



## Utilization of the Muara Takus Temple Site as a Source of Historical Learning to Increase Student Motivation and Historical Awareness at the Darussakinah Islamic Boarding School Madrasah Aliyah

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the use of the Muara Takus Temple site as a source of historical learning at the Darussakinah Islamic Boarding School Madrasah Aliyah. The research method used is a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collection techniques through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The research subjects include history teachers, students, and the managers of the Muara Takus Temple site. Data analysis was carried out through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results showed that the use of the Muara Takus Temple site as a source of historical learning had a positive impact on three areas of learning, namely the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. Factors supporting the implementation of this activity included support from the school, student enthusiasm, and cooperation with site managers. Meanwhile, the inhibiting factors included time constraints, facilities, and teachers' ability to integrate site-based learning into the curriculum. Overall, history learning using the Muara Takus Temple site proved to be effective in increasing learning motivation, fostering appreciation for local history, and strengthening the national identity of students.



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## INTRODUCTION

De jure, Indonesia began to exist and be recognized as a state following the Proclamation of Independence on August 17, 1945. This recognition was based on the establishment of the Indonesian state, which fulfilled the legal elements of statehood (Soekanto, 2006). However, in essence, the Indonesian nation had existed long before the arrival of colonial powers in the Nusantara, as evidenced by the emergence of great kingdoms that once unified the entire archipelago (Kartodirdjo, 1987). These kingdoms included the Kutai Kingdom, Sriwijaya, and Majapahit. Along with the existence of these kingdoms, each left behind remnants of their former glory. These legacies vary in form, such as temples, inscriptions, tombs, and others. Today, these relics are referred to as historical heritage, and Law Number 11 of 2010 concerning Cultural Heritage classifies them as follows: Cultural Heritage refers to tangible cultural heritage in the form of Cultural Heritage Objects, Cultural Heritage Buildings, Cultural Heritage Structures, Cultural Heritage Sites, and Cultural Heritage Areas on land and/or in water that need to be preserved due to their important value for history, science, education, religion, and/or culture through a process of official designation. All of these historical relics can be utilized for various purposes, including as learning media (Barus & Suratno, 2015).

Education plays a crucial role in maintaining the sustainability of a nation and state. Through education, the quality of human resources can be improved so that individuals are able to face various challenges. In addition, education is one of the primary means of realizing national aspirations. This is in line with Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2003, which emphasizes that the goal of national education is to educate the life of the nation (Republic of Indonesia, National Education System Law). A professional teacher has three main responsibilities, namely educating, teaching, and training students. Educating means instilling and developing life values, teaching relates to the delivery and development of knowledge and technology, while training aims to enhance the various skills possessed by students.

Education is a learning process organized by schools as formal educational institutions to shape students' abilities and foster awareness of their social relationships and responsibilities (Natuna, 2013). Learning is a long-lasting change in behavior or the ability to act in certain ways as a result of practice and various forms of experience (Schunk, 2012). To improve the quality of the learning process and learning outcomes, teachers need to implement various innovations in carrying out their roles as educators. One effort that can be undertaken is the use of learning media as learning resources. Learning media function as channels for delivering instructional messages that can stimulate students' attention, interest, and thinking processes (Mughtar & Siregar, 2007). One madrasah that has begun to utilize learning through the use of the Muara Takus Temple site as a learning resource is Pondok Pesantren Darussakinah Batu Bersurat.

Various research findings reveal that the use of historical sites as learning resources is able to provide more meaningful learning experiences and improve students' understanding of historical material (Lestari et al., 2019). This literature review identifies a research gap, as most studies still focus on the direct impacts of the learning process, such as mastery of material, the growth of learning interest, and the formation of character values. Meanwhile, discussions on how to design a structured and effective learning model to systematically integrate historical sites into the school curriculum remain very limited (Teneo et al., 2023). Previous studies on temple sites generally focus on historical, archaeological, and cultural aspects, such as temple functions, the background of the kingdoms, and their symbolic meanings. This can be seen in Munandar (2011) research, which examines temples from archaeological and religious perspectives of past societies. Meanwhile, studies discussing the use of temple sites as historical learning resources tend to be conceptual in nature. Hasan (2012) emphasizes the importance of environment-based history learning and authentic historical sources; however, the study does not explain in detail the model for implementing temple-site-based learning in classroom teaching and learning activities.

The novelty of this research lies in the development of a history learning model based on local historical sites (temples) that is systematically integrated into madrasah learning. Unlike previous studies that generally utilize historical sites as supplementary learning resources or as part of field visits, this research positions the temple site as the primary learning resource throughout all stages of learning, from planning and implementation to evaluation. The learning model is designed based on local context through contextual learning activities and historical inquiry. In addition, this research presents empirical evidence regarding the impact of utilizing temple sites on students' history learning outcomes, covering cognitive, affective, and historical awareness aspects. Thus, the novelty of this study lies in its pedagogical approach and the strengthening of empirical evidence for local site-based history learning in madrasahs.

This study aims to describe the utilization of the Muara Takus Temple site as a history learning resource at Madrasah Aliyah Pondok Pesantren Darussakinah, the implementation of learning activities using the Muara Takus Temple site to examine its effectiveness in terms of student motivation, as well as the obstacles encountered in utilizing the Muara Takus Temple site as a history learning resource at Madrasah Aliyah Pondok Pesantren Darussakinah.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

The research method employed is a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collection techniques consisting of observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The research subjects include two history teachers who meet the criteria of teaching history at the madrasah that serves as the research site and who are directly involved in the planning and implementation of site-based learning; ten students who participate in history learning activities based on the Muara Takus Temple site; and the management of the Muara Takus Temple site. Data validity is ensured through several techniques, namely source triangulation and technique triangulation. Data analysis is conducted using the Miles and Huberman model, which consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Research Findings

#### The Utilization of the Muara Takus Temple Site as a History Learning Resource at Madrasah Aliyah Pondok Pesantren Darussakinah

Muara Takus Temple is one of the most important relics of the Ancient Malay civilization and is estimated to date back to the period of the Sriwijaya Kingdom. The temple is located in Kampar Regency, Riau Province, and is the only Buddhist temple complex in Sumatra. Its historical value encompasses political, economic, social, cultural, and religious aspects of the past. Muara Takus Temple is a Buddhist temple complex situated in Muara Takus Village, XIII Koto Kampar District, Kampar Regency, Riau Province. The Muara Takus Temple site is also one of the tourist destinations in Muara Takus Village, and the temple complex covers an area of approximately three hectares.

**Table 1. The Muara Takus Temple Site Complex**

Mahligai Temple	Tua Temple	Bungsu Temple	Palangka Temple
Mahligai Temple, also known as the Mahligai Stupa, is considered the most well-preserved structure within the temple complex. The building consists of three main parts: the base, the body, and the roof. The stupa stands on a rectangular foundation measuring approximately 9.44 meters × 10.6 meters and features 28 sides surrounding the base of the temple.	Tua Temple, also known as Sulung Temple, is the largest structure among all buildings within the Muara Takus Temple Site complex. The temple consists of three main parts: the base, the body, and the roof. Access to the temple is located on the western and eastern sides, with stairways decorated with lion statues. The foundation of the temple measures approximately 31.65 meters × 20.20 meters and has 36 sides surrounding its base.	Bungsu Temple has similarities to Sulung Temple, but its summit is square in shape. The structure is located to the west of Mahligai Temple and measures approximately 13.2 meters × 16.2 meters. On the eastern side, there are several small stupas as well as a staircase made of white sandstone. The temple's foundation has 20 sides, with a flat surface at the top.	This temple structure is located to the east of the Mahligai Stupa, with the body of the temple measuring approximately 5.1 meters × 5.7 meters and a height of about 2 meters. Its entrance faces north. In the past, Palangka Temple functioned as an altar..

Based on the results of interviews with the management of the Muara Takus Temple, it was stated that:

*“The Muara Takus temple complex is a relic from the Sriwijaya Kingdom period with Buddhist characteristics. Muara Takus Temple is also the only temple-shaped heritage site found in Riau. Within the Muara Takus temple complex, there are four main temple structures, namely Tua Temple, Mahligai Temple, Palangka Temple, and Bungsu Temple.”*

This statement indicates that Muara Takus Temple not only possesses historical value but also functions as a symbol of the continuity of the history of the Sriwijaya Kingdom in a region that is geographically located outside its main center of power. In the context of history learning, this condition provides opportunities for students to understand history as a spatial and decentralized process. The existence of Tua Temple, Mahligai Temple, Palangka Temple, and Bungsu Temple demonstrates that the Muara Takus Temple complex represents a pluralistic Buddhist religious and architectural system. The diversity of these structures allows history learning to be directed toward the development of historical thinking skills, such as analyzing material evidence and interpreting the functions of buildings. Thus, the existence of the temple complex can be used to teach the importance of artifacts as concrete evidence in reconstructing history.

In the educational context, particularly at the Madrasah Aliyah level, history learning often faces challenges in the form of limited learning media that can connect students with concrete realities. The utilization of historical sites such as Muara Takus Temple can address this need by providing direct

experiential learning that enriches students' understanding of historical material. Students' learning experiences are reflected in the statement of S1 (student), who stated:

*"I just found out that there is a Sriwijaya temple in Riau, and it turns out that there is not only one building."*

In addition, another student, S2, stated:

*"Learning activities at Muara Takus Temple make me more interested in history lessons. Usually, in the classroom we only listen to the teacher's explanation, but at the temple we can directly observe the buildings and discuss them with friends."*

These statements indicate a shift in students' understanding from merely knowing historical facts toward the development of historical awareness, namely an awareness of the relationship between the past, local space, and personal identity. In history learning, Muara Takus Temple can serve as a concrete example that history is not merely a textual narrative but also consists of physical remains that can be directly observed.

Within the curriculum, history is not only studied to understand past facts but also to develop historical consciousness, foster nationalism, promote appreciation for national cultural heritage, and enhance critical thinking skills through the analysis of historical sources. Material on Hindu Buddhist kingdoms in Indonesia, including Sriwijaya, is included in the Basic Competencies of Indonesian History. Muara Takus Temple can therefore be utilized as an authentic learning resource that supports the achievement of these objectives.

This was conveyed by a history teacher (GS1) during an interview, who stated:

*"Sometimes we focus only on textbooks, which makes students feel bored and less focused on learning. By going directly to the field and utilizing Muara Takus Temple as a history learning resource, students become more enthusiastic and active. In addition, using Muara Takus Temple helps them understand history more concretely because they can directly see historical evidence that they previously only encountered in textbooks."*

This statement shows that history learning that relies solely on textbooks tends to be monotonous and less capable of actively engaging students. This condition indicates the limitations of conventional learning resources in fostering students' interest and attention toward historical material. The findings suggest that the utilization of local historical sites can enhance student engagement in learning. Contextual and experiential learning activities encourage students to participate more actively in the history learning process. Thus, Muara Takus Temple functions not only as a historical tourism object but also as an effective history learning laboratory within the Madrasah Aliyah environment.

The teacher's perspective is reinforced by the statement of S3 (student), who expressed that:

*"By using Muara Takus Temple as a learning resource, it is easier for us to understand history because we can directly see historical evidence that previously existed only in books."*

This student statement indicates that the utilization of Muara Takus Temple as a learning resource provides concrete and contextual learning experiences for students. The direct presence of historical objects helps students connect abstract concepts found in textbooks with observable physical realities. This facilitates the process of understanding history, as students do not rely solely on imagination or written narratives but also obtain authentic evidence that strengthens the meaning of the learning material. Thus, the use of historical sites such as Muara Takus Temple plays an important role in improving students' understanding, interest, and engagement in history learning.

## **Implementation of Learning Using the Muara Takus Temple Site at Madrasah Aliyah Pondok Pesantren Darussakinah**

### **Learning Implementation Procedures**

Muara Takus Temple serves as evidence of cultural and religious development during the Sriwijaya Kingdom period and reflects the strong influence of Buddhist teachings in central Sumatra.

In the educational context, the implementation of history learning through the utilization of temple sites aims to connect theoretical knowledge obtained in the classroom with empirical realities in the field. This activity enables students to directly understand evidence of the grandeur of Nusantara civilization during the Hindu Buddhist era, while also fostering awareness of the importance of preserving national cultural heritage.

The implementation of Muara Takus Temple as a learning resource is not solely oriented toward mastery of historical content but also emphasizes contextual learning experiences and the strengthening of national character values. Learning activities conducted directly at the temple site can integrate students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects into a unified learning experience. The implementation of Muara Takus Temple as a history learning resource at Madrasah Aliyah Pondok Pesantren Darussakinah is carried out according to the stages of the learning process, as presented in:

**Table 2. Stages of Learning Implementation Procedures**

Planning Stage	Field Activity Preparation Stage	Site Activity Implementation Stage	Reflection and Analysis Stage	Learning Evaluation Stage
Identifying Relevant Basic Competencies / Learning Outcomes (KD/CP)	Coordinating with the Muara Takus Temple site management, the school, and parents	Direct observation by examining the building structures, reliefs, construction materials, and geographical location	The groups present their observation findings in the classroom	Conducting formative evaluation based on students' activities, discussions, and participation during the learning activities
Formulating objectives that encompass knowledge, skills, and attitudes	Preparing activity guidelines by providing observation sheets, site maps, and guiding questions	Engaging in group discussions	Facilitating discussions on students' findings in relation to the national historical context	Conducting summative evaluation through tests of historical concept understanding, assessment of reports, and final products
Selecting learning materials that are appropriate to the lesson	Providing student orientation by introducing the historical background of the temple, observation techniques, and visitation ethics	Recording data and creating visual documentation (photos/sketches) as materials for reflection	Producing a historical field trip report, cultural heritage infographics, or an interactive map	Conducting reflection by having students write about their experiences and the impact of the visit on their understanding of history

### Planning Stage

Learning planning is a crucial initial step in the educational process. It is a systematic process that involves formulating objectives, determining learning materials, selecting appropriate methods, and designing evaluations to ensure meaningful and effective learning experiences for students. Several planning stages can be carried out, including curriculum analysis, which involves identifying relevant Basic Competencies/Learning Outcomes (KD/CP), such as topics related to Hindu Buddhist kingdoms, cultural acculturation, or local historical heritage. Learning objectives are then formulated to encompass aspects of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Material mapping is conducted by selecting appropriate content, such as the development of Buddhism in Indonesia, social structures in the classical period, and the role of temples in society (Kemendikbudristek, 2022).

### Field Activity Preparation Stage

This stage includes coordination with the management of the Muara Takus Temple site, the school, and students' parents. Activity guidelines are prepared by providing observation sheets, site maps, and guiding questions. Students are also given preliminary briefings, including an introduction to the historical background of the temple, observation techniques, and ethical conduct during the visit.

### Site Activity Implementation Stage

Direct observation is carried out by having students examine building structures, reliefs, construction materials, and geographical location. This is followed by on-site group discussions in which students discuss the functions of the temple, possible relationships among structures, and the cultural values contained within the site. Subsequently, students record data and produce visual documentation (photos or sketches) as materials for reflection.

### Reflection and Analysis Stage

Each group presents the results of their observations in the classroom, where the teacher facilitates discussions by linking students' findings to the national historical context. Project-based assignments are then given, such as producing a historical field trip report, cultural heritage infographics, or interactive maps.

### Learning Evaluation Stage

Formative evaluation is conducted based on students' activities, discussions, and participation during the learning process. Summative evaluation is carried out through tests measuring students' understanding of historical concepts, assessment of reports, and evaluation of final products. Student reflection is also implemented by having students write about their experiences and the impact of the visit on their understanding of history.

Through this approach, history learning becomes more engaging and meaningful, encouraging students to become active and critical learners in understanding the past. Based on an interview, one student (S4) stated:

*"I feel that history learning has become more meaningful because we can connect the material about the Sriwijaya Kingdom with historical remains in our own region. This makes me feel more proud of local history."*

Another student (S5) added:

*"Before visiting Muara Takus Temple, I did not really understand the function of temples during the Hindu Buddhist period. After seeing it directly and receiving explanations from the teacher, I realized that temples were not only places of worship but also had important cultural and historical values."*

These student statements indicate that the utilization of the Muara Takus Temple as a learning resource enhances the meaningfulness of history learning. The connection between the topic of the Sriwijaya Kingdom and historical remains in students' surrounding environment helps them understand history not as something distant and abstract, but as part of a local identity closely related to their lives. This fosters a sense of pride in local history and strengthens awareness of the importance of local cultural heritage.

Furthermore, direct learning experiences through site visits and teacher explanations are proven to deepen students' conceptual understanding, particularly regarding the function of temples during the Hindu Buddhist period. Students no longer perceive temples merely as places of worship, but also as centers of cultural and historical activity that played an important role in the development of past

societies. These findings indicate that site-based history learning can enrich students' cognitive and affective understanding, making history learning more contextual and meaningful.

### **Effectiveness in Terms of Learning Motivation**

Learning motivation is a crucial psychological factor in supporting the success of the learning process. Slameto (2010) states that learning motivation greatly determines the intensity of effort and an individual's success in learning. Several general indicators of learning motivation can be identified, including perseverance and diligence in learning, interest and enjoyment in the subject matter, a desire to achieve, independent and responsible learning behavior, willingness to face challenges, positive responses to results and feedback, and active participation in the learning process. By understanding these indicators, researchers and educational practitioners can design more effective learning strategies and develop evaluation instruments capable of measuring learning motivation objectively and systematically.

This was conveyed by a teacher (S1), who stated:

*“Learning at historical sites provides a different learning atmosphere for students. They do not just sit and listen, but also directly observe the temple structures. This makes students more focused and motivated because they feel that learning history is real and not merely memorizing material from books.”*

In addition, a student (S6) expressed:

*“Learning activities at Muara Takus Temple make me more interested in history lessons. We can directly observe the buildings and discuss them with friends.”*

These statements indicate that history learning conducted at the Muara Takus Temple site creates a more varied and authentic learning atmosphere compared to classroom-based learning. Direct student involvement through observation of the temple structures encourages a shift in learning patterns from passive to more active engagement. Students do not merely receive information verbally but also construct understanding through direct experience.

Furthermore, the different learning environment increases students' focus and motivation because they perceive history as something real and observable, rather than merely memorized content from textbooks. Opportunities to discuss with peers within the historical site environment also strengthen students' interest in history learning. These findings suggest that site-based history learning has significant potential to enhance students' motivation, attention, and engagement, thereby making the learning process more dynamic and meaningful.

### **Constraints in the Utilization of the Muara Takus Temple Site as a Source of History Learning at Madrasah Aliyah Pondok Pesantren Darussakinah**

#### **Insufficient Learning Time for In-Depth Discussion**

In the formal curriculum, the number of instructional hours allocated to history is fixed and limited. The scope of material that must be covered is relatively broad; therefore, when learning is directed toward the use of field-based learning resources such as the Muara Takus Temple site, the available time is often insufficient for comprehensive exploration. Site-based learning, such as visits to Muara Takus Temple, requires more time than classroom learning, including travel, logistical arrangements, student briefings, and on-site observation. Time spent on non-academic activities (transportation, preparation, documentation) reduces the effective duration for academic discussion. According to Mulyasa (2013), learning time management is a crucial factor in determining the success of curriculum implementation in schools, especially in institutions with complex activity programs such as madrasahs and pesantren.

Based on interviews with history teachers, time constraints were identified as the main obstacle in using the Muara Takus Temple site as a learning resource. Teachers stated that the allocation of

history lesson hours in educational institutions is relatively limited, while the required material coverage is extensive. This makes it difficult for teachers to allocate specific time for field-based learning. One teacher (GS2) stated:

*“If we take students to Muara Takus, most of the time is spent on the journey. When we arrive, they are indeed enthusiastic, but there is not enough time for deeper discussions about the historical background and its connection to the development of Buddhist kingdoms in Sumatra, which is actually the most important part.”*

In addition, a student (S7) expressed:

*“The difficulty I experienced was that the travel time to the site was quite long, so the time for learning and discussion at the temple became limited.”*

These statements indicate the existence of practical constraints in utilizing Muara Takus Temple as a learning resource, particularly related to limited time. Lengthy travel time causes the allocation of learning time at the site to be suboptimal. Although students show high enthusiasm when at the historical site, this condition is not fully accompanied by adequate opportunities for in-depth discussion regarding historical backgrounds and their relationship to the development of Buddhist kingdoms in Sumatra. This suggests that field-trip-based learning requires careful planning so that direct experiential aspects can be balanced with conceptual deepening, which is the primary objective of history education.

Limited time also causes learning activities to focus more on general introductions rather than critical analysis. As a result, learning experiences at the site tend to only add factual knowledge rather than deepen historical understanding.

### **Teachers' Difficulties Due to the Lack of Facilities for Site Visits**

By directly visiting historical heritage sites such as Muara Takus Temple, students can observe, analyze, and concretely connect historical facts. However, the implementation of this strategy does not always run smoothly. One of the main obstacles expressed by teachers in this study is the lack of adequate facilities for site visits. According to Hamalik (2004), the effectiveness of using learning resources is strongly influenced by the availability of educational facilities and institutional readiness to support learning activities. Teachers stated that the school does not have specific programs or facilities to support visits to historical sites. Consequently, although teachers pedagogically recognize the importance of field-based learning, in practical terms such activities are difficult to implement.

Based on interviews, a history teacher (GS1) explained several difficulties they experienced, particularly regarding the lack of transportation facilities:

*“Although Muara Takus Temple is not very far from the school, without bus facilities or cooperation with external parties, it is difficult for teachers to take students there. Even if transportation is arranged, it usually relies on students' personal vehicles, and not all students have them, especially those who live in the boarding school dormitory.”*

In addition, a student (S10) stated:

*“Although learning at Muara Takus Temple is interesting, this activity is rarely carried out due to time and facility limitations, so it cannot be done regularly.”*

These statements indicate that infrastructure and facilities are significant constraints in utilizing Muara Takus Temple as a learning resource. Although the site is relatively close to the school, limited transportation facilities and the absence of cooperation with external parties make it difficult for teachers to implement field-based learning activities. The use of students' private vehicles is not an ideal solution, as not all students have access to them, particularly those living in boarding school dormitories. This condition shows that the success of site-based history learning is not only determined by the potential of the learning resource itself, but also heavily depends on adequate facilities and supportive institutional policies.

The absence of transportation, special funding, and technical support makes it difficult for teachers to implement site-based learning. This, in turn, results in a low frequency of visits that could otherwise enrich students' learning experiences.

### **Teachers' Limited Mastery of Local Historical Site Materials**

History education at the secondary level is not only intended to convey facts about the past but also to foster historical awareness, national identity, and appreciation of cultural heritage. One potential learning resource is local historical sites, such as Candi Muara Takus in Riau. However, this study finds that one of the inhibiting factors in utilizing local historical sites as learning resources is that teachers have not yet fully mastered the material related to these sites. Hosnan (2014) emphasizes that teachers must possess creativity in developing contextual learning so that students are able to connect learning materials with the social and cultural realities around them.

Interviews with history teachers indicate limitations in knowledge and mastery of material related to Candi Muara Takus. This was expressed by a history teacher (GS2), who stated:

*"I know that Muara Takus is a Buddhist heritage site, but I have not fully mastered the historical details, such as who built it, what its function was, and how it played a role in ancient trade networks. As a result, it is difficult to explain these aspects in depth to students. National history textbooks only briefly discuss Muara Takus. Comprehensive information is rarely available. If teachers do not actively seek additional sources, their knowledge of local sites remains limited."*

This condition was also expressed by a student (S8), who stated:

*"Sometimes we are still confused about what exactly we should observe at the temple site. If it is not explained in detail beforehand, we are not well prepared for discussion."*

These statements indicate limitations in teachers' mastery of local historical content related to Candi Muara Takus. Although teachers generally understand that Muara Takus is a Buddhist heritage site, the lack of detailed information regarding its background, function, and role within a broader historical context prevents the learning process from being conducted in depth. The minimal discussion of Muara Takus in national history textbooks, along with the limited availability of accessible reference sources, further reinforces this condition. This indicates that the development of learning based on local historical sites requires more comprehensive information support as well as efforts to improve teachers' competencies, so that knowledge of local historical heritage does not remain superficial or marginalized in history learning.

Literature on local history, including Candi Muara Takus, is still relatively limited. National textbooks provide only a small portion of discussion, making it difficult for teachers to obtain reliable sources.

### **Students' Low Activeness in Site-Based Learning Discussions**

One of the objectives of history learning is to develop critical thinking skills and foster historical awareness. Therefore, learning should not rely solely on texts but also utilize real learning resources such as local historical sites. By studying Candi Muara Takus, students are expected to connect physical evidence with historical narratives while developing appreciation for regional cultural heritage. According to A.M (2018), students' learning motivation can be influenced by their perceptions of the relevance and benefits of learning. When students do not see a direct connection between visits to historical sites and their academic achievement, their learning enthusiasm tends to decline.

However, research findings show that when site-based materials are discussed in the classroom, students tend to be less active. Discussions are passive, students ask few questions, and interaction is largely limited to listening to the teacher's explanations (GS2). The teacher stated:

*“Students are less active because they do not know much about Muara Takus. They feel that they do not have additional information to contribute to discussions, so they simply wait for explanations from the teacher.”*

This was also conveyed by a student (S9), who stated:

*“Before visiting Candi Muara Takus, my knowledge about the temple’s history was very limited. As a result, during discussions I was not confident enough to ask questions or express my opinions.”*

These statements indicate that students’ low level of activeness in learning is closely related to their limited prior knowledge of Candi Muara Takus. A lack of information readiness causes students to feel that they do not have sufficient material or confidence to engage in discussions, resulting in a passive role that depends heavily on the teacher’s explanations. This condition suggests that history learning based on local sources requires strengthening the pre-learning stage, such as providing preliminary information or supporting reading materials, so that students have sufficient background knowledge to participate actively and critically in the learning process.

It can therefore be concluded that students are accustomed to waiting for the teacher’s explanations and are rarely trained to ask questions or think critically. This habit makes them increasingly passive when confronted with unfamiliar topics.

## **Discussion**

### **Candi Muara Takus as a Cultural and Historical Site**

According to Hamid (2017), historical learning resources include all forms of data, objects, documents, and artifacts that can help students understand past events contextually. Learning resources are not limited to textbooks but also encompass historical remains such as ancient manuscripts, monuments, museums, and archaeological sites. In the context of modern education, historical learning resources play an important role in developing students’ historical thinking skills. Therefore, teachers are required to be creative in selecting and utilizing relevant and contextual learning resources that are closely connected to students’ environments, one of which is temple sites.

The findings of this study indicate that the Candi Muara Takus Site has strong potential as a contextual and meaningful historical learning resource. The utilization of this site not only enriches students’ factual knowledge of Indonesian cultural history but also helps them understand the relationship between the past and contemporary social and cultural realities. This finding reinforces the view that culture is dynamic and continues to live within social practices, making it highly relevant as a foundation for the educational process.

These findings are consistent with the philosophical foundation of the 2013 Curriculum, which positions culture as the basis for the development of national education. Education is understood as a means of transmitting and developing cultural values by younger generations. This study strengthens the findings of Wahyuni et al. (2013), who stated that integrating cultural values into learning contributes to students’ character formation. However, this study is distinctive in its direct use of local historical sites as learning media, rather than merely integrating cultural values through classroom teaching materials.

When compared with Wineburg (2010) research, which emphasizes the importance of analyzing historical sources to foster historical thinking, the findings of this study show that learning resources are not limited to written documents. Artifacts and physical structures such as Candi Muara Takus also function as authentic sources that encourage students to engage in observation, interpretation, and historical reasoning. The difference lies in the form of the sources used, while the ultimate goal remains the same: to develop critical and reflective historical thinking.

Based on historical studies and expert research findings, Candi Muara Takus is known as a Buddhist-style structure. It is the only temple-shaped historical relic in Riau Province. The existence of this Buddhist-style temple indicates that Buddhist teachings once developed in this region in the past.

In terms of materials, Candi Muara Takus was constructed using sandstone, river stones, and bricks, which differ from temples in Java that are generally made of andesite stone from mountainous areas. The primary material, clay for brick production, originated from Pongkai Village (Jais et al., 2015).

### **Utilization of Candi Muara Takus as a Historical Learning Resource at Madrasah Aliyah Pondok Pesantren Darussakinah**

Experiential learning can be defined as “a process in which learners construct information, skills, and meaning from project experiences.” In this context, teachers are portrayed as coaches, largely detached from their traditional roles as interpreters of reality, transmitters of truth, and mediators between students and the external world. Teachers must trust that students are capable of drawing relevant and meaningful conclusions from their own experiences (Sheng, 2023).

The results of this study indicate that utilizing Candi Muara Takus as a historical learning resource at Madrasah Aliyah Pondok Pesantren Darussakinah creates a more vivid and meaningful learning experience. Students do not merely receive verbal information but are directly involved in observation and discussion based on field findings. This condition supports the creation of active and contextual history learning.

From the perspective of experiential learning theory, the implementation of learning at the Candi Muara Takus Site supports Kolb (1984) view that knowledge is constructed through direct experience followed by reflection and conceptualization. In this study, the stages of site observation, group discussion, and reflection demonstrate that students gradually build historical understanding. The difference is that this study places greater emphasis on learning outcomes related to historical awareness and character development, rather than solely on conceptual mastery.

One of the main objectives of history education is to shape students' character and historical awareness. Historical awareness is the ability to understand the past in order to build identity and future orientation (Kartodirdjo, 1992). Through learning at temple sites, students can directly experience the traces of their nation's history, which in turn fosters a sense of ownership of cultural heritage and strengthens national identity. The Candi Muara Takus Site functions not only as an archaeological relic from the Sriwijaya Kingdom period but also as a contextual medium that helps students understand religious development, cultural dynamics, and political processes during the classical period in the Indonesian archipelago (Sutopo, 2018).

### **Implementation of Learning Using the Candi Muara Takus Site at Madrasah Aliyah Pondok Pesantren Darussakinah**

The implementation of Candi Muara Takus as a learning resource is not solely oriented toward mastering historical content but also emphasizes contextual learning experiences and the strengthening of national character values. Learning activities conducted directly at the temple site integrate cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects of students into a unified learning experience. In experiential learning, the process of learning history is designed through real activities that allow students to experience, observe, and reflect on learning materials directly (Aji & Fahrudin, 2025).

### **Effectiveness in Terms of Learning Motivation**

The findings also indicate an increase in students' learning motivation during site-based history learning at Candi Muara Takus. Students appeared more active in asking questions, participating in discussions, and showing interest in the material. This suggests that an authentic and varied learning environment can encourage students' emotional and intellectual engagement.

These findings align with the learning motivation theory proposed by Uno (2018), which states that learning motivation increases when students are involved in challenging activities that are relevant to their lives. Unlike previous studies that predominantly employed quantitative approaches, this study emphasizes qualitative observation of students' learning behaviors during the learning process.

Furthermore, the results support A.M (2018) view that learning motivation serves as the primary driving force behind learning success. Site-based history learning has proven effective in reducing students' boredom associated with routine and verbalistic instruction. Therefore, local historical sites can serve as a strategic alternative for improving the quality of history education in madrasahs.

### **Implications of Utilizing Candi Muara Takus as a Historical Learning Resource**

Theoretically, the findings of this study reinforce the paradigms of place-based education and heritage education that have developed in international history education studies. Falk & Dierking (2016) emphasize that learning based on historical places allows learners to construct meaning through direct interaction with cultural environments, making learning more personal and sustainable. The findings of this study show a similar pattern, in which students' direct interaction with the Candi Muara Takus Site encourages simultaneous cognitive and emotional engagement.

Practically, this study implies that the Candi Muara Takus Site can function as a *living classroom* integrated into the madrasah curriculum. Compared to Sutopo (2018) research, which emphasized the role of historical sites as contextual media, this study strengthens the implementation aspect by offering systematic learning stages and integrating character values and religiosity.

When compared with Wright-Maley (2016) research on historical consciousness, site-based learning in this study also contributes to students' ability to understand the relationship between the past, present, and future. While aligned with this concept, the study differs by incorporating the local-religious context of the madrasah, which enriches history learning with spiritual and tolerance values. From the perspective of heritage education, Unesco (2017) emphasizes that heritage-based education plays an important role in building identity awareness, appreciation of diversity, and responsibility for preservation. The findings of this study support this view, as learning at the Candi Muara Takus Site not only enhances historical understanding but also fosters students' appreciative attitudes and concern for cultural heritage preservation. The difference lies in positioning teachers as facilitators of value reflection rather than merely conveyors of heritage information.

This study is limited by its implementation in only one educational institution, namely Madrasah Aliyah Pondok Pesantren Darussakinah. Therefore, the findings cannot be widely generalized to other madrasahs with different student characteristics, curricula, and learning environments. The learning materials and media developed in this study still focus on visual and narrative aspects of the Candi Muara Takus Site. Interactive and digital learning resources have not been maximized due to limited technological facilities at the madrasah.

Future researchers are encouraged to expand the scope of subjects and research locations. Studies may involve different educational levels, such as elementary schools, senior high schools, or even university students, to examine variations in the effectiveness of utilizing Candi Muara Takus as a historical learning resource across developmental stages. Future research should also develop more varied and structured site-based learning models and explore the use of digital media and educational technology, such as learning videos, virtual tours, or augmented reality applications, as alternative solutions for schools facing limitations in time, cost, or access to direct site visits.

### **CONCLUSION**

This study finds that the Candi Muara Takus Site has strong potential as a local context based historical learning resource in madrasahs. Utilizing the temple as a primary learning resource, rather than merely a supplementary one, is able to provide students with concrete and meaningful learning experiences. History learning conducted through direct observation, discussion, and reflection at the historical site has been proven to enhance students' understanding of Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms, foster historical awareness, and increase students' learning motivation and engagement. Thus, local historical sites can function as effective history learning laboratories that integrate cognitive, affective, and historical awareness aspects of students' learning.

This study makes an important contribution to the development of history education, particularly in the madrasah context. The main contribution lies in the development of a structured and systematic local historical site based history learning model, encompassing the stages of planning, implementation, and evaluation. Unlike previous studies that tend to position historical sites as supplementary learning resources, this study demonstrates that temple sites can be fully integrated into the history learning process. These findings strengthen experiential learning, site-based education, and heritage education approaches within the context of history education in madrasahs, while also enriching history education studies with a local-religious perspective that aligns with the characteristics of madrasah students.

Practically, the findings of this study have direct implications for history teachers in madrasahs. Teachers can utilize local historical sites as primary learning resources to reduce reliance on textbooks and create more contextual and engaging learning experiences. However, for site-based learning to be implemented optimally, teachers need to conduct careful planning, including strengthening their mastery of local historical content, providing pre-learning materials, and managing time effectively. In addition, institutional support from madrasahs in the form of policies, transportation facilities, and collaboration with site management authorities is a crucial factor in the successful implementation of site-based history learning. With an appropriate approach, the utilization of the Candi Muara Takus Site not only enhances the quality of history learning but also fosters students' appreciative attitudes toward cultural heritage and their responsibility for its preservation.

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