

The Perception of Students at Yayasan Perguruan Sultan Iskandar Muda on the School's Social Environment in the Context of Integration

Abet Nego Terkelin Bangun¹, Ratih Baiduri², Usman Pelly³

{anego1992@gmail.com¹}

Universitas Negeri Medan^{1,2,3}

Abstract. This study explores students' perceptions of the social environment at Yayasan perguruan Sultan Iskandar Muda, focusing on integration. Using a qualitative ethnographic approach, the study reveals that students view their school as highly diverse in terms of religion, ethnicity, and social class. They believe that the school supports integration through both academic and extracurricular activities. Key initiatives include encouraging interfaith prayers, providing various worship facilities (mosques, churches, temples, shrines), and forming study groups that consider the students' diverse backgrounds. Students feel that these efforts foster national integration, as seen in their interactions with peers of different religious and ethnic backgrounds, where discrimination is absent. The school plays an active role in promoting a harmonious, inclusive environment.

Keywords: Multicultural, Integration, Integration Dynamics.

1 Introduction

Indonesia is an archipelago that is geographically flanked by two continents, namely the Asian and Australian continents. Not only flanked by two continents, Indonesia is also flanked by two large oceans, namely the Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean. These two things make Indonesia a strategic country. Indonesia's strategic location is what ultimately "invites" the presence of other nations. The arrival of other nations to Indonesia began with the purpose of trade. The early trade relations of the Indonesian people are proven by several historical sources, including the findings of Heine Goldern regarding the nekara found in Sangean which is thought to have been printed in the Funan area which has been influenced by Indian culture in 250 BC (Tappil) [1].

The arrival of foreign nations to Indonesia was finally not only limited to trade. The arrival of foreign nations eventually also brought influence in the spread of beliefs, previously the Indonesian people adhered to animism and dynamism. There are many new beliefs that enter

Indonesia, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Protestant Christianity, Catholicism and also Confucianism, thus Indonesia has a variety of beliefs.

Not only limited to the diversity of religions/beliefs, in Indonesia itself there are also many customs, tribes and languages. According to *Badan Pusat Statistik* in 2010, there are around 1,340 ethnic groups in Indonesia. The diversity that exists in Indonesia should be a source of pride for this nation. But it cannot be denied, this diversity also often causes various problems, such as conflicts between tribes and also conflicts between religions.

In 2001, for example, there was a conflict between the Dayak and Madurese tribes in Sampit. The conflict started with an arson attack on a Dayak house, and was further exacerbated by differences in the habits and values of the two tribes. The Madurese have a habit of carrying a machete or celurit wherever they go and make the Dayak tribe assume that their guests are ready for a fight. The conflict eventually ended after the government stepped up security, evacuating residents and arresting provocateurs.

Previous conflicts were caused by a lack of understanding of multicultural values in the majority of Indonesian society. An understanding of multicultural values is considered important to be instilled in Indonesian society due to the diversity of Indonesian society so that it can prevent conflicts caused by ethnic and religious differences.

The cultivation of multicultural values is expected to be done through formal education in schools. Education in schools is considered to be a very effective medium to create a generation of people who have a better view of the differences that exist in Indonesia. Linda Agustina (2018) states that education that integrates multicultural values in its learning can provide equal opportunities for all Indonesian children in treating others regardless of their inherent differences and being able to respect fellow humans from any cultural background [2].

The integration of multicultural education in learning activities has an important role in shaping the character and personality of students. School is not only a place to gain knowledge, but also a medium for students to interact and socialize with their friends from various backgrounds. As a multicultural country, social interaction in schools is important. The diversity of religions, ethnicities, and even social groups that exist in Indonesian society is also reflected in the school environment. Yayasan Perguruan Sultan Iskandar Muda is a miniature of a heterogeneous society. This can be seen from the diverse backgrounds of the students.

Based on this background, the author will examine the perceptions of students at the Sultan Iskandar Muda Educational Foundation regarding their school's social environment in the context of integration. Students' perceptions are very important because they can provide a clear picture of how the social environment at school is perceived and interpreted by them.

2 Method

In doing this writing, the author uses a type of qualitative writing using the ethnographic writing method. Literally, ethnography can be interpreted as the results of writing about one

tribe written based on the results of field writing. According to Dr. James Spradley [3] ethnography is a work that describes a culture with the aim of understanding the view of life from the point of view of the natives. The ethnographic writing method has distinctive characteristics, including being comprehensive and integrated (holistic-integrative), rich description (thick description) and qualitative analysis in order to get the native's point of view.

In this paper, the ethnographic method is used to examine students' perceptions of the social environment at school in the process of assimilation. To obtain the necessary data, the data collection techniques used by the author include observation, in-depth interviews, documentation, literature study, and field notes.

The research location chosen by the author in this study is the Perguruan Sultan Iskandar Muda Foundation. On Jalan Sunggal, Gg. Bakul, Sunggal, Medan Sunggal District, Medan City. The author in conducting his research focuses on the SMK level which has two majors, namely: Akuntansi Keuangan Lembaga and Desain Komunikasi Visual.

In the ethnographic method, the first step that must be taken is the determination of informants. The informants to be selected should have five conditions, among them: (a) Full enculturation, (b) Direct involvement, (c) Unknown cultural atmosphere, (d) Sufficient time, (e) Non-analytical. Based on the above provisions, the authors determine the informants as follows: (a) New students (Grade Ten) who come from a homogeneous junior high school. (b) Final year students (Grade Twelve) who come from a homogeneous Junior High School.

To obtain data, the author in this writing uses several methods in collecting data, including: (a) Observation. Observation is an activity of observing an object and or observing the activities of research informants. In making observations, researchers must involve the senses of sight and hearing in order to obtain the necessary data. In ethnographic research, the author goes directly to the field to observe the activities carried out by informants at the research location. The observations made by the author are observing student activities at school, both in the learning process in class and also activities outside the classroom. The observation technique was carried out with the aim of helping the author to find data related to students' perceptions of the social environment at school in the process of assimilation. (b) In-depth Interview. In this study, the authors used unstructured in-depth interview techniques. Unstructured in-depth interviews were conducted to obtain data related to students' perceptions of the school social environment in the process of assimilation. (c) Documentation. Documentation is one of the data collection techniques. In writing scientific papers, one form of accurate data is documentation. In documentation, the author will collect data both in the form of recordings, photographs and or written objects either from mass media or other media. (d) Field Notes. In this study, the authors recorded the results of interviews and observations.

3 Results And Discussion

a. Overview of Yayasan Perguruan Sultan Iskandar Muda

Yayasan Perguruan Sultan Iskandar Muda (YPSIM) is an educational institution established on August 25, 1989. The foundation was founded by Mr. Dr. Sofyan Tan. He is a Chinese descendant who has experience of discrimination in his college days. The experience he experienced made his biggest reason to build an educational institution that does not

discriminate. He has a dream to be able to build a school that provides equal education to all people regardless of their background. He founded this school with the hope of being able to spread the values of diversity / multicultural in the next generation of this Nation.

The selection of the name Sultan Iskandar Muda as the name of this Foundation is because Sultan Iskandar Muda was the first sultan in the Aceh region to open trade relations with the Chinese region. This is considered a form of acceptance of a difference. Perguruan Sultan Iskandar Muda Foundation in its learning applies Multicultural understanding to its students. This foundation upholds the values of Faith, Empowerment, Culture, Diversity, and Sustainability which are packaged in Multicultural Education.

This foundation is often known as a "blending school". In the 2023/2024 academic year, the number of students in this school amounted to 4,134 people consisting of various different backgrounds, including religion, race, ethnicity and also social status.

Tabel 1. Number of Students of Yayasan Perguruan Sultan Iskandar Muda Academic Year. 2023/2024

	Gender		Religion						Amount
	Man	Woman	Islam	Protestant Christian	Catholic	Buddha	Hindu	Sikh	
Total	1962	2172	1222	1888	251	628	143	2	4134
%	47.46	52.53	29.55	45.67	6.07	15.19	3.45	0.048	100

Multicultural education applied at YPSIM aims not only to teach students to respect differences in ethnicity, race and religion but it is also a lesson for all school members. Multicultural Education used by Yayasan Perguruan Sultan Iskandar Muda is expected to be a medium to "eradicate" prejudices against differences in ethnicity, religion and race.

The practice of implementing Multicultural Education in YPSIM can be seen from various things, including: (1). There are 4 different houses of worship, including Vihara, Pura/Kuil, Mosque and Church. (2). Interfaith prayer in various activities, (3). Integration of multicultural values in learning materials. (4). Diversity Class (Joint Religious Class) to instill the value of religious moderation. (5). Extracurricular activities based on multicultural education and (6). National curriculum developed in accordance with the vision.

a. Students' Perceptions of the School Social Environment

School is one of the important factors in influencing student development. Social interactions that occur in the school environment will shape the character, attitudes and values that students will bring to other environments. Soedijarto revealed that school as a center of meaningful learning and as a process of socialization and acculturation of abilities, values, attitudes, character, and behavior can only occur with appropriate infrastructure, education personnel, curriculum system, and environment (Latief) [4]. Social relationships between students and teachers are one of the key factors that influence students' perceptions of their social environment at school.

Yayasan Perguruan Sultan Iskandar Muda in the process of internalizing multicultural values in the learning process requires teachers to build good social relationships with students. Good

social relations will affect students' perceptions of their social environment in the assimilation process carried out by the school. This is in accordance with the opinion of Angeline Claudya who is a grade XII student who has been studying for three years at YPSIM. In an interview session with the author, Angeline expressed her view that she felt very accepted by her peers and teachers.

"When I was in junior high school, I went to a school where all the students were Muslim. After I joined this school at first I was afraid that I would not be accepted by other friends. But after I went through it, my fear did not happen. The teachers are very friendly, never differentiating between students. With the diverse students in this school, I really feel accepted"

In line with Angeline, Mutiara Zahra br Sitepu also feels very welcome at this school. Her social relationships with fellow students and teachers are well developed. Mutiara Zahra is a student who previously attended a homogeneous school. Mutiara Zahra graduated from MTS Al-Washliyah. When she first joined YPSIM, Mutiara Zahra was amazed to see that her students had different backgrounds. She felt very well received by her fellow students and teachers, which Mutiara conveyed during an interview with the author.

"I am very welcome at this school, the response of the teachers and friends is very good to me. This makes me feel comfortable going to school here. I have a good relationship with my friends. We often talk about the dos and don'ts of our respective religions. The goal is to avoid misunderstandings, because we come from different backgrounds."

The results of the interviews obtained by the author are in line with the results of the author's observations during the research at YPSIM. The author found many students who come from different backgrounds can chat in the canteen, or in the school field. They engage in simple discussions full of jokes. In fact, the author's observations found a group of students who were also discussing with one of the teachers. Not discussing subjects, but discussing their interests and talents. This kind of interaction shows that teachers at YPSIM not only act as teachers, but also as mentors who care about student development outside of the academic aspect.

This proves that the social relationships built between students and teachers are positive social relationships. This positive social relationship will certainly create a conducive learning environment. A conducive learning environment will build interesting learning. Thus, the process of internalizing multicultural values in learning will run well. This will build a good perception for students about the process of integration and differences.

Positive social relationships between students and teachers are an important factor in building students' perceptions of the blending process. Students' perceptions of the social relationships between students and teachers greatly influence their learning experiences and personal development. Therefore, it is important for teachers to continue to develop these positive social relationships. This will have a positive impact on the whole school community and make the school a centre for meaningful learning and an effective socialization process in accordance with Soedijarto's view.

According to Slameto [5] Perception is a process concerning the entry of messages or information into the human brain. Through this perception process, humans will continue to establish relationships with their environment. As stated by Slameto, students in their social relationships at school are certainly influenced by their learning environment. According to A.L Slamet Riyadi [6] the environment is a place of settlement with everything where the

organism lives along with all the conditions and conditions that directly or unexpectedly affect the level of life and health of the organism.

The school is one of the student's environments that affects the level of life and also social relationships. The school becomes a social environment that affects the behavior and social system of students and will certainly shape the personality of a student. Soejono Soekanto [7] reveals that the social environment consists of people, both individuals and groups that are around humans. Thus, the social environment becomes a place to meet and interact between individuals and shape a person's behavior.

Sultan Iskandar Muda school becomes a social environment for its students, in line with Soejono's opinion which says that the social environment can shape individual behavior, Sultan Iskandar Muda school has an impact in shaping the behavior of its students. This is in accordance with the statement of Saskia Putri Safira Siregar as a grade XII student at YPSIM

"The Multicultural Program that applies in this school helps me understand the importance of mutual respect, respect between one student and another. The differences in ethnicity and religion that we have should not be a wall of separation between us."

The existence of this school affects the behavior that arises in students, this can be seen from the author's observation that a group of students can chat with their friends even though they come from different religions. When the author went around the house of worship, the author met two students who were waiting for their friends in the mosque who were praying. According to the two students, the things that the author encountered were things that were commonly found in this school.

"If this is the case sir, it is a common thing in this school sir. Christians wait for their friends to be ready to pray, or even Muslims wait for Christians to be ready for PA. So in this school it is common, if there are students of different religions can mingle. This is of course because it is supported by school facilities, sir. Houses of worship for each religion are side by side, so automatically the relationship between students is also built."

From the results of the author's observations and the results of the author's interviews, it shows that the social environment built by the Perguruan Sultan Iskandar Muda Foundation affects students' perceptions. The Interfaith Prayer Program builds students' perceptions that activities should not be dominated by just one belief. This is in line with the opinion of Riza Umami who is a class XII student.

"Every activity at this school, and even the start of each lesson, begins with a prayer led alternately by different students each day. This helps me understand how my friends of different religions pray."

Students at the Sultan Iskandar Muda Educational Foundation recognize that the school's social environment greatly influences their perceptions in understanding the integration process. The school environment, which supports activities that instill multicultural values, helps students directly understand the concept of multicultural education.

4 Conclusion

The study reveals that the social environment at Yayasan Perguruan Sultan Iskandar Muda is perceived by students as inclusive and supportive of assimilation. Despite the diversity in

religion, ethnicity, and socio-economic backgrounds, students interact harmoniously, viewing this diversity as a strength. Key findings include the school's active support for assimilation through interfaith prayers and diverse worship facilities, the formation of study groups that promote interaction among students of different backgrounds, and the role of these efforts in fostering national integration. The school's inclusive policies and programs have successfully facilitated cross-cultural and religious interactions, contributing to both social harmony and national development in Indonesia.

References

- [1] Rambe, Tappil; Sejarah Politik Dan Kekuasaan. Yayasan Kita Menulis. 2019.53
- [2] Agustina, Linda; Integrasi Nilai-Nilai Pendidikan Multikultural Dalam Proses Pembelajaran PPKn Di SMP Negeri 3 Lingsar Lombok Barat. CIVICUS : Pendidikan - Penelitian - Pengabdian Pendidikan Pancasila Dan Kewarganegaraan. Vol. 6. 2018. 55-62
- [3] J. P. Spradley, Metode Etnografi, Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 2006.
- [4] Latief, Abdul; Pengaruh Lingkungan Sekolah Terhadap Hasil Belajar Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan Pada Peserta Didik Di Sekolah Negeri Paku Kecamatan Binua Kabupaten Polewali Mandar. Jurnal Papatuzdu. Vol. 7. 2014.17
- [5] Slameto; Belajar Dan Faktor-Faktor Yang Mempengaruhinya. Rineka Cipta. 2003.102
- [6] Pitosewas, Berchah; Pengaruh Lingkungan Sosial Dan Sikap Remaja Terhadap Perubahan Tata Nilai. Jurnal Pancasila Dan Kewarganegaraan. No.3. Vol.1. 2018. 8-18
- [7] Soekanto, Soerjono; Sosiologi Suatu Pengantar. Rajawali Pers. 2010. 3389
- [8] J. A. Banks, An Introduction Multicultural Education, United States: Pearson Education, 2014.
- [9] L. J. Moleong, Metode Penelitian Kualitatif, Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2007.
- [10] Koeswinarno; Memahami Etnografi Ala Spradley,“ Jurnal SMaRT, zv. 01, %1. vyd.02, pp. 257-265, 2015.
- [11] Rukun Sembiring; Integrasi Pendidikan Multikultural dalam Pembelajaran Sejarah di Madrasah,“ BEST JOURNAL, zv. 5, %1. vyd.2, pp. 223-228, 2022.
- [12] H. Becker, Outsiders: Studies In The Sociologu Of Deviance, New York: Free Press, 2018.
- [13] M. H. Pratiknjo, Masyarakat Multikultural: Bentuk dan Pola Interaksi dalam Dinamika Kehidupan Sosial, Manado: Yayasan Serat Manado, 2012.
- [14] Argitha Aricindy; Urgensi Pendidikan Perdamaian di Sekolah Multikultural Yayasan Perguruan Sultan Iskandar Muda Medan dan Sekolah Karang Turi Semarang,“ Prosiding Seminar Nasional Pascasarjana UNNES, pp. 989-994, 2023.