Social Networks in Improving the Learning Achievement of Zoning Pathway Students

Kartika Purnama Eka Dewi, Nurhadi, Saifuddin Zuhri
Sebelas Maret University
kartikaprnm03@student.uns.ac.id, nurhadi@staff.uns.ac.id, zuhri@staff.uns.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Zoning policies create associations of students with different academic abilities and school backgrounds. The focus of this research is on zonal pathway students who have experienced improvements in terms of cognitive aspects and explains the problem of social networks in increasing the grades of zonal pathway students. This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach to examine the issues raised. The research subjects were determined using a purposive sampling technique, namely 12th-grade MIPA students. The research results explain that students have similar social network patterns among each other. Increasing student learning outcomes is dominated by peer group interaction within and outside the school environment. In this way, peers trigger or motivate students to improve learning outcomes.

Keywords: High school students, learning achievement, peer group, social network, zoning system

INTRODUCTION

The government has established zoning policy as the primary basis for structuring school reform, from Kindergarten (TK) to Senior High School (SMA). In addition, this zoning policy is another breakthrough in illustrating the government's efforts to ensure that all students have equal access and the same quality of education (Saharuddin & Khakim, 2020). Since its inception, zoning policies have received much attention. This is proven through the results of research that has been carried out previously. The zoning system is a system that regulates the selection process for New Student Admissions (PPDB) based on the area where prospective students live. So, the priority for selecting prospective students is not based on achievement or ranking but has changed to Rayonization (Noor, 2020).

Observations at one of the Surakarta State High Schools showed that implementing the zoning system policy resulted in student input that was different from before, especially for zoning pathway students who were more heterogeneous. Heterogeneous means students who come from different school backgrounds, have different academic abilities, and live in different environments, impacting student learning outcomes (Dianah, 2022). This is in line with the results of previous research, which states that implementing zoning policies creates heterogeneous
student output, causing changes in learning patterns that require schools to adapt (Madiana et al., 2022).

The impact of implementing this policy has been proven through several studies. This impact is felt by students themselves, where students' motivation is weakened. They do not need good grades to enter their favorite school, nor decrease student motivation because they are constrained by the extended distance from home to their desired school (Gistituati, 2022). Zoning creates a condition where students with different academic abilities meet in one school or class. These differences will later impact the learning process in the classroom, so students and teachers need to make efforts to achieve learning outcomes (Widyastuti, 2020).

Learning achievement is defined as what students are expected to learn, understand, and be able to do after a period of learning. In learning achievement, the focus is on students' abilities rather than the learning material. Core competencies in the 2013 curriculum are the level of abilities that students must have at each grade level. Core competencies consist of the core competencies of spiritual attitudes, social attitudes, knowledge, and skills. In achieving this, students can be influenced by various internal and external factors as long as they establish social relationships so that the social relationships experienced by students can provide social support and sources of information obtained in achieving learning (Sakti & Cilik, 2017).

Social networks are external components that can influence student learning outcomes. Social relationships are a particular type of network where "ties" connect points. Social relationships show cooperation and coordination between individuals based on active and reciprocal social ties. Social networks help students get social support and information (Sakti & Cilik, 2017). Social networks are formed because of mutual knowledge, giving each other information, reminding each other, and helping each other carry out and solve problems. Social network students help and inform each other regarding the lessons they are studying to achieve the best learning results.

This research looks at a situation or condition experienced by students entering the zoning route. The fact is that students and girls who enter through the zoning route at one of the Surakarta State High Schools have an increase in grades from one semester to the next, such as students who enter through the achievement route and others. This happens because students have started forming social networks for various reasons, and the social networks formed will vary so that they contribute to student learning achievement. According to Robert MZ Lawang, social networks are ties between nodes connected by media (social relations) (Damsar, 2009).

In this article, the concept applied in research uses Marwell’s theory to explain how social networks and student efforts form in improving the learning achievement of zoned students. Social networks are related to collective action.
wherein, in a community group, there are social ties so that there is mutual
dependence between its members in decision-making. The density of social ties
determines the level of collective action. The social ties in question are ties that
occur directly. Social networks become essential when the perpetrators obtain
interests and benefits, both material and non-material. Therefore, this is the basis
for why individuals interact with other individuals and then form social networks.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This research departs from the implementation of a zoning system policy
which has had an impact both on schools and students. Implementation of the zone
system in the admission of new students (PPDB), where the provisions for
prospective new students to register at school change, previously using changing
grades by showing them based on distance or zone. These changes also affect
student input which has also changed from before, namely the input of students
with heterogeneous academic abilities. Little studied aspects of supporting zoned
pathway students in improving their learning achievement, such as examining who
students turn to for information and advice when they struggle or need advice on
subject-related issues.

Research on environmental perceptions in helping students improve their
learning achievement shows that peer encouragement makes a greater contribution
to improving the learning achievement of zoned students. Like previous research on
the influence of teacher competence and peer environment on student learning
achievement. The results obtained showed that the peer environment had a positive
relationship with student learning achievement (Nugroho, 2018). Other research
states that the peer environment influences student learning outcomes. Partially, it
shows that the peer environment is at a good level, where the more conducive the
peer environment is, the better the learning outcomes obtained. (Khairina et al.,
2020). More specifically, the support category of most students seeks support for
advice, assistance, and emotional support related to academic or course-related
issues. Peers are most often sought for these three types of support (Wally et al.,
2023).

From the description of previous research related to this research, it can be
concluded that the results of the discussion about the environment and its
components are the main factors in improving student learning achievement.
Previous research has not discussed how environmental elements interact with each
other to produce student success in improving their learning achievement.
Therefore, this research discusses social networks that occur in the youth
environment so that they help students improve their learning achievement. This
study explores how zoning pathway students’ efforts are related to academic
problems or concerns in the subject. To explain how support or efforts are provided
by zonal pathway students and who are the actors involved in improving the
learning achievement of zonal pathway students, it is necessary to explain social ties and collective action which are summarized in Gerald Marwell's theory.

METHODS

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study type of research to examine the problems raised. The case study method was used in this research to collect comprehensive and in-depth information. Case studies provide information from an individual's perspective, allowing researchers to describe an event's complexity (Sugiyono, 2014). This research was conducted at one of the Surakarta State High Schools. The researcher chose this school because it is an achievement school with A accreditation and is one of the leading schools in Surakarta Regency, so it is still a target for students.

Data was collected in a natural setting at the Surakarta State High School research site. The research subjects were determined using a purposive sampling technique, namely 12th-grade MIPA and IPS students. The research subjects were determined based on specific considerations, such as students accepted through the zoning route in 2021/2022. The other criteria to answer the problem being studied are zoning pathway students who have improved grades, starting from semester three and semester 4, to see whether they have experienced an increase and how their efforts are during the learning process at SMA Negeri Surakarta. This helps researchers find out what efforts have been made by zoning students. Apart from that, to test the validity of the data, researchers use the triangulation method. Source triangulation involves informants or other predetermined research subjects, such as teachers and classmates.

Primary data was obtained from students through the interview process. In contrast, secondary data was obtained through observations and document analysis, which proved an increase in grades from zoning pathway students in the form of report cards for semester three and semester 4. After the data was successfully collected in a certain period, analysis was carried out during data collection, which took place using an interview (Sugiyono, 2014). The data that has been collected is then analyzed using data analysis techniques, according to Miles and Huberman. According to Miles and Huberman, qualitative data analysis includes three activity procedures: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions or verification (Sugiyono, 2014).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Using the social network paradigm to understand human social groups and community behavior is nothing new. Social networks help people work together to achieve goals and gain reciprocity. Students' social networks at school, both inside and outside, are essential for measuring, guiding, and developing students'
competence as actors. Social networks focusing on relationships between individuals can analyze actors in a circle of social relationships and describe the relationships between them and the impact received by each actor involved in that circle (Agusyanto, 2007: 11).

This was obtained from students regarding how the social networks of zoned students achieve increased grades or learning outcomes and how they interact with individuals in them. The environment influences behavior formation changes and how they think in their respective portions. Frequent interactions with specific individuals or groups will play a more significant role as an actor in forming networks. Likewise, students' social networks, where students have close social relationships with teachers, students, and parents, influence the student’s success at school.

The student environment that is the main focus of this research includes the family, school, and play environments. Social life is characterized by interactions between actors who form networks. Interaction between actors is not just contact (greeting) but, more than that, an activity that institutionalizes various obligations and hope (Usman, 2018: 25). Based on interviews conducted, it was found that social networks existed between students and their peers at school, especially classmates. Students begin to form mutually beneficial and trusting relationships. Friends here are actors who play an essential role in improving students' grades or learning outcomes.

The closeness among students due to being in the same class starts from the time they enter as new students, and there is no change in students as they move on to the next semester. This shows the existence of social ties between the students gathered there. This is in line with Marwell’s social network theory, which states that network relationships always positively affect collective action. Network relationships with peers are said to be denser because it was found that parental involvement in improving student learning outcomes is seen in the economic aspect, where parents support in terms of facilities that can support increased student learning outcomes.

The ties that informants have with their friends also have different densities. This is based on the close quality of their friendship and the greater intensity of meeting them. In addition, a higher density of social ties indicates that these social ties are prioritized over other social ties. The purpose of ties in a social network is to encourage collective action of the individuals involved. So, individuals in this social network are selected based on similarities in interests and selected through pre-existing social ties.

Close relationships in social networks aim to institutionalize obligations and expectations that function in realizing goals because they can create a social environment embedded in attitudes and actions of mutual trust and mutual
help (Usman, 2018: 26). So, individuals are involved in this social network based on shared interests to achieve specific goals. A student sees his classmates who can master certain subjects. One day, he asked his friend for help, and vice versa. So, there will be a reciprocal and mutually beneficial relationship.

For the informant with the initials F, efforts were made to improve grades or learning outcomes by focusing on one subject to be achieved. F wants to enter law school to focus on subjects related to that major. He focused intensively on subjects such as SMBP material and supporting subjects. Apart from that, F’s efforts were made to pay attention to the situation related to understanding teacher behavior and teacher characteristics by sitting in the front chair adjacent to the teacher’s desk. This is done to create a special inner bond with the teacher. This action has been carried out since F was in elementary school, which proved successful when F entered the desired superior school. The inner bond between informant F and the teacher began with informant F, who was interested in the teachers. Informant F included students who participated actively as event organizers at school. This makes F more often face-to-face with teachers in delivering school activities. Not only that, he was also often asked for his opinion by teachers regarding his problematic classmates.

Apart from the efforts above, F explained that it is difficult for him to make a regular study schedule nowadays because of activities such as OSIS and extracurricular activities. So that he does not fall too far behind, F takes tutoring, which forces him to continue studying amidst his other activities. Based on interviews, the closest family, besides providing financial support, also motivates F to continue improving learning outcomes. The image that motivates informant F is the figure of his older brother. The older sister figure who motivated informant F has now graduated from college and is working. Apart from that, the mother figure advises informant F every time they eat together to be responsible for every choice they make.
As in the picture above, apart from the school and family environments, it can also be seen in the friendship network with school friends in the same class as the informant and outside the class. According to the informant's statement, he had a study group made up of his classmates, or what was known as a circle. This circle is a group of students with the same thoughts in completing their school assignments. Informant F said that sometimes, some students do not want to share the results of their assignments with other friends. This similarity is the beginning of the circle being formed in this class. This circle is situational; there is no definite schedule for them to work on tasks together. Their closeness is based on having the same goals to form mutually beneficial relationships.

![Figure 2. Informant's Social Network in Improving Learning Achievement](source: processed data by researchers, 2023)

For informant T, the effort made to improve his learning outcomes was by studying. Every student certainly has a different method or type of learning. For informant T, the method used was working on questions. According to informant T, asking questions makes it easier for him to understand the material and is suitable for exams. He already knows the type of question and the answer by doing questions. Apart from that, informant T also started by deepening the material. If the exam is to be carried out in more than one chapter, he begins to skim by taking points in installments per chapter.

Another effort made by informant T was studying with peers. Informant T is an easy-going individual. This is done to gain knowledge from every friend he meets. So, the friendship group here is essential in helping improve informant T's learning outcomes. For example, he will ask his friends how to have good public speaking, how he absorbs material, discusses discussions, and what habits he does—noticed by the informant. After obtaining this information, he will apply this knowledge to himself, whether it matches the methods or habits that his friends have for him. Therefore, peers indirectly become "role models" for informant T in improving learning outcomes. Apart from establishing friendship groups with the same students in the same class, informant T's friendship groups were established with
students outside the classroom and school. This started because they came from the same tutoring place.

A similar pattern is also found in close relationships formed within the family environment. According to informant T, he lives in an academic family environment. Since the beginning, his parents have directed him to attend his favorite school. Based on the interview results, this was done because parents have a network of fellow parents regarding their child's future vision. Apart from that, the figure of a sibling or cousin with achievements also becomes a "role model" for the informant by looking at their experience, motivating them to excel in their respective paths.

The increase in informant S's grades was influenced by actors in his social environment, including family, junior high school friends, and friends who attended the same high school as him now. Until now, the informant maintains close relationships with his friends from junior high school who now attend another high school close to the informant's current school. The informant admitted that he was more enthusiastic when participating in non-academic learning because the informant was not very good at academics, so he had to find a way to get grades above average.

The efforts that S has made so far have been to build relationships with classmates and friends outside the classroom. This proximity is used by S to obtain information about subjects he does not understand. Usually, S asks for help from classmates first regarding material he does not understand. If he feels he still does not understand the material, S will ask for help from friends outside the class who are still in the same school. Apart from that, the existing relationship will benefit both parties; when a daily test is held, the actors will provide each other with information regarding the material that will be tested if one of the actors takes the exam on the first day. Apart from school friends as the actors who played the most
role in improving informant S's learning outcomes, the family also played a role. S said that parents provided facilities that could be used to support the informant's achievements, such as tutoring, laptops, and basketball shoes for extracurricular activities. Therefore, in the case of informant S, parental involvement in student success is seen in economic form.

The following informant is Z, who habitually has study time at certain hours. Z admitted he had a study schedule after evening prayers until 9 pm. This habit is essential to do, remembering that Z does not attend tutoring, so Z has carried out this habit from junior high school until now. Z's learning habits to improve his learning outcomes are repeating and understanding the material presented by the teacher during classroom learning activities and then looking for other reference sources via the internet and YouTube. Z uses a method to help himself understand the material by reading the material and then making a summary.

The informant's success in improving learning outcomes cannot be separated from close relationships between other students. Informant Z explained that he had three classmates who often met to hold discussions, help with problem-solving, and give each other information about subjects. The close relationship started with the formation of a peer group by one of the subject teachers. This aims to encourage students to help each other and share knowledge with other students. Z also explained that some students were embarrassed and lazy to ask questions directly to the teacher of the subject in question, so having a peer group helped improve learning outcomes.

According to the informant, he is not only classmates but also close to friends outside the class, many of whom are in the same school area. This meeting began when the informant took part in the OSN Economics extracurricular. Extracurricular activities held every Friday bring together actors. Apart from Fridays, there are additional hours for taking part in guidance, namely on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Friday afternoons after school hours. There are still additional days for guidance on
Saturday and Sunday. With a long duration, close relationships between actors can be built with each other. Apart from the friendships formed, the closeness of these students to the economics subject teacher also creates a close relationship with the frequency of their meeting each other and interacting, apart from having an interest, namely learning to take part in OSN competitions. This indicates that the structure of social relations shows the opportunity, frequency, and duration of relationships between teachers and students. Interaction factors between actors that institutionalize various obligations and expectations that function in realizing common goals that are attached to attitudes and actions of mutual trust and mutual help.

Students’ academic success can also be seen in the frequency of relationships between parents and children (students). According to interviews with informant Z, parents’ involvement in school activities was less direct. However, the informant’s mother always said that informant Z should go to school well and that her mother would always pray for him. So, it can be said that the support given by parents to informants is moral.

It can be seen from the picture above that peers are one of the actors who play an essential role in improving student learning outcomes. However, the bond density varies as indicated by the thickness of the color on the circle. Peers influenced informants F, T, S, and Z in improving learning outcomes. Peers are divided into peers within and outside the school environment. Informants T, S, and Z have thick circles, which indicate that success in improving learning outcomes is dominated by peers in various ways. Meanwhile, for informant F, the close relationship between the teacher and informant F began when informant F became a pretty active member of the OSIS, supported by the informant being a representative for OSIS children in presenting school activity programs. According to Sarafino (in Tea et al., 2020), there are five types of teacher social support that students can feel: emotional support, information support, instrumental support, appreciation support, and social network support. This form of social network support is related to feeling accepted in a group, sharing fun, telling stories, or discussing and spending time together.

Informant T used his peers as inspiration regarding how these friends successfully improved their grades. This aligns with previous research, which states that peers can form study groups to exchange ideas about problems such as school assignments, discuss complex problems, and study together to pass exams (Cahaya, 2018). Informant S said he had deficiencies in academic abilities and needed to build relationships with classmates and friends outside the classroom. Meanwhile, informant Z has a study group with his classmates, formed from a peer group created by the subject teacher. As stated (Hakim 2020), the peer tutoring learning method has been proven to contribute to the emergence of learning behavior in students. In the case of these three informants, students’ social networks influenced learning achievement (Sakti & Cilik, 2017).
Increasing student learning achievement can be influenced by the above actors, namely teachers, peers, and family (Trianah & Sahertian, 2020). These three actors support students’ success in achieving learning achievements through various forms, both in terms of emotions (sentiment), morals, and finances. The emotional support (sentiment) given by peers to informants T, S, and Z is formed from social relationships containing feelings that exist in friendship. It cannot be denied that the four informants above also have friends who have the potential to have a negative influence related to improving learning achievement. Like friendship groups outside the informant’s study group. Informants F, T, S, and Z realized their friendship group was in the Toxic group. Toxic friendships are defined as friendships that impact individuals in the friendship group, affecting their mental health. Students with a toxic friendship environment have specific characteristics, including experiencing a lack of self-acceptance, poor behavior management, a lack of potential growth, and an inability to manage their lives, such as neglecting their obligations as students (Aini et al., 2023).

In this case, a defined peer group provides affiliation according to special interests, often creating a motive to misperceive or create favorable influence for the group. In some cases, peer interaction is the variable that has the most influence on students’ negative behavior (Budiarti, 2016). This collective action can be formed because of mutual knowledge, providing information, reminding each other, and helping each other in carrying out and overcoming problems related to learning activities by their friendship groups, as well as the positive or negative roles given significantly to student behavior, as explained (Wati & Isroah, 2019). The role of the family is in the moderate category when compared with the role of peers in achieving increased learning achievement. This aligns with previous research, which states that the highest indicators achieved are social networks, which influence shaping student character (Khairil Aftar et al., 2021).

CONCLUSION

The zoning system has an impact on a variety of abilities. Students’ ability on the zoning route is undoubtedly different from the ability of the achievement route, which can be seen through achievements or grades, not based on the distance from the student’s home. This has given rise to perceptions among several groups, including classmates, regarding the abilities of zoned pathway students. Students make various efforts to improve learning outcomes. Business is done by establishing social relationships with other students within and outside the school environment. The results obtained were that students had similar social network patterns among each other. Students have formed social networks before and after being in today’s school environment. Increasing student learning outcomes is dominated by peer group interaction both within and outside the school environment. In this way, peers trigger or motivate students to improve learning outcomes. Apart from that,
the family can be a supportive actor in the form of financial and moral support in supporting student learning outcomes.

REFERENCES


