

GORONTALO AND JAVANESE ETHNICITY: AN OVERVIEW OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

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Abstract

This study describes the effectiveness of intercultural communication among the people of Suka Mulya Village, which is home to the two most populous ethnic groups, the Gorontalo and the Javanese. This study employs a qualitative research method. Data successfully collected from primary and secondary sources via interviews and observation was analyzed through data reduction, data presentation, and concluding/data verification. The study's findings revealed intercultural communication between Gorontalo and Javanese ethnics in Suka Mulya Village, as evidenced by seven indicators: mutual respect, cultural acculturation, mindfulness, openness, tolerance, empathy, interdependence, and inter-ethnic marriage.

Keywords: *Intercultural Communication; Gorontalo ethnicity; Javanese ethnicity*

A. Introduction

Since interacting with society, someone has begun to absorb cultural values. This set of values and norms is derived from the people who live in the area.¹ In other words, the culture that a person has acquired is the result of a communication process. That is why culture and communication are inextricably linked. Culture determines how the communicator conveys the message and how the communicant understands the message.

Intercultural communication is communication between individuals or groups who speak different languages and have different cultural backgrounds. Individuals from different cultural backgrounds must be able to explore and learn how to carry out the communication process. In its most basic form, intercultural communication is interpersonal communication between people from different cultural backgrounds.^{2 3 4}

Wonosari District is known in Gorontalo as a multicultural sub-district in Boalemo Regency due to its residents' diverse ethnic backgrounds. Bongo Satu, Bongo Dua, Jatimulya, and Suka Mulya are villages with a majority of ethnic Javanese residents. Balinese is the majority ethnic in Bongo Tiga, Tri Rukun, and Raharja villages. Meanwhile, ethnic Sasak people live in Dimito and Suka Mulya villages. Suka Mulya Village, in particular, is home to the majority of Gorontalo

¹ Wahidah Suryani, "Komunikasi Antar Budaya: Berbagi Budaya Berbagi Makna," *Farabi* 10, no. 1 (2013): 1–14, <https://journal.iaingorontalo.ac.id/index.php/fa/article/view/763>.

² Suryani.

³ Aminullah, Puji Lestari, and Sigit Tripambudi, "Model Komunikasi Antarbudaya Etnik Madura Dan Etnik Melayu," *Jurnal Komunikasi ASPIKOM* 2, no. 4 (2015): 272–81, <https://doi.org/10.24329/aspikom.v2i4.77>.

⁴ Alo Liliweri, *Dasar-Dasar Komunikasi Antar Budaya* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2013).

and Javanese ethnicities. 712 Gorontalo residents, 469 Javanese, 215 Sasak, 1 Balinese, and 5 Mandar. The ethnic diversity in Wonosari District is related to the Indonesian transmigration program in Gorontalo between 1950 and 1960.⁵

Facts about ethnic diversity in Wonosari District, particularly in Suka Mulya Village, provide an overview of Indonesia's ethnic diversity. So, Indonesia has long been known for its diverse society, which includes many ethnic groups, religions, languages, customs, and so forth.⁶ Following the Central Statistics Agency's (BPS) 2010 census, Indonesia has 1,340 ethnic or ethnic groups. The Javanese ethnic group is the largest in Indonesia, making up 41 percent of the total population.⁷ These facts highlight the significance of learning more about multi-ethnic societies' harmony, particularly the relationship between culture and communication.

The different cultural backgrounds might lead to differences in interpreting the message. This difference is not an obstacle for every ethnicity in Wonosari District to live harmoniously and side by side. This fact is in line with the findings of previous studies regarding the Gayo and Javanese ethnicities. Although there are differences in interpreting and

⁵ Helman Manay, "Proyek Demografi Dalam Bayang-Bayang Disintegrasi Nasional: Studi Tentang Transmigrasi Di Gorontalo, 1950-1960," *Jurnal Sejarah Citra Lekha* 1, no. 2 (2016): 93–106, <https://doi.org/10.14710/jscl.v1i2.12766>.

⁶ Suranto Aw, "Implementasi Teori Komunikasi Sosial Budaya Dalam Pembangunan Integrasi Bangsa," *INFORMASI Kajian Ilmu Komunikasi* 45, no. 1 (2015): 65–72, <https://doi.org/10.21831/informasi.v45i1.7771>.

⁷ Indonesia.go.id, "Suku Bangsa," 2017, <https://indonesia.go.id/profil/suku-bangsa/kebudayaan/suku-bangsa#:~:text=Indonesia memiliki lebih dari 300,mencapai 41%25 dari total populasi.>

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responding to messages in a communication process, these two ethnicities can coexist despite having different cultural backgrounds.⁸

Other research findings show that differences in the cultural background do not become a barrier to interaction between students of Papuan and Manadonese ethnicity. Both ethnic always prioritize mutual respect.⁹ In Roban Village, Singkwang City, West Kalimantan, the same is true for the Madurese and Malay. In these two ethnic groups, mutual respect and appreciation are a model of intercultural communication.¹⁰

Relevant to subsequent research findings, the relationship between the Gorontalo ethnic and the Balinese ethnic in Raharja Village is harmonious and very tolerant. The two mutually build a shared identity without any ethnic group feeling disturbed.¹¹ This finding is the same as the findings of previous studies regarding the tolerance attitude of the Gorontalo, Minahasa, and Balinese people in Tri Rukun Village during Nyepi Day.¹² Other research findings reveal that tolerance has become a significant aspect of the relationship between individuals of different

⁸ Effiati Juliana Hasibuan and Indra Muda, "Komunikasi Antar Budaya Pada Etnis Gayo Dengan Etnis Jawa," *Simbolika* 3, no. 2 (2017): 106–13, <https://doi.org/10.31289/simbolika.v3i2.1456>.

⁹ Marselina Lagu, "Komunikasi Antarbudaya Di Kalangan Mahasiswa Etnik Papua Dan Etnik Manado Di Universitas Samratulangi Manado," *Acta Diurna Komunikasi* 5, no. 3 (2016), <https://ejournal.unsrat.ac.id/index.php/actadiurnakomunikasi/article/view/12774>.

¹⁰ Aminullah, Lestari, and Tripambudi, "Model Komunikasi Antarbudaya Etnik Madura Dan Etnik Melayu."

¹¹ Momy A. Hunowu, Hatim B. Pakuna, and Muhammad Obie, "Creating Harmony in Multi-Ethnic and Religious Community: Evidence from the Transmigration Land of Raharja Village, Indonesia," *East African Scholars Multidisciplinary Bulletin* 3, no. 4 (2020): 181–86, <https://doi.org/0.36349/easmb.2020.v03i04.004>.

¹² Roni Lukum, "Membangun Keharmonisan Antara Etnis Lokal Gorontalo Dengan Etnis Bali Dalam Mewujudkan Negara Multikulturalisme Di Desa Tri Rukun Kecamatan Wonosari Kabupaten Boalemo Provinsi Gorontalo Dan Implikasinya Terhadap Ketahanan Wilayah," *Gorontalo Journal of Government and Political Studies* 4, no. 1 (2021): 25–39, <https://doi.org/10.32662/gjgops.v4i1.1436>.

ethnic backgrounds in Banuroja Village. Toleration is critical for living a joyful and peaceful society.¹³

Previous studies have not discussed harmony and intercultural communication in the Gorontalo and Javanese ethnic communities in Suka Mulya Village. Therefore, this research completes previous research findings on the relationship between culture and communication. This research also complements the portrait of ethnic diversity in Indonesia through the harmony of the Gorontalo and Javanese ethnic communities in Suka Mulya Village, Wonosari District, Boalemo Regency, Gorontalo Province.

This study uses a qualitative method because the researcher seeks to explore the harmony of the people of Suka Mulya Village from the perspective of intercultural communication. The data in this research come from primary data and secondary data. The primary source of information is obtained through observation and interviewing approaches. Secondary data are official records or papers related to the study topic.¹⁴ Data examination employs the steps of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion/data verification.

¹³ Darwin Une, "Interaksi Sosial Budaya Masyarakat Desa Banuroja," *Gorontalo Journal of Government and Political Studies* 4, no. 1 (2021): 178–86, <https://doi.org/10.32662/gjgops.v4i1.1459>.

¹⁴ Saifudin Azwar, *Metodologi Penelitian* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2011).

B. Discussion of the Findings

Effectiveness of Intercultural Communication

Intercultural communication aims to create effective communication through the identical meaning of the messages exchanged. In addition, intercultural communication aims to express social identity and become a connection to cultural differences through new information. Intercultural communication can alter communication practices, allowing people to become more understanding of the cultural backgrounds of others.¹⁵

The effectiveness of intercultural communication includes four things. First, individuals must be able to express themselves clearly and competently. Second, the ability to interact well. In other words, people may express themselves in precise, unambiguous language in a welcoming setting. Third, the ability to adapt to diverse cultures, even when numerous forces are present during the adaptation process. Fourth, the individual's capacity ensures that he can adapt to and overcome the stress of various cultures.¹⁶

According to the findings of this study, the four components of intercultural communication efficiency mentioned above may be expressed in 1) Mutual respect; 2) Cultural acculturation; 3) Awareness; 4) Openness; 5) Tolerance; 6) Empathy and interdependence; and 7) Inter-ethnic marriage. The following table, which lists the findings from interviews, illustrates these seven points:

Table 1 – Indicators of Effectiveness of Intercultural Communication

¹⁵ Liliweri, *Dasar-Dasar Komunikasi Antar Budaya*.

¹⁶ Alo Liliweri, *Makna Budaya Dalam Komunikasi Antarbudaya* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2009).

Indicator	Interview quote	Research informant code
Mutual respect	Our friendship is strong, and I like spending time with Javanese people. So far, we have coexisted peacefully. When it comes to differences, they are natural. I personally respond to all of this by wanting to understand more; they learn about my culture, and I learn about theirs; we just respect one other.	G.AAH
	So far, contact with the Gorontalo has been excellent. Moreover, we have lived here for a long time, interacting with them every day, yet, <i>alhamdulillah</i> , I have never heard of any confrontation between us.	J.ZM
Cultural acculturation	I like the habit of Javanese people who speak softly and politely. I unintentionally mimic their behaviors. Furthermore, the majority of my pals are Javanese. So, I interact with them daily, mimic their routines, and even when I speak to my parents or family, I soften. Also, when speaking with my	G.RA

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	Gorontalo pals, I frequently talk to them in Javanese.	
	I can also communicate their language, and there are numerous terms that I frequently use in my daily interactions. My children are more eloquent in the Gorontalo dialect.	J.ZM
Awareness	I've never felt insulted when speaking with them. They, like myself, are careful while speaking with me.	J.S
	<i>Alhamdulillah</i> , I never had a fight with the Javanese.	G.JK
Openness	Open, open, open. As an immigrant, I must be approachable. It's impossible to resist opening it. The folks of Gorontalo have likewise been incredibly welcoming. To quickly become connected, you must, of course, be open. How can we get along with them if we keep locking ourselves off and refusing to mingle?	J.S
	Everyone gets along with everyone here. They make no distinctions. They will assist anyone who requires assistance. The essential thing is that everyone here is friendly.	G.AP

Tolerance	We are accustomed to coexisting with people of many nationalities and beliefs. That is not an issue for us. We respect one another and live in peace. They appreciate various tribes in other villages, particularly in their own. Help each other regardless of tribal affiliation or religion.	G.DM
Empathy and interdependence	We employ many Javanese, and they hire many of us, from planting through harvesting, for example.	G.UI
Inter-ethnic marriage	My spouse is Gorontalo. I am Javanese. There are no issues; I quickly adjust to his family, and my spouse has little difficulty speaking with my family. Maybe the only problem is language. Our relationship has been good so far. We can understand each other. At home, we usually speak Indonesian.	J.CH
	My wife is from Java, and I am from Gorontalo. So far, no issues have arisen. If any existed, they would only be in the language.	G.DM

Mutual respect is necessary for successful intercultural communication. Schramm suggests that effective intercultural communication consists of four conditions. First and foremost, treat

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individuals of different cultures as human beings. Second, appreciate other cultures for what they are rather than what we desire them to be. Third, recognize the right of people from different cultures to behave differently than us. Fourth, an effective cross-cultural communicator must learn to love living with individuals from other cultures.¹⁷ The residents of Suka Mulya Village live with this attitude of mutual respect and gratitude. They always prioritize this attitude to maintain the life of the people of Suka Mulya Village remains secure and conflict-free.

Acculturation refers to the process of modifying one's culture through contact or direct exposure to another culture. Suryanto gave an example, if a group of migrants lives in a particular area, their culture will be affected by the culture of the host community. Gradually, the ways of behaving, values, and beliefs in the host culture will become part of the culture of the immigrant group. At the same time, the host culture also changed.¹⁸ The Gorontalo ethnic and Javanese ethnic who inhabit Suka Mulya Village still maintain the authenticity of their respective cultures. Cultural variety benefits the members of the two ethnic groups. The customs of the Javanese are viewed positively and absorbed by the Gorontalo community, and vice versa. For example, the use of regional languages. Javanese ethnic community used the Gorontalo local dialect in Suka Mulya, and the ethnic Gorontalo people used Javanese vocabulary in their talks.

Intercultural communication will be effective if a mindful situation occurs in the communication process. To achieve this, each person participating in the conversation should reduce negative perspectives to

¹⁷ Deddy Mulyana and Jalaluddin Rakhmat, *Komunikasi Antar Budaya* (Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 1990).

¹⁸ Suryanto, *Pengantar Ilmu Komunikasi* (Bandung: Pustaka Setia, 2015).

minimize cultural misunderstandings. These attentive situations can reduce personal anxiety and also have a positive influence on social relations. Mindful can prevent conflict caused by incompatibility when communicating with people of different cultures. The things that color intercultural communication are misunderstandings due to differences in language, ways of communicating, and differences in value orientations between individuals with different cultural backgrounds. The norms that apply in each culture are different. It is preferable to avoid associating one's own cultural rules with those of other people's cultures. That is why, in their interactions, the people of Suka Mulya Village are always careful in communicating, especially with people with different ethnic backgrounds. It is necessary to avoid misconceptions that might lead to confrontation.

The cultural distinctions among the residents of Suka Mulya Village do not separate the community. The two majority ethnic groups can create a mindful communication situation. In other words, both ethnicities have adequate intercultural communication skills. They demonstrate motivation and knowledge to communicate effectively, efficiently, and adequately. It exemplifies the ability of people of both backgrounds to appreciate all cultural differences.

Openness is a critical component of good intercultural communication. Openness is essential for creating optimum interpersonal interactions. An open attitude is also needed in social life to avoid conflict. An attitude of openness can manifest an attitude of mutual understanding, respect, and cooperation among community members. Likewise, the Gorontalo and Javanese ethnic communities in Suka Mulya Village have implemented an attitude of openness in their daily lives.

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Openness allows the people of Suka Mulya Village to gain more experiences and new relationships.

The Gorontalo and Javanese ethnic communities in Suka Mulya Village have a high sense of tolerance. Tolerance is defined not only as an attitude but also as a state of mind, a way of thinking whose distinctiveness lies in the willingness to accept and respect differences. Tolerance does not just refer to religion; it also refers to a fundamental attitude to living a harmonious existence in a pluralistic community. In essence, tolerance is an attitude of mutual respect and cooperation between different groups of people in ethnicity, language, culture, politics, and religion. In Suka Mulya Village, the absence of discrimination or discrimination against individuals based on ethnicity is a form of tolerance. The Gorontalo and Javanese ethnic groups are open to accepting differences, appreciating and respecting the rights of others, and living in peace. The people of Suka Mulya Village are used to living tolerantly in many cultural and religious matters.

The people of Suka Mulya Village have a high sense of empathy. If there is a calamity or a bereavement, the local community will come to their assistance. The assistance provided is generally food assistance such as rice. There is also assistance in the form of cash. The people of Suka Mulya Village help each other regardless of differences in ethnic background. In addition, they also help each other in terms of work. On average, the Gorontalo ethnic in Suka Mulya Village sell their garden produce to the Javanese ethnic community, and vice versa.

The findings of this study indicate that many ethnic Gorontalo people are married to ethnic Javanese. Marriages of different cultures in Suka Mulya Village are common. Traditional wedding processions, language, and other differences are not an issue, and there is a way out.

C. Conclusion

Living side by side for a relatively long time, the Gorontaloese and Javanese people of Suka Mulya Village can understand and respect one another. Intercultural communication in Suka Mulya Village between the two ethnicities is running effectively. Seven indicators of intercultural communication effectiveness in Suka Mulya Village include mutual respect, cultural acculturation, mindfulness, openness, tolerance, empathy and interdependence, and inter-ethnic marriage.

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