

MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION IN INDONESIA: *The Case Study of Philippines Students in Hati Persada School Aceh*

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Abstract

The Hati Persada School in the Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam province is one of the few educational institutions in Indonesia that implementing the peace education in Indonesia. The peace-based curriculum is practiced both in the classroom and the outside activity. Furthermore, this school got an opportunity to accept students from Philippines as their first batch of foreign students. However, the interaction between the Philippines students with local students and teachers faced many difficulties in regard of the cultural and value differences despite the peace-based principles. This research describes the interaction and learning process experienced by students from Philippines in the Hati Persada School and also from the local students and teachers. This article uses qualitative methods with the multicultural education approach and intercultural communication concepts to analyze the adaptation process and the primary data form the interviews and observation within the school environment. One of the findings from this research is that cultural factors often become a barrier to adaptation both for Philippines students and their local counterparts because the lack of experience in the multicultural interactions.

Keywords: Multicultural education; peace education; cultural diversity; Hati Persada School; foreign students.

Abstrak

Sekolah Hati Persada di wilayah provinsi Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam merupakan salah satu sekolah yang memberlakukan pendidikan bina damai di Indonesia. Bentuk-bentuk pendidikan ini diterapkan baik di dalam kelas maupun aktivitas di luar kelas. Dalam perkembangannya, sekolah Hati Persada menerima beberapa siswa dari Filipina. Siswa-siswa ini merupakan rombongan pelajar asing pertama yang pernah bersekolah di sini. Namun, interaksi antara para siswa Filipina dan siswa serta guru lokal di sekolah ini mengalami banyak kendala khususnya terkait perbedaan budaya. Penelitian ini mengurai proses interaksi dan pembelajaran yang dialami oleh para siswa asal Filipina di Sekolah Hati Persada Aceh beserta para siswa lokal dan para gurunya. Tulisan ini menggunakan metode kualitatif serta pendekatan pendidikan multikulturalisme serta komunikasi antarbudaya. Data-data yang digunakan oleh peneliti bersumber dari wawancara dan observasi di lingkungan sekolah. Salah satu temuan dari penelitian ini adalah faktor budaya kerap kali menjadi penghalang adaptasi para siswa Philippines karena ini adalah pengalaman pertama baik dari mereka maupun dari pihak sekolah untuk berinteraksi lintas-budaya. Siswa-siswa Philippines mengalami kendala dari segi bahasa, budaya, kehidupan asrama, serta kurikulum yang digunakan dalam kegiatan belajar-mengajar.

Kata Kunci: Pendidikan multikulturalisme; Pendidikan perdamaian; Keberagaman budaya; Sekolah Hati Persada; Philippines.



INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is an archipelagic country that poses unique diversity in language, cultural, social system, and religion. These diversities is inevitable and consequently is part of the national identity itself (Rahmawati. Yeni; Yi-Fong, Pai; Chen, 2014). On the other hand, the multiculturalism is not yet a familiar issue, because it is related with influence of political and social change in Indonesia (Rahmawati. Yeni; Yi-Fong, Pai; Chen, 2014).

One of the main areas for the integration of multicultural values in the Indonesian society is education (Harjatanaya & Hoon, 2020). In the context of social and political changes in the country—from the Independence through the Reformation era—there is a surge in the multicultural education movement from assimilation to multiculturalism (Jayadi et al., 2022). In addition, the multicultural addition is embedded into the law, rules, and basic principles in Indonesia (Cathrin & Wikandaru, 2023).

From their research on documents and articles from public universities perspectives, Jayadi et.al (2022) argues that several multicultural paradigms are already embedded in the society. Those values are the cultural preservation paradigm, social justice paradigm, equality paradigm, unity in diversity paradigm, and social interaction paradigm (Jayadi et al., 2022). However, this research also suggests us to look closely to the school as the main location to practice these paradigms (Rahman et al., 2021) together with the burdens and difficulties of the school environment.

The school is one of the main locations where the multicultural values can be developed in the society (Noor, 2019). The school have their own approach, values, curriculum, and preferred learning process to deliver this cause (Ainna et al., 2019). For example, in Indonesia we can differentiate between the public and private school. While the public schools comply with the standard national curriculum, the private school can have their own variations of curriculum from the religion-based school to the Western-based international schools (see Rahmawati. Yeni; Yi-

Fong, Pai; Chen, 2014). In addition, Levinson and Holland in Hoon (2011) underlines that school has an active role in transmitting the ideal values in the society and developing the culture. Hoon underlines that school is not necessarily neutral in these process (Levinson & Holland, 2011).

Nakaya (2018) argues that the curriculum in Indonesia had local subjects to preserve the uniqueness of the local cultural aspects in Indonesia. However, when majority groups established compulsory subjects based on their own culture and language, minorities struggled in their studies thus created some sense of discrimination in the school (Nakaya, 2018). This contradiction leaves a big problem to the practice of multicultural education in Indonesia.

Other research also portrays this situation. Hoon (2011) finds that some public and private schools are experiencing the rise of identity exclusivism instead of multicultural practice. Based on the observation and interview in four prominent Christian schools in Jakarta and surrounding area, Hoon concluded that these schools are developed based on homogenous race, religion, and social class values (Hoon, 2011). One of the main findings from this research is the parents acknowledged that they send their children to these schools to avoid bullying and discrimination by the 'natives' students in the public schools (Hoon, 2011). Consequently, the Christian schools becoming the tools to build the boundary where Chinese-origin students defines their identity against the non-Chinese.

The multicultural education also have a major role in the post-conflict peacebuilding process. The study from Nakaya (2018) traces about the roles of teachers and school textbooks in dealing with the stereotyping among junior high school students in West Kalimantan. She concludes that due to the trauma and anxiety from parents and officials, the textbooks usage is limited. In addition, the textbooks itself are still filled with the negative stereotyping towards some cultural entities in West Kalimantan (Nakaya, 2018).

Raihani (2012) portrays the multicultural education in the Islamic boarding school. Her

research in Pesantren Darul Falah in Yogyakarta city—one of the multicultural pesantren in Indonesia—shows that multicultural values already had a proportional space in their curriculum, particularly in the subjects such as Sociology, Indonesian History, and Akhlak (Islamic teaching about proper behavior). However, these values did not get the main attention in the overall curriculum in the pesantren which practically prioritizing the Islamic teachings. Students in Pesantren Darul Falah practically studying about multiculturalism exactly from their interaction in the outside classroom activity, their interaction in dormitory, or through the interfaith activity when their schools inviting the participants from other identity background (Raihani, 2012).

Rosyad (2020) underlines the relations between multicultural education and Islamic teachings. He argues that the Islamic and multicultural education is inseparable. Islamic education or familiar by PAI has primary role as moral activator within Student and democracy value practice should be internalize in Islamic

education world through learning process in formal education (Rosyad, 2020). In addition, Anwar (2021) highlights the importance of Pancasila as part of the foundation of multicultural education. Through the case study in Sukoreno village East Java, he concludes that the multicultural education is not only happens in the school, but should go alongside the society and neighbourhood in which the school is located (Anwar, 2021).

The problem with the multicultural education and identity exclusivism in Indonesian schools also portrayed by the conduct of religious fundamentalism in School. The research from Pusat Pengkajian Islam dan Masyarakat Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah (PPIM UIN) Jakarta. revealed that Indonesian teachers, from the kindergarten level to the high school level, have the tendency towards intolerance and radicalism practices (PPIM UIN, 2018). Furthermore, as much as 56% teachers refuse the construction of school by the Non-Moslem counterpart in their neighbor. Still, as much as 21% teacher admit that they rejecting if their neighbor conducting the worship in their home. The other fact revealed

that 33% of the teacher agree to encouraging other people to go to war for protecting their religion.

The research about multicultural education in Indonesia mostly traces the relations between students and teachers that has Indonesian nationality. Thus, the multicultural education in the school are practiced within the range of Indonesian nation but with many cross-cultural relations. On the other hand, the relations inside Sekolah Hati Persada are between the Indonesian and Philippines students. This is the main research gap that founded this study. The approach towards multicultural concerns can be found through the peace-based curriculum in Sekolah Hati Persada (later called with HP) Aceh.

The practiced curriculum in HP is not only designed to allow students to optimize their cognitive capability, but also combined it with the understanding of Acehese local values that founded by the Islamic teachings. Furthermore, HP also tries to develop the peace values within the school as part of peacebuilding process since Aceh have a long history of conflict and violence against government in the past. The students in Hati Persada are educated to be part of global citizen without forgot their cultural roots of Acehese and also the Islamic teachings (Siswa Sekolah Hati Persada, 2013).

On August 2016, HP welcomed 30 students from Philippines. Philippines. Philippines. Philippines. Philippines. Philippines.

The Philippines students are the first foreign students to get their education in the HP Aceh. Basically, both of these regions have majority of Moslem people and o have a long history of conflict and separatist issues. This is also the main reasons for their parents to give permissions to their children. However, this is also the first time for HP to accept foreign students and interacting with them intensively. Thus, the common denominator between Philippines and Aceh people is not automatically resulted in a smooth interaction between them. There were also misunderstanding, clashes, and disagreement between not only Philippines and Aceh student, but also with the teacher and school administrators.

This paper is elaborating two points. First, this paper covers the adaptation process of Philippines students relating with the multicultural approach in the HP Aceh, Aceh. Second, Authors seek to explain how the HP Aceh conducting the education process in the middle of cultural gap between their environment and the Philippines students in the context of multicultural education. As elaborates in the next section, both must put more efforts in the adaptation process. Although the HP Aceh have a social capital in their cultural resemblance with Philippines, but it proved not worked comprehensively. The Philippines still must put more efforts because of their minority status despite several affirmative actions that already practiced by HP Aceh.

ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK

This paper uses multicultural education theory that conceptualized by James Banks. He defines multicultural education as " ... "the idea that all students – regardless of their ethnic, racial, cultural, or linguistic characteristics – should have an equal opportunity to learn in school" (Banks, 2009). Multicultural education can be translated into three roles: as a concept, as process, and as education transformation movement. Multicultural education underlines the fact that students in their society are still not has proper access into a good quality education because of their status as minority.

Banks argues that school is an environment that has its own characteristic and values. Thus, curriculum is just one aspect that builds this environment beside the outside classroom interaction between teacher, staffs, and students. He concludes that:

"Each major variable in the school—such as its culture, its power relationships, the curriculum and materials, and the attitudes and beliefs of the staff—must be changed in ways that will allow the school to promote educational equality for students from diverse groups." (Banks & McGee, 2016).

Multicultural education intends to de-

sign the school transformation to erase the inequality that attached to the school such as race difference, tribe, religion, and other identity issues. The inequality appears in the school system and its facility such as the curriculum, student handbooks, teaching methods, school culture, daily language, teaching methods, teacher behavior, and punishment for the student (Banks, 2009). The main goal of multicultural education is to change the school structure so that students can gain knowledge, attitude, and capability which make them "functioned" in the diverse world or on their own society (Banks, 2009).

Multicultural education has five dimensions i.e. content integration (teachers using examples and methods from varieties of culture), knowledge construction (teachers helping students to understand implicit cultural association), equity pedagogy (teachers modify their teachings to meet the needs of academic achievement by student from diverse background), prejudice reduction (modified the racial attitudes of students from teaching methods) and empowering school culture (create a school culture that empowers students from diverse racial, ethnic, and gender groups) (Banks, 2016). This research focused its analysis on the fifth dimensions specifically the empowering school culture because of the concept managed to explain the interaction between the individual and groups inside the HP Acehespecially the interaction outside the classroom.

The second concept that utilized in this article is intercultural communication to analyze the gap between the cultural background between Philippines students and the environment in HP Aceh. Stella Ting-Toomey & Leeva C. Chung defines intercultural communication as:

"...the symbolic exchange process whereby individuals from two (or more) different cultural communities attempt to negotiate shared meanings in an interactive situation within an embedded societal system." (Toomey & Chung, 2012)

Furthermore, Ting-Toomey and Chung underlines six important concepts in intercultural communication i.e symbolic exchange,

process, different cultural communities, negotiated shared meanings, interactive situations, and an embedded social system.

Ting-Toomey and Leeva C. Chung (2012) also elaborates the concept of culture shock to explain the consequences from the entrance of an individual to the already established group which has different cultural background. She explains:

“Culture shock basically refers to a stressful transitional period when individuals move from a familiar environment into an unfamiliar one. In this unfamiliar environment, the individual’s identity appears to be stripped of all protection.”

Authors use the intercultural communication approach especially the culture shock concept to explain the problems faced both by Philippines students and HP Aceh School staffs in terms of their daily interaction. The differences between Aceh and Philippines cultural background, despite the expectation from Philippines students and HP Aceh staffs that their culture is relatively similar, proved to be main challenge towards the adaptation and interaction process both outside and inside classroom. Furthermore, the multicultural education concepts are used to elaborate the adaptation and solution from the challenge itself. The multicultural education concepts, especially the “empowering school culture” dimension, explain about the efforts from both the Philippines students and HP Aceh staffs to create common ground between them in terms of academic and non-academic process.

RESEARCH METHOD

This article uses the qualitative methods and utilizes both the primary data and secondary data. The primary data obtained through interview and observation which conducted directly in the neighbor of Sekolah Hati Persada Aceh. Authors had a chance to stay for 1 week between 11 March to 17 March in Sekolah Hati Persada Aceh dormitory while conducting this research. Authors managed to interview seven (4 girls and 3 boys) from 22 Philippines students that still continue their

education in HP Aceh. The seven students who have more fluent English participate in the group interviews. The interview itself conducted mainly in English and sometimes in Bahasa. The participated students came from varied gender background also tribe composition.

Beside the students, authors also interviewed the teachers, academic staffs, and non-academic staffs to confirm the data from students. The number of interviewed school staffs are 15 persons through the focus group discussions format and in-depth personal interviews. Authors selected the teachers/staffs which frequently interacting with the Philippines students. This included the head of male and female dormitory, principal and vice principals, teaching staffs (not all of the teacher in HP Aceh had the experience in teaching Philippines students), guardian teacher, school counsellor, security, kitchen staffs, cleaning services and drivers. The selection of these interviewees is based on the needs to portray the interaction and adaptation media publications relating to the HP in Aceh. Authors uses narrative analysis to uncover the stories, feelings, behaviors, and experience of the students and teaching staffs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The findings and discussions about this research are discussed through the main concept of multicultural education that the school should be conceptualized as a social system (Banks & McGee, 2016). Thus, the dynamics of interaction process that must be given attention is related with the fifth dimension of multicultural education that mentioned before namely “empowering school culture”. Furthermore, Banks underline that:

“Each major variable in the school—such as its culture, its power relationships, the curriculum and materials, and the attitudes and beliefs of the staff—must be changed in ways that will allow the school to promote educational equality for students from diverse groups” (Banks & McGee, 2016).

The organization of the findings and

analysis of this research are based from the points mentioned by Banks above.

School Culture

AcehAceh The culture of HP Aceh can be seen from their rules and how the rules itself be practiced. One of the main traits of HP Aceh rules is referring to Indonesian nationality, Acehnese culture, and Islamic values. This principle underlines the importance of good attitudes and respects between all the school environment based on the Islamic values and Acehnese culture.

Despite of the ideal school culture that mentioned before, Philippines students still not fully adapted with the whole cultural background of HP Aceh. Culture shock is a dominant feeling that still perceived by Philippines students in HP Aceh until their third year. They feel that they cannot fully adapted into the HP Aceh neighbor, or to be precise, the Acehnese culture in general. One thing that should be underlined is that the Acehnese and Philippines culture is very different.

The difference between Philippines and Aceh culture often led the students to accidentally break the rules. One female Philippines students admitted that back in Philippines she is not obliged to wear the veil (hijab) or committing the shalat.¹

Other students also confessed that having a romantic date in the public space is common in Philippines.² Back in Aceh, those practices are very prohibited and even considered taboo. When asked about what makes them uncomfortable in the school, one student admitted that one of them is her veil (hijab) "...because in the Philippines, I didn't wear like this, just only here."³

The culture shock sometimes made Philippines students felt that school is like prison for them. Furthermore, this also made some students break the rules, especially when

they don't understand the reasons behind the rules itself. In fact, they are also felt unfair if the rules only applied for them while some teachers allowed skipping the rules constantly.⁴ One student described this situation as:

"The other student also feels like that because they said that even the teachers, they reason like this, "we are student that already follow the rules, some of the teachers, we can see that they did not follow the rules, we just feel like silent".⁵

Philippines students and their local counterparts (student, teachers, and staffs). This problems happens when the cultural background clashes without the help to bridge the intercultural communication. The school should be a place for both students and teachers to--regarding the definition of intercultural communication by Stella Ting Toomey (2012)—negotiating their shared meanings in the interactive situations within embedded social system. In this context, the HP Aceh-culture is the embedded social system itself, while the teachers and students should be the actors that their shared meanings and understanding about their perceived values. One thing that should be remembered is students came from specific religious, cultural, and ethnic groups that had their own socialization to act and think. This way of thinking and act might be different from the ones that they get from school neighborhood which had its own religious, cultural, and ethnicity background. Thus, Banks elaborate that the contemporary challenge for multicultural education is how to help students from diverse groups mediate between their home and community cultures and the school culture needed to function effectively in each cultural setting (Banks, 2016). For this purpose, it is very important to introduce the rules and creating an effective yet empathic way to inform the student about the rules. Frequently, the student has their own

1 "Because when I'm in Philippines, I don't usually pray 5 times a day but when I went here, it change everything like I feel like being religious because when I was in Philippines, I always skip praying because I ignore it like "no it's okay, I will just pray later" so I will just play with my friends but when I went here, I feel like, I'm not comfortable if I skip 1 prayer maybe because of their culture too." Interview with one female Philippines student on Thursday, 14 March 2019.

2 Interview with one male Philippines student on Thursday, 14 March 2019.

3 Interview with two female Philippines students on Friday, 15 March 2019.

4 This situation usually happens in English Day where all the school students and staffs must use English in their daily communication. The Philippines students which find difficulties to communicate in English often be warned if they forgot to use English.

5 Interview with one male Philippines student on Wednesday, 13 March 2019.

background on the reason why they break the rules. One student told authors that:

“About the rules, actually, I feel uncomfortable because of the rules is over like even at night, we did not have a lot of time to rest because we spent a lot of time to study, let’s say to study because even at night we should pengajian or like let’s say Islamic studies and then at the morning related to schools or sometimes even if we have free time, we should do cleaning. So maybe for them it’s normal because of this is one of their let’s say culture but if compared with us, when we’re in Philippines, we usually have a lot of time to rest like we 2 days to have rest, we call it weekend.”⁶

In general, authors emphasize that both the Philippines students and other HP Aceh’s neighbor are experiencing the “cultural bumps” condition. This condition happens when two or more individual/groups interacting and still holds their basic values without adjusting to the preferences or values of their counterparts. Furthermore, this situation resulted in the miscommunication and misunderstanding between the interacting parties. Ting Toomey and Chung define cultural bumps:

“...is about violating another person’s cultural norms without malicious intent. Specifically, we commit unintentional culture bumps in a new culture because we have not mastered the norms and the meaning fluency of that new system.” (Toomey & Chung, 2012).

Curriculum and Materials

HP Aceh is a very exceptional school, probably one of the best schools in whole Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam province. This school have good facility, competitive students, and very qualified teachers. However, the quality of this school posed its own challenges for the Philippines students since not all of them have proper educational background to follow the study process here.

The first prominent problem for Philippines students is language gap. In fact, not all of the Philippines students able to commu-

nicate in English. On the other hand, the majority of HP Aceh teacher also did not have an experience to teach in English. This resulted in the difficulties both in study process and informal conversations in the classroom. To handle this condition, HP Aceh provided the teachers with “shadow teacher” to help translating the subjects from Bahasa to English for Philippines students. “Shadow teacher” usually picked from the English teacher and he/she must stay beside the subject teachers during the class.⁷

The language gap proved to be the main burden both for Philippines students and also their teachers as well. However, the HP Aceh had several adjustments to tackle this condition. In addition, to help the teachers with “shadow teacher” that aforementioned before, HP Aceh also designed the “buddies” system. “Buddies” consisting of local students who have a good English communication capability and have a vast knowledge about HP Aceh environment. The “buddies” then accompanied the Philippines students either outside and inside the class to help them adapted with the situation in HP Aceh.⁸ The “buddies” are a very helpful for the Philippines students because they were their first local friends.

One thing that frequently complained from the teacher about language gap is the Philippines students often use their native language when the teaching process occurred. Some teachers find that this habit will prevent them to fully mastering the English and Bahasa as well.⁹ On the other hand, the teachers itself felt curious and confused when they heard the Philippines students talking in their native language. The teachers felt that they could not fully comprehended the class situation when the students talking in the language that they could not understand.

The language gap also resulted in the curriculum and materials challenges. The subjects that taught in Philippines schools are very different from Indonesia. As a result, HP Aceh must modify the curriculum in Philippines classroom. They were only given several subjects such as Science, Mathematics, English,

6 Interview with one male Philippines student on Wednesday, 13 March 2019.

7 Interview with former shadow teacher on Friday, 15 March 2019

8 Interview with two former “buddies” for Philippines students on Tuesday, 12 March 2019.

9 Interview with teaching staffs in Philippines class on Wednesday, 13 March 2019

World History, Arts, Sports, and Bahasa.¹⁰

For the Philippines students, HP Aceh mixed their Indonesian curriculum with the Cambridge system. Nevertheless, this method is not fully structured rigidly. HP Aceh giving freedom for teachers to improvise and adapt their own mixture between Indonesian curriculum and Cambridge system with consideration towards the student ability.¹¹ In fact, the teachers should put more effort into combining these two systems.

HP Aceh has its own approach towards Philippines students compared with the local students. First, the Philippines students placed in 4 years education program that started in the 9th grade or in the middle school. This approach conducted even though the Philippines students have varied age level between 14 years old to 20 years old. It resulted in the practice of special curriculum since the Philippines students have not already take the “equalization” exam into the Indonesian curriculum.¹²

Second approach related to the structure of the classroom. At first, the Philippines students are mixed with the Indonesian students in the bilingual classroom. Both of Philippines and local students were happy with this format since they can get mingled within each other because the frequent interaction inside the class.¹³ Unfortunately, the school later decided to separate this class and the Philippines students got their own class. On one hand, this process can help their adaptation process in the learning process. On the other hand, this process affected their adaptation with the other local students.

Third approach by HP Aceh is related with the teacher composition. HP Aceh assigned their teachers that already completed education abroad to teach in Philippines class. There are total of 30 teachers from three branches of HP in Aceh that included in this program, while HP Aceh had 10 teachers. They were assigned in hope for utilizing their English capability and the educational expertise that earned from studying abroad.¹⁴

All of the approaches and adjustments which practiced by HP Aceh came from the background condition related with the quality level of the Philippines students itself. If compared with the local students in Aceh, the quality of Philippines students are relatively lower. Some Philippines students can match the quality of local student or even surpassed them. On the other hand, the most of them still had to work hard to match the level of local students.

Power Relationship

The adaptation process from Philippines students are centered in their informal interaction with HP Aceh neighbor. This part involves the local students, teachers, head of dormitory, and non-academic staffs. On this context, this is where the process of “negotiated shared meanings” by Ting-Toomey and Chung practically happened. According to this, Ting Toomey and Chung underlines three layers of meaning that are critical to our understanding of how people express themselves in a communication process i.e content meaning, relational meaning, and identity meaning. Authors will focus in the third layers or the identity meaning which involves issues such as the display of respect or disrespect and identity approval or disapproval. Wilmot & Hocker (2011) refers the identity meaning as the problem of...” “Who am I and who are you in this interaction episode?” “How do I define myself in this interaction scene?” and “How do I define you in this interaction scene?”

Based on the identity meaning definition, authors argues that the pattern of relations between Philippines students with HP Aceh neighbor can be divided into two types: vertical relations and horizontal relations. Authors use this classification based on the amount of power relations involved within the interaction. Furthermore, the amount of power relations can be seen from how the actors perceived themselves as “higher”, “lesser”, or “equal” in the communication process.

Vertical relation is used in the type of

10 Interview with Education Director of Sekolah Hati Persada on Saturday, 9 February 2019.

11 Interview with teaching staffs in Philippines class on Wednesday, 13 March 2019.

12 Interview with Director of HP Aceh on Friday, 15 March 2019.

13 Interview with two local students who shared class with the Philippines on Tuesday, 12 March 2019.

14 Interview with Director of HP Aceh on Friday, 15 March 2019.

relation that involved more power relations between the actors as the interaction between students and teacher. We can recognize the gap of power inside this relation since students should pay their respects to their teacher through several attitudes (i.e greetings and some respect gestures) while teacher may not have the same obligation to do so. Authors will elaborate this problem in the next section.

Meanwhile, the horizontal relation is used to label the relations in which the interacting actors have relatively equal positions without or with less power relations. The horizontal relations happened in the relations between students or between students and non-academic staffs. This is seen from the communication pattern and informal gestures in their interaction.

The non-academic adaptation process dominantly happened in the dormitory room. At this area, both of vertical and horizontal relations could happen simultaneously. The vertical relations usually occur when Philippines students must face the dormitory rules and their head of dormitory. On the other hand, the horizontal relation lies within their relations with local students inside the room.

According to Philippines students, the dormitory room has its own impressions. First, most of them admitted that they love the dormitory and the school neighbor in general. It is very clean, full of trees and facilities, and so on. However, they felt that this dormitory limited their privacy.¹⁵ This is happened both for the male and female students. The dormitory sometimes can be so hot especially in the summer and they can't have enough space for themselves. This often resulted in conflict between Philippines students and local students who shared the same room over trivial issues such as whether the dormitory window is supposedly opened or closed.

Attitudes and Beliefs of Staffs

The attitudes and beliefs of HP Aceh' staffs are shown by the interaction process with the students. On this context, the interaction process is showing the basic values that

perceived by both parties in the school. James Banks introduce the concept of latent curriculum to underlines the basic values that not explicitly teaches by teacher but all the students learn indirectly. Latent curriculum deals with how the teachers perceived their relations and interactions with the students itself.

He defines it as:

" that powerful part of the school culture that communicates to students the school's attitudes toward a range of issues and problems, including how the school views them as human beings and as males, females, exceptional students, and students from various religious, cultural, racial, and ethnic groups." (Banks & McGee, 2016).

In general, the Philippines students really appreciate the warmness and kinship atmosphere in HP Aceh. Nevertheless, they also felt that they were always under the spotlight in the school. Teacher have a high expectation towards them because of their background as international students. As a result, they felt that they always compared with the local students about their performance in the classroom and their attitudes outside it.¹⁶ They even think that if one of them breaks the rules or causing problems within schools, it will be perceived as a whole Philippines students fault. One student even mentioned that "...so, actually, a teacher said like 'if one Philippines problem, it could be your all problem because you're like a family here, because you're too far from your parents, you need to discuss between you'".¹⁷

Some teachers in HP Aceh felt that Philippines students are more spoiled than local students. HP Aceh already gave them with special treatments such as allowance money to buy daily goods, cellphone time on the weekend and travelling trip to the cities yet they were still complained about their boring daily routine.¹⁸ One teacher talked about Philippines student's habit to skip the extra curriculum activities (i.e sports, dance, or scout) or just follow it reluctantly. This fact is also admitted by Philippines students itself. They felt that they already burned out after the

¹⁵ Interview with four Philippines students on Wednesday, 13 March 2019.

¹⁶ Interview with four Philippines students on Wednesday, 13 March 2019

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Interview with school staffs and teacher on Tuesday 12 March 2019.

classroom activities and sometimes they still work out their homework in the dormitory until night. Not to mention other obligations such as cleaning the dormitory neighbor. This made them only joined the extra curriculum activities halfheartedly.¹⁹

The condition created the insecurity feeling when some teachers always compared them with native students from Aceh. Thus, this polarized action created the “cultural distance” which includes the embraced values, language, verbal and nonverbal gestures in communication, religion, negotiation style, and so on. Ting Toomey elaborates that the frustration level of people which adapting in the new neighbor are bigger if the expected that the “cultural distance” between their home and destination area is close. (Ting-Toomey, 2012) This situation happened because initially they hoped that they will not have to change their identity drastically in the new area.

The tendency from Philippines students to get bored with their routine activities related with their psychological traits. Now they are in their puberty age, so they need more affection from their surroundings especially the adults. This is their first time to separate with their parents and families as well. They often felt homesick and needed someone to talk about their feelings.²⁰ That’s why they are very close with teachers and staffs which do not have tendencies for ‘being distant’ to them. Furthermore, they are very attached with the teachers/staffs that do not apply the vertical relations towards them. They even perceived these individuals as their “mommy” and “daddy” in school. This is how one Philippines students describes her favorite teacher to authors:

“He’s also the one who can understand us and when we have our problem, we share about “Abi [means father], like this, like that”. We talk about when we have a problem we cannot say to other, we can say to Abi because we know that he can understand us, and he always give us advice and a lot knowledge. Abi is also the good one and our favorite teacher. Not only

teacher but our father here.”²¹

For Philippines students, they love teachers or staff that willing to spend their time or able to communicate closely with them both outside and inside the classroom. A very simple moment such as when their teacher shared meals if they able to answer his/her questions is very memorable. Or in other occasion, they appreciated the kitchen staffs which allowed them to cook their own traditional food. The cooking time might be modest moment, but for Philippines students especially the girls, this is one moment that they can remember their life back in Philippines with their parents.

Some teachers in HP Aceh might be had some concerns about the problems that caused by Philippines students. Nevertheless, we should be aware that the problem itself came from the behavior and not the cultural background itself. Some Philippines students are thinking that the problems within them always be linked with their background.²² This situation is not ideal according the multicultural education because it can lead to the formation of stereotyping and generalization behavior. Related to this, Banks underlines that: Although membership in a gender, racial, ethnic, social class, or religious group can provide us with important clues about individuals’ behavior, it cannot enable us to predict behavior. Knowing one’s group affiliation can enable us to state that a certain type of behavior is probable. Membership in a group does not determine behavior but makes certain types of behavior more probable. (Banks & McGee, 2016).

The cultural bumps between the teachers and staffs with Philippines students happened because of the adaptation process that occurred so sudden. The Philippines students arrival were in the middle of the new semesters so that the school environment must adapted rapidly. . However, the communication between them and Philippines students is experiencing what Stella Ting-Toomey and Leeva Chung defines as “inflexible intercultural communication” or “...the continuation using our own cultural values, judgments, and

19 Interview with four Philippines students on Wednesday, 13 March 2019

20 *Ibid*

21 Interview with one female Philippines student on Friday, 15 March 2019.

22 Interview with two Philippines students on Friday, 15 March 2019.

routines in communicating with culturally different others.” (Toomey & Chung, 2012). It can be concluded from the teacher beliefs that the Philippines students should obey the Aceh culture and Islamic values since they are new-comer in HP Aceh. One teacher stated that, “They must understand that they live in Aceh that practiced the Syariah Islam. They should adapt in this way of thinking also for their own good.”²³

The inflexibility in the intercultural communication is since this is the first time the HP Aceh teachers interacting with international students. The HP Aceh teachers to date always deal with the Acehnese student. There are few students from other provinces, but they are still Indonesian citizens which relatively had a similar cultural background. Meanwhile, the Philippines students have their own cultural and ethnic background which has its own uniqueness compared to Indonesian and Acehnese culture in general.

Teachers are very important pillars in creating the ideal, equal yet multicultural social system in the school itself. The teachers are arguably the embodiment of the values and “main transmitter” of it to the students. On this perspective, Banks argues that the multicultural values and teachings are ineffective in the hands of teachers who have negative attitudes toward different racial, ethnic, language, and cultural groups.²⁴ Thus, it is very important to engage the teachers with the multicultural values and how to manage it in the school environment.

CONCLUSION

The adaptation process of Philippines students in HP Aceh proved not as smooth as expected before. They were facing many difficulties to adapting in HP Aceh culture and interacting with other school neighbor such as the local students, school staffs, and the teachers. On the other hand, the school staffs, local students, and teachers also must deal with their own difficulties. The difficulties in this interaction resulted from two factors: the high expectation towards Philippines students

and the short time for adaptation process between the Philippines student and the school environment. Nevertheless, this is resulted in the “trials and errors” process that should be held by both parties since they must find their way to know each other in the middle of the teaching process. The language gap, differences in education and curriculum system, and the generation gap between Philippines students and the teachers are the main background that burdened the adaptation process. However, HP Aceh also managed to do a lot of adaptation to deal with the arrival of Philippines students. These efforts included modifying the curriculum, relaxing some of the school rules, and giving some affirmative actions to make Philippines students feels like home. Nevertheless, those are the institutional or rule-based adjustment that functioned as a guideline for the empiric interactions between Philippines students and other school neighbor. Meanwhile, this institutional adjustment could not comprehensively influence the person-to-person interactions especially between Philippines students and the adults. There is still a burden in the interaction between them due to the lack of negotiated shared values in which the Philippines students positioned a lesser party especially in the personal interaction. This condition must be solved by HP Aceh if soon they want to get another international student.. Since this is the first time for HP Aceh environment to interact with international students, the chance for positive adjustments is still open in the future.

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²³ Statement from one teacher in the focus group discussion with non-academic teaching staffs on Tuesday, 12 March 2019

²⁴ *Ibid*, op.cit.

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