Ethnocentrism, Intergroup Anxiety and Willingness to Communicate between Cultures: A Study on Javanese and Madurese Ethnic Students

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ABSTRACT

Inter-ethnic harmony needs to continue to be maintained for the sake of national and state life. This harmony starts from the willingness to inter-cultural communication. This research aims to investigate relationship between ethnocentrism, intergroup anxiety and willingness to communicate between cultures and examine differences in terms of gender and ethnicity. Using a correlational research design, this research involved 172 student respondents at UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya with 97 Javanese ethnic backgrounds and 75 Madurese students who were selected using a purposive sampling technique. Data collection was conducted using a questionnaire. The SFGENE-7 scale was used to measure the level of entocentrism, while the Greenland Group Anxiety Scale was used to measure intergroup anxiety, and the IWTC scale was used to measure the willingness to communicate between cultures. The results of this study indicate that ethnocentrism and intergroup anxiety have a significant negative relationship with willingness to communicate interculturally. Furthermore, there were no significant differences in the three variables tested in terms of ethnicity and gender.

ABSTRAK

Kerukunan antar etnis perlu terus dijaga dalam kehidupan berbangsa dan bernegara. Kerukunan ini dimulai dari kesediaan untuk berkomunikasi antar budaya. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk melihat apakah ada hubungan antara etnosentrisme, kecemasan antar kelompok dan kesediaan berkomunikasi antar budaya serta melihat apakah terdapat perbedaannya dari sisi jenis kelamin dan etnis. Menggunakan desain penelitian korelasional, penelitian ini melibatkan 172 responden mahasiswa UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya dengan latar belakang etnis Jawa sebanyak 97 mahasiswa dan etnis Madura sebanyak 75 mahasiswa yang dipilih dengan teknik purposive sampling. Pengambilan data dilakukan menggunakan kuisioner. Skala SFGENE-7 digunakan untuk mengukur tingkat entosentrisme, sementara Skala Kecemasan kelompok Greenland digunakan untuk mengukur kecemasan antar kelompok, dan skala IWTC digunakan untuk untuk mengukur kesediaan berkomunikasi antar budaya. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa etnosentrisme dan kecemasan antar kelompok memiliki hubungan negative yang signifikan dengan kesediaan berkomunikasi antar budaya. Hasil lainnya menujukkan tidak ada perbedaan yang signifikan pada tiga variabel yang diuji ditinjau dari etnisitas dan jenis kelamin.

Introduction

Cultural diversity among the community results in the need to better understand the process of intercultural communication (Logan &; Hunt, 2014), especially in regional students (Giri, 2016). Based on the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) of East Java (Central Bureau of Statistics of East Java Province, 2019), the number of students in the city of Surabaya has the highest total compared to other regions, namely 272,846 students with 114,958 students at state universities (PTN) and 157,888 students at private universities (PTS). According to Harel, the highest number of students in Surabaya is dominated by regional students who come from various regions (Harel, 2019). Aldiansyah explained that restrictions on the interaction of regional students with indigenous people having different cultural and linguistic backgrounds made them less able to adjust communication patterns to the new environment occupied (Aldiansyah, 2019). Communication of students who have different cultural and linguistic backgrounds from the natives is a form of intercultural communication (Hasibuan, 2016; Pragash et al., 2018). A literature review revealed that intercultural communication in overseas students will be created when students have an intercultural willingness to communicate (Pragash et al., 2018). Intercultural willingness to communicate or IWTC refers to the extent to which people tend to initiate communication with people from other cultures or races (Kassing, 1997; Logan & Hunt, 2014). A number of literature reviews have revealed IWTC is related to ethnocentrism and anxiety variables between groups (Logan et al., 2016; Tegelaar, 2012).

Students coming from another region, often feel anxious and uncertain when interacting with students from other cultural backgrounds, which sometimes causes these students to avoid initiating interactions (Logan et al., 2016; Logan & Hunt, 2014). In addition, research found the role of ethnocentrism on the willingness of intercultural communication (Fatemi et al., 2016; Logan & Hunt, 2014; Rajan et al., 2021). Ethnocentrism is the extent to which a person values one's own culture above other cultures (Logan et al., 2016). Ethnocentrism has been known to play a role as a major factor influencing intercultural communication, having contributed to the emergence of individual willingness to carry out intercultural communication (Cargile &; Bolkan, 2013).

Essentially human beings either consciously or unconsciously want to communicate effectively (Gudykunst, 1995), and ethnocentrism and willingness to communicate between cultures (IWTC) had key roles in early intercultural interactions (Croucher, 2013). People with high levels of communication anxiety have a lower willingness to communicate. They tend to avoid or withdraw from communication with others (McCroskey & Richmond, 1990). In addition, IWTC is noted as an early positive sign of engaging in intercultural interaction (Justen, 2009). (Campbell, 2016) has emphasized that interaction is a central process of intercultural competence, without a willingness to engage with others, it seems impossible to develop a level of intercultural competence. Identify that there are many reasons why individuals might avoid communicating with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. (Gonzalez et al., 2017) mentioned that individuals achieve a greater sense of belonging through integration, this can lead to a greater intercultural willingness to communicate when the opportunity arises. In addition, this can also lead to a greater level of intercultural competence as individuals achieve an ethno-relativist point of view that makes them more sensitive to different cultures, as well as intercultural adaptability to their environment. Since the private universities chosen to conduct this research are very crowded by Chinese students, and fewer Indian and Malay students, it is better to study IWTC students than face-to-face interethnic interaction.

Ethnocentrism has been a major topic since the term was introduced more than a century ago to the vocabulary of social scientists, by William Sumner. As cited by James W. Neuliep, (2012) ethnocentrism refers to "the technical name for this view of things in which one's own group is the center of everything, and all others are scaled and judged with reference to it". Logan et al., (2016) affirm ethnocentrism as a fundamental aspect that significantly affects IWTC and needs further research.

Mortazavi et al., (2015) explored the impact of ethnocentrism on social capital bridging interethnicity through mediating online interethnic interactions among multi-ethnic Malaysian students. The results showed that although more than 50% of respondents daily interacted with their peers of different ethnicities, the level of ethnocentrism of respondents was reported to be negatively correlated with the level of interethnic interaction. Tamam, (2013) adds, when people judge out-group members based on their own beliefs and values, it is difficult for them to engage in bias-free interethnic interactions. Therefore, Tamam sees ethnocentrism as an obstacle to multiethnic communities. Imamura et al., (2016) define intergroup communication anxiety at the individual level as "one's uncomfortable feeling of being uncomfortable, tense, worried, and worried" about communicating with an individual who is perceived as a member of an outgroup. Anxiety has been studied extensively as an explanatory mechanism between intergroup contact and attitudes. Specifically, anxiety mediates the relationship between contact dimensions (i.e., frequency, quality) and intergroup attitude dimensions (i.e., behavioral, affective).

Intergroup anxiety may explain the lack of meaningful relationships in intercultural interactions. Ruble & Zhang, (2012) suggested intergroup anxiety as feelings of worry, uncertainty, or anxiety that arise from intercultural encounters. Often this anxiety comes from the risk of embarrassment during interactions or arises from misunderstandings or miscommunication. Intergroup anxiety plays an important role in both the communication patterns of both migrants and members of the host culture, as shown by previous studies (Imamura et al., 2012).

Research on the tensions between Madurese and Javanese students is crucial for gaining a comprehensive understanding of interethnic dynamics within Indonesia's diverse cultural landscape. By investigating the levels of ethnocentrism and intergroup anxiety within these two distinct cultural groups, the study seeks to unravel potential sources of tension and apprehension. Furthermore, the research delves into the willingness to communicate between Javanese and Madurese students, examining factors that may either hinder or facilitate effective intercultural interactions. This study holds significance in providing valuable insights into the complexities of interethnic relations, offering a foundation for informed interventions and strategies to foster better understanding, cooperation, and harmony among diverse student populations in Indonesia.

Furthermore, several studies have shown the role of ethnocentrism and anxiety between groups in the decline in the willingness to communicate between cultures. Examining previous findings in different cultural contexts is necessary, especially in university contexts where students are often faced with situations where they are involved in academics that require interacting with people of different ethnicities. In addition, adaptation to non-academic life is also related to the ability and willingness to establish communication with people from different cultural backgrounds. Departing from the above background, it is important to conduct research related to the role of ethnocentrism, intergroup anxiety and willingness to communicate between cultures in students. This study will examine how the relationship between entocentrism and anxiety between groups with the willingness to communicate between cultures among students at the State Islamic Univerisity (UIN) of Sunan Ampel Surabaya and whether there are differences in terms of gender and ethnicity.

Method

This type of research is quantitative correlational where ethnocentrism as variable X1, anxiety between groups as variable X2 and willingness to communicate between cultures as variable Y. Participants consisted of students of State Islamic University of Sunan Ampel Surabaya. The samples were selected using the purposive sampling technique, focused on Javanese and Maduranese students. Representation of each faculty at the university was also taken into account in determining the sample size. Data was taken using *paper and pencil questionnaires*. Regarding research ethics, students are presented *with informed consent* before filling out the questionnaire. Participation is totally voluntary and they can drop from their study whenever they wanted. From the distributed

instruments, in total 193 data were collected which were then sorted to ensure the validity of the incoming data with the following stages, first; ensuring the completeness of the data of each subject, second; tracing on redundant data, and the third; tracing data outliers. From these three stages, 172 data are eligible for further analysis consisting of 97 ethnic Javanese students and 75 ethnic Madurese. This data were further processed for the data analysis. Description of the participant can be seen in tabel 1.

Table 1. Distribution of research subjects by gender and faculty

Background	Gender		Total
	Male	**Female**	
Faculty of origin			
Faculty of Adab and Humanities	4	14	18
Faculty Dakwah and Communication	10	12	22
Faculty of Economics and Business	5	15	20
Faculty of Social and Political Sciences	8	14	22
Faculty of Psychology and Health	3	20	23
Faculty of Science and Technology	6	12	18
Faculty of Sharia and Law	6	10	16
Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training	3	16	19
Faculty Ushuluddin and Philosophy	7	7	14
Ethnic Background			
Javanese Students	26	71	97
Madurese Students	26	49	75
Total			172

The data collection technique uses a Scale with Likert answer format (1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree). The ethnocentrism scale is adapted from Neto & Neto, (2022)*short form measure* model (SFGENE-7) which includes 7 items. Based on the results of the item validity test in the Ethnocentric variable shows that of the 7 items all are considered valid with *corrected item total correlation* between 0.42-0.51, and Cronbach's alpha reliability value = 0.764. Meanwhile, to measure anxiety between groups, a scale measuring instrument developed by (Greenland et al., 2012) was used which contained 17 items. Based on the results of the validity test, out of 18 items there were 3 items that were dropped, namely in items 1, 2 and 7, with *corrected item total correlation* between 0.40-0.72, and Cronbach's alpha reliability value = 0.806. Finally, to measure students' intercultural willingness to communicate, the IWTC intercultural willingness scale to communicate was used (Kassing, 1997) which included 12 items. The validity test results showed 11 valid items with *corrected item total correlation* between 0.42-0.74 and Cronbach's alpha reliability = 0.89.

The data that has been collected is then analyzed in several steps. First, descriptive statistical analysis to obtain a general picture of the data. Furthermore, classical assumption tests are also carried out. Finally, correlation analysis is performed to test the relationship between variables. To test the difference in variables in terms of ethnic background and gender, the *Independent Sampe t-test is used*. Data analysis was performed with SPSS software version 24.

Results

The description of this research data seen from the gender of students appears in table 2, showing for ethnocentrism variables in male students with a mean value of 14.173 while female students 14.27. Meanwhile, for the anxiety variable between groups of male students, the mean score was 41.28, while

female students were 42.67 on the variable Willingness to communicate, male students had a mean value of 70.48 and women 70.86.

Table 2. Descriptive data of each variable with gender

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	SE
Ethnocentrsim	Male	52	14.17	3.90	.54
	Female	120	14.27	3.11	.28
Intergroup Anxiety	Male	52	41.28	5.14	.71
	Female	120	42.67	5.50	.50
Willingness to Communicate	Male	52	70.48	14.08	1.95
	Female	120	70.86	12.56	1.14

The Pearson Correlation analysis was conducted in an attempt to answer the hypothesis of this study. The Correlation Test is performed on two dependent variables and one independent variable. The dependent variable is Ethnocentrism and anxiety between groups, while the independent variable is Willingness to Communicate. The results showed that ethnocentrism had a significant negative correlation of -0.362 with *P* below 0.000, while anxiety between groups had a significant negative correlation of -0.189.

Table 3. Pearson correlation results

Variable	1	2
Ethnocentrsim (1)	1	.094
Intergroup Anxiety (2)	.094	1
Willingness to communicate (3)	-.362**	-.189*

** $p < 0.01$ level (2-tailed).
* $p < 0.05$ level (2-tailed).

Furthermore, the results in table 4, showing the results of the difference test for each variable in terms of student ethnic origin, it appears that the *t* value in the ethnocentrism variable shows a number of -0.168 with a significance of 0.867, while for the intergroup anxiety variable with a t value of -0.731 with a significance of 0.466, and the last variable is willingness to communicate with a t value of 1.092 with a significance of 0.277. It can be seen from the three variables tested that there is no significance value below 0.05 so that it can be concluded that there are no differences in ethnocentrism, anxiety between groups and willingness to communicate between students from Javanese and Madurese ethnicity.

Table 4. The results of the Independent Sample *t-test* from ethnic background and gender

Variable	*t*	*df*	*Sig.*	*Mean Difference*	*SE Difference*
Ethnic Background					
Ethnocentrism	-.168	170	.867	-.087	.519
Intergroup Anxiety	-.731	170	.466	-.610	.835
Willingness to Communicate	1.092	170	.277	2.181	1.99
Gender					
Ethnocentrism	-.182	170	.856	-.10192	.560
Intergroup Anxiety	-1.546	170	.124	-1.38654	.896
Readiness to Communicate	-.178	170	.859	-.38590	2.164

In addition, table 4 also shows the results of the difference test for each variable in terms of student sex, it appears that the *t* value in the ethnocentrism variable shows a number of -0.182 with a significance of 0.856, while for the anxiety variable between groups with a t value of -1.546 with a

significance of 0.124, and the last variable is willingness to communicate with a t value of -0.178 with a significance of 0.859. It can be seen from the three variables tested that there is no significance value below 0.05 so that it can be concluded that there are no differences in ethnocentrism, anxiety between groups and willingness to communicate between the sexes of students.

Discussion

By looking at the results of the data analysis described above, it can be concluded as follows; 1) ethnocentrism has a significant negative relationship with the willingness to communicate between cultures in UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya students, meaning that the higher the ethnocentrism a student has, the lower his willingness to communicate interculturally with his environment, and vice versa, the lower the ethnocentrims of a student, the higher his willingness to communicate between cultures in his environment. 2) Intergroup anxiety has a significant negative relationship with the willingness to communicate between cultures in UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya students, meaning that the higher the intergroup anxiety a student has, the lower his willingness to communicate between cultures with his environment, on the contrary, the lower the anxiety between groups of a student will be the higher his willingness to communicate between cultures.

These results seem to be in accordance with the meticulous work conducted by Logan et al., (2016) and Logan & Hunt, (2014) Regional students often feel anxious and uncertain when interacting with students from other cultural backgrounds, which sometimes causes these students to avoid initiating interactions. Limited or lack of knowledge about other cultures and outside groups can lead to ethnocentrism and prejudice (W. Stephan &; Stephan, 1984). In line with Januariza & Hendriani, (2016) it should be noted that even though students are in the decision-making process to communicate or not, fear of making mistakes, fear of being laughed at, lack of vocabulary, and lack of self-confidence will cause anxiety, which ultimately lowers motivation. They from initiating intercultural communication. At this point, if anxiety is high, students will choose not to initiate intercultural communication and vice versa. Thus, anxiety negatively affects the willingness to communicate.

If you look at the ethnic origin of the students studied, there appears to be no difference in the level of ethnocentrism, anxiety between groups and willingness to communicate between cultures. This is interesting because there is no one ethnic origin of students who have very different levels. Likewise, when the three variables were associated with the sex of students, none of the variables tested had a significant difference in terms of gender. This study shows that ethnic origin does not necessarily have a tendency that is different from other ethnicities, meaning that certain ethnicities do not have certain tendencies in ethnocenstrism in this study. Likewise, when viewed from the gender, both sons and daughters, there is no particular tendency at the level of ethnocentrism.

The efforts to increase the willingness to communicate between cultures can be done through a cultural awareness approach. Through this approach, students can be encouraged to reconsider their biases by comparing their own culture to what they learn about other cultures. Diversity courses have been shown to be effective in reducing prejudice and increasing tolerance between groups (Kernahan &; Davis, 2007). The best way for college students to learn from each other is not through class but in dorm room discussions, mealtime conversations, and other group activities (Lamal, 2007). Through positive contact with each other, students can gain insight into themselves and others. This can help students to understand that their own norms are not the only way to manage the social world, and perhaps, these new perspectives can reshape their views of themselves and outside groups (Pettigrew, 1998).

Although the correlation is only moderate, it is significant. In addition, these findings increase the generalization of Allport's (1954) Contact Theory predictions cited by Katz, (1991) for intercultural communication whereby Allport proposes that intercultural communication should lead to an increase in intercultural attitudes when contact occurs in favorable environments and vice versa.

Cross-cultural friendships may reduce prejudice between groups. Furthermore, for contact between groups to have a positive effect, equal group status, common goals, cooperation between groups, and support of authority are needed. Thus, in designing programs that lead to positive contact effects, educators need to make sure to meet these four conditions. It is likely that through positive and meaningful contact between students, their ethnocentric behaviors and attitudes changed, and they became more willing to engage in intercultural communication.

Establishing cross-cultural friendships is vital for Javanese and Madurese students, serving as a means to diminish prejudice and cultivate empathy (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008). Deardorff's (2011) advocacy for an integrated campus approach underscores the importance of programs extending beyond social interactions to encompass comprehensive intercultural learning. By actively involving students from diverse backgrounds, this approach fosters mutual understanding and breaks down barriers, contributing to a harmonious educational community. Such initiatives equip students to navigate the intricacies of an interconnected world, promoting inclusivity, understanding, and cooperation among individuals with distinct cultural backgrounds.

This study has implications for universities and policy makers involved in fostering intercultural relations among students. The results revealed that it is important to reduce anxiety, uncertainty, and ethnocentrism among students to increase their willingness to communicate with students from different cultural backgrounds. Lack of quality interaction, deep cultural knowledge, and openness to other cultures is one of the causes of anxiety, uncertainty, and ethnocentrism among students. Therefore, universities and policymakers should consider organizing programs or activities involving multicultural students as part of the existing academic structure for undergraduates. This activity will provide greater opportunities for students from different cultural groups to mingle. This can help students become more willing to communicate between cultures and assist them in managing their intercultural barriers effectively.

Studies of indirect contact point to the potential role of intragroup dynamics in facilitating anxiety reduction. Wright et al., (1997) argue that members in a group can influence the attitudes of other colleagues by creating a positive communication experience, as well as expanding intercultural communication networks has also been shown to reduce anxiety between groups and thus reduce prejudice. Further expanding cross-group friendships has a function as a common stress buffer mechanism that reduces intergroup anxiety (Paolini et al., 2004).

Intergroup anxiety can be reduced by addressing three interrelated components of intergroup anxiety: affective, cognitive, and physiological. First, the negative influence at the heart of intergroup anxiety needs to be reduced and any negative emotions generated by intergroup anxiety need to be reduced. Second, negative expectations that are closely related to ingroup anxiety should be modified and replaced with more adaptive cognition. Third, the physiological arousal that accompanies intergroup anxiety must be lowered. There are various ways to modify the three components of intergroup anxiety including changing intergroup attitudes and cognition, reducing negative influences and emotions, increasing intergroup contact, changing behavior toward outgroup members, and modifying personality traits and group identification (Stephan, 2014).

There are several things that are suggested from the results of this study. First, all parties at the university level must emphasize and uphold the value of tolerance and set a good example for students so that it will increase tolerance among fellow students and reduce student ethnocentricism. In addition, it is expected that the university provides a forum for facilities and infrastructure needed in learning so that students feel comfortable without any differences. Second, all students are expected to implement values or attitudes of tolerance wherever they are. And respect each other. Improving the process of assimilation with other Indonesians in daily life so that ethnocentric attitudes in ethnic groups began to erode and became part of Indonesian society. Third, for future research, other studies that are interested in examining ethnocentric attitudes, researchers suggest controlling research subjects based on subject origin in a balanced manner because the origin of the subject area seems to have an influence in ethnocentric attitudes.

Conclusion

From the results of the study, it can be concluded that ethnocentrism has a significant negative relationship with the willingness to communicate between cultures in UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya students, meaning that the higher the ethnocentrism of a student, the lower his willingness to communicate between cultures, and vice versa, the lower the ethnocentrims of a student, the higher his willingness to communicate between cultures in his environment. In addition, anxiety between groups has a significant negative relationship with the willingness to communicate between cultures in UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya students, meaning that the higher the anxiety between groups owned by a student, the lower his willingness to communicate interculturally with his environment, and vice versa the lower the anxiety between groups of a student will be higher his willingness to communicate between cultures.

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