicultural literacy.

RESEARCH METHOD

The method used in this community engagement activity is Participatory Action Research (PAR). This method is a collaborative approach used in community engagement activities, emphasising active involvement between researchers and community members. PAR comprises the stages of planning, implementation and evaluation (Aditya Wiranda et al., 2025). The main objective of PAR is to address social issues and bring about sustainable change through collective research, problem identification and action planning (Abdullah et al., 2023). This method has been applied in various contexts, such as the empowerment of senior pupils in faith-based schools (Abdullah et al., 2023), the improvement of teaching quality (Soe'oed et al., 2022), and the development of digital marketing skills for small businesses (Qomar et al., 2022). The results of applying PAR in these three studies demonstrate positive impacts, including increased participant enthusiasm, improvements in the quality of education, and the successful adoption of digital marketing strategies by local businesses. In line with this, this community engagement activity also emphasised active collaboration between the community engagement team, the History Teachers' Working Group (MGMP), secondary school history teachers, and partner schools. It is hoped that this approach will foster more contextual, participatory and sustainable innovations in history learning.

The research phases began with initial observations and discussions with

the MGMP committee and history teachers to identify needs, challenges, and opportunities for utilising Lasem history teaching materials based on multicultural values. Subsequently, intervention measures were implemented, including the provision of facilities to support internet access, workshops on teaching material development, expert validation, training, and intensive mentoring. The mentoring process was carried out through regular visits to partner schools, covering implementation practices, reflection, and the refinement of teaching strategies. At each stage, formative evaluations were conducted to assess the effectiveness of the activities, followed by a summative evaluation at the end of the programme to measure the achievement of the community service objectives.

Data for this research was collected using several techniques, namely observation, interviews, documentation, and the distribution of questionnaires to training participants. The data obtained was then analysed qualitatively with reference to the achievement of pre-defined success indicators. This approach was chosen to ensure that the community service activities were not merely a one-way training process, but also served as a means of continuously strengthening teachers' capacities. Through this strategy, the initiative is expected to foster more innovative teaching practices, strengthen collaborative networks among educators, and ensure the continued use of the teaching materials produced within the context of history teaching in schools. Consequently, the training not only

provides practical knowledge but also creates a long-term impact on improving the quality of education.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This community engagement activity was designed as an academic contribution focused on improving the quality of locally-based history teaching through the integration of multicultural literacy, eco-pedagogy and Generative AI technology, specifically ChatGPT. The event took place on Wednesday, 3 August 2025, in the meeting room of Rembang State Senior Secondary School No. 1, with participants comprising history teachers from state senior secondary schools across Rembang Regency who are members of the Rembang Regency History Teachers' Working Group (MGMP), acting as partners in the community engagement initiative.

The event began with a discussion and needs assessment to identify teachers' requirements in developing local history teaching, particularly the multicultural history of Lasem, which played a significant role in the cultural and trade development of the Nusantara. Since the Majapahit era, Lasem has flourished as a centre of maritime activity and a meeting point for diverse cultures, such as Javanese, Chinese and Arab (Adhitya et al., 2023). Based on the results of initial coordination, it was determined that the approach to be used would be the strengthening of eco-pedagogical literacy—a pedagogical approach that integrates the values of sustainability, local wisdom, and the utilisation of generative AI technology. The use of generative AI can assist teachers in

Indonesia in developing more efficient and high-quality learning materials (Syahputra et al., 2025). In this context, ChatGPT is utilised to quickly and diversely explore information on the history of Lasem, helping teachers to construct contextual and engaging historical narratives, develop digital storytelling-based learning models, and create interactive learning content that reflects local cultural values. Although ChatGPT is capable of providing quick references and varied material for subjects such as Indonesian, there are concerns regarding over-reliance on technology and the need to adapt content to meet curriculum requirements (Juni et al., 2025).

In the first session, Dr Soeharso, M.Pd., a Lecturer in History Education at UNNES, presented material on the use of digital technologies such as YouTube and PowerPoint for creating history learning videos. He emphasised the importance of utilising platforms with which learners are already familiar to make history learning more engaging and accessible. The next session was led by Dimas Anggoro, S.Pd., M.Pd., who introduced simple techniques for creating infographics featuring local heroes and historical figures from Lasem as a means of strengthening students' character and multicultural values. Participants were actively and enthusiastically engaged. They took notes, engaged in discussions, and shared experiences regarding the application of Generative AI (ChatGPT) technology to create local history learning materials that are relevant, innovative, and focused on strengthening cultural identity and

developing educational tourism among pupils.

Assessment in education is a vital process for gathering information on pupils' learning outcomes and improving the quality of learning (Syarif et al., 2021). In the context of this activity, evaluation was carried out using both qualitative and quantitative approaches to obtain a more comprehensive picture. The qualitative evaluation indicated that the activity went well and received a positive response from participants, although it was noted that time management needed to be improved in future activities. Quantitative evaluation was carried out via a questionnaire to measure participants' understanding of the material and their ability to implement an eco-pedagogy and AI-based literacy model in history teaching. The questionnaire results showed that the majority of participants understood the concept of eco-pedagogy literacy, were able to use ChatGPT as a tool to support history learning, and were committed to developing local history education in Lasem to increase pupils' interest in local culture and historical tourism in the Rembang region.

CONCLUSION

The Programme to Strengthen the Lasem History Multicultural Values Ecopedagogy Literacy Model, based on ChatGPT Generative AI, for history teachers at state senior secondary schools throughout Rembang Regency has proven to be a strategic step in improving the quality of history teaching integrated with multicultural values and

environmental awareness. The use of technology facilitates teachers' ability to access, process and present historical material in a creative and contextual manner, whilst emphasising its relevance to local wisdom, cultural potential and environmental issues. The programme also encourages the development of collaborative learning that links the history of Lasem with cultural tourism potential, ensuring that students not only understand history as past events, but also as part of the region's creative economic development. As a result, there has been a noticeable increase in pupils' awareness of the preservation of Lasem's cultural heritage, a sense of pride in their local identity, and motivation to become actively involved in promoting cultural tourism. This success demonstrates that the integration of eco-pedagogical literacy with AI technology can serve as an effective and innovative learning model to support the development of cultural tourism and the strengthening of local identity amongst the younger generation.

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