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Multiculturalism as a Mediator of Ethnic Identity and National Identity among Javanese Adolescents

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Multikulturalisme sebagai Mediator dari Identitas Etnis dan Identitas Nasional pada Remaja Suku Jawa

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1. Introduction

National identity is often perceived as a critical aspect of a nation's competence, partly because it refers to an individual's identification towards a social group or country in the modern world (Davidov, 2009). Studies have highlighted the positive contribution that national identity has towards nation integration, particularly within the immigrants' context. An experimental study on natives' attitudes toward immigrants in Germany, France, and the USA discovered that immigrant and native-origin individuals are more likely to be viewed as ideal

ABSTRACT

The development of national identity in a highly multicultural nation begins by identifying oneself to a particular ethnic group and realizing that multiculturalism is the bridge between both identities. This research aims to discover the link between national identity, ethnic identity, and multiculturalism in Indonesia, specifically for Javanese. This study utilized three measurement scales: (1) National Identity Scale to measure national identity; (2) Ethnic Identity Scale to measure the sense of belongingness to the Javanese ethnicity; and (3) Universal Diverse Orientation (UDO), to measure multiculturalism. This study's participants consist of 441 college students in Yogyakarta (male = 115; female = 326), ranging from 17 to 21. The regression analysis result shows that the mediation model supports this research hypothesis, namely that multiculturalism mediates the relationship between ethnic identity and national identity. Therefore, the current finding generates a new conception regarding the related theme.

ABSTRAK

Pengembangan identitas nasional pada negara yang sangat multikultural dimulai dengan mengidentifikasi diri sendiri pada kelompok etnis tertentu dan menyadari bahwa multikulturalisme adalah jembatan antara kedua identitas tersebut. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui keterkaitan antara identitas nasional, identitas etnis, dan multikulturalisme di Indonesia, khususnya suku Jawa. Penelitian ini menggunakan tiga skala pengukuran: (1) Skala Identitas Nasional untuk mengukur identitas nasional; (2) Skala Identitas Etnis untuk mengukur rasa memiliki terhadap etnis Jawa; dan (3) *Universal Diverse Orientation* (UDO), untuk mengukur multikulturalisme. Partisipan penelitian ini terdiri dari 441 mahasiswa di Yogyakarta (laki-laki = 115; perempuan = 326), dengan rentang usia 17 sampai 21. Hasil analisis regresi menunjukkan bahwa model mediasi mendukung hipotesis penelitian ini, yaitu multikulturalisme memediasi hubungan antara identitas etnis dan identitas nasional. Oleh karena itu, temuan saat ini menghasilkan konsepsi baru mengenai tema terkait.

representatives of the nation when employed in occupations that reflect national identity (Maxwell, 2016). It is also useful in driving negative public opinion towards harmonization (Luedtke, 2005). Additionally, at an individual level, national identity correlates positively with meaning in life and life satisfaction due to the existence of a sharing process with other individuals with the same national identity (Grozdanowska, 2016). Thus, the positive contribution of national identity towards a nation is seldom contested. However, one remaining debate that continues to be discussed is multiculturalism in developing national identity.

There are opposing views on the perceived role of multiculturalism in highly diverse countries such as Indonesia. While some have argued that diversity would impede social trust, solidarity, and loyalty towards the nation (Goodhart, 2004; Putnam, 2007), more recent studies have started to shed light on the use of multiculturalism in building an inclusive national identity (Moran, 2011). Therefore, multiculturalism is an integration whereby the people are receptive to cultural diversity to be a part of their national identity. However, highly multicultural nations often experience a crisis of integration that results from the multiethnic composition (Onyibor, 2016). Indonesia, as one of the most multi-ethnic countries, has 663 ethnicities, with Javanese making up 40.5% of the total Indonesian population (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2015). Nevertheless, it has also been acknowledged as one of the most successful nations to build a unified multi-ethnic state – seen through Indonesia’s national motto “*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*” known as unity in diversity. It served as a revolutionary strategy in creating a bond between the people after years of Dutch colonial rule. Despite the success that Indonesia has in creating a multi-ethnic coexistence, it did not come without challenges.

Issues of National Identity and Ethnic Identity in Indonesia

In Indonesia, the issue of national identity has not been widely discussed. Suwartono et al. (2017) showed that Indonesian society does not explicitly express pride towards Indonesia, often comparing Indonesia’s condition with other countries. In practice, some people do not identify themselves with national identities, but rather associate themselves with other social identities, one of which is ethnic groups, referred to as ethnic identity. One of the driving factors is ethnic attachment in people’s daily interpersonal relationships, which have manifested themselves into social culture.

As part of the Indonesians’ social identity, ethnic identity also refers to membership in a particular group, the only difference being in the characteristics that make up the categories. Ethnic identity is the degree to which individuals perceive themselves as being included in an ethnic group (Smith & Silva, 2011). Phinney (1990) stated that ethnic identity is built based on a few aspects: self-identification as a member of a group, group belongingness, attitude regarding group membership, and involvement in various rituals or cultural activities. Several factors could influence individual self-identification, such as parents’ ethnic origin and external environment (e.g., peer influence). Parents’ ethnic origin often leads children to identify with the same ethnicity as

their parents, while the latter could cause adolescents to change their ethnic identification (Phinney, 1990).

Although having a strong ethnic identity could provide some comfort, it could also pose problems when individuals begin to glorify ethnic identities. For the rest of the population that still upholds a strong sense of ethnic identity, inequality issues across ethnic groups were found. Geographically, Central Java and East Java are regions where the Javanese culture emerged; thus, it remains to have strong Javanese cultural elements (Koentjaraningrat, 1971). Although Javanese culture is substantially present in the central and eastern part of Java Island, the Javanese community is spread out to various regions in Indonesia due to developments and demographic changes. Research from Pitoyo and Triwahyudi (2017) showed that, between 2000 and 2010, the number of Javanese ethnic communities in Sumatra Island increased on average. The Javanese ethnic community spread to various regions in Indonesia, increasing the potential for inter-ethnic conflicts. Similarly, inter-ethnic conflicts also show the degradation of various ethnic principles that values harmony over conflicts. Several studies related to ethnicity in Indonesia suggest inter-ethnic conflicts that begin with the migration of one ethnicity to another area and experiencing mutual friction (Prayudi, 2004; Ardiansyah, 2010).

The problems faced by inter-ethnic groups can make each group increase ingroup favoritism and outgroup derogation (Turner et al., 1979). Ingroup favoritism is closely related to ethnocentrism bias. Ethnocentrism hinders individuals from seeing a situation objectively, often feeling that their group is preferable to other groups (Gudykunst, 2003). Ethnocentrism towards its ethnic groups hinders public awareness of the larger group’s identity, namely national identity. One of the ways that could potentially be used to minimize the ethnocentrism bias of a group is by increasing one’s acceptance towards multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism as an Embedded Identities Mediator in Indonesia

Multiculturalism proposes that differences between groups are essential to be acknowledged and appreciated, creating equality and harmony between groups (Ryan et al., 2007). In other words, multiculturalism can be understood as the acceptance and support towards life from people who come from various backgrounds (van de Vijver et al., 2008). Berry (2013) supported this by stating that, in Canada, policies that support multiculturalism promote the social integration of Canada’s diverse society social integration. A similar result was found in a study conducted by Visintin et al., (2017) that showed that

individuals in South-Eastern England who supported multiculturalism as an ideology developed a more positive perception about an outgroup when the experimental stimulus represented a strong group characteristic. Furthermore, a school environment that supports multiculturalism can increase students' empathy towards other ethnic groups (Chang & Le, 2010). Intergroup interactions as an implementation of multiculturalism also encourage creative thinking, accommodate business mobilization, and inclusivity of education, especially education held across cultures (Aytug et al., 2018). Multiculturalism also promotes psychological adaptation and interaction between the Chinese immigrant minority group and the dominant native Hong Kong residents (Hui et al., 2015). A similar result was also found in research by Urbiola et al., (2017) that showed that favorable judgment about cultural differences supported harmonious intergroup relations and lessened injustices between subordinate and dominant groups. Nevertheless, this has not been explored extensively, especially in the Indonesian context that consists of many ethnicities. Therefore, this research aims to determine the link between national identity, ethnic identity, and multiculturalism.

Based on the theoretical concept built on the diversity of social identities, people tend to judge their groups overly positively compared to other groups which leads to ethnocentrism. When multiculturalism occurs, someone will perceive their ethnic group as superior to other ethnicities which creating inter-ethnic conflicts. Thus, to reduce the risk of conflicts, it is necessary to raise multiculturalism, later they will consider themselves as part of a nation (not only divided at the ethnic level) and perceive there is an identity that unites the ethnic groups, i.e., national identity. The purpose of this research is to examine the model between ethnic identity, national identity, and multiculturalism proposed by the researcher towards one of the largest ethnic groups in Indonesia, namely Java. Referring to this rationale, three hypotheses are proposed. The first hypothesis: there is a relationship between ethnic identity and national identity. Second, ethnic identity has a major role in multiculturalism, and the third is multiculturalism has a significant impact on national identity.

2. Methods

Study Design and Participants

This research was a cross-sectional study involving 441 students from a state university in Yogyakarta - one of the cities in Indonesia that earned the nickname as the city of education, with the arrival of students from various backgrounds. This study's sampling method was non-

probability sampling, specifically convenience sampling, in which participants who met the inclusive criteria were asked to participate in this study (Hayes, 2000). The inclusion criteria of the participants included: (1) Actively enrolled students, (2) Identify oneself as a Javanese ethnicity, (3) Indonesian citizens. Initially, the current researchers reached out to several faculties within the university to ask for permission in collecting data from their students. However, due to time constraints, only three faculties were available: Faculty of Psychology, Faculty of Economics and Business, and Faculty of Engineering. The participants of this study were students from those faculties.

Data were collected between May and August 2018. At least two research assistants administered the questionnaire in each class. Before the data collection process, participants were provided a brief explanation of the study's objective, inclusive criteria, and confidentiality issues. Participants who agreed to participate in this research were then provided informed consent and a survey. All participants were also provided a reward after completing the questionnaire. In total, the current study collected 487 participants. However, only 441 could be analyzed due to 46 of them having incomplete responses.

Data Collection Instrument

The data for this study was collected through a survey that consisted of three adapted measurement scales:

National Identity Scale. The National Identity Scale consists of 12 questions on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree) to measure thoughts, feelings, and behaviors as an Indonesian nationality. This scale was modified from the *Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure* (Phinney, 1992), *Erikson Psychosocial Stage Inventory* (Rosenthal et al., 1981), and *Multi-Religion Identity Measure* (Abu-Rayya et al., 2009). It had been tested on 400 participants, resulting in an Alpha Cronbach reliability score of 0.87. Examples of items from the scale are “*Saya melihat diri saya adalah orang Indonesia* [I see myself as an Indonesian]” and “*Saya merasa saya adalah orang Indonesia* [I feel that I am an Indonesian]”.

Ethnic Identity Scale. This scale consists of 12 questions on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from one (very inappropriate) to five (very appropriate) to measure the sense of belongingness (cognitive, affective, and behavioral) based on an individual's subjective claim. This scale is an adaptation from the *Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure* (Phinney, 1992) and has been tested on 400 participants, resulting in an Alpha Cronbach reliability score of 0.87. Examples of items from this scale

are “*Saya senang bahwa saya adalah anggota dari kelompok etnis saya* [I am glad to be a member of my ethnic group]” and “*Saya punya perasaan memiliki yang kuat terhadap kelompok etnis saya* [I have a strong sense of ownership toward my ethnic group]”.

Universal Diverse Orientation Scale. This scale consists of 14 questions on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree) to measure the degree to which individuals accept and understand the similarity and differences they have with others. This scale is an adaptation and modification of the Multiculturalism Scale from Fuertes et al. (2000) named Universality-Diversity Scale—Short Form (M-Guds_S) and has been tested to 400 participants which resulted in an alpha Cronbach reliability score of 0.74. An example of a favorable item from this scale is “*Saya bisa memahami seseorang dengan sangat baik setelah saya tahu bagaimana ia sama dan berbeda dengan saya* [I can understand someone very well after I know how that person is same with and different from me].” In contrast, an example of an unfavorable item in this scale is “*Saya hanya nyaman dengan orang-orang dari ras saya* [I am only comfortable with people from the same race as me]”.

Table 1. Reliability of the National Identity Scale, Ethnic Identity Scale, and Multiculturalism scale

Scale	Number of items	α
National Identity	12	0,87
Ethnic Identity	12	0,87
Multiculturalism	14	0,74

Data analyses

Regression analysis was used to analyze the mediation model based on Baron and Kenny (1986). The regression analysis for this mediation model had to meet certain conditions, namely that there was (1) a significant role of the independent variable (X) towards the dependent variable (Y) (path c); (2) a significant role of the independent variable (X) towards the mediating variable (M) (path a); (3) a significant role of the mediating variable (M) towards the dependent variable (Y) (path b); and (4) if there was a significant role of the independent variable (X) and the mediator (M) towards the dependent variable (Y) then the mediation model was a partial mediation, whereas a perfect mediation (path c’) occurred if there was an insignificant role from the relationship. On path c and path a, the analysis used was a simple linear

regression, while on path b and c’, a multiple regression analysis was used. Furthermore, Baron and Kenny (1986) stated that in psychological measurement, the mediation model that occurred was a partial mediation because psychological variables can be influenced by various conditions.

3. Results

Sample Characteristics

Participants in this research were 441 students from the Faculty of Economics and Business, the Faculty of Psychology, and the Faculty of Engineering of a state university in Yogyakarta. More than half of the total participants were female, aged between 17-21 years old. The sample is also more representative of those who have lived in Yogyakarta for more than 10 years (N= 226), followed closely by those who have lived in Yogyakarta for 0-5 years (N=183). In other words, most of our data were derived from Javanese females (73,9%) who have lived in Yogyakarta for more than 10 years (51,3%). A detailed description of the sample characteristics can be viewed in Table 2.

Table 2. Sociodemographic characteristics of participants

Demography	Number of Participants	Percentage
Sex	Male	26,1%
	Female	73,9%
Amount of time living in Yogyakarta	>10 years	51,3%
	5-10 years	7,3%
	<5 years	41,4%
Total	441	100%

Inter Variable Correlation

Table 3 shows that ethnic identity has a significant positive correlation with both multiculturalism ($r= 0.142, p < 0.01$) and national identity ($r= 0.384, p < 0.01$). Multiculturalism also had a significant positive correlation with national identity ($r= 0.308, p < 0.01$). These findings indicated that the stronger one identifies with one’s ethnic identity, the more open one becomes to accept multiculturalism. Similarly, a higher score in ethnic identity also relates to a higher score in national identity. Having a greater openness to multiculturalism also results in a stronger sense of national identity. The existence of a significant correlation in each variable connected predicted a research result that supported the hypotheses.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics, internal consistency and intercorrelations for measured variables

Variable	1	2	3
1 Ethnic identity	1	0.142**	0.384**
2 Multiculturalism		1	0.308**
3 National identity			1

Note: ** $p < .001$

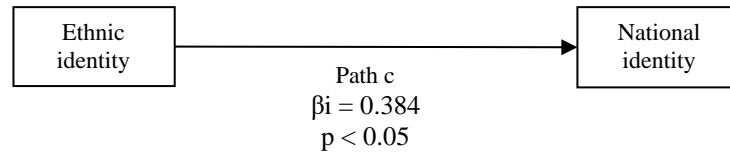


Figure 1. Ethnic identity’s direct path towards national identity

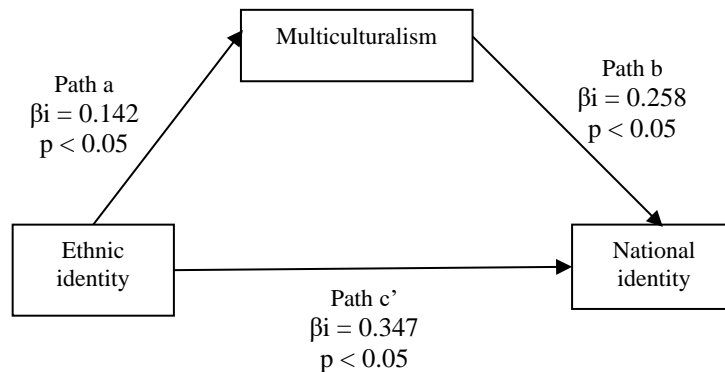


Figure 2. Ethnic identity’s path towards national identity with multiculturalism as a mediator

Hypothesis testing

Based on the regression analysis, conditions that must be met to result in the mediation model were met. Significant results were generated in the role of: (1) ethnic identity towards national identity (path c, $\beta_i = 0,384$), (2) ethnic identity towards multiculturalism (path a, $\beta_i = 0,142$), (3) multiculturalism towards national identity (path b, $\beta_i = 0,258$), and ethnic identity and multiculturalism towards national identity (path c', $\beta_i = 0,347$). The results can be seen in Figure 1 and Figure 2. Therefore, it can be concluded that the hypothesis of this research was accepted.

4. Discussion

This research aims to discover the link between national identity, ethnic identity, and Javanese adolescents' multiculturalism. Our findings show that multiculturalism mediates the relationship between ethnic and national

identity. The current findings are in line with past studies, arguing that multiculturalism is essential to understanding how to unite nations from a highly multicultural background (Berry, 2013; Chang & Le, 2010; Pitoyo & Triwahyudi, 2017; Visintin et al., 2017). These endorsements towards multiculturalism show its valuable contribution to bolstering ethnic identity's unification in becoming a national identity.

Multiculturalism is closely related to national identity in the category or variable that unites each ethnic identity. Paauw (2009) expressed that one of the significant categories in forming a national identity is language. This is because the national language gives every ethnic group a chance to have an equal understanding of each other, enabling communication to be more assertive. That thought is also supported by Gill (2009), who showed that the Malay language is a platform to interact with various ethnicities in

Malaysia. Even further, Berry (2013) stated that regulation that can accommodate various groups, whether it be the majority or the minority, could support multiculturalism in various groups in society. In the case of Javanese adolescents, multiculturalism is often reflected in the language used in everyday humor. The use of language manipulation for humor has become a substantial part of the young Javanese culture. It often contains local wisdom and acts to maintain social and cultural norms (Suryaningtyas & Setyaningsih, 2018). Essentially, this type of humor uses a play on words of various ethnic languages to convey a message humorously. As a result, it allows Javanese adolescents to unconsciously still be receiving local wisdom, familiarizes them with other ethnic languages, and provides a platform to connect with people from other ethnic groups entertainingly.

Multiculturalism, as a mediator between ethnic identity and national identity, is also influenced by various conditions. Berry (2013) said that several matters need to exist to create multiculturalism: (1) Ethnic security, for example, whether a particular ethnicity is guaranteed physical, economic, or social security, (2) Psychological attachment of an individual towards two identities (ethnic and national identity), (3) Voluntary contact, and (4) Support from the environment. These conditions show that multiculturalism that occurs in societal groups can change when the conditions are not met. In terms of the first condition, Javanese people are more ethnically secure, seeing as they remain one of Indonesia's largest ethnic groups. Most of the economic and social development is centered in Java, allowing them to have the security to interact freely with other ethnic groups. Secondly, the Javanese remains to be the dominant ethnic group in almost all provinces in Indonesia. Many regulations and modern cultures are therefore derived from the Javanese cultures. As such, Javanese adolescents' psychological attachment towards both the ethnic and national identity is upheld quite strongly. This is because there are minimal differences that can be highlighted between those two identities.

The Javanese culture of upholding harmony and a sense of community also aids in nurturing this sense of multiculturalism. One of the ways that continue to be used to promote this behavior is through *gotong-royong* activities. *Gotong royong* is a form of social solidarity whereby people aid in personal and group interests. This value is not just implemented from early education but also reflected in the community's daily activities as a whole – the majority of which are seen in youth activities (Hodriani et al., 2019). One of the findings of this study is the duration of the participants' stay in Yogyakarta, which incidentally is one of Indonesia's cities with various schools and campuses. With this situation, many people of Javanese

ethnicity, as residents in this city, interact with immigrants from various ethnic backgrounds. This situation makes it easier for people to establish relationships and get to know each other's ethnicities so that the life of multiculturalism is manifested in real interactions. In other words, Javanese people meet all the requirements to be able to have strong multiculturalism. However, those factors were not studied in this research. Thus, a comprehensive conclusion could not be made.

In broad terms, it can be said that ethnic identity, national identity, and multiculturalism are formed on the same basis, which is a subjective claim on a personal level. When an individual has a sense of belongingness towards a group not just because of ethnic sameness, which is then bridged by multiculturalism sourced from an awareness that can harmonize social life, then the foundation of national identity will merge into a holistic understanding to unite and not see merely from the sameness that underlies. It can be said that the concept of collective identity could be a basis for the link between ethnic identity, national identity, and multiculturalism. Collective identity derives from personal acceptance or personal acknowledgment towards that identity (Ashmore et al., 2004), not based on other things or an underlying external factor.

This research generates a new conception regarding the link between ethnic identity, multiculturalism, and national identity, specifically in the Indonesian context. However, some limitations need to be considered in further research. Our participants mostly represent female Javanese students who have lived in Yogyakarta for more than ten years. However, due to our sampling strategy's nature, it is not possible to claim the generalizability of this study. Secondly, this research explores one of the largest ethnic groups in Indonesia who resides in one of the main cities. Therefore, participants tend to have more resources from the country, generally stereotyped to have more opportunities and support (i.e., infrastructure, structural positions). However, it might not necessarily reflect the Javanese population's opinion who resides in the more rural area where government support might not be felt as strongly. Future research with this theme is expected to fill in the limitations of the current research, as multiculturalism as a bridge between ethnic identity and national identity can be understood more comprehensively and evenly.

5. Conclusion

This research shows that ethnic identity has a role in the formation of national identity. Individuals with a strong ethnic identity will also show a strong sense of belonging

to their national identity. Additionally, we found that multiculturalism acts as a mediator between ethnic identity and national identity. In other words, individuals who strongly identify with their ethnic identity will also avoid viewing ethnic differences in the concept of multiculturalism as a problem. Multiculturalism could, therefore, support the formation of national identity.

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