
INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION DYNAMICS

(A Case Study of Conflicts Among East Nusa Tenggara Students at Tambak Bayan)

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Abstract

Culture is considered as an inseparable heritage from humans so that many people tend to assume it is inherited genetically. The many cultures often cause several problems. One of them is that people think that Eastern students are a little different. Only a few individuals create a negative stigma that is strongly attached to Eastern students. The purpose of this study was to see how the dynamics of conflict and adjustment of NTT students in Tambakbayan Yogyakarta. To maintain a good relationship between NTT students and Tambakbayan residents. This study is a qualitative descriptive study, data collection was carried out by interviewing and collecting data from the media. The data validity test is technical triangulation and source triangulation and is analyzed continuously by reducing data, displaying data, verifying data. The results of this study indicate that differences in language, habits, and perceptions make it difficult for NTT students to communicate in Yogyakarta. In addition, the existence of stereotypes attached to NTT students such as being backward, like making trouble, and being prone to committing crimes is a source of gaps between NTT students and students from other regions. ultimately fostering ethnocentric attitudes in each group. It would be better if NTT students and Tambakbayan residents collaborate so that inter-ethnic relations can improve and a sense of comfort can be achieved.

Keywords

Dynamics of Intercultural Communication, NTT Students, Conflict

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1. INTRODUCTION

Communication is a process that involves individuals within relationships, organizations, groups, and society, aiming to respond to and create messages in order to adapt to one another's environment (Hanifa et al., 2023). Some people consider communication to be merely a simple conversation that everyone engages in. However, if a person has good communication skills, they can influence others to act according to their intentions; conversely, if someone lacks effective communication skills, others will not listen to them (Maizan et al., 2020).

In our lives, we constantly communicate with other people who come from different



racial, ethnic, or cultural groups. According to Suranto, socio-cultural communication is a dominant and frequent type of communication because the opportunities for interaction with people from different social and cultural backgrounds are very high (Wono et al., 2021). Messi quoted Suraya's view that communication and culture have a reciprocal relationship like two sides of the same coin: communication influences culture and culture also influences communication. Culture teaches a person how to think and behave toward others, and this is the reason why cultural background plays a crucial role in shaping one's perspective on everything (Nuraeni Mesi et al., 2022). However, according to William Howell as cited by Alo Liliweri and Agnes, there are four different levels of awareness and competence in intercultural communication. A person may be aware that they are unable to understand another culture.

There are also those who are aware that they are able to understand other cultures. On the other hand, someone may be unaware that they are capable of understanding another culture, or even unaware and incapable of understanding other cultures. (Wantiyastuti, 2021) Therefore, in intercultural communication, it is not uncommon for a person to encounter certain problems or conflicts. This occurs because of the differences in language used between individuals. Not all words that sound the same have the same meaning; on the contrary, they may have different meanings.

As an illustration, there was a narrative about a conflict in East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) in 2012, when NTT students launched an attack on the Tambakbayan hamlet. In March 2013, an incident occurred involving the murder of a Kopassus soldier by four eastern Indonesian residents. Then, in June 2022, a clash broke out among NTT, Papuan, and Ambonese students due to a misunderstanding between ethnic groups. These events created tension between the students and local residents, who had already developed prejudices against them.

Culture undergoes change; therefore, it is necessary to foster a strong sense of tolerance and mutual respect so that intercultural life can develop harmoniously. A harmonious relationship can be described as a condition in which there are no conflicts or misunderstandings, but rather peaceful relations and equality among cultural groups.

Yogyakarta, as an icon of an educational city with universities offering various fields of study, has become an attraction for students from East Nusa Tenggara (NTT). In this city, NTT students meet and interact with other residents from diverse ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds. NTT students studying in Yogyakarta are spread across various dormitories and boarding houses, with many of them living in groups in certain areas, such as Tambakbayan.

The NTT ethnic group and other communities or students have very striking differences. These differences include language, customs, traditions, habits, values, norms, and traditional

foods. These aspects represent part of the cultural values that influence a person when they move to a new area with a different culture (Rachmadillah, 2021). When communicating with others, we are faced with different languages, rules, and values. It becomes difficult to understand other people's communication if we are highly ethnocentric. According to Sumner, ethnocentrism is "the view that one's own group is the center of everything, and that all other things are measured and evaluated by reference to it." (Rizak, 2018)

As a result of the attacks and recurring conflicts, there have been significant effects on the relationship between NTT students and the local residents of Tambakbayan. These include the growing distrust of Yogyakarta residents toward NTT students and even the refusal to rent boarding houses to them, especially in the Tambakbayan area.

2. Literature review

Conflict Transformation Theory

Conflict transformation is the creation of a vision and a response to the ebb and flow of social conflict as an opportunity given by life to bring about a constructive process of change that reduces violence and promotes justice within social structures, while also addressing real-life problems in human relationships. Conflict transformation is indeed highly relevant to ethnic conflicts, which are complex and systemic in nature. Seen by some as a method of peacebuilding through nonviolence, it aims to deal with protracted or asymmetric conflicts that repeatedly alternate between phases of violence and peace.

Conflict transformation does not view conflict as fundamentally negative, because in fact, conflicts can serve as agents of change within society. However, its goal is to gradually transform conflicts to prevent violence. It also aims to establish a peace that goes beyond negative peace the mere absence of violence and seeks positive peace, which involves ending structural violence to achieve lasting harmony. From the perspective of conflict transformation, there are four dimensions of change that emerge as a result of conflict: the personal dimension, the relational dimension, the structural dimension, and the cultural dimension. (Daniel K. Listijabudi, 2005)

a. Personal Dimension

In this dimension, changes occur in cognitive, emotional, perceptual, and spiritual aspects as a result of conflict experiences. Transformation is needed to free individuals from the destructive effects of social conflict, such as physical and mental wounds.

b. Relational Dimension

Transformation is needed to restore patterns of communication and interaction within a conflicted relationship. More specifically, transformation refers to an intensive intervention aimed at reducing poor communication and enhancing mutual understanding.

c. Structural Dimension

This dimension relates to the social structure or the set of rules that govern relationships among individuals within a society. It also concerns how people build and manage social, economic, and institutional relationships to fulfill their basic human needs, provide communities with access to decision-making processes that affect their lives, understand the root causes of conflict, promote non-violent mechanisms for addressing conflicts, and minimize violence itself.

d. Cultural Dimension

The cultural dimension identifies and understands cultural patterns that may trigger violence as an expression of conflict. In addition, transformation is also needed to identify cultural values that can address conflicts constructively.

The researcher uses this theory to examine the conflicts that often occur among the NTT ethnic group in Tambakbayan. In addition, it is also used to understand conflicts caused by issues of inequality and injustice that emerge as social, cultural, and economic problems.

Cultural Adaptation

Cultural adaptation is the process of humans adjusting themselves to changes in the socio-cultural order. This kind of adaptation is often practiced by migrants to overcome the challenges they face in order to achieve positive balance amid different background conditions (Suranto, 2010). The ability to communicate and adapt within an environment that has a foreign culture varies from one individual to another. Richard Donald Lewis, a cross-cultural communication consultant from England, stated that a person's native communication tendencies influence their ability to adjust or adapt to a foreign or new environment. (Soemantri, 2019) Cross-cultural communication is the process of transferring ideas and concepts from one culture to another with the aim of influencing the target culture so that both can mutually affect each other. (Abdullah, 2024) According to Charley, as cited by Nurunnisa, intercultural communication is the process of sending and receiving messages within the context of cultural differences that produce varying effects (Mutmainnah, 2023)

There are four phases in the adaptation process, plus a planning phase. The stages in the process of cultural adaptation are as follows:

- a) *Fase honeymoon* This is the stage where an individual enters a new environment and begins adjusting to a new culture and surroundings. At this stage, a person usually feels enthusiastic, curious, and highly excited about the new experiences they are about to encounter.
- b) *Fase Frustration* In this stage, culture shock begins to occur as the new environment starts to present challenges. The initial enthusiasm and curiosity gradually turn into feelings of frustration, anxiety, and irritation as expectations do not match reality.
- c) *Fase Readjusment* This is the stage of re-adaptation, where a person starts to develop various ways and strategies to cope with and adjust to the existing conditions.
- d) *Fase Resolution* This phase represents the final stage of cultural adaptation, in which an individual finds a solution to the discomfort they have been experiencing. At this stage, several possible outcomes or choices may emerge, such as *Full Participation*, *Accomodation*, *Fight*, and *Flight* (Devita et al., 2015)

3. Methods

The research employs field research with a qualitative descriptive method. The descriptive data consist of written or spoken words from people and observable behaviors. (Lexy J. Moelong, 2019) Descriptive qualitative research is usually used to address research problems that involve the questions of what, how, and why. Once all aspects of the phenomenon have been thoroughly explored, the researcher can describe the characteristics of the phenomenon comprehensively and holistically through words and narrative sentences. (Ulfatin, 2015). This research was conducted in Tambakbayan, Yogyakarta City, involving students from East Nusa Tenggara (NTT). The data collection technique used was non-probability sampling, with purposive sampling applied to obtain samples based on specific characteristics that align with the research objectives. The data collection methods included observation, structured interviews, and documentation (social media news) (Rachmat Kriyanto, 2014). To ensure data validity, technique triangulation and source triangulation were used, and the data were continuously analyzed through data reduction, data display, and data verification.

4. RESEARCH RESULT

The history of NTT (East Nusa Tenggara) people in Yogyakarta in this writing is taken from the 1960s era up to the present. Throughout this long historical period, the goal is to understand how interactions occurred between people from NTT and the local community. In addition, it also aims to see the early emergence of friction between NTT migrants and the people of Yogyakarta, which eventually developed into a cultural dynamic affecting self-adjustment and

prejudice.

In the early 1960s, there was a small-scale migration of outstanding students from NTT to Yogyakarta. This migration was carried out to pursue both academic and non-academic studies. In 1961, students from Sumba began arriving to study at Gadjah Mada University (UGM). At that time, students traveled by sea to reach Java, marking the first generation of NTT students in Yogyakarta. Upon arrival, they sought lodging in local residents' homes, while some stayed in dormitories. NTT students were known to be friendly and blended well with the local community.

During that period, they were admired and known for their strong enthusiasm for learning, diligence, intelligence, and remarkable academic achievements. In 1969, Umbu Landu Paranggi and several of his friends founded *Persada Studi Klub* (PSK), an art community focusing on literature. Within this community, members were trained to develop creativity and produce literary works. The best works were published in the *Pelopon Jogya* newspaper.

In the second period, between 1980 and 1990, one of the NTT students, John Keban, became the head of the NTT community association in Yogyakarta. As the leader, he often dealt with various student issues. These problems and conflicts arose due to a change in living patterns students began to live separately from local residents, leading to a lack of proper social adjustment.

In the third period, from the 2000s until today, the number of NTT students coming to Yogyakarta has continued to increase. During this time, more issues began to arise between NTT students and local residents, particularly in the Tambakbayan area. The growing number of conflicts has at times led to rejection from the local community. This situation clearly affects the dynamics of intercultural communication experienced by NTT students.

Dynamics of NTT Student Conflict

The dynamics of ethnic violence include the factors that cause such violence, the socio-psychological impacts it generates, and the efforts made by students to reduce the level of violence in Yogyakarta involving students from Eastern Indonesia. The factors that contribute to the occurrence of ethnic violence in Yogyakarta include individual differences, cultural differences, conflicts of interest, and competition. The following is an explanation of these factors:

a. Individual Differences

The violence that occurs between students from East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) and local residents is partly due to individual differences. These differences can be seen from physical aspects for example, Eastern Indonesian students tend to have darker skin, curly hair, and sharp facial features, which often lead to mistaken prejudices about their

character. Because of these visible physical differences and assertive appearances, Yogyakarta residents often perceive NTT students as being rough or aggressive in nature.

b. Cultural Differences

Cultural differences are another factor contributing to ethnic violence in Yogyakarta. For example, people from Eastern Indonesia tend to speak with a loud and high tone, while Javanese people usually speak in a soft and polite manner. This difference in communication style between the two cultures can easily cause misunderstandings and conflicts.

Another factor that causes conflict and ethnic violence is the behavior of some NTT students who are less observant of traffic rules. Habits such as not wearing helmets or failing to equip their vehicles with mirrors and other necessary attributes are often carried over from their hometowns to Yogyakarta. As a result, students who do not comply with traffic regulations are often socially excluded by the local community.

c. Conflicts of Personal Interests

Another factor leading to ethnic violence is conflict of interest. This is sometimes experienced when certain lecturers use NTT students as examples or make frequent comparisons in class.

Moreover, the role of mass media in reporting such incidents can also trigger conflicts and violence in Yogyakarta. Media coverage often emphasizes the ethnic background of individuals involved in acts of violence. This causes local residents to generalize and assume that all Eastern Indonesian students are troublemakers, including those from NTT. In reality, not all students were involved in the violent incidents that occurred in Tambakbayan, Yogyakarta.

The researcher also found that competition factors can lead to ethnic conflict and violence in Tambakbayan. This includes power struggles over parking spaces, security roles, and territorial disputes. In addition to pursuing their education, many migrants from NTT also settle in Yogyakarta to find work, increasing competition in these areas.

d. The "Drunkard" Stigma

A negative stigma has developed toward NTT students living in Tambakbayan, Yogyakarta. They are often stereotyped as drunkards, troublemakers, rude, hot-tempered, and violent. In this study, the researcher found that for some NTT students, drinking alcoholic beverages is a normal social activity, typically done only during certain events. Therefore, the act of drinking alcohol is considered a common and culturally acceptable practice among them.

That situation indeed leads to a societal stigma that students from NTT are often associated with excessive drinking. Although such behavior may be considered normal in NTT, it is deemed inappropriate according to the social norms of Yogyakarta society, especially in the Tambakbayan area. The direct impact experienced by the local community tends to restrict the social activities and interactions of these students in their daily lives.

Ethnic violence in Yogyakarta has encouraged students from East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) to take positive initiatives to prevent further incidents. The students from Eastern Indonesia have made efforts to be accepted by the people of Yogyakarta. These efforts are expressed through positive attitudes such as friendliness and politeness, as well as through constructive activities like tutoring, church choirs, and community and campus services.

Senior students who had already been in Yogyakarta provided guidance to new NTT students in order to reduce negative public perceptions such as the view that NTT students tend to get drunk, act violently, enjoy partying excessively, and disobey traffic rules. In addition to personal efforts, the NTT student community has also organized initiatives such as dialogues with the Yogyakarta government and the creation of regulations aimed at reducing the level of ethnic violence in the region.

Conflicts and destructive actions that occurred in Tambakbayan hamlet caused unrest in social life. To minimize these conflicts and destructive behaviors, various institutions including local community leaders, church authorities, and the police took concrete steps using constructive strategies. Furthermore, mediation was also conducted by the **Interfaith Forum (FUB)**, involving Sri Sultan to reconcile residents and NTT students. The purpose of this mediation and negotiation was to de-escalate the conflict and prevent it from spreading or triggering new conflicts

1. Padukuhan Tambakbayan

To prevent the conflict from escalating, the neighborhood authorities together with the heads of RW and RT in Tambakbayan made efforts to reconcile both parties. The deliberation involved several groups, including community representatives, representatives of students from East Nusa Tenggara (NTT), elders from the NTT community, security officers, and the Tambakbayan neighborhood authorities.

The neighborhood leaders, along with the RW and RT, took several measures to prevent further conflict. First, they involved students in community activities such as communal work (gotong royong), art performances, and joint sports events. Second, they encouraged NTT students to socialize and interact with students from other ethnic groups

or regions. Third, they advised students to live in boarding houses or rented places that have supervisors or caretakers, in order to maintain discipline and order.

2. State Apparatus

There are regular patrols around the Tambakbayan and Babarsari neighborhoods to maintain public order. The security patrols also include monitoring the lives of students living in boarding houses or rented houses. In addition, a security circular was issued to boarding house owners to help maintain the safety and discipline of their tenants. Boarding house residents are prohibited from engaging in cohabitation without marriage, holding alcohol or drug parties.

The Yogyakarta Regional Police (Polda DIY) also held meetings with three tribal leaders involved in the conflict those from East Nusa Tenggara, Ambon, and Papua. In addition to conducting mediation and reaching agreements, the Yogyakarta Regional Police and the three tribal leaders also discussed preventive measures to avoid further conflicts in Yogyakarta. The goal is to restore the city's safety, comfort, and peace, ensuring that no more riots occur.



Figure 1. Conflict Mediation of Three Tribes: NTT, Ambon, and Papua
Source : www.detik.com

Held at the Gadri Kepatihan Danurejan Building in Yogyakarta in 2013, a dialogue forum was organized between the Governor of the Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY) and the regional forum (including the Regional Police Chief, Military Commander, Chief Prosecutor, Chief of the High Court, Speaker of the Regional House of Representatives, Naval Commander, and Regional Secretary) together with the Governor of East Nusa Tenggara (NTT). The purpose of the dialogue was to create a conducive atmosphere between the residents and people from NTT, as well as to establish good communication.



Figure 2. State Apparatus Dialogue Forum
Source: jogja.kemenkumham.go.id

In June 2022, a riot occurred in Tambakbayan involving three ethnic groups: NTT, Maluku, and Papua. During the incident, Sri Sultan Hamengku Buwono X ordered the Regional Police to take firm action not only to break up the conflict but also to impose sanctions on the perpetrators. The Governor of Yogyakarta Special Region also stated that he was always willing to act as a mediator for dialogue between the two parties.



Figure 3. Poster of the Governor of DIY's Order
Source: *Status Whatsapp*

3. Religious parties

The lives of NTT (East Nusa Tenggara) students have received considerable attention from the Catholic Church in Babarsari. The church is concerned about the increasing number of violence cases involving NTT students. In addition, there has been a moral decline among students, such as premarital pregnancies, dating violence, drunkenness, and fights. First, the formation of the NTT student community aims to involve them in positive church activities and reduce negative behaviors. Second, the church engages boarding house and rental property owners to help manage and monitor the students, as

many parents have asked for assistance in finding safe and comfortable housing. Third, pastors conduct visits to student boarding houses and rental homes to listen to their concerns and provide guidance, encouraging them to avoid actions that may disturb the community and violate religious norms.

Intercultural Communication in the Adjustment of NTT Students

Cultural differences often become a problem, as individuals are not accustomed to dealing with diverse cultural backgrounds (Moulita, 2018). Typically, there will be rejection or tension arising from cultural similarities and differences through stereotyping, generalization, evaluation, and judgmental behaviors and attitudes (Wono et al., 2021). Stereotyping occurs, for example, when students from East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) speak in a loud tone, Javanese people might perceive them as rude, even though that is not actually the case. Adaptation in intercultural communication is therefore very important. Being open-minded and expanding social interactions are essential to avoid negative ethnocentrism.

NTT students live in an environment that requires them to participate in the acculturation process. Cultural differences can be managed by adjusting themselves to their surroundings. However, over time, the interaction between NTT students and the residents of Tambak Bayan has become increasingly distant. This is due to the students' reluctance to socialize with the local community and their frequent involvement in conflicts both among fellow NTT student groups and with other cultural groups. Consequently, there has been a change in intercultural communication between NTT students and the residents of Tambak Bayan.

1. Factors Influencing Self-Adjustment

a. New Environment

The behavior of the people in Yogyakarta is known to be very gentle and polite, which has become a challenge for migrants from East Nusa Tenggara (NTT). For them, this is quite the opposite of what they are accustomed to in their home region, as people from eastern Indonesia generally have different manners compared to those in Yogyakarta. This difference has made it difficult for NTT students to adapt, as they often still carry the communication style from their place of origin. Their naturally loud and slightly harsh tone shaped by their native environment is often misunderstood by others. Within the student community, NTT students frequently experience unfair treatment due to racial differences, such as skin color and physical appearance. They also face discrimination when making purchases, as price differences often occur between them and the local people.

The way society perceives them makes them feel like outsiders. They feel looked at differently, misunderstood, and often ridiculed. Students from East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) perceive that there is a misunderstanding among the local community toward them, which makes it even more difficult to interact.

b. Influence of Custom or Culture

NTT students have many differences compared to the local people in Yogyakarta, such as in terms of food, language, and behavior. Yogyakarta is known for its sweet-tasting cuisine, while NTT's traditional dishes are generally savory and spicy, with yellow-based spices and often use sago as the main ingredient for daily meals. These differences in food preferences have become one of the problems faced by NTT students, as the taste of food in Yogyakarta and in their hometowns is significantly different.

The languages spoken in NTT include Lamaholot, Tetun, Sumba, and Malay dialects, while people in Yogyakarta use Javanese, which has a very soft intonation. NTT students often face difficulties communicating with others because of the wide differences in language and dialogue styles. This language barrier sometimes leads to misunderstandings with the local community. For example, when NTT students are talking with one another in their native dialect, they are sometimes perceived by locals as being angry or arguing.

2. Strategi Penyesuaian diri Pasca Konflik

The large number of cases involving people from East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) has created a sense of shame and fear among students. However, some students from NTT feel indifferent about these incidents. In fact, there are NTT students who respond to such events calmly because they feel they have done nothing wrong and are not afraid of the threats being spread. As a result of these incidents, interethnic relations and intercultural communication between NTT students and the residents of Tambakbayan have become increasingly closed off. To deal with the various challenges of post-conflict adjustment, certain strategies are needed, namely :

a. Self Control

This strategy emphasizes the importance of self-control and composure, which enable individuals to deal with problems carefully. In facing issues during interactions, self-control involves regulating one's emotions, thoughts, and actions.

b. Self defense

With normal adjustment, failure may occur, followed by efforts to try again. Conversely, when experiencing disturbances in adjustment, failure may lead to processes such as rationalization, projection, and compensation. Individuals with normal adjustment are able

to solve problems through rational consideration and can directly address the issue. They are capable of evaluating problems or conflicts and organizing their thoughts, behaviors, and emotions to solve problems even under difficult conditions demonstrating normal adjustment.

3. Dynamics of Community Communication with NTT

Community leaders also urged the residents of Tambakbayan to be open and welcoming toward students from other regions without any discrimination. As a result, a harmonious interaction developed between the Tambakbayan residents and the migrant students. The students blended in and interacted with the locals without any friction or conflict. This reflects Yogyakarta as a miniature Indonesia that should embrace all forms of ethnic diversity from across the archipelago.

The occurrence of several riots that often involved people from Eastern Indonesia has led to negative labeling against them. Although these riots were not entirely caused by the actions of “Eastern people,” they may have been carried out only by certain individuals. However, this situation has influenced the attitudes of Yogyakarta’s local community toward migrants from Eastern Indonesia as a whole.

It has been known that since 2012, there has been rejection toward students from East Nusa Tenggara (NTT), either directly or indirectly, through advertisements for boarding houses and rental places. It was later discovered that such rejection was driven by stereotypical views, prejudice, and negative framing toward students from NTT. However, not all members of society express rejection toward NTT students. This largely depends on the stigma and mindset of each individual in responding to the presence of migrants.

Efforts have been made to ensure good communication and prevent conflicts. A church located in Babarsari organizes an activity called **HWI (Harmoni Warna Warni Indonesia)**. This event brings together people from various ethnic groups who showcase their regional uniqueness through singing, dancing, music, crafts, games, and traditional clothing. The target participants of this activity are youth or students residing in Tambakbayan and the surrounding areas. The event is expected to serve as a unifying platform for various ethnicities, promoting intercultural tolerance and the beauty of harmony. This initiative aims to prevent conflicts and foster good communication between local residents and migrants, particularly students from NTT.

Analysis of the Dynamics of NTT Student Conflict

In life, people need communication to fulfill various aspects of their daily needs. The

communication that occurs is influenced by the goals and interests of each party involved. Communication tends to occur more easily in homogeneous societies and is more challenging in heterogeneous ones. One example of communication within a heterogeneous society can be seen in the interactions between the local community of Yogyakarta and migrant students from Eastern Indonesia.

These incoming students are required to adapt to the majority (local) society of Yogyakarta, which possesses a culture distinct from their own. Such cultural differences can trigger conflicts between the two groups. According to the Conflict Theory proposed by Dahrendorf, conflicts are rooted in differences in individual characteristics within social interactions. These differences encompass physical traits, customs, beliefs, intelligence, knowledge, and other aspects.

This concept effectively reflects and corresponds to the conditions of the local Yogyakarta community and students from East Nusa Tenggara (NTT). Cultural and habitual differences lead to divergent perceptions regarding what is considered right and wrong. Furthermore, the strong framing conducted by the media and other actors contributes to societal stereotypes toward Eastern students and may exacerbate tensions between the two communities.

From the perspective of Karl Marx's Conflict Theory, a distinction exists between majority and minority groups (Putri & Kiranantika, 2020). Majority groups tend to have the power to dominate minority groups. This can be observed through discriminatory behaviors by the majority, carried out to render the minority powerless and unable to obstruct or interfere with the customs and interests of the majority. Such discriminatory behavior subsequently leads incoming students to choose to live in groups with people from the same region or with those who share the same cultural background. The choice of these students to live in groups is another consequence of social conflict.

The researcher observes that people from the eastern regions of Indonesia are taught from a young age that when a friend is hurt, other friends must help a concept referred to as “*ale rasa beta rasa*.” The cultural norms of eastern societies also play a significant role that cannot be overlooked, and in some situations, this has even led to fatal outcomes. In addition, a strong-willed character, which is considered part of noble upbringing, also emphasizes the importance of defending certain matters.

After analyzing the dynamics of conflict among students from East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) in Tambakbayan, Yogyakarta, the researcher highlights and discusses four main areas of change that require attention to induce systemic transformation and shift conflict toward peace. The focus on these four areas encompasses individual, interpersonal, and community-level transformation.

1. Individual Transformation

In the process of conflict transformation during riots, the parties involved are required to engage in compromise. Objectives should be revised through negotiation techniques that consider ideology, religion, historical experiences, myths, and other significant characteristics of the conflicting parties. This process can take place during dialogues facilitated by a mediator, in the presence of a neutral mediator accepted by all participants. The purpose is to enhance responsiveness, mutual empathy, and comprehensive understanding among all parties involved.

2. Transformasi Interpersonal

In interpersonal transformation, the emphasis is placed on the importance of relationships in conflict transformation. This requires the presence of all actors involved in the conflict, including the government, community leaders, ethnic groups, and marginalized groups. The presence of these actors is essential to facilitate the transition from an unpleasant situation to peaceful relationships.

Furthermore, negotiations must be conducted among conflict stakeholders to identify key issues and potential solutions. These negotiations aim to promote equality, respect, participation, and mutual enrichment.

3. Community Transformation

The presence of ethnic conflicts can serve to create or reinforce identity. Such conflicts can provide knowledge about equality among ethnic groups, respect for diverse languages, and tolerance for differences between ethnic communities. The development of cultural activities that group various ethnic communities together is also necessary to foster a sense of intimacy among these groups. Participation in such activities can help individuals understand one another beyond their ethnic identities. These activities may include music, theater, sports, games for children, painting classes, book clubs, and other cultural associations. For example, organizing a football tournament between Hindu and Muslim participants with mixed teams can help both groups perceive each other in different contexts as different actors, as teammates, or as opponents, rather than as enemies.

Analysis of Intercultural Communication in the Adjustment of NTT Students

The cultural adaptation theory proposed by Gudykunst & Kim describes a process of self-adjustment to achieve comfort within a particular environment through connecting processes (Lecky Gustanio, 2020). The cultural system and its environment, or the cultural system itself, consist of human ideas and concepts shared collectively within a society. A system is a component

of culture that is abstract in nature and comprises thoughts, ideas, concepts, and beliefs. Thus, the cultural system is a part of culture which, in Indonesian, is referred to as *adat istiadat* (customs and traditions).

Based on the cultural adaptation theory, students from East Nusa Tenggara undergo a long process of cultural adaptation while living in the city of Yogyakarta. To achieve comfort in life and temporary residence during their student status in Yogyakarta, the Javanese cultural system characterized by politeness and courteous speech serves as a guideline for East Nusa Tenggara students to integrate and apply the Javanese cultural system into their own East Nusa Tenggara culture.

Communication style influences the effort to achieve communication goals. When students from East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) adapt to a communication style in terms of language and speech that is loud, harsh, or even coarse, it affects the communication process with Javanese people, who are accustomed to a softer communication style. Moreover, the communication style practiced by NTT students tends to be one-way, as they rarely communicate and interact with Javanese people and are more inclined to interact with fellow NTT students. Consequently, communication does not function optimally.

Cultural differences in adapting communication styles influence changes in trust, causing NTT students to experience several phases during adaptation. Students may undergo culture shock and face numerous challenges before successfully adjusting. After passing through these phases, they are able to overcome crises of trust related to differing cultural backgrounds.

The cultural adaptation strategy of NTT students is influenced by situations of relative balance, non-contradictory balance, and unconventional goals. In adaptation, the influence of relative balance in the self-adjustment process serves as the objective for NTT students to demonstrate their adaptation in communication style. Because of the persuasive influence from Yogyakarta culture, NTT students tend to enhance and align their communication style with that of the Yogyakarta people.

Meanwhile, accommodation explains how and why individuals adjust their communication behavior in response to the actions of others. The behavior of communication participants often involves mutual imitation. Giles and colleagues refer to this as convergence, or alignment. Conversely, divergence occurs when speakers begin to exaggerate their differences. Adjustments in both forms have been observed in almost all communication behaviors, including accent, speech rate, volume, vocabulary, grammar, voice, body movements, and other features.

Based on the researcher's observation, the ways in which Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT) students cope with culture shock occur through stages and phases. There are four stages that form

the culture shock cycle:

a. Incubation Stage or Honeymoon Stage

NTT students experience this stage when they arrive in Yogyakarta, feeling excited because coming to the city becomes an interesting experience for them. It is a unique experience to live far from their parents and feel no restrictions or reprimands if they want to do something in Yogyakarta. They feel delighted with Yogyakarta's tourist attractions, dormitory accommodations, new campus, friendships with local students, and learning the local Yogyakarta language, which is different from their own.

b. Crisis Stage

At this stage, the effects of culture shock begin to appear. Students may feel resentment toward other cultures entering their own, experiencing frustration when encountering differences that make life feel less meaningful in Yogyakarta. Their native language becomes ineffective when communicating with the Javanese community, as well as dealing with the attitudes of the local people. Yogyakarta residents often use indirect language in expressing themselves, unlike NTT people who speak directly. The Javanese intonation also differs from the louder intonation typical of NTT students. All these differences cause NTT students to experience a crisis of self-confidence in adapting to these differences. Being far from their parents also contributes to a stage of shock for NTT students.

c. Recovery Stage

At this stage, students have been able to overcome the second stage (crisis stage). NTT students are able to cope with challenges such as language barriers, manners, and other differences, allowing them to live harmoniously with Yogyakarta's culture.

d. Adjustment Stage

NTT students have learned to adapt to Yogyakarta's culture and take pride in their ability to adjust to life in the new cultural environment. Initial feelings of anxiety due to fear of being unable to interact have passed, reducing the culture shock they previously experienced.

CONCLUSION

Intercultural communication between NTT students and the residents of Tambakbayan was still conducted interactively before the conflict occurred. The difficulties in understanding each other's cultural differences both from the NTT students and the Tambakbayan residents represented a process of learning as well as adaptation. Living alongside a community with a

different culture is very challenging. The cultural differences between the Javanese people and the students from East Nusa Tenggara are highly contrasting. This is an aspect that must be considered to prevent the emergence of conflicts caused by cultural differences. Therefore, it is necessary for NTT students to understand, become aware of, and, if required, study the local culture, values, norms, and other related aspects. This awareness is especially important given that the Yogyakarta community tends to be polite and gentle, in order to avoid misunderstandings between the native Yogyakarta residents and NTT students. Students should also maintain proper behavior by refraining from causing disturbances, shouting, or engaging in other inappropriate actions.

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