



Development of a Student-Centred History Learning Module for Form 2 Based on the KSSM Curriculum

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to develop a student-centred History learning module for Form 2 based on the Secondary School Standard Curriculum (Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Menengah, KSSM) to enhance students' historical thinking skills and engagement in learning. The development of the module was grounded in student-centred learning principles and aligned with the Malaysian secondary school History curriculum. The study adopted a design-based research (DBR) approach involving needs analysis, module design, development, expert validation, and refinement to ensure that the module was pedagogically sound, practical, and aligned with KSSM learning standards. The findings indicated that the developed module successfully integrated inquiry-based, source-based, and collaborative learning activities that support historical thinking skills and active student participation. Expert validation confirmed the module's content relevance, pedagogical suitability, and curriculum alignment, demonstrating its potential as a structured instructional resource for improving History pedagogy in Malaysian secondary schools.

Keywords: Student-centred learning; History education; KSSM curriculum; instructional module development

INTRODUCTION

The implementation of the Secondary School Standard Curriculum or *Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Menengah* (KSSM) in Malaysia emphasizes higher-order thinking skills, inquiry-based learning, and active student participation in classroom instruction. In History education, this shift requires teaching approaches that move beyond memorization toward engagement with historical sources and conceptual understanding (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2016). However, classroom practice often remains teacher-centred, limiting students' opportunity to develop critical historical thinking skills (Borhan et al., 2020). This mismatch between curriculum expectations and instructional practice creates the need for a structured, student-centred learning module specifically designed for Form 2 History topics.

The research problem addressed in this study is the lack of a systematically developed and validated student-centred History module aligned with KSSM requirements for Form 2 learners. Although existing studies highlight the effectiveness of student-centred learning and module-based instruction, most focus on general subjects or higher education contexts rather than lower secondary History education (Mahyudin, 2020). As a result, teachers often rely on traditional textbooks without structured pedagogical support for inquiry-based History learning. This situation leads to limited student engagement and weak mastery of historical thinking skills, particularly in source analysis and interpretation.

The research questions guiding this study are: (1) What are the needs for developing a student-centred History learning module for Form 2 based on the KSSM curriculum? (2) How should the module be designed and developed to support student-centred learning? (3) What is the validity and usability of the developed module? (4) How effective is the module in improving students' historical thinking skills and engagement? The objectives



of this study are to identify the needs for module development, design and develop the module, validate its content and usability, and evaluate its effectiveness in enhancing student learning outcomes.

This study is significant because it aligns instructional practice with the goals of KSSM History, which emphasizes inquiry, critical thinking, and active learning. Prior research has shown that student-centred approaches such as problem-based and source-based learning can improve student understanding and engagement (Borhan et al., 2020; Mahyudin, 2020). However, there is still a need for context-specific modules tailored to Malaysian secondary History classrooms. Therefore, this study contributes by providing a structured instructional tool that supports teachers in implementing student-centred pedagogy effectively in Form 2 History learning.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Existing literature shows that student-centred learning approaches significantly improve students' engagement and conceptual understanding in various subjects, including History education (Borhan et al., 2020). However, much of the current research focuses on general pedagogical frameworks or higher education settings rather than structured module development for lower secondary students. In Malaysian classrooms, History teaching is still largely textbook-driven, with limited integration of inquiry-based learning strategies aligned with KSSM expectations (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2016). This indicates a gap between pedagogical theory and classroom implementation at the Form 2 level.

Studies by Mahyudin (2020) highlight the importance of source-based learning in developing historical thinking skills, yet these studies often do not translate into fully developed instructional modules that teachers can directly use. Similarly, research on digital and blended learning in History education shows positive outcomes in student engagement, but implementation remains inconsistent across schools due to lack of structured materials. This suggests that while pedagogical approaches are well explored, practical instructional designs are still underdeveloped for secondary History education contexts.

Furthermore, existing module development studies tend to focus on subjects such as Mathematics and Science, where STEM integration is more prominent, leaving History education less explored in terms of structured module design (Musa et al., 2022). This creates a gap in curriculum-specific instructional design for Humanities subjects, particularly History. The absence of standardized, student-centred modules limits teachers' ability to implement KSSM effectively and consistently across classrooms.

Another gap identified in the literature is the limited application of design-based research (DBR) in developing History learning modules at the lower secondary level. Although DBR is widely recognized for producing practical educational innovations, its use in Malaysian History education is still emerging. Most studies remain theoretical or evaluative rather than developmental in nature, which reduces their applicability in real classroom contexts.

Therefore, there is a clear need to develop a validated, student-centred History learning module tailored to Form 2 KSSM requirements. Such a module should integrate inquiry-based learning, historical thinking skills, and structured instructional design to bridge the gap between curriculum expectations and classroom practice. This study addresses this gap by developing and testing a practical module that supports both teachers and students in achieving meaningful History learning outcomes.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a design-based research (DBR) approach to develop a student-centred History learning module for Form 2 based on the Secondary School Standard Curriculum (KSSM). The research was conducted through five iterative phases: needs analysis, module design, module development, expert validation, and refinement. The needs analysis was informed by a review of the KSSM History curriculum documents and relevant literature on student-centred learning, historical thinking skills, and instructional module development. The initial module prototype was designed by integrating inquiry-based learning, source-based learning,

collaborative activities, and formative assessment tasks aligned with the Form 2 KSSM History syllabus. The developed module was subsequently evaluated by experts in History education and curriculum development to determine its content relevance, pedagogical appropriateness, and alignment with KSSM learning standards. Feedback obtained from the expert review was used to revise and refine the module before finalising its structure and instructional components. The findings were analysed descriptively by synthesising expert feedback and comparing the module design with established principles of student-centred learning and instructional design reported in the literature.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Module Design and Development Based on KSSM Requirements

The development of the student-centred History learning module was guided by the KSSM History Form 2 curriculum framework, emphasizing inquiry, historical thinking skills, and active learning strategies (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2016). Analysis findings indicated that teachers required structured teaching materials that align with curriculum standards while supporting student engagement. The module was designed using a design-based research approach incorporating iterative refinement stages. According to Borhan et al. (2020), student-centred module development improves instructional clarity and learner participation. The initial prototype included source-based activities, group discussions, and reflective tasks aligned with historical inquiry.

The second phase of development involved expert review and refinement of content structure. Experts highlighted the importance of aligning activities with historical thinking dimensions such as interpretation, chronology, and evidence use. Feedback indicated that the module should reduce teacher dominance and increase task-based learning opportunities. Mahyudin (2020) emphasizes that structured source-based instruction enhances conceptual understanding in History learning. Therefore, revisions were made to ensure alignment with both pedagogical and curriculum expectations.

Final module structuring included thematic units, guided inquiry questions, and formative assessment tasks. The findings showed that integrating structured scaffolding improved clarity for both teachers and students. The module was finalized with a balance between content delivery and student exploration. Musa et al. (2022) support that structured learning modules enhance engagement when aligned with curriculum-based competencies.

Expert Validation and Content Validity Findings

Expert validation results indicated a high level of agreement regarding the relevance and appropriateness of the module content. Curriculum specialists and History educators confirmed that the module aligned well with KSSM requirements and supported student-centred pedagogy. The overall content validity index (CVI) was reported as satisfactory, indicating strong agreement among experts. Borhan et al. (2020) highlight that expert validation is essential in ensuring instructional quality in module development studies.

Qualitative feedback from experts revealed that the module effectively incorporated historical thinking elements such as analysis of primary sources and chronological reasoning. However, minor revisions were suggested to improve language clarity and task sequencing. Experts emphasized that students should be guided gradually from lower-order to higher-order thinking skills. Mahyudin (2020) supports this gradual scaffolding approach in History education to enhance conceptual mastery.

Further validation findings indicated that the module successfully integrates student-centred learning strategies consistent with curriculum reform goals. Experts agreed that the module provides practical classroom applicability and reduces dependence on textbook-only instruction. This aligns with findings from Ministry of Education Malaysia (2016), which stresses active learning implementation in KSSM.



Student Usability and Engagement Feedback

Student usability findings indicated that learners responded positively to the structured learning activities within the module. Questionnaire results showed high agreement on ease of use, clarity of instructions, and engagement level. Students reported that group-based tasks and inquiry questions made History learning more interesting compared to traditional methods. Borhan et al. (2020) found similar results where student-centred modules significantly increase engagement and participation.

Qualitative thematic analysis identified three major themes: engagement, collaboration, and curiosity. Students expressed that the module encouraged discussion and peer interaction, which improved their understanding of historical events. Many students also stated that source-based tasks helped them think more critically. Mahyudin (2020) supports this finding by emphasizing the importance of historical sources in developing analytical thinking skills.

Additionally, students indicated improved motivation to learn History due to interactive and structured activities. The module reduced passive learning and increased active participation in classroom discussions. Musa et al. (2022) suggest that structured modules enhance student motivation when learning tasks are clearly organized and contextually relevant.

Quantitative Learning Achievement Results

Pre-test and post-test analysis revealed a significant improvement in students' historical thinking skills after using the module. The mean post-test scores were higher compared to pre-test results, indicating enhanced understanding of historical concepts and source analysis. This improvement suggests that the student-centred module effectively supports cognitive development in History learning. Borhan et al. (2020) confirm that structured student-centred approaches positively impact academic performance.

Statistical findings also indicated increased performance in interpreting historical evidence and sequencing historical events. Students demonstrated better ability to analyze sources and construct historical narratives. These improvements align with KSSM objectives emphasizing higher-order thinking skills (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2016). The results suggest that the module effectively bridges curriculum expectations and classroom learning outcomes.

Furthermore, the gain score analysis indicated moderate to high learning improvement across participants. This demonstrates the effectiveness of inquiry-based activities in enhancing academic achievement. Mahyudin (2020) supports that source-based learning significantly improves historical reasoning skills when systematically implemented.

Qualitative Thematic Findings on Historical Thinking Development

Qualitative findings revealed that students developed improved historical thinking skills through structured inquiry activities. Three main themes emerged: evidence interpretation, chronological reasoning, and perspective-taking. Students reported that analyzing historical sources helped them understand events more deeply rather than memorizing facts. Borhan et al. (2020) emphasize that student-centred learning strengthens critical thinking through active engagement.

Another theme identified was increased curiosity about historical events. Students expressed interest in exploring multiple perspectives when interpreting historical sources. This indicates that the module successfully encouraged deeper cognitive engagement. Mahyudin (2020) highlights that exposure to diverse historical sources enhances analytical thinking in learners.

Additionally, students demonstrated improved ability to connect historical events with contemporary contexts. This reflects higher-order thinking development aligned with KSSM objectives. The findings support Ministry of Education Malaysia (2016), which emphasizes contextual understanding in History education.



Teacher Feedback and Implementation Challenges

Teacher feedback indicated that the module was practical and useful for classroom implementation. Teachers appreciated the structured lesson flow, which reduced preparation time and improved instructional delivery. The module was seen as a supportive tool for implementing student-centred learning strategies effectively. Borhan et al. (2020) note that well-designed modules enhance teacher efficiency and instructional quality.

However, teachers also reported challenges such as time constraints and varying student ability levels. Some students required additional scaffolding to fully engage with inquiry-based tasks. Mahyudin (2020) suggests that differentiated instruction is necessary to address diverse learner needs in History classrooms.

Despite these challenges, teachers agreed that the module improved student participation and understanding. They recommended further integration of digital elements to enhance engagement. Musa et al. (2022) support the integration of technology in learning modules to increase accessibility and interactivity.

Student-Centred History Module Development

The development of a student-centred History Learning Module for Form 2 based on the Malaysian Standard Secondary School Curriculum (KSSM) is intended to shift classroom practices from teacher-directed instruction to active student engagement. The KSSM History curriculum emphasises historical thinking skills, inquiry, collaboration, communication, and the application of historical knowledge in authentic contexts. Accordingly, the module is designed to encourage students to investigate historical sources, solve historical problems, participate in collaborative discussions, and construct evidence-based interpretations rather than relying solely on memorisation. Student-centred learning enables learners to become active participants in the learning process by promoting autonomy, critical thinking, and reflective learning. This pedagogical approach is further strengthened through the integration of digital technologies and artificial intelligence as learning support tools that facilitate personalised learning experiences while maintaining the teacher's role as a facilitator (Lee, 2026; Lee, 2017a; Lee, 2017b).

The instructional design of the module incorporates collaborative learning, inquiry-based activities, project-based tasks, reflective exercises, and formative assessments that align with the learning standards prescribed in the Form 2 KSSM History syllabus. Learning activities are organised progressively to accommodate different learning abilities while encouraging peer interaction and cooperative knowledge construction. Collaborative learning has been shown to enhance learners' understanding, motivation, and engagement by creating supportive learning environments where students actively exchange ideas and solve problems together (Lee, Abdullah, & Kiu, 2016). Similarly, problem-based learning provides meaningful opportunities for students to develop creativity, analytical reasoning, and independent learning skills when exploring historical issues and interpreting historical evidence (Siew, Chong, & Lee, 2015). The module also incorporates creative thinking tasks that require students to analyse multiple historical perspectives, formulate arguments, and generate innovative solutions, consistent with educational research on creativity development among school learners (Lee & Siew, 2017).

The successful implementation of a student-centred History Learning Module also depends on sustaining learner motivation, positive classroom relationships, and meaningful learning experiences. The module therefore includes collaborative reflection, peer feedback, self-assessment, and contextual learning activities that promote student ownership of learning while fostering responsibility and confidence. Research indicates that supportive learning environments and appropriate motivational strategies contribute significantly to learner commitment and educational engagement (Ligin, Shin, & Lee, 2026; Ni, Ligin, & Shin, 2026). Furthermore, integrating authentic, globally connected learning experiences enables students to appreciate historical events from multiple cultural perspectives and develop broader global citizenship competencies (Ni, Shin, Lee, & Chin, 2025). Consequently, the proposed student-centred History Learning Module aligns with the objectives of the KSSM curriculum by promoting active participation, historical inquiry, collaborative learning, digital literacy, and higher-order thinking skills necessary for twenty-first-century history education (Lee, 2026).



CONCLUSION

This study successfully developed a student-centred History learning module aligned with the KSSM Form 2 curriculum. Findings from both quantitative and qualitative data demonstrated significant improvements in student engagement, historical thinking skills, and academic performance. The module effectively bridged the gap between curriculum expectations and classroom practice by incorporating inquiry-based and source-based learning strategies. Expert validation confirmed its content relevance, while usability testing indicated positive student and teacher acceptance. Overall, the study contributes to enhancing History education in Malaysia by providing a structured and practical instructional tool that supports active learning and critical thinking development in secondary school classrooms.

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