

# **SOCIAL INTERACTION RELATIONSHIPS AND MULTICULTURALISM ATTITUDE IN STUDENTS AT UNIVERSITY X JAKARTA**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Every human being needs social interaction with each other. Social interaction can be divided into interactions between individuals with individuals or individuals with groups. This kind of interaction, especially in a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society like Indonesia, will lead to a different "lifeworld" for each of the parties involved. In such circumstances, friction is very possible. For that, at least to minimize the possibility of friction that occurs, it is necessary to have a positive attitude of multiculturalism that is built based on social interaction. This research was conducted in Jakarta on 164 students as subjects. Data was obtained by distributing questionnaires through Google Forms which were distributed in April-May 2022. This research is a quantitative correlational study. The measuring instrument used in this study has been tested on 66 subjects to obtain item validity and variable reliability. The test is done with Spearman correlation because the data distribution is not normally distributed. The results of the study obtained a significant positive relationship between social interaction and multiculturalism  $p\ 0.000 < 0.05$  with a correlation coefficient of 0.551 including moderate correlation.*

**Keywords:** social interaction, multiculturalism, students

## **1. PREFACE**

Multiculturalism can be understood as an acknowledgment of the diversity of a pluralistic, heterogeneous and plural society. This attitude of multiculturalism is necessary to understand diverse cultural and ethnic differences. This attitude can grow through the influence of the environment and certain conditions, including through relationships between individuals and other individuals, or between individuals and groups, maybe even between groups and groups. This relationship is known as social interaction. Social interaction or also known as social contact. Social contact can be positive or negative. Positive social contact leads to cooperation, while negative social contact leads to opposition or conflict. In addition, social contacts can be primary or secondary. Primary social contact occurs when the participants of the interaction face to face. Meanwhile, secondary contact occurs when the interaction takes place through an intermediary, for example, a telephone conversation.

Social interactions that have occurred lately seem to have occurred more by secondary contact, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. The existence of meeting restrictions and strict regulations not to go out of the house, as well as arrangements for work and study through online, caused relatively less primary contact. The contribution of the frequency and duration of the primary interaction or contact will determine the quality of the interaction. This condition has attracted the interest of researchers to look in more detail and depth related to the attitude of multiculturalism formed, especially among students.

Social interaction occurs because humans are intelligent living beings who have the ability to think that is formed through social interaction. This thinking ability allows humans to learn meaning and symbols in human interactions. Humans also have the ability to interpret symbols, think about them and choose actions. These actions then create groups in society. According to Robert M.Z Lawang social interaction is a process when individuals who communicate influence each other both in thought and action. Thus, social interaction involves more than one individual performing mutually known actions.

Social interaction can occur because of social contact and communication. First, in the sociological sense, social contact is not only face-to-face interaction, but contact can be made without meeting face-to-face. This happens, for example, getting information through radio, telephone, electronic mail created by technological advances. In addition, social contacts can be primary or secondary. Second, communication is very important with the intention of expressing each other's behavior whether it's in speaking, attitudes and even gestures to convey messages.

Multiculturalism is an ideology that requires the unity of various cultural groups with the same rights and social status in society. Thus, the attitude of multiculturalism is an attitude that does not discriminate between one ethnicity and another and provides an equal position between them.

The variety of interactions that occur between individuals may be able to build an attitude of multiculturalism, especially in adolescents who usually have a fast-changing and wide-ranging environment. The group of teenagers as students who experience online lectures do not feel primary contact with other fellow students, it will affect the interaction that are form. For this reason, this research was conducted, taking into account the relationship between social interaction and the attitude of multiculturalism.

The problem in this study is: is there a relationship between social interaction and the attitude of multiculturalism in students?

### **Related Work**

The results of Syamsiyah's research on multiculturalism in one area in the city of Surabaya show that multicultural awareness is an important element in realizing social integration. Prerequisites for the realization of social integration include, among other things, not having a problem with differences, having a desire to give tolerance, emerging cultural hybridization and shared identity, being willing to cooperate, having a will for deliberation, and developing social solidarity.

### **Our Contribution**

This paper contributes to understanding the need for social interaction in order to instill a positive multicultural attitude towards other ethnic groups with different cultures. This understanding is needed in Indonesian society, which is diverse in ethnicity and culture.

## **Paper Structure**

The composition of this paper consists of several parts. The first is the introduction which contains the results of previous research, contributions and the composition of the writing. The second part is the background which is the basis for conducting research and writing it down in this paper. The third part contains the methods used in the research process. The fourth part is finding and discussion. the fifth part conclusion. Finally, there are acknowledgements and references.

## **2. RESEARCH METHODS**

Indonesia is an archipelagic country which has the largest area among other archipelagic countries. Indonesia is a multicultural nation, with more than 205 ethnic groups spread over 14,000 islands in the territory of Indonesia. This means showing the diversity of each ethnic group in how they perceive themselves, and how diverse they perceive each other. According to Roosseno, the perception of ethnicity or regionalism has not changed despite the “Sumpah Pemuda” or the Proclamation of Independence of the Republic of Indonesia on August 17, 1945. Indonesia remains a mosaic of ethnicity, meanwhile, national unity is still an ideal. This is in accordance with what Ben Anderson said that Indonesia is an imagined political community. Indonesia, with its various ethnicities and cultures, has its own lifeworld which differs from one ethnicity to another. Those who live in his lifeworld are people who are united with meaning, not atomistic people.

Indonesia is a country characterized by a heterogeneous society, a multicultural and multi-ethnic country. This presupposes that each ethnic group has a different culture from one another. In this difference, there is a lifeworld of each of these ethnic groups that will appear when there is interaction between ethnic groups. In inter-ethnic interactions, because each has its own lifeworld, it is very possible for friction to occur. To avoid possible friction, a positive attitude towards multiculturalism is needed in each individual. Multiculturalism is a view of the diversity of life in the world, the acceptance of cultural diversity. A multicultural society like Indonesia needs to have mutual respect for cultural differences, so that a society with the same goals can be created.

## **3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The design of this study is a non-experimental quantitative research that aims to see the relationship between two variables, namely the social interaction variable and the multiculturalism attitude variable. The tool used to measure each variable is a questionnaire compiled by researchers through the stages of testing the validity and reliability of items with test subjects (66 people).

The research instrument used was a questionnaire which was tested for items to check the validity and reliability of the items. Table 1 contains the results of the validity and reliability tests of the social interaction variables which are divided into four dimensions. The number of items before the test was 17 items, after the test there was one item that was not valid, namely the communication dimension of individuals.

Table 2 contains the results of the validity and reliability of the multiculturalism attitude variable which is divided into three dimensions. The number of items before the test was 20 items, after the test there were two invalid items, namely the dimension of diversity recognition.

Data were obtained through distributing questionnaires to selected subjects. During the pandemic, which still applies to online lectures, the distribution of questionnaires is carried out through Google Forms. The questionnaire is compiled in the form of a Google Form which takes 15-20 minutes to fill out.

Data analysis was carried out by testing hypotheses using the SPSS program, by first conducting several assumption tests to meet the statistical test requirements. The test was carried out with Spearman correlation because the data obtained were not normally distributed.

**Table 1.**

*Validity and Reliability Test of the Social Interaction Variable*

Dimension	Before test		After test	
	items	Cronbach's Alpha	items	Cronbach's Alpha
Individual Communication	4	0,625	3	0,739
Individual-Group Communication	6	0,730	6	0,730
Individual Social contact	4	0,652	4	0,652
Individual-Group Social contact	3	0,688	3	0,688

**Table 2.**

*Validity and Reliability Test of the Multiculturalism Attitude Variable*

Dimension	Before test		After test	
	items	Cronbach's Alpha	items	Cronbach's Alpha
Deversity recognition	7	0,695	5	0,756
Culture recognition	6	0,719	6	0,719
Other culture recognition	7	0,724	7	0,724

The number of research subjects was 164 people, consisting of 132 people (80.5%) were women, 32 people (19.5%) were men. The age of the respondents ranged from 17-23 years, most of the subjects were 18 years old (49 people or 29.9%). Based on the ethnicity recognized by the subject, 98 people (59.8%) were ethnic Chinese, the remaining 66 people (40.2%) were not ethnic Chinese. The description of the subject data is contained in the following table

**Table 3.**

*Subject Data*

Variable	Frequency (n=164)	Percentage
Gender: Female	132	80,5
Male	32	19,5
Age (year): 17	1	0,6
18	49	29,9
19	61	37,2
20	27	16,5
21	22	13,4
22	2	1,2
23	2	1,2
Ethnic: Chinese	98	59,8
Non-Chinese	66	40,2

**Table 4.**

*Correlation Test Between Social Interaction and Multicultural Attitude*

Subject	p	Significance	Correlation coef.	Notes
Chinese (n=98)	0,000	Significance	0,533	moderate
Non-Chinese (n=66)	0,000	Significance	0,590	moderate
All subject (n=164)	0,000	Significance	0,551	moderate

In the social interaction variable, the p value of  $0.014 < 0.05$  was obtained, meaning that the distribution of the data on this variable was not normal. In the multiculturalism attitude variable, p-value is  $0.089 > 0.05$ , then the data distribution for the multiculturalism attitude variable is normal. Furthermore, the test was continued by choosing a non-parametric test, because one of the variables did not have a normal data distribution, then the choice of correlational test used the Spearman correlation.

The results of the correlation test between social interaction and the attitude of multiculturalism showed significant test results with a p value of  $0.000 < 0.05$  with a correlation coefficient of 0.551 including in the moderate category (in the range 0.40 - 0.59). Meanwhile, specifically for Chinese subjects, which amounted to 98 people, significant test results were also obtained between social interaction and multiculturalism attitudes with a p value of  $0.000 < 0.05$  with a correlation coefficient of 0.533 included in the moderate category (in the range 0.40 - 0.59). Likewise, in non-Chinese subjects (66 subjects), significant test results were obtained between social interaction and multiculturalism with a p value of  $0.000 < 0.05$  with a correlation coefficient of 0.590 included in the moderate category (in the range 0.40 - 0.59).

From the test results, it was found that the research hypothesis was proven, namely that there was a relationship between social interaction and multiculturalism. The relationship that occurs is a positive relationship with a moderate relationship. From the correlation results, it seems that there is no difference in the categories of Chinese and non-Chinese subjects. The more positive social interactions will foster a positive attitude towards multiculturalism as well. For this reason, it is necessary to build social interactions between individuals and individuals and between individuals and groups.

Talking about the relationship of social interaction with each dimension of the attitude of multiculturalism, it can be seen that the highest value occurs in the dimension of recognition of the culture (Table 9), both on Chinese, non-Chinese and overall subjects. It can be

understood that the recognition of an individual's culture will form self-identity, thereby making it easier for individuals to recognize the culture of others. This view is certainly very necessary for a multicultural society like Indonesia.

## **5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The conclusion of this study, the hypothesis is proven that there is a relationship between social interaction with the attitude of multiculturalism. The relationship is positive and is in the moderate range. This means that the higher the social interaction carried out by individuals, the higher their multicultural attitude.

In Indonesia's culturally diverse society, understanding other people's cultures is important. To be able to understand the culture of other ethnic groups, it is necessary to understand their own culture first. This is also in line with the research findings that the correlation test of social interaction with the dimension of recognition of culture produces the highest correlation value compared to the correlations of other dimensions.

This research was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic so all questionnaires were distributed via Google Form (GF). The advantage of using GF is that it saves time and materials (paper) as well as data input that is connected to the data processing program. However, there are still limitations, namely not being able to recognize and meet the subject directly. During the pandemic it is not possible to interview. Initially, it was planned that several subjects would be interviewed, but this intention was finally canceled. For this reason, if the pandemic period is gone, this research can be continued with qualitative research using the interview method.

Research subjects are also only taken at one university in Jakarta. If the situation has returned to normal, of course, it can involve a wider range of subjects and various characteristics.

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