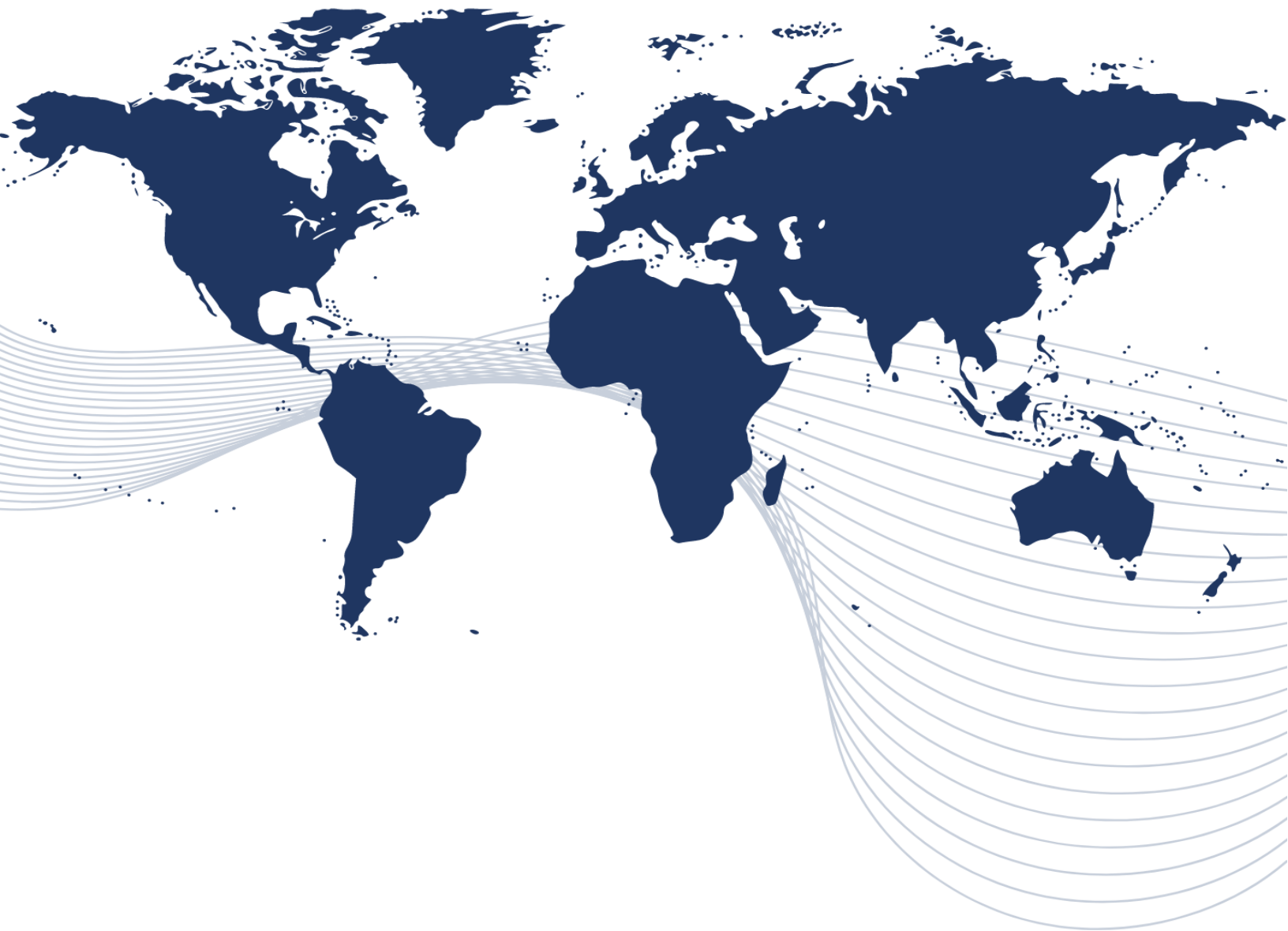


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Intercultural Communication: Acculturation, Assimilation and Problems

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Abstract

As a cultured human being, it certainly requires communication, as for the communication that is established, namely intercultural communication. Singkil sub-district has a variety of ethnic groups, languages and different cultures, the tribes in the area are Javanese, Acehnese, Singkil tribe, Jamee / Minang tribe and Nias tribe. The object of research is the Singkil tribe and the Jamee / Minang tribe, because among the tribes in Singkil District the most dominant are the two tribes, so that the differences of opinion between the two. Therefore, this research was conducted to examine how Acculturation, Assimilation and also Enculturation exist in these two tribes, especially in Singkil District, and what are the problems or problems between the two tribes. The type of research used is qualitative research, the data collection techniques used are: observation in the field, interviews, and documentation, the respondents are the people of the two tribes in Singkil District. The results of this study prove that the Minang people find it difficult to understand the language of the Singkil tribe so that there are differences of opinion and perception between the two.

Keyword: Intercultural Communication; Acculturation; Assimilation

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INTRODUCTION

The dynamics of communication across culturally varied groups have grown ever more complicated and important in the modern era of globalization and intercultural contact. Defined as the contact between people or groups from several cultural origins, intercultural communication which shapes social cohesion, identity negotiation, and conflict resolution in multicultural societies is absolutely important (Lustig & Koester, 2010). Examining the processes of cultural interaction in Indonesia, a nation-state made of hundreds of ethnic groups, languages, and cultural traditions, offers a unique setting especially in areas where several ethnic communities coexist inside shared administrative and geographic limits. One such area is Kecamatan Singkil in Aceh Province, where the majority cultural groupings are the Singkil and Minang (Aneuk Jamee). For decades the Minang people, noted for their matrilineal customs and strong Islamic identity, and the Singkil people, typically connected with Batak cultural heritage, have cohabitated the area. Though they have long-standing coexistence and a common Islamic faith, these groups show different language, social, and cultural practices that have sometimes resulted in misinterpretation, stereotyping, and even intergroup tensions. Key ideas in anthropology and communication studies—including acculturation, assimilation, and enculturation—formulate the theoretical framework for comprehending such intercultural processes. Acculturation is the process by which people or groups absorb aspects of another culture via constant encounter without necessarily losing their own cultural identity (Berry, 1997; Koentjaraningrat, 1980). In contrast, assimilation is a deeper integration whereby cultural differences fade with time, usually leading to the absorption of minority cultures into dominant ones (Gordon, 1964). Conversely, enculturation is the absorption of cultural norms and values by socialization inside one's own cultural setting (Herskovits, 1948).

Previous research on intercultural communication in Indonesia have underlined both the difficulties presented by linguistic obstacles, ethnocentrism, and cultural misconceptions as well as the possibility for harmonic coexistence (Liliweri, 2003; Mulyana, 2005.). But most of the current research has concentrated on urban or national-level interactions, paying scant attention to localised, rural settings where traditional rituals and family systems continue to be significant. Focusing on the micro-level interactions between the Singkil and Minang populations in Kecamatan Singkil, this paper aims to close this disparity by investigating how cultural contact shows up in daily communication, social events, and intergroup relations.

Though a lot of literature on intercultural communication and cultural integration in Indonesia exists, not much empirical study looks at the actual experiences of cultural encounter in rural or peripheral areas like Kecamatan Singkil. Most studies have either concentrated on high-profile ethnic conflicts or generalised intercultural dynamics at the national level, therefore ignoring the smaller, daily forms of cultural negotiation that take place in less urbanised environments.

Moreover, although theoretical models of acculturation and assimilation have been extensively used in Western contexts, their applicability and explanatory power in Indonesian settings where cultural identities are often fluid, overlapping, and shaped by both indigenous and Islamic traditions require further empirical validation. Especially among ethnic groups in Singkil, the interaction of language, cultural pride, and perceived social standing has not been methodically studied.

The current anecdotal data points to ethnocentric attitudes and language misinterpretation as causes of social conflict between the Singkil and Minang populations. For

example, some Minang speakers have labeled the Singkil language as "bahasa Dayak," which has been seen as disrespectful and has resulted in animosity and, occasionally, young people engaging in physical violence. These events emphasize the need of a better knowledge of how cultural identities are expressed, challenged, and reconciled in daily contacts. Moreover, even if both societies have Islamic principles, their ways of expressing and interpreting religious and cultural practices – such as marriage ceremonies, funerals, and group celebrations vary greatly. If not controlled by good intercultural communication, these variations could widen social gaps and impede the growth of communities. With an eye toward the processes of acculturation, assimilation, and the difficulties that follow, this study seeks to probe the nature of intercultural communication between the Singkil and Minang ethnic groups in Kecamatan Singkil.

The particular goals of the study are 1. To examine the forms and channels of engagement and communication between the Singkil and Minang groups in different social settings (e.g., marketplaces, schools, religious activities). 2. To investigate how each society's cultural transmission (enculturation) shapes intergroup attitudes and actions. 3. To investigate, including common habits, adaptations, and resistances, the degree and kind of cultural assimilation and acculturation between the two groups. 4. To suggest ways for promoting mutual respect and social harmony and to pinpoint the main causes of intercultural conflict and misinterpretation.

The study advances the more general field of intercultural communication in multiple respects by tackling these goals. First, it offers a grounded, context-specific study of cultural interaction in a rural Indonesian environment, therefore augmenting the empirical foundation of intercultural communication studies in Southeast Asia. Second, it provides understanding of how, in face of ongoing interethnic interaction, traditional cultural identities are preserved, negotiated, or changed. Third, the study emphasizes the part local government, education, and language play in moderating multicultural relations and provides doable advice for legislators, teachers, and community leaders.

Methodologically, the study takes a qualitative approach using field observations, in-depth interviews, and document analysis to capture the complex experiences and viewpoints of community people. This method enables a comprehensive, interpretive knowledge of the symbolic and affective aspects of intercultural communication often disregarded in quantitative research. Emphasizing the need of communication, mutual respect, and cultural literacy in creating cohesive and strong communities, this study ultimately aims to foster a more inclusive and sympathetic knowledge of cultural variety in Indonesia. Doing this fits the larger national and international goals of multiculturalism, social integration, and intercultural competency.

METHOD

This work uses a descriptive-interpretive qualitative research approach. The design's choice is based on the goal of the study to investigate in their natural social context the complex processes of intercultural communication, acculturation, and assimilation between two different ethnic communities Singkil and Minang. The study aims to comprehend the lived experiences, cultural expressions, and communicative practices of people engaged inside their particular cultural contexts, therefore transcending testing hypotheses or measuring variables. The richness and intricacy of these exchanges were caught using a field-based ethnographic method. The study was carried out in Kecamatan Singkil, a subdist of Aceh Province, Indonesia, distinguished by ethnic variety and historical coexistence of the Singkil and Minang (Aneuk

Jamee) populations. Primary data sources included community members from both ethnic groups including seniors, religious leaders, young people, teachers, and local government officials. Purposive selection of participants was motivated by their cultural awareness, social roles, and applicability to the study topics.

Fourteen important informants in all from both ethnic groups including traditional leaders, interethnic couples, and community stakeholders were contacted. This variety of points of view made a more complete knowledge of regional intercultural dynamics possible. Several instruments were used to guarantee the validity and richness of the data: The main instrument for getting participants' in-depth stories and reflections was semi-structured interviews. To guarantee uniformity between sessions and provide freedom to examine developing themes, an interview guide was created. The researcher directly observed community events, religious meetings, commercial transactions, and cultural ceremonies. Maintaining field notes allowed one to record nonverbal signals, spatial layouts, and contextual details. Supplementary data from local archives, community records, and cultural texts was compiled to triangulate conclusions and offer historical background.

Depending on the informants' choice, all interviews were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia or local dialects; they were audio-recorded with permission. Verbatim transcription of the participants' voices helped to maintain their authenticity. Over three months, from January to March 2016, data collecting took place. Local leaders and cultural gatekeepers enabled community admission and rapport-building, so starting the process. Strict observance of ethical issues including informed consent, confidentiality, and the freedom to withdraw at any point was noted. Usually in informal environments such homes, community centers, or places of worship—interviews were carried out to guarantee participant comfort and candor. Every session ran anywhere from 45 to 90 minutes. Concurrent with this, observational data were gathered while the researcher attended public events and recorded interactions amongst people of several ethnic backgrounds.

The iterative character of qualitative research let data collecting techniques be constantly improved. Early interview emerging themes guided later questions and observations, therefore facilitating a more responsive and grounded research. Inspired by ideas of grounded theory and interpretive phenomenology, the data analysis took a thematic route. The procedure took numerous phases: To really grasp the data corpus, all transcripts and field notes were read several times. Inductively, text segments were scored for recurrent patterns, metaphors, and culturally important terms. Codes were arranged under more general categories such intercultural communication, acculturation techniques, identity negotiation, and conflict resolution. Themes were understood in view of pertinent theoretical models including ideas of ethnocentrism and cultural identification, Hall's high- and low-context communication theory, and Berry's acculturation model. To increase validity and lower researcher bias, data from documents, observations, and interviews was cross-checked. Manual coding was chosen instead of NVivo software to keep close interaction with the data and preserve contextual sensitivity. Reflexive notes were kept all through the process to record analytical choices and researcher perspective.

The research followed credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability criteria to guarantee the validity of the results. Selected individuals underwent member checking to confirm interpretations. Thick explanations were given so that readers may evaluate if results might be applied in other settings. The pertinent institutional review board granted

ethical clearance; all participants were briefed on the goals and extent of the project. Pseudonyms helped to retain anonymity; all of the data were kept safely.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Finding

Organized into four subject categories patterns of intercultural communication, mechanisms of cultural transmission (enculturation), processes of acculturation and assimilation, and causes of intercultural tension this part offers the empirical results of the study. Interviews, field observations, and document analysis carried out in Kecamatan Singkil provide the data; direct quotes from participants help to highlight important themes.

Pragmatic adaptation mixed with cultural distance defines intercultural communication between the Singkil and Minang groups in Kecamatan Singkil. Although both groups share public areas including marketplaces, schools, and religious activities, their contacts usually consist in functional exchanges rather than in thorough social integration. One of the village heads from Kampung Siti Ambia observed: "Suku Singkil dan Minang biasanya bertemu di pasar atau pesta. Suku Minang tidak mengerti bahasa Singkil, tapi orang Singkil banyak yang bisa bahasa Minang. (Makmur Munte, interview dated 15 February 2016) This disparity in language ability reflects more general trends of communicative adaptation. W

hile Minang speakers typically stay in their linguistic comfort zone, members of the Singkil group often change their speech to enable contact. One Minang source said: "Kami memang tidak tahu bahasa mereka, tapi kami bisa mengerti maksudnya. Mereka lebih menyesuaikan. (Gambang, Interview, February 23, 2016) Notwithstanding these initiatives, communication stays mostly transactional and there is little emotional or cultural connection between groups. Rooted in family structures, religious traditions, and community ceremonies, both groups preserve unique systems of cultural transmission. Beginning at infancy and running through adolescence, enculturation shapes people's sense of identity and belonging.

Matrilineal kinship and Islamic teachings help the Minang people to transmit traditional values. "Setelah melahirkan, saya hanya duduk dan menyusui anak," one Minang mother said about the postpartum custom known as badapu. Setelah itu kami potong rambut bayi dan bawa pisang ke masjid. (Eva, interview on March 15, 2016) By contrast, the Singkil people stress clan-based practices and patrilineal lineage. Though it has a different symbolic purpose than badapu, the ketaring ceremony is followed with own symbolic features. "Kami juga duduk di ketaring setelah melahirkan, lalu potong rambo dan diarak ke masjid," a Singkil source clarified. Santi: Interview, March 11, 2016 These customs not only mark rites of passage but also act as means of early age implantation of cultural values and social expectations.

Although both groups have strong cultural identities, there is evidence of selective acculturation—especially in shared public events and material culture. Some Singkil families, for example, have embraced the use of pintu gadang, a traditional Minang wedding arch, but with changes. "Kalau ingin pakai pintu gadang harus potong kerbau. Walau tidak semua ikut aturannya; tapi sekarang orang Singkil juga mulai pakai. (Tapa, interview conducted 23 February 2016) Likewise, the Minang people have started including aspects of Singkil musical traditions, like dendang dampeng, into their wedding festivities: "Sekarang ada juga orang Minang yang pakai dendang Singkil di pestyereka." (Gambo, Interview, February 23, 2016) These cases of cultural borrowing, however, remain surface-level and may not always point to more thorough absorption. Regarding marriage ceremonies and social structure, both groups

still follow their own standards. For instance, the Singkil people forbid marriage between members of the same clan (*marga*), a custom not followed by the Minang. "Kalau sama-sama marga, tidak boleh menikah. Itu kami. (Hasbi, interview conducted 22 February 2016)

Though there have been times of peaceful coexistence, the two groups' relationship has been characterized by tense episodes sometimes brought on by language problems and apparent disdain. One ongoing cause of strife is the naming of the Singkil language as "bahasa Dayak," which some Minang young people find offensive. "Bahasa Singkil sering disebut bahasa Dayak. That's what I mean. (Khairul, interview dated 14 February 2016) Such comments have caused verbal arguments and, occasionally, violent clashes among young people attending schools. At a nearby Islamic high school, a teacher related: "Dulu sering ada tawuran antar siswa karena saling ejek lewat bahasa." Tapi sudah mulai berkurang karena ada pendekatan dari guru dan tokoh masyarakat. Irwan Sahrijal, interview dated 13 March 2016 Though they expose underlying tensions over identity, pride, and past grievances, these conflicts are usually settled by informal mediation and community-based reconciliation.

Discussion

The dynamics of intercultural communication, acculturation, and assimilation between the Singkil and Minang (Aneuk Jamee) populations in Kecamatan Singkil, Aceh Province, were investigated in this work. The results expose a sophisticated interaction among latent tension, selective adaptation, and cultural preservation. Although both groups live in the same area and have religious connection, their relationships remain essentially divided and functional. Bahasa Indonesia is commonly used for mediation of communication; the Singkil community exhibits more language flexibility. Within every community, cultural transmission is still strong; early life social conventions and rituals help to shape identity. Though substantial assimilation is rare, examples of cultural borrowing like the acceptance of wedding symbols or musical traditions suggest modest acculturation. Ultimately, especially among young people, the study found language-based stereotyping and ethnocentric attitudes as regular causes of intergroup conflict.

The results of this study fit and complement earlier studies on intercultural communication in multiple communities. In multicultural settings, Liliweri (2003) and Mulyana (2005) have underlined the function of language as both a barrier and a link. In Singkil, the asymmetrical linguistic accommodation where Singkil speakers often understand Minang language but not vice versa mirrors patterns seen in other multiethnic areas of Indonesia, including in metropolitan centers where dominant groups expect minority communities to adapt linguistically (Mulyana, 2005).

The continuation of different enculturation practices inside every group reflects results of Berry's (1997) acculturation model, which holds that depending on the domain of interaction integration and separation can coexist. In Singkil, cultural and family domains remain places of isolation even when economic and educational environments encourage minimal integration. Studies by Ward and Kennedy (1999) which revealed that people and groups commonly utilize various acculturation techniques across life spheres also fit this dualism.

Furthermore, the recording of symbolic cultural borrowing such as the employment of *pintu gadang* or *dendang dampeng* resonates with Koentjaraningrat's (1980) concept of "surface acculturation," whereby aesthetic or ceremonial components are accepted without changing basic cultural values. But unlike in more urbanized or commercially motivated settings where

such borrowing may indicate hybridization (Hannerz, 1992), in Singkil it seems to be more pragmatic and context-specific.

The discovery of language-based conflict among young people also corresponds with research on interethnic relations in other areas of Indonesia (e.g., Kalimantan, Maluku), where linguistic slights and stereotypes have preceded more general societal upheaval (Davidson, 2008). But unlike other areas, the confrontations in Singkil have stayed confined and are usually settled by unofficial mediation, implying a latent but under control degree of intergroup hostility.

The results have various ramifications for theory as well as for practice. The study, theoretically, advances a more complex knowledge of intercultural communication in rural, multiethnic environments. It questions the presumption that common religion must inevitably promote more thorough cultural unification. Though both groups identify as Muslims, their cultural manifestations of Islam through customs, kinship rules, and social etiquette remain different. This strengthens the case that without intentional intercultural interaction, religion by itself cannot help to heal cultural differences (Samovar et al., 2013).

Practically, the study emphasizes the need of community programs and culturally sensitive education. Particularly schools come out as important locations for either supporting or reducing intergroup stereotypes. Teachers have a great responsibility to support inclusive stories and open intercultural communication. The example of the Islamic high school in Singkil, where teachers actively mediate student conflicts, shows the possibility of educational institutions to develop intercultural competence.

Moreover, the results imply that local government systems including religious leaders and village chiefs can be rather important in controlling cultural variety. Their participation in cultural activities and dispute resolution offers a stage for advancing shared community identity and respect. Still, this promise is unrealized, hence more organized intercultural projects could help to improve social cohesiveness.

Although the study provides insightful analysis, certain limits have to be admitted. First of all, even if the sample size is enough for qualitative research, it might not fully reflect the variety of experiences any community has. Although methodologically valid, depending too much on purposive sampling could have created selection bias, especially in favor of people more ready or able to express their opinions.

Second, the three-month study was somewhat brief, which would have hampered the observation of seasonal or event-specific cultural practices? Especially in reaction to political, economic, or demographic changes, longitudinal study could offer a more complete knowledge of how intercultural interactions change over time.

Third, although young people are essential in several of the recorded confrontations, the study mostly concentrated on adult viewpoints and limited direct interaction with them. Future studies would profit from a more equitable inclusion of generational views, especially considering how young people will shape intercultural relations.

Ultimately, even if the study used several data sources, it omitted visual or digital media analysis, which can provide more understanding of how cultural identities and stereotypes are created and disseminated in modern environments.

Based on the results and constraints of this work, numerous directions of next research are advised. Future research should look at generational differences in intercultural attitudes and behaviors inside the same ethnic group. This could clarify changes in identity, receptivity

to integration, and the part digital media plays in forming intercultural impressions. Comparative studies of intercultural communication in other multiethnic subdistricts – both inside Aceh and throughout Indonesia would assist to place the Singkil-Minang interaction within more general national trends. Such research might point up shared difficulties and effective approaches of cross-cultural interaction. Given both populations' common Islamic identity, more study may look at how religious institutions and discourses affect intercultural relations. Do mosques function as gathering places or do they accentuate racial divisions by means of language and practice? Examining how local government policies control cultural diversity could produce doable suggestions for inclusive government. This include looking at the design and execution of cultural events, language policies, and conflict resolution systems. At last, action-oriented research assessing the success of programs for intercultural education in educational institutions is much needed. With an eye on encouraging empathy, critical thinking, and intercultural competency among students, such studies should guide curriculum development and teacher preparation.

CONCLUSION

With an eye toward the processes of intercultural communication, acculturation, and assimilation between the Singkil and Minang communities in Kecamatan Singkil, an area characterized by ethnic diversity and shared religious identity, this study By means of qualitative investigation comprising interviews, observations, and document analysis, the study revealed a complex and generally ambiguous interaction between these two cultural groups. The results show that although both populations live in the same administrative and geographic area, their interactions are essentially pragmatic and shallow. Bahasa Indonesia is commonly used for mediation of communication; the Singkil community exhibits more language flexibility. Within every group, cultural transmission is still strong; early childhood shapes identity by means of unique rituals, values, and social conventions. Though there are indicators of symbolic cultural borrowing such as the acceptance of wedding rituals or musical traditions these remain surface-level and do not really indicate deeper integration.

Significantly, the study emphasizes that although providing a common moral framework, shared religion does not always result in cultural cohesion. Rather, variations in language, kinship structures, and social graces still define the limits separating the groupings. Particularly among young people, tense episodes highlight the continuation of ethnocentric views and the need of more intentional intercultural interaction. These discoveries have important ramifications. Scholars help to challenge presumptions sometimes obtained from urban or Western settings, therefore contributing to a more complex knowledge of intercultural communication in rural, multiethnic environments. The research emphasizes for practitioners and legislators the need of inclusive government, community-based discourse, and culturally sensitive education in promoting social cohesiveness. The study also notes at the same time its shortcomings in terms of sample size, chronological span, and scant interaction with younger voices. Future studies could expand on these results by include comparative case studies, longitudinal viewpoints, and closer investigation of generational changes in cultural identification and communication.

Finally, this research confirms that, even in societies with common beliefs and long histories of coexisting, intercultural concord is not a guarantee. It has to be developed via mutual respect, empathy, and ongoing communication. Understanding and handling the intricate

nuances of daily intercultural life such as those in Kecamatan Singkil remains both a scholarly and societal need as Indonesia negotiates its unique cultural mosaic.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTEREST

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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