



The Pride of Students Choosing Sociology as Their Major at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences University of Riau

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ABSTRACT

Sociology students at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, University of Riau, are proud of the department they have chosen. The sociology program equips them to become competent graduates capable of serving as agents of change in society. This study employs a qualitative approach using structured interviews and free essays from students about their experiences. Informants were purposively selected from the 2022 cohort of students actively involved in campus organizations, without considering their Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA). Data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns and themes related to students' pride. With the growing interest in sociology among young people, it is important for the faculty to continue improving the quality of the curriculum and providing adequate support for students so that they feel proud and engaged in the field they have chosen. This study shows that student involvement in various extracurricular activities, as well as the support and guidance provided by faculty members, are key factors in building students' pride in their department.

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INTRODUCTION

Student pride in choosing a major is a very important and influential aspect in shaping their academic and social experiences during higher education. One major that attracts the attention of many students is Sociology at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences (FISIP) at the University of Riau.

As of the end of 2024, the number of Sociology students stood at 749 active students. Of this number, 303 students have submitted proposals and are currently writing their theses, while 140 students have not yet selected a thesis topic, with the remainder still in the learning phase. The number of Sociology students at FISIP University of Riau continues to increase annually. The Sociology Department has become one of the preferred choices for students. The Sociology Department at FISIP University of Riau is accredited with an A rating and has been classified as

outstanding since the end of 2024. This status serves as a major attraction for students to pursue their studies in the Sociology Department.

Additionally, in the context of a rapidly evolving social landscape, there is an increasing demand to understand human interactions, social structures, and cultural dynamics in our surroundings. This is increasingly relevant given that society today faces various challenges such as climate change, social conflicts, and economic inequality. According to Palao (2024), students' pride in their chosen major is significantly influenced by how well the program aligns with their personal interests and academic ambitions. This is further supported by Danisman et al. (2023), who emphasize that students who feel satisfied with their major tend to exhibit higher levels of pride and engagement in academic activities.

Riau Province, as a migrant-receiving region, is surrounded by several neighboring provinces, and Pekanbaru City, as the provincial capital, is strategically located with adequate urban facilities. This makes it highly attractive for students to study in this city. In Pekanbaru itself, in addition to the University of Riau, according to the LLDIKTI 17 report, there are 22 private higher education institutions (PTS) in the form of universities, 15 PTS in the form of institutes, 35 PTS in the form of colleges, 18 PTS in the form of academies, and 6 PTS in the form of polytechnics (LLDIKTI 17, 2025). The Sociology Department under the state-owned University of Riau is the primary reason for choosing it as a place to study.

Specifically, Sociology students from the 2023 cohort at the University of Riau have diverse backgrounds in terms of education, economics, and culture. This diversity creates a dynamic and interactive learning environment that enriches the academic perspectives faced by students. With varied backgrounds, students can exchange ideas, experiences, and differing viewpoints, thereby expanding their understanding of social phenomena. In this context, students' pride in their department is not only influenced by the formal curriculum taught but also by the social experiences they gain during their time on campus. Research by Wang (2013), Pasaribu (2024) and Simanjutak et.al (2025) indicates that students actively involved in organizational activities, seminars, and research tend to have higher levels of pride in their department. Participation in extracurricular activities and research projects provides students with the opportunity to apply the theories they have learned in class to real-world practice. This not only enhances academic skills but also fosters a sense of solidarity and collective identity among Sociology students.

This pride, in turn, can motivate students to be more committed to their studies, contribute positively to society, and develop future careers related to the field of sociology. Thus, students' pride in choosing the Sociology program at the University of Riau is not merely a personal positive feeling but also reflects a broader connection between education, social engagement, and responses to contemporary challenges. As noted by Ribeiro et.al (2023), Pharaswal, L., and Latif, A. (2023). the involvement in extracurricular activities plays a crucial role in enhancing students' pride and academic engagement. This major not only prepares students to become competent scholars but also encourages them to become agents of change who play an active role in society. Based on this, this study examines the issue in question.

This study introduces a fresh perspective on the concept of student pride in higher education, particularly within the field of Sociology at the University of Riau. While previous studies have explored student satisfaction and engagement in various academic disciplines, this research provides new insights into the interplay between academic curriculum, extracurricular involvement, and sociocultural factors that shape student pride. Furthermore, this research

focuses specifically on the context of a regional university in Indonesia, which offers a unique setting compared to studies conducted in more metropolitan or international environments.

Unlike traditional studies that often concentrate on academic performance alone, this study emphasizes the importance of social and cultural experiences as key contributors to students' pride and engagement. By linking students' pride to both academic and non-academic factors, this study offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the dynamics of student identity formation in higher education, particularly in a developing region like Riau.

Despite extensive research on student satisfaction and pride, there remains a gap in understanding how sociocultural dynamics within specific university contexts influence students' engagement and identity, particularly in less-studied regions such as Riau. Most existing studies have focused on large urban centers or well-established universities, overlooking how regional and local factors impact students' educational experiences. Furthermore, while some studies have looked at extracurricular involvement, few have examined how these activities interact with students' academic identities in the context of a Sociology program. This research seeks to address these gaps by exploring the factors contributing to students' pride at a regional university in Indonesia, specifically focusing on the interaction between academic, social, and cultural experiences.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach, incorporating structured interviews and student-written essays about their experiences and challenges as students. Informants were purposely selected from among several sociology students in the 2022 cohort who were actively involved in campus organizations such as the Sociology Student Association (IMS), the Student Executive Board (BEM), the Student Legislative Board (BLM), and other student organizations. Cumulative grade point average (CGPA) was not considered when selecting informants. Thus, this study is expected to provide a more comprehensive picture of the factors influencing Sociology students' pride at the University of Riau. Additionally, secondary data was collected from faculty documents and annual reports to support the research findings. The obtained data were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques to identify patterns and themes related to student pride in the sociology department.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In sociological studies, student pride is an interesting and complex topic to research, as it can be understood through various theories and concepts developed by experts in this field. One of the most famous theorists who has made a significant contribution to understanding social dynamics is Pierre Bourdieu. In his famous work published in 1986, Bourdieu introduced the concept of "social capital," which refers to the resources individuals obtain from their social networks (Hidir & Malik, 2024). This concept is very important for understanding how social interactions in academic environments can influence student identity and the pride they feel toward their chosen majors. Social capital encompasses various interrelated aspects, such as friendship networks, organizational experiences, and involvement in academic activities. All these elements significantly contribute to the formation of students' social identities. For example, at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, University of Riau, Sociology students who are actively involved in various activities outside the classroom often find that they have higher motivation and a greater sense of pride in their department. Internship activities, student

exchanges between campuses, and teaching campuses under the MBKM Program provide new insights for them.

This involvement not only shapes them academically, but also in a broader social capacity, giving them the opportunity to develop skills that are useful in the real world. Furthermore, research conducted by Pasaribu (2024) highlights that participation in extracurricular activities, such as student organizations and various social programs, can increase students' sense of belonging and pride in their majors. In this context, Sociology students at the University of Riau have numerous opportunities to engage in organizations such as the Sociology Student Association (IMS). Such organizations not only serve as a platform for students to collaborate and share ideas but also provide an ideal venue for them to contribute to social projects that have a positive impact on the surrounding community.



Figure 1

Sociology Teaching activities carried out by students

Participation in IMS and other activities not only helps students build social and leadership skills, but also strengthens their sense of identity as sociology students committed to understanding and resolving various social issues in society. Through active participation in discussions, seminars, and social projects, they can gain a deeper understanding of the social dynamics unfolding around them and develop a more comprehensive understanding of social reality. They learn to analyze complex issues from a broader perspective, and thus, students' pride does not stem solely from academic achievements but also from the experiences and interactions they engage in within a broader social context. In this regard, Sociology students at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, University of Riau, are not merely individuals who study sociological theories but also practitioners who can observe and understand the impact of these theories in their daily lives. Furthermore, active involvement in organizations and extracurricular activities opens opportunities for students to build strong networks. These networks are not only composed of peers but also involve various other parties, including alumni, faculty members, and the broader community.



Figure 2

Social Practicum for Sociology Students

An extensive network allows students to support each other in overcoming academic and social challenges. The valuable experiences gained through this network enrich their knowledge and help them plan for the future in terms of both their careers and their contributions to society. In a supportive social environment, sociology students at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences at the University of Riau learn to support each other, share knowledge, and inspire one another.

This creates a solid, empowered community and fosters a sense of solidarity. This social process strengthens their pride in their department and enriches their life experience, making them more integrated and empowered individuals. Therefore, students' pride is the result of the social capital they possess and the experiences they gain during their studies. This process shapes individuals who are academically intelligent and sensitive to social issues, making them potential leaders who can contribute to societal progress. In the context of increasingly competitive and global higher education, it is crucial for educational institutions to support and facilitate student participation in activities that enrich social capital. By providing opportunities for interaction, organization, and contribution, institutions can help students develop academically and become well-rounded, competitive individuals in today's globalized era (Maymon et.al, 2015).

Thus, efforts to develop social capital among students should be considered an integral part of quality and sustainable higher education. Educational institutions should be more proactive in developing programs that encourage student participation, including providing facilities and support for extracurricular activities. This can include funding for student organizations, organizing skills workshops, and collaborating with local communities on social projects. All of these efforts are expected to create a more conducive atmosphere for the development of students as individuals who are not only academically excellent but also contribute positively to society. In the long term, understanding and applying the concept of social capital among students will produce a generation that is better prepared to face future challenges and capable of fulfilling their role as effective agents of change in society.



Figure 3
Sociology Student Creativity Event

The pride of students in choosing Sociology as their major at the University of Riau can be seen as a deep reflection of the academic, social, and emotional experiences they have undergone during their studies. As a discipline that studies the structure and dynamics of society, sociology offers insights that are relevant not only to the academic world but also to everyday life. With the growing interest in sociology among the younger generation, it is important for the faculty to continue improving the quality of the curriculum and providing adequate support for students so that they feel proud and engaged in their chosen field. This study shows that student involvement in various extracurricular activities, as well as the support and guidance provided by faculty members, are key factors in building students' pride in their major.

Extracurricular activities, such as seminars, panel discussions, and student organizations, not only provide practical experience but also create a social atmosphere that encourages collaboration and the exchange of ideas. Therefore, strategic steps need to be taken to increase student participation in organizations and social activities. This can be done by organizing more interesting events and creating a safe and inclusive space where students feel comfortable expressing their opinions and sharing their experiences.

Equally important, we need to consider the impact of technological developments and social media in building student identity. In this fast-paced digital era, Sociology students have a golden opportunity to utilize online platforms as tools for sharing knowledge, collaborating with peers, and expanding their social networks. This is in line with the findings by Sari (2021), who stated that students who are active on social media tend to have a higher level of pride in their major. When Sociology students share relevant content, such as articles, research, or personal experiences on social media, they not only strengthen their identity as individuals in this discipline, but also contribute to a broader understanding of social issues in society.

Therefore, faculty members need to integrate technology into the learning process and social interactions to attract students' interest. This can be achieved by creating courses that utilize digital tools, conducting workshops on the use of social media for academic and professional purposes, and encouraging students to participate in research projects that utilize the latest technology. As a result, not only will students' pride in the Sociology major increase, but the quality of education they receive will also be more relevant to the needs of the times and the challenges faced by society today.

CONCLUSION

Students at Universitas Riau feel proud of their choice of Sociology as a major, reflecting their academic, social, and emotional experiences during their studies. Sociology, which examines community structures and dynamics, offers valuable insights for both academics and daily life. With growing interest in sociology among the youth, it is essential for faculties to enhance curriculum quality and support students to foster this pride. Student involvement in extracurricular activities and guidance from faculty are crucial for building this pride. Extracurricular events like seminars and student organizations provide practical experiences and foster collaboration. Strategic measures are needed to boost student participation in these activities, creating an inclusive environment for expression. Additionally, the role of technology and social media in shaping student identity must be recognized. Sociology students can leverage online platforms to share knowledge, collaborate, and expand their social networks. Research indicates that students active on social media tend to have higher pride in their major, as sharing relevant content enhances their identity in the discipline and contributes to broader social understanding.

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