

# *Social Skills Of Chinese Ethnic Students In A Culturally Diverse School Environment*

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**Abstract:** This study aims to explain the social skills possessed by Chinese ethnic students in the school environment. SMA Kristen 1 Metro has considerable cultural diversity; therefore, the main focus of this research is to understand the indicators of social skills in the classroom environment, namely communication, tolerance, and self-control among students. Data were collected through observation and interviews with Chinese ethnic students in the school environment. The data were analyzed using qualitative procedures, including data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results of the study conducted in the school environment show that students' social skills are at a good level and are in accordance with the conditions experienced by most students. The indicator that appears prominently in cultural diversity is communication. Communication is at a very good level, and during the learning process students respect ideas expressed by others, which makes communication more fluent and conducive. The tolerance indicator also shows a good level, as students are able to appreciate differences by interacting randomly despite diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds during learning activities. Meanwhile, the self-control indicator is categorized as good, reflecting students' ability to manage emotions and differences in perspectives by understanding ideas and responding more wisely. These findings indicate that, within cultural diversity, Chinese ethnic students contribute to creating a positive and harmonious atmosphere. The conclusion of this study shows that the social skills of Chinese ethnic students in cultural diversity at school demonstrate positive attitudes in communication, tolerance, and self-control in social relationships within the school environment. Therefore, the findings emphasize the benefits of multicultural learning practices in diverse classroom settings.

**Keywords:** Social Skills, Communication, Tolerance, Self-Control

## 1. Introduction

Indonesia, as a country characterized by diversity and unity in differences, serves as an ideal example for its citizens as well as for other nations. These elements are integrated into the heterogeneous life found in every region. Ethnic unity becomes a key factor in building harmony within communities and school environments. Rapid technological advancement also enables people to interact more quickly and easily with individuals from different regions. A large portion of Indonesia's population originates from various areas and ethnic groups, consisting of diverse ethnicities and languages spread across the archipelago. Their presence is essential in maintaining harmony within the national unity. The phenomenon of diversity occurs not only in

society but also in educational institutions. Cultural diversity in schools creates positive effects. One example is SMA Kristen 1 Metro, where the presence of Chinese ethnic students is particularly interesting. This school is frequently chosen by Chinese ethnic families for continuing education, resulting in daily social interaction among students. Chinese ethnic students in this school represent cultural assets and diversity in tolerance. Their enrollment is often influenced by parental decisions in selecting schools (Iqbal et al., 2024). They experience comfortable social relationships in daily school life, despite having different cultural and religious backgrounds. A diverse school environment encourages students to build friendships with one another. Changes in education and social dynamics also encourage them to prepare for realistic future lives. A strategic and supportive environment for social development becomes one of the reasons for choosing such schools. Comfort in pursuing education allows Chinese ethnic students to maximize their skills and characteristics in social interaction.

The Chinese ethnic community in this school has existed for decades, shaping students' cultural values, character, and social relationships. School activities encourage students to demonstrate social skills and adaptability in differences. The values of hard work and diligence among students are influenced by both parents and teachers. Chinese ethnic communities believe that education facilitates access to employment opportunities and cultural values (Julieta et al., 2024). The diversity of student character creates a unique environment. Students need to develop self-control and understand existing social skills. Social awareness, care, and friendship are forms of social skills. This research is closely related to the condition of the school, which has a significant number of Chinese ethnic students. Previous studies have also shown that social skills are important to examine, as many journals and studies report positive findings regarding social skills. Their involvement in education and strong relationships with others support harmonious interactions (Sudibyo et al., 2025). Cultural interaction and life components influence individuals to behave harmoniously. The ability to maintain boundaries in friendships contributes to a safe and comfortable social environment. Therefore, this research aims to specifically understand the Chinese ethnic group within the school context, focusing on identifying indicators of cultural diversity reflected in students' social skills. The researcher focuses on Chinese ethnic students and their social skills within diversity. This approach facilitates qualitative research, as observation requires direct understanding of events in the research setting. Interaction skills in private school environments become a central aspect. The development of collaborative thinking in solving school tasks and problems is complex. This allows researchers to identify aspects that need improvement or further study in students' daily lives. Generally, Chinese ethnic students emphasize discipline and respect for parents (Marliana et al., 2025). They obey family rules as a form of respect and devotion, which is transmitted through family culture. Chinese communities are widely known for discipline in work and study. Social skills are closely related to students' attitudes and social awareness in their environment.

The purpose of this research is to understand students' social abilities and skills within a multiethnic environment and mutual tolerance. Diversity among students fosters the development of social and cultural understanding. This ability is referred to as social skills, which emerge from daily interactions among students in Indonesia's diverse ethnic environment. Social experiences, such as communication between individuals, create new social dynamics. Cultural assimilation and the absorption of social values help Chinese ethnic students understand appropriate behavior (Aulia et al., 2023). Social interaction in school is a daily obligation during the teaching and learning process. The dynamic development of society and technological advancement also facilitate students' social relationships. The environment supports social interaction among students. Chinese ethnic cultural values gradually contribute positively to interactions among students, teachers, and the surrounding community. Indicators of social skills in this study include communication ability, tolerance, cooperation, and self-control. Collaborative activities occur through communication among groups and communities in school, requiring active participation. This fosters responsibility and respect for cultural diversity. Diversity within schools becomes an essential element for creating a harmonious atmosphere. Previous studies highlight important aspects of social skills related to environmental and cultural contexts. These abilities encourage students to demonstrate tolerance in diversity. Other studies also indicate that interaction skills are supported by positive peer relationships, influencing students to adapt to different cultures. In multicultural schools, students become more capable of understanding tolerance within diversity.

## 2. Research Method

This study employed a qualitative approach to examine the social skills of Chinese ethnic students within cultural diversity. Qualitative research is used to understand social life problems and to describe phenomena within individual and group social contexts (Creswell, 2014). This method allows the research to be more focused and detailed. The information obtained is considered more accurate because it explores interactions and character values within diversity. This study facilitates an understanding of social relationship patterns and social skills among students in their natural setting, namely the classroom and school learning environment. SMA Kristen 1 Metro, which has a heterogeneous environment and students from various regional backgrounds, was selected as the research site. The school includes students from Chinese, Javanese, Batak, Sundanese, Minahasa, and other ethnic groups. Research subjects were selected based on their identity and experiences. Students with relevant backgrounds and the ability to provide opinions and explanations during classroom and school activities were chosen. Their experiences in social interaction were described in the discussion. During the teaching and learning process, the researcher observed students involved in interactions and social skills within diversity, including changes related to character development and cultural values. In qualitative research, researchers can conduct natural observations directly with groups, individuals, or organizations (Miles et al., 2014). This means that effective research involves direct experience of events in the research setting. Data collection techniques included interviews, observations, and documentation. The dynamics resulting from educational modernization and social status required direct observation. Accordingly, the research involved direct interaction with groups or individuals as field informants. Data analysis was conducted through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing to ensure credible findings (Miles et al., 2014). Data were presented descriptively, and conclusions were drawn after identifying relationships among findings.

To ensure data validity, triangulation was applied, meaning that data obtained from one source were compared with subsequent data to enhance credibility. Students' abilities develop dynamically, and the mental and physical changes occurring in school contribute to the formation of new personal characteristics. During adolescence, social skills are important to observe, particularly cooperation, group work, communication, and self-control. Cultural understanding has begun to develop among students; therefore, this method was used to identify cultural values and social skills among Chinese ethnic students within classroom and extracurricular contexts. Through this method, students' abilities and attitudes can be described to illustrate the social skills shaped by cultural values among Chinese ethnic students. Their interactions within diversity contribute to supporting an effective and harmonious learning environment.

## 3. Results and Discussion

Based on the results of the research conducted, several factors were found to improve students' social skills in the school environment. During learning activities and extracurricular interactions, a number of students from the Chinese ethnic group showed significant influence. Social skills include various forms of responses within a diverse social environment, which become important indicators for building social relationships. The findings of this study can be observed through students' attitudes in both classroom and school settings. Students' intelligence and skills form complex relationships that correspond to their level of communication ability. The level of learning success is also determined by the ability to control behavior and by the educational environment within the school community.

### 3.1 Student Communication

Chinese ethnic students have adapted well to the school and classroom environment. This is evidenced by observations conducted in most classes. Communication skills in the millennial era show noticeable differences. Linguistically, assimilation often occurs through the mixing of English and Mandarin. Students feel that using these languages increases their confidence and reflects distinctive characteristics of the Chinese ethnic group. Communication is a process that enables individuals and communities to recognize one another and create interconnected spaces of interaction (Sangaswari, 2024). Through communication with other students, they begin to understand each other's identities. The researcher also found the presence of

the value of *li* (禮), which refers to politeness and respect toward others. By recognizing the social status of others, students apply polite communication styles in their interactions. Communication skills among Chinese ethnic students sometimes create perceptions among other ethnic groups of differences in social interaction quality. Some students tend to prefer closer interaction with peers from the same ethnic background. However, this behavior is often influenced by family upbringing within Chinese cultural traditions. The diversity of ethnic groups within the school environment contributes to shaping students' character. They understand that cultural and social differences require greater empathy and understanding in their behavior. Effective communication also requires self-awareness so that social relationships become more friendly and inclusive, enabling students to better understand communication within ethnic diversity. Differences in social status encourage students to preserve cultural values inherited from their parents. Respect for elders in communication is consistently maintained. Language functions as both identity and a means of strengthening friendships. English and Hokkien are often used among members of the same ethnic group and when communicating with their families. These practices reflect cultural values that are maintained as guidance for the future.

### 3.2 Student Tolerance

The broad cultural diversity within the school's social environment encourages students to adapt and develop tolerance in their interactions. Opportunities to learn about others' characteristics make students more careful in their speech. Opinions expressed during discussions are considered from different perspectives. Chinese ethnic students are generally raised with disciplined habits and obedience to parental rules. Classroom activities such as group projects also encourage them to understand differing opinions and cooperate without discriminatory behavior. In each activity, students help one another with a sense of togetherness and trust, while maintaining the value of harmony (*he* 和), which is commonly upheld in Chinese culture. Students maintain interactions carefully due to high diversity and tend to avoid communication conflicts. Different religious beliefs coexist in the school environment, including Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Catholicism. This diversity of beliefs stimulates students to develop empathy in social interactions. Group activities become valuable lessons in interaction guided by teachers. As a minority in broader society, Chinese ethnic students tend to preserve their cultural identity for future generations (Fatimah, 2023). Additionally, cultural traditions such as Cap Go Meh, which have blended into Indonesian customs, are familiar to students at SMA Kristen 1 Metro, where students from various ethnic backgrounds actively participate in annual cultural festivals. The school provides space for artistic expression and respect for cultural and religious diversity, which strengthens social solidarity. The tradition of angpao, which is still preserved, represents cultural diversity and maintains existing cultural values (Caroline et al., 2024). This tradition reflects Chinese cultural influences within the ethnic community. Mutual respect for culture and harmony within the school creates a conducive environment. Such a conducive environment is generally formed through high tolerance. Tolerance encourages mutual understanding, and high tolerance contributes to peaceful coexistence (Pratama et al., 2024). Indonesia is internationally recognized for its cultural friendliness, harmonious communication, and coexistence of hundreds of ethnic groups. The influence of Chinese culture in Indonesia is evident in architecture, schools, religion, and daily language use. Despite stereotypes, Chinese ethnic communities are known for their ability to integrate socially and economically. Historically, this sometimes led to perceptions of competition with indigenous groups (Yulianetha et al., 2023). However, such perceptions are no longer major obstacles. Modern mindsets and social media exposure encourage students to move forward collaboratively and support one another. Generation Z students actively demonstrate positive behavior, especially during religious celebrations such as Islamic and Christian holidays, where they show enthusiasm and mutual respect. Differences in belief systems are no longer barriers, and the tradition of visiting one another during celebrations strengthens Indonesian cultural unity.

Positive social relationships are also influenced by the concept of *Ren* (仁) in Chinese culture, which emphasizes compassion and sincerity. Social visits during religious celebrations reflect the willingness of Chinese ethnic students to visit classmates and teachers of different faiths. They also extend greetings through social media, usually within a few days after major holidays such as Eid al-Fitr, Vesak, Christmas, and other celebrations. This mutual respect is consistently demonstrated during learning activities and in daily interactions.

### 3.3 Student Self Control

Adolescence is characterized by various dynamics and changes in patterns of thinking and behavior. During this stage, individuals experience a period of identity formation. One important aspect is self-control, which is considered a social skill that helps students regulate emotions when interacting with peers at school. Communication abilities during classroom learning sessions also influence students' social atmosphere. Chinese ethnic students in this school often demonstrate strong cohesion and willingness to help one another. For example, in Grade 10, students experience a new environment and require adaptation; therefore, the school initiates an orientation program to introduce the school environment. Positive learning styles and affective development foster constructive social relationships, including tolerance and mutual respect. In this context, self-control plays a significant role in respecting different beliefs and accepting diversity (Pratama et al., 2024).

During adolescence, individuals tend to exhibit stronger emotional responses, which influence self-control. High hormonal changes during this stage make individuals more easily influenced by others during activities and tasks. Good tolerance supports self-control, as both are interconnected in shaping behavior within social skills. Students in this school demonstrate self-control in various situations, such as during physical education classes. Science and social science students participate in futsal team activities involving physical contact and teamwork. Generally, they form groups and are motivated to perform well. Students discuss and express their ideas, enabling them to accept themselves within group environments (Nasution et al., 2023). Through such learning concepts, students may sometimes experience unnecessary emotional responses; however, some students maintain self-control by avoiding negative reactions.

Chinese ethnic students typically follow lessons as usual, but as a minority group, they tend to prioritize patience and careful observation of situations. Spiritual and emotional intelligence among students become visible and can be nurtured when teachers act as effective facilitators. Chinese ethnic communities are expected to integrate with environments that include diverse religious backgrounds (Sofinadya & Warsono, 2023). Many students in this school enroll due to their parents being alumni, and Chinese ethnic students at SMA Kristen 1 Metro have long formed a close-knit community. The comfortable environment supports their adaptation and positive attitudes toward the school. Differences in ideology and perspectives can have positive effects when students respond through constructive communication and develop trust in social relationships.

### 3.4 Findings from indicator observation

The activities observed during this qualitative research in the school were described using qualitative descriptions. This study focused on gathering information from informants and conducting analysis accompanied by accurate conclusions (Hasibuan, 2024). This approach helped assess the extent of development and tolerance within diversity. The data were described using categorical scales, namely very good, good, fair, and poor. Students involved in this study were selected from Chinese ethnic groups in the school. Teachers were also involved to enhance the research process and provide additional observations. The participating students generally ranged from Grade 10 to Grade 12 and met the criteria of being from the Chinese ethnic background.

Table 1. Social Skills of Chinese Ethnic Students in Cultural Diversity in the Classroom

| Sosial Skills Indicators | Social Scale Category | Students Meeting the Criteria | Percentage | Observation Results   |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|------------|---|
| 1. Student Communication | Sangat Baik           | 17                            | 85%        | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students' ability to speak to senior individuals enables them to share ideas during collaborative learning in a way that is easily understood and promotes mutual respect.</li> <li>2. Differences in language and communication styles encourage students to behave more maturely and to maintain solidarity among diverse ethnic groups.</li> </ol> |
| 2. Student Tolerance     | Baik                  | 15                            | 75%        | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Diversity during the learning process requires teamwork, and many students form and select group members based on self-awareness without distinguishing ethnic backgrounds.</li> <li>2. Differences in collaboration within a culturally diverse environment foster the growth of tolerance among students, teachers, and others.</li> </ol>          |

|                        |      |    |     |  |
|------------------------|------|----|-----|--|
| 3.Student Self Control | Baik | 14 | 70% | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Development in managing emotions and building social relationships in various aspects of social behavior encourages individuals to think more wisely without prioritizing negative emotions.</li> <br/> <li>2. The ability to resolve conflicts, both individually and in groups, and to engage in discussions regarding interests and ideas enables students to address hypotheses and questions with a high level of awareness.</li> </ol> |
|------------------------|------|----|-----|--|

**Note:** The respondents consisted of 20 students who met the criteria of being from the Chinese ethnic group.

Based on the table above, the indicators of social skills within cultural diversity at school were obtained through classroom observations of 20 students. Most of the students involved demonstrated positive aspects of the activities conducted. Students who met the communication criteria showed a percentage of 80%, indicating a very good level based on observation. In the tolerance criteria, students achieved a good percentage of 75%, suggesting that their tolerance within cultural diversity was fairly strong. Furthermore, the self-control indicator showed a good percentage of 70%. Based on these observational data, students were able to understand and demonstrate social skills within a culturally diverse school environment, resulting in effective and positive learning processes.

#### 4. Conclusion

Based on the research conducted and the findings analyzed from various sources and informants at SMA Kristen 1 Metro, it can be concluded that Chinese ethnic students demonstrate good indicators within the classroom environment. Within the existing diversity at the school, the aspects of tolerance, communication, and self-control were evident. Students' ability to manage diverse social relationships in school shows positive behavior and maintains strong togetherness. In terms of communication skills, Chinese ethnic students in the classroom demonstrate strong abilities in expressing ideas. They also adapt their language use within diversity while maintaining politeness and social norms. This indicates that education provided by teachers and parents contributes to creating a comfortable environment. Frequent positive communication helps minimize misunderstandings among students. Observations of self-control show that students communicate appropriately and avoid behaviors that could disrupt the learning environment. In highly diverse classrooms, students become more open and are able to maintain harmony during learning activities. Students' ability to manage emotions and comply with school regulations is categorized as very good. Multiethnic and diverse schools provide an environment that supports comfortable and organized learning. Thus, the aspects of communication, tolerance, and self-control play important roles for Chinese ethnic students in creating a harmonious atmosphere. Strong social skills facilitate relationships with students from other ethnic groups. These indicators contribute to a conducive learning environment for students and foster positive social relationships within cultural diversity at school.

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