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## The Inter-Ethnic Student Social Interactions: The Case Study of a Public Senior High School in Batam

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### Abstract

Various ethnic students have triggered social interaction forms, like looking for friends during break time to go to the cafeteria or sitting relaxed in the school park. Likewise, students tend to choose the optional extracurricular activities based on their friends because they are reluctant to get involved in an activity if their fellow friends are not in the group. This research aimed to identify forms of social interaction of students of different ethnicities at *a public senior high school in Batam*. It used qualitative with a case study approach. The participants were the student assistant principal, the English teacher, and students at *a public senior high school in Batam*. Data analysis used the interactive analysis model. The research results showed the associative social interaction forms were seen during extracurricular activities, collaboration in study groups, and classroom cleaning competitions. Meanwhile, the dissociative social interaction was used when the use of local languages during conflicts and disputes over student council elections.

### Keywords

Ethnicity, social interaction, students, teacher

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## **Introduction**

School is a formal educational institution that accommodates many students in it, and of course, these students come from different ethnic backgrounds, especially in schools that are in urban areas. These various backgrounds require them to associate or interact in attending school education. Someone is said to be part of a group at the school if they gather and have interactions with each other even though they have different ethnic backgrounds.

Ethnicity is a population that biologically can develop and survive, has the same cultural values, and become aware of togetherness in culture form, form its own communication and interaction network, determine its group which is accepted by other groups and can be differentiated from various population groups (Zumratan, 2019). Batam is one of the cities directly adjacent to Singapore and Malaysia, so it attracts migrants to find jobs or settle. Therefore, the existence of heterogeneous immigrants raises different ethnic backgrounds. It also triggers ethnic differences in SMAN 4 Batam.

SMAN 4 Batam has various ethnic backgrounds. Whereas in KI.2, students are required to show honesty, disciplined, responsible, caring (cooperation, tolerant, peaceful), behavior, polite, responsive, and proactive as part of the solution to various problems in interacting with the social and natural environment and positioning themselves as a reflection of the nation in the association of the world. However, KI.2 cannot be fully applied in the social life of students at SMAN 4 Batam in interacting, as evidenced by the results of the observations that the researchers made, which shows that there are still certain limitations among these students when interacting with classmates.

These ethnic differences lead to forms of social interaction, such as students from one tribe looking for friends who have the same tribe to do various school activities, like going to the canteen or sitting relaxed in the school park. In addition, these students often communicate using their local language during break time. Therefore, when they do these interactions, students from other ethnic groups will feel disturbed. Other interactions are when participating in selected extracurricular activities at school. Students tend to choose these extracurricular choices based on their friends because they are reluctant to get involved in an activity if their fellow friends are not in the group. Therefore, through the reasons for the problems described above, the researchers are very interested in conducting research about the "social interaction of students among ethnic groups at SMAN 4 Batam".

## **Literature Review**

### ***Social process theory***

The social process is a way of relating that is seen when individuals and social groups meet each other and determine the systems and forms of these relationships or what will happen if there are changes that cause the existing patterns of life to falter. On the other hand, social processes are defined as reciprocal influences between various aspects of life, for example, the feedback influence between social and political, political and economic, and economic and legal. Thus, it is hoped that both dynamic and static aspects will be obtained from the community itself (Soekanto, 2016).

Social interaction is the relationships between people individually, between groups, and among individuals with groups (Setiadi & Effendi, 2007). Furthermore, social processes consist of two forms, namely associative social interaction, including cooperation, accommodation, assimilation, and acculturation, and dissociative social interaction, including competition, convention, and conflict (Soekanto, 2016).

### ***Symbolic interactionism theory***

According to Berger and Luckman (1967), society has a fundamental dialectical process consisting of three steps, consisting of externalization, objectivation, and internalization. First, for externalization, when compared with biological creatures, humans have deficiencies because they are born with an incomplete instinct structure that is not directed and is less specialized. With these imperfections, humans always have to create a human world, namely culture.

Second, objectivation. The essence of the objectivation process is that the culture created by humans then faces its creator as a fact outside of himself. The world created by humans becomes something outside it, becomes objective reality. Therefore, Berger and Luckmann (1967) argued that society is a dialectical phenomenon. Third, internalization. The world that has been objectivated is reabsorbed into the structure of the individual's subjective consciousness so that it determines it. By internalizing the objective facts of the social world, they become objective facts of the social world and subjective facts of the individual. At this stage, humans are a product of society (man: product of society).

### ***Social exchange theory***

This exchange theory is one of three theories with almost similarities and relationships, including rational choice theory, network theory, and this theory itself. The basic difference lies where rational choice theory focuses on individual decision-making processes, and exchange theory focuses more on analyzing social relationships. Meanwhile, network theory is almost like rational choice theory. The fundamental difference is that network theory denies the existence of rationality in human behavior, and the similarity is that all three are positivistically oriented (Ritzer & Goodman, 2004).

According to Homans (1958), the basic principle of social exchange is "distributive justice", a rule that says a reward must be proportional to the investment. The well-known proposition regarding this principle is a person in an exchange relationship with another person will expect the reward received by each party to be proportional to the sacrifice he has made - the higher the sacrifice, the higher the reward, and the benefits received by each party must be proportional to the investment, the higher the investment, the higher the profit (Mighfar, 2015).

### ***Theory of cultural hegemony***

Hegemony is a chain of victories obtained through a consensus mechanism (*Consensus*) rather than through the oppression of other social classes (Sudardi & Ilafi, 2017). The theory of hegemony is the most crucial political theory of the 20th century. This theory was put

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forward by Antonio Gramsci in 1891-1937. The term hegemony comes from the ancient Greek language, namely *Eugemonia*, as stated by the Encyclopedia Britannica in practice in Greece applied to indicate the domination of positions claimed by city-states (*Polisism or city-states*) individually, for example, Athens and Sparta against other countries on equal footing (Sudardi & Ilafi, 2017).

### ***Social interaction***

Social interaction is a process in which individuals and individuals, individuals and groups, or groups and groups relate to one another (Narwoko & Suyanto, 2014). According to Setiadi and Kolip (2011), social interaction consists of two forms with no fundamental differences. This form of interaction includes social interaction that brings closer or unites what is called associative and distances or contradicts what is called dissociative. The interaction form that exists in individuals are (1) cooperation, (2) competition, (3) conflict, (4) conformity, (5) assimilation/fusion, and (6) accommodation. From some of the explanations above, social interaction is a relationship that occurs between humans and other humans, both between individuals and individuals, individuals and groups, or between groups and groups.

### ***Ethnic group***

An ethnic group is a group in society with a distinctive culture that distinguishes it from other ethnic. The distinctiveness of ethnic culture is reflected in the collectivity of actions, the similarity of religions, and the peculiarities of language, clothing, and traditions. Hence, group members have a group identity with similar settlement locations. This peculiarity is caused by the similarity or resemblance of their ancestors and their origins. Therefore, the peculiarities of the group are also marked by a distinctive physical appearance and shared experience or knowledge of the same past (Syauqany, 2019).

### **Methodology**

This research used qualitative research with a case study approach. According to Moleong (2011), qualitative research prioritizes research quality over quantity. Meanwhile, a case study is a variation of an approach in qualitative research that provides an in-depth exploration of a constrained system (Creswell, 2007). In this research, there were 23 research participants chosen in purposive sampling consisting of one student assistant principal, one English teacher, and 21 students at SMA Negeri 4 Batam.

Furthermore, the researchers collected data through interviews. There were some questions in the interview section. Each research participant answered the questions for about 30 minutes. During the conversation, the researchers recorded using a recorder (phone application). For the data analysis, the researchers did some steps. First, the researchers transcribed all the data from the interview in the recording form descriptively. Second, the researchers classified the data into some themes. Third, the researchers chose the data that related to the research questions and analysed with some theories discussed to find the answers to the research questions and reach the conclusion of the research.

## Findings

The form of interaction which occurs between students is in the form of associative and dissociative interactions. Below is the interaction form that occurs between students from different ethnic groups.

### *Associative interactions*

**Extracurricular activities**, the research data show that one form of associative interaction that occurs among students at SMA Negeri 4 Batam from different ethnic groups is in extracurricular activities. This activity is carried out by students outside of the regular school curriculum. These activities aim to develop students' personalities, talents, and abilities in various fields outside the academic. The extracurricular activities carried out by students at SMA Negeri 4 Batam includes Flag Hoisting Troop, Red Cross Youth, Basketball, Scouts, Futsal, and Volleyball. In these extracurricular activities, several students form groups consisting of students from different ethnic groups. In this extracurricular activity, like it or not, students have to interact with fellow group members even though they come from different ethnic backgrounds. Based on the results of an interview with Efendi, a student from the Javanese ethnic group, who stated,

“... Yes, there is, but I do not join all the extracurricular activities, only for Scouts because it is a must. My friends also join it. I think all the students in the class join Scout activities. There are also Batakness, Javeness, and Minangness friends. A lot of students are joining, Miss.”

This opinion was supported by the interview with Prayoga, a student from Malay ethnic who stated,

“...In my opinion, all extracurricular activities are good because we can have many friends and know each other. It will be more intimate even though we do not have the same frequency, but we have to mingle since there are activities that are carried out together.”

This opinion was supported by the interview results with Henok, a Batakness student who revealed,

“... This extracurricular activity makes us mingle with others, so there is no difference, especially Scout. It is like we are one, so the compactness feels right.”

Based on the answers of the two informants above, one form of associative interaction between students from different ethnic groups is extracurricular activities that require students of various ethnic groups to interact with one another. Fendi stated, with these extracurricular activities, he could mingle with friends from different ethnic groups, such as the Batak, Minang, and Javanese ethnic groups.

**Cooperation in study groups**, student cooperation is one part of the learning process. Cooperation in study groups is a form of student interaction at SMAN 4 Batam.

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With various ethnic groups among students at SMA Negeri 4 Batam, it is not uncommon for teachers to form these students into several study groups in carrying out assignments given by the teacher during the learning process in class. In the study group, there are students from different ethnic groups. The research findings indicate that with the study groups, students communicate more with their friends from various ethnic groups. They divided the tasks of each individual, such as writing and looking for references, and when presenting group assignments, there were speakers and moderators. Based on the interview results with Shania, a student from the Javanese ethnicity,

“... I am happy when there is a study group in class because the assignments can be done together. It does not matter if the group is from different ethnicity. The important thing is that the task becomes easier.”

This opinion was supported by the interview results with Ravina, a student from the Malay ethnic, who stated,

“...Yes, it is good if there is a study group. We can work and do assignments together. It does not matter if the group consists of different ethnic. The important thing is that the division of teamwork is fair. If there are friends who do not take part in doing the tasks, it becomes a problem.”

Based on the utterances of the two participants above, another form of associative interaction between students of different ethnicities is a collaboration between study groups because, during the process, the students will interact with each other to complete tasks given by the teacher. According to Ravina, with study groups, group assignments are completed more quickly, and ethnic differences are not a barrier for them to interact.

***The cleanest class competition***, SMA Negeri 4 Batam holds the cleanest class competition once a year. The activity involved all students from the same class. This competition is intended to spur students to have responsibility for keeping the classroom clean. The research findings show that students from each class become more familiar with and mingle when participating in the competition. Ethnic differences seem to be forgotten because students focus on the same goal to win the cleanest class competition. Based on the interview results with Rossa, a Minangness student, who revealed,

“... It will be fun if all the students follow the competition. It will show our compactness. We can develop our ideas to decor the class. Besides, we can get closer to different regions.”

This opinion was supported by the interview results with Syafirda, a student from the Palembang ethnic, who stated

“... For activities that involve all students in one class, we all immediately mingle though the activity has been over later. The most important first is we can win the competition”.

This opinion was supported by the interview results with Aritonang, a student from the Batak ethnic, who stated,

“... We will work together for the cleanest class competition. We will arrange a strategy first for the class accessories. Differences in ethnicity are melted and forgotten since we only focus on competitions.

Based on the answers of the two participants above, the cleanest class competition is a form of associative interaction between students of different ethnicities since it will make students interact and work together to make the class good. Their goal is to win the competition so that students forget about ethnic differences. Syafirda and her friends work together for the cleanest class competition but first will set a strategy for what to do. Ethnic group differences were forgotten because they only focused on the cleanest class competition.

### *Dissociative interactions*

*Use of local languages during a conflict*, the local language is a language spoken by someone from where he lives. The existence of a local language is very closely related to the ethnic groups that give birth to and use that language. Language is the main supporting element of traditions and customs. Local languages are used in daily conversations. However, the findings of the study showed that the use of local languages by students at SMA Negeri 4 Batam with different ethnic backgrounds was only when they felt unhappy with their friends from different ethnic groups. It was done with the aim that his friend did not understand the meaning of the words. Based on the interview results with, a student from the Javanese ethnic group, who stated,

"... I still use the local language when I talk with friends from the same ethnic, especially when talking about friends from different ethnic who do not like my behavior."

This opinion was supported by the interview results with Carolin, a student of Malays ethnic, who stated,

“... I get annoyed with my friends from other ethnics when they teased me with their local languages.”

The interview results with Atikah, a Sundanese student, were also in line with Carolin,

“... I use my local language depending on when and where it is, Ma'am. If I am saying bad things about friends from other ethnic, I will use my local language, so that person does not know what I am saying."

Based on the answers of the two participants above, the form of dissociative interaction between students of different ethnicities was the use of local languages when they had disagreements. It is when the student communicated with friends from the same ethnic backgrounds. According to Atikah, when she spoke unkindly to her friends from another ethnicity, her friend would not know that the purpose of the conversation was for the friend.

*Disputes in the student council election*, the student council (OSIS) is one of the organizations in SMA Negeri 4 Batam. OSIS is a good social environment for supporting and developing students' communication skills. Students who take part in OSIS tend to be nice. Meanwhile, students who do not take part in OSIS are individuals who do not have the desire to develop their potential. The research results indicate there was a dispute during the OSIS election at SMA Negeri 4 Batam. It was because the prospective OSIS members who served were only Muslim students. There were no representatives from other Ethnic Students. Based on the interview results with Zakiya, a student from Palembang ethnic,

"... Yes, it's natural, the ethnic who does not have representatives participating in the election for student council president. It will make us not want to be a member because it is not as frequent. It will not make the school's name better but vice versa, right, Ma'am."

This opinion was supported by the interview results with Wilfred, a student from Bataknese stated,

"... I did not feel happy about the election for the student council president at that time because all the candidates were Muslim. None of them were from the Batak ethnicity. Most of us were non-Muslims. Of course, if we register as the member of the student council, we will not be chosen. It is chosen from among them, so it is useless for us to register."

This opinion was supported by the interview results with Ms. Rini, student assistant principal who stated,

"... Yes, so the problem was that during the election for the Student Council president, many students did not use their right to vote, Mrs. Yona. If we asked the reason, it must be because they do not want to choose. No one is from their ethnicity. Those who nominate are all Muslims. Therefore, after one friend thought that way, the other friends would also follow, and we all know, Mrs. Yona, that the students here are the type to join in."

Based on the answers of the two informants above, another form of the dissociative interactions between students from different ethnicities was disputed in the student council election because the student council president candidates are only from the ethnic groups with Islamic religions, and there are no representatives from the other ethnic groups who are non-Islamic religions. It is because students from the non-Islamic ethnic groups feel discriminated against and choose not to participate in the OSIS nomination. According to Wilfred, the other non-Muslim ethnic groups felt inferior from the beginning because if one of them nominated themselves, they were not be elected. After all, the Student Council was dominated by the Islamic ethnic groups.



## Discussion

Social interaction is the foundation of relationships in actions based on the prevailing social values and norms and must be applied in social life. Good values and norms can make social interaction good. If there is no awareness of each other's personality, the social process itself cannot run as we expect. In everyday life, humans cannot be separated from their relationship with one another. They will always need to look for other individuals or groups to be able to interact or exchange ideas.

School is a formal educational institution that accommodates many students in it. Hamalik (2009) defines students as an input component in the education system, which is then processed in the educational process so that they become quality human beings according to the goals of National education. According to Uhbiyati and Ahmadi (2001), students are human figures as individuals/whole human beings. An individual is a person who is not dependent on other people that is truly a person who determines himself or herself and is not forced from the outside to have his characteristics and desires.

Students in schools tend to have diversity, especially ethnic diversity, like students at SMA Negeri 4 Batam who come from different ethnic groups. Ethnicity is a group in society with a distinctive culture that distinguishes it from others. The existences and peculiarities of the group are realized by every ethnic member. The distinctiveness of ethnic culture is reflected in the collectivity of actions, the similarity of religions, and the peculiarities of language, clothing, and traditions. Hence, group members have a group identity characterized by the similarity of settlement locations. This peculiarity is caused by the similarities or resemblance of their ancestors and their origins, and the peculiarities of the group are also marked by a distinctive physical appearance and shared experience or knowledge of the same past (Syauqany, 2019).

The ethnic diversity of SMAN 4 Batam students will also trigger various forms of interaction. The social interaction of SMAN 4 Batam students is the same as with the theory of social processes by Gilin and Gilin (Soekanto, 2016). The social process is a way of relating that when individuals and social groups meet each other and determine the systems and forms of these relationships or what will happen if there are changes that cause the existing patterns of life to falter. On the other hand, social processes are reciprocal influences between various aspects of life together, like the influence between social, political, and economic and legal aspects. Thus, it is hoped that both dynamic and static aspects will be obtained from the community itself (Soekanto, 2016). The relationship between social processes and the research finding is to form social interactions between students from different ethnic groups that can influence the behaviors of each of these students.

First, according to Berger and Luckmann (1967), when compared to biological creatures, humans have deficiencies because they were born with an incomplete instinct structure that they are not directed and are less specialized. The human world is an open world programmed imperfectly and characterized by built-in instability and inherent instability. Therefore, humans always have to create a human world, namely culture.

At this step or moment of internalization, according to Berger and Luckmann (1967), the objectivated world is reabsorbed into the structure of the individual's subjective consciousness. In summary, through internalization, the objective facts of the social world become the objective facts of the social world into the subjective of the individual. At this stage, humans are a product of society (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). The social interaction that occurs in students at SMAN 4 Batam is included in the symptoms of internalization because this form of social interaction was created by students between ethnic groups themselves. The social interaction created such as extracurricular activities to strengthen the students' interaction from different ethnic backgrounds, cooperation in study groups, and student cooperation in class cleaning competition activities. The forms of dissociative interaction include the use of local languages during conflicts and disputes over student council elections.

The forms of social interactions created by students between different ethnic groups will later result in social exchanges. It is in line with Homans' (1958) social exchange theory which argues that one characteristic of exchange theory that stands out is the cost and reward. Humans always consider the cost (cost or sacrifice) with the reward (appreciation or benefit) obtained from this interaction. If the cost does not match the reward, one of the parties will feel annoyed and stop their interaction, so their social relations will fail. The core of Homans' exchange theory lies in a collection of standard propositions that explain at least two interacting individuals (Mighfar, 2015). In this case, the benefits of the forms of social interaction created by students from different ethnic groups are always considered extracurricular activities carried out by students between ethnic groups can provide benefits for each student to get to know each other's uniqueness and characteristics. Soekanto (2016) explain that social processes are divided into two forms, namely associative social interactions, which includes cooperation, accommodation, assimilation, and acculturation. In the research findings, the associative form of social interaction of SMA Negeri 4 Batam students only included cooperative relations. Meanwhile, this form of cooperation is when SMA Negeri 4 Batam students carried out the same extracurricular activities. Cooperation also happened when SMA Negeri 4 Batam students did assignments from the teachers which were done together or in groups when SMA 4 Batam students took part in a class cleanliness competition, where students who were members of one class worked together to win the competition.

It is in line with Ranny et al. (2019) that students are from different religions and ethnicities, but they understand the value of tolerance and mutual respect for differences, even though they have different religions and ethnicities. The students respect each other and have a high value of solidarity. Second is dissociative social interaction, including competition, convention, and conflict. The research findings indicated that the form of the dissociative social interaction of SMA Negeri 4 Batam students was the social interaction in the form of conflict or dispute. For example, when SMA Negeri 4 Batam students were arguing or fighting with students from different ethnic groups, they would use the local language during the conflict, and other forms of social interaction were arguments over the selection of the student council. After all, the student council candidates involved were only from Muslim ethnic groups so non-Muslim ethnic groups felt discriminated against and chose not to participate because they felt they would not win in the student council election.

## Conclusion

The forms of social interaction of different ethnicities student at SMAN 4 Batam were divided into two forms, namely the associative interactions such as extracurricular activities, which further strengthen the students' interaction with different ethnic backgrounds, cooperation in study groups, and student cooperation in the cleanest class competition activities. The forms of dissociative interaction included the use of local languages during conflicts and disputes over student council elections.

## Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest.

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