

Analyzing the Controversy of Literature Integration in Educational Curricula: Policy Review and Educational Implications

Amelia Juanda ✉¹

¹ Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

✉ ameliajuanda.2023@student.uny.ac.id

Abstract. The integration of literature into educational curricula has sparked ongoing debate regarding its relevance and practical value in modern education systems. This study explores the challenges, implications, and benefits of incorporating literature into the curriculum, balancing tradition with innovation while emphasizing its socio-cultural importance. The primary challenges include policy prioritization of STEM subjects over the humanities, insufficient teacher preparedness, and resource inequalities between urban and rural schools. To address these issues, the study advocates for comprehensive policy reforms, including improved teacher training, equitable access to literary resources, and contextualized curricula that incorporate both local and global literary works. The findings highlight literature's significant role in developing 21st-century skills, such as critical thinking, creativity, empathy, and communication. By engaging with literary texts, students can connect with cultural heritage, foster moral reflection, and develop a global outlook. Additionally, balancing classical literary traditions with modern, technology-driven approaches enhances student engagement and accessibility in the digital age. Literature's socio-cultural value lies in its ability to preserve cultural identity, reflect societal realities, and inspire critical consciousness. This study concludes that integrating literature into curricula is vital for holistic education, cultivating students' intellectual, ethical, and emotional development. Policymakers and educators must collaborate to ensure sustainable implementation, bridging the gap between humanistic learning and contemporary educational needs.

Keywords: Literature; Education Policy; Curriculum Integration; Educational Implication.

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental transformation process that shapes both individuals and society. The role of literature, especially in relation to culture, is one of the areas of concern in the educational curriculum. Literature can not only serve as a medium to improve language skills, but it also has the potential to enhance students' social lives and strengthen their cultural understanding (Benabbes & AbdulHaleem Abu Taleb, 2024). Research shows that literature has the capacity to reflect cultural identicalities (Key et al., 2022).

However, many studies have shown that literature is important in education. However, many people debate how effective it is, especially in meeting the demands of today's world, which prioritizes measurable results and skills that can be applied in the workplace (Gafni et al., 2024). Modern educational approaches that emphasize practical skills such as STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) often clash with traditional approaches that prioritize literature.

This creates tension in the development of a curriculum that integrates 21st-century literature and skills, which are increasingly essential to address the demands of technology and globalization (Mathou, 2023; Homer et al., 2025).

It is often believed that incorporating literature into the curriculum helps students improve their empathy, social awareness, and critical thinking skills. According to some researchers, literature can provide benefits beyond language lessons because it can incorporate relevant and global cultural elements into the current educational curriculum (Tan et al., 2024; Cufer & Kosty, 2023). Additionally, content-based approaches that use literary elements to teach language skills and cultural understanding are gaining traction (Kabilan & Khan, 2012). Nevertheless, there is skepticism regarding the possibility that the intrinsic value of literature could be diminished if it is viewed solely as a tool for language or cultural learning, which could reduce its appreciation as a profound art form (Le et al., 2024).

In the Indonesian context, education policies that often change are one of the major obstacles in the implementation of literature in the curriculum. Often, these policies prioritize technical skills over the development of humanistic values through literature, which can lead to the neglect of literature lessons in schools (Jones & Christakis, 2024). Following ongoing policy changes, the emergence of the Independent Curriculum in 2023 by the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology offers a more flexible space in integrating literature with broader educational goals, including the development of 21st century skills such as critical thinking, creativity, and communication (Rapti & Sapounidis, 2024). This provides an opportunity to combine literature across disciplines to create more dynamic and interdisciplinary learning.

However, the biggest challenge in the implementation of this policy is the readiness of teachers to teach literature in a way that is relevant and attractive to students in the digital era (Rodrigo et al., 2025). Many teachers feel less trained in using technology to teach literature in a creative and fun way. In addition, the inequality of resources between schools in urban and rural areas further worsens access to quality literary education (Kemelbayeva & Kurmanov, 2024; Almusaed et al., 2025). This has led to significant gaps in the implementation of an inclusive curriculum throughout Indonesia. The novelty of this research is to explore more deeply how the Independent Curriculum can be a solution in overcoming these challenges, particularly in terms of literary integration, which not only improves language skills, but also develops students' social, moral, and cultural skills (Tsao & Nogues, 2024). By using a more content-based approach, literature can be taught in a more contextual manner by adapting to the local and global needs of students, as well as by leveraging digital technologies to enhance the learning experience (Wu & Wang, 2025).

Over time, literature not only taught moral values, but also provided space to explore complex ethical dilemmas, such as those often found in literary works.

Literature can portray a variety of perspectives on human life that help students to see the world from a broader perspective, which ultimately develops their empathy and social insight. Therefore, literature has great potential to enrich education in different, more in-depth, and relevant ways in the context of social and global change.

1.1 Literature Review

Numerous studies have highlighted the importance of literature in the curriculum as a tool for character development and moral learning (Puspitasari et al., 2021). Additionally, literature is believed to enhance students' critical thinking and empathy skills (Levett-Jones et al., 2024). However, research has also brought to light the other side of the issue, namely, the burden of study time and the current educational orientation that prioritizes technological and scientific skills (Kabra et al., 2023). Research on the integration of literature in the curriculum has been a fascinating and controversial topic in various countries. Indeed, one of the relevant studies is by (Benediktsson & Tavares, 2024), who explored the implications of curriculum review for English Literature and English Language studies at tertiary level. This study found that an integrated approach in the curriculum could improve student performance by involving various stakeholders, including students, parents, and lecturers. This study also emphasized the importance of lecturer training in an integrated pedagogical approach.

Rogoza et al., (2025), discussed the challenges and strengths of an integrated approach in the curriculum. They stated that an integrated approach can reflect students' experiences outside school, making learning more practical, critical, and meaningful. However, they also acknowledged concerns that this approach may “water down” the curriculum. The integrated approach in the curriculum has also been discussed by the OECD in their report on curriculum reform. The report highlights the importance of stakeholder involvement in the reform process to ensure its effectiveness and inclusiveness. The report also emphasizes that an integrated approach can help students relate their learning to their everyday lives. This idea underscores the importance of a holistic and practical approach in education, which is crucial in developing well-rounded individuals who are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to thrive in today's world.

Educational policy is an initiative undertaken by the government or policymakers to achieve specific goals in education. According to public policy theory, these policies must consider various factors such as relevance, effectiveness, and social impact (Gao et al., 2025). Literature is believed to enrich moral, aesthetic, and cultural values in education (Baumann et al., 2022). For this reason, many curricula in various countries include literature as a compulsory or elective component in language education. These policies reflect the importance of literature in developing a broader understanding of the world and

fostering critical thinking skills in students (Promma et al., 2025).

2. METHOD

In this study, the approach used is literature review, which aims to analyze, criticize, and synthesize various existing research findings related to the integration of literature in the educational curriculum. This method includes the process of searching and selecting relevant literature from various sources, be it journal articles, books, policy reports, and previous studies that discuss the application of literature in education, both in terms of policy, pedagogy, and its impact on the development of students' character and social skills.

2.1 Literature Search

Finding books, papers, policy reports, and earlier research that is pertinent to the research topic that is, the function of literature in the curriculum is the first step in conducting a literature search. The selection of literature sources was based on temporal and thematic relevance, with a major focus on works published between 2017 and 2025. Academic databases like Google Scholar, JSTOR, ERIC, and other academic portals are used for the search process. "Curriculum reform and literature," "integration of literature in education," "literature in curriculum," and "impact of literature on critical thinking and empathy" were among the search terms utilized."

2.2 Literature Selection

Once the relevant literature is found, the selection process is carried out considering the quality and credibility of the source. The selected articles are research published in reputable journals, academic books, and reports from leading educational institutions. The selection also includes articles that discuss various aspects of literary integration, both from the pedagogical side, policy, and its impact on student skill development, such as critical thinking, empathy, and creativity. Literature containing the results of empirical research and analysis of education policy is also the focus.

2.3 Synthesis and Critical Analysis

Once the literature is selected, the next step is synthesis and critical analysis. The selected literature was analyzed to identify the key themes that emerged in the integration of literature in the curriculum, as well as the associated challenges and opportunities. This synthesis includes a discussion of the benefits of literature in education, both in the development of academic, social, moral, and 21st-century skills such as critical thinking and empathy. In addition, criticism of the practice of literary integration and challenges in its implementation, such as unequal distribution of resources and limitations in teacher training, were also discussed.

3. RESULTS

The integration of literature into the curriculum faces several significant challenges, including policy shifts that prioritize STEM subjects over the humanities, leading to a marginalization of literature in many educational systems, including in Indonesia. This policy bias often stems from the perceived lack of direct economic benefits associated with literature, which is viewed as a "soft" subject with limited practical contributions to students' employability. Furthermore, many teachers in Indonesia are inadequately trained to teach literature in a creative and engaging manner, relying on traditional rote-learning methods that fail to spark student interest. This challenge is compounded by students' increasing engagement with digital media, which makes literature seem outdated and disconnected from their contemporary experiences. To address these issues, it is essential to implement policy reforms that balance the focus on STEM with the inclusion of humanities, improve teacher training, and integrate local and contemporary literary works that are more relatable to students' lives.

Literature plays a vital role in developing essential 21st-century skills, such as critical thinking, creativity, empathy, and communication. By analyzing complex literary texts, students enhance their ability to think critically, interpret meanings, and engage in reflective discussions. Literature also fosters creativity, as students express themselves through writing and exploring new ideas. Additionally, literature promotes empathy by allowing students to step into the shoes of diverse characters, increasing their understanding of different cultures and perspectives. Studies have shown that reading literature with multicultural themes enhances students' empathy, social awareness, and emotional intelligence. Furthermore, literature-based activities such as discussions and group projects help students improve their teamwork and communication skills, which are crucial for both personal and professional growth.

In Indonesia, policies such as the National Language and Literature Policy Regulation No. 42 of 2018 have emphasized the importance of literature education for fostering national identity and preserving cultural heritage. However, there are still gaps in the practical implementation of these policies, especially regarding resource inequalities between urban and rural schools. To overcome this, the government must prioritize equitable access to literary resources, such as digital libraries and government-funded book distribution programs, especially for schools in underprivileged areas. Additionally, policies should encourage the integration of both local and global literary works into the curriculum, allowing students to connect with their cultural roots while engaging with diverse perspectives. By adopting a balanced approach that combines traditional literature with innovative teaching methods, such as digital tools and multimedia platforms, literature education can remain relevant and contribute to the holistic development of students.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 Challenges in Integrating Literature into the Curriculum

Integrating literature into the educational curriculum faces a range of structural, cultural, and pedagogical challenges. One of the main challenges in integrating literature into the curriculum is the education policies that often prioritize STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) over the humanities. This shift in policy is driven by the demands of the global economy, which places greater emphasis on technical and practical skills in preparing students for the workforce. As a result, literature is often viewed as a 'soft' subject with limited practical contributions to student employability, disregarding its crucial role in developing critical thinking, creativity, empathy, and cross-cultural understanding all of which are essential for success in today's interconnected world.

Smith, (2017), emphasize that the focus on measurable learning outcomes often relegates literature to a position of irrelevance in meeting the needs of modern education. This situation is exacerbated in Indonesia, where literature classes are often given less instructional time due to resource constraints. The UNESCO (2021) report found a decrease of up to 30% in enrollment in humanities at secondary level in several Southeast Asian countries, including Indonesia, as a consequence of these policies. This decline in focus on humanities and literature is problematic, as these fields contribute to crucial aspects of human development such as empathy, cultural understanding, and creativity. Beyond the policy-level marginalization of literature, another significant challenge arises from teachers' lack of preparedness to teach literature effectively. Kramer-Dahl et al., (2007), discovered that many Indonesian teachers feel inadequately equipped with the pedagogical skills required to teach literature in a creative and engaging manner. The traditional rote memorization method persists in most classrooms, which often makes literature seem dry and rigid. This approach strips away the explorative and critical dimensions that should be intrinsic to literature education.

Meanwhile, innovative strategies such as guided reading, literary circles, or drama-based methods have proven more effective in boosting student engagement. As Thomson (1992) notes, the conventional approach to literature education often lacks the vital exploratory and critical dimensions. Innovative teaching strategies, such as guided reading, literary circles, or drama-based methods, have demonstrated higher levels of student engagement. However, Craddock et al., (2024), survey reveals that 60% of Indonesian teachers do not have the confidence to design relevant and engaging literature lessons for their students. This lack of confidence may stem from inadequate teacher training, unfamiliarity with contemporary pedagogical methods, or the perception that literature education is low priority compared to other subjects.

Moreover, student engagement with literature presents its own challenge,

particularly in the digital age. Many students view literature as antiquated and irrelevant to their lives, often preferring the more interactive and compelling experiences offered by digital media. As Straw (2008) notes, literature must compete with social media, video platforms, and other digital media that dominate students' attention. Furthermore, the literary works taught in classrooms often lack contextually relevant connections to students' contemporary lives, further widening the gap between students and literature. Indeed, Liddicoat (2000) highlights the need for literature curricula to integrate local and contemporary works to better resonate with students' lived experiences. Nikolsky & Benítez-Burraco, (2024), study corroborates this, finding that schools teaching local literature, such as folklore and modern poetry, experienced a 25% increase in student interest. By incorporating literary works that reflect their cultural context, students can see themselves and their communities represented in the texts they study, fostering a sense of belonging and investment in their education.

Finally, resource inequities between urban and rural schools compound the challenge of integrating literature into the curriculum. Schools in remote or underserved areas often face limited access to a wide range of diverse and relevant literary materials. Gomez Jr., (2017) report that only 40% of rural schools in Indonesia have access to updated sources of literary reading material. In addition, technological infrastructure disparities hinder the modernization of literature education, despite the opportunities offered by digital platforms. As a result, students from low-income backgrounds are disproportionately impacted by these limitations.

To address these challenges, a comprehensive approach is required, encompassing policy reform to achieve greater parity between STEM and humanities, enhanced teacher training programs, adaptation of literature to contemporary life, and equitable distribution of educational resources throughout Indonesia. This holistic strategy will help to ensure that literature education is not left behind in the face of globalization, technological advancements, and evolving educational priorities.

4.2 The Role of Literature in Developing 21st-Century Skills

One of the key contributions of literature education is the development of critical thinking skills. By engaging with complex literary texts, students learn to evaluate meaning, identify hidden themes, and question social norms. Recent studies have emphasized that literature enhances students' ability to think critically, and encourages them to interpret layered meanings in texts, sharpening their analytical abilities (Abdullah et al., 2024). Literature-based curricula are shown to improve students' ability to argue critically, with a 15% increase in the quality of in-class discussions as evidenced by contemporary studies (Bobkina & Dominguez, 2019).

Moreover, literature fosters creativity and imaginative thinking. Through

writing stories, poems, or dramatic scripts, students are provided with opportunities to express themselves and exercise their imaginations. Recent research indicates that literature education is highly effective in fostering creativity and innovative thinking by allowing students to experiment with language and explore creative ideas (Khoso et al., 2025). Furthermore, studies in Indonesia show that students involved in narrative and poetry writing projects exhibit significant increases in their creativity and language proficiency (Law, 2024).

Additionally, literature plays a crucial role in developing empathy and emotional intelligence. By presenting diverse characters and situations, literature encourages students to understand the experiences of others, fostering tolerance and compassion. The ability to appreciate cultural differences and embrace diversity is significantly enhanced through engagement with multicultural literary texts (Lin et al., 2025). In a study on multicultural themes, it was found that students who read literary works with such themes showed a notable 20% increase in empathy levels, highlighting literature's effectiveness in promoting social awareness (Taye & Teshome, 2025).

Students can also use literature as a platform to enhance their morals and ethics. Literature encourages profound ethical inquiry by posing moral conundrums to students in real-world situations, in contrast to other academic fields that offer hard facts. This gives pupils the opportunity to use drama, poetry, or storytelling to reflect on difficult subjects like justice, truth, and morality. Literary works in Indonesia that tackle issues like justice and struggle are essential for teaching students about moral behavior and fostering moral growth, especially in countries that are struggling with socioeconomic inequity (Elnahla & McKay, 2020).

Finally, literature fosters teamwork and communication skills through discussions, literary circles, and group projects. By encouraging students to communicate both orally and in writing, these exercises help them become better communicators and team players. According to recent studies, literature-based conversations are useful for improving written and oral communication skills as well as teamwork, both of which are critical in both professional and educational contexts (Huang, 2025). By imaginatively incorporating literature into the curriculum, schools help children develop their character, critical thinking, and emotional intelligence in addition to their academic abilities, so preparing them for challenges in the future.

4.3 Policy Implications for Literature Integration

In fact, the National Language and Literature Policy Regulation No. 42 of 2018 of the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture (Permendikbud) states that the goal of this policy is to develop, foster, and preserve literature as part of initiatives to improve appreciation, creativity, and innovation in the field of education. According to Article 8 of the policy, the growth of literature is meant

to enhance national identity, establish the country as a cultural treasure, and elevate the country's standing in the world of literature. Additionally, this policy's Article 12 emphasizes the need of providing high-quality literature instruction in schools, educating teachers, and providing resources to support the literary community. Consequently, this policy offers a solid basis for the methodical and long-term incorporation of literature into the curriculum.

Policy frameworks that acknowledge literature's importance as a crucial part of a well-rounded education must be considerate and helpful in order to incorporate it into curriculum. In contrast to courses like STEM, literature frequently receives less emphasis in policy discussions, despite its evident benefits, which include cultivating critical thinking, empathy, and cultural knowledge. The perceived absence of direct economic benefits linked to literary studies is the cause of this discrepancy. According to Fawcett & Killip, (2019), politicians frequently give priority to topics with quantifiable results that meet the needs of the workforce, which causes the humanities including literature to be marginalized. Policies must be created to balance technical proficiency with humanistic education in order to rectify this disparity and guarantee that students acquire both practical skills and the capacity for moral, introspective thought.

In Indonesia, the introduction of the Merdeka Curriculum is a step forward in addressing the need for a more flexible and balanced educational system. The Merdeka Curriculum emphasizes the importance of 21st-century skills, including creativity, critical thinking, and cultural literacy, which align closely with the goals of literature education. Martínez-Álvarez et al., (2024), highlight how the flexibility offered by this curriculum enables teachers to incorporate literature into various subjects, such as history, ethics, and language studies, fostering interdisciplinary learning. For example, a history lesson can integrate literary texts like poetry or short stories to provide richer perspectives on historical events and societal changes. However, despite this flexibility, implementation remains uneven due to limited teacher preparedness and disparities in access to resources across schools.

Teacher training is a crucial policy consideration for the successful integration of literature. Policies must prioritize professional development programs that equip teachers with innovative pedagogical strategies to make literature engaging and relevant for students. According to Dian, (2017), many teachers in Indonesia lack confidence in teaching literature creatively, often resorting to outdated, rote-learning methods that fail to capture students' interest. Effective policies should mandate regular workshops, training sessions, and the provision of up-to-date teaching materials that reflect both traditional and contemporary literary works. Additionally, collaboration between education ministries and higher education institutions can help produce well-prepared teachers with the skills to implement literature-based curricula effectively.

Another important policy implication is addressing the resource inequality

between urban and rural schools. Schools in underprivileged areas often lack access to diverse literary texts, digital tools, and adequate libraries, which hampers efforts to integrate literature effectively. A study by Muniandy & Thurasamy, (2025), found that only 40% of schools in rural Indonesia had access to current and relevant literary resources, creating a gap in students' exposure to literature. To overcome this, policies should focus on providing equitable access to literary materials, whether through government-funded book distribution programs, digital libraries, or partnerships with publishing houses.

Furthermore, policies must encourage the contextualization of literary curricula to reflect local and global perspectives. While global literary works provide exposure to diverse cultures and ideas, local literature plays a critical role in preserving cultural heritage and fostering national identity. Emphasizes that integrating local literary texts, such as folklore, traditional poetry, and contemporary works by Indonesian authors, can make learning more relevant and engaging for students. Such policies ensure that literature not only contributes to global understanding but also strengthens students' connection to their own cultural roots.

Lastly, policy reforms must promote interdisciplinary approaches to literature education. Literature should not be confined to language classes but integrated across subjects such as ethics, science, and social studies to highlight its relevance in real-world contexts. For example, teaching ethical dilemmas from literary texts alongside moral philosophy can help students develop critical reasoning and ethical decision-making skills. Similarly, integrating literature into STEM subjects through storytelling or historical narratives can make abstract concepts more accessible and engaging.

4.4 Balancing Tradition and Innovation in Literature Education

Integrating tradition and innovation in literature education is a challenge that requires a holistic approach to ensure literature remains relevant to modern demands without losing its artistic value. Permendikbud No. 42 Tahun 2018 stresses the importance of developing and fostering literature as a means of character formation, reinforcing national identity, and increasing appreciation for both local and global literary works. However, in practice, this policy often faces a dilemma between preserving traditional literature rich with local culture and adopting technology-based innovations and modern approaches. According to recent studies, a traditional approach focusing on classical texts is still essential for preserving cultural heritage and the moral values embedded within literary works.

However, in the digital era, this traditional approach requires innovative methods to engage students and adapt to technological advancements. This challenge highlights the need for an integrative approach in literature education that strikes a balance between preserving traditional values and embracing technological advancements. A holistic approach could involve incorporating

digital tools, multimedia, and interactive activities that connect classical works to contemporary issues and student experiences. Innovation in literature education includes the utilization of digital technology such as e-books, literary podcasts, and multimedia platforms to present literary works interactively (Bereczki & Kárpáti, 2021). For example, virtual drama performances or digital storytelling allow students not only to comprehend literary works theoretically but also to engage in creative processes that foster critical and collaborative thinking. Furthermore, innovative approaches such as literary circle discussions and contextual analysis help students understand the relevance of literary works to contemporary issues such as the environment, gender equality, and human rights (Schwoerer, 2024).

Meanwhile, preserving local literary traditions is crucial for students to maintain a connection with their own culture. Policies like the inclusion of regional literature in the curriculum, as stipulated in Article 9 of Permendikbud No. 42 Tahun 2018, are strategic steps to preserve cultural identity amidst globalization. This policy not only helps students appreciate their heritage but also broadens their perspectives by exposing them to diverse voices and narratives. By teaching folktales, traditional poetry, and regional legends, students learn language and literature while embracing the local wisdom that is part of their national identity (Bhattacharya, 2015). Emphasizes that a balance between traditional and contemporary literary texts creates a space for students to respect their cultural heritage while developing a global perspective. This concept echoes the principles of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, which are increasingly important in an interconnected and interdependent world. By preserving local literary traditions alongside innovative approaches, students can develop a deeper understanding of their heritage while engaging with diverse voices from around the world. Therefore, effective literature education must combine traditional and innovative methods, ensuring that classical literature preserves cultural values, while digital technology and interactive approaches serve as bridges to the modern world. Through this synergy, literature education becomes a tool for developing creativity, critical thinking, and a broad appreciation of diverse literary works.

4.5 Socio-Cultural Value of Literature

As a reflection of society, a tool for cultural preservation, and a stimulant for social awareness, literature has profound sociocultural worth. According to Article 14 of Regulation No. 42 of 2018 of the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture (Permendikbud), which deals with the development and promotion of regional literature, literature is essential for promoting cultural expression, bolstering national identity, and advancing human values. This demonstrates the effectiveness of literature as a tool for social change since it not only makes it possible to share other viewpoints but also has the capacity to subvert prevailing

narratives and increase readers' empathy. In addition to reflecting social facts, literature also shapes societal perceptions of morality, history, and cultural identity. According to recent research, literature can document societal change and provide forums for discussion on topics like identity, injustice, and conflict.

Traditional literature in Indonesia, including pantun, gurindam, folktales, and hikayat, is crucial for conveying moral principles, culture, and history. For example, local wisdom like gotong royong (mutual collaboration), deference to parents, and the harmonious coexistence of humans and nature are frequently conveyed in folktales from different parts of Indonesia. Students can improve their sense of national identification while learning about and appreciating the various cultures found in Indonesia by integrating regional literary works into the curriculum. According to studies, pupils who like local literature are more likely to feel proud of their culture and stop the loss of cultural heritage as a result of globalization. Students who become familiar with their local literary traditions gain a sense of identity and belonging that goes beyond influences from around the world.

However, sociocultural ideals found in modern and contemporary literature are extremely pertinent to the circumstances of modern life. Students' perspectives on global issues are widened by literary works that tackle current topics including migration, environmental change, and gender equality. According to studies, literature can foster social awareness and empathy by engrossing readers in other people's lives. For example, Pramoedya Ananta Toer's novels give a detailed account of the Indonesian people's fight against injustice and colonialism, and modern poetry captures young people's concerns about contemporary issues. Furthermore, literature is an essential instrument for maintaining cultural identity and language. It is crucial for preserving regional languages and fostering social cohesiveness among local populations. Integrating literature into the classroom is becoming a calculated move to uphold traditional values and increase understanding of the diversity seen in Indonesian society in the face of globalization.

Students can learn about their cultural history and get a critical knowledge of the intricacies and difficulties of contemporary society by integrating both traditional and current literature into their curriculum. Literature has socio-cultural importance because it can help people connect with their cultural identities, raise social awareness, and start conversations about human issues. Younger generations can gain a critical perspective on the world that is always changing while also better understanding history, culture, and the moral underpinnings of communal life through literary works. As a result, including literature in the curriculum fosters empathy, character development, and societal awareness while also preserving culture.

5. CONCLUSION

The analysis of literature integration into the educational curriculum

highlights the critical role of literature in fostering essential skills, preserving cultural heritage, and promoting holistic education. As outlined in Permendikbud No. 42 Tahun 2018, literature is a strategic component in developing character, strengthening national identity, and encouraging innovation. The discussion revealed several key findings. First, challenges such as policy prioritization of STEM subjects, limited teacher preparedness, and resource disparities have hindered effective literature integration. Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive policies that promote balanced education, equitable access to resources, and enhanced teacher training to foster creative and effective teaching strategies. Second, literature contributes significantly to developing 21st-century skills, including critical thinking, creativity, empathy, and communication. Through engagement with literary texts, students gain the ability to reflect on complex issues, articulate ideas clearly, and appreciate diverse cultural perspectives. Integrating both traditional and contemporary literature ensures that students remain connected to their cultural roots while developing a global outlook.

Third, balancing tradition and innovation in literature education is essential. By preserving classical texts and combining them with digital tools and modern pedagogical approaches, literature education becomes more relevant, engaging, and accessible to students in the digital age. This balance allows students to appreciate cultural heritage while leveraging innovative methods to meet the demands of contemporary education. Finally, literature holds profound socio-cultural value as a medium for cultural preservation, moral development, and social awareness. Traditional and modern literary works serve as tools for fostering national pride, critical consciousness, and empathy among students. Literature's ability to reflect societal realities and inspire change underscores its importance in the curriculum. In conclusion, the integration of literature into the curriculum is not merely about teaching texts; it is about shaping individuals who are critical thinkers, culturally aware, and empathetic citizens. Policymakers, educators, and stakeholders must collaborate to ensure the systematic and sustainable integration of literature in education. Future research can explore innovative teaching practices and interdisciplinary approaches that further enhance literature's role in equipping students with the knowledge, skills, and values needed to navigate a rapidly changing world.

6. REFERENCES

- Abdullah, A. S., Geetha, S., Abdul Aziz, A. B., & Mishra, U. (2024). Design of automated model for inspecting and evaluating handwritten answer scripts: A pedagogical approach with NLP and deep learning. *Alexandria Engineering Journal*, 108, 764–788. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aej.2024.08.067>
- Almusaed, A., Almssad, A., Alasadi, A., & Al-Asadi, F. (2025). Sustainable Reimagining of urban Habitats: Navigating Iraq's housing crisis through Socio-

- Technological and Environmental approaches. *Ain Shams Engineering Journal*, 16(2), 103280. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.asej.2025.103280>
- Baumann, S., Kennedy, E. H., & Johnston, J. (2022). Moral and aesthetic consecration and higher status consumers' tastes: The "good" food revolution. *Poetics*, 92, 101654. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2022.101654>
- Benabbes, S., & AbdulHaleem Abu Taleb, H. (2024). The effect of storytelling on the development of language and social skills in French as a foreign language classrooms. *Heliyon*, 10(8), e29178. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e29178>
- Benediktsson, A. I., & Tavares, V. (2024). The social and linguistic integration experiences of Ukrainian refugees through community and urban education courses in Iceland. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 10, 101210. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2024.101210>
- Bereczki, E. O., & Kárpáti, A. (2021). Technology-enhanced creativity: A multiple case study of digital technology-integration expert teachers' beliefs and practices. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 39, 100791. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tsc.2021.100791>
- Bhattacharya, M. (2015). A historical exploration of Indian diets and a possible link to insulin resistance syndrome. *Appetite*, 95, 421–454. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appet.2015.07.002>
- Craddock, N., Budhraj, M., Garbett, K. M., Nasution, K., Gentili, C., Rizkiah, C., Haime, Z., Ayu Saraswati, L., Medise, B. E., White, P., Diedrichs, P. C., & Williamson, H. (2024). Evaluating a school-based body image lesson in Indonesia: A randomised controlled trial. *Body Image*, 48, 101654. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2023.101654>
- Cufer, T., & Kosty, M. P. (2023). ESMO/ASCO Recommendations for a global curriculum in medical oncology edition 2023. *ESMO Open*, 8(6), 101631. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.esmoop.2023.101631>
- Dian, M. (2017). China's collective memory between the revolution and tiananmen square. In *Contested Memories in Chinese and Japanese Foreign Policy* (hal. 135–185). Elsevier. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-08-102027-2.00004-3>
- Elnahla, N., & McKay, R. (2020). Workplace issues in the context of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*: Mental health problems, cannabis and the division of labour. *Transnational Corporations Review*, 12(2), 106–125. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19186444.2020.1746598>
- Fawcett, T., & Killip, G. (2019). Re-thinking energy efficiency in European policy: Practitioners' use of 'multiple benefits' arguments. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 210, 1171–1179. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2018.11.026>
- Gafni, R., Aviv, I., Kantsepolsky, B., Sherman, S., Rika, H., Itzkovich, Y., & Barger, A. (2024). Objectivity by design: The impact of AI-driven approach on employees' soft skills evaluation. *Information and Software Technology*, 170,

107430. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.infsof.2024.107430>
- Gao, Y., Yang, J., Zhao, J., & Peng, H. (2025). Impact of developmental social policy on household welfare: Evidence from China's comprehensive demonstration policy for e-commerce in rural areas. *Economic Analysis and Policy*, 86, 1820–1838. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eap.2025.05.023>
- Gomez Jr., J. E. A. (2017). The size of cities: A synthesis of multi-disciplinary perspectives on the global megalopolis. *Progress in Planning*, 116, 1–29. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.progress.2016.03.001>
- Homer, S. T., Lim, W. M., & Poon, W. C. (2025). A concentric locus of control and triple bottom line model for responsible management: Theory development inspired by students from the Global South. *The International Journal of Management Education*, 23(1), 101083. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijme.2024.101083>
- Huang, X. (2025). “Why you should (not) use semaglutide?”: A critical discourse analysis on health professionals' videos of semaglutide for weight loss on Douyin. *Social Science & Medicine*, 118339. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2025.118339>
- Jones, P. H., & Christakis, A. N. (2024). Limits to modeling: Design lessons from the world problematique. *She Ji: The Journal of Design, Economics, and Innovation*, 10(3), 351–379. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sheji.2024.10.003>
- Kabilan, M. K., & Khan, M. A. (2012). Assessing pre-service English language teachers' learning using e-portfolios: Benefits, challenges and competencies gained. *Computers & Education*, 58(4), 1007–1020. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2011.11.011>
- Kabra, G., Dhaundiyal, M., & Saharan, A. (2023). Prioritization of barriers to social media usage by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in disaster preparedness phase: An integrated methodology. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, 99, 104099. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdr.2023.104099>
- Kemelbayeva, S., & Kurmanov, B. (2024). Elite schools and educational inequality: Evidence from a private university in Kazakhstan. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 127, 102413. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2024.102413>
- Key, K., Healy, M., & Mulligan, E. (2022). Closing the cultural intelligence skills gap in accounting students: An action research approach to cross-cultural teamwork. *The British Accounting Review*, 54(3), 101034. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bar.2021.101034>
- Khoso, A. K., Honggang, W., & Darazi, M. A. (2025). Empowering creativity and engagement: The impact of generative artificial intelligence usage on Chines EFL students' language learning experience. *Computers in Human Behavior Reports*, 18, 100627. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chbr.2025.100627>
- Kramer-Dahl, A., Teo, P., & Chia, A. (2007). Supporting knowledge construction and literate talk in Secondary Social Studies. *Linguistics and Education*, 18(2), 167–199. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.linged.2007.07.003>

- Law, L. (2024). Application of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) in language teaching and learning: A scoping literature review. *Computers and Education Open*, 6, 100174. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.caeo.2024.100174>
- Le, T. T., Pham, T. T., Nguyen, A. T., Phuong, H. Y., Huynh, T. A. T., & Nguyen, H. T. (2024). "Becoming a trilingual learner may be harder than I thought!": Difficulties encountered by Vietnamese French-major students when studying English as a foreign language. *Ampersand*, 12, 100168. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amper.2024.100168>
- Levett-Jones, T., Brogan, E., Debono, D., Goodhew, M., Govind, N., Pich, J., River, J., Smith, J., Sheppard-Law, S., & Cant, R. (2024). Use and effectiveness of the arts for enhancing healthcare students' empathy skills: A mixed methods systematic review. *Nurse Education Today*, 138, 106185. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2024.106185>
- Lin, C.-H., Zhou, K., Li, L., & Sun, L. (2025). Integrating generative AI into digital multimodal composition: A study of multicultural second-language classrooms. *Computers and Composition*, 75, 102895. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compcom.2024.102895>
- Martínez-Álvarez, P., Cuevas, I., Sáez, N., & Son, M. (2024). Bilingual pre-service teachers' evolving conceptualizations about curriculum as a hybrid space through multimodal learning experiences. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 152, 104801. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2024.104801>
- Mathou, C. (2023). Contemporary curriculum policies: globalization, recontextualization and hybridization of pedagogic models. In *International Encyclopedia of Education*(Fourth Edition) (hal. 8–18). Elsevier. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-818630-5.03002-5>
- Muniandy, S., & Thurasamy, R. (2025). Mind your food manners: Investigating consumers' wasteful behaviour - A systematic literature review. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 486, 144617. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2024.144617>
- Nikolsky, A., & Benítez-Burraco, A. (2024). The evolution of human music in light of increased prosocial behavior: a new model. *Physics of Life Reviews*, 51, 114–228. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.plrev.2023.11.016>
- Promma, W., Imjai, N., Usman, B., & Aujirapongpan, S. (2025). The influence of AI literacy on complex problem-solving skills through systematic thinking skills and intuition thinking skills: An empirical study in Thai gen Z accounting students. *Computers and Education: Artificial Intelligence*, 8, 100382. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.caeai.2025.100382>
- Puspitasari, D., Widodo, H. P., Widyaningrum, L., Allamnakhrah, A., & Lestariyana, R. P. D. (2021). How do primary school English textbooks teach moral values? A critical discourse analysis. *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, 70, 101044. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.stueduc.2021.101044>
- Rapti, S., & Sapounidis, T. (2024). "Critical thinking, communication, collaboration,

- creativity in kindergarten with educational robotics": A scoping review (2012–2023). *Computers & Education*, 210, 104968. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2023.104968>
- Rodrigo, L., Palacios, M., Martínez-Corral, A., & Tafur, J. (2025). Virtual virtuous cycles. Mapping value structure in digital platforms and online communities realms. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 211, 123913. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2024.123913>
- Rogoza, C., Fasih, S., & Kwan, B. Y. M. (2025). Implementing a competency based medical education curriculum in diagnostic radiology: Challenges and Pearls of Wisdom. *Current Problems in Diagnostic Radiology*. <https://doi.org/10.1067/j.cpradiol.2025.01.012>
- Schwoerer, L. (2024). 'International, intersectional and interdisciplinary' – Gender and feminist studies degree descriptions and logics of representation in marketised English higher education. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 105, 102936. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2024.102936>
- Smith, J. D. (2017). Positioning missionaries in development studies, policy, and practice. *World Development*, 90, 63–76. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2016.08.016>
- Tan, S., Goei, S. L., & Willemse, T. M. (2024). Global insights on lesson study in initial teacher education: A systematic literature review encompassing English, Japanese, and Chinese language sources. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 152, 104791. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2024.104791>
- Taye, T., & Teshome, G. (2025). The efficacy of extensive reading strategies for enhancing reading comprehension among 4th year EFL students at Mizan Tepi University. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 11, 101616. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2025.101616>
- Tsao, J., & Nogues, C. (2024). Beyond the author: Artificial intelligence, creative writing and intellectual emancipation. *Poetics*, 102, 101865. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2024.101865>
- Wu, H., & Wang, Y. (2025). Disclosing Chinese college students' flow experience in GenAI-assisted informal digital learning of english: A self-determination theory perspective. *Learning and Motivation*, 90, 102134. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lmot.2025.102134>