

Analysis of Social Studies Learning Media Needs in Economic Activity Materials in Elementary Schools

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Abstract

Social studies learning in elementary schools is often considered boring because the delivery of material tends to be conventional, focusing on lectures and memorization methods. This study aims to analyze the need for social studies learning media for the economic activities of fifth-grade students at SDN Simomulyo I Surabaya. This study used a qualitative descriptive approach with a needs analysis type. The research subjects consisted of fifth-grade teachers and fifth-grade students. Data collection techniques included observation, interviews, and questionnaires. The results showed that social studies learning is still conventional and teacher-centered. The media used has not been able to attract student interest, resulting in low learning motivation. Based on the results of the needs analysis, it was found that students need interactive, contextual, and educational game-based learning media. The economic monopoly game media is considered to have the most potential for development because it can simulate real economic activities, foster cooperation, and increase learning motivation.

Keywords: Learning Media, Social Studies, Economic Activities



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Introduction

Education is one of the main factors in shaping the next generation of the nation who have character, knowledge, and high competence. In the context of national education, this goal is affirmed in Chapter II Article 3 of Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, which states that education aims to develop the potential of students to become human beings who have faith, piety, noble character, health, knowledge, capability, creativity, and independence, as well as become responsible citizens. This affirmation is strengthened in Article 25 paragraph 4(a) of Government Regulation Number 57 of 2021 concerning National Education Standards, which emphasizes that everything used in the learning process must support the implementation of active, creative, collaborative, fun, and effective learning. Education is the spirit of life throughout the ages that requires the existence of a curriculum as a reference in formulating goals and practical and strategic steps to achieve them (Ummah, et al., 2024). Thus, improving the quality of education must be directed at creating a learning environment that encourages students to think critically, innovate, and be able to adapt to global developments.

Teachers have a strategic role in realizing these educational goals. Based on Article 40 paragraph (2) of Law Number 20 of 2003, educators are obliged to create an educational atmosphere that is meaningful, fun, creative, dynamic, and dialogical. Therefore, teachers are required to be able to innovate in choosing learning strategies and media that are in accordance with the characteristics of students. Learning innovation is becoming increasingly important in the era of globalization and digitalization, when learning is required to be more adaptive to the needs of students and the development of educational technology.

One of the subjects that plays an important role in developing students' social competence and critical thinking is Social Sciences. This subject not only teaches social, economic, and cultural concepts, but also instills social values as well as the ability to think logically and reflexively to various social phenomena. In the Independent Curriculum and the 2013 Curriculum, social studies learning is directed so that students are able to recognize and understand the surrounding socio-economic environment. One of the important materials in social studies learning in elementary schools is economic activities, which include production,

Analysis of Social Studies Learning Media Needs in Economic Activity Materials in Elementary Schools

distribution, and consumption activities. Understanding the concept of economic activities is expected to help students relate theory to daily life so that learning becomes more contextual and meaningful.

But in reality, the social studies learning process in elementary schools is still often carried out conventionally with lecture and memorization methods. Based on the results of initial observation and the distribution of questionnaires in the VE class of SDN Simomulyo I, out of 28 students who participated in social studies learning, only 11 students showed enthusiasm in participating in learning activities. Meanwhile, most of the other students seemed to be less excited, showed boredom, and had difficulty understanding the concept of economic activities in depth. This has an impact on low motivation and student learning outcomes. This condition shows the need for more interesting and interactive learning, one of which is through the use of appropriate learning media.

According to Yasin et al. (2023), the use of media in learning can increase learning motivation, facilitate concept understanding, and create a fun learning atmosphere. Supriyono also emphasized that learning media helps teachers in delivering abstract material to be more concrete and easy for students to understand. (Supriyono, 2024). Meanwhile, Audie (2019) argues that the use of media that is in accordance with the characteristics of students can foster activeness and curiosity in the learning process. Based on this view, the selection and development of relevant learning media is very necessary so that social studies learning, especially in economic activity materials, can take place effectively and meaningfully.

Therefore, an analysis of learning media needs is needed that aims to identify ongoing learning conditions, obstacles faced by teachers and students, and the type of media that best suits the characteristics of the material and the needs of students. This needs analysis is important as a first step in designing innovative, contextual, and interesting learning media. The results of this analysis are expected to provide a comprehensive picture of the real needs in the field, so that the media developed will be truly effective in increasing student motivation and learning outcomes. Thus, the research entitled "Analysis of Social Studies Learning Media Needs in Economic Activity Materials at SDN Simomulyo I" was carried out to find out the needs of teachers and students for relevant and effective learning media in supporting the social studies learning process, especially in economic activity materials in elementary schools.

Method

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach with a needs analysis. This approach was chosen because it aims to obtain an in-depth picture of the learning conditions, obstacles faced by teachers and students, and the need for learning media in social studies, specifically economic activities, at SDN Simomulyo I. According to Sugiyono (2021), qualitative research is used to understand the phenomena experienced by research subjects holistically, by describing them in words and language in a natural context.

This research was carried out at SDN Simomulyo I, Sukomanunggal District, Surabaya City. The research subjects include class V teachers and class V students who participate in social studies learning economic activity materials. Classroom teachers are used as the main informants because they play a direct role in the learning process and the selection of media used. Meanwhile, students are used as a source of supporting data to find out their needs and perceptions of the learning media used in the classroom. This study uses two types of data sources, namely primary data and secondary data. The primary data in this study is data obtained directly from the results of interviews, observations, and the distribution of questionnaires to teachers and students in grade V of SDN Simomulyo I. while the secondary data is data obtained from school documents, such as teaching modules, grade lists, and documentation of learning activities.

Table 1. Respondent Profile

No	Teacher's Initials	Teacher Profile		
		Teaching Classes	Teaching Classes	Final Education
1	TK	5A	10-20 year	Bachelor
2	DM	5B	10-20 year	Bachelor
3	NS	5C	10-20 year	Bachelor
4	DK	5D	10-20 year	Bachelor
5	M	5F	20-30 year	Bachelor
6	S	5G	20-30 year	Bachelor

Analysis of Social Studies Learning Media Needs in Economic Activity Materials in Elementary Schools

Data collection in this research was carried out through 4 techniques, namely observation, interview, questionnaire, and documentation. First, observations are carried out to directly observe the implementation of social studies learning, especially in economic activity materials. This observation aims to identify learning methods, media used, and student activeness during the learning process. Second, interviews are conducted in a semi-structured manner with class V teachers to explore in-depth information about teachers' experiences in teaching social studies, the obstacles faced, and views on the necessary learning media. Third, a questionnaire is given to students to find out their interests, motivations, and needs for social studies learning media. The questionnaire was compiled using the Likert scale so that student responses could be easily analyzed. Fourth, documentation is used to complete observation and interview data. The following table shows the profiles of the respondents of this study.

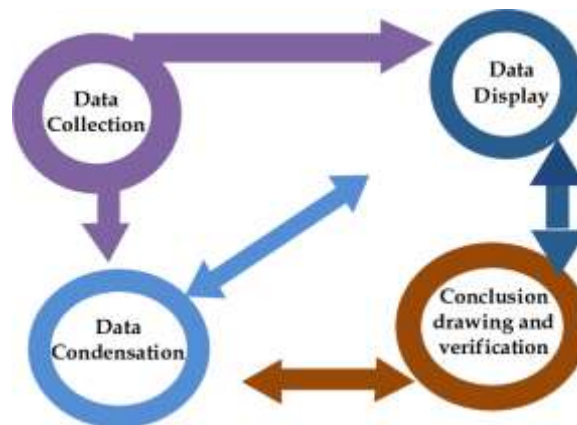


Figure 1. Qualitative Data Analysis Stages

The data obtained was analyzed using the Miles and Huberman (Sugiyono, 2021) analysis model which includes three stages, namely: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification. At the data reduction stage, the researcher carried out the process of selection, concentration, and simplification of data obtained from observations, interviews, and questionnaires. Furthermore, at the data presentation stage, the data that has been reduced is systematically arranged in the form of descriptive narratives, tables, or graphs to make them easier to understand and interpret. The last stage, namely drawing conclusions and verification, is carried out by interpreting the meaning of the data that has been presented to answer the formulation of the research problem and ensure the validity of the findings.

Results and Discussion

The following are the results of the learning observations conducted by the researcher.

Table 2. Learning Observation Results

Observed Aspects	Findings
Dominant learning methods.	Learning is dominated by verbal delivery by teachers. Student activity is minimal.
Use of learning media.	The media used is one-way and does not involve students interactively.
The role of teachers.	Teachers are the only main source of knowledge. Their role as guides for student activities is very low.
Level of active student participation (asking questions, expressing opinions, conducting simulations).	The majority of students (61%) are not actively involved in the learning process.
Indicators of student behavior during learning (calculated in 5 observation time intervals). Physical and mental involvement.	Only a minority of students show consistent enthusiasm. Most show signs of boredom. Almost the entire class acts as passive listeners. Engagement that requires physical/ mental activity is very low.

Analysis of Social Studies Learning Media Needs in Economic Activity Materials in Elementary Schools

Based on the results of observations made on social studies learning activities of economic activity materials in class V of SDN Simomulyo I, it is possible to get an idea that the learning process is still dominated by conventional methods, namely lectures and questions and answers. Teachers act as teacher-centered, while students tend to be passive in participating in learning activities. The material is delivered verbally without the support of interesting or interactive learning media. Teachers have used simple media such as pictures and textbooks, but their use is still limited to explaining concepts, not yet able to stimulate active student engagement. As a result, students tend to be less focused and bored easily.



Figure 2. Learning Atmosphere

The observation results showed that only about 39% of the students (11 out of 28 students) seemed enthusiastic about participating in the learning activities, while the rest showed signs of boredom and lack of active participation. These findings show that social studies learning has not fully reflected the principles of active, creative, and fun learning as mandated by Government Regulation Number 57 of 2021 concerning National Education Standards. Thus, learning conditions that are still centered on teachers are one of the factors that cause low motivation and student learning outcomes.

Table 3. Summary of Key Findings and Implications

Key Findings of the Observation	Implications for Learning
The dominance of lecture methods leads to teacher-centered learning.	Students are placed as passive objects, inhibiting the development of critical and collaborative thinking skills.
The learning media used are not interactive and are boring.	Abstract material is difficult to understand; students' interest and motivation to learn are not stimulated.
Student participation is very low.	Learning does not reflect PAIKEM principles; learning outcomes tend to be low and rote.
Only a small number of students appear enthusiastic.	The learning environment is not conducive to deep emotional and cognitive engagement.
There is a gap between learning practices and educational standards.	Innovative media and learning models are needed to shift the orientation from teacher-centered to student-centered.

Analysis of Social Studies Learning Media Needs in Economic Activity Materials in Elementary Schools

The following are the results of interviews conducted by the researcher with five respondents.



Figure 3. Interview with Teachers

The teaching experiences of the five speakers reveal a consistent pattern: attempts to connect abstract economic activity material with students' real lives are often hampered by conventional methods. The majority of teachers rely on lectures, class discussions, and assignments from package books as the primary method. One teacher, DM, described this challenge by stating,

"I analogize the economic chain to the food chain in science... But when I explain rice from farmers to traders and then to us, they have a hard time imagining the process and the many perpetrators"

Efforts to make learning more relevant have indeed been made, for example by Teacher S who tried a contemporary approach,

"I invite children to discuss about 'selling online' that they see their parents doing... it's their world now"

However, without adequate media support, these efforts often stop at verbal discussions that are not fully able to make students understand the economic mechanisms in their entirety and visually.

In practice, teachers face a triangle of interrelated obstacles: the availability of media, infrastructure, and time allocation. The most basic obstacle is the lack of specific and interesting learning media for social studies. One teacher, TK, clearly expressed his disappointment,

"We don't have a special media for social studies. Often only the images in the LKS are black and white and unclear. How can children be interested?"

This obstacle is exacerbated by digital infrastructure problems. The NS teacher shared his frustrating experience,

"My plans to use video often fail because the internet connection at school is slow or the projector is being borrowed by another teacher. Finally, I had to go back to the conventional method"

On top of that, the pressure of limited lesson hour time allocation makes it difficult for teachers to design and implement more complex, media-based learning activities, ultimately forcing them to revert to the quickest and easiest method: lectures and memorization.

Based on these experiences and constraints, a strong consensus emerged regarding the characteristics of the learning media they wanted. Their vision is centered on a medium that is able to "bring to life" concepts visually and interactively. Teacher DK imagined,

"There is an animated video that tells how a bottle of chili sauce is made, from chili farmers, processing plants, to stalls. That would be much easier to digest than I explained with a lecture"

In addition to contextual visual content, teachers also want an element of interactivity that can increase student engagement. Teacher S gave a further idea,

"If possible, make it like a simple application that contains simulations. For example, students can choose to become traders or buyers in a virtual marketplace"

Overall, their main need is not sophisticated and complex media, but rather practical, accessible, "ready-to-use" and specifically designed to bridge the gap between the theory in textbooks and the economic realities that students experience in their daily lives.

Analysis of Social Studies Learning Media Needs in Economic Activity Materials in Elementary Schools

The supporting data from interviews with other teachers is as follows.

Table 4. Summary of Interview Results with Other Respondents

Teacher Initials	Media Used	Impact on Learning	Teacher Suggestions	Pedagogical Objectives
DK	Textbooks, pictures in LKPD/LKS, blackboard.	The material is presented in an abstract manner, resulting in low student interest.	Animated video of economic processes.	Improve conceptual understanding.
TK	Textbooks, LKPD with black and white pictures, simple infographics (rarely).	The failure of ICT-based learning plans has led to a return to old methods.	Economic Monopoly (Permonomi), Video "From Farmer to Dining Table".	Provide a variety of fun and educational activities.
DM	Textbooks, concrete objects from the environment (as analogies), charts.	Learning is rushed, leaving no time for simulations or complex activities.	Virtual market simulation application.	Increase engagement and learning by doing.
NS	Textbooks, projectors (limited access), videos (if the network supports it).	There is a dependence on existing media, with a lack of innovation.	Easy-to-use media even if the projector is problematic.	Ensure feasibility and sustainability of use.
S	Textbooks, PowerPoint slides, short videos, digital images.	Students are passive, motivation to learn is low, and learning outcomes are not optimal.	Discussion and online sales simulation.	Improve relevance and connectivity.

To strengthen the results of observations and interviews, the researcher distributed a questionnaire to 28 grade V students of SDN Simomulyo I regarding their perception and needs of social studies learning media. The results of the questionnaire analysis can be concluded as follows:

Table 5. Results of a Questionnaire Analysis of the Needs of Social Studies Learning Media

Aspects Assessed	Percentage of Student Responses	Interpretasi
Love learning using visual media (pictures, videos, games).	92,8%	Students are very fond of interactive media.
Feeling bored with the lecture method.	78,6%	Most students feel bored.
Want social studies learning in the form of educational games.	85,7%	Students are more motivated by game-based media.
Finding it difficult to understand the concept of economic activities.	67,9%	Concrete media is needed to make it easier to understand.
Engaging media can increase the spirit of learning.	96,4%	Media is considered to have an effect on learning motivation.

Based on table 2, it was explained that as many as 26 out of 28 students (92.8%) stated that they liked learning using visual media such as pictures, videos, and educational games. These findings show that students really like learning media that are interactive and interesting. On the other hand, 22 students (78.6%) revealed that they felt bored with learning methods that were still dominated by lectures. This condition reinforces the finding that one-way learning tends to make students passive and less motivated. In addition, 24 students (85.7%) expressed a desire for social studies learning to be presented in the form of educational games that allow them to actively participate and learn while playing. Furthermore, 19 students (67.9%) admitted that they had difficulty understanding the concept of economic activities. This shows the need for concrete and contextual learning media so that students can more easily understand abstract concepts in social studies materials. Meanwhile, 27 students (96.4%) believe that interesting learning media can increase their enthusiasm and motivation to learn. These results show that the majority of students have a high need for interesting, visual, and interactive learning media, especially in the form of educational games. These

Analysis of Social Studies Learning Media Needs in Economic Activity Materials in Elementary Schools

results show that the majority of students have a high need for interesting, visual, and interactive learning media, especially in the form of educational games.

Based on the results of needs analysis from various data sources, it is possible to get an idea that the media needed in social studies learning at SDN Simomulyo I has the following characteristics: (1) Interactive and game-based learning. The media needs to contain elements of games so that students can learn through fun and challenging activities. (2) Contextual with daily life. The media should contain simulations of economic activities that are close to the student's environment, such as buying and selling activities, food production, or simple money management. (3) Visual and easy to use. The media should feature attractive visual elements, such as colors, illustrations, and simple economic symbols, making it easier to understand abstract concepts. (4) Encourage positive cooperation and competition. Media should allow students to interact, work together, or compete in a healthy group, in order to foster a collaborative spirit.

The types of media that suit these needs include educational game media in the form of Economic Monopoly, because it is able to integrate elements of learning, entertainment, and economic simulation in a concrete way. Hermawati & Lestari stated that monopoly-based educational games are effective in increasing student motivation and involvement because they invite them to learn while playing and understand economic concepts through direct experience (Hermawati & Lestari, 2024). Thus, the results of this needs analysis show that teachers and students need innovative learning media that is interactive and contextual, so that the social studies learning process becomes more meaningful, fun, and able to increase student motivation and learning outcomes.

The findings of this study confirm the deep gap between the student-centered vision of social studies learning *and the reality of teacher-centered teaching practices* at SDN Simomulyo I. Social studies learning, especially in economic activity materials, is still confined to the traditional paradigm that is oriented towards verbal delivery of material through the dominant lecture method. In a classroom atmosphere like this, students play more of a role as passive listeners who are fed information, rather than as active explorers who construct their own understanding through interaction with their learning environment. This is in line with the results of research by Putra & Susanto (2021) who explain that the dominance of lecture methods not only plunges students into a puddle of passivity, but also reduces their enthusiasm for learning and significantly erodes their intrinsic motivation. The further impact is evident: not only in the low number of learning outcomes printed on the report card, but what is more concerning is the weak critical and reflective thinking skills of students, as found in the research of Mailani et al. (2025) which concluded that one-way learning inhibits the development of *higher-order thinking skills* students in analyzing and responding to socio-economic problems that occur in the surrounding environment.

Responding to this stagnant condition, the offer to transform towards active, innovative, creative, effective, and fun learning (PAIKEM) as stated by Manarwati & Rachmadyanti (2019) is very relevant. This study found that the path to PAIKEM can be opened through meeting students' needs for educational game media. The results of the interviews and observations clearly show that students not only "love" games, but they intrinsically *long for* an activity-based learning that is able to provide them with concrete experiences and positive emotions, a finding that is consistent with the research of Putra et al. (2024) on the effectiveness of *game-based learning* in creating *positive learning environment*. This tendency is not an escape from learning, but rather a natural way for children to get involved. Students are found to be more likely to digest and internalize abstract concepts when they are directly involved in a participatory and immersive process, which is supported by the findings of Prawitasari et al. (2025) that *hands-on activities* improve long-term memory retention in elementary school students. The majority of students voice a high need for learning media that is not only visually appealing, but also functionally interactive. This finding reinforces the foundation that has been built by Yasin et al. (2023) that the suitability of media with students' interests and world is not secondary, but a prerequisite for significantly boosting motivation and learning engagement.

More than just catering to the elements of "exciting" and "fun", game-based media like "Permonomy" has the power to function as a *micro-economic simulator*. This medium is intelligently able to facilitate the understanding of complex economic concepts through direct simulation of production, distribution, and consumption activities. Aqila et al. (2024) in their research on simple business simulations for elementary school students also found that this approach effectively makes abstract economic concepts real and easy to understand. Through the mechanisms of role-playing and economic decision-making in the pressure of the game, students not only memorize theories, but they experience firsthand the logical consequences of every choice they make. It is this process that quietly but surely builds critical thinking skills, collaboration with "business partners", and a sense of social responsibility, as revealed in a study by Dewi et al (2025) on the development of *critical thinking skills* through *problem-based games*. This is in line with and strengthens the

Analysis of Social Studies Learning Media Needs in Economic Activity Materials in Elementary Schools

opinion of Hermawati & Lestari (2024) who affirms that educational game media is effective not only to foster situational *interest*, but more importantly, to increase in-depth active participation and create a meaningful learning atmosphere.

At a higher level, the implementation of game-based media is basically a concrete effort to encourage the implementation of true *student-centered learning*, a paradigm that according to Nurhandini et al (2025) has proven to be able to empower student learning independence. In the scenario created by "Permonomy", the center of gravity of learning shifts from teacher to student. The teacher abandons his traditional role as the "sole source of knowledge" and transforms into a skilled facilitator, who guides the process of exploration, encourages reflective discussion, and helps students deduce learning from their own experiences in the game, a role emphasized by Jaya (2021) as the key to success in inquiry learning. Thus, the integration of educational game media in social studies learning has a double impact. On the one hand, it meets the psychological needs of students for a pleasant learning atmosphere and minimal anxiety. On the other hand, it becomes a powerful vehicle for bringing students to achieve 21st century competencies, equipping them not only with knowledge of economics, but also with a critical thinking framework, creativity, the ability to collaborate and communicate effectively, skills that are much more valuable to deal with the complexities of life in the future, which is in line with Zubaidah's (2016) findings on the contribution of *project-based learning* to strengthening the profile of Pancasila students.

The discussion of the above research results will be reinforced by the following theoretical framework and in-depth comparative analysis.

This study clearly maps the wide gap between the theoretical foundations of constructivist learning and instructional practices in the classroom. Constructivist learning theory, as emphasized by Piaget (1969) and Vygotsky (1978), places students as active agents who construct their own knowledge through social interaction and direct experience. However, observational data shows that learning is dominated by lectures. This confirms a very strong teacher-centered pattern, in which teachers function as single transmitters of knowledge, a paradigm that is contrary to Vygotsky's principles of scaffolding and zone of proximal development. This gap is not only a methodological problem, but also a failure to translate theory into practice that enables meaningful learning (Ausubel, 1968). As a result, as expressed by Teacher DM, students find it difficult to imagine the economic chain because they are never given scaffolding in the form of media or simulations to build this understanding independently.

The results of the interviews, visualized in a table, reveal the main dilemma faced by teachers: being caught between the demands of the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes differentiated and active learning, and the reality of limited resources. Comparative analysis shows that constraints related to the availability of specific media and infrastructure are structural and systemic in nature, while constraints related to time allocation and expertise are more individual capacity-related. When compared to similar studies in different contexts, such as the study by Hanik et al. (2022) in urban elementary schools, which were more constrained by aspects of teachers' technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK), the findings at SDN Simomulyo I underscore a more fundamental problem: the lack of access to basic contextual media. This creates a curriculum implementation paradox: teachers are expected to facilitate active and creative learning (PAIKEM), but are not equipped with the main tools to make it happen. This condition forces teachers into a pedagogical survival mode, where lecturing becomes a rational choice because it is the only feasible method in conditions of extremely limited resources.

Despite coming from different backgrounds, the five teachers showed a strong convergence of vision regarding the characteristics of ideal media. This synthesis of needs is in line with two key theories. First, the Multimedia Learning Theory (Mayer, 2024) asserts that humans learn better from words (verbal) and images (pictorial) than from words alone. Teachers' demand for animated videos and interactive visual content is a direct application of Mayer's multimedia principle and interactivity principle. They intuitively understand that text and verbal lectures (single channel processing) have failed, and that dual coding is needed to overcome students' cognitive load when learning abstract concepts. Second, the demand for media to be contextual and contemporary reflects the principle of contextual learning (Contextual Teaching and Learning/CTL), which emphasizes relating, experiencing, and applying. Teacher S's proposal to discuss 'online sales' or virtual market simulations is not merely an attempt to find something interesting, but rather an effort to connect the material with the cognitive schemas that students already possess, so that learning becomes more meaningful. Compared to the findings of Yusup & Mastoah (2025), which emphasize the fun aspect of educational games, this needs analysis emphasizes authenticity and relevance as the main foundations, where the fun element is a derivative effect, not the primary goal.

Conclusion

The social studies learning conditions at SDN Simomulyo I still tend to be conventional, dominated by lecture methods, and minimal use of interactive learning media. This causes students to be less active and easily feel bored during the learning process. The main obstacles faced by teachers and students include the limitations of interesting learning media, difficulties in understanding the concept of abstract economic activities, and low student motivation to learn. Based on the results of the needs analysis, it was found that students need interactive, contextual, and game-based learning media. This kind of media is expected to be able to make social studies learning more fun, concrete, and meaningful. The Media of the Economic Monopoly Game is considered the most potential to be developed because it is able to simulate real economic activities, foster cooperation, and increase student motivation and learning outcomes.

The urgent practical implication is the development of learning media specifically designed to overcome real obstacles in the field. These media must meet three main criteria: first, they must be visual and simulative in order to explain economic processes in a realistic manner; second, they must highlight the context of students' daily lives (such as MSMEs or online buying and selling) in order to be relevant; and third, they must be designed with the principles of ready-to-use and ease of access in mind so that they can be immediately adopted by teachers even with limited resources. The concrete recommendation is to create prototypes of educational game-based media (such as board games or simple digital simulations) that allow students to directly experience production, distribution, and consumption activities through role-playing. Thus, this media not only addresses the instrumental need to attract interest in learning, but also becomes a strategic tool for implementing student-centered learning and developing critical thinking and collaboration skills, as required by 21st-century competencies.

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Analysis of Social Studies Learning Media Needs in Economic Activity Materials in Elementary Schools

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