

Students' Perceptions of the Educational Issue "Tertiary College Needs" and Efforts to Implement the Fifth Principle at the Higher Education Level

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Abstract

This study aims to explore students' perceptions of the issue of "tertiary education necessity" and the efforts to implement the Fifth Principle of Pancasila at the higher education level. Through a qualitative approach, in-depth interviews were conducted with students from various study programs at the State University of Medan. The results show that students' perceptions of tertiary education vary, with some agreeing, disagreeing, or strongly rejecting the statement. The research also reveals the importance of higher education in enhancing the quality of life and community welfare. Efforts to implement the Fifth Principle, such as scholarship programs and educational subsidies, are identified as crucial steps to ensure social justice and equitable access to higher education. This study is expected to contribute to the formulation of more inclusive and equitable educational policies.

Keywords: *students' perception, tertiary education necessity, Fifth Principle, higher education, social justice*

INTRODUCTION

Increasing students' perceptions of the issue of "tertiary education needs" is an important effort in understanding the dynamics of higher education in this era of globalization (Tirza & Cendana, 2021). An era where the notion that "college is a tertiary necessity" is increasingly rampant, raising questions about the relevance, purpose and consequences of higher education itself. This study is important because it is not only related to individual students, but also to the direction of educational development and national welfare (Natalie et. al., 2022).

The problem faced is how students' perceptions of the concept of "tertiary education" influence their educational choices. This is closely related to social, economic and cultural dynamics that influence their views on the value and benefits of higher education. Problems arise when there is a gap between expectations and reality, where dreams of a better job and a more prosperous life collide with economic challenges and tight job market competition (Kartika & Mahendra, 2023).

The aim of this research is to dig deeper into students' perceptions of the issue of "tertiary education", identify the factors that shape these perceptions, and formulate

strategies to overcome the challenges faced. This research does not just describe existing phenomena, but also aims to contribute to formulating policies and programs that are more effective in meeting educational needs and directing students towards educational choices that suit their interests, talents and potential.

The relevance of this research is related to efforts to implement Pancasila values, especially the Fifth Principle, at the tertiary level. Universities have a very strategic role in producing young people who are not only academically intelligent, but also have high social, moral and entrepreneurial awareness. Implementation of the Fifth Principle, which emphasizes social justice for all Indonesian people, is crucial in this context.

Through this research, it is hoped that concrete strategies can be found in implementing the Fifth Principle at the tertiary level, such as through scholarship programs, affirmations and subsidies to expand access to higher education for underprivileged communities (Herawati et. al., 2022). Apart from Therefore, improving the quality of higher education is also the main focus, by strengthening the curriculum, improving the

quality of lecturers, and providing adequate infrastructure. This research also tries to propose solutions to foster a culture of mutual cooperation, social awareness, tolerance and respect among students. This is important to build a society that is

inclusive and fair, capable of appreciating diversity and respecting the rights of each individual (Wahyumi et. al., 2024). The relevance of this research lies not only in understanding students' perceptions of the issue of "tertiary education requirements", but also in formulating concrete steps in implementing Pancasila values, especially the Fifth Principle, at the tertiary level. It is hoped that the results of this research can make a significant contribution in efforts to create a more inclusive, just and high-quality education system, which is capable of producing a young generation that is intelligent, has integrity and responsibility.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research approach used in this research uses a qualitative approach. This qualitative method requires participants, namely students from various study programs, then in the data collection technique, in-depth interviews are carried out to explore students' views, experiences and perceptions regarding this issue. Interview activities are carried out on the Medan State University campus on Wednesday, May 29 2024 at 10.00 WIB. In the discussion of this research, emphasis is also placed on literature studies through reviews of journals, books and previous research which can support and inform the conceptual basis of this research.

Table 1 Medan State University Student Respondents

No	Name	Faculty
1	AK	FBS
2	AD	FMIPA
3	SS	F.E
4	P.Y	F.E
5	MHY	FT

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Response to the Statement "Tertiary College Needs"

Student responses regarding the statement "tertiary education needs" based on the results of interviews conducted with 5 student samples resulted in perceptions that confirmed, disagreed and strongly rejected the statement.

A confirming statement was conveyed by respondent AD, "It's true that there are those who say that it's a luxury, not everyone can get it, right? But yes, now there is a scholarship, yes, it's called a tertiary but if you try, you'll definitely get it, right?" This confirms the respondents' opinion that college is indeed a luxury, because not everyone gets this opportunity, but this opportunity can be sought by taking advantage of existing scholarships. These scholarships can come from the government or private sector. Several scholarships sourced from the government can provide relief for people who want to study, such as the Indonesian Smart-College Card (KIP-K), Indonesian Education Scholarship, and others.

Other opinions expressed disagreement with the statement. Respondent AK said, "I don't agree with this statement, because in fact there are many people out there who don't go to college and indeed, they don't get salaries that don't match it, while people who go to college definitely have higher salaries than those who don't go to college." Respondent SS also said, "college should be a primary need, not tertiary because education affects our knowledge and perspective and also the future, although not everyone can go to college because there are also economic factors that mean not everyone can go to college." This opinion is based on the income received while working, which focuses on differences in education levels resulting in different amounts of income, with workers who are college graduates generating greater income than workers who are not graduates of college. Research by (Kurniawan 2016) states that education level has a significant correlation with income.

Respondent MHY also expressed strong rejection, saying, "It's ridiculous, because I think education is the right of every community in Indonesia, especially Indonesia, which currently needs several new workers to support

Indonesia's golden era," as well as other strong rejections by respondents. PY said, "In my opinion, this statement is a bit illogical and doesn't make any sense at all. Because from what we know, education should be a primary need, a need that must be met. Because it is through education that the characteristics and advanced thinking of a nation can be formed. "Apart from that, in accordance with Article 31 of the 1945 Constitution, it is mandated that every citizen has the right to receive education, so this statement should never appear, especially from the mouths of people who have higher education." This strong rejection is based on the conditions currently and will be experienced by the Indonesian people and regrets the statement "tertiary education needs" made by the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud).

Based on UUD no. 12 of 2012 concerning higher education, the definition of higher education is that Higher Education is the level of education after secondary education which includes diploma programs, bachelor's programs, master's programs, doctoral programs, and professional programs, as well as specialist programs, which are organized by tertiary institutions based on national culture. Indonesia.

The statement about "tertiary education needs" is basically not wrong, this is proven by the definition by the World Bank (2021), tertiary education is all formal education after secondary education (SMA), including state, private universities, institutes and vocational schools. However, the rejection by the public was due to the statement being made by the Ministry of Education and Culture at a time when the issue of increasing the Single Tuition Fee (UKT) in May 2024 was rife. Public acceptance created a perception that the Ministry of Education and Culture had not created favorable conditions for the public to study. This statement is also considered to be contrary to the goals the government wants to achieve in creating Indonesia's golden generation in 2045 and the goal of quality education in the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Opinions about the importance of studying

Education is very important for everyone, and everyone has the right to receive education to improve their quality of life and welfare in society. Education is considered to have a very important role in shaping a person's character and future. In addition, education is considered to have a direct relationship with national development.

Education has the ability to increase the intelligence of each individual, improve the welfare of society, and increase the honor and dignity of the nation. More specifically, education is necessary for human life to grow and develop the abilities within them to realize their dreams.

Based on the results of interviews with 5 respondents, the results of the perceptions given by students regarding the question regarding "Is college important?" as follows:

According to respondent AK: "It's important, it's very important. Because we are definitely educated. "It's just that most of these lectures don't provide the right education to students, what is given is assignments, we don't get the right education."

According to respondent SS: "Obviously going to college is important, because if we don't go to college, we won't get in-depth knowledge which we will later need when working."

According to PY respondents: "Very important. This is because, we all know that education can lead a nation to become better and more advanced. Apart from that, in my opinion, those of us who live in this era without making education a mandatory requirement will be far behind and become the object of ridicule by people, especially those who have power and can act as they wish."

According to respondent MH: "Yes, college is important. Because from college we can learn about things from what we don't know to what we know, especially college is not just about studying or getting an education at the bench, but more than that. We can learn to speak, we can learn to face crowds, we can learn to face the outside world which is even tougher."

According to respondent AD, "It's important, yes, very important. Especially if we are

women who become educational institutions for our future children. Yes, it's important."

In the results of interviews with the five respondents above, researchers saw that all respondents stated that skin is important. They consider that lectures are able to increase their insight and knowledge. Studying can also make it easier for them to get a job in the future, where in the current era the average job vacancy requires a bachelor's degree. This is in line with Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System which states that universities are obliged to provide education, research and community service (Article 20 Paragraph 2). Higher education must continue to adapt to the demands, developments and needs of the times based on the Tri Dharma. To prepare human resources (HR), especially in the current global era, education is a very important investment. Education will give Indonesia the ability to plan and prepare a workforce that can compete with other countries. Apart from that, it is known that higher education institutions (PT) are educational institutions that are very important for developing high quality human resources (HR) to meet development needs.

College education is very important for all genders because it can improve understanding and development of knowledge. Both men and women must have high levels of knowledge to educate their children in the future. Women's duty to study is not limited to certain education. Now, the scope of women's research has expanded to various subjects. By increasing women's access to higher education, it is hoped that a generation of women will rise. because a good mother will give birth to a good child too.

Syamsiyah (2015: 227) explains that the role of women in the family is very important because sometimes women have to work to help the family economically and are also fully responsible for educating children. Women who have higher education will become smart, insightful and great women, and women may also produce a generation or child like that.

Efforts to equalize opportunities for studying

Education is a primary need for every person; therefore, education is a right for every citizen. The government must provide guarantees to every citizen to receive a decent education, without distinguishing whether male or female, children or adults who have reached school age (Muhardi, 2004). However, the aim of education is essentially to lay a strong foundation of character through internalizing values in education, cultivating and instilling emotional and spiritual intelligence that colors one's life activities, cultivating the ability to think critically through carrying out learning tasks, cultivating habits and actively participating regularly to utilize and fill free time with learning activities. Education is a vital element for developing people's knowledge and abilities. This shows that education is the main factor in improving the quality of a country. As stated by the respondents, they agree that education provides important capital for survival because without education, a person will lack the skills needed to compete in the world of work. Respondent MHY said, "Actually, studying and the world of work are primary needs. for each individual because again, humans need something called survival. The best possible survival for most people comes from the education they have. If he doesn't have an education, he doesn't have the skills to be able to compete in the world of work."

The challenge currently faced is the lack of equality in studying due to an unsupportive economy. The soaring increase in UKT has an impact on people's desire to obtain higher education coupled with the demands of looking for work with a bachelor's degree and also supported by the Ministry of Education and Culture's statement regarding college as a tertiary need, the respondents disagreed with this, as stated by respondent SS, "I do not agree with this because this perspective says that higher education is not a necessity. urgent compared to getting a job to meet the basic needs of life. Meanwhile, looking for work nowadays, you have to have a bachelor's degree and have a high level of education."

This challenge refers to social justice which is mandated in the fifth principle of

Pancasila which demands equality in access to resources and opportunities, including education. Based on article 31 (1) of the 1945 Constitution which discusses the rights of every citizen regarding education, it shows that the government and regional governments are obliged to provide services and convenience in the process of carrying out education, as well as guaranteeing the provision of high-quality education for every citizen without discrimination, and the community and family are obliged to provide resource support in providing education. Education is also a pillar in the formation of quality human resources. Development can be hampered if a country's human resources are not of high quality, so education is required to have quality and be able to adapt to the times (Widodo, 2016). Obtaining higher education certainly cannot be separated from various problems in the world of education, one of which is the high cost of education (Agustang, 2021). Respondents SS and AD in their interviews, when asked about efforts to ensure that Indonesian people have the opportunity to study, said "it's more up to the government to increase scholarships for less fortunate people and provide assistance so that everyone is educated", while AD's opinion said "Yes, to the government, it's more expanding scholarships for the less fortunate, especially those in remote areas. But back to the person, if you give scholarships evenly, you really have to get them and be on target."

The government, through the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology, provides assistance through the KIP college program for students. KIP-Kuliah is educational assistance from the government for high school (SMA) graduates or equivalent who have good academic potential but have economic limitations. Through KIP lectures, various conveniences are obtained by students, but students must also follow the agreed rules in order to still be able to receive benefits from KIP lectures. One of them is improving achievement as measured through the Achievement Index (IP) as a result of learning. In implementing the KIP-K scholarship program, it is still very common to find prospective recipients of this program who

provide requirements documents that are not genuine. So many of those who escape are people who are financially capable but deliberately use the funds they get for personal gain without focusing on the responsibilities they have to carry out and other people who need them more. Apart from that, every year the University deploys surveyors to ascertain the condition of prospective KIP-K scholarship recipients. However, not all areas can be reached by surveyors, therefore this gap is what usually causes Smart Indonesia Card scholarship recipients to miss the target.

To minimize mistargeted programs, the use of scholarship funds must always be considered and supervised. It is necessary to add a point for reporting the use of funds as one of the requirements for KIP-Kuliah recipients. This report will increase student responsibility so that they do not carelessly use the scholarship funds they receive.

The challenge of equalizing opportunities to study in Indonesia, which is related to the fifth principle of Pancasila, requires synergy between the government, the private sector and society in creating fair and inclusive policies. Higher education must be seen as a primary need that is important for achieving collective prosperity and progress. Thus, every citizen has an equal opportunity to develop and contribute to nation building.

CONCLUSION

Increasing students' perceptions of "tertiary education needs" is important in understanding higher education in the era of globalization. It is important to understand students' perceptions, the factors that shape them, and formulate strategies to overcome these challenges for educational development and the nation's prosperity. Also relevant to the implementation of Pancasila values in higher education. This study uses qualitative methods with the participation of students from various study programs. Data was collected through in-depth interviews in the campus environment on Wednesday, May 29 2024. A literature review was conducted to support the conceptual foundation of this research. Higher education has an important role in shaping a person's personality and future. Entering college provides an opportunity to gain knowledge and improve career opportunities. Apart from that, universities also play a role in teaching,

research and community service. Education is recognized as an important investment in developing quality human resources. Higher education includes public and private universities, vocational institutions, and schools. However, there are challenges in creating equal learning opportunities. It is important for the government, private sector and society to work together to build fair and inclusive policies in education.

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