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Local Wisdom and Social Awareness in Social Studies Education at UNM

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Abstract

Social studies education in higher education seeks to develop students' understanding of social relations, respect for diversity, and capacity to act responsibly. The teaching of local wisdom often emphasizes cultural content, with limited attention to how it can foster reflective and critical social awareness. Drawing on the sociology of education, this article examines how local wisdom can support students' social awareness in social studies education, using the Social Studies Education Program at Universitas Negeri Makassar (UNM) as its institutional context. The qualitative integrative review synthesized 18 journal articles and four foundational theoretical works identified through indexing portals and official journal and publisher websites. The sources were examined through thematic coding and conceptual synthesis. The synthesis identifies four interacting mechanisms that can support social awareness in higher education: a contextually grounded curriculum, dialogic and collaborative pedagogy, inclusive social interaction, and institutional culture as expressed through the hidden curriculum. Bugis–Makassar values such as *sipakatau*, *sipakalebbi*, *sipakainge*, *siri'*, and *pesse* can serve as ethical resources when incorporated into learning experiences that invite critical reflection. The article integrates these mechanisms into a four-layer conceptual framework for strengthening social studies education. The framework is a literature-derived proposition whose applicability at UNM remains to be examined through field research.

Keywords: Local Wisdom; Social Awareness; Social Studies Education; Sociology of Education; Bugis–Makassar Values

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INTRODUCTION

Education is a social institution that contributes to socialization, cultural transmission, identity formation, and the reproduction as well as transformation of social order. From the perspective of the sociology of education, learning does not take place in a neutral space because educational experiences are always connected to values, social structures, power relations, and students' cultural backgrounds. Educational success, therefore, cannot be measured solely by knowledge acquisition; it should also be considered in terms of individuals' capacity to interpret social problems, understand the positions of others, and participate in collective life (Durkheim, 1956; Dewey, 1916).

This expectation is particularly important in Social Studies Education, which connects knowledge from history, geography, economics, sociology, anthropology, and civics to interpret social realities in an integrated manner. Future Social Studies educators need to master social concepts while developing sensitivity to inequality, conflict, diversity, solidarity, and social change. Local wisdom can bridge academic concepts and people's lived experiences, particularly when it is treated as a source of knowledge and reflection rather than merely as decorative learning content.

Contemporary educational challenges concern not only technological change and workforce competencies but also the ways individuals build social relationships in plural societies. Digital information flows expand access to knowledge, yet they can also accelerate prejudice, polarization, derogatory speech, and judgments detached from context. Social education should therefore provide opportunities to understand differences, evaluate information, engage in dialogue, and address shared problems. In this article, social awareness refers to the capacity to recognize other people's circumstances and interests, understand the structures that shape social problems, demonstrate empathy, respect differences, and assume responsibility through participation.

The central argument of this article is that social awareness cannot be formed merely by delivering lessons about norms and values. It develops when students experience consistency among curriculum content, lecturers' teaching practices, the quality of peer interaction, and institutional culture. If a course teaches tolerance while classroom discussions deny equal opportunities to express different views, the curricular message becomes contradictory. Likewise, if local wisdom is memorized only as a list of terms,

students may recognize the expressions without being able to use them to analyze actual social relations.

In South Sulawesi, Bugis–Makassar values such as sipakatau (treating others as fully human), sipakalebbi (mutual respect and honoring others), sipakainge (mutual reminding), siri' (dignity or self-respect), and pesse/pacce (empathy and solidarity) provide ethical resources closely connected to social life. These values may enrich sociology and Social Studies learning because they embody respect, care, responsibility, and self-restraint. Nevertheless, cultural values should not be assumed to produce inclusive behavior automatically. Their meanings may shift according to context, power relations, and the ways in which they are taught and practiced.

The scholarly issue addressed here is therefore not simply whether local wisdom should be included in education, but how local values can be translated into critical, inclusive, and socially relevant learning experiences. This issue matters in higher education because students are developing professional identities, analytical capacities, and social responsibilities as future educators and members of society.

Several studies indicate that integrating local wisdom can strengthen the relevance of learning and the internalization of values. Ibrahim, Kamaruddin, Majid, and Leesen (2025) developed a sociology learning module based on Bugis–Makassar local wisdom to strengthen school culture. Their study reported that the material was clear and systematic, connected sociological concepts with students' experiences, and integrated values such as siri' na pacce, sipakatau, and getteng. Ibrahim et al. (2026) further showed that local cultural values can be integrated into formal and non-formal learning through contextual, collaborative, and reflective strategies.

At the higher education level, Nursida, Syamsuri, and Nursalam (2026) developed contextual sociology teaching materials using sipakatau, sipakainge, and sipakalebbi to strengthen students' sociological reasoning and social identity. Their study is relevant because it shifts the discussion of local wisdom from school settings toward university learning experiences. Nurdin, Jumadi, and Kamaruddin (2023), meanwhile, examined social interaction in education and its relationship with sociology learning achievement. Their findings reinforce the importance of social relations in educational processes, although their primary focus was learning achievement rather than multidimensional social awareness.

Other studies have examined the relationship between sociology learning, tolerance, and institutional culture. Through a literature review, Hanifa, Maftuh, and Wilodati (2025) identified tolerance-oriented habitus, sociology learning, and teacher competence as important elements in building a tolerant culture. Sukardi, Hanum, and Efianingrum (2025) discussed patterns of moderate tolerance and empathy in multicultural education. Setiawan et al. (2024) and Abdurrohman et al. (2025) showed that tolerance is not cultivated only through formal subject matter, but also through classroom agreements, everyday interactions, shared activities, and the hidden curriculum.

Bibliometric studies by Khusyairin et al. (2024) and Arjaya et al. (2024) indicate growing scholarly attention to the integration of local wisdom in education. Nevertheless, many studies focus on teaching-material development, character education in schools, or tolerance promotion in specific settings. Fewer syntheses explain, within a single analytical framework, the relationships among curriculum, pedagogy, social interaction, institutional culture, social capital, and university students' social awareness in a Social Studies Education program.

The research gap therefore concerns three insufficiently integrated areas. First, local wisdom is often positioned as subject matter or a source of learning content, rather than as a social practice that shapes peer relations and academic culture. Second, social awareness is frequently simplified into character or tolerance, although it also involves the ability to identify inequality, understand social structures, and participate in problem-solving. Third, Social Studies Education research often centers on school learning, whereas university programs have their own social ecosystems, including curricula, student organizations, lecturer–student relations, and academic norms.

The novelty of this article lies in proposing a conceptual framework that connects Bugis–Makassar local wisdom with the development of students' social awareness through four educational mechanisms: contextual curriculum, dialogic and collaborative pedagogy, inclusive social interaction, and institutional culture. The framework draws on Durkheim's theories of socialization and solidarity, Dewey's democratic education, Bourdieu's cultural capital, Coleman's social capital, and Freire's critical consciousness. These perspectives are complementary but not interchangeable: Durkheim emphasizes social integration; Bourdieu highlights the reproduction of inequality; Coleman explains relational resources; Dewey

emphasizes democratic experience; and Freire positions critical reflection as a basis for transformation.

Specifically, this article aims to explain the dimensions of social awareness relevant to Social Studies Education students; analyze local wisdom as a source of social knowledge and ethics; identify curricular, pedagogical, relational, and institutional mechanisms that may support its development; and formulate conceptual implications for strengthening Social Studies Education at the Social Studies Education Program of Universitas Negeri Makassar. These objectives are analytical and conceptual, rather than an empirical evaluation of the program's actual performance.

METHODS

Research Approach and Design

This study employed a qualitative approach using an integrative literature review. This design was selected to synthesize empirical findings, conceptual discussions, and sociological theories of education in order to develop a more comprehensive explanation of the relationship between local wisdom and students' social awareness. It differs from a field survey or an empirical case study because the primary data consist of published scholarly literature rather than interviews, observations, or measurements involving human participants.

The Social Studies Education Program at Universitas Negeri Makassar (UNM), Makassar, Indonesia, was used as the institutional context for formulating implications for the development of Social Studies Education. Accordingly, the reference to UNM does not imply that interviews, classroom observations, or direct assessments of lecturers and students were conducted. The unit of analysis was the publication and its relevant concepts or findings, not individual students or lecturers.

Literature Sources and Selection

The literature corpus consisted of 18 scholarly journal articles and four foundational theoretical works. The journal articles were selected primarily from the 2016–2026 period, while classical works were retained to explain the theoretical foundations of the analysis. Literature was identified through indexing portals and official journal or publisher websites, including Garuda, SINTA, university journal platforms, J-STAGE, Frontiers, and other

scholarly publisher websites. Search terms included sociology of education, Social Studies Education, social awareness, local wisdom, Bugis–Makassar culture, social capital, cultural capital, multicultural education, tolerance, and social interaction.

The selection was purposive and thematic. Sources were included when they addressed education, Social Studies or sociology learning, social interaction, social or cultural capital, tolerance, or local wisdom; were published by a traceable scholarly journal or academic publisher; provided verifiable bibliographic information; and contributed directly to one or more analytical themes. Sources were excluded when they were irrelevant, duplicated, or lacked sufficient publication information. The review does not claim to be a systematic review conducted under a PRISMA protocol, and the search should not be interpreted as an exhaustive census of all available publications.

Data Collection and Analytical Procedure

A literature extraction matrix was used to organize each source by author and year, research focus, theoretical orientation, methodological approach, principal findings, and relevance to the present study. The review proceeded through four analytical stages: identifying key concepts and findings; coding the material according to socialization, local wisdom, social awareness, interaction, social capital, and institutional culture; comparing similarities and differences across studies; and synthesizing the coded material into a conceptual framework.

Trustworthiness was supported by cross-checking bibliographic metadata against publisher or DOI pages, comparing empirical studies with conceptual literature, and distinguishing previous authors' findings from the present article's interpretive synthesis. Because the study did not involve human participants or collect personal data, participant consent procedures were not applicable. The main limitation of the method is that purposive selection may not capture every relevant publication and does not provide the same reproducibility as a fully registered systematic review.

RESULTS

Profile of the Literature and Main Patterns

The literature synthesis indicates that the relationship between education and social awareness is developed through several interconnected pathways. Studies on local wisdom

emphasize the contextualization of knowledge; multicultural education research emphasizes recognition of difference; social capital studies highlight networks and trust; and research on the hidden curriculum shows that values are also learned through everyday routines and relationships. Ibrahim and colleagues' publications are particularly relevant because they directly connect sociology learning, Bugis–Makassar culture, and the strengthening of school culture.

Table 1 summarizes selected studies that are closely related to the focus of this article. It is not an exhaustive list of all references, but a map of the principal contributions that inform the synthesis.

Table 1. Selected studies and their contributions to the review

Author/year	Research focus	Main contribution
Ibrahim et al. (2025)	Sociology module based on local wisdom	Connects sociological concepts with Bugis–Makassar values and school culture.
Ibrahim et al. (2026)	Local culture in madrasah learning	Identifies contextual, collaborative, and reflective integration strategies.
Nurdin et al. (2023)	Social interaction and sociology achievement	Highlights the relevance of social relations in learning processes.
Nursida et al. (2026)	Sociology materials in higher education	Links local wisdom, sociological reasoning, and social identity.
Hanifa et al. (2025)	Sociology learning and tolerance	Emphasizes tolerance-oriented habitus and educator competence.
Abdurrohman et al. (2025)	Hidden curriculum	Shows the role of school culture and informal interaction.
Gentry et al. (2025)	Social capital in higher education	Reviews approaches to assessing student networks and relational resources.
Ghufronudin et al. (2025)	Local wisdom-based ecopedagogy	Connects critical consciousness with environmentally responsible behavior.

The studies do not support the assumption that a single teaching material or instructional method can automatically produce social awareness. Rather, educational contributions emerge from the relationship among learning content, interactional experiences, group norms, and opportunities for students to apply knowledge in social situations. The literature also contains an important qualification: strong in-group ties may provide support, but they do not necessarily encourage interaction across social groups.

Dimensions of Social Awareness and Their Educational Mechanisms

The synthesis identifies five interrelated dimensions of social awareness. The first is social perspective-taking, or the ability to understand that individual experiences are shaped

by different social positions, access to resources, and living conditions. The second is empathy and solidarity, referring to the capacity to recognize and respond responsibly to other people's difficulties. The third is tolerance and recognition of difference, which requires respect for other people's identities and rights. The fourth is social responsibility, or the willingness to contribute to collective interests. The fifth is critical awareness, defined as the ability to connect personal experiences with social structures and to assess injustice through reasoned arguments.

These five dimensions are supported by four educational mechanisms. A contextual curriculum provides concepts and cases connected to people's social lives. Dialogic and collaborative pedagogy enables students to test ideas, listen to others, and complete shared tasks. Inclusive social interaction provides practical experiences of respect and cooperation. Institutional culture reinforces or weakens these values through rules, role modeling, services, and everyday academic practices.

Table 2. Dimensions of social awareness and supporting educational mechanisms

Dimension	Conceptual indicators	Supporting mechanisms
Social perspective-taking	Understanding differences in social position, access, and experience	Case analysis, problem mapping, evidence-based discussion
Empathy and solidarity	Care, willingness to help, and responsiveness to vulnerability	Collaborative projects and community-based learning
Tolerance and recognition	Respect for others' identities, opinions, and rights	Intergroup dialogue and classroom agreements
Social responsibility	Participation and contribution to collective interests	Student organizations and social projects
Critical awareness	Reading social structures, power relations, and injustice	Critical reflection and problem-based learning

Local wisdom functions as a source of values and examples of social practice, while educational mechanisms determine whether those values are understood, questioned, and enacted. Social awareness is therefore better understood as a recurring process than as the immediate result of a single lesson or the transmission of cultural terminology.

DISCUSSION

Education as Socialization and the Development of Critical Agency

From Durkheim's perspective (1956), education introduces the norms and values that enable individuals to live as members of society. The development of social awareness

consequently requires experiences involving shared rules, responsibility, and solidarity. However, socialization should not be reduced to obedience. If education merely asks students to conform without developing their capacity to evaluate norms, it may reproduce practices that are unjust.

Dewey (1916) offers a different emphasis by viewing education as a democratic experience. Students learn to live together through participation, inquiry, communication, and decision-making. In Social Studies learning, discussions about inequality, resource conflicts, discrimination, or cultural change should not end with theoretical answers. Students need to test arguments, examine evidence, and consider the consequences of decisions for different social groups.

Freire (2000) extends this framework through the concept of critical consciousness. Individuals need to do more than recognize that social problems exist; they must understand the relationship between everyday experiences and the structures that produce those problems. In Social Studies Education, pesse or pacce can provide an entry point for discussing solidarity. Learning, however, should proceed further by examining why some groups are more vulnerable, how resources are distributed, and what forms of collective action may be possible.

These three perspectives complement one another while creating a productive tension. Durkheim explains the need for integration, Dewey emphasizes democratic practice, and Freire calls for reflection on unequal structures. Education that emphasizes integration alone may neglect critique, while education that focuses only on critique may lose its orientation toward solidarity. Social awareness requires both the capacity to live together and the willingness to improve conditions that disadvantage some members of society.

Local Wisdom as Cultural Capital Requiring Critical Interpretation

Local wisdom is not merely a collection of traditional expressions. It is a form of social knowledge developed through history, practice, and intergenerational relationships. Sipakatau can be understood as treating others as fully human; sipakalebbi as honoring and respecting others; sipakainge as mutual reminding; siri' as dignity and responsibility; and pesse/pacce as empathy and solidarity. Studies by Rahmawati and Eli (2024) and Azis et al. (2021) illustrate how Bugis values may be translated into character education and social relations.

Bourdieu (1986) reminds us that culture can also function as a form of capital whose distribution is unequal. Knowledge of particular languages, symbols, and practices may receive greater recognition in educational institutions than the knowledge of other groups. Integrating local wisdom into the curriculum should therefore avoid assuming that all students have the same degree of familiarity with Bugis–Makassar culture. Students come from diverse family, regional, linguistic, and experiential backgrounds. Local culture should become a space for dialogue, not a single standard for judging students' identities or moral worth.

Wu and Wang (2025) show that the relationship between cultural capital and educational achievement is shaped by economic inequality. Shani and Bar-Haim (2025) likewise draw attention to the relationship between teachers' cultural capital and educational reproduction. These findings caution against romanticizing culture. Recognition of local wisdom must also consider who has the authority to interpret cultural values, who is given opportunities to speak, and who may be marginalized.

Local wisdom should thus be treated as a source of reflection that remains open to interpretation, examination, and contextualization. Values that support dignity, empathy, and respect can be strengthened, while practices that may perpetuate stigma, hierarchy, or discrimination should be critically examined. This approach prevents culture-based education from turning into an exclusive form of identity instruction.

Social Capital, Interaction, and the Hidden Curriculum

Coleman (1988) describes social capital as resources embedded in relationships and social structures, including trust, reciprocal obligations, norms, and information channels. In higher education, social capital may help students gain academic support, information, a sense of belonging, and opportunities to participate. Gentry, Martin, and Douglas's (2025) review of 93 higher education studies shows that social networks and the resources embedded in them are important for understanding differences in students' educational experiences.

However, social networks are not always inclusive. Strong ties within a group may provide security, but they may also limit interaction across groups when bridging relationships are absent. Academic and student activities should therefore create opportunities for collaboration across different backgrounds. Nurdin et al.'s (2023) findings

on the importance of social interaction in sociology learning support an emphasis on the quality of relationships rather than merely the frequency of contact.

The hidden curriculum is also important. Abdurrohman et al. (2025) show that school culture, non-academic activities, and informal interactions can strengthen tolerance. Setiawan et al. (2024) find that tolerance values can be cultivated through classroom agreements, everyday encounters, shared activities, and stories. Aderibigbe et al. (2023) similarly indicate that safe learning environments and authentic activities help students connect knowledge about diversity with lived experience.

For the Social Studies Education Program at UNM, the implication is that the development of social awareness cannot be assigned to a single course. Providing fair opportunities to speak, ensuring transparent assessment, responding constructively to disagreement, maintaining equitable access to student organizations, and shaping lecturer–student communication are all part of social education. When the values taught in class are inconsistent with institutional experiences, students receive contradictory social messages.

A Conceptual Framework for Strengthening Social Studies Education at UNM

Based on the synthesis, this article proposes a four-layer framework. The first layer is a contextual curriculum, which integrates local and national issues into sociology, history, economics, geography, and civics. The second layer is dialogic and collaborative pedagogy, using evidence-based discussion, case analysis, structured debate, reflection, and group projects. The third layer is inclusive social relations, which create interactions that respect differences in identity, ability, and experience. The fourth layer is institutional culture, which demonstrates consistency between the values taught and everyday academic practices.

Table 3. A conceptual framework for strengthening social awareness

Layer	Potential implementation	Process indicators
Contextual curriculum	Local social cases, Bugis–Makassar wisdom, inequality and diversity issues	Students connect concepts with social contexts
Dialogic pedagogy	Evidence-based discussion, structured debate, reflection, collaborative projects	Open argument, active listening, evidence evaluation
Inclusive relations	Cross-background groups, equal discussion rules, peer support	Respect, empathy, and cooperation across groups
Institutional culture	Role modeling, transparency, fair services, student participation	Consistency between stated values and institutional practice

This framework is proposed as a development agenda, not as a description of the current conditions at the UNM program. A realistic first step would be to map courses and

student activities that already address social issues. The next step would be to develop assignments based on local case analysis, followed by an evaluation of students' experiences of dialogue, respect, and participation. Process indicators are more appropriate than claims of direct character change when no adequate measurement has been conducted.

Local wisdom can be integrated through case studies of community solidarity, conflict resolution, social responsibility, and communication ethics. Sipakatau can be examined through the way students make room for others; sipakainge through feedback practices that do not demean; pesse through responses to vulnerable groups; and siri' through responsibility for protecting one's own dignity and that of others. Such learning transforms values from slogans into practices that can be observed and reflected upon.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

This review has several limitations. First, literature selection was purposive and integrative rather than based on a systematic review protocol with standardized risk-of-bias assessment. Second, some of the reviewed studies were conducted in schools or madrasahs, so their application to higher education requires careful examination. Third, UNM was used as a conceptual institutional context; no field data were collected on the program's curriculum, lecturers, students, or academic culture. The proposed framework should therefore be regarded as an analytical proposition that requires empirical validation.

Future research could conduct a case study at the UNM Social Studies Education Program through curriculum-document analysis, classroom observation, interviews with lecturers and students, and examination of student-organization activities. Longitudinal research is also needed to assess whether learning experiences based on local wisdom are associated with changes in social awareness, participation, and collaborative behavior. Research instruments should distinguish knowledge of values, attitudes, behavior, and structural analysis so that social awareness is not reduced to a single character score.

CONCLUSION

This review concludes that local wisdom can contribute to the development of students' social awareness when it is critically integrated into the broader ecosystem of Social Studies Education. Social awareness encompasses perspective-taking, empathy and solidarity, tolerance, social responsibility, and critical awareness. Its development requires the

interaction of a contextual curriculum, dialogic and collaborative pedagogy, inclusive social interaction, and consistent institutional culture.

The article's conceptual contribution is a four-layer framework connecting local cultural resources with socialization, democratic experience, social capital, and critical reflection. In the context of the UNM Social Studies Education Program, the framework may provide a basis for reviewing curriculum relevance, teaching practices, and academic culture. However, this article does not claim that the framework has already been implemented or proven effective at UNM. Conclusions about actual institutional conditions and effectiveness require field research.

The main recommendation is to develop Social Studies learning that connects social concepts with local experiences, expands dialogue across different backgrounds, and ensures that respect and solidarity are reflected in academic governance. Further empirical research should test the proposed framework through a case-study or mixed-methods design using transparent indicators.

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