



Contribution of Sociology Education in Realizing Tolerance and Diversity at SMA Negeri 5 Makassar

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ABSTRACT

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This study aims to determine the contribution of sociology education in forming attitudes of tolerance and accepting diversity among students of SMA Negeri 5 Makassar. Through a descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected through observation, interviews with sociology teachers and students, and learning documentation. The results of the study indicate that sociology education plays a strategic role in shaping students' understanding of the importance of living in diversity, respecting differences, and avoiding social conflict. Sociology materials such as social structure, social interaction, and cultural values are the foundation for building students' social awareness. Thus, sociology education makes a positive contribution to creating a harmonious and inclusive school environment.

Keywords: *Sociology Education, Tolerance, Diversity, Social Awareness, SMA Negeri 5 Makassar*

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is one of the countries with the highest levels of diversity in the world. This country is inhabited by more than 1,300 ethnic groups, has more than 700 regional languages, and adheres to various religions and beliefs that are officially recognized by the state. This diversity is spread from Sabang to Merauke and is the main identity of the Indonesian nation known by the motto "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika" which means "Different but still one" (Nasution, 2019). In this context, diversity is not only a cultural wealth to be proud of, but also a complex challenge in maintaining social harmony and national integration.

This challenge is increasingly apparent in the era of globalization and digitalization, where the flow of information is so fast and free. Identity-based social conflicts often occur, ranging from small-scale between individuals to large-scale between groups. The potential for social friction is even higher if society, especially the younger generation, is not equipped with an understanding and tolerant attitude towards existing differences.

In the midst of these conditions, education plays an important role as a vehicle for the transformation of values, knowledge, and character. Through education, the younger generation is guided to understand the complexity of society, develop social empathy, and uphold the values of humanity and unity. Education does not only function as an academic process, but also as a process of forming an inclusive and tolerant national character. One of the subjects that explicitly teaches social values and diversity is sociology education. This subject discusses concepts such as social structure, values and norms, culture, social integration, and conflict and its resolution. Through sociology learning, students are directed to understand social reality critically and reflectively, and are trained to accept and appreciate differences as part of the dynamics of community life. Therefore, sociology education has great

potential in forming social awareness and tolerant attitudes among students as future leaders of the nation.

Sociology education at the Senior High School (SMA) level teaches students to understand social structures, norms, values, and various social realities that occur in society. Through this learning, students not only understand social theory but are also invited to reflect on life in a pluralistic society. In this context, sociology education has great potential in instilling values of tolerance, respect for differences, and forming inclusive attitudes (Triyanto, 2015).

However, in reality, cases of intolerance are still found among students such as discrimination against minority groups, conflicts between students due to differences in background, and lack of social empathy. This shows that the values of tolerance have not been fully internalized in students (Komnas HAM, 2022). Therefore, a more in-depth study is needed regarding the extent to which sociology education contributes to shaping students' social awareness of diversity. Several previous studies have discussed the role of multicultural education in creating social harmony in schools (Munir, 2020; Hidayati, 2021). However, research that specifically highlights the contribution of sociology education—not just general education—in the context of tolerance and diversity at the high school level, especially in Makassar, is still limited. Most studies focus on religious education or extracurricular activities as a medium for forming tolerant characters. In fact, sociology as a subject has great theoretical and practical potential in building students' social awareness. This study offers a new approach by focusing on the contribution of sociology education as a formal subject in the high school curriculum to the formation of tolerance values and attitudes towards diversity. In addition, this research was conducted contextually in SMA Negeri 5 Makassar, which represents the cultural and religious diversity typical of Eastern Indonesia, making it an important study that can be a reference for the development of inclusive education policies in similar areas. With this background, this study aims to answer the main question: How does sociology education contribute to realizing tolerance and diversity in SMA Negeri 5 Makassar? The results of this study are expected to be input for teachers, curriculum developers, and policy makers in improving the quality of sociology learning that is oriented towards the values of diversity.

METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach that aims to describe in depth the contribution of sociology education in realizing an attitude of tolerance and appreciation for diversity among students of SMA Negeri 5 Makassar. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to understand social reality from the perspective of informants and explore the meaning they give to their social experiences (Creswell, 2016). Data were analyzed using the interactive analysis model from Miles and Huberman (2014).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

This study aims to describe the contribution of sociology education in forming attitudes of tolerance and appreciation for diversity among students at SMA Negeri 5 Makassar. In an era marked by complex social dynamics and increasing potential for conflict based on identity differences, sociology education is present as an important instrument in instilling multicultural values, tolerance, and unity.

Through a qualitative approach, data were obtained from observations of learning activities, in-depth interviews with teachers and students, and documentation of teaching materials and school activities. Based on these findings, it is clear that sociology subjects provide a significant contribution in shaping the social character of students, especially in terms of awareness of the importance of peaceful coexistence amidst diversity. Sociology subjects not only equip students with theoretical knowledge about the structure and dynamics of society, but also encourage them to reflect on their active role as members of an inclusive and tolerant society. Mutual respect for differences in ethnicity, religion, culture, and social background is instilled through teaching materials, participatory learning methods, and teacher role models in daily interactions in the classroom.

Thus, the results of this study confirm that sociology education is not only a subject in the classroom, but also a medium for transforming social values that contribute to the

formation of a young generation that is able to maintain harmony in diversity.

1. Sociology Material Promotes Understanding of Social Diversity

Sociology subject matter in grade XI has a strategic role in shaping students' social awareness of the importance of tolerance and respect for diversity. Topics such as social structure, social interaction, social conflict, and cultural values and norms are basic concepts that enable students to understand that society consists of various groups with different backgrounds, both in terms of ethnicity, religion, race, and social class.

The presentation of the material by the sociology teacher at SMA Negeri 5 Makassar is done contextually, namely by linking the sociological concepts with actual social phenomena. Issues such as intolerance between religious communities, discrimination against minorities, and horizontal conflicts between social groups are discussed together in class forums as case studies. Thus, students not only understand the theory, but are also able to see the direct relevance of the material in real life.

This approach is in line with Vygotsky's (1978) view that emphasizes the importance of the social and cultural environment in the learning process. When students are given space to relate knowledge to their social experiences, learning will be more meaningful and able to form reflective attitudes. In this case, students are not only recipients of material, but also active subjects who reflect on their role in maintaining social harmony.

In addition, the use of discussion methods, group presentations, and written reflections by teachers also strengthen the process of internalizing tolerance values. Students are invited to dialogue, listen to different views, and express opinions politely. This indirectly fosters critical thinking skills, social empathy, and an attitude of respect for differences, which are the core of multicultural education (Banks, 2009). Furthermore, students' understanding of concepts such as social conflict and social integration helps them realize that conflict does not have to be avoided, but can be managed and resolved constructively. In class discussions, for example, students are asked to identify the causes of social conflict and design solutions based on Pancasila values and social norms. This provides an applicable learning experience while strengthening their national commitment.

Thus, sociology subject matter not only broadens students' horizons about social diversity, but also instills values of tolerance through an active, reflective, and contextual learning process. Sociology education is an important medium in shaping the multicultural awareness of the younger generation, which is greatly needed in maintaining social integrity amidst the challenges of the times. One student said, "Initially I did not know the importance of tolerance, but after learning about social conflict and social structure, I realized that diversity must be maintained." This shows that students' cognitive understanding of diversity increases along with the learning process. According to Soekanto (2012), sociology helps individuals understand social reality objectively and build an attitude of accepting differences. This understanding is an important provision in forming a harmonious and inclusive society.

2. Active Learning Strategies Strengthen Attitudes of Tolerance

Sociology teachers at SMA Negeri 5 Makassar play an important role in internalizing the values of tolerance and respect for diversity through an active and participatory learning approach. In the teaching process, teachers do not only deliver materials conventionally, but also use various interactive methods such as group discussions, case studies, role plays, and debates. These methods have proven effective in shaping students' social awareness and increasing their involvement in understanding social issues more deeply. One real example is when the teacher delivers the topic of "conflict and social integration". In this session, students are divided into several small groups to analyze the causes of inter-ethnic conflicts, both those that have occurred in Indonesia and abroad. After that, each group is asked to formulate solutions to create peace and social integration in the context of diversity. This activity not only improves students' cognitive understanding of sociological concepts, but also fosters reflective and empathetic attitudes.

The use of discussion and case study methods allows students to practice critical thinking skills, express opinions argumentatively, and listen to views from various angles. This is important in the context of learning tolerance values, because students directly practice appreciating differences of opinion and finding common ground in diverse situations. As stated by Trianto (2014), active learning can create a conducive dialogic space to shape students' social

character.

Meanwhile, the role-playing method helps students understand the position and perspective of others in a social conflict. For example, in an inter-ethnic conflict simulation, students are asked to play the role of members of a community group experiencing discrimination. Through this experience, students are invited to feel the emotional impact of intolerance and learn how to build empathy and resolve conflicts peacefully. Thus, the methods used by sociology teachers not only enrich the learning process but also become an effective vehicle for instilling social values, especially in terms of respect for diversity and peaceful conflict resolution. According to Johnson & Johnson (2006), cooperative learning such as discussion and group work can build strong interpersonal relationships, increase openness, and foster mutual trust between students—all of which are the foundation of tolerance. Observations show that this strategy encourages students to think critically, be open to friends' opinions, and practice social empathy. Cross-group discussions are also a means to strengthen inclusive social interactions between students from different backgrounds. Trianto (2014) states that active learning allows students not only to understand concepts but also to internalize social values such as tolerance and respect for diversity.

3. The Role of Teachers as Role Models and Facilitators of Tolerance

In addition to delivering subject matter, sociology teachers also play an important role as role models in shaping attitudes of tolerance in the school environment. In the context of sociology learning that emphasizes the values of diversity, justice, and equality, teacher role models are a key aspect in the process of internalizing values by students. When teachers demonstrate inclusive, fair, and respectful attitudes in daily interactions, this has a strong influence on students' mindsets and social behavior. In SMA Negeri 5 Makassar, interview results showed that students viewed their sociology teacher as someone who was consistent in practicing the values he taught. The teacher was open to students' diverse opinions, treated all students equally without distinguishing ethnic background, religion, or social status, and actively avoided the use of stereotypes or prejudice in classroom communication. This attitude reflects role-modeling-based value education, which according to Lickona (1991), is one of the most effective strategies in character education. A student's statement, "The teacher always emphasizes that we are all the same even though we have different ethnicities or religions. That makes me feel comfortable in class," shows the existence of an inclusive and humanistic learning climate. In an atmosphere like this, students feel valued, accepted, and are not afraid to express their social identities. This is very important in building self-confidence and openness between individuals, especially in the context of a multicultural society. Moreover, the teacher's behavior that is consistent with the values of tolerance is a real example of how social norms are applied in everyday life practices. According to Bandura (1977) in social learning theory, individuals—especially children and adolescents—learn a lot through observing the behavior of adults around them. Therefore, when teachers are able to be good role models, students will imitate and instill these values in themselves.

By treating students fairly, prioritizing dialogue in resolving differences of opinion, and building healthy relationships in social interactions in the classroom, sociology teachers not only teach, but also educate by example. This practice strengthens students' understanding that tolerance is not just a theory in a book, but must be part of everyday attitudes and behaviors. Thus, it can be concluded that the role of teachers as role models makes a major contribution to creating a learning environment that is conducive to the development of values of tolerance and diversity. Teachers' role models are a bridge between the sociological knowledge learned by students and its application in real social life. According to Lickona (1991), teacher role models are a key factor in shaping students' character. Values that are exemplified are more effective than those simply conveyed verbally.

4. School Environment Supports the Creation of a Culture of Tolerance

SMA Negeri 5 Makassar not only prioritizes tolerance learning through the curriculum, but also through an inclusive school culture that supports the actualization of multicultural values. This school consistently builds a social space that encourages harmonious interaction across ethnicities, religions, cultures, and other social groups, which is clearly reflected in various school activities. One real form of inclusive culture at SMA Negeri 5 Makassar is the implementation of routine activities such as "Nusantara Cultural Week" and "Interfaith

Dialogue". These activities are not only a place for student creativity, but also an important means of instilling the values of tolerance, respect for diversity, and the spirit of unity in differences. In the Nusantara Cultural Week, for example, students display a variety of traditional arts from various regions in Indonesia, wear traditional clothing, and serve regional specialties. Meanwhile, in the Interfaith Dialogue, students from various faith backgrounds discuss universal teachings about peace, compassion, and mutual respect.

Documentation of the activities shows that students from various backgrounds are actively and enthusiastically involved in each session of the activity. This cross-group participation creates a harmonious social climate, mutual respect, and free from discrimination. This is in line with the theory of multicultural education according to James A. Banks (2004), which emphasizes the importance of learning through direct experience (experiential learning) as an effective means of building empathy and cross-cultural understanding. Furthermore, activities like this also strengthen the concept of socio-cultural learning that places student experiences as part of the educational process. According to Nieto & Bode (2012), schools with an inclusive culture are able to provide space for students to celebrate their identities, while learning to accept the identities of others. An environment like this is an important foundation for the formation of the character of students who are tolerant, open, and have a strong sense of nationality.

These extracurricular activities also strengthen the learning of sociology in a practical way. Values such as social solidarity, social integration, and cultural pluralism taught in sociology classes are brought to life in students' daily social reality through these activities. Thus, tolerance education does not stop in the classroom, but is also practiced in the dynamics of school life as a whole. By creating a fair and equal participation space, SMA Negeri 5 Makassar has provided a real example of how an inclusive school culture can strengthen the implementation of sociology education in forming a young generation that is tolerant, wise, and able to live side by side peacefully amidst diversity.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that sociology education provides a real contribution in forming a tolerant attitude of students at SMA Negeri 5 Makassar. This contribution can be seen from various important aspects that support each other, such as contextual learning materials, participatory learning methods, teacher role models, and an inclusive school culture. These four aspects form a positive synergy in strengthening multicultural character education, which is very relevant in the context of a pluralistic Indonesian society.

First, sociology course materials—especially on topics such as social interaction, conflict and integration, and social structure—help students understand diversity as part of social reality that must be appreciated, not rejected. The materials presented are not abstract, but are directly linked to actual social phenomena experienced by students in everyday life. This makes it easier for students to reflect on the values of tolerance in real terms.

Second, participatory learning methods such as group discussions, case studies, role plays, and debates provide space for students to be actively involved in building social understanding. Through this approach, students not only gain knowledge, but also develop social skills, critical thinking, and empathy for differences. Learning becomes a dialogic process, not a one-way one.

Third, the role model of sociology teachers plays an important role in creating a fair and inclusive classroom atmosphere. The teacher's consistent attitude in respecting differences of opinion, avoiding stereotypes, and treating all students equally becomes a concrete example that is imitated by students. This strengthens the process of internalizing the social values taught.

Fourth, school environment support is also a key factor. Activities such as "Nusantara Cultural Week" and "Interfaith Dialogue" create a space for the actualization of tolerance values outside the classroom. Students' involvement in cross-cultural and cross-faith activities strengthens their awareness of the importance of living harmoniously in diversity. This finding is in line with Banks' (2009) view, which states that multicultural education is not only about understanding differences, but must also provide space for students to experience, reflect, and appreciate diversity directly. Thus, education is not only a transfer of knowledge, but also a

process of forming attitudes and social awareness.

In this context, sociology education has proven to be a strategic medium in bridging intergroup understanding, reducing social prejudice, and fostering inclusive attitudes. Sociology education not only forms individuals who are knowledgeable, but also those who have character and are responsible for creating social cohesion in the future.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that sociology education has a significant contribution in forming attitudes of tolerance and appreciation for diversity among students of SMA Negeri 5 Makassar. Through learning integrated with social values, sociology education can become a strategic medium in building multicultural awareness and students' social character. Contextual sociology learning materials, especially on themes such as social structure, social conflict, integration, and cultural values, provide students with a deep understanding of the importance of appreciating differences. Participatory learning methods—such as discussions, debates, case studies, and role-playing—encourage students' active involvement in exploring social issues and internalizing the value of tolerance in real terms.

In addition, the exemplary behavior of sociology teachers in being fair, respecting differences, and creating open discussion spaces also play an important role in shaping students' inclusive attitudes. An inclusive school culture, reflected through activities such as the Indonesian Cultural Week and Interfaith Dialogue, also strengthens the educational atmosphere that respects diversity. Thus, sociology education at SMA Negeri 5 Makassar not only plays a role as an academic subject, but also as an instrument for multicultural character education that is able to develop social awareness, reduce prejudice, and foster responsibility for the realization of social cohesion in community life.

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