Developing Interreligious Understanding and Peacebuilding among Local and International Students Through Community Outreach Program in the Moslem Community

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OUTLINE

1. The Problem

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1. PROBLEM STATEMENTS

- The prejudices arising before joining the COP
- The influences of cultural and religious on their social interactions
- The students’ adaptation process to different cultures and religions
PREVIOUS RESEARCH*:

• Cultural differences exist in the way individuals define themselves (Johnson & Johnson, 2002).

• Students start to recognize a cultural identity of their group mates who are of a different nationality.

• The Asian students (Indonesian, Hong Kong, and South Korea) have observed that their Dutch friends speak very straightforward and individualistic.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH (cont)*)

• Others mentioned that the Asians take more time for making a decision compared to the Europeans and are also more quiet (the latter could be caused by the language barrier rather than a general stereotype of Asians)

• To Indonesian students, Koreans are hard working, respectful to older people, and have many rules.

• The first week in the village is an important stage for every student start to learn to adapt to their new environment, new people in the group and also the villagers who do not understand English.

• The students, particularly the overseas students, will start to explore the best way to communicate particularly with the villagers.

The students’ views about the village changed over time during COP.

The negative views about the village decreased from 55% prior to COP to 10% in the mid COP.

The negative views students had were about the village infrastructure and facilities like clean water, proper toilet, and cleanliness.

Students faced more difficulties in communicating with fellow students of different nationalities rather than with the villagers.

Using body language and speaking slowly and clearly were the ways students used to help them communicate.

PREJUDICE*)

• The result of information obtained from previous participants.
• The assessment obtained without a valid and proper proven fact, premature and was judge too hastily
• Involves emotional element, like or disliked which strengthening the assessment.

Allport’s Scale of Prejudice

1. Antilocution, the majority of people discuss other groups negative stereotypes and negative images. They talk among groups or peers.
2. Avoidance, the majority group actively avoid people in a minority group.
3. Discrimination, the minority groups are discriminated against by denying them opportunities and services, putting prejudice into action.
4. Physical attack, members of the group physically attack another group when the emotional and hatred level were hard to contained.
5. Extermination, murder or genocide occurred against the hated group.

SWIDLER - INTERFAITH DIALOGUE*)

- Practical: collaboration of people to help each other for humanitarian affairs
- Spiritual: try to experience ideology or religion of others
- Cognitive: trying to understand the beliefs of others

When these three things are done, there will be understanding of what is believed by another person or group.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

- Focus Group Discussion (Japan, South Korea, Netherlands, Hongkong, China, and Indonesia)
- Interviews
- Student’s reflection journals
THE QUESTIONS

1. What is your perception of the religious and cultural differences before joining the COP program?

2. Tell me about your experiences among people of different cultures and religions before joining the COP program!

3. Is there a change of perception about religion and culture during the COP program?

4. What challenges did you face when interaction with people of different cultures and religions?
3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
PREJUDICE AMONG THE COP PARTICIPANTS

• The Netherlands students speak up a lot and like to impose their will.
• Muslims practice their religion with strict
• Indonesian people work ineffective and often late
Physical appearance:

- The Netherlands participants did not expect to have a lot of Chinese-descent-Indonesian students.
- They did not feel interacting with Indonesian students.
THE INFLUENCE OF CULTURAL IN SOCIAL INTERACTION (cont)

Communication:

• Netherlands students were accustomed to short meetings and straight to work

• Indonesians meeting style use meeting time for brainstorming
THE INFLUENCE OF CULTURAL IN SOCIAL INTERACTION (cont)

Communication:

• Netherlands students spoke with direct tone and tend to push their ideas.

• In the meeting, when the other participants didn’t have an idea, spontaneity shown by Netherlands students giving the new ideas.

• The Korean participants heard the guidance of their Korean mentor.

• The Japanese students tend to stay silence, but at the same time gathering their own ideas.
• The Korean and Japanese participant were hard workers
THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGIOUS IN SOCIAL INTERACTION

• The Korean participant was disturbed by the call of prayer at dawn (*azan*) form the mosque.

• The Hongkong participant was amazed to see Indonesian participant praying numerous times and with a long duration.

• The participants viewed not all Muslims practice their religion (ex. fasting) with tight
ADAPTATION PROCEEDS TO THE CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES

• The participants learn the culture and customs before participating in COP
• The participants learn to accept and tolerate the differences
ADAPTATION PROCESSES TO THE CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES (cont)

• The participants learn to understand other's religions through engage their religious activities.

• Ex. preparing food for break fasting, attending *tarawih* (extra prayers performed by Sunni Muslims at night in the Islamic month of Ramadan)
ADAPTATION PROCESSES TO THE CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES

• Participants focused on achieving the goal
CONCLUSION

• The Community Outreach Program was proven to be a good medium to study interreligous and understanding and peacebuilding.
• The mental attitude to accept and appreciate differences, helped the participants to be able to adapt.
• Orientation process and debriefing to face the cultural and religious differences are important. The debriefing will prepare students’ mental attitude which support the peacebuilding process in COP.