

COMPARISON STUDY OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM IN SINGAPORE AND HONGKONG

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Received: April 2022

Accepted: April 2022

Published: May 2022

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33650/pjp.v9i1.3559>

Abstract : *This study aims to analyze the comparison of the primary school level school system in Singapore and Hong Kong, to analyze the comparison of the social studies curriculum at the elementary school level in Singapore and Hong Kong. The research method used is the library method with literature reviews from journals, books and other library sources. The results showed that; 1) The education systems in Singapore and Hong Kong have much in common. The school system starts at Kindergarten for 3 years, continues at the Primary or elementary school level. Then Secondary and College Level. The differences in the education systems of the two countries can be seen from the secondary or secondary school level; 2) The social studies education curriculum in Singapore and Hong Kong also has similarities as well as differences. The Social Studies curriculum at Elementary Schools in Singapore integrates the study areas of Geography, History, Economics and Sociology called Social Studies. Meanwhile, Hong Kong is included in the Personal, Social and Humanities Education group material as General Studies.*

Keywords : *Comparison Study; Curriculum; Elementary School; Social Studies.*

Abstrak : *Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis perbandingan sistem persekolahan tingkat sekolah dasar di Singapura dan Hongkong, menganalisis perbandingan kurikulum sosial studies tingkat sekolah dasar di Singapura dan Hongkong. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah metode kepustakaan engan literatur review dari jurnal, buku dan sumber kepustakaan lainnya. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa; 1) Sistem pendidikan di Singapura dan Hongkong memiliki banyak kesamaan. Sistem persekolahan dimulai pada masa Kindergarten selama 3 tahun, dilanjutkan pada level Primary atau sekolah dasar. Kemudian Level Secondary dan Perguruan Tinggi. Perbedaan sistem pendidikan kedua negara terlihat sejak level secondary atau sekolah menengah; 2) Kurikulum pendidikan IPS di Singapura dan Hongkong juga memiliki kesamaan dan juga perbedaan. Kurikulum Social Studies di Sekolah Dasar di Singapura mengintegrasikan bidang studi Geografi, Sejarah, Ekonomi dan Sosiologi yang dinamakan dengan Social Studies. Sedangkan Hongkong masuk pada materi kelompok Personal, Social and Humanities Education dengan sebutan General Studies.*

Kata Kunci : *Studi Perbandingan; Kurikulum; Social Studies; Sekolah Dasar.*

INTRODUCTION

Globalization transnationally relativizes the world. (Giddens, 1990). Thus, various countries in the world learn and compare to other countries that are considered more advanced and modern, including in the field of education. (Siska & Rudagi, 2021) So that the education system in schools transmits the knowledge, skills and dispositions needed to improve skills in the global era. (Irwan, 2015)

Each country in carrying out the educational process has differences from one country to another because it has a different history, socio-cultural values, economics, and political developments, technology. (Bray, 2007) It also affects the curriculum in the education system implemented by a country.

One of them is Singapore and Hong Kong. Both countries have the same past history, namely the former British colony for about a century and a half. After independence, Hong Kong re-integrated with the People's Republic of China as a unique administrative region in 1997, while Singapore gained independence in 1965. (Irwan, 2015) In addition, these two countries are multicultural countries with the largest Chinese population which has an effect on rapid economic development.

Singapore has three official languages, namely Chinese, Malay, Tamil and English. These four languages are taught in Primary Schools (Primary). Students are required to learn English and their own 'mother tongue' based on their respective ethnicity. Hong Kong has almost 98% of the population with less concern about multi-ethnic issues, and adopting English) and trilingual policies (Cantonese, Putonghua, and English) in education. As a result of historical heritage and national importance, English has become one of the key languages in these two countries. (Siska et al., 2021)

One component of the educational curriculum in Social Studies, social studies into the school curriculum due to changes in human behavior and social behavior of society due to progress in various fields. (Irwan et al., 2019) So that social science and education experts make an effort in order to overcome the problems that arise, one of which is by advancing knowledge in a disciplinary manner which can be done through a formal education program approach in schools. (Siska & Irwan, 2020) The most exciting thing for the author to study in the Social Sciences Education curriculum in Singapore and Hong Kong is the Social Studies Education Curriculum in Elementary Schools, because the main understanding of history, nationalism, social environment is at the elementary school level. Based on the background of the problem above, the purpose of this study is to analyze the comparison of the school system in Singapore and Hong Kong, to analyze the comparison of the social studies curriculum at the elementary school level in Singapore and Hong Kong.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with library research methods or also called literature review. Library research method is a research method that collects data and information through various sources such as journals, source books, documents, archives,

magazines, and other sources relevant to the study being studied. (Irwan, 2018) Meanwhile, according to Sugiyono, Library research is a theoretical study, as a source, as well as other scientific literature related to culture, values and norms that developed in the social situation being studied.

The series of activities in library research begins with the method of collecting library data, reading, taking notes and processing research materials. (Syaodih,2009) This study limits its data collection to literature review or library research without having to research directly in the field. This study uses secondary data, namely collecting data in the form of books, journals, related documents from the internet about the education system and social studies education curriculum for elementary schools in Singapore and Hong Kong.

The data collection technique in this study used secondary data, namely from books, journals, and other literature relevant to the comparative study of the social studies curriculum in elementary schools in Singapore and Hong Kong. The data or information obtained is arranged in accordance with the results of a literature study on these data.

The data analysis in the article consists of two stages: data reduction and data presentation. Data reduction to make it easier for writers to select data from the literature validly when presenting data in narrative form. The results of the discussions and conclusions in this article are the results of analyzing various relevant scientific knowledge. resources to discuss the importance of local wisdom content in social studies learning.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

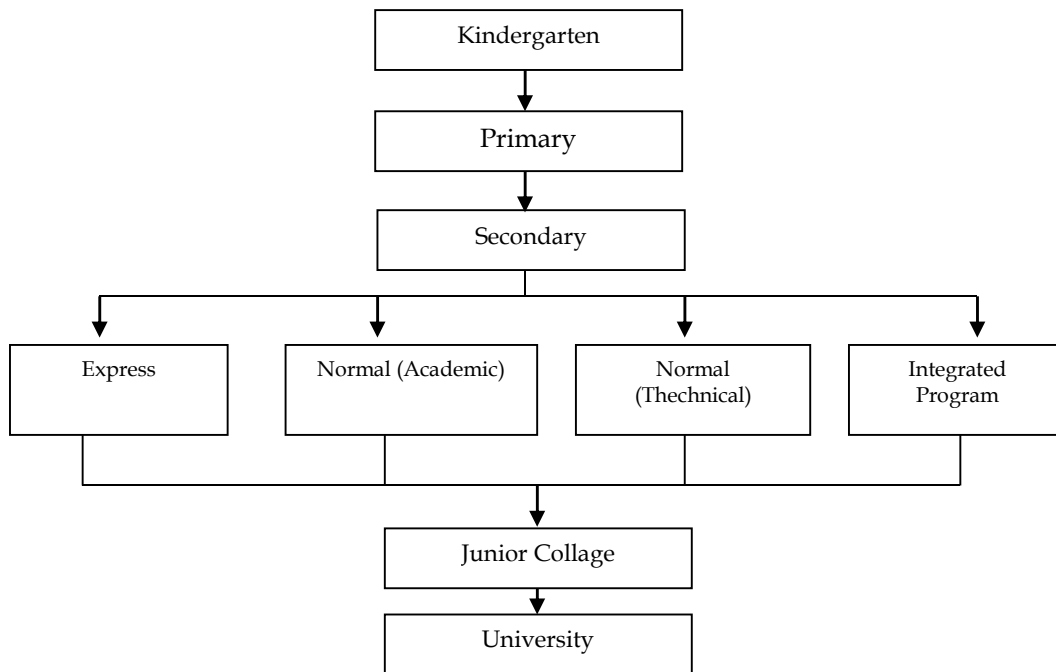
Comparison of Schooling Systems in Singapore and Hong Kong

1. Education System in Singapore

Singapore is one of the countries that has an advanced education system, economy, technology, and human resources, especially in Southeast Asia. Thus, in the field of education, Singapore has become one of the destination countries and a branding in studying. Singapore's education system aims to provide students with basic and religious knowledge to unite the diversity in Singapore, both in terms of race and culture and language. (Putra, 2017)

Singapore's primary education system is based on the premise that every student has unique talents and interests. Singapore uses a flexible approach to foster student potential. This country implements a traditional English education system that is concerned with developing children's talents. In addition, there is a policy of making English and Malay/Mandarin/Tamil the national languages.

The school system implemented in Singapore is as follows:



**Chart 1: Education System Scheme in Singapore
(Curricula Social Studies In Singapore, 2016)**

The education system in Singapore starts from Kindergarten to College level. The first known level is Kindergarten School. At this stage, education is held by community foundations, religious associations, social organizations and businesses under the ministry of education for three years at the age of 3-6 years. The curriculum applied at this time includes English and foreign language programs, except for international schools (using the kindergarten program for expatriate children). For the admission of new students, each school is different, most of them accept students from any country throughout the year as long as there is a quota.

After completing Kindergarten, the next stage taken by students is Primary School or the equivalent of Elementary School. The education system consists of four years with the first basic stage being grades 1 to 4. The next basic stage of grades 5 and 6 is called the orientation stage. The curriculum consists of English, mathematics, regional languages and additional subjects such as music, arts and crafts, physical education, and social studies. Science has been taught since grade 3 because this science is a preparation for the orientation stage. To determine graduation at the elementary school level, students take the primary school leaving examination at the end of grade 6.

The education curriculum in Singapore primary schools is used as a model and model for other countries in the world, especially the method of learning mathematics. Foreign students from any country can be accepted into Singapore primary schools as long as there are places available.

Secondary School, the level that must be taken after elementary school. At this stage the education program is 4-5 years through special, fast or normal programs. This special and fast program prepares students for the Singapore-Cabridge General Certificate of Education 'Ordinary' (CGE 'O') exam at level four. Students in the normal program can choose an academic or technical major, both of which prepare students for the Singapore-Cabridge General Certificate of Education 'Normal' (CGE 'N') exam at level four and if the results are satisfactory, the student will sit for the CGE 'O exam.' at level five.

Further education is a unique education system. Singapore has started directing students according to their talents. Several types of majors that students can pursue are art, commerce or economics majors, applied sciences and engineering. The learning process is of international standard and quality. The creative, inspirational and critical work of students makes advanced education an example for other countries in carrying out education. As a supporter of student skills, the skills that must be learned are English, regional languages, mathematics, science and humanity.

The next level that students must take before entering university is the Centralisea Institute and Junior Colleges. To determine the choice of schools taken based on grades. For those who have good grades, they can study at junior colleges for 2 years, the goal is to prepare for entering college. Meanwhile, those who have sufficient grades, study at the Centralisea Institute for 3 years. It prepares students for the world of work. The education curriculum in Singapore is unique and the best in the world. Singapore prepares special schools for students who will not enter college, so that students have the same opportunity to study according to their respective abilities.

2. Hong Kong Education System

Hong Kong developed its education system based on the British education system. (Faslah, 2012) Hong Kong is a British colony. Extensive knowledge, former British colony so that in some cases Hong Kong applies the British system. The focus of the education system in Hong Kong is special skills lessons that are applied in practice or honing skills, besides that the topic of socio-cultural matters is the focus of education in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong's school system spans from kindergarten to college, the same as in other countries in the world. The following is an overview of the education system in Hong Kong:

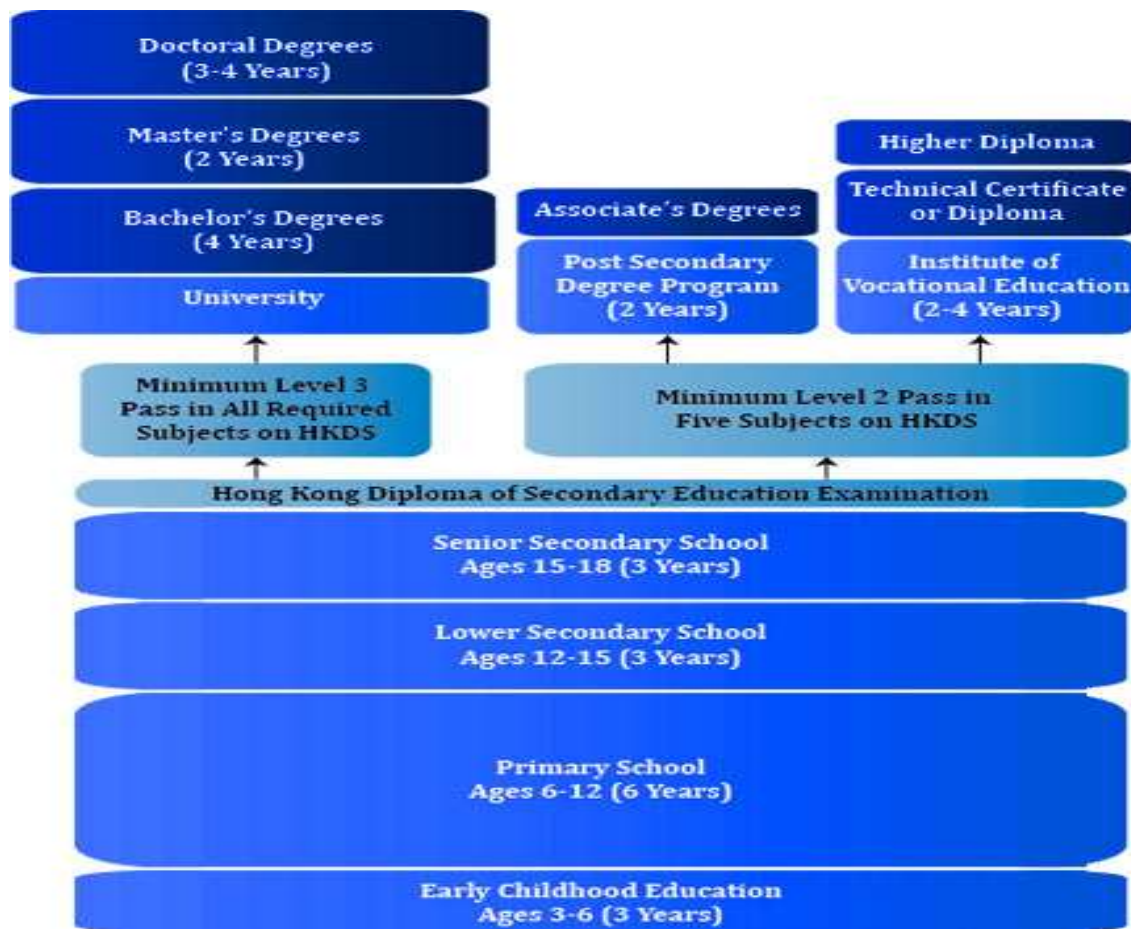


Figure 1: Hong Kong Education System Scheme

The first level of schooling is Early Childhood Education or kindergarten for 3 years, but this level is not compulsory education. The Hong Kong government recognizes that kindergartens provide a good basis for education. Kindergartens are registered and supervised by the Education Bureau (EDB). The second stage is primary school. The Hong Kong government stipulates compulsory education at the primary school level which is completed in 6 years. The primary school curriculum includes core subjects (Chinese, English, mathematics), basic subjects (Social and Natural Sciences), health lessons, music, sports, and skills.

After completing basic education, students continue to secondary school, at this time divided into 3 years at the junior secondary level and 2 years at the senior secondary level. The first three years of secondary education are referred to as “form one” to “form three”. The curriculum at this level is similar to basic education.

Entering the senior secondary stage, students are asked to choose their major, namely Arts with Science. At the form four and four five levels, students prepare to take the Hongkong certification of education Examintaion (HKCEE) exam. Students with satisfactory HKCEE scores can proceed to the next stage of secondary education. Those

who get six A's have the opportunity to register for the Early Admission System (EAS) to enter certain universities.

The next stage of secondary education does not form part of compulsory education and is completed within two years. Form Six and form seven are the last stages before taking the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination (HKALE), this is an exam that usually determines a student's acceptance to a university. Basically there are four types of schools in Hong Kong, namely public schools, aided schools, schools with direct subsidies schemes (DSS) and pure private schools. Public schools and assisted schools do not charge tuition fees for their students. Purely private schools charge tuition fees of varying amounts.

Hong Kong has high rankings in the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), a program that studies the achievements of 15-year-olds by the OECD, an organization that oversees the development of the world economy. The education system applied by Singapore and Hong Kong has some fundamental differences. The author's analysis is in accordance with the vision, mission and educational goals as well as the expected outcomes of education outcomes for the development of each country. The following table compares the education system in Singapore and Hong Kong.

Table 1: Comparison of Singapore and Hong Kong Education Systems

No	Comparatif	Singapura	Hong Kong
1	Education system	British education system	British education system, Chinese culture
2	Level of education	-Kindegarten (3 years) -Primary, 6 years -Secondary 2-3 years: Express program, normal academic, normal technical and integrated program. -Junior Collage, 2-3 years: <i>centralised institute (2 th) dan junior colleges (3 years)</i> -Universitas	- Early Childhood Education (3 years) -Primary School (6 years) - Junior Secondary (3 years) - Senior Secondary (3 years) - Perguruan Tinggi: Level 3 (S1 3 years, S2 2 years, S3 3-4 years). Level 2 (Postsecondary Program). Level 2 Vokasi (Institut Vokasional Education 2-3 years, Diploma).
3	Compulsory Study	10 Years	9 years
4	Official Language	English, Malay, Mandarin and Tamil	English and Mandarin

The education systems of Singapore and Hong Kong have many similarities, especially the education of these two countries is guided by England because both of them were former British colonies. The difference is that Hong Kong has a Chinese

education base as its culture. In addition, the two countries have the best education systems in Southeast Asia, even in the best category in the world. Another similarity is that education starts from Kindergarten or Kindergarten to college. The system and pattern of implementation of education at the Secondary to University level are different for the two countries.

Then, the main official language used is English. Singapore's other official languages are Malay, Tamil and Mandarin and for Hong Kong, Mandarin is spoken. In the implementation of education, the competitiveness of students in the learning process in both countries is very high, because admission to higher education is based on their level of intelligence based on test results.

Comparison of Primary School Social Studies Curriculum in Singapore and Hong Kong

Comparison of the Social Studies curriculum at the Elementary School or Primary level is assessed from the concepts and objectives of Social Studies, materials, and assessments. The following is an explanation and comparative of the Social Studies curriculum in Singapore and Hong Kong

1. Concepts and Purpose of Social Studies

The concept of Social Studies in the education curriculum in Singapore is the integration of the disciplines of history, geography, economics, and sociology. (Ministry Of Education of Singapore, 2016) Where it aims to increase students' understanding of the issues critical to Singapore's survival and success (Rojuli, 2017). Having a great national spirit in Singapore in living life. So that they will not betray their homeland.

Meanwhile, the concept of Social Studies in Hong Kong is that Social Studies subjects in Hong Kong are called Personal, Social and Humanities Education subjects. These subjects are included in the General Studies (GS) group or general subjects. Thus, if students want to study Social Studies subjects in elementary schools in Hong Kong, students must study the structure and system of general subjects (general studies) as a whole. As stated by The Curriculum Development Council that: 'All primary schools should adopt the General Studies curriculum in accordance with the recommendations of this Curriculum Guide from the 2011-12 school year'.

There are three important messages that are mandated through the subjects general studies (GS) for elementary school students in Hong Kong. First, General Studies must be able to present a learning experience for students which in the end students have a better understanding of themselves and the environment around them. Second, General Studies subjects must be able to build students' interest in developing research skills or observing issues and issues related to science, technology and society. Third, General Studies subjects must be able to strengthen attitudes and values in developing aspects of personal and social health.

Meanwhile, the General Studies curricular goals in elementary schools in Hong Kong have five targets to be achieved. First, the ability to maintain personal health, self-development and foster self-confidence, as well as produce citizens who think rationally and responsibly. Second, so that they know/understand their roles and responsibilities as family and community members and show concern for their existence. Third, develop a sense of national identity, and have a commitment to contribute to the country and the world. Fourth, develop curiosity and interest in nature and the world of technology, including understanding the influence of science and technology on society. Fifth, the subject of General Studies is to develop students' attention and interest in the environment.

The following is a comparison of the concept of Social Studies and the objectives of the social studies curriculum in Singapore and Hong Kong:

Table 2: Comparison of Social Studies Concepts and Goals in Singapore and Hong Kong

Num	Comparatif	Singapura	Hong Kong
1	Term/name	Social Studies	General Studies
2	Definition	The concept of Social Studies in the Social Studies curriculum in Singapore is the integration of the disciplines of history, geography, economics, and sociology	Social studies is included in the Personal, Social and Humanities Education group as the General Studies Curriculum for the primary school level.
3	Purpose	enhance students' understanding of issues critical to Singapore's survival and success (Rojuli, 2017). Having a great national spirit in Singapore in living life.	the goal is to form students to have knowledge, generic skills, values and attitudes.

(Processed data, 2021)

The concept of social studies in each country is different. This is adjusted to the history of social studies, the needs and socio-cultural conditions of the country. For Singapore, Social Studies is an integration of the fields of geography, history, economics and sociology as Social studies. Meanwhile in Hong Kong this material is included in Personal, Social and Humanities Education as General Studies.

The objectives of the Social studies curriculum in Singapore and Hong Kong, which the authors conclude are almost the same, are to foster a sense of nationalism and the spirit of nationalism, to think critically to solve social problems, and to think for reflection.

2. Content

The components of Social Studies material taught to elementary school students in Singapore are the integration of geography, history, economics and sociology. The themes and the scope of the material cover 4 themes, namely: people, places, and the environment: time, change and continuity; scarcity, choice, and resources; and identity, culture and community. (Curriculum Planning and Development Division, 2016)

The order of themes in the Social Studies syllabus at the Elementary School level is based on an extended environmental approach. The themes used range from the neighborhood, school, community, country and neighboring countries of Singapore in Southeast Asia. (Curriculum Planning and Development Division, 2016) These concepts are taught sequentially according to the school level, as shown below.

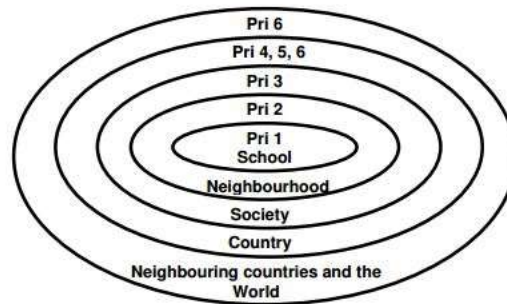


Figure 2: Order of the Syllabus of Social Studies in Singapore

Based on the picture above, it can be explained that the introduction of the environment to students is according to their class level. For grade 1 children, materials are given about the school environment, in grade 2 children are taught about the environment in which they live and for grade 3 the material is given to the community environment. The material for grades 4-5 is taught about the State of Singapore, after that only the neighboring countries in Southeast Asia.

In addition, Social Studies learning in elementary schools also presents teaching concepts that use a spiral approach. (Syihabbudin & Umami, 2021) This approach helps students understand how a new application or idea connects to a previously studied one. It also introduces and strengthens knowledge and nationalism about Singapore.

The four themes of Social Studies namely "People, Place and Environment", "Time, Change and Continuity", "Scarcity, Choice of Resources" and "Identity, Culture and Community" are an integration of the fields of study of Geography, History, Economics and Sociology. These themes also provide a smooth transition in teaching materials and skills from one level to the next.

The conceptual model, as shown in Figure below illustrates how students acquire knowledge, skills as well as attitudes and values goals through four different themes.

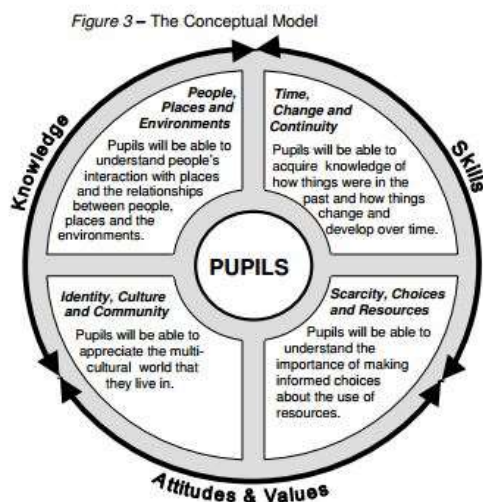


Figure 3: Strategies and Learning Models for Social Studies in Singapore

Meanwhile in Hong Kong, social studies is included in the Personal, Social and Humanities Education group with the title General Studies Curriculum for the primary school level. This subject basically has the aim of forming students to have knowledge, generic skills, values and attitudes. This curriculum contains: Health and Living, People and Environment, Science and Technology in Everyday Life, Community and Citizenship, National Identity and Chinese Culture, Global Understanding and the Information Era. (Curriculum Development Council, 2011)

Table 3: Comparison of Social Studies Content in Singapore and Hong Kong

Nu	Comparatif	Singapura	Hongkong
1	Content	Integration of Geography, history, economics and sociology. Theme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People, Places and Environment. • Time, Change and Continuity • Scarcity, Choice and Resources • Identity, Culture and Community 	Personal, Social and Humanities Education group with the title General Studies. Theme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Health and Living - People and Environment - Science and Technology in Everyday Life - Community and Citizenship - National Identity and Chinese Culture - Global Understanding and the Information Era

(Curriculum Planning and Development Division, 2016), (The Curriculum Development Council, 2011)

3. Assessment

In the field of assessment, the social education curricula in primary schools of the two city-states have more in common than differences. The two curriculum guides are, indeed, similar in policies and principles, this is stated in the Curriculum Development Council & Curriculum Planning and Development Division, 2016:

- 1) the subject is a non-examination subject for all grade levels
- 2) both formal and non-formal assessments are adopted
- 3) emphasis is placed on assessment for improving students' learning
- 4) all assessment tasks are to be placed in a meaningful context
- 5) self-assessment and peer assessment can be adopted to allow students opportunities for reflective learning

Based on the research points of the Social Studies curriculum in Singapore and Hong Kong above, that there is subject assessment or attitude assessment at each level of school, there is adoption of formal and non-formal assessments, task assessments, self-assessments and peers so that students get self-reflection learning.

Both countries design textbooks according to learning principles, as set out in the curriculum guides. There are learning/assessment assignments on map/graphic/image interpretation, documentary analysis, project investigations, interviews, social participation, and data retrieval with the aim of encouraging process learning, skills development, and a student-based approach. However, tests and exams are still mainly used in schools to evaluate student learning outcomes. (Chai Yip & Cheng, 2004)

CONCLUSION

Based on the formulation of the problem described in the discussion, it can be concluded: First, the education systems in Singapore and Hong Kong have much in common. The school system starts at Kindergarten for 3 years, continues at the Primary or elementary school level. Then Secondary and College Level. The differences in the education systems of the two countries can be seen from the secondary or secondary school level.

Second, the social studies education curriculum in Singapore and Hong Kong also has similarities as well as differences. The Social Studies curriculum at Elementary Schools in Singapore integrates the study areas of Geography, History, Economics and Sociology called Social Studies. Meanwhile, Hong Kong is included in the Personal, Social and Humanities Education group material as General Studies. The purpose of the Social Studies education curriculum in elementary schools is to make students able to compete globally with a high national spirit and think critically and be able to solve problems according to the level of education that students are pursuing.

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ISSN: 2354-7960 (p) 2528-5793 (e)

Vol. 9 No. 1 (2022), pp. 1-14

<https://ejournal.unuja.ac.id/index.php/pedagogik>

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