



Students' and Teachers' Perceptions on the Implementation of Contextual Learning Based on Local Potential: A Case Study of Economic Geography in Cirebon Regency

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ABSTRACT	ARTICLE INFO
<p>This study aims to describe how the implementation of contextual learning based on local potential, as well as describe the perception of students and teachers in Cirebon Regency. The method used is quantitative descriptive. The data collection technique was carried out through the distribution of questionnaires for students and teachers for several schools that are close to local potential sources such as the batik and Trusmi industry, pottery businesses, salt ponds, and leather cracker businesses. The results of the study showed that students had a high interest in contextual learning based on local potential. the impact of contextual learning of real life is 39% students strongly agree and 65% students agree. And teachers' perception of contextual learning in geography, as many as 91% of teachers have a good understanding of the basic principles of the contextual approach. In addition, 92% of teachers believe that contextual learning can improve students' understanding of geography subjects. Some schools supported by institutions have implemented contextual learning processes based on local potential. However, on the other hand, this study shows that there are obstacles in the contextual learning process. Among them are time constraints, and support from schools. This study concludes that contextual learning based on local potential has a positive impact on improving the meaning and quality of geography learning. As well as being able to</p>	<p>Article History: <i>Submitted/Received 12 June 2025</i> <i>First Revised 26 June 2025</i> <i>Accepted 27 June 2025</i> <i>First Available online 29 June 2025</i> <i>Publication Date 29 June 2025</i></p> <p>Keyword: <i>Contextual Learning, Local Potential, Student Perception, Teacher Perception.</i></p>

increase students' love for their respective regions. Therefore, teacher training and sustainable education policies are needed to support the integration of local potential into the learning curriculum.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Geography learning can be a means to equip students with knowledge of the surrounding environment as well as an understanding of the various social and economic phenomena that occur in the area where they live. In this learning process, the surrounding environment has a very important role. Because, students do not only learn in class. School is not the last place for children to learn and enrich knowledge, insights, skills, and interactions between others (Hasyim, 2019). However, we must go into the field to find out the phenomena of natural and social phenomena that arise in daily life (Nurlaela, 2016). One of the approaches that is considered to be able to improve the quality of learning, especially learning that prioritizes real-life experiences is the contextual approach (Sulfemi, 2019). Contextual learning processes are able to support the management of students' attention, even outside the laboratory environment (Conci & Zhao, 2025)

Contextual learning is learning that connects teaching materials with real conditions that are relevant to daily experiences (Hafnidar et al, 2016). Contextual learning can also be interpreted as a teaching and learning concept that helps teachers connect the content of lessons with real-world situations (Henukh et al, 2019). For example, in geography learning, teachers can connect economic geography materials with local potentials around the school such as the Trusmi batik industry. The learning explains the relationship between geographical conditions and local potential and the economic type of the surrounding community. So this contextual approach encourages students to make connections between the knowledge that students have and its application in their lives as individuals, family members and communities (Muhartini et al, 2023). If students are able to identify many relationships in the learning process, then the knowledge they have will be more meaningful (Susiloningsih, 2016). Contextual learning is said to be effective if each student plays an active role in the learning process (Lie, 2022). In a contextual approach, it is very important for students to understand what benefits are obtained in the learning process. Because this learning helps and bridges the process of discovering concepts and contexts in learning (Laksono et al., 2023). Rather than just transferring information from teacher to student, the learning process in this model focuses more on active engagement through hands-on practice and real student experiences. Therefore, through the application of contextual learning, teachers are able to build an active and interactive learning environment (Hamruni, 2015). In short, the contextual approach can be summed up as an approach that requires students to more actively associate their understanding with real examples of daily life, so that in this case the teacher is only a facilitator. According to (Pareira & Papa, 2016), this is contrary to the learning practice that has been going on, namely learning that encourages students to memorize more collections of facts and concepts, where the teacher is the only source of knowledge for students.

Cirebon Regency is one of the regions in Indonesia that is rich in local economic potential such as the Trusmi batik industry in Plered District, salt pond business in Losari District, fishery activities in Gebang District, traditional trade sectors such as leather crackers in Tengah Tani District, pottery business in Jamblang District, to rattan manufacturing business in Plumbon District. This economic potential is very suitable to be studied in economic geography material. The indicators that can be studied are related to the type, distribution, and what factors affect the economic activities of the local population. However, the majority of teachers and students still rely heavily on national textbooks that tend to be general and do not describe specific local contexts.

Learning based on the potential around them is believed to be able to optimize students' mindsets, because it allows them to directly observe the relationship between theory in the classroom and real conditions in the field (Susilowatii, 2017). By providing real cases of economic activities in Cirebon Regency, students not only understand concepts cognitively, but are also able to develop critical thinking skills. This is in line with the principle of deep learning, which connects knowledge and experience with real life. Deep learning includes understanding and the relationship between conceptual, procedural knowledge and the ability to apply conceptual knowledge in new contexts (Hattie & Donoghue, 2016; Parker et al., 2011; Winch, 2017). Deep learning is able to produce high-quality learning outcomes, while less in-depth learning methods tend to produce low learning outcomes (Smith & Colby, 2007). By utilizing the potential of the local economy as a learning resource, students are expected not only to gain a deeper understanding of the concept of economic geography, but also to be able to foster a sense of belonging, pride, and care for their own region.

Although geography learning holds great potential to enhance students understanding of their local environment and socio-economic phenomena through a contextual approach, its practical implementation is often less than optimal. Preliminary interviews revealed that students' average scores in economic geography competencies tend to be lower than in other topics most likely due to the lack of real and contextual examples that support deeper conceptual understanding. In response to this issue, this study aims to integrate the specific local economic potential of Cirebon Regency such as the Trusmi batik industry, Losari salt ponds, and Plumbon rattan crafts as contextual learning resources in geography education. In addition, the study provides a comprehensive analysis of teacher and student perceptions regarding the implementation of contextual learning in the classroom. Given that this issue has not been extensively explored in the local context of Cirebon, the research is expected to offer practical and innovative guidance for developing geography learning models that are not only relevant to the local context but also aligned with students' characteristics and needs.

2. METHODS

The method used in this study is a quantitative descriptive approach that aims to systematically describe the perception of teachers and students towards the application of contextual learning based on local potential in economic geography materials. Quantitative descriptive design allows to be able to expose numerical data on educational phenomena, so that it can be analyzed in simple statistics (Sukardi, 2021). Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics likes frequencies, means, percentages. The data were obtained using a questionnaire distributed via google forms, consisting of statements measured on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The research location is focused on Senior High Schools (SMA) in Cirebon Regency like in **figure 1**.

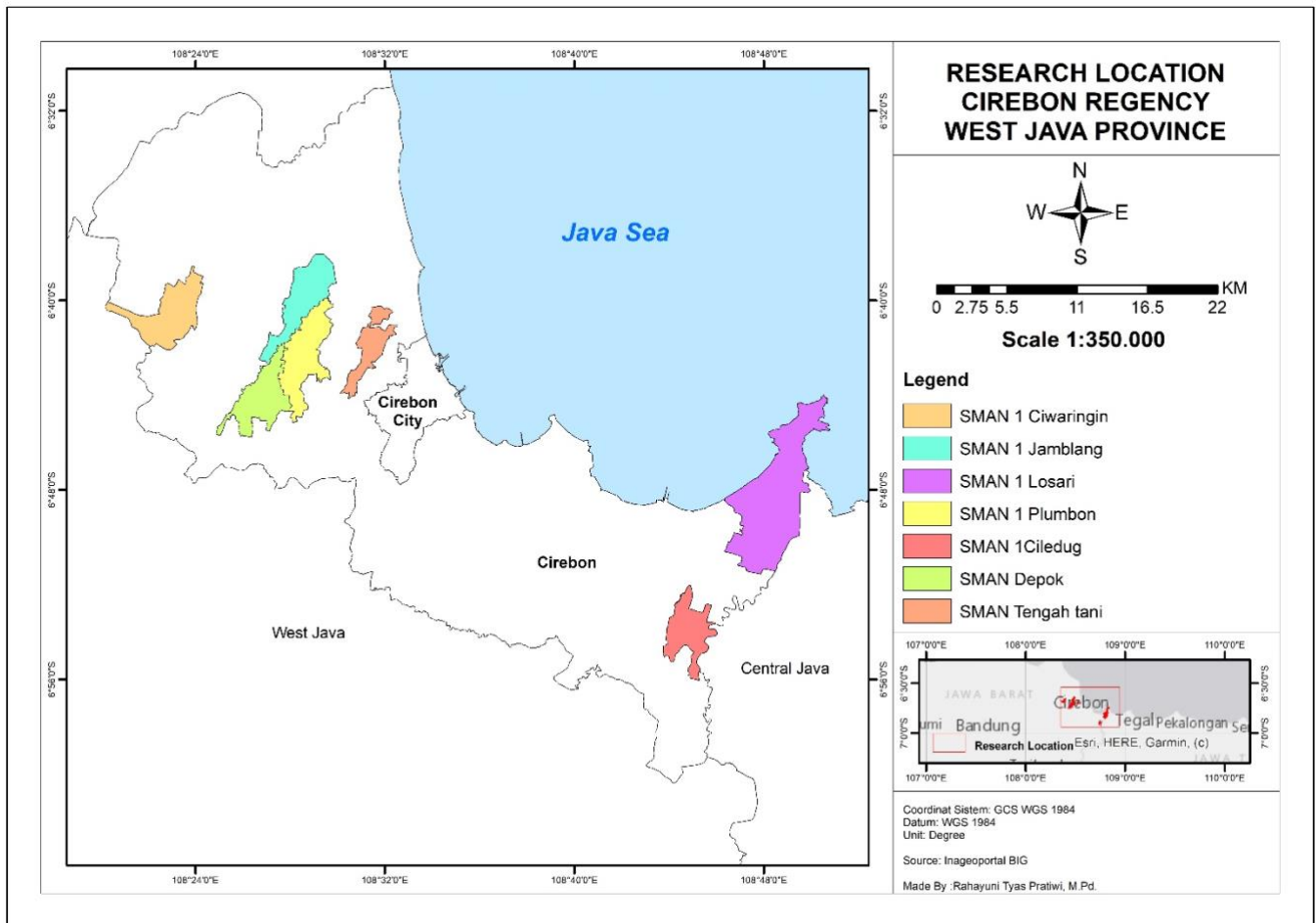


Figure 1. Study Area

The selection of schools was carried out by purposive sampling by considering the suitability of the location close to the local economic potential between 3-5 km. The research focuses on geography teachers and grade XI students who have received economic geography material. Meanwhile, data collection was carried out through interviews and questionnaires to find out the perceptions of students and teachers. The subjects of this study consist of 7 schools, namely SMAN 1 Losari, SMAN 1 Jamblang, SMAN 1 Plumbon, SMAN Depok, SMAN 1 Ciwaringin, SMAN 1 Ciledug, and SMAN Tengah Tani. All of these schools were chosen because they were on a radius that allowed the integration of local potential into geography learning.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research was conducted using a survey method via Google Forms, which contains a number of questions with answer choices using a Likert scale. This survey was filled out by 7 geography teachers from schools that were the research locations, as well as 65 grade XI students who had received economic geography material. The following are the results of the research survey.

Table 1. Students' interest in learning Contextual Geography

Criterion	Statement 1	%
Strongly agree	16	25%
Agree	39	61%
Disagree	6	9%
Strongly disagree	1	2%

Source: Researcher Analysis (2025)

Based on the results of the questionnaire distributed to students in table 1, it was found that students have a high interest in learning geography, if learning is associated with the area where they live. This is considered more concrete, meaningful and easier for students to remember in the long term. Because in the social constructivist view, learning occurs when students interact with contexts or peers, and interpret the environment in which they are located to form meaning. (Qing et al, 2019)

The results of the questionnaire stated that 25% of students said they strongly agreed and 61% of students agreed with the statement that they felt more interested if learning geography was associated with the conditions of the area where they lived. With a total of 86% of students expressing support for this contextual approach, it can be concluded that the choice of learning content location is able to increase students' attractiveness in learning geography.

Table 2. Use of local potential by teachers in learning

Criterion	Statement 2	%
Strongly agree	10	16%
Agree	40	63%
Disagree	9	14%
Strongly disagree	0	0%

Source: Researcher Analysis (2025)

In a statement on the use of local potential by teachers in teaching, the results of the questionnaire stated that as many as 63% of students agreed and 16% strongly agreed that their teachers at school had used local potentials such as the batik trusmi center and salt ponds as examples in teaching. This shows that the use of local resources has been carried out by some teachers. However, this is different from the 14% of students who disagreed if their teachers had used local resources as an example in learning. This is a concern because there is still room to improve teachers who have not used local resources to be examples in learning.

Table 3. Students' understanding of local Economic Geography material.

Criterion	Statement 3	%
Strongly agree	17	27%
Agree	31	48%
Disagree	11	17%
Strongly disagree	1	2%

Source: Researcher Analysis (2025)

The next statement is about the student's understanding of the geography of the local economy. The results of the study stated that as many as 75% of students found it easier to understand the material if it was associated with economic activities in Cirebon, such as rattan

business, batik industry, pottery business and salt pond. This shows that contextual learning makes a significant contribution to improving students' cognitive understanding.

Table 4. Effects of conventional learning

Criterion	Statement 4	%
Strongly agree	21	33%
Agree	30	47%
Disagree	9	14%
Strongly disagree	1	2%

Source: Researcher Analysis (2025)

As for the statement about the effects of conventional learning, as many as 80% of students feel bored if geography learning is only delivered through textbooks. This shows that conventional learning methods that are abstract and less relevant to students are no longer effective for the current generation. They prefer learning that uses an explorative and concrete approach. So that they feel close to the reality of daily life. Including utilizing the local potential of the surrounding area as a medium and a learning resource.

Table 5. The students' curiosity about their own region.

Criterion	Statement 5	%
Strongly agree	29	45%
Agree	31	48%
Disagree	3	5%
Strongly disagree	0	0%

Source: Researcher Analysis (2025)

The next discussion was about students' curiosity about their own area, showing that 93% of students were very interested in learning more about the social and economic conditions in which they lived. This shows that students have a high curiosity about the environment in which they live. Thus, it can be the initial capital in contextual learning by utilizing the surrounding environment and will be the development of local character. This curiosity provides a solid foundation for applying learning approaches that originate from where students live.

Table 6. The impact of contextual learning on real life.

Criterion	Statement 6	%
Strongly agree	25	39%
Agree	36	56%
Disagree	1	2%
Strongly disagree	0	0%

Source: Researcher Analysis (2025)

A discussion of the impact of contextual learning on real life yielded that 95% of students responded positively that contextual learning helped them connect the subject matter to their daily lives. This shows that material related to real life provides a significant increase in motivation to learn.

Table 7. Student involvement in field activities.

Criterion	Statement 7	%
Strongly agree	10	16%
Agree	29	45%
Disagree	18	28%
Strongly disagree	2	3%

Source: Researcher Analysis (2025)

A discussion of student involvement in field activities yielded results in the form of only 45% of students agreeing that they had made direct observations or visits to local businesses close to their school. Meanwhile, there are 31% of students who have never done it. This shows that the implementation of experiential learning in the field is still limited. There are several factors that make this limited, one of which is licensing from the school.

Table 8. Strengthening local identity

Criterion	Statement 8	%
Strongly agree	22	34%
Agree	39	61%
Disagree	2	3%
Strongly disagree	0	0%

Source: Researcher Analysis (2025)

Discussions about strengthening local identity and pride resulted in as many as 95% of students responding that they felt proud when they learned about their own area's potential in school through the subject. This shows that learning by increasing local potential also plays a role in strengthening students' identity and pride in their origins. This is one of the important aspects of character education. The task of education is not only to transfer knowledge in the context of the development of disciplines, but also to build character, morals, and personality, so that the younger generation can live a better life in the future (Sugandi, 2015).

Table 9. Engage students with contextual assignments

Criterion	Statement 9	%
Strongly agree	18	28%
Agree	34	53%
Disagree	8	13%
Strongly disagree	1	2%

Source : Researcher Analysis (2025)

A discussion of students' preferences for contextual assignments found that as many as 28% of students strongly agreed and 53% of students agreed that they would feel happier if they were given a geography assignment that is related to the surrounding environment. This shows that students are more enthusiastic if given tasks in the form of applicative and contextual, such as making reports on local economic activities. So that learning is student-centered. Student-centered learning, where students will get opportunities and facilities to be able to build their own knowledge to gain a deep understanding (deep learning), and ultimately can improve the quality of learning (Andrianti, 2014).

Table 10. Synergy of learning in aspects of local culture and nature.

Criterion	Statement 10	%
Strongly agree	30	47%
Agree	29	45%
Disagree	3	5%
Strongly disagree	0	0%

Source : Researcher Analysis (2025)

The last discussion of the statement was the synergy of learning with local cultural and natural aspects. Based on the results of the analysis, 47% of students strongly agree and 45% of students agree that learning geography will be more interesting if it is associated with the culture, economy, and nature around the place of residence.

Table 11. Teachers' perceptions of contextual learning in Geography

Criterion	Statement 1	%	Statement 2	%	Statement 3	%
Strongly agree	7	58%	8	67%	10	83%
Agree	4	33%	3	25%	1	8%
Neutral	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Strongly disagree	1	8%	1	8%	1	8%

Source: Researcher Analysis (2025)

Based on the results of the questionnaire in Table 11 regarding teachers' perception of contextual learning in geography, as many as 91% of teachers have a good understanding of the basic principles of the contextual approach. They know that a contextual approach is a learning method that uses real-world examples in everyday life. In addition, 92% of teachers believe that contextual learning can improve students' understanding of geography subjects. Finally, regarding teachers' perceptions of contextual learning in geography, teachers believe that connecting geography material with local potential is an important and relevant approach. This is supported by the results of a survey of 83% of teachers who strongly agree with this statement. This shows that geography teachers highly value local potential as a source of learning.

Table 12. Implementation of contextual learning.

Criterion	Statement 4	%	Statement 5	%	Statement 6	%
Strongly agree	7	58%	3	25%	6	50%
Agree	3	25%	4	33%	2	17%
Neutral	1	8%	4	33%	4	33%
Disagree	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Strongly disagree	1	8%	1	8%	0	0%

Source: Researcher Analysis (2025)

Based on the results of the questionnaire in table 12, regarding the implementation of contextual learning, as many as 58% answered strongly in agreement and 25% answered in

agreement. This shows that geography teachers in Cirebon Regency routinely associate geography material, especially economic geography, with local potential in their area. However, there are still 8% who give a neutral response and even strongly disagree with the implementation of geography materials with local potential. This indicates that there are still challenges in implementing this approach. In contrast to access to teaching materials or other media, as many as 25% of teachers stated that they strongly agreed and 33% agreed if they experienced difficulties in finding learning resources that are in accordance with local potential. This result is a concern in the manufacture of teaching materials that are adjusted to the local potential of the region. This attention is also a challenge for teachers to be creative in making teaching materials or other media that are tailored to local potential. The next implementation of contextual learning is in terms of involving students in field activities, such as field observations to introduce local potential. The results of the study stated that 50% of teachers strongly agreed and 17% of teachers agreed that they involve students in field activities. Activities like this are important to support contextual learning.

Table 13. The impact of contextual learning on students

Criterion	Statement 7	%	Statement 8	%	Statement 9	%
Strongly agree	9	75%	9	75%	9	75%
Agree	1	8%	2	17%	2	17%
Neutral	1	8%	0	0%	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Strongly disagree	1	8%	1	8%	1	8%

Source: Researcher Analysis (2025)

Based on the results of the questionnaire in Table 13, regarding the impact of contextual learning on students, it was stated that as many as 75% of teachers strongly agreed that their students were more interested in learning geography if it was related to the conditions of their area. The same percentage, recorded in the other two statements, as much as 75% about contextual learning, makes it easier for students to understand geography concepts and makes students more actively involved in the learning process in the classroom.

Table 14. Obstacles in the application of contextual learning

Criterion	Statement 10	%	Statement 11	%	Statement 12	%
Strongly agree	3	25%	5	42%	4	33%
Agree	0	0%	3	25%	2	17%
Neutral	4	33%	2	17%	5	42%
Disagree	2	17%	1	8%	1	8%
Strongly disagree	3	25%	1	8%	0	0%

Source : Researcher Analysis (2025)

Based on the results of the questionnaire in Table 14, regarding the obstacles in implementing learning through a contextual approach, it was stated that as many as 25% of teachers strongly agreed that they had difficulty finding learning resources that were in accordance with local potential, while the other 33% stated neutral. In addition, only 33% of teachers agree that facilities and support from schools are adequate for contextual learning.

Another 8% disagree. This reflects the need for more attention from schools to support teachers in the contextual learning process.

Table 15. Support and expectations

Criterion	Statement 13	%	Statement 14	%	Statement 15	%
Strongly agree	6	50%	9	75%	7	58%
Agree	4	33%	2	17%	3	25%
Neutral	1	8%	0	0%	1	8%
Disagree	1	8%	0	0%	0	0%
Strongly disagree	0	0%	1	8%	1	8%

Source : Researcher Analysis (2025)

In Table 15, there is information about support and expectations in the contextual learning process. It was noted that 50% of teachers strongly agreed and 33% agreed to hold advanced training on the integration of local potential in contextual learning for geography materials. This shows that, even if teachers have a good understanding of contextual learning concepts, they still need training to improve their teaching capacity and abilities. Furthermore, regarding the flexibility of the curriculum so that teachers can develop materials based on the local potential of their area, it was recorded that 75% of teachers agreed with it. Finally, in terms of personal commitment to improve teachers' abilities, 58% strongly agree to continue to develop learning based on regional potential. This shows a good and positive attitude towards the sustainability of this approach.

Based on the results of the student and teacher questionnaires, it was found that the majority of students in Cirebon Regency are happy if the learning process is associated with the local potential of the area where they live. This is also in accordance with the teacher's questionnaire, which states that the students are active when the learning process is associated with the surrounding potential. In addition to field studies, what teachers do in carrying out the contextual learning process is interviews with local resource persons and the use of documentary videos about the conditions of local potential. Field studies are still a fun activity for teachers and students, as they can provide real experiences for students. According to (Setiyorini, 2018) learning activities do not always have to be carried out in the classroom, sometimes they also have to be in the source place where this information can be obtained directly. Although some schools have obstacles in licensing from schools, teachers take the initiative to conduct observations in the school environment with their own methods. These obstacles support teachers in innovating in creating learning strategies that can empower students' potential (Mak & Hong, 2020). From the results of this study, the teacher said that contextual learning has a positive impact on students. At CTL, students are invited to enjoy learning activities by satisfying their curiosity (Sambada, 2012). Subject matter that is integrated with the context of students' daily lives in contextual learning will result in a deep knowledge base where students will be rich in understanding problems and how to solve them (Setiyorini, 2018). In addition, students become more interested in learning because the material learned feels closer and more real to them. (Rahmadani, et al. 2022) Another thing that the teacher said was that students were more active in asking questions so that they were able to improve critical thinking skills for students. According to (Mufahroyin & Santoso, 2022), contextual learning also emphasizes higher-level thinking skills. Some of the obstacles felt by teachers in carrying out the contextual learning process are time limitations. Due to the busy curriculum and school activities, as well as P5 activities, teachers lack time to carry out this learning process. In addition, there are also budget limitations from schools in

conducting field observations. In addition to the budget, the difficulty of licensing from schools is also felt by some teachers. Another obstacle is the need for further training for teachers on contextual learning and its application to learning materials. And the last obstacle is that there are several student characters that are difficult to cooperate with to carry out the contextual learning process because they often spend time at home playing gadgets. These barriers are an important note to develop training programs for teachers and also school policies in supporting the implementation of contextual learning that is integrated with local potential. In the context of education in Indonesia, integrating culture, local potential, and local wisdom in learning is becoming increasingly relevant to maintain the nation's identity in the midst of globalization (Septina, et al. 2025)

4. CONCLUSIONS

The conclusion given based on the results of the analysis of questionnaires of students and teachers in Cirebon Regency is that the contextual learning process of geography based on local potential has been applied through various forms. We know that the impact of contextual learning of real life is that 39% students strongly agree and 65% students agree. This means that contextual learning provides them with a meaningful and in depth learning experience. For the effects of conventional learning, 33% students strongly agree and 47% students agree that they feel bored if geography learning is only delivered through textbooks. Based on the results of the questionnaire, regarding teachers' perception of contextual learning in geography, as many as 91% of teachers have a good understanding of the basic principles of the contextual approach. In addition, 92% of teachers believe that contextual learning can improve students' understanding of geography subjects. But for schools that receive support, activities are carried out through direct observation. However, for schools that lack support, the contextual learning process is carried out through simple methods such as observation around the school or through videos. The findings of this study show that local potential in Cirebon Regency has been used as a learning context that will enrich students' learning experiences. However, in this case, there are still obstacles, namely in the form of teaching materials based on local potential and the lack of advanced training for teachers. Thus, contextual learning of geography based on local expertise has positive prospects in Cirebon Regency because it can form students who love local culture.

This study acknowledges several limitations. First, the research was conducted in only seven public senior high schools within Cirebon Regency, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions. Second, the sample size, especially for teacher respondents, was relatively small, which may not fully capture the diversity of practices and perceptions across the broader educational landscape. Future research could expand the sample to include schools in urban and rural comparisons or apply mixed methods for deeper insight.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are proposed to enhance the effectiveness of contextual learning based on local potential in Cirebon Regency. First, it is important to organize professional development programs or training for geography teachers on how to implement contextual learning in an engaging and effective manner. This aims to ensure that learning does not become monotonous and that students remain enthusiastic and motivated in participating in geography lessons.

Second, there is a need to develop teaching media or learning resources, both printed and digital, that are directly aligned with local potential, to address the current shortage of

relevant instructional materials. The goal is to help students become more familiar with the potential of their local area, rather than relying solely on nationally standardized textbooks.

Third, educators are encouraged to design learning tools that incorporate exploration of the surrounding local economy, such as developing modules on salt production in coastal areas or educational videos documenting the process and cultural heritage of Trusmi batik.

Lastly, successful contextual learning requires collaboration among teachers, principals, students, and external stakeholders, particularly in organizing field-based learning activities that allow students to interact directly with the local environment.

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