



From Chinese Schools to National Schools: Efforts to Integrate Chinese Ethnicities Through Education, Surabaya 1966-1998

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Abstract. This article examined how the closure of Chinese schools in 1966 did not diminish the enthusiasm of the Chinese community to revive education. This study is essential, as the education provided by the Chinese during the New Order era had not received adequate attention from historians. This spirit exemplified the independence and tenacity of the Chinese ethnic group in educating the younger generation. By engaging in educational activities, Chinese individuals contributed to the strengthening of Indonesian nationalism. By using historical methods, the research results show that attempts to integrate Chinese through education were not only for the benefit of the Chinese but also as support for the government in order to accelerate the integration process and foster a spirit of nationalism. Several educational institutions are tracing back Chinese cultural values and combining them with local culture so that a young generation of Chinese are able to position themselves as part of the Indonesian nation without losing their Chinese identity. Meanwhile, others adopt global principles, creating a younger Chinese population that is willing to engage in global activities. In addressing the issue of Chinese ethnic integration, global identity presents a new challenge for education.

Keywords: Chinese School, Public School, Integration, Surabaya

1 Introduction

For individuals who are going through dark, backward, and oppressive times, education is a source of hope. The Chinese ethnic group has gone through a period of persecution, backwardness, and darkness in the society, the nation, and the state. To make this status equivalent to, if not better than, other communities, education is a driving factor. According to one source, it would be difficult for the Chinese to be accepted by society if

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P. A. W. Wibowo et al. (eds.), *Proceedings of the International Conference on Cultural Studies (ICCuS 2023)*,

Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research 824,

https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-212-5_13

they were impoverished and stupid; as a result, the Chinese should be intelligent, successful, and wealthy. All of this is possible with high-quality education, therefore when a school is first established, it is directed by teaching moral and ethical principles as well as adapting to the demands and advancements of the moment (Tedja, 15 November 2008). The New Order regime's closure of hundreds of Chinese schools in 1966 was a dark period for Chinese education, but it did not diminish their excitement to reopen private schools that could house students from closed Chinese schools (Suryadinata, 1988: 33). So many private school foundations have expanded their Chinese-school admissions quotas since 1966, and several of them have also created branch schools as soon as possible in the following few years.

The Chinese integration was accelerated by the opening of private schools with a national curriculum. National integration, according to Christine Drake, is the process of bringing together people who originally came from different backgrounds to form an independent nation (Drake, 1989: 16). The decreased quality of education, on the other hand, is reflected in the forced acceleration of integration. Paulo Freire believes that there is no neutrality in education since there is a propensity to approach those in positions of authority. The majority of private schools owned by Chinese people are also affected by this issue because they don't offer students the opportunity to learn about their own culture.

Private schools run into a lot of challenges while attempting to integrate students through education. The problem of high operational costs for schooling is the largest obstacle. Some schools struggle to lower these expenses, which makes it challenging for them to get non-Chinese parents to enroll their children in private schools (Shi, 10 March 2023). As a result, private schools with a student enrollment that is over 50% Chinese have emerged out of this circumstance.

The first focus of this study is on how Chinese ethnic national identity in Surabaya changed when the Old and New Orders came to an end. Secondly, examining how the Chinese are using education to overcome their identity issue. Third, adjustments are being made in education to accommodate the different Chinese population's requirements. Fourth, examine the initiatives taken to accelerate Indonesia's integration process through education.

2 Literature Review

Chinese education in Indonesia has experienced ups and downs for more than a century. Education helped to strengthen identity as well as modernize the younger generation. Identity through education was strengthened while other identities were weakened. Because the government and school officials had different interests, this transformation could occur, resulting in a generation of Chinese students with a wide variety of identities (Devi, 2014). This demonstrates that opening schools for Chinese students has a quite challenging background. However, it demonstrates that the Chinese invested a lot of attention in education for several reasons. The government was not always pleased with the Chinese people's freedom in establishing schools. The eagerness of the

Chinese people to open schools even irritated the Church Council, which in the 17th century was given the power to do so (Tjia, 2005: 37).

The increasing number of Chinese-run schools was significantly influenced by China's political climate. Two distinct sorts of Chinese schools, namely nationalist and communist notions, emerged as a result of the formation of two political groups in China. Because of this, there was competition between the two and bitterness between the Chinese who have citizenship in Indonesia and other ethnic groups as a whole (Zhou, 2019: 98–99). In addition to China's political climate, Indonesia's political climate has had a significant impact on the future of schools founded by Chinese people. In addition to having an impact on the disintegration of the Indonesian Communist Party, the events of the 30 September 1965 Movement in Jakarta also marked a dark time for Chinese schools. Chinese schools were shut down by the New Order governance in 1966, which marked the beginning of Chinese people losing understanding of their own culture. When Chinese open private schools, they must adhere to the national education standards established by the government. As a result, education was used as a medium to accelerate the process of integration and assimilation of the Chinese ethnic group (Suryadinata, 1988: 33-34).

The process of integration into Indonesia through education was not only a need for the Indonesian government, but also for some Chinese. Chinese people, of course, had different points of view on what was considered as integration. To ensure that the Chinese generation did not feel uncomfortable when assimilating into Indonesian culture, attempts must be made to identify Chinese cultural values that complement Indonesians' personalities. However, they also needed to get a generation ready for the challenges of globalization. It's interesting to discuss integration, the challenges of globalization, and the history of cultural values.

3 Method

This research used historical research methods. The first step was to determine the topic. The topic was selected since a few studies have examined Chinese educational programs that accelerated Indonesia's integration during the New Order era. The source search was carried out at the Medayu Agung Library, Surabaya City Archives and Library Agency, Jakarta National Archives and was completed with interviews with Surabaya Chinese figures, former Chinese school teachers, former Chinese school students, former national private school teachers, and former national private school principals. The data is next verified to determine the authenticity and credibility of the source. Then interpretation is carried out, by providing interpretation and analysis of the facts obtained. The final stage is writing or historiography.

4 Results and Discussions

The political environment in Indonesia, China, and other parts of the world had a significant impact on the growth and development of Chinese education. Chinese had the opportunity to open numerous schools from the Declaration of Indonesian

Independence in 1945 until 1957, reflecting their unique political orientations and ideologies. Due to the government's inability at the time to educate every child, the opportunity was extremely opened (see *Pewarta Soerabaja*, 17 September 1952). Three classifications of Chinese can be identified from the simultaneous development of different types of schools (*Terompet Masjarakat*, April 2, 1953). First, the Chinese group had a political stance toward Indonesia and was in support of both assimilation and integration. They established national private schools, Christian schools, and Catholic schools that adopted the national curriculum. Second, Chinese schools were established by organizations having a political stance toward China. Chinese schools split in 1949 into two groups: those oriented towards the People's Republic of China (PRC) with a communist ideology and a small portion oriented towards Taiwan with a nationalist Kuomintang ideology (See *Terompet Masjarakat*, 10, 12, and 22 June 1953). These divisions were the result of political conflicts in China that the Chinese Communist Party ultimately prevailed. There were just 6 Kuomintang nationalist schools among the 27 Chinese schools (Wu, 27 June 2009). Chinese citizens who attended Dutch educational institutions belong to the final group and are in favor of institutions that continue offering courses in Dutch. But from the early 1950s, a third group changed direction to Indonesia and implemented a national education curriculum.

Although the Old Order era government allowed space to accommodate the growing number of foreign schools, it adopted a variety of rules aimed at regulating, limiting, and even eliminating Kuomintang nationalist institutions in order to accelerate integration and avoid foreign intrusion. Since November 6, 1957, the Minister of Defense, Djuanda, decided that Chinese schools where more than 50% of the students had the status of Indonesian Citizens (WNI) were converted into national schools, resulting in a decreased number of Chinese schools (Ministry of Home Affairs, 1978: 462-474). When the authorities dreaded that the nationalist Kuomintang party had been involved in the PRRI Permesta rebellion, the number fell even lower. According to Suryadinata (1984: 159–161), this incident contributed to the closing of Kuomintang nationalist schools. The national private school foundations received several Chinese school buildings.

Table 1. Chinese schools listed by name that became national schools in 1957

Chinese School Name	Name of the Foundation or School Using the Chinese School Building
<i>Ji Meng Siě Siao</i>	Indonesian Education and Teaching Association (PPPI) or Indonesian Education and Teaching Foundation (YPPI)
<i>Ta Cung Siě Siao</i>	Indonesian Education and Teaching Association (PPPI) or Indonesian Education and Teaching Foundation (YPPI)
<i>Shin Ming</i> atau <i>Hua Chiao</i>	Christian Education and Teaching Association (PETRA)
<i>Cen Wen Siě Siao</i> atau <i>Tjin Boen</i>	Tri Sila
<i>Nan Yang Chung Siě</i>	Ketabang Kali College Foundation

Source: *Pewarta Soerabaia*, 23 December 1957, 26 December 1957, 27 December 1957

When the 30 September Movement became a national tragedy in 1965, Chinese ethnic education began its darkest era. All Chinese schools were closed as a result of the claimed People's Republic of China (PRC) involvement in that incident. Chinese youngsters hoped and waited for the schools to reopen at the beginning of the closure, but this desire was disappointed because 16 schools and one Res Publica University were under government control. The remainder were loaned to national private schools and state universities, none of which accept students from former Chinese institutions (Shi, 10 March 2023).

Table 2. Changes in Use of Chinese School Buildings, 1966

Chinese School Building	New User
<i>She Sui Cung Hoa Siě Siao</i> (THHK)	Faculty of Pharmacy, Airlangga University
<i>Chiao Cung Siao Siě</i>	IKIP (Institute of Teacher Training and Education)
<i>Hoa Chiao Siě Siao</i>	Islamic High School
<i>Chung Kuo Nu Hsueh</i>	Public Elementary School and Bhayangkari Elementary School
<i>Shin Hwa Cung Siě</i>	STM (Mechanical Engineering School) I
<i>Fu Wu Cung Siě</i>	STO (Sports Institute)
<i>Kuang Hoa Siě Siao</i>	P.P.A.J
<i>Nan Jing Siě Siao</i>	Senior High School VIII
<i>Ming Chiang Siě Siao</i>	Senior High School VII
<i>Sin Ciao Siě Siao</i>	Muhammadiyah Junior High School
<i>Chung Hoa Chung Siě</i>	Surabaya Institute of Technology
<i>Chiao Dung Siě Siao</i>	Deaf-Mute Children's Foundation
<i>Chiao Cung Siao Siě</i>	IKIP (Institute of Teacher Training and Education)
<i>Khay Ming Chung Siao Siě</i>	SGKP (Girls' Skills Teachers' School)
<i>Hoa Chiao Se Fan Siao Sio Siě</i>	Scout
<i>Tung Shan Siě Siao</i>	Elementary Public School

Source: The East Java Regional Dwikora No. Kep-59/10/1966 Concerning the Use of Former Foreign School Buildings was issued by the Commander of Military Region VIII Sriwijaya.

Some former Chinese school students hadn't been allowed to attend class for almost two years. Others made the decision to enroll in the available national private schools. Several former Chinese school instructors made the decision to covertly visit the homes of former students after discovering the struggles they were having. They taught Mandarin, arithmetic, and other subjects for a number of hours each day without being paid (Ko, 8 July 2021). Since July 1966, the Military Commander of East Java, Major General Sumitro, has prohibited the publication of newspapers in Mandarin, which has had an impact on the use of Mandarin in daily life. As a result, they had to take care to avoid being detained by the army. Parents finally opted not to teach Mandarin to their children due to their overwhelming dread. Thus, Mandarin became a lost language for the Chinese generation born between 1960 and the end of the New Order era (Ko, 8 July 2021).

Major General Sumitro's attempts to resolve the Chinese ethnic problem, in Charles A. Coppel's viewpoint, went too far. Chinese ethnicity rose up in opposition to this

municipal legislation. The policy that forbade trade outside of the Surabaya region, which was extremely harmful to Chinese, marked the beginning of this resistance. However, Major General Sumitro forced the majority of the Chinese population to relocate to Surabaya by using military force, closing hundreds of Chinese-owned businesses (Coppel, 1994: 197–200; Zhang, 21 September 2022). Their move also affected the need for educational facilities, which the government has not yet addressed.

The government started implementing assimilation initiatives in 1966 to accelerate integration. According to MPRS Resolution No. III/Res/MPRS/1966 on promoting national unity, assimilation was accomplished by using the Indonesian language as a unifying tool more frequently, preserving regional culture, and accelerating assimilation of citizens of foreign descent by removing all barriers that create hostile conditions with native citizens. In 1968, the government organized Special Project National Schools as part of an educational integration strategy based on this objective (Ministry of Education and Culture, 1976: 8). However, the SNPK school was never established in Surabaya till the project was cancelled. Only in Jakarta, Palembang, and North Sumatra are SNPK schools to be found (Pelly, 2003: 36).

Chinese might open private schools and construct classrooms at their own expense to solve the issue of educational needs. Dapena, Petra Christian School, Tri Sila, Sasana Bakti, and YPPI are a few of these institutions. Older private schools established by missionaries, such as St. Louis, Stella Maris Catholic Junior High School, St. Agnes Catholic Junior High School, and St. Louis Catholic Junior High School, also admitted former Chinese school students. Angelus Custos Catholic School (Middlebare School), St. Vincentius, St. Stanislaus Catholic Junior High School, Santa Maria School, and Yahya (April 20, 2006). The increase in Chinese residents in Surabaya prompted the opening of more private schools, particularly Christian and Catholic ones. In addition, a number of organizations, including schools established by the Indonesian Army and the police, encouraged Chinese children who have Indonesian citizenship (Wijaya, 29 August 2021). Chinese students made up a small minority in the latter school because the majority of the students were the offspring of the police and military.

Table 3. Several Private Schools were Founded in the New Order Era

School name	Since of Year
Advent Kindergarten-High School	Kindergarten (1974), Elementary School (1976), Junior High School (1981), Senior High School (1985)
Tri Pusaka School	1977
Karitas School	1983
Gloria Christian School	1984
Pecinta Damai Catholic Junior High School	1986
Mandala School	1986
Masa Depan Cerah Christian School	1994

Source: Processed from interviews and data from the school website

Since Chinese schools were shut down, Chinese had only had one choice: to adopt the national curriculum. Assimilation, which was seen to be the most efficient approach to accelerate integration, was the goal of education. As a result, the educational assimilation strategy might be followed by all schools. The 1968-implemented regulation had been supported by Christian and Catholic religious organizations. One way to provide help was to set up a foundation to build schools, which led to an increase in the number of Christian and Catholic schools in the 1980s. Along with public schools like Tri Pusaka School, Mandala, and an increasing number of schools organized by YPPI, there were Christian and Catholic schools as well. These private schools were the main choice for Chinese to send their children to school. There were several reasons for choosing private schools by parents of Chinese students; the close distance from home, the difficulty of registering at a public school, good learning facilities, keeping children away from discrimination and verbal violence, the quality of teachers, some schools have their own curriculum which was combined with the national curriculum, some schools provide information on the best universities in the world, schools were an investment in the future and lastly, some private schools had national and international networks that help school alumni to get jobs (Yahya, 20 April 2006).

Even though there were no official regulations, many parents of Chinese students face rejection when enrolling their children in public schools, especially when entering higher education or university. As a result, many parents were not enthusiastic about enrolling their children in public schools and immediately chose private schools (Yahya, 20 April 2006). This resulted in the establishment of many private schools. Consequently, as a result, there was an imbalance in the ethnic composition of private schools, which led to new issues, including accusations that new Chinese schools were opening up that were hampering integration (Tedja, 15 November 2008). When faced with unfavorable circumstances, numerous administrators of private school foundations made an effort to balance the ethnic combination by offering potential non-Chinese students lower tuition costs. Several foundation officials were also open to offering up non-Chinese students as foster parents. The YPPI school, which is located at Jalan Donokerto and Sulung, was in charge of this endeavor (Tedja, 15 November 2008). There were many that not only dismiss school fees but also lower them so that people who live close to the school could send their kids to school. This policy was used by two schools: Tri Pusaka and Mandala Schools. However, efforts to balance ethnic composition have been hampered by the negative misconception that the school is only for Chinese students (Shi Baoxuan, 10 March 2023).

Private schools were hiring more non-Chinese teachers who are still enrolled in public universities in addition to efforts to balance ethnic composition, and some administrators were even non-Chinese. In addition, a number of schools have started extracurricular activities with the goal of fostering a generation that was inclusive by bringing students closer to society and the natural world. One of them was the YPPI School's GHL program, which stands for gunung (mountains), hutan (forests), and laut (seas). Farmers, livestock breeders, fishers, and artisans from the community were all involved in the implementation of this program. Community involvement programs seek to teach youngsters how to be open and socially conscious so they can fit into society (Soedjono, 5 October 2021).

In addition to GHL, introducing local arts and culture was another strategy for accelerating integration. Extracurricular Javanese performances were organized in an effort to increase cultural understanding, and the YPPI provided a set of gamelan in order to help in these attempts (Tedja, 15 November 2008). A Chinese student named Tee Boen Liong attended this institution and had a passion for learning Javanese gamelan and shadow puppetry. He decided to pursue this profession when he was older and became a puppeteer (Tee, 30 October 2021). YPPI schools were referred to be nationalist schools due to efforts to introduce children to local culture (Soedjono, 5 October 2021). As a result, it was crucial to introduce Indonesian values, but this might be balanced with the desire to change with the times. Based on this belief, a number of private schools had set up computer labs, science labs, improved English language instruction, and library facilities where literature that students and teachers require are provided (Soedjono, 5 October 2021).

The Tri Pusaka school, which is hidden behind the Boen Bio temple, aimed to meld Chinese and local cultures, in contrast to the YPPI school, which immersed students in the community. Sunday school instruction introduced Chinese culture. Confucian students learn about Confucianism as a religion and way of life at Sunday school, as well as Chinese etiquette. Additionally, daily character learning also introduced Chinese principles or etiquette. Traditional Javanese dance was performed as a way of interacting with the local culture. The two-cultural approach, in the opinion of the teachers of Tri Pusaka School, aimed to build morality so that kids grow into a generation that was adaptable and had a strong sense of Indonesian nationalism, as well as for those of Chinese ancestry who never lose sight of their Chinese identity. Chinese identity was meant to support Indonesian nationalism rather than Chinese nationalism. First, in the four corners of the ocean are brothers is one of the ethical principles or Chinese cultural values that are used as a guide in moral education. Considering parental devotion first means constantly keeping your parents in mind when taking action. Third, a thousand friends are not enough, and one enemy is too many. Lastly, Maintain the public facilities. Teachers at Tri Pusaka schools believe that by teaching fundamental moral values early on, they may promote national pride and Indonesian nationalism while also upholding unity and peaceful ties with different ethnic groups (Sudharma, 6 January 2002).

Many Chinese figures in Surabaya, including Kresnayana Yahya, Widyanto Tedja, and Shi Baoxuan, believe that the P4 program and Pancasila Moral Education lessons are insufficient for transferring the Pancasila values and the motto of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*. Schools and teachers must serve as role models for children through their behavior, attitudes, and encouragement to participate in social activities. For this reason, a number of national private schools punish instructors who abuse students verbally or physically. Bullying students are also subject to sanctions. However, numerous Chinese students have reported being bullied and subjected to verbal abuse (Soe Tjen Marching, 29 March 2023). This experience proves that the negative stigma about Chinese that was deliberately built by the New Order government through political policies and mass media coverage had an impact on the attitudes of several teachers and students at school.

Regarding the issue of identity, Christian and Catholic schools tried to build a Christian identity. Christian identity was seen as a strategic step to save the Chinese generation, because Christian and Catholic institutions were recognized by the government. This identity replaced the Chinese identity which was not given space by the government. Erasing the identity of Chinese Christians or Chinese Catholics to become Indonesian Christians or Indonesian Catholics facilitates the integration process (Darmawan, 2014: 16). Apart from that, Christian and Catholic institutions were also trying to escape the impression of colonialism, which was previously hated by society. However, several Christian and Catholic institutions have made progress toward modernization or westernization during their development. Some students' desire to continue their studies in countries like Australia, Europe, and America led to this development. English, mathematics, and natural sciences were therefore given priority in school lessons. Participation in this subject's national and international olympiads served as evidence of this concentration. The desire of the Chinese generation to be able to have a global identity, which they believe was more hopeful for the future and in accordance with current trends, was impacted by the country's tendency toward westernization. The catalyst was the intersection of technological advancements with cross-border human activity. Nearly all Chinese-run private schools, whose students of that ethnicity made up the majority, forced the younger generation to adopt a global identity around the end of the New Order. They were inspired to pursue careers in business, create cutting-edge technologies, and take on leadership roles in Asia. This development demonstrated the development of the Chinese-Indonesian generation, but it also presented a new challenge when it comes to preserving Indonesian national identity. As educational institutions, schools must work to focus students' attention on global identity in order to strengthen Indonesian national identity.

5 Conclusion

The conclusion of this study is that the pressure on Chinese ethnic education was not an obstacle to continuing to strive for and advance education. According to the assimilation program, education had to be done throughout the New Order era to accelerate the integration of the Chinese ethnic population. The government tried to erase cultural values that prevented assimilation during this process. In this instance, Chinese culture was referred to as a barrier. As a result of this approach, just one school—Tri Pusaka School—retained Chinese cultural values as a means of moral improvement and character development.

The introduction of cultural values, the practice of social activities, and the involvement of the community in the learning process were more effective adaptation tactics used by educators, and they made it simpler for the young Chinese generation to perceive Indonesianness. The idea of becoming Indonesian, however, was still evolving, therefore it might be pursued in a way that embraced modernity and was prepared to meet globalization. Private schools might therefore be creative in integrating the eastern and western educational systems. Favorite private schools were created through the integration of scientific, eastern, and western cultural values. Both non-Chinese and

Chinese people of ethnicity sought these institutions out. However, the uneven ethnic composition was a worry that needed to be solved right away, as Chinese students continued to make up more than 60%, and in some cases over 90%, of the population enrolled in popular private schools up to the end of the New Order.

6 Authors' Contributions

It is hoped that this study will eventually be taken into consideration by the government and administrators of educational institutions in order to determine the educational policies and curricula that are suitable for the needs of the younger generation while taking Indonesia's national and international interests into account.

7 Acknowledgments

We appreciate the support of the history doctoral program at Diponegoro University and the history department at Airlangga University's faculty of cultural sciences.

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