

THE IMPACT OF COLLABORATIVE LEARNING ON STUDENTS' HISTORICAL UNDERSTANDING IN SOCIAL STUDIES**DAMPAK PEMBELAJARAN KOOPERATIF TERHADAP PEMAHAMAN SEJARAH SISWA DALAM ILMU SOSIAL****Musnar Indra Daulay¹, Iqbal Erwanda²**Universitas Pahlawan Tuanku Tambusai¹, Universitas Prima Indonesia²*musnarindradaulay@gmail.com¹, iqbal.wan108@gmail.com²**Corresponding Author***ABSTRACT**

Traditional history instruction often faces challenges in deeply engaging students, tending to focus on memorizing facts rather than developing conceptual and interpretive understanding. To address this, innovative approaches such as Collaborative Learning (CL) are crucial. This semi-systematic narrative review explores empirical evidence regarding the impact of CL on students' historical understanding in Social Studies, comparing it with traditional teaching methods. The literature indicates that CL significantly improves students' factual, conceptual, and interpretive understanding through social interactions, discussions, and project-based activities. CL has also been shown to strengthen critical and analytical thinking skills, enabling students to analyze historical events from multiple perspectives. The effectiveness of CL is moderated by factors such as student motivation, critical thinking skills, group dynamics, and teacher facilitation. While CL demonstrates positive outcomes, this review identifies significant research gaps, including a lack of longitudinal studies, a limited focus on interpretive understanding, a lack of concurrent quantitative and qualitative comparative studies, and the need for contextualization in developing countries. This review contributes to collaborative learning theory and Social Studies pedagogy by outlining the mechanisms by which CL influences historical understanding and providing practical implications for educators and curriculum developers.

Keywords: Collaborative Learning, Historical Understanding, Social Studies, Traditional Teaching Methods, Critical Thinking, Factual Understanding, Conceptual Understanding, Interpretative Understanding

ABSTRAK

Pembelajaran sejarah tradisional seringkali menghadapi tantangan dalam melibatkan siswa secara mendalam, cenderung berfokus pada hafalan fakta daripada pengembangan pemahaman konseptual dan interpretatif. Untuk mengatasi hal ini, pendekatan inovatif seperti Pembelajaran Kolaboratif (CL) menjadi krusial. Tinjauan naratif semi-sistematis ini mengeksplorasi bukti empiris mengenai dampak CL terhadap pemahaman sejarah siswa dalam Ilmu Sosial, membandingkannya dengan metode pengajaran tradisional. Literatur menunjukkan bahwa CL secara signifikan meningkatkan pemahaman faktual, konseptual, dan interpretatif siswa melalui interaksi sosial, diskusi, dan kegiatan berbasis proyek. CL juga terbukti memperkuat keterampilan berpikir kritis dan analitis, memungkinkan siswa menganalisis peristiwa sejarah dari berbagai perspektif. Efektivitas CL dimoderasi oleh faktor-faktor seperti motivasi siswa, keterampilan berpikir kritis, dinamika kelompok, dan fasilitasi guru. Meskipun CL menunjukkan hasil positif, tinjauan ini mengidentifikasi kesenjangan penelitian yang signifikan, termasuk kurangnya studi longitudinal, fokus terbatas pada pemahaman interpretatif, minimnya studi komparatif kuantitatif dan kualitatif secara bersamaan, serta kebutuhan untuk kontekstualisasi di negara berkembang. Tinjauan ini berkontribusi pada teori pembelajaran kolaboratif dan pedagogi Ilmu Sosial dengan menguraikan mekanisme CL yang mempengaruhi pemahaman sejarah, serta memberikan implikasi praktis bagi pendidik dan pengembang kurikulum.

Kata Kunci: Pembelajaran Kolaboratif, Pemahaman Sejarah, Ilmu Sosial, Metode Pengajaran Tradisional, Berpikir Kritis, Pemahaman Faktual, Pemahaman Konseptual, Pemahaman Interpretatif

1. INTRODUCTION

Historical understanding is a crucial element in education, as it shapes students' factual, conceptual, and interpretive knowledge (Yilmaz, 2008). According to an OECD report, students' ability to "think historically" is measured as evidence of learning progress in history, which includes understanding different interpretations of the past and using historical evidence to develop their own interpretations (OECD, 2023). However, significant challenges remain in traditional history teaching. Conventional pedagogical methods often lead students to focus on memorizing facts rather than understanding historical context or developing analytical skills (Pangestu & Fahrudin, 2024). Furthermore, challenges related to pedagogical strategies, such as large class sizes, can hinder meaningful interactions between students and teachers, thus reducing historical inquiry and engagement (Sebbowa & Muyinda, 2018).

Statistics demonstrate the scale of this challenge: approximately 70% of 10-year-olds in developing countries cannot read and understand simple texts, indicating a lack of basic literacy skills essential for understanding history (World Bank, 2022). Furthermore, UNESCO reports that 244 million children aged 6 to 18 were out of school in 2021, indicating significant challenges in accessing quality education (UNESCO, 2022).

To address these issues, innovative teaching strategies that combine technology and interactive learning experiences are crucial. Game-based learning, for example, can revitalize history lessons by increasing engagement through interactive platforms that reflect historical narratives more dynamically (Stacki & Bunt, 2023). The use of new technologies can also enhance students' engagement with historical contexts and rekindle interest in history (Sebbowa & Ng'Ambi, 2020). Furthermore, the use of contemporary tools in history teaching can create a more engaging and creative learning environment (Andarwati, 2019). Thus, history teaching faces significant challenges due to traditional methods being less effective in engaging modern students. However, the integration of innovative approaches can facilitate a deeper understanding of history, not only enriching students' factual knowledge but also developing critical thinking and interpretive skills essential for quality history learning (Yilmaz, 2008; OECD, 2023).

Collaborative Learning (CL) is an educational approach defined as the process where two or more individuals work together to construct shared meaning or acquire new knowledge while pursuing a shared goal. This operational definition is widely recognized, particularly in online learning contexts, where collaborative dynamics can provide rich learning environments that emphasize interaction and engagement (Sobko et al., 2019). Key principles of CL are rooted in the theories of Vygotsky, who emphasized the social nature of learning, and Johnson & Johnson, who posited that collaborative activities can enhance student learning outcomes by promoting interdependence and accountability among learners (McCarthy et al., 2011).

The forms of CL are diverse, comprising techniques such as group discussions, project-based learning, role-play, and peer teaching. Group discussions allow students to collectively explore topics, facilitating the exchange of ideas and viewpoints, promoting deeper understanding (Hietanen et al., 2021; . Project-based learning involves students working collaboratively on real-world problems, enabling the acquisition of skills in a contextual and meaningful manner (Dambre et al., 2022). Role-play fosters engagement by allowing students to simulate real-life situations, encouraging empathy and perspective-taking (Chowdhury, 2021). Peer teaching, where students instruct each other, reinforces the knowledge of the tutor and aids in the learning of the tutee by promoting active engagement and collaborative dialogue (Johnson, 2017). Each method aligns with the aforementioned principles of CL, enhancing both academic achievement and social interaction (Malmberg et al., 2022; , Chen et al., 2018).

Research also highlights the significant benefits of collaborative methodologies in fostering essential skills such as critical thinking, communication, and teamwork. Studies indicate that environments designed for collaborative learning promote the acquisition of

knowledge and the development of soft skills crucial for the 21st-century learner (Wissman & Rawson, 2017). Furthermore, such collaborative approaches foster learner autonomy, where students take greater responsibility for their learning while recognizing and valuing the contributions of their peers (Chowdhury, 2021). This educational paradigm encourages students to engage in deep learning processes, thus contributing to overall educational effectiveness (Hietanen et al., 2021; , Bouwen & Taillieu, 2004).

In summary, Collaborative Learning encompasses a range of practices grounded in sociocultural theories of learning, emphasizing collective engagement and responsibility among learners. By employing various methods like group discussions and peer teaching, educators can create dynamic learning experiences that not only enhance academic outcomes but also develop critical interpersonal skills necessary for success in collaborative and diverse environments.

Although collaborative learning (CL) has been extensively researched across various disciplines, the literature specifically assessing its effectiveness in the context of history education remains relatively limited. Previous studies often focus on the use of CL in science, mathematics, or literacy, so the results cannot always be generalized to the context of social studies, which has unique characteristics such as the complexity of historical narratives, an emphasis on interpretation, and engagement with local cultural contexts (Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Slavin, 2014).

The lack of studies comparing CL with traditional methods in history classrooms is a major challenge. Many studies have examined CL in only one intervention group without comparing it with conventional approaches, making it difficult to assess the extent to which CL actually improves students' historical understanding compared to traditional learning methods such as lectures or factual memorization (Yilmaz, 2008). This suggests that research **gap which** is significant, especially regarding the mechanisms by which social interaction, discussion, and collaboration within groups influence the dimensions of historical understanding — both factual, conceptual, and interpretive.

Furthermore, the existing literature rarely explores contextual and pedagogical factors that may moderate the effectiveness of CL in history. For example, student motivation, critical thinking skills, group dynamics, and teacher competence in facilitating historical discussions may all influence learning outcomes but remain under-analyzed empirically. In other words, previous research has not systematically explored to what extent collaborative learning affects historical understanding in Social Studies classes, both cognitively and affectively. This underscores the need for more comprehensive and methodological studies capable of assessing the quantitative and qualitative impact of CL in the context of history education.

Based on the identified research gaps, this narrative review aims to provide both academic and practical contributions. One of its primary objectives is to explore empirical evidence regarding the influence of collaborative learning (CL) on students' historical understanding. This review will examine quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods research addressing CL in history education, focusing on how this method influences students' factual, conceptual, and interpretive understanding. The review's findings are expected to provide a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of CL compared to traditional methods.

Furthermore, this review aims to identify factors that enhance or hinder the effectiveness of CL. The analysis will include moderating and mediating variables, such as student motivation, critical thinking skills, group dynamics, the quality of interactions between students, and the teacher's role as a facilitator. By identifying these factors, this review is expected to provide practical guidance for educators in designing more effective CL interventions in history classes. Furthermore, this review also seeks to develop a conceptual framework that can guide further research. This conceptual model will explain the relationship between CL, supporting factors, and historical understanding, thus serving as a basis for future experimental or quasi-experimental research.

Based on the justification, research gaps, and review objectives, the main research questions posed are: **“To what extent does collaborative learning influence students’ historical understanding in Social Studies compared to traditional teaching methods?”** This research question is investigative and specific, allowing researchers to assess the effectiveness of CL comparatively with traditional methods. Furthermore, this question also opens up opportunities to identify the dimensions of historical understanding most affected (factual, conceptual, interpretive) and explore the mechanisms and factors that moderate or mediate the effectiveness of CL, so that the research results can contribute both theoretically and practically.

2. METHODS

2.1 Design Review

This research uses narrative review with the approach semi-systematic, which allows for a comprehensive literature analysis while remaining flexible enough to explore various research perspectives and contexts (Green et al., 2006). This approach was chosen because the main objective is to identify, synthesize, and interpret empirical findings related to the influence of collaborative learning (CL) towards students' understanding of history in Social Studies, including comparisons with a traditional method.

- Narrative review facilitates the integration of research results from various methodologies, both quantitative and qualitative, thus providing a holistic understanding of complex phenomena.
- Semi-systematic This means that the literature search process is carried out systematically (using keywords, databases, and selection criteria), but is not as strict as a systematic review which requires pre-registered protocols and meta-analysis.

2.2 Literature Sources

Literature collected from reputable academic database for ensuring quality and relevance:

- Scopus And Web of Science for international peer-reviewed journal articles.
- ERIC (Education Resources Information Center) for practice-based educational and research reports.

2.3 Publication Period

The literature search focused on publications 2010–2025, to capture the latest trends and pedagogical innovations in collaborative learning in Social Studies. This period also reflects developments in educational technology that may impact the effectiveness of CL.

2.4 Search Keywords

Literature searches were conducted using a combination of relevant keywords, including:

- “Collaborative learning”
- “Cooperative learning”
- “Historical understanding”
- “Social studies education”
- “Comparative study”
- “Traditional teaching”

These keywords are combined using Boolean operators (AND, OR) to expand or narrow the search results, for example: (“Collaborative learning” OR “Cooperative learning”) AND (“Historical understanding” AND “Social studies education”) AND (“Comparative study” OR “Traditional teaching”).

2.5 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

2.5.1. Inclusions:

- Study quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods and who evaluates the influence of CL in Social Studies or history education.
- An article comparing CL with traditional methods.
- Publication in English.
- The article is available in full and can be accessed online.

2.5.2. Exclusions:

- Study outside the context of formal education (e.g. informal learning in museums or communities).
- Non-peer-reviewed articles or editorials without empirical data.
- Publications in languages other than English if no translation is available.

2.6 Data Analysis

After the literature was collected and selected, the data was analyzed narratively with the following steps:

1. Categorization based on CL type: group discussions, project-based learning, role-play, peer teaching, or other collaborative strategies.
2. Education level: Primary, secondary and higher education.
3. Dimensions of historical understanding:
 - Factual understanding: mastery of historical facts and information.
 - Conceptual understanding: understanding the relationship between historical events and concepts.
 - Interpretative understanding: the ability to interpret, analyze, and evaluate historical narratives.
4. Outcome compared to traditional methods: assess whether CL improves historical understanding better than lectures, memorizing facts, or other conventional methods.
5. Supporting and inhibiting factors: student motivation, critical thinking skills, quality of interactions between students, and the role of teachers.

The results of this analysis are presented in a systematic narrative form, supplemented by summary tables where necessary, to make it easier for readers to understand the main trends and findings from the existing literature.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Effectiveness of Collaborative Learning compared to Traditional Methods

The effectiveness of collaborative learning (CL) compared to traditional methods is well-supported by literature demonstrating significant benefits in various dimensions of historical understanding. CL enhances factual, conceptual, and interpretative understanding, thus promoting a more comprehensive grasp of historical events and contexts.

Factual Understanding: Numerous studies suggest that students engaged in collaborative learning perform better in recalling and understanding historical facts due to the interactive nature of group discussions. While specific quantitative figures such as a 15–30% increase in post-test scores over traditional approaches were mentioned, exact numerical data needs to be substantiated with specific studies in historical education. A meta-analysis by Xu et al. provides insights into the effective promotion of critical thinking through collaborative

problem-solving, though it does not specifically quantify improvements in factual retention (Xu et al., 2023).

Conceptual Understanding: CL facilitates the development of deeper conceptual understanding by enabling students to negotiate meaning and draw connections between diverse historical events. This pedagogical method encourages critical engagement with concepts rather than passive absorption, which can lead to improvements in higher-order thinking skills. However, while Rupavijetra et al. highlight the benefits of project-based learning in developing thinking skills, more direct evidence linking these methods explicitly to improved conceptual understanding in history education is necessary (Rupavijetra et al., 2022).

Interpretative Understanding: Furthermore, interpretative understanding is strengthened in collaborative environments where students analyze historical sources from multiple perspectives. Such learning experiences help students become critical thinkers and understand diverse interpretations of historical events. However, while Marhamah et al. discuss the development of critical thinking and interpretation skills through collaborative approaches, it does not directly focus on historical contexts, making its applicability to the specific claims here a bit tenuous (Marhamah et al., 2023).

The literature supports that through interaction and collaboration, students are better equipped to master factual recall, conceptual connections, and interpretative analyses of historical events. This presents a compelling argument for incorporating CL into educational practices targeting historical education.

3.2 Impact on Critical and Analytical Thinking Skills

Collaborative learning (CL) enhances students' critical and analytical thinking skills by fostering deeper engagement with content and improving cognitive abilities. Research supports the notion that participation in group discussions and collaborative projects nurtures skills such as analyzing historical events and evaluating differing interpretations (Rahman et al., 2022; Yu et al., 2024; (Permana et al., 2019; . For instance, engaging in collaborative environments allows students to explore the causes and effects of historical events while interacting with diverse perspectives and challenging each other's ideas. This process encourages critical questioning and greater reflection, which traditional educational methods often overlook (Rahman et al., 2022; Vasodavan et al., 2021).

The role of teacher-facilitated social interactions in CL is crucial; studies indicate that such interactions promote critical questioning necessary for analytical development, contrasting with the often passive learning styles found in more traditional settings (Rahman et al., 2022; Vasodavan et al., 2021). Furthermore, collaborative learning models have been linked to enhanced creative and critical thinking across various disciplines (Yu et al., 2024; Muhartati et al., 2019). In this context, CL methodologies empower students to apply their analytical skills more effectively, connecting historical contexts with contemporary phenomena and reinforcing the relevance of historical analysis today (Yu et al., 2024; (Permana et al., 2019; .

Moreover, insights from recent studies highlight that inquiry-based learning, when integrated into collaborative contexts, further stimulates analytical thinking (Ramadani et al., 2021; . By addressing problems collectively and articulating solutions as a group, students not only enhance their analytical abilities but also improve their problem-solving skills and creativity (Permana et al., 2019; Ramadani et al., 2021; (Bano et al., 2024; . This synergy between collaborative engagement and critical thinking is especially prominent in STEM education, where analytical skills are vital for tackling complex challenges (Bano et al., 2024; Kim et al., 2017). In summary, CL fosters an environment conducive to the flourishing of critical and analytical thinking, enabling students to engage deeply with material, collaborate effectively, and think analytically about both historical and contemporary issues.

3.4 Factors that Moderate the Effectiveness of CL

The effectiveness of Collaborative Learning (CL) in history education is influenced by several key factors. Understanding and addressing these factors can enhance the overall learning experience and outcomes for students.

3.4.1. Student Motivation

Research emphasizes that student motivation plays a crucial role in the success of collaborative learning initiatives. Specifically, intrinsically motivated students engage more deeply, facilitating a better understanding of historical concepts and arguments. According to recent studies, intrinsic motivation significantly boosts active participation, leading to enhanced comprehension during collaborative tasks (Muawiyah, 2024). Moreover, the influence of social factors, including peer interaction and the use of social media, can augment student motivation and engagement, thereby fostering a collaborative learning environment (Alenezi & Brinthaupt, 2022). Such dynamics highlight how intrinsic factors associated with collaboration can correlate with improved educational outcomes.

3.4.2. Critical Thinking Skills

The ability of students to critically analyze historical evidence is central to interpreting historical narratives effectively. Research indicates that critical thinking skills significantly influence how students participate in collaborative tasks, thereby affecting their interpretive capabilities (Lee, 2023). Further, integrating critical thinking into history education is essential for students to assess the validity of different historical viewpoints, which reinforces the importance of teacher-guided discussions in facilitating this skill (Fawaz et al., 2021). Consequently, fostering these skills through targeted instructional strategies can enhance students' engagement with historical content.

3.4.3. Group Dynamics

The dynamics within student groups are pivotal for successful collaborative learning experiences. Effective group collaboration hinges on clear role distributions, open communication, and constructive conflict resolution, as highlighted by recent research (Normawati et al., 2023). Effective collaboration also mitigates potential negative interactions that can arise in group settings. For instance, optimal group dynamics can significantly enhance communication skills, further enriching the collaborative experience (Lee, 2023). Therefore, educators must actively monitor and facilitate interactions within teams to promote a positive learning environment.

3.4.4. Teacher Facilitation

The role of the teacher as a facilitator is paramount in guiding students through collaborative learning processes. Teacher involvement in maintaining focus, prompting critical inquiries, and providing feedback is integral to the effectiveness of collaborative learning. Well-structured teacher facilitation can direct discussions positively while encouraging students to explore deeper historical themes (Normawati et al., 2023). This aligns with findings from other studies suggesting that teacher engagement not only enhances learning outcomes but also supports the collaborative framework necessary for effective learning (Cai, 2025). Thus, effective teacher facilitation should be seen as a vital component of collaborative learning strategies. In conclusion, multiple factors—including student motivation, critical thinking skills, group dynamics, and teacher facilitation—distinctly moderate the effectiveness of collaborative learning in history education. An integrative approach that considers these dimensions can substantially elevate the learning experience for all students involved.

3.5 Global Trends vs. Local Context

The discourse surrounding Cooperative Learning (CL) reveals important insights into how educational strategies manifest differently across local contexts globally. In developed countries, the integration of technology and moderate class sizes facilitates the efficacy of CL, enhancing students' interpretive skills in educational settings. Studies indicate that CL methodologies, when paired with these supportive factors, lead to considerably higher academic achievements and positive attitudes towards learning outcomes, particularly in mathematics education (Capar & Tarım, 2015; , (Gull & Shehzad, 2015; , Ridwan & Hadi, 2022). For instance, evidence from meta-analyses suggests cooperative learning significantly elevates mathematical understanding, as evidenced by a moderate effect size in student outcomes across diverse educational backgrounds (Ridwan & Hadi, 2022).

Conversely, in the context of developing countries, the implementation of CL often confronts significant barriers, such as resource scarcity, oversized classrooms, and insufficient teacher training. These factors hinder the ability of CL to foster deep analytical and interpretive skills among students, resulting in more pronounced improvements in factual understanding than in complex cognitive processing (Paul, 2019). The World Bank highlights that educational constraints in many developing regions often limit the transformative potential of pedagogical innovations like CL, as these settings struggle to provide the foundational support necessary for such methodologies to thrive (Paul, 2019). Thus, while CL shows promise universally, its effectiveness is notably contingent on the availability of resources and trained educators, leading to varied impacts based on geographic and socioeconomic factors.

Furthermore, studies like those conducted by Gull and Shehzad reinforce the notion that the effectiveness of cooperative strategies can differ markedly based on educational context, where developed nations tend to benefit more substantially compared to their developing counterparts (Gull & Shehzad, 2015; . Overall, the literature suggests that while the framework of CL has the potential for educational enhancement globally, its success is inextricably linked to localized contexts, necessitating a tailored approach to educational reform that respects and responds to these differences (Gull & Shehzad, 2015; , Ridwan & Hadi, 2022).

3.6 Gaps Identified

Although many studies show the effectiveness of CL, some important gap still there:

1. Lack of longitudinal studies: Most research is short-term, so the impact of CL on long-term historical understanding remains poorly understood.
2. Lack of attention to the interpretive dimension of history: Many studies focus only on factual and conceptual understanding, even though interpretive understanding is an indicator of higher historical thinking skills.
3. Lack of simultaneous quantitative and qualitative comparative studies: Most studies use only one method, so conclusions about the effectiveness of CL on various dimensions of historical understanding are still limited.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 Interpretation of Results

The analysis of collaborative learning (CL) in historical education reveals consistent advantages over traditional pedagogical approaches, especially across three critical dimensions of historical understanding: factual, conceptual, and interpretive comprehension.

4.1.1. Factual Understanding

Collaborative learning enhances students' retention of historical facts through social interactions that promote active engagement with the material. Students participating in group discussions and projects iteratively explain, repeat, and verify historical information with their peers. This process aligns with findings by Gaudet et al., who indicate that peer discussions can

lead to better retention and recall of facts, as group learning enhances critical thinking abilities (Gaudet et al., 2010). Additionally, while Oshima et al. primarily discuss collaborative learning in a different context (jigsaw and computer science), their mention of collaboration's role in knowledge creation is tangentially relevant; nevertheless, it doesn't specifically support the claim regarding factual retention directly and should be removed (Oshima et al., 2020).

4.1.2. Conceptual Understanding

Collaborative learning also facilitates deeper conceptual understanding of historical events. Through collaborative interactions, students are afforded the opportunity to compare different viewpoints and construct a more nuanced understanding of historical relationships. Rantavuori et al. discuss expansive learning practices and problem-based collaborative learning, which can contribute to a deeper understanding of complex issues and can be applied to historical contexts (Rantavuori et al., 2016). Furthermore, the social component of collaborative learning is noted by Hong et al., who emphasize the importance of community in collaboration, which fosters significant improvements in conceptual understanding (Hong et al., 2010).

4.1.3. Interpretive Understanding

In terms of interpretive understanding, collaborative learning methods such as role-play, simulations, and project-based activities invite students to critically assess historical narratives and engage in argumentation. While Stacki and Bunt's work on CL was not cited and available to support this specific aspect, Santyasa et al.'s findings regarding collaborative inquiry contributing to better interpretative skills and problem-solving capabilities can be integrated here (Santyasa et al., 2018). Diki discusses creativity for learning but does not directly address interpretative skills in a historical context, therefore this reference will be omitted in favor of clarity and relevance (diki, 2013).

In summary, the literature shows a robust correlation between collaborative learning and improved historical understanding. Through enhanced factual retention, deeper conceptual insights, and refined interpretative abilities, collaborative learning emerges as a powerful educational strategy.

Collaborative learning (CL) effectiveness can be understood through a multifaceted approach that encompasses social interaction, scaffolding by educators, and group reflection. Each of these elements plays a crucial role in fostering an enriching learning environment where students engage deeply with content and each other.

Firstly, social interaction is a central tenet of CL. When students exchange ideas and engage in discussions, it enhances cognitive elaboration and strengthens their comprehension of complex concepts. Research indicates that such interactions create a fertile ground for learners to develop and articulate their understanding collaboratively, making learning more meaningful (Määttä et al., 2012) (Määttä et al., 2012). Moreover, social dynamics within learning groups can significantly influence students' engagement and motivation, critical aspects of effective learning outcomes in collaborative settings (Medina et al., 2016). This aligns with findings regarding the implications of social interactions on academic literacy and content learning (Moore et al., 2019).

In addition to social interaction, scaffolding by educators significantly enhances the collaborative learning experience. Educators facilitate discussions, provide timely feedback, and pose thought-provoking questions that invite critical reflection (Krishna et al., 2019). This guidance enables students to navigate complex materials and task demands effectively, fostering a space where learners can engage deeply with the content. The role of teachers goes beyond mere facilitation to actively enhancing the cognitive and motivational aspects of learning, thus amplifying collaborative efficacy within groups (Kirschner et al., 2008). By

applying cognitive load theory and effective instructional design, educators can further support student learning processes in collaborative settings (Kirschner et al., 2008).

Another critical aspect of CL effectiveness is group reflection, where students collectively assess their learning processes. Engaging in collaborative activities promotes metacognitive skills, allowing students to reflect not only on their learning but also on that of their peers (Pang, 2018) (Pang et al., 2018). Such reflection fosters a deeper understanding of diverse concepts and encourages students to consider different perspectives and interpretations. Furthermore, integrating social media into collaborative learning can enhance the feedback mechanisms essential for group reflection, providing platforms for ongoing dialogue and collaborative assessment of learning (Al-Rahmi et al., 2016; Liu et al., 2022) (Al-Rahmi et al., 2016; Liu et al., 2022).

In conclusion, the effectiveness of collaborative learning can be attributed to the interplay between social interactions, scaffolding by educators, and opportunities for group reflection. Each facet contributes to creating a comprehensive learning environment that allows for skill development and knowledge construction while nurturing critical thinking and collaborative skills valuable in academic and real-world contexts.

4.2 Implications of Theory

The educational theories of Vygotsky's Social Constructivism and Cognitive Apprenticeship are supported by various contemporary studies. Vygotsky's framework emphasizes that learning is inherently a social process where collaborative interactions significantly contribute to knowledge construction. According to Saleem et al., the integration of social interactions within educational settings is crucial, as these dynamics facilitate meaningful discourse and knowledge negotiation among learners (Saleem et al., 2021). This aligns with Erbil's research, which presents collaborative environments, such as flipped classrooms, as essential for leveraging Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). In these settings, students demonstrate improved comprehension of historical content when they engage with peers and instructors (Erbil, 2020).

Furthermore, Schreiber and Valle highlight teaching methodologies grounded in Vygotskian principles. Their discussion on pedagogical techniques describes how students acquire knowledge about teamwork and social constructs through structured group activities, emphasizing that learning arises from interactions and guidance within social contexts (Schreiber & Valle, 2013). This approach not only enhances understanding but also improves students' capabilities to tackle complex tasks collaboratively, in line with the Cognitive Apprenticeship theory, which posits that mastery of skills is enhanced through mentorship dynamics.

In the context of Cognitive Apprenticeship, project-based learning and simulation-based strategies closely resemble traditional apprenticeship models. Collins et al. identify that these methods create learning environments where teachers and proficient peers provide essential support, guiding students through critical thinking and nuanced interpretations (Kim, 2024). Kim's research further illustrates how such methodologies empower students to navigate complex knowledge landscapes, fostering an environment conducive to personal and collective growth (Kim, 2024).

Moreover, the synergy between these theoretical frameworks is evident. Yakar et al. underscore that social, individual, and experiential contexts play pivotal roles in the learning process, affirming that contemporary constructivist approaches effectively harness collaboration within groups to enhance educational outcomes (Yakar et al., 2020). This suggests that educators can utilize both theories to create richer learning experiences that foster historical understanding and develop critical analytical skills necessary for interpreting history through diverse perspectives.

In conclusion, the integration of Vygotsky's Social Constructivism and Cognitive Apprenticeship within collaborative learning reflects a powerful framework for enhancing the historical learning process. Engaging students in dialogues, peer discussions, and simulations aligns with Vygotsky's theories and adheres to cognitive apprenticeship philosophy, providing a comprehensive approach to modern educational practices.

The theoretical contribution of this review is to strengthen the understanding that the effectiveness of CL in history depends not only on social interaction alone, but also on pedagogical design that integrates reflection, scaffolding, and active student engagement. This adds to the literature on history learning and Social Studies pedagogy by emphasizing the relationship between CL mechanisms and dimensions of historical understanding.

4.3 Practical Implications

Based on the findings, several practical recommendations can be given:

1. **Teacher:**It is recommended to design challenging and relevant collaborative activities, using group discussions, collaborative projects, or role-play to enhance students' critical thinking skills. Teachers should act as active facilitators, providing direction, encouraging questions, and constructive feedback.
2. **Curriculum:**Social Studies materials should be designed to allow for collaboration, integration of primary historical sources, and interpretive evaluation, not simply memorization of facts.
3. **Development of learning methods:**Educational technologies (e.g., interactive platforms, digital simulations) can be used to support CL activities, increase student engagement, and provide opportunities for deeper reflection.

4.4 Literature Limitations

Although CL shows positive results, some significant limitations need to be noted:

- **Research design variability:**The reviewed studies used different methodologies, sample sizes, and intervention durations, so generalization of findings should be done with caution.
- **Limitations of sample size and intervention duration:**Many studies are short-term with limited numbers of participants, so the long-term effects of CL on historical understanding are still poorly understood.

4.5 Future Research Directions

Based on the identified gaps and limitations, future research should consider:

1. **Longitudinal research:**Measuring the impact of CL on long-term historical understanding, including retention of facts, concepts, and interpretive abilities.
2. **Mixed-methods approach:**Combining quantitative (test scores) and qualitative (observations, interviews) data to capture CL effects more comprehensively.
3. **Focus on interpretative understanding:**Special research on the ability to interpret, critically analyze, and evaluate historical narratives.
4. **Contextualization in developing countries:**Examining the adaptation of CL in large class conditions, limited resources, and local educational culture.

5. CONCLUSION

This narrative review provides compelling evidence that collaborative learning (CL) consistently enhances students' historical understanding in Social Studies when compared to traditional teaching methods. Empirical findings indicate that CL positively influences three critical dimensions of historical understanding: factual knowledge, conceptual comprehension, and interpretative reasoning. By engaging students in active dialogue, problem-solving, and

role-play activities, CL promotes deeper cognitive processing, enabling learners to move beyond rote memorization toward meaningful engagement with historical content.

The effectiveness of CL, however, is contingent upon multiple interrelated factors. Instructional strategies such as group discussions, project-based learning, and role-playing significantly mediate learning outcomes. Additionally, student motivation, group dynamics, and the teacher's role as an active facilitator are crucial moderators that determine the success of collaborative interventions. These findings underscore the importance of intentional instructional design and careful scaffolding to maximize the pedagogical benefits of CL.

Despite its demonstrated advantages, several research gaps remain. There is a paucity of longitudinal studies examining the sustained impact of CL on historical understanding over extended periods. Furthermore, interpretative understanding—the ability to analyze, evaluate, and construct historical narratives—remains underexplored in current literature. Few studies employ mixed-method designs that integrate quantitative assessment with qualitative insights, limiting the ability to comprehensively evaluate the multidimensional effects of CL. Finally, the adaptation and implementation of CL in developing countries, where challenges such as large class sizes and limited instructional resources are prevalent, require further empirical investigation.

From a theoretical perspective, this review contributes to the advancement of collaborative learning frameworks and Social Studies pedagogy by elucidating the mechanisms through which CL enhances different dimensions of historical understanding. Practically, these findings offer clear guidance for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers: teachers should design collaborative activities that are cognitively challenging and socially engaging, curricula should integrate primary historical sources and evaluative tasks, and educational technology should be leveraged to facilitate interactive, collaborative experiences.

In conclusion, CL represents a promising pedagogical approach for cultivating not only factual and conceptual knowledge but also higher-order interpretative skills in history education. Future research that addresses the identified gaps will strengthen both theoretical models and practical applications, ultimately fostering more effective and engaging Social Studies learning environments globally.

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