

THE ROLE OF HOMEROOM TEACHERS IN MANAGING STUDENTS' SOCIAL DIVERSITY

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Abstract

This study examines the role of homeroom teachers in managing students' social diversity students in elementary school environments. Diversity in students' social backgrounds and characteristics creates interaction dynamics that require appropriate sociological management. The research problem focuses on how homeroom teachers perform their roles in fostering harmonious social relationships in the classroom. This study aims to describe the roles of homeroom teachers in managing students' social diversity in SD Muhammadiyah Program Khusus Pracimantoro. A qualitative approach with a case study design was employed. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The findings indicate that homeroom teachers act as social mediators, promoters of tolerance values, and facilitators of inclusive social interactions. In conclusion, the role of homeroom teachers contributes significantly to creating a conducive and diversity-respecting classroom social climate.

Keywords: Homeroom teacher ; social diversity ; sociology of education ; social interaction; elementary school

PERAN WALI KELAS DALAM MENGELOLA KEBERAGAMAN SOSIAL PESERTA DIDIK

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji peran wali kelas dalam mengelola keberagaman sosial peserta didik di lingkungan sekolah dasar. Keberagaman latar belakang sosial dan karakter siswa memunculkan dinamika interaksi yang memerlukan pengelolaan sosiologis yang tepat. Permasalahan penelitian berfokus pada bagaimana wali kelas menjalankan perannya dalam membangun relasi sosial yang harmonis di kelas. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan bentuk peran wali kelas dalam mengelola keberagaman sosial peserta didik di SD Muhammadiyah Program Khusus Pracimantoro. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa wali kelas berperan sebagai mediator sosial, penanam nilai toleransi, serta fasilitator interaksi sosial yang inklusif. Kesimpulan penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa peran wali kelas berkontribusi signifikan dalam menciptakan iklim sosial kelas yang kondusif dan menghargai keberagaman.

Kata kunci: Wali Kelas; Keberagaman Sosial; Sosiologi Pendidikan; Interaksi Sosial; Sekolah Dasar

1. Pendahuluan

Various studies in the sociology of education show that students' social diversity, including their social, cultural, and economic backgrounds, and individual characteristics, directly correlates with the dynamics of social interactions in the classroom. Recent studies have identified that these differences often give rise to unbalanced relationship patterns,

such as social exclusion, stereotypes, and interpersonal conflict, particularly in elementary education, which is the initial phase of children's formal socialization (Ainscow, 2020; Slee, 2020). Other studies also confirm that without targeted social management, diversity can hinder the formation of an inclusive classroom climate and influence students' socio-emotional development (Haug, 2020; Loreman, 2020). These findings consistently demonstrate that managing social diversity is an empirical issue of ongoing concern in educational studies, not merely a normative issue or the perception of individual researchers.

Since 2020, at least dozens of studies in the sociology of education and inclusive education have emphasized the importance of school actors in managing social diversity. These studies highlight the role of teachers as agents of socialization (Florian, 2021), strengthening an inclusive school culture (Booth & Ainscow, 2020), and maintaining a conducive classroom social climate (Loreman, 2020). Other studies also emphasize that healthy social interactions in elementary schools contribute to students' socio-emotional development and character (Kurniawan, 2023). These findings indicate that managing social diversity is a strategic issue in elementary education.

. However, most previous research has focused more on the role of teachers in general or on inclusive education policies at the institutional level. Studies that specifically position homeroom teachers as key sociological actors in managing students' social diversity are still relatively limited, particularly in the elementary school context (Efendi, 2021; Putra & Rahmawati, 2021). Yet, homeroom teachers hold a strategic position because they interact intensively with students, parents, and subject teachers, and are directly responsible for the social dynamics of the classroom.

The limitations of this study indicate a suboptimal exploration of the homeroom teacher's role as a social mediator, value director, and manager of social relations in heterogeneous classrooms. Some studies only place the homeroom teacher in an administrative role, while its sociological dimensions have not been studied in depth (Susanto & Fitria, 2022). Furthermore, there is limited research linking the homeroom teacher's role to managing social diversity as part of character education and an inclusive school culture.

Based on this gap, this study offers novelty by positioning homeroom teachers as key actors in managing students' social diversity from a sociological perspective. This research's novelty lies in its analytical focus on homeroom teachers' daily practices in building inclusive social interactions, instilling values of tolerance, and preventing social exclusion in the classroom. This approach enriches previous studies, which tended to be normative and policy-oriented (Miles & Singal, 2021).

The purpose of this study is to describe and analyze the role of homeroom teachers in managing the social diversity of students in elementary schools. Specifically, this study aims to identify the forms of homeroom teachers' roles as social mediators, guides of character values, and facilitators of inclusive social interactions. Thus, this study is expected to provide an empirical overview of social diversity management practices at the classroom level.

Based on the problems and research gaps outlined, this article aims to analyze the role of homeroom teachers in managing students' social diversity in elementary schools, particularly in building inclusive social interactions and supporting character education. This research aims to uncover the actual practices carried out by homeroom teachers in dealing with heterogeneous class social dynamics. To achieve this goal, this study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. This approach was chosen because it allows for in-depth and contextual data collection regarding homeroom teachers' experiences and

strategies in managing students' social diversity, so that the research findings can provide relevant empirical contributions to the development of elementary education practices.

2. Literatur Review

2.1. Social Diversity in the Context of Basic Education

Student social diversity is a structural phenomenon in the modern education system, encompassing differences in social, cultural, economic, and individual character backgrounds. Research shows that social diversity in elementary school classrooms has direct implications for social interaction patterns and student identity formation (Ainscow, 2015). Slee's (2018) study emphasized that social diversity can be a source of positive social learning, but it also has the potential to lead to exclusion if not managed systematically.

2.2. The Role of Teachers in Managing Social Interactions

Previous research has highlighted the role of teachers as key actors in managing students' social interactions. Avramidis and Norwich (2016) found that teachers' attitudes and strategies influence levels of social acceptance among students. Loreman (2017) added that teachers act as social facilitators who bridge differences and encourage collaboration in heterogeneous classrooms.

3. Method

3.1 Research methods and design

This research employed a qualitative approach with a case study design, aiming to gain an in-depth understanding of the role of homeroom teachers in managing the social diversity of students in elementary schools. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to examine social phenomena contextually and naturally, in keeping with the characteristics of sociological studies of education, which emphasize meaning, interaction, and social practices (Creswell & Poth, 2021).

3.2 Research Subjects

The research subjects were the first-grade homeroom teachers of Muhammadiyah Elementary School with Special Programs in Pracimantoro, who were selected purposively, considering their direct involvement in managing the heterogeneous social dynamics of the class. The research location was determined based on the criteria of the school having diverse student social backgrounds. The research focused on the practices, strategies, and roles of homeroom teachers in building inclusive social interactions in the classroom.

3.3 Data Collection Techniques

Data collection techniques included interviews, classroom observations, and documentation studies. Interviews were conducted to explore the homeroom teachers' experiences and perspectives regarding managing students' social diversity. Observations were used to directly observe social interactions in the classroom, while documentation was used to strengthen the data through school records, class programs, and other supporting documents.

3.4 Data Presentation Techniques

Data analysis was conducted through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing, as outlined by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2020). The analysis process was carried out iteratively to identify patterns, themes, and meanings related to the role of homeroom teachers in managing students' social diversity. Data validity was maintained through triangulation of techniques and sources, as well as checking data consistency between interviews, observations, and documentation. Thus, the research results are expected to have an adequate level of credibility and reliability in describing the phenomena studied (Lincoln & Guba, 2020).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

The results of the study show that homeroom teachers have a strategic role in managing students' social diversity through three main roles, namely as social mediators, directors of values and character education, and facilitators of inclusive social interactions in the classroom environment.

First, homeroom teachers act as social mediators in managing the dynamics of interactions between students from diverse social backgrounds and characters. Homeroom teachers are directly involved in resolving minor conflicts between students, preventing social exclusion, and fostering fair and open communication in the classroom. This role is evident in the practice of dialogue, personal approaches, and the provision of preventative social guidance.

Second, homeroom teachers act as guides for values and character education. Research results show that homeroom teachers consistently instill the values of tolerance, mutual respect, and empathy through classroom activities, daily habits, and exemplary behavior. Character education is not only delivered verbally but also integrated into classroom management and student social interactions.

Third, homeroom teachers act as facilitators of inclusive social interactions. They create a space for equal participation for all students, including those from diverse social backgrounds. This practice is evident in the arrangement of heterogeneous group work, providing equal opportunities to speak, and strengthening cooperation among students. This role contributes to the creation of a conducive and inclusive classroom social climate.

4.2 Discussion

The findings of this study reinforce previous research, which emphasized that students' social diversity requires targeted social management at the classroom level. Ainscow (2020) and Haug (2020) stated that without the active role of educators, diversity has the potential to create unequal social relations in schools. The results of this study indicate that homeroom teachers are key actors in responding to these conditions directly and contextually.

The role of homeroom teachers as social mediators aligns with Slee's (2020) findings, which emphasize the importance of school actors in managing equitable social culture and relations. Unlike macro-policy approaches, this study demonstrates that homeroom teachers' social mediation practices occur in everyday, micro-scale interactions, yet have a significant impact on the classroom's social climate.

Furthermore, the role of homeroom teachers in character education supports the views of Loreman (2020) and Florian (2021) that values of inclusivity and tolerance need to be internalized through pedagogical practices, not simply through the formal curriculum. The findings of this study demonstrate that homeroom teachers function as role models who influence the ongoing formation of students' social attitudes.

The results of this study also confirm those of Putra and Rahmawati (2021) and Susanto and Fitria (2022), which assert that the social role of homeroom teachers contributes to the creation of a positive school climate. However, the novelty of this study lies in its emphasis on the sociological dimension of homeroom teachers, rather than solely on their pedagogical or administrative roles. Thus, this research complements previous studies that tended to position homeroom teachers as managerial.

Overall, the findings of this study confirm that managing students' social diversity is inextricably linked to the role of the homeroom teacher as the primary social actor at the classroom level. This role encompasses mediation, value instillation, and facilitation of inclusive social interactions, which collectively contribute to the creation of a harmonious classroom social climate that supports character education.

5. Conclusions

This study concludes that homeroom teachers play a strategic role in managing the social diversity of students in elementary schools. Homeroom teachers function as social mediators in managing conflict and preventing social exclusion, as value guides in instilling character education, and as facilitators of inclusive social interactions in the classroom. These roles contribute to the creation of a conducive classroom social climate that supports student diversity. The findings of this study emphasize the importance of strengthening the sociological dimension of the homeroom teacher's role in elementary education practices and provide implications for the development of teacher development policies and practices oriented towards managing social diversity and character education.

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