WorldSSR
International Journal of World Social Science Research

Analysis of Values and Norms in Max Weber's Thoughts on Social Action in Education

Listia Dwi Febriati[1], Lisma Meilia Wijayanti[2]

[1] Prodi Kebidanan Program Sarjana FIKES UNRIYO, Indonesia; listiadwi@respati.ac.id
[2] Institut Agama Islam Sunan Giri Ponorogo, Indonesia; Lismamei@gmail.com

Article history	
Abstract	Max Weber's theory of social action provides a critical framework for understanding how values and norms influence individual behavior within social structures, including education. This paper explores Weber's views on social action, with a particular focus on how values and norms shape educational processes and outcomes. Weber categorizes social action into four types instrumentally rational, value-rational, affective, and traditional action each of which has significant implications for the way individuals engage with education. In education, values such as discipline, hard work, and achievement play a central role in motivating actions, while norms shape the expectations and behaviors within educational settings. By analyzing these dynamics, this paper highlights the ways in which educational institutions not only transfer knowledge but also promote socialization and the internalization of societal values. The study also examines the impact of different cultural and social contexts on educational practices, showing that education can serve as both a means of individual development and a mechanism for reinforcing social norms. Ultimately, Weber's theory offers valuable insights into the complex relationship between education, social action, and societal values, providing a deeper understanding of how educational systems contribute to the formation of both individual identity and social order.
Keywords	

INTRODUCTION

Max Weber, one of the most influential sociologists of the modern era, made significant contributions to the understanding of social behavior and societal structures through his theory of social action.[1] Weber's framework for analyzing social action emphasizes the role of values and norms in shaping individual behavior within social contexts. His work continues to resonate within the study of education, particularly in

how societal values and norms influence educational systems and interactions within them.[2] This paper seeks to explore Weber's ideas on social action, focusing on the role of values and norms in education, and to analyze their implications for the broader social and educational frameworks.[3]

Weber's theory of social action categorizes human behavior into four types based on the motivations behind actions: instrumental rationality, value-rationality, affective action, and traditional action. In the educational context, these categories can be applied to understand how students, teachers, and educational institutions interact. The values and norms ingrained within these social actions shape how individuals engage with educational structures and the purposes they attribute to education itself. These elements are critical to understanding the dynamics of teaching and learning as both reflect and perpetuate the values of a particular society.[4]

The relationship between education and social action is especially evident when considering how values such as discipline, hard work, or individual achievement are transmitted within educational settings. Weber's concept of "value-rational action" becomes particularly relevant here, as individuals often act in accordance with personal or societal values, regardless of the practical consequences. This dynamic is evident in educational environments where actions and motivations align with the overarching goals of academic success, character formation, and the cultivation of social norms.

Norms, as understood by Weber, play an equally important role in education.[5] Norms in education such as expectations regarding behavior, classroom conduct, and interaction between students and teachers serve as the invisible framework within which educational processes occur. These norms, whether based on tradition, rationality, or emotional connections, define what is acceptable within educational settings and have significant implications for how education is experienced by individuals. The way education is structured, the norms students are taught to follow, and the values embedded in the curriculum all influence the overall educational experience.

This paper aims to analyze Weber's thoughts on social action in the context of education, focusing on how values and norms influence educational practices and how they contribute to the formation of individuals and societies. By examining Weber's theory, we can better understand the interplay between education, values, and social action, offering valuable insights into how educational systems shape not only knowledge but also social behavior and identity.

METHODS

Library research is an approach used in research to collect data or information from various written sources in libraries or other documents.[6] This method is often applied in qualitative research and is used to examine existing theories, explore various perspectives, and collect relevant secondary data to support arguments or findings in research. In the context of this research, the library method is used to analyze Max Weber's views on social action, values, and norms in education, by referring to books, scientific articles, journals, and other publications that discuss Weber's theories and their application in various fields, including education.

The first process in the library method is the identification of relevant sources. Researchers need to find literature related to the topic being studied. In this case, researchers look for Max Weber's works, both original books and literature that discuss his main concepts, such as social action, values, and norms. Other relevant sources can include articles that discuss the application of Weber's theory in the context of education, as well as studies that discuss the development of sociological theories related to education.

After identification, the next step is the evaluation and selection of literature. Researchers need to evaluate the quality and relevance of the sources found, ensuring that the selected literature is credible and in-depth. At this stage, researchers must verify the sources through references that have been tested or published by recognized institutions, such as indexed scientific journals and academic publishers. This evaluation is important to ensure that researchers use valid and accountable sources in building a strong theoretical framework.

Next, researchers conduct an analysis of the selected literature. This analysis involves critically reading and analyzing the theories and findings in the selected literature. Researchers will note relevant arguments, identify relationships between concepts, and look for gaps in existing research. In this study, literature analysis is used to dig deeper into how the values and norms expressed by Weber relate to educational practices in modern society, as well as to assess the relevance of Weber's theory in the current educational context.

The final stage is the synthesis and preparation of conclusions based on the findings from the analyzed literature. Researchers develop clear and structured arguments by summarizing the various perspectives found in the literature, and linking them to the research questions. Here, researchers can also criticize and provide new insights regarding the application of Weber's theory in education. The library method used in this study helps researchers to build a strong theoretical basis and

provides deeper insights into the relationship between values, norms, and social action in education, as well as contributing to the development of educational sociological thought.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Max Weber, one of the key figures in sociology, provided profound insights into the concept of social action. He emphasized the significance of understanding values and norms in shaping individual behavior within society.[7] In the context of education, Weber's concept of social action holds great relevance as it helps to explore how individuals interact with educational institutions and how values and norms influence the very goals of education. This article aims to analyze Weber's views on values and norms in education, and their implications for shaping social action within the educational environment.

Max Weber, one of the most influential sociologists, proposed a comprehensive theory of social action that categorizes actions based on their underlying motivations. Weber's framework provides a useful lens for analyzing how individuals behave in various social contexts, including education. According to Weber, social actions can be classified into four distinct types, each driven by different motivational forces.

Instrumentally Rational Action refers to actions that are carried out with a clear goal in mind and are driven by a rational calculation of the most efficient means to achieve that goal. In the context of education, this type of action is evident when students and educators approach their tasks in a goal-oriented manner. For instance, a student may study diligently for exams with the clear objective of achieving high grades, while a teacher may design lessons focused on measurable academic outcomes. This rational approach is often seen in modern educational systems, where efficiency, standardized testing, and performance metrics guide educational practices.

Value-Rational Action, on the other hand, is motivated by an individual's belief in certain values, regardless of the practical consequences or outcomes. In education, this can be observed when teachers or students engage in practices or adopt educational goals based on deeply held values, even if those actions do not directly lead to practical or immediate success. For example, a teacher may prioritize ethical teaching and moral education, believing that shaping students' character is of greater importance than simply preparing them for exams or careers. Similarly, students might choose to pursue fields of study that align with their personal values or passions, rather than solely focusing on financially rewarding professions.

Affective Action is driven by emotions and feelings. In the classroom, affective action can be seen when actions are influenced by emotions such as love, anger, or empathy. Teachers and students may, at times, make decisions based on their emotional connections or personal feelings rather than strict rationality. For instance, a teacher might go out of their way to help a struggling student out of a sense of compassion or empathy, even if it does not fit into the formal curriculum. Similarly, students might act out of emotional responses, such as the desire to impress a teacher or the excitement about a subject they are passionate about.[8]

Traditional Action is guided by customs, traditions, or established habits. In education, this type of action is particularly relevant when we consider how educational practices are passed down through generations. Teachers and students often follow established norms and practices simply because they have always been done that way. This could include following traditional classroom routines, adhering to conventional teaching methods, or maintaining customary practices like standing when the teacher enters the room. Such actions are not necessarily based on efficiency or value but are embedded in the tradition of the educational institution.

These four types of social actions, as described by Weber, offer a useful framework for understanding the diverse ways in which individuals and groups behave within the educational system. The values held by individuals whether they be educators, students, or policymakers have a profound influence on how they approach education and interact within it. These values shape the very essence of educational goals, curricula, and teaching methodologies.

Weber placed great importance on the role of values in shaping social action. In the context of education, values can originate from multiple sources, such as religion, culture, or political ideologies. These values serve as guiding principles for both teachers and students, and they influence the way educational systems are structured and how individuals engage within those systems.

One of Weber's most influential contributions is his analysis of the relationship between Protestant ethics and the rise of capitalism, which he explored in his famous work *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. According to Weber, the values of hard work, discipline, and the pursuit of worldly success values that were emphasized by Protestantism had a significant impact on the development of modern educational systems, particularly in Western societies. These values encouraged individuals to strive for economic success and personal achievement, and such aspirations were reflected in the educational practices of these societies.

For example, in many Western educational systems, there is an emphasis on individual achievement, discipline, and success in the marketplace. Schools and universities promote values that prepare students for careers, often focusing on skills that are directly linked to economic productivity. This alignment between education and the Protestant work ethic reflects how values shape the educational system and its goals. Students are encouraged to work hard, be disciplined, and strive for personal success values deeply ingrained in the societal fabric, according to Weber's theory.

In addition to economic values, Weber also recognized that education plays a critical role in the formation of individual character. He viewed education not only as a means of transferring knowledge but also as a mechanism for shaping individuals' social identities by teaching the broader norms and values of society. Education, from Weber's perspective, is a process through which individuals are socialized into the collective values of their culture, such as respect for authority, conformity to social norms, and the development of moral values.

Thus, Weber believed that education serves two vital functions: it is a vehicle for knowledge transmission and a means of character formation. Through education, individuals are not only prepared for the workforce but are also shaped by the values that underpin society. These values whether they come from religion, culture, or other social institutions help to cultivate a sense of belonging and identity within the broader social framework.

Discussion

Weber's ideas on social action extend beyond individual behaviors, emphasizing that social actions must be understood in relation to the larger social context in which they occur. In education, this means that the values and norms present within society play a pivotal role in shaping the purposes of education and how it is practiced.

Weber believed that education is not solely about achieving objective goals, such as graduation or academic success; it also shapes how individuals perceive themselves within the social fabric. Education influences how students view their roles in society, their identity, and their relationship to social norms. This process of "subjectivation" involves individuals internalizing societal values, norms, and expectations, which then shape their actions, attitudes, and behavior both inside and outside the classroom. In this sense, education becomes a tool for molding the subjective understanding of oneself and one's place in the world. For example, a student who is taught to value hard work and individual achievement may internalize these values, shaping how they approach life and their future endeavors.

According to Weber, education also plays a critical role in reinforcing or challenging societal norms. Education systems that emphasize social solidarity and collective cooperation help instill these values in students, fostering a sense of community and shared responsibility. Such systems tend to promote norms of cooperation, collaboration, and social cohesion, which contribute to the moral fabric of society. Conversely, education systems that prioritize competition and individual success may foster a more individualistic set of norms, where personal achievement takes precedence over collective well-being. The type of education system in place has a direct influence on the social norms that students adopt and the moral values they come to embrace.

One of Weber's key insights is that social norms and values in education are not universal but vary according to the social context in which education occurs. In different societies, the norms and values emphasized in educational systems can differ widely. For example, in a society where religion plays a dominant role, education may be centered around imparting specific spiritual values and teachings, shaping students' moral and ethical outlooks in accordance with religious doctrines. In contrast, in more secular societies, education may place a stronger emphasis on skill development, critical thinking, and academic achievement, with less focus on spiritual or religious teachings. The broader social, cultural, and religious context of a society influences the goals and methods of education, ultimately shaping the norms that govern educational interactions.

CONCLUSION

Max Weber provided a profound perspective on how values and social norms shape social action, including in the realm of education. Through his framework of social action, Weber reminds us that education is not just about transferring knowledge or skills; it is also about the formation of character and broader social norms. In the modern era, education plays an increasingly significant role in shaping individuals who are able to adapt to the constantly evolving social norms, while also responding to the social challenges of the time. This article explores Weber's thoughts in the context of education and how social values and norms shape social action within the classroom. By understanding Weber's theory, we can gain deeper insight into how education plays a role in shaping society through the values and norms that govern it.

REFERENCES

[1]   R. Swedberg, *Max Weber and the idea of economic sociology*. Princeton University

Press, 2018.

[2] C. Brennan, *Max Weber on power and social stratification: an interpretation and critique*. Routledge, 2020.

[3] M. Weber, *Economy and society: A new translation*. Harvard University Press, 2019.

[4] S. M. Constantino, M. Schlüter, E. U. Weber, and N. Wijermans, "Cognition and behavior in context: a framework and theories to explain natural resource use decisions in social-ecological systems," *Sustain. Sci.*, vol. 16, no. 5, pp. 1651–1671, 2021.

[5] B. Alexander *et al.*, "Horizon report 2019 higher education edition," EDU19, 2019.

[6] L. S. Connaway and M. L. Radford, *Research methods in library and information science*. Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2021.

[7] D. Beetham, *Max Weber and the theory of modern politics*. John Wiley & Sons, 2018.

[8] M. Weber, "Basic sociological terms," in *Social Theory Re-Wired*, Routledge, 2023, pp. 246–256.