

Analysis of Multicultural Behavior of Senior High School Students

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ABSTRACT

Adequately student multicultural behavior was one of the indicators of successful schooling. Presumably, the students who lived in rural or small city areas had less opportunity to interact with culturally diverse peers. This study aimed to examine their multicultural behavior in the school environment. Using a survey procedure quantitative approach, involved 100 respondents selected randomly, consisting of 34 in 10th grade, 32 in 11th grade, and 34 in 12th graders in Batumarta, a small city in South Sumatera Province, Indonesia. Data of students' multicultural behavior were obtained by administering a questionnaire, a self-report four scales of Likert. It consisted of 36 items assessing their expressing multicultural behavior in five dimensions. For data analysis, after managing the ordinal data and converting them into interval data, we used a line chart to display the students' multicultural behaviors according to their frequencies in each dimension and compared mean scores of multicultural behaviors based on gender and grade levels by using the analysis of variance method. In conclusion, we found most students have a moderate frequency in expressing multicultural behavior, male and female students had dissimilar multicultural behavior, there were no multicultural behavior differences among the three grade levels, and the predominantly ethnic students were not different from their peers. Finally, we recommended the school develop a multicultural behavior program.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, a country with an ethnically diverse population, one of the high school counselling concerns is how to facilitate students to have multicultural competencies since this matter has been a concerned today and in future society (Tirtosudarmo, 2022). With the availability of various communication devices, such as smartphones, tablets, and computers, the students should have had more opportunities to connect than before, resulting in more positive insight to diversity nationally and internationally. The presence of diverse ethnicities and their various cultures in schools makes

school counselors experience more challenges since students have achieved more advanced social-cognitive development (Choudhury, 2006; Gillibrand et al., 2016; Zucker et al., 2018). They have to be more aware and curious about the nature of their own culture as well as other cultures (Zarbaliyev, 2017). It means that to build a living together harmoniously in an environment, school counselors should be able to bridge differences wisely. Furthermore, to create a conducive academic atmosphere for supporting student learning, school counselors need to recognize student multicultural perspectives comprehensively.

Everyone has his own culture and social identity built from multiple cultures that define how he has to behave in group and outgroup settings (Brewer, 2010). When young people start attending high school, they have the opportunity to interact with culturally diverse peers (Schachner et al., 2021). Having adequate cultural competencies encompassing awareness of attitudes/beliefs, knowledge, and skills, they will be able to build such interaction (Henderson & White, 2008). They are expected to be able to appreciate different cultural insights and values to create a conducive academic atmosphere for successful learning. Schools as social institutions bring students into direct contact with a wider environment, to some extent resulting in student well-being (Govorova et al., 2020). Specifically, in Konan et al.'s perspective (2010), the cultural diversity of schools provides a fostering atmosphere where students can increase their learning performance.

High school student role needs to be put in a broader cultural context since they will be part of the future nation. Their ethnic diversities are not only found in schools in urban areas but also in rural areas. In school, they interact directly or indirectly with peers, teachers, and others from different cultural backgrounds. In Indonesia, by 2021, there were approximately 5.1 million active senior high school students (BPS, 2021). The majority of them have schools in rural areas where culture is less diverse than urban's. However, wherever they go to school, they ought to contribute to society's dignity, sovereignty, and welfare for it exists forever. The future depends on their effort despite social change impact challenges (Budirahayu et al., 2018; Irawan, 2017; Muthahhari, 2017), and is an important asset for supporting the multiculturalism foundation of Indonesian (Kamil & Mukminin, 2015). History noted cultural prejudice, bullying, conflict, offence, and discrimination among individuals, groups, and society (Aini, 2012; Nakaya, 2018), yet they will diminish if they can keep the founding fathers' vision of Indonesia as a multicultural country. From this perspectives, it is important for the young generation to have multicultural awareness and manifest it in productive behaviors.

Multicultural behavior is driven by its sources, such as motivation, capability, and opportunity (Michie et al., 2011). So, every student can learn it with the help of family, school, or community. For its nature, school is the best institution for students to learn more about culture since they meet with culturally diverse peers. By guidance curriculum activities, the student may learn about various cultures intended not only to reduce prejudice and racism (Banks, 2000; Pica-Smith & Poynton, 2014) but also expand them to social class, religion, gender, or exceptionality (Convertino et al., 2013). Moreover, a designed multicultural curriculum must involve the concerned stakeholders such as parents, caregivers, families, and communities (Manning et al., 2017). To accomplish this goal, multicultural education specialists agree that changes must occur in multiple areas of schools, including course curricula, teaching materials, individual teaching styles, assessment procedures, overall school culture, and the attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors of the school staff (Banks, 2014). For successful multicultural education, it is believed that a school counsellor needs to arrange available resources to build a community learning system.

It is essential to introduce students to the cultures that belong to others to prepare them to engage in the society that exists outside of their community. Educators in schools, particularly school counsellors, play a crucial role in facilitating the growth and development of multicultural students (Rowley et al., 2005). They may benefit from a psycho-pedagogical background and be ready to serve students from diverse cultural backgrounds. School counsellors, along with high school teachers, can provide multicultural education by using various strategies. However, they still face several dilemmas related to such provisions. As identified by Kamaruzzaman (2016), the lack of opportunities to carry out guidance lessons for prevention and development programs was the main obstacle faced by school

counselors. Under the new curriculum, entitled by “Independent Curriculum” (Kemdikbud, 2022), implementing guidance lessons to students is under pressure since it does not allocate a regular schedule for school counselors to provide them. School counselors have to choose another strategy so that it keeps running.

School counselors have a role in strengthening student multicultural behaviors through various activities, such as large-group guidance, group counseling, peer facilitation, and consultation (Merlin, 2017; Myrick, 2011). These activities enable students to explore knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs about working with various peers, identifying the impact of family culture upon student learning, meeting all student needs (Henfield et al., 2014), increase their cultural competence, and facilitate their cultural awareness, knowledge, and skills (Ratts et al., 2016). In line with this role, it is believed that the multicultural academic atmosphere in high school reflects students' multicultural behavior, which is a manifestation of their multicultural attitudes and competencies. In terms of self-efficacy as predisposition of multicultural behavior, its process relates to several sources, such as enactive mastery, vicarious experience, social persuasion, and physiological and emotional arousal (Bandura, 1982; Usher & Pajares, 2009).

Teaching multicultural behavior at the high school level is endeavor efforts since the nature of multicultural itself is dynamic. This has been considered by the Independent Curriculum, that promotes multicultural content as part of character education (Sufyadi et al., 2021). Of course, its effectiveness cannot be measured directly but after a period of time, such as six to ten years (Gouëdard et al., 2020). Promoting multicultural behavior can give the students an advantage in building an academic atmosphere. In addition, it is also beneficial for achieving a successful future life in the challenging the interaction between globalization and culture (Raikhan et al., 2014). However, the density of the school counselling program in helping students express their culture and appreciate others' culture is in questions as indicated by the scarcity of professional literature, resulting in inadequate information regarding student multicultural behavior in school settings.

Understanding student multicultural behavior in the Indonesian context is crucial, particularly as school population becomes more ethnically diverse. Several previous studies related to the what and how dynamic multicultural behavior in school settings have been reported. For instance, Fihayati et al. (2014) found that only half of their samples have a relationship with peers of other cultures. A finding of Moulita (2019) revealed that students who had awareness or knowledge of their own culture and others tended to have good social skills in establishing intercultural interactions. Next, the study of Eun-ju and Kyung-Hwa (2021) showed a positive correlation between multicultural acceptance, self-concept, and community consciousness among elementary and middle school students. Bayram et al. (2021) in their study concluded that over time adolescents, on average, became more open to diversity. Meanwhile, the study of Engels et al. (2020) regarding ethnic heterogeneity revealed more ethnic diversity in the classroom is beneficial for numerous outcomes, such as self-worth and perceptions of school safety. Those studies indicated that multicultural behavior was a complex phenomenon. In addition, information taken from such studies has not highlighted cultural behavior in other dimensions. So, the present study was intended to explore cultural behavior in more dimensions. Since this information will be related to the implementation of a new curriculum, investigating the multicultural behavior of high school students in a rural area where the school population was dominated by non-ingenious is urgent.

2. METHOD

The current research used a survey procedure of quantitative method (Gall et al., 2003) to achieve its objectives. Specifically, it analyzed student multicultural behavior in cultural insight, communication, cultural value, cultural awareness, and flexibility dimensions. It, conducted in September 2022, involved students at a public senior high school (N=100) in Batumarta, a small city in South Sumatra, Indonesia. They became an analysis focus because they were in the transition stage of development to adulthood word. Parts of them were selected randomly as samples from 450 students. Demographically, they comprised 34 students in 10th grade, 32 students in 11th grade, and 34 students

in 12th grade. In terms of gender orientation, they consisted of 31 males and 69 females. Meanwhile, for ethnicity status, they were asked to identify according to their paternal lineage comprised of Javanese (77 students), Oganese (9 students), Balinese (5 students), Sundanese (5 students), Lampung (2 students), Malay (1 student), and Minang (1 student). Oganese were endogenous of South Sumatra, while the others came from other regions of Indonesia. The daily spoken languages in their family were Javanese (57 students), Bahasa (35 students), Oganese (3 students), Balinese (3 students), and Sundanese (2 students).

Researchers measured student multicultural behavior by utilizing 36 item-self-report questionnaire. The questionnaire, written based on a multicultural self-efficacy scale for high school students (Yosef et al., 2022), measured their behavior in five multicultural behavior dimensions in the school environment settings, namely cultural insight (8 items), communication (6 items), cultural values (8 items), cultural awareness (8 items), and flexibility (6 items). It required students to rate each item according to a Likert-type scale (Heppner et al., 2008), ranging from 1 (never), 2 (sometimes), 3 (often), and 4 (always). Some item examples are: Discussing cultural tradition differences with other students openly; Avoid gestures that lead to misunderstanding; Avoid judging group member behavior based on one's cultural measures; Accepting criticism of one's tradition calmly; and Mingling with other students without feeling awkward (for complete items, see the annex). Two high school counselors evaluated their content validity using the content validity index (CVI) method (Polit & Beck, 2006). So, the questionnaire items comprised acceptable item-CVI values ≤ 0.80 for two reviewers (Boateng et al., 2018; Davis, 1992).

The researches utilized the descriptive analysis method to explain students' multicultural behavior demographically. The SPSS version 27 was used to assist the analysis. The first analysis was intended to portrait students' multicultural analysis in general. It encompassed displaying data descriptively according to the frequency both for all students, student ethnicity, and gender. Specifically for ethnicity, since the respondents were predominantly Javanese and the others were in small number, the descriptive analysis only addressing Javanese and non-Javanese. The second analysis was addressed to gender and grade level comparison since could give more detail the behavior. It compared the variance of gender and grade level by using an independent t-test. Since obtained data from the questionnaire had ordinal characteristics, before doing the t-test, they were transformed to interval data using the methods of successive intervals (MSI) so that it could be analyzed by employing factorial analysis.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. *Multicultural Behavior by Frequency*

The current study examined the students' multicultural behaviors in the school environment. After administering the questionnaire to the students, managing the obtained data on the computer, and calculating them using the statistics software for advanced statistical analysis, the study has reached its goals where it found meaningful data to discuss. Figure 1 shows the descriptive data of their multicultural behaviors.

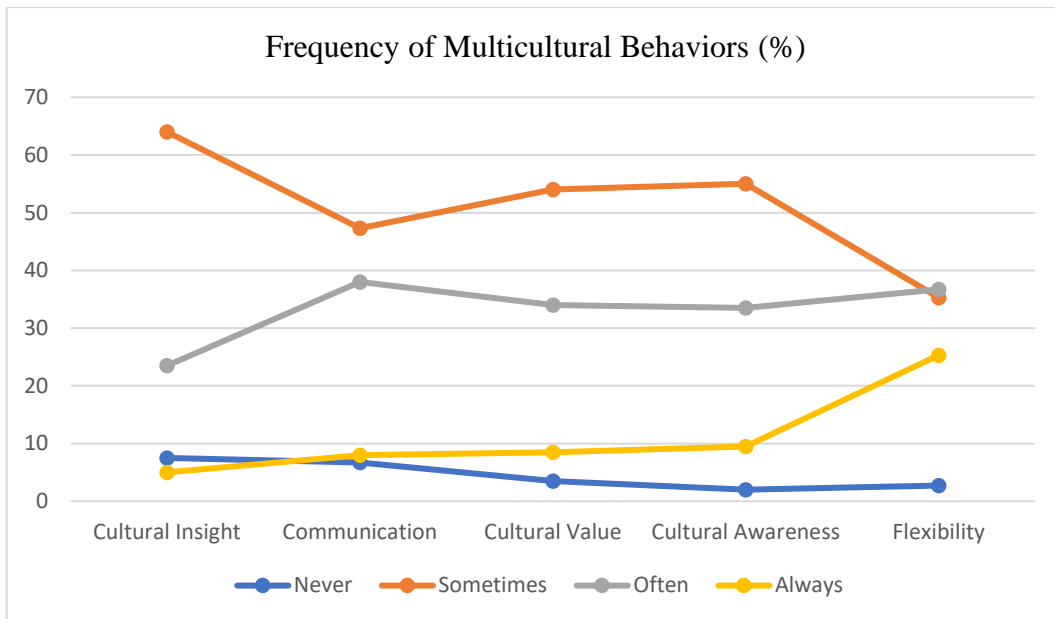


Figure 1. Frequency of students' multicultural behavior

In this figure, their behavior frequencies in five dimensions were scattered but not patterned. The sometimes frequency of cultural insight and flexibility dimensions are more dominant than other dimensions. They indicated that the students' multicultural behaviors are not linear across the dimensions. More analysis of the students' behaviors by ethnics as displayed in Figure 2 revealed that the sometimes frequency of Javanese students are slightly higher than their peers of non-Javanese in all dimensions.

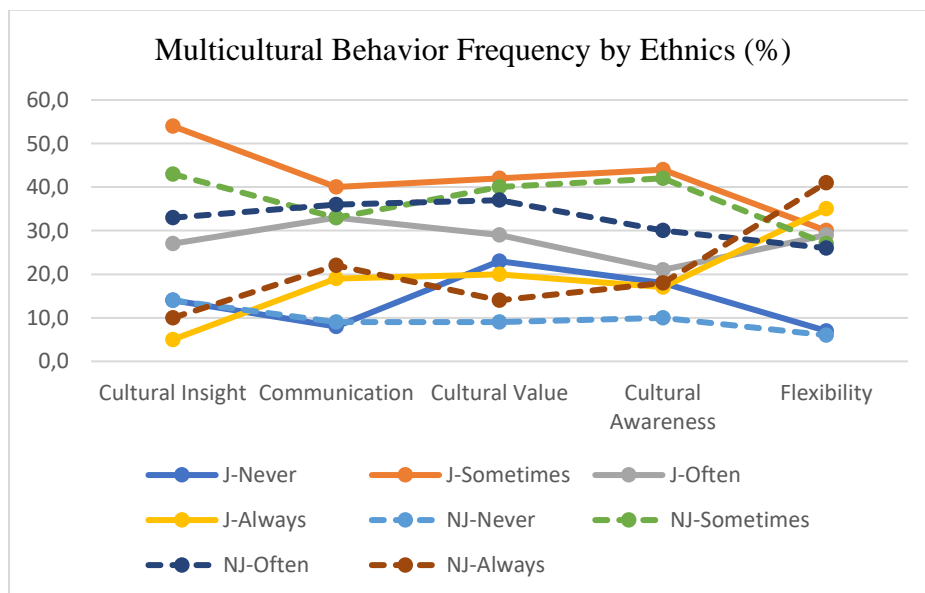


Figure 2. Students' multicultural behavior by ethnics (%)

It also gives the impression that the non-Javanese students are better than their peers shown by the always frequency in the flexibility dimension. Likewise, the frequency of non-Javanese students is lower than that of Javanese students across the dimensions.

In addition to the above data, Figure 3 specifically displayed the descriptive data of students' multicultural behaviors by gender.

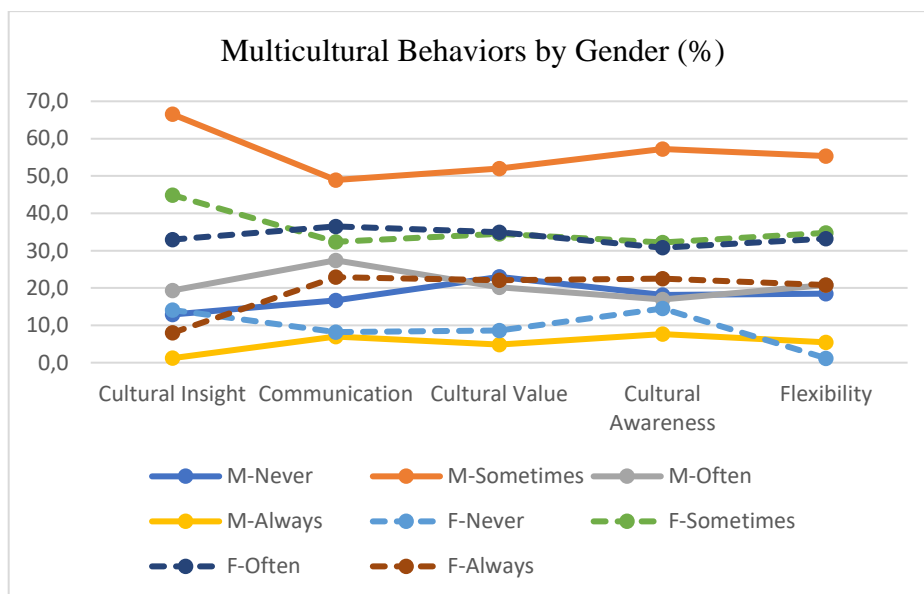


Figure 3. Multicultural behavior by gender

Focusing in the always, often, and sometimes frequency, it seems, female students are better in showing multicultural behaviors than males' in all dimensions. In summary, the portrait of students' multicultural behavior shows several trends. For instance, in behavior relating to cultural insight, students rated sometimes at 64% and always at 5%. Meanwhile, in behaviors relating to flexibility, the students always choose at 35.3% and never at 2.7%. Overall, the behavior frequency tended to the sometimes, meaning they are not so active in revealing multicultural behavior in the school environment.

3.2. Multicultural Behavior in Comparison

For more detailed analysis, the student's responses in ordinal data (1-4) were transformed into interval data by utilizing methods of successive intervals (MSI) so that the comparison of students' scores by grade levels was more meaningful. Table 1 and 2 display mean scores, standard deviations, and t-test results students multicultural behavior by gender.

Table 1. Students' Multicultural Behavior by Gender

Dimension	Male (n=31)		Female (n=69)		t-test*
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Cultural Insight	2.25	.37	2.50	.47	Sig. (2-tailed)=.010; t=-2.613
Communicating	2.58	.45	2.90	.50	Sig. (2-tailed)=.003; t=-3.096
Cultural Values	2.49	.46	2.87	.54	Sig. (2-tailed)=.001; t=-3.428
Cultural Awareness	2.41	.38	2.70	.59	Sig. (2-tailed)=.009; t=-2.681
Flexibility	2.80	.48	3.21	.54	Sig. (2-tailed)=.000; t=-3.628
Overall	2.51	.28	2.84	.39	Sig. (2-tailed)=.000; t=-4.249

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05.

From Table 1 it reveals that overall there is a significant difference between multicultural behavior between males and females in which the Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.000 is <0.05 . However, in more detail, significant differences are found in communication, cultural values, and flexibility dimensions.

Table 2. Students' Multicultural Behavior by Grade Level

Dimension	10 th Grade		11 th Grade		12 th Grade		F*
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Cultural Insight	2.25	.40	2.46	.40	2.56	.51	Sig.=.016; F=4.322
Communication	2.70	.49	2.78	.55	2.92	.41	Sig.=.174; F=1.780
Cultural Values	2.56	.57	2.75	.58	2.94	.41	Sig.=.015; F=4.403
Cultural Awareness	2.39	.49	2.73	.50	2.72	.52	Sig.=.008; F=5.098
Flexibility	2.92	.64	3.12	.56	3.22	.41	Sig.=.090; F=2.469
Overall	2.56	.38	2.77	.41	2.87	.31	Sig.=.004; F=5.979

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05.

In terms of grade level, the analysis of variance in Table 2 indicates the Sigma values of communication and flexibility are greater than 0.05 meaning these groups are not significantly different. The other dimensions are different. However, looking at the overall values, students in 10th, 11th, and 12th grade are significantly different in multicultural behavior.

Discussion

For the above data description, it is necessary to discuss the findings. Participants of the current study identify their ethnicity according to the paternal line. 77% are predominantly Javanese, while the other 23% are non-Javanese (Balinese, Sundanese, Minang, and Oganese). Since the numbers are not equal, the study tries to describe their multicultural behavior frequencies based on Javanese and non-Javanese students. In extremity, data from Figure 2 reveal that multicultural behavior frequency of those two groups are slightly different in each dimension and overall as well. This finding suggests that students of both ethnic groups have appropriate multicultural behavior in terms of expressing or appreciating diverse cultures. This finding confirms that although significant differences among the ethnic groups in Indonesia are obvious (Mangundjaya, 2013; Suharnomo & Syahruramadhan, 2018), they do not trigger massive ethnic conflict and mostly live in harmony (Ningrum, 2018), and have learned how to behave with a culturally diverse peer.

Gender encompasses the socially and psychologically appropriate behavior for males and females approved by and desired within a society (Banks, 2016). The current study suggests multicultural behavior of females is higher than males in all dimensions. Since the high frequency is associated with the doer's expressing multicultural behavior, it appears the former shows more frequent behavior compared to the latter. In detail, the frequencies of the always in males are lower than those of females, indicating females are more active conduct culturally. Males reveal higher frequencies in the never than those females. In the cultural insight dimension, females seem more engaged in learning cultural knowledge than males. A similar trend occurs in cultural awareness. Here, females are more aware of their multicultural behavior rather than males. Previous studies may give direction to compare the current findings. Gender is a prescription of how humans behave as an impact of cultural constructs. Culture arises a gender construct that expects how males and females have to conduct themselves. Gender inequality may thus be affected by who defines the conduct. It occurs in various settings (Puspa & Larasati, 2021; Wood, 2019) and has psychological consequences (Kinias, 2012). Koenig (2018), for instance, gave more detail about what each gender has to be. He found that

women should be communal and avoid being dominant. Men should be agentic, independent, masculine in appearance, and interested in science and technology, but avoid being weak, emotional, shy, and feminine in appearance. These findings suggest that why the multicultural behavior of females is more active than that of males.

The study further analyzed students' multicultural behaviors by grade level displayed in Table 2. The analysis of variance across grades 10–12th shows that their multicultural behaviors are different (Sig.=.004, $F=5.979$). However, the data in all dimensions indicated that only in communication (Sig.=.174; $F=1.780$) and flexibility (Sig.=.090, $F=2.469$) was the difference significant. Descriptively, data in Table 2 informs that the mean scores of students in 12th grade are higher than those in 11th and 10th grades, and the mean score of students in 11th grade is higher than those in 10th grade. It inferred that the 12th graders are more active in expressing their multicultural behavior than their peers.

Student grade levels are often assessed for their different values in certain variables, such as self-regulated learning (Guo, 2020), academic achievement (Luo et al., 2021), and transition from elementary to high school, and school climate (Bear et al., 2017). If they refer to school levels, such as middle and high school, the differences among students may be evident for their age groups are different. However, when determining those of high school students, one needs carefully to make conclusion since the difference by age may be insignificant. Making meaningful consideration the difference among the students of these levels has to be done with an assumption that the 12th graders will have more appropriate behavior than their peers of 10th and 11th because of more social experiences or maturity than their peers. A similar assumption should have been subject to the 10th and 11th graders in present study, in which the first were lower than the latter. However, the data analysis parametrically reveals the opposite. The mean scores among them seem similar. In confirming this finding, several previous studies ought to become references for the explanation. A comparison study in Islamic and public high school by Yosef (2022), for instance, did not find significant difference in multicultural self-efficacy among students in grade 10th, 11th, and 12th. Referring to Zamroni et al (2021) that accounted for the traditionally higher exposures of social and cultural diversity students experience, plausible explanation of the similarity is that it is their previous experience that may shapes such behavior that mostly develops in family environment rather than current in-school experience.

Students' multicultural behavior can foremost be seen as an increased awareness and action to the dissimilar ways they relate to their socio-academic environments. The study provides abundant implications for multicultural practices in high school. The school counsellors have to provide different opportunities for the students of each grade level to feel meaningful and impressive experiences where they may practice cultural diversity through various school-based or community-based activities. To do this, they need to foster, maintain, and extend a comparable cultural focus in their professional development. In addition, they ought to arrange guidance and counseling programs for strengthening positive multicultural behavior. Responsive service may take action for those students who have a cultural concerns. Culturally-based responsive service may be provided to students who have more cultural concern. Despite the findings, the study acknowledges some limitations. Using a self-report for identifying students' multicultural behavior even though still appropriate as mentioned by Demetriou et al. (2015) and (Reimers et al., 2012), it may not give accurate data since stated personally is not based on the precisely occurring behavior. Future studies may address more students and use qualitative methods to deepen the meaning of the behavior. It will be beneficial for conducting future studies in high schools in areas that have a more diverse but balanced ethnic composition for grasping a deeper explanation.

4. CONCLUSION

Culture is one of the unseparated parts of a high school student's life, and according to developmental tasks, these adolescents have to achieve socially responsible behaviors and take into account the values of society. Since today and future society place multicultural as a critical value, they are expected to learn and internalize the values in their way of life, so that they can be part of the society. However, the endeavor to master the task is complicated and full of challenges. The current study

found how students' multicultural behavior looks in in term of their relationship with peers in school environment. The findings revealed most students had moderate multicultural behavior. Specifically, females showed better multicultural behavior than that of their male peers. In terms of grade levels, the 12th graders seemed to have better behavior compared to their peers in 10th and 11th grades. Future studies may involve more students and use other methods to deepen the meaning of the behavior. It will be beneficial for conducting future studies in high schools in areas that have a more diverse but balanced ethnic composition for grasping a deeper explanation.

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