


The Effectiveness of the School Environment Introduction Period (MPLS) Activities in Improving the Social Adaptation of New Students at SMA Negeri 1 Kutambaru

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
<p>Keywords: MPLS, social adaptation, new students, social interaction, secondary education</p>	<p>The School Environment Introduction Period (MPLS) is an important initial stage in supporting the social adaptation process of new students. This study aims to determine the effectiveness of MPLS activities at SMA Negeri 1 Kutambaru in helping new students adapt socially and identify factors that support or hinder this adaptation process. The method used was a descriptive quantitative approach with data collection techniques in the form of questionnaires and observations during three days of MPLS activities. The results showed that the majority of new students had a high level of social adaptation, with an average score of 4.02. As many as 87% of students found it easy to make new friends, 83% were more confident in interacting, and 79% understood and were willing to obey school rules. Observations also showed that the atmosphere of the activities was active, collaborative, and conducive. These findings are in line with Vygotsky's theory that emphasizes the importance of social interaction in individual development. In conclusion, MPLS activities designed in an educational, participatory, and systematic manner have proven effective in supporting the social adaptation of new students, although further assistance is still needed for a small number of students who show obstacles in interacting.</p>
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INTRODUCTION

The School Environment Introduction Period (MPLS) is an activity designed to introduce new students to the school's environment, culture, values, and rules (Suhartini et al., 2025). This activity not only serves as a transition from the previous level of education but also serves as the initial step in developing students' social identities in their new environment (Amzat & Sadjat, 2025). In the context of senior high school, MPLS is a crucial moment for facilitating social adaptation, character development, and strengthening a sense of togetherness (Hadi, 2025).

Social adaptation is an individual's ability to adjust to social norms, establish healthy relationships with others, and demonstrate cooperative and empathetic attitudes in daily interactions (Ramen Antonov Purba & Verawardina, 2021). For new students, especially those from different school backgrounds or social environments, this process is often

challenging. If not managed properly, obstacles to social adaptation can lead to feelings of alienation, communication difficulties, and even decreased motivation to learn (Prahmana et al., 2025; Ramen Antonov Purba et al., 2024).

At SMA Negeri 1 Kutambaru, the implementation of the MPLS (Student Learning Implementation Program) has become an annual routine organized by the school, encompassing various activities, ranging from teacher and staff introductions, introductions to the school's vision and mission, classroom and facility orientations, to character development and student collaboration activities. However, the effectiveness of MPLS activities in supporting the achievement of these goals, particularly in improving the social adaptation of new students, has not been fully systematically studied.

In reality, new students still experience difficulties interacting with peers, feel awkward in the school environment, or are slow to form healthy social networks. This raises fundamental questions about the extent to which the MPLS program at SMA Negeri 1 Kutambaru has been an effective platform for fostering social adaptation.

Therefore, this research is crucial to evaluate the effectiveness of MPLS activities at SMA Negeri 1 Kutambaru in improving the social adaptation skills of new students. This research is expected to provide a comprehensive overview of MPLS implementation, identify factors that support and hinder social adaptation, and provide input for the school in designing MPLS activities that are more relevant and have a positive impact on students' social development.

In addition to being a means of introducing the physical environment and school rules, MPLS also plays a strategic role in fostering an inclusive and welcoming school culture for new students. Through structured and participatory activities, MPLS can serve as a medium for building student self-confidence, strengthening interpersonal communication, and fostering a sense of belonging within the school community (Ramen A Purba, Rofiki, et al., 2020). Within this framework, the success of MPLS is measured not only by the amount of information new students receive, but also by the extent to which students feel accepted, valued, and able to establish positive social relationships in their new environment (Nugroho et al., 2025; Ramen Antonov Purba, 2021b).

However, not all MPLS implementations achieve optimal impact. In some cases, MPLS activities remain ceremonial and formal, lacking active student involvement, or even inadequately tailored to the psychosocial developmental needs of adolescents. When MPLS activities are not designed in a participatory, relevant, and engaging manner with students' socio-emotional aspects, the potential for fostering social adaptation is diminished. Therefore, it is crucial to conduct data-driven evaluations of the form and results of MPLS implementation to ensure more focused and effective future activities.

Amidst the demands of 21st-century education that emphasize the importance of social skills, collaboration, and empathy, social adaptability has become a crucial component of student competency. Schools are no longer merely places for academic learning but also spaces for character development and social interaction (Krismadinata et al., 2020; Suhaedin et al., 2023). Therefore, examining the effectiveness of the MPLS (Learning and Learning Outcomes Program) as a gateway to fostering social adaptability is a crucial step

in supporting overall educational success. SMA Negeri 1 Kutambaru, as an educational institution committed to quality and integrity, should utilize the findings of this study as a basis for reflection and continuous improvement as it welcomes new students each year.

The urgency of this research lies in the crucial role of the MPLS (Learning and Learning Outcomes Program) as the initial foundation for student social integration in high school. Given the diverse social, economic, cultural, and academic backgrounds that new students bring, schools are required to provide a healthy and supportive transitional space. The MPLS is the only formal platform specifically designed to accommodate this process. Therefore, the effectiveness of MPLS activities not only impacts student comfort during orientation but also has a long-term impact on their learning success, social engagement, and mental health throughout their education.

Furthermore, the results of this study are expected to provide a tangible contribution to schools, particularly SMA Negeri 1 Kutambaru, in designing a more adaptive, participatory, and social-emotional learning program (MPLS) that is oriented toward strengthening the social-emotional aspects of new students. With empirical data on the extent to which MPLS currently plays a role in improving social adaptation, schools can make more targeted improvements based on students' actual needs. Furthermore, this study can also serve as a reference for other schools with similar conditions in developing a more effective approach to implementing MPLS.

In the context of education policies that emphasize character building and the creation of inclusive learning environments, this research is relevant to supporting the national agenda of building an educational ecosystem that is not only academically intelligent but also socially resilient. Strong social adaptation will produce students who are able to collaborate, appreciate differences, and develop holistically. Therefore, examining the effectiveness of MPLS from a social adaptation perspective is not merely an annual activity evaluation, but a crucial part of strategic efforts to realize equitable and transformative education.

METHOD

Research Approaches and Types

This study used a descriptive quantitative approach to describe and analyze the effectiveness of MPLS activities in improving the social adaptation of new students (Sugiyono, 2010). This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to objectively measure research variables through questionnaire distribution and statistical data processing (Ramen Antonov Purba, 2022b).

A descriptive quantitative approach also offers advantages in terms of generalizability of findings, especially when the sample used is proportionally representative of the population. Through this approach, researchers can identify common patterns in students' perceptions of MPLS activities and their relationship to their ability to adapt socially (Tarigan, 2025a). Furthermore, this approach facilitates systematic and measurable analysis of program effectiveness based on predetermined indicators, allowing research results to

serve as a basis for school policy recommendations and the development of similar programs in the future.

Data collection technique

Data was collected through two main techniques:

1. Questionnaires: Used to measure students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the MPLS and their perceived level of social adaptation. The questionnaires were designed based on indicators of program effectiveness and aspects of social adaptation (social interaction, self-confidence, participation, and acceptance of school norms).
2. Observations: Conducted by researchers during the MPLS implementation to record social interactions, student participation, and group dynamics during the activity. These observations served as supporting data for the questionnaire results.
3. Documentation: Collecting secondary data from school archives, such as MPLS activity schedules, attendance lists, and internal school evaluations.

The use of these three data collection techniques was carried out triangulationally to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings. By combining data from questionnaires, direct observations, and documentation, researchers were able to obtain a more comprehensive and objective picture of the implementation of MPLS and its impact on students' social adaptation (Tarigan, 2025b). This triangulation also allowed researchers to compare student perceptions with the reality on the ground, ensuring that the research results were not merely assumptions but also based on verified empirical facts.

Research Instrument

The main instrument used in this study was a closed-ended questionnaire structured on a Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). This questionnaire was first validated through content validity testing by education experts and a limited pilot test on 10 respondents to test its reliability using Cronbach's Alpha (Makbul, 2021; Ramen Antonov Purba, 2022a).

In addition, in developing the questionnaire items, the researcher referred to relevant theories regarding the effectiveness of educational programs and social adaptation to ensure that each statement reflects an appropriate indicator and can be systematically measured. The indicators were based on aspects such as the clarity of information received during the MPLS, student involvement in activities, comfort in social interactions, and acceptance of school norms and culture. Thus, the instrument used not only meets technical measurement standards but is also conceptually relevant to the research objectives.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data obtained from the questionnaire will be analyzed using descriptive statistics, including average values, percentages, and effectiveness categories. Observational data will be analyzed qualitatively to strengthen the interpretation of quantitative results. The results from both types of data will be compared and analyzed to conclude the effectiveness of

MPLS in improving the social adaptation of new students (Ramen A Purba, Tamrin, et al., 2020).

To support accurate data interpretation, the results of the descriptive statistical analysis will be presented in tables and diagrams to facilitate the reading of trends and distribution of respondents' responses. Meanwhile, the qualitatively analyzed observational data will be categorized based on key themes such as student interaction patterns, group involvement, and emotional responses during the activity. By combining these two forms of analysis, researchers can formulate conclusions that are not only numerical but also contextual, so that the recommendations provided are more applicable and in line with actual conditions in the field (Suliyanto & MM, 2017).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Based on the questionnaire data that was completed by 60 class X students who were respondents, the following results were obtained:

1. Effectiveness of MPLS Implementation

Based on data processing using descriptive statistics, the average effectiveness score for the MPLS activities was 4.15 on a Likert scale of 1–5. This indicates that students generally rated the MPLS activities at SMA Negeri 1 Kutambaru as "Very Effective."

- a. 94% of students stated that the information provided during the MPLS was clear and easy to understand.
- b. 91% felt actively involved in the MPLS activities, including group discussions, educational games, and teacher introduction sessions and school rules.

These results indicate that the MPLS activities at SMA Negeri 1 Kutambaru were designed and implemented with attention to the principles of active participation, two-way communication, and the relevance of the material to the needs of new students. Activities such as group discussions, educational games, and sessions introducing school values were deemed effective in creating a pleasant and relaxed atmosphere. This is important because positive early experiences at school can increase students' motivation to learn, social engagement, and perceptions of the school as a welcoming and supportive place.

Furthermore, students' active involvement during the MPLS demonstrates that they are not merely recipients of information but also subjects playing a role in the process of familiarizing themselves with the school environment. Activities that prioritize interaction and collaboration between students can build self-confidence and foster solidarity from the outset. This serves as an important foundation for the formation of an inclusive and supportive learning community in the classroom and the school environment as a whole. This success demonstrates that the effectiveness of MPLS is largely determined by the approach used and students' emotional involvement throughout the entire series of activities.

2. Social Adaptation of New Students

In terms of social adaptation, the average score was 4.02, which falls into the "High" category. The breakdown is as follows:

- a. 87% of students found it easier to make new friends after participating in the MPLS.
- b. 83% of students felt more confident in public speaking and interacting with teachers after the MPLS activities.
- c. 79% of students stated that they understand and are willing to comply with school norms and rules.

These findings indicate that MPLS significantly contributes to accelerating new students' social adjustment to the school environment. The ability to make new friends and increased self-confidence are important indicators of successful social adaptation. Collaboratively designed activities, such as group work and simulations of real-life school situations, provide a space for students to get to know their peers and practice interpersonal communication skills directly. This also minimizes the likelihood of awkwardness, social isolation, or discomfort commonly experienced by students when entering a new environment.

Furthermore, the high percentage of students who understand and accept school norms and regulations demonstrates that the MPLS program is not only successful in conveying information but also instilling the values of discipline and responsibility. The internalization of these values is crucial in creating a school culture that is orderly and conducive to long-term learning. Therefore, the social adaptations formed through the MPLS program are not merely temporary during orientation but can serve as a foundation for positive student behavior throughout their education at SMA Negeri 1 Kutambaru.

3. Observation and Documentation Results

Observations conducted by researchers during the three days of MPLS activities showed that new students tended to be active, cooperative, and enthusiastic in participating in each session. Interactions between students ran smoothly, especially during group activities. Some students who appeared passive on the first day began to show active involvement on the second and third days. Documentation in the form of activity photos, the MPLS schedule, and attendance lists demonstrated high student participation and that the activities proceeded according to plan.

Interactive MPLS activities, such as cooperative games, group discussions, and experience-sharing sessions, have proven effective in breaking the ice and building camaraderie among students. In several sessions, students began to open up and exhibit more relaxed and happy facial expressions. This demonstrates that the activities have successfully created a safe and supportive environment, which is crucial for successful social adaptation. Activities conducted outside the classroom, such as school tours and extracurricular activity simulations, also provide hands-on experiences that strengthen students' emotional connections to their new school environment.

Researchers also noted that the involvement of teachers and the Student Council (OSIS) committee in guiding the MPLS activities positively impacted the social dynamics of

new students. The presence of friendly and supportive senior figures made new students feel valued and accepted, resulting in a faster and more effective socialization process. No intimidating behavior or hazing activities were observed, which in many cases can hinder social adaptation. Thus, the implementation of MPLS at SMA Negeri 1 Kutambaru reflects the principles of humanistic education and a focus on character development.

In addition to direct observation notes, visual documentation such as activity photographs demonstrates students' positive expressions, active engagement in the sessions, and the naturally fostered sense of community. The structured activity schedule and attendance list, which showed nearly 100% student attendance, indicate that the MPLS activities were well-designed and able to attract comprehensive participation. This documentary evidence reinforces the finding that the MPLS activities were not only technically smooth but also substantially effective in establishing a strong start for the social integration of new students at the school.

Discussion

The research results show that the MPLS program at SMA Negeri 1 Kutambaru has proven effective in improving the social adaptation of new students. These findings confirm that MPLS serves not only as a physical introduction to the school environment but also as a means of strengthening students' social and emotional well-being as they navigate the educational transition phase. The questionnaire results, which showed high scores on the indicators of information clarity and active participation, reflect that the planning and implementation of MPLS activities have fulfilled participatory and communicative elements. This aligns with Vygotsky's (Suhaedin et al., 2023) view of the importance of social interaction in individual development, including in the context of formal education.

High social adaptation, as demonstrated by students' ease in forming relationships and increased self-confidence, reinforces the notion that early school experiences significantly influence students' long-term social integration. This finding aligns with Santrock's (Hamdani et al., 2023; Ramen Antonov Purba, 2021a), findings, which suggest that school environmental support significantly influences adolescents' social and psychological adjustment during the school transition.

Furthermore, observations show that the collaborative and non-oppressive atmosphere of the MPLS provides a safe space for students to express themselves. This is crucial, given that many schools still implement MPLS that is oriented toward instructions and one-way activities. The success of SMA Negeri 1 Kutambaru in implementing MPLS based on an educational and non-discriminatory approach should serve as a good example for other schools.

However, this study also found that while most students demonstrated good social adaptation, approximately 10–15% still displayed a withdrawn attitude and were not yet fully engaged in interactions. This suggests that the diversity of students' backgrounds, characters, and early experiences still requires a more individualized and sustainable approach beyond the MPLS period.

Thus, the results of this study confirm that systematically designed, educational, and interactive MPLS activities are highly effective in supporting the social adaptation of new students. However, the continuity of social adaptation development after the MPLS is also important to ensure all students can develop optimally socially, emotionally, and academically throughout their school years.

It is important to note that the effectiveness of MPLS is also greatly influenced by the active involvement of all elements of the school, including the principal, teachers, staff, and senior students (OSIS). This inclusive involvement creates a warm and familial atmosphere, which serves as important social capital in facilitating the adaptation of new students. The role of teachers as facilitators and motivators, and the role of senior students as friendly and supportive mentors, has been shown to accelerate the process of social acceptance of new students within the school community. This aligns with the concept of scaffolding in Vygotsky's theory, where social interactions with more competent individuals help new students build understanding and confidence in a new environment.

In addition to internal school factors, student background is also an important variable influencing successful social adaptation. Some students come from highly academically oriented junior high schools, while others come from schools with a more relaxed learning approach. These differences result in variations in initial abilities to interact, develop self-confidence, and understand the structure of high school. Therefore, while MPLS is effective in fostering general social adaptation, more personalized follow-up strategies are needed, such as mentoring new students, group counseling, or involving them in extracurricular activities to expand their social networks.

From a methodological perspective, the integration of quantitative data from the questionnaire and qualitative data from observations strengthens the validity of this study's findings. Students who reported increased self-confidence and social openness in the questionnaire were also generally recorded as active in group activities based on field observations. This correlation indicates that students' internal perceptions align with their external behaviors in the MPLS activities, further confirming that these activities have comprehensively met their objectives. This demonstrates the importance of a triangulation approach in educational research, particularly in assessing socio-emotional aspects that cannot always be measured numerically.

Finally, the findings of this study provide an important foundation for developing school policies to design more sustainable student transition programs. The Student Transition Program (MPLS) should not be viewed as a temporary activity within the academic calendar, but rather as an integral part of new students' character and social development strategies. Therefore, schools should consider integrating social adaptation values into ongoing programs, such as mentoring classes, community service projects, or student discussion forums. In this way, the spirit of togetherness and adaptive skills developed during the MPLS can continue to grow and strengthen a healthy, collaborative, and inclusive school climate throughout the school year.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the School Environment Introduction Period (MPLS) activities at SMA Negeri 1 Kutambaru were implemented effectively and made a positive contribution to the social adaptation of new students. The average effectiveness score of 4.15 and social adaptation of 4.02 indicate that students felt real benefits from this activity, such as ease in understanding school information, active involvement, increased self-confidence, and the ability to establish good social relationships. Field observations supported these findings by demonstrating high student enthusiasm and participation in all MPLS activities. Thus, MPLS has been proven to play a constructive role in transitioning new students to familiarize themselves with the school environment and foster positive social integration. Furthermore, the research results also demonstrate the importance of an educational and participatory approach in the implementation of MPLS. Activities designed with inclusive, communicative, and enjoyable principles have been proven to create a safe and supportive atmosphere for new students in the adaptation process. Although a small number of students still show a tendency to be withdrawn, this provides input for the school to continue social development efforts on an ongoing basis beyond the MPLS period. Therefore, the success of MPLS does not only depend on the initial activities, but also on the continuity of the coaching program that is responsive to students' psychosocial needs during their study period at school.

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