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Closeness in Interethnic Friendship (Arabic, Javanese, Tionghoa): A Qualitative Study on Adolescents Living in Surakarta, Central Java, Indonesia

Fadjri Kirana Anggarani

Faculty of Psychology, University of Sebelas Maret, Surakarta 57126, Indonesia,
fadjri.kirana@staff.uns.ac.id

Avin Fadilla Helmi

Faculty of Psychology, University of Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta 55281, Indonesia, avinpsi@gmail.com

Claudia Rosari Dewi

Faculty of Social Sciences and Law, University of Bristol, BS8 1JA England, io20189@bristol.ac.uk

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Cover Page Footnote

We sincerely thanks to our study participants for joining the study, Avin Fadilla Helmi as my tutor, Faturochman and Ira Pramastri as my supervisor.

Closeness in Interethnic Friendship (Arabic, Javanese, Tionghoa): A Qualitative Study on Adolescents Living in Surakarta, Central Java, Indonesia

Kedekatan Pertemanan Antaretnis (Arab, Jawa, Tionghoa): Studi Kualitatif Remaja di Surakarta, Jawa Tengah, Indonesia

Fadjri Kirana Anggarani^{1,2*}, Avin Fadilla Helmi², & Claudia Rosari Dewi³

1. Faculty of Psychology, University of Sebelas Maret, Surakarta 57126, Indonesia

2. Faculty of Psychology, University of Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta 55281, Indonesia

3. Faculty of Social Sciences and Law, University of Bristol, BS8 1JA England

ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the formation process of the closeness in interethnic friendship among adolescents living in Surakarta, Central Java, Indonesia. A qualitative study using grounded theory method is employed. Study participants comprised five adolescent girls, aged 16–17 years, with the following interethnic friendships: Javanese–Arabic–Tionghoa, Javanese–Arabic, and Javanese–Tionghoa. Data on the formation process of closeness in interethnic friendship were collected using semi-structured interview referring to the Closeness Interethnic Friendship Guideline for Adolescents. Data were analyzed using initial coding, focused coding, axial coding, and theoretical coding. Results reveal seven composites of closeness in interethnic friendship: disclosure, comfort, compatibility, reappraisal of the characters and other ethnic groups, support, similarity, and togetherness. Closeness led to the continuity of friendship, along with positive emotions, such as excited, comfortable, fun, happy, joyful, content, safe, and proud. This process occurred when the situation supported togetherness as well as, personal quality, experience, and appraisal toward the different ethnic groups, and the shared values understood by all the ethnic groups.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan menggambarkan proses pembentukan kedekatan dalam persahabatan antaretnis pada remaja yang tinggal di Surakarta, Jawa Tengah, Indonesia. Penelitian ini merupakan studi kualitatif dengan pendekatan *grounded theory*. Partisipan terdiri dari lima gadis remaja, berusia 16–17 tahun, dengan persahabatan antaretnis berikut: persahabatan Jawa–Arab–Tionghoa, Jawa–Arab, dan Jawa–Tionghoa. Data tentang proses pembentukan kedekatan dalam persahabatan antaretnis dikumpulkan menggunakan wawancara semi-terstruktur mengacu pada Pedoman Kedekatan Persahabatan Interetnis untuk Remaja. Data dianalisis menggunakan pengkodean awal, pengkodean terfokus, pengkodean aksial, dan pengkodean teoritis. Hasilnya mengungkapkan tujuh pembentuk kedekatan dalam persahabatan antaretnis yaitu keterbukaan, kenyamanan, kecocokan, penilaian ulang karakter dan kelompok etnis lain, dukungan, kesamaan, dan kebersamaan. Kedekatan menyebabkan keberlanjutan persahabatan, kebersamaan dengan emosi positif seperti semangat, nyaman, menyenangkan, bahagia, gembira, puas, aman, dan bangga. Proses ini terjadi ketika adanya situasi yang mendukung kebersamaan, kualitas personal, pengalaman dan penilaian terhadap kelompok etnis yang berbeda, dan nilai-nilai bersama yang dipahami oleh semua kelompok etnis.

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*Correspondence Author:

Fadjri Kirana Anggarani
E-mail: fadjri.kirana@staff.uns.ac.id

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1. Introduction

Ethnicity has dynamic and variable characteristics and is structure by society (Verkuyten, 2005). Ethnicity was the second largest cause of intergroup violence in Indonesia during 1990–2003, following religion (Varshney et al.,

2008), which included anti-Chinese (Chinese) sentiment, Madura-Dayak, and other interethnic groups. Most of the persecution violence transpired in Java provinces (Varshney et al., 2008). The chronology of conflict in Surakarta had started since 1911 (Prihartanti & Thoyibi, 2009). The most aggravating situation was the

tremendous violence toward Chinese people and their assets, such as the vandalism, burning, persecuting, looting, and raping that persisted from May 14, 1998 to May 15, 1998.

Surakarta, which has a long history of interethnic conflict, is an interesting context for further study, especially related to the relations between ethnic groups in adolescents. The history of conflicts among interethnics created a foundation for stereotypes and prejudice between both ethnics, although those conflicts happened long time ago (Eifert, 2012; Kristiono, 2008; Susetyo, 2002). Numerous studies on interethnic relationship have been conducted in Surakarta, they mainly focused on conflicts, prejudices, and stereotypes (Kristiono, 2008; Prihartanti & Thoyibi, 2009; Purnama, 2004; Puspowardhani, 2008; Susetyo, 2002).

Adolescents did not have the similar memories related to past conflicts as in adults (Kim et al., 2006). Although no conflicts transpired between students of different ethnicities in Surakarta, bad feelings often arose due to differences in customs and prejudices (Purnama, 2004). Communication continuity is one of the results of interethnic friendship (Anggarani, 2016). The continuity of friendship can be achieved through the aspect of closeness. Adolescent groups in Surakarta did not only have an acquaintance relationship with their interethnic friends. This study aims to answer the question: *“How does the formation process of closeness in friendship between adolescents in Surakarta transpire?”*

Ethnicity or race is one of the facilitating factors of friendship (Bergnehr et al., 2020; McPherson et al., 2001; Moody, 2001). Friendship with a majority ethnic group plays a significant role in prompting minority ethnic group members to feel included within the society, which led them to express positive attitudes toward the majority ethnic group (Munniksma et al., 2015; Wittek et al., 2020). Dialog will reduce prejudice and encourage interethnic relations (Cleven, 2020), however there is a role for perceived ethnicity in dislike—majority students disliked their minority peers (Boda et al., 2020).

Few chances exist that the interethnic friendship will be characterized by mutual activities, mutual reciprocity, and a high level of closeness (Kao & Joyner, 2004; Rude & Herda, 2010). Moreover, interethnic friendships have a low quality of relationship (Aboud et al., 2003; A. Smith & Schneider, 2000), and it can lead to conflict after six months (Schneider et al., 2007). Casual contacts were unlikely to develop into closer interethnic friendship which might still be associated with low quality of trust, tolerance, willingness to help each other, and spend time together (Kisfalusi, 2016; Rydgren et al., 2013). Previous cross-cultural and cross-sectional studies investigated the perceptions of interethnic friendship and unveiled that

the intragroup friendship had more positive qualities than intergroup ones (Pica-Smith et al., 2017). The low quality of this closeness can be understood because of the previous experiences of friendship with the majority group are related to the level of bond in a friendship (Fong & Isajiw, 2000). Therefore, further study is warranted to uncover the process of working the factors and aspects of interethnic friendship relations discovered in forming closeness among adolescents in Surakarta.

2. Methods

Design

In this study, a qualitative approach with the grounded theory method was used (Charmaz, 2014), and the data were collected using semi-structured interview. The interview guide refers to the Closeness Friendship Guidelines for Adolescents that have been reviewed by academic experts in media and communication studies. All participants had given their informed consent to participate in this study.

Participants

Theoretical sampling in grounded theory was concerned with elaborating and improving the categories uncovered (Charmaz, 2014). Adolescent participants were chosen given that this stage is when they first perceive and understand their ethnic identity (Santrock, 1998), friendships are closer and longer lasting in adolescence (Dwyer, 2000), and friends become important in fulfilling the social needs of adolescents (Santrock, 2013). The participants were in the middle and late adolescent age range because they explored identity more visibly than early stages (Santrock, 1998). The participants were also from multiethnic schools given that the ethnic diversity in the school environment allowed for friendship between ethnicities (Bagci et al., 2014; Williams, 2010). Therefore, senior high school students were chosen in this study as participants.

Five participants were selected on the basis of the following criteria: namely, a friendship partner (mention each other's names in the interview session) and having various experiences (positive and negative) with ethnic differences in each participant based on the interview response. The interviews were conducted to trace the formation of closeness interethnic friendship from the beginning, process, and result and to identify the dynamics of the themes found in the response categorization. The interview was conducted three times for each participant with a maximum duration of two hours. Table 1 summarizes the data of interview participants.

Table 1. Interview participants

Code	Initials	Ethnicity	Different-ethnic friend
R1	AML	Javanese	Tionghoa (R2), Arabic (R5)
R2	CHR	Tionghoa	Arabic (R5), Javanese (R1)
R3	FAT	Arabic	Javanese (not interviewed)
R4	LDY	Tionghoa	Javanese (not interviewed)
R5	NMR	Arabic	Tionghoa (R2), Javanese (R1)

Table 2. Closeness Interethnic Friendship Guideline for Adolescents

1. Identification of participant’s ethnicity
 Could you tell me about ethnic X?
Probing:

- How strong does the participant feel to be Javanese/Tionghoa/Arabic?
- Why do you feel like that? How do you feel to be Javanese/Tionghoa/Arabic?
- How much a participant knows about ethnic values?
- How do participant internalize ethnic values into their daily lives.

2. How the participant interacts with different-ethnic groups
 What do you think about ethnic Y?
Probing:

- Participants’ knowledge, feelings, and behavior toward different-ethnic group (the same ethnicity with interethnic friend’s ethnic).
 How do you interact so far? How do you feel interacting with ethnic Y?
- The knowledge, feelings, and behavior of the participant toward different-ethnic groups (the peer group who have same ethnicity with interethnic friend’s ethnic).
 How do you feel interacting with ethnic Y in your school?
- Are there differences between connecting with friend who has the same ethnicity connecting with a friend who has a different ethnicity?

3. How do participant interact with different-ethnic friend.
 How do you establish friendship with different-ethnic groups? How do you feel interacting with different-ethnic friend? How do you feel interacting with same-ethnic friend?
Probing:

- Participant says that “Z” is an interethnic friend. Are other interethnic friends? Why did the participant say Z is an interethnic friend and not the other?
- How does the participant perceive closeness with their interethnic friend?
- Can you elaborate the process of how the participant established an interethnic friendship with their friends and how their relation was throughout the process (what they done, how often).

The interview questions continued according to the response from the participants.

Measure

Closeness Interethnic Friendship Guideline for Adolescents. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in this study. The interview questions included questions about behavior, processes of understanding and interpretation, feelings, being neutral, avoiding sophisticated terms, and using open questions (Smith, 2009; Poerwandari, 2013). The questions in the guidelines were based on self-categorization theory of Tajfel (Ellemers & Haslam, 2012) to identify the ethnic identity and internalization of the participants’ ethnic values. The contact theory (Dovidio et al., 2003) is used to identify interactions with other ethnic groups. Friendship theory (Berko et al., 2010) and aspects of friendship relationships (B. Brown & Klute, 2003; Santrock, 2013) is used to identify interactions with other ethnic friends.

3. Results

The results show that the interethnic friendship has a high level of closeness, described as close friendship. Close friendship quality was described by R3 and R4 and regarded their different-ethnic friend as best friend and family. Based on R1’s experience, the closeness was due to the frequent visit of R1 to the different-ethnic friend’s house, mutual understanding (R2), and discussions on family issues (R5). Fundamentally, the friendship between the participant and the different-ethnic friend was extremely close. The dynamics of interethnic friendship were gathered from the in-depth interview results with the five participants. The results of the interviews were used as empirical data to draw connection between the themes found in the response analysis.

Table 3. Formation of Interethnic Friendship

A. Facilitating Factors of Interethnic Friendship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Situation • Personal Quality • Experience with Different Ethnic • Appraisal toward Different-Ethnic Group • Social Values
B. Forming Aspects of Interethnic Friendship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Togetherness • Similarity • Compatibility • Comfort • Disclosure • Closeness
C. Result of Interethnic Friendship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendship Continuity
D. Emotional Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive Emotion

The themes found were grouped into factors, aspects, and results of interethnic friendship. Therefore, the dynamics of interethnic friendship can be explained by the relationship between factors, aspects, and results of interethnic friendship to give a complete figure of the formation of interethnic friendship. Table 3 shows all themes that were empirically connected in establishing interethnic friendships.

Dynamics between Facilitating Factors and Forming Aspects of Interethnic Friendship

Interethnic friendship is a friendship relation involving people from different ethnic backgrounds. Most of the participants in this study strongly identified ethnicity as one of social identities. In addition to situation and personal quality, the ethnic identification was emphasized as one of the facilitating factors of interethnic friendship.

The foundations of ethnic identification as a facilitating factor of interethnic friendship were appraisal toward the experience and engagement with other ethnic groups. Both factors affected participants’ own ethnic identification.

Appraisal of Similarity and Difference toward Other Ethnic Groups.

Experience with and appraisal toward other ethnic groups had a certain relationship. Experience with different-ethnics groups, such as born and lived in different-ethnic neighborhood (R3), and interaction with different-ethnic groups, such as making friends (R5), prompted an appraisal toward different ethnic groups that there existed no difference between the participants (with their own ethnic identity) and different-ethnic people. The appraisal of similarity led the R5 to mingle and build togetherness with their different-ethnic friends because togetherness was also caused by the sense of similarity with different-ethnic groups. This indicated that appraisal of similarity toward other ethnic group was due to participant’s previous experiences with different-ethnic groups.

Appraisal of similarity was not only due to participant’s experience with different-ethnic groups. Moreover, another reason leading participants (R2; R3) toward the appraisal of similarity was “*ke-Indonesia-an*” (sense of Indonesia nationality). Participants were cognizant that living together in Indonesia put them and their different-ethnic peer as equals.

In addition to the appraisal of similarity, experience with different-ethnic groups prompted participants (R4; R2; R5) to develop an appraisal of difference. They can identify some differences in physical appearance, characters, and culture. Respect, good manner, tolerance, and togetherness are the social values shared by all three ethnicities in this study. Those values also strengthen the formation of interethnic friendship. Therefore, further analysis on those values found in the results of the open-ended questionnaire and interview was needed. Those aforementioned social values came up after the participants concluded that other ethnic groups are “different” (R2; R4; R3). This data showed that these social values came up as participants’ responses toward the appraisal of difference. When the appraisal of difference was responded by social values conformed by the participants, it led to togetherness between the participants and their different-ethnic friends (R3; R5).

The appraisal of being “similar” and “different” indicated that the participants identified their ethnic identity and other identity simultaneously. The other identity was identity as Indonesian. The identity as Indonesian prompted participants to feel the togetherness if they shared the same identity with their different-ethnic peer. The same identity can also be generated through close proximity of interaction space, which allows for the possibility of encountering different ethnic groups, such as through a meeting, if another party is facilitating the contact. R3 and R1 mentioned that schools, wherein the rules are set and enforced by teachers, can give the participants more opportunity to interact with their

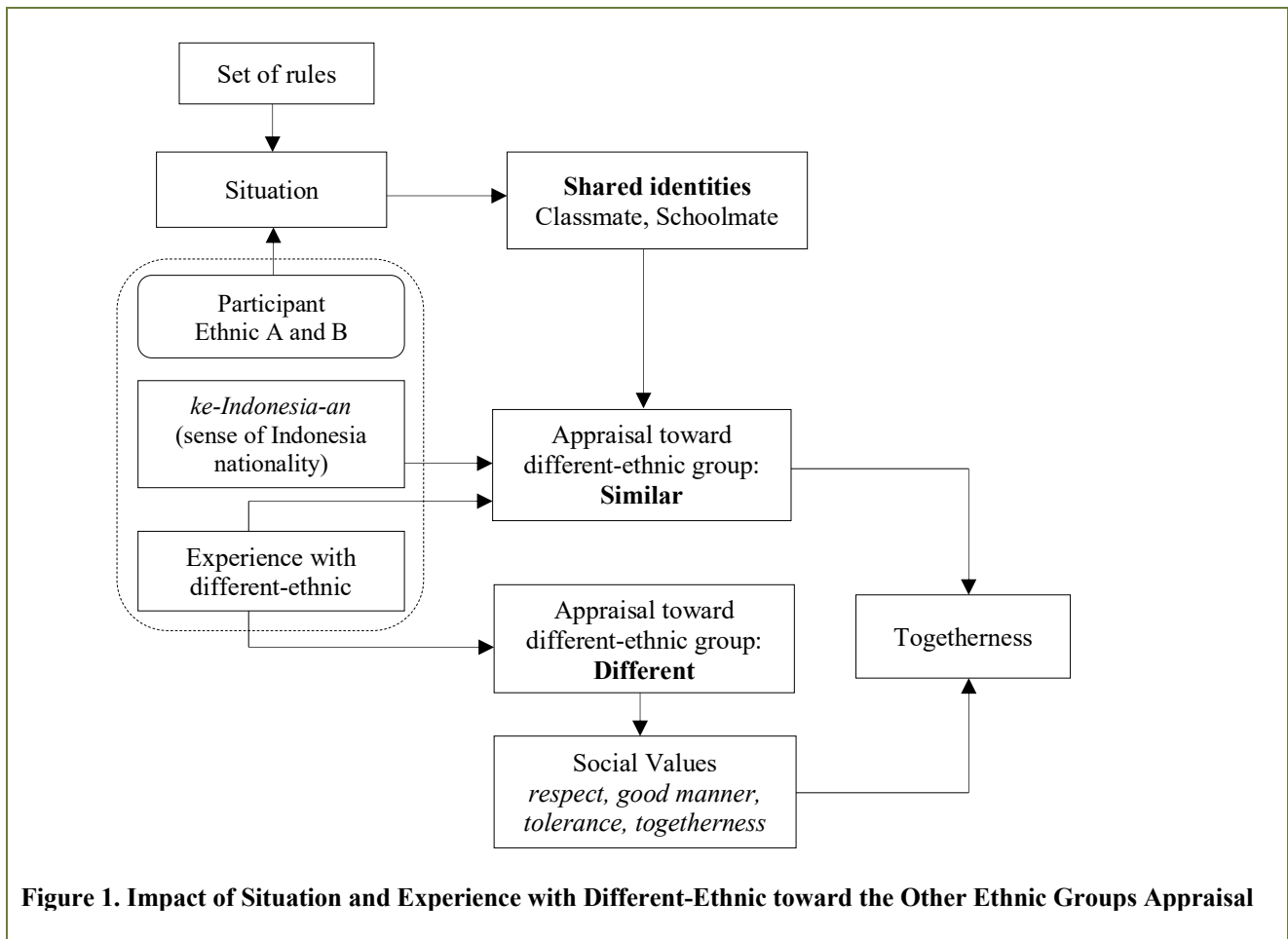


Figure 1. Impact of Situation and Experience with Different-Ethnic toward the Other Ethnic Groups Appraisal

different-ethnic friends through various events, such as cultural night shows or homeroom class re-arrangement.

The close proximity of interaction space between participants and their different-ethnic friends, such as being in the same homeroom class or same school, enabled the participants to identify their similarities with their different-ethnic friends. An example of the shared identities can be seen from how they called the different-ethnic friends as “classmate” (R1) or “schoolmate” (R3). Both participants did not directly nor specifically call their different-ethnic friends as “classmate” or “schoolmate,” but based on the interview analysis, the participants already considered their different-ethnic friends “classmate” or “schoolmate.” This explanation is shown in the graphic above (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 unveils the several identities simultaneously identified by the participants, which are ethnic identities (indicated by the appraisal of being “different” toward different-ethnic) and similar identities (Indonesia nationality, classmate, schoolmate). Classmate or schoolmate identities were given by participants to their different-ethnic friends due to being in the same environment (being in the same class or school) with a set of rules, which provided them the possibility of

interaction. These shared identities prompted the appraisal of similarity toward other ethnic groups, aside from having previous experience, such as born and lived in different-ethnic neighborhoods or befriended a different-ethnic peer. Shared identities facilitated the way to togetherness in interethnic friendship.

Situation and Togetherness Factors. Along the process, togetherness in interethnic friendship can be controlled immediately by the situation through close proximity of interaction space. This closeness of interaction space allowed for the interaction among students. The form of interaction is being included in the same classroom, close seating arrangement, chatting, using social media, or shared experiences, such as MOS (“Masa Orientasi Sekolah”) or school orientation week, leading to more meetings and gatherings (R1; R2; R5). The close proximity of interaction space contributed to the formation of togetherness, which can lead to interethnic friendship.

Personal Quality and Compatibility Factors. Another factor affecting the formation of interethnic friendship is personal quality. Before the friendship started, participants were already acquainted with their different-ethnic friends. Personal quality comprised of different-

ethnic friend's personal characters, such as kind and fun, and personal competencies, such as academic competency. In the early stage of interethnic friendship formation, personal quality affected participants' compatibility with their different-ethnic friends. Personal characters would determine the compatibility between the participant and the different-ethnic friend, based on R5's statement. R5's initial appraisal of R1's fun character made R5 felt "*nyambung*" ("in the same page"/match each other) in their conversations. A similar statement came from R1, whose initial appraisal about R2's personal character led to the feeling of incompatibility. These statements showed that participants' initial appraisal on their different-ethnic friends' personal characters affected the decision on whether they were compatible or not.

Based on the analysis, situation and personal quality factors led to the quality of interethnic friendship. However, after in-depth interviews, several participants admitted that they did not have any knowledge about their different-ethnic friends' characters at the beginning of their friendship, so they built it on the basis of their life situation. R2's experience pointed out that when the participant did not know about the different-ethnic friend's character, the situation factor would generate interethnic friendship by facilitating togetherness.

Dynamics between Forming Aspects of Interethnic Friendship and Friendship Continuity. Forming aspects of interethnic friendship found in this study were togetherness, similarity, compatibility, comfort, disclosure, support, and closeness. Togetherness is particularly important because most of the facilitating factors empirically led to togetherness. The sub-categories of togetherness are spending time together, doing common activities, and learning about other ethnics, including speech adaptation and learning about other religion. In learning about other ethnics, participants were reappraising several points, such as the ethnic group in general and the characteristics of their different-ethnic friend. The reappraisal related to other ethnic groups in general is the realization of similarities with ethnicity and the change in stereotype perception toward another ethnic group.

Togetherness influence participants to learn more about the ethnicity of their different-ethnic friends (R2; R4; R3; R5). Moreover, similarities existed between their ethnicity and their friends' ethnicity (R2; R3; R5). By saying "*apparently it turns out that...*," R2 and R5 implicitly showed reappraisal toward their different-ethnic friends. Therefore, togetherness in interethnic friendship caused reappraisal because participants found similarities between their ethnicity and other ethnicities. Appraisal of similarities also emerged among the participants when they learned about the other identities (aside from ethnicity) possessed by their friends, for

instance, religion. R1's experience when learning about other ethnicities and religion was one of the behavioral indicators of togetherness. It not only produced an assessment of similarities between the participant's religion and that of their friend's but also shifted the participant's attitude toward another ethnic group.

Participants' togetherness with their different-ethnic friends provided opportunities to change their view of other ethnics (stereotype). R1's initial stereotype about ethnic Tionghoa (Chinese Indonesian) only befriended people within their own ethnicity shifted after befriending a Tionghoa. R5's belief that Tionghoa people were stingy changed after befriending R2. Similarly, R2 perception of Javanese changed because R2's Javanese friend was not discriminative, which is opposite to R2's initial perception of Javanese. Conclusively, togetherness prompted participants' reappraisal toward different ethnic groups. Togetherness led participants to appraise the similarities between ethnics and change their beliefs (stereotype) toward other ethnics. Furthermore, the reappraisal also occurred on their friends' characteristics, which included the process of understanding those characteristics.

Participants already had initial character appraisals of their friends. R1, R2, and R5 saying "*apparently it turns out that...*" showed that togetherness led participants getting to know the real characters of their friends. Hereafter, participants can understand and accept their friends' characters. R4 stating "*sympathetically understand,*" and R5's and R3's experiences relayed that there were acceptance and understanding attitudes of their friends' characters. Fundamentally, participants' reappraisal, rooted in togetherness, did not only relate to other ethnic groups, such as finding similarities and changing belief (stereotype), but also about their friends' personal characters such as reappraisal on their characters and acceptance of those characters. Furthermore, togetherness led to discovery of similarities and support.

Participants' togetherness with their different-ethnic friends, for example by spending time and conversing with each other, allowed them to identify similarities, such as similar thoughts and experiences mentioned by R1 and R4. Meanwhile, similarities found by participants and their friends also prompted them to strengthen their togetherness. Similarities in thoughts (R1) or hobbies (R1; R2) influenced participants and their friends to further discuss those similarities, indicating a reciprocal relationship between similarities and togetherness.

In addition to similarity, togetherness formed a supportive behavior. Togetherness can lead to supportive behaviors, such as asking for or getting help (R2; R5), giving help (R1), or helping each other (R2). Togetherness, which was conditioned by the situation,

enabled for the discovery of similarities, supportive behaviors (receiving and giving help, helping each other), and change in either personal character or another ethnic group appraisal while increasing the togetherness between participants and their different-ethnic friends.

Personal character reappraisal eventually affected participants' compatibility with their different-ethnic friends. Participants felt more "*clicked*," or more compatible with their friends. Moreover, personal competency strengthened compatibility. Reappraisal of character and competency as experienced by R5 due to R5's togetherness with the different-ethnic friend prompted the feeling of "*clicked*" and "*great*," which expressed compatibility. Understanding of each other's characters also led to a better, more in-tuned conversation (R4). R3's reappraisal of the different-ethnic friend resulted in better conversation by identifying similarities.

Reappraising similarities with other ethnic groups also made participants feel more connected to their different-ethnic friends because they had more common topics to discuss. R5 described that the reappraisal of other ethnic groups led to R5 feeling more compatible with R5's different-ethnic friend due to the discovery of certain similarities between them.

Compatibility between participants and their different-ethnic friends was also caused by similarity. Compatibility in the form of the feeling of "*clicked*" and connected were due to similarities in thoughts (R1), hobbies (R1; R5; R3), and shared idols, as told by R3. The feeling of compatibility was expressed by saying "*fun*" or "*feels good*." These expressions were also stated by R4. Similar interests or hobbies can build closeness (R3; R1). Closeness was built on the basis of the similarity, which can lead participants to spend more time together and have deeper conversations about the similarity, demonstrating that in-tuned conversation led to closeness.

However, this compatibility did not automatically lead to closeness. As aforementioned, character reappraisal caused by togetherness would lead to compatibility between participants and their different-ethnic friends. Furthermore, character reappraisal was generated by supportive behaviors demonstrated by participants and their different-ethnic friends. The help given by R2, such as learning assistance (R5; R1), caring attention (R1), and advice (R1), made R5 and R1 reappraised R2's personal character. Thus, compatibility was affected by similarity. Compatibility was also affected by participants' reappraisal on their different-ethnic friends' character and their friends' ethnic group (through finding similarities). The character reappraisal itself was gathered by participants through the support received from their different-ethnic friends.

However, compatibility did not directly lead to closeness. Results show that compatibility generates comfort and disclosure, which in turn builds closeness. Compatibility made participants felt more comfortable in the presence of their different-ethnic friend, which is similar to what R1 stated. The disclosure, which occurred in the closeness of R1 and R5, was because R1 and R5 have known each other for a long time and thus are comfortable to share with each other. Reciprocally, disclosure showed by R5 made R1 felt that there was trust between them. This interaction showed that trust (R5) was a part of comfort. This result was parallel to the questionnaire categorization in which trust emerged as a part of comfort, which led to disclosure. Disclosure was also a factor leading participants to perceive closeness with their different-ethnic friends.

Closeness felt by participants were due to the disclosure in conversation topics (R1 and R5). Essentially, a two-way process exists between disclosure and closeness: disclosure between participants and their friend that made them feel closer (R2), and the closer they were, the more open they were to converse and engage in other activities (R5). In addition to the interaction shown above, closeness built between participants and their different-ethnic friends can also be generated through support, either received or given by the participants.

The support given, such as learning assistance (R5; R2), caring attention (R2; R3), helping each other (R3) prompted emotional responses, such as the feeling of closeness (R2; R5; R2) and closeness in terms of family-like relationship (R3). However, closeness in the friendship would eventually lead to mutual support giving. Closeness fosters mutual support and assistance (R3; R5), mutual advice giving (R1), and mutual attention giving (R1). Moreover, a reciprocal relationship exists between support and closeness (R1). Support might generate closeness, and closeness can lead to support. In addition, closeness was affected by togetherness. The higher the intensity of togetherness, the higher the closeness they have. R1 stated that they created a common online group, friendship clique; gossiping (R2); and engaged in activities together (R3).

Initial togetherness would develop in intensity, which in turn leads to closeness. The highest quality in togetherness explained why support from others can formed closeness (in addition to the feeling of closeness with the supported friends), based on what R2 said. Furthermore, it explained why togetherness can prompt support, as described by R3. Therefore, increased togetherness intensity leads to closeness.

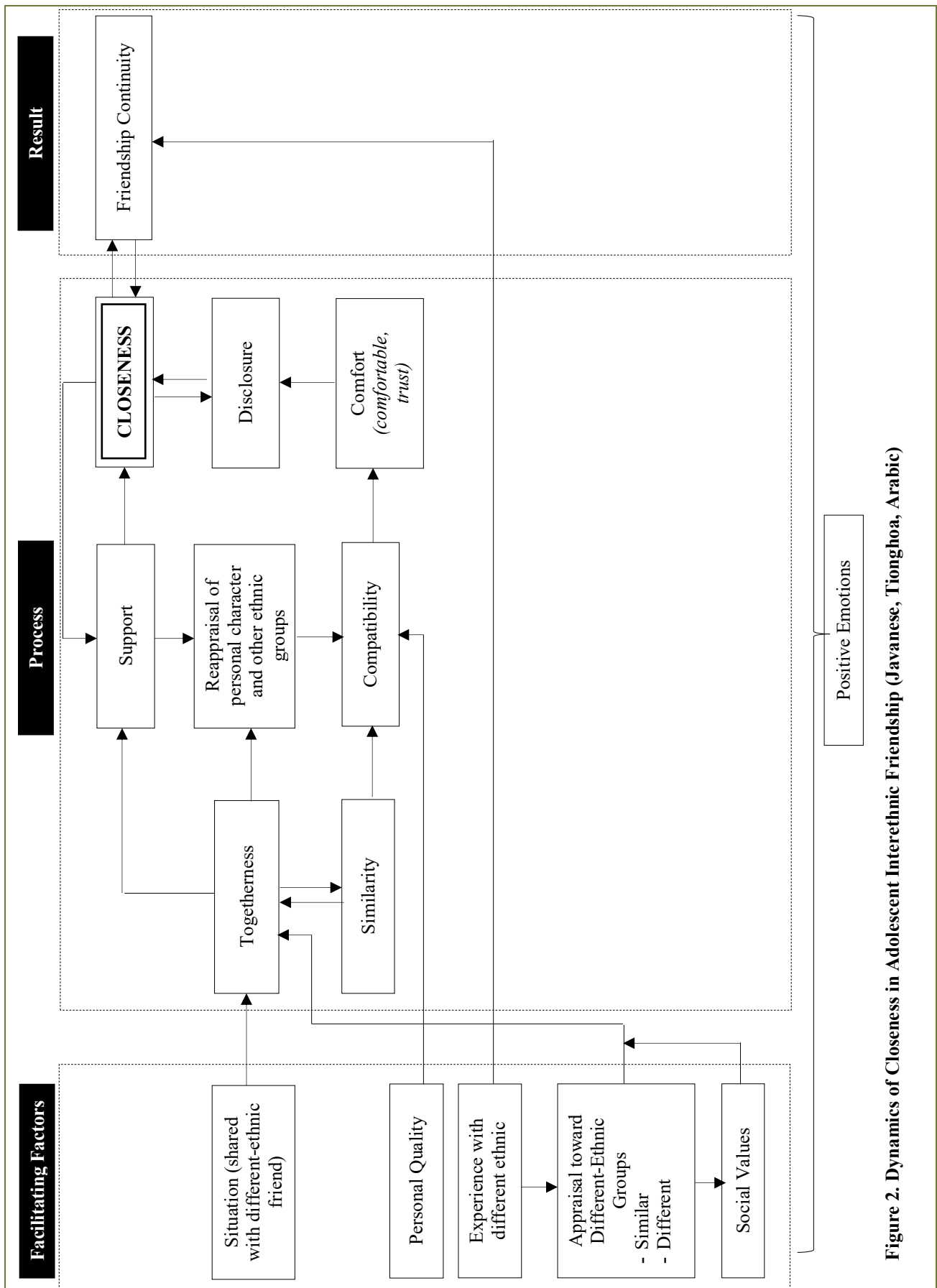


Figure 2. Dynamics of Closeness in Adolescent Interethnic Friendship (Javanese, Tionghoa, Arabic)

A reciprocal relationship between support and closeness exists in the relationship between closeness and friendship continuity. Closeness formed during the friendship generated longevity (friendship continuity) (R3; R1). Meanwhile, a long-running friendship can give quality to the process of closeness (R1; R3; R4). Closeness in friendship might lead to friendship continuity, whereas friendship continuity can affect the closeness quality. Moreover, participants had previous experiences with different ethnic groups. This experience was one of the factors contributing to interethnic friendship. Among participants' previous experiences with different ethnic groups were interaction in the neighborhood (R4) and friendship in previous education level (R4; R5). Those experiences affected participants' current relationship with their different-ethnic friends. Participants' previous experiences with different ethnic groups played an important role in determining whether the interethnic friendship would continue or not. Positive experience encouraged participants to maintain their interethnic friendship (R3).

Therefore, interethnic friendship continuity was affected by participants' previous experience with different ethnic groups. Closeness formed between participants and their different-ethnic friends, combined with long duration of friendship and sustainable communication intensity, would result in friendship continuity. If the friendship can continue, the participants would feel closer to their different-ethnic friends. It is stated because of the difference in closeness quality, which depends on how long they had been friends. Beside closeness, friendship continuity was also affected by participants' previous experience with different ethnic groups.

Emotional Response

The whole dynamics explained above prompted participants' emotional responses. Positive emotions, such as excited, comfortable, fun, happy, joyful, content, safe, and proud, were the most prevalent emotions in interethnic friendships, indicating that the interethnic friendships also occurred in a positive manner. Participants' emotional responses were caused by various factors on the individual level, such as togetherness (R3), support (R2), appraisal of friend's personal quality, and support received (R1). Thus, positive emotions were the outcome of interpersonal and intergroup process in friendship. Ultimately, positive emotions were another outcome of interethnic friendship.

4. Discussion

This study aims to describe how the closeness in interethnic friendship among adolescents in Surakarta was formed. Closeness in interethnic friendship has seven domains: disclosure, comfort, compatibility, reappraisal of the characters and other ethnic groups,

support, similarity, and togetherness. Closeness led to the continuity of friendship, along with positive emotions, such as excited, comfortable, fun, happy, joyful, content, safe, and proud. This process occurred when the situation supported togetherness as well as personal quality, experience, appraisal toward different-ethnic group, and the shared values understood by all the ethnic groups.

Appraisal of Similarity and Difference with Different Ethnic Groups

Contact and Hybrid in Interethnic Friendship. Alport conveyed several criteria for optimal contact, which are equal status, cooperation, common goals, and authority support (Dovidio et al., 2003). These criteria are important in building an effective intergroup contact, which may grow to be more stabilized, more developed, and lead to a change in attitudes. The closeness in interaction space (such as school and home) with ethnic diversity increased opportunities for contact (to meet and get to know each other) among members of different ethnicities. Shared status as students, the experiences of working together for school assignments, common goals earned from togetherness, and support from the authority figure, such as school faculty, can create and encourage an interethnic friendship.

Dividio and colleagues (2003) stated that one of the cognitive factors in making contact is social representation, which is one of the mediums for intergroup contact to prompt more positive attitude and relation. Social representation explained that there was a fundamental role played by either individual or collective identity. Tajfel elaborated that self-categorization was the foundation to comprehensively understanding the complexity of social situations (Ellemers & Haslam, 2012). Self-categorization theory emerged on the basis of the differences occurred between social identity and personal identity. Three alternative models resulted from the process of contact, namely, decategorization, recategorization, and mutual intergroup differentiation. These strategies affected the social categorization process as the starting point of understanding and the decrease of intergroup bias (Dovidio et al., 2003).

This result also presented that personal qualities, such as character and competency, which were used to find compatibility, contribute in the forming of interethnic friendship. The fact that personal qualities affect the forming of interethnic friendship shows that decategorization happens in the process. Decategorization, as explained by (Dovidio et al., 2003), is a process of minimizing group boundaries and accepting oneself as a different individual rather than as a member of different group, resulting in individual representation (personalization). Personalization in a contact situation discourages categorical difference from sticking out within intergroup interaction and provides

chances to get to know the members of outgroup as persons (individuals). During personalization, each person focuses on the information about the members of other groups concerning them as a person rather than a member of a group. This study shows that participants' initial appraisal about their different-ethnic friends' personal character led them to determine whether they are compatible or not. Moreover, decategorization plays a role in forming interethnic friendship because it produced individual representation as one of the causes of interethnic friendship.

In addition to personal identity-related decategorization, another form of categorization process exists, namely, recategorization. This kind of categorization is part of a categorization phase at superordinate level in the Pettigrew contact model (Eller & Abrams, 2003). On the basis of this model, Dovidio and colleagues (2003) mentioned that intergroup bias and conflict can be reduced by morphing individual representations as members of two groups into one, more inclusive group. This groups' integration and their fused identities may seem ideal, yet its operationalization is highly complex (Fataurochman, 2008). Another form of categorization, which is not included in Pettigrew's model, is the dual identity level of categorization (Eller & Abrams, 2003). This approach is represented by common ingroup identity model (CIIM). Developing CIIM does not necessarily mean eliminating the original identities, because in dual identity, superordinate group and subgroup's identities are noticeable (Brewer & Gaertner, 2008). CIIM also enhances attitude and support among individuals from different groups (Dovidio et al., 2003).

Befriending people from different ethnic backgrounds prompts appraisal of difference with them. This appraisal emerges when participants felt different compared with their different-ethnic friends. Participants acknowledge the social identity difference, namely, ethnic identity. The result of participants' ethnic identification strength also shows that participants acknowledge ethnicity as one of their possessed identities. Concurrently, their appraisal of similarity toward another ethnic group stands out. The participants acknowledge a greater common identity they share with other ethnic groups, namely, sense of Indonesian nationality. Their ethnic and Indonesian identities reveal the subgroup and superordinate identities acknowledged by the participants.

However, within the intergroup context, when members not only accept their membership in several different groups but also as part of the same superordinate group, the relationship resulted between groups may be much more positive, compared to a situation where they only think of themselves as members of separate groups (Brewer & Gaertner, 2008). Strong superordinate identity contributes to the stability of intergroup relationship, even when the identities of each group within are quite

high (Brewer & Gaertner, 2008). Acknowledgment of the shared identity as Indonesian plays a role as a more inclusive identity and it does not require each individual to disavow their ethnic identities (as Javanese, Tionghoa, or Arabic).

The explanation above shows that dual identity precedes interethnic friendship and emerges as a noticeable categorization process that facilitates interethnic friendship. Each participant identified themselves as member of their own ethnic group and acknowledged their membership in a more inclusive, ethnically diverse group, which is Indonesia. Pettigrew's contact model shows that situations and individual experience are the antecedents in the process (Eller & Abrams, 2003). Consequences of dual identity are a category crossover (Fataurochman, 2008). The result of this study shows that the situation, in the form close proximity of interaction space, contributes to the category crossover.

Self-categorization explains how social categorization can be formed in inclusive levels or different abstraction (such as Javanese/Tionghoa/Arabic, students of X school, members of X classroom) and how a person can put themselves in several categories with different criteria (such as female/male, as Javanese/Tionghoa/Arabic, as a student) (Ellemers & Haslam, 2012). Results shown in the form of close proximity of interaction space, such as being in the same classroom or schools, can encourage participants to identify themselves as members of X school or X classroom. This identification then leads to the acknowledgment of shared identity between participants and their different-ethnic friends as members of the same aforementioned groups, which was shown from how participants labeled their different-ethnic friends as classmates or schoolmates.

In addition to acknowledgment of the shared identity as Indonesian, participants also acknowledged other shared identities with their different-ethnic friends as members of the same school or classroom. This situation shows multiple identities. Multiple social identities facilitate the hybrid model in interethnic friendship. Hybrid approach brings together hierarchic dual identity and category crossover (Fataurochman, 2008), which is suitable for plural societies (Brewer & Gaertner, 2008). Particularly, individuals will acknowledge other people as part of an ingroup in one category and as an outgroup in other categories (Brewer & Gaertner, 2008). Category crossover among individuals increases interpersonal interaction and contact that crosses categorical boundaries (Brewer & Gaertner, 2008). Category crossover will be more effective when the involved categories fall under one superordinate ingroup identity.

The participants' acknowledgment of their ethnicity and Indonesian identity conveys the existence of dual identity, due to their membership in subgroup and

superordinate group. In addition to dual identity, the situation of being in the close proximity of interaction space allows participants to share an identity with their friends, as member of the same school or classroom. It shows multiple identities within the participants that facilitate categories crossover shown by how they labeled their different-ethnic friends as schoolmates or classmates. The crossover happens when participants acknowledge their ethnic difference, yet admit their similarity as Indonesians.

The above indicates that either decategorization or hybrid is facilitating factors of interethnic friendship. Decategorization is manifested in how personal qualities affect compatibility. Social representation as a member of a particular group (social identity) is manifested in how experience with different-ethnic and situation prompting multiple identities that leads to hybrid facilitate the forming of interethnic friendship. In the next step, these characteristics related to personal and social identities will be reappraised during the process of interethnic friendship. The relationship between reappraisal of social identity and the role of cognitive appraisal toward different-ethnic group will be explained in the next part.

Closeness in Friendship

Closeness expressions were categorized into five themes, namely, spatial proximity, physical contact, expressions of affection, spending time together, and joint leisure activities (Ben-Ari & Lavee, 2007). Those five themes show an individual closeness to their partner. Closeness comprises space proximity, sharing information and leisure, engaging in joint activities, and spending time together (Johnson et al., 2003, 2004). Three strategies used to form closeness in interpersonal relationship are openness, attention, and involvement (Hess et al., 2007). Closeness as an inclusion of other in the self (Aron et al., 2004). Inclusion of others in the self was the key that turned regular relationship into a closer one. Closeness was built by creating interaction between individuals who were engaged in a relationship.

However, closeness was not merely built by the individuals because closeness with each other's families became one of the behavioral indicators that was found to build more intimacy between individuals in their friendship. Every individual felt closer if they had been introduced to their friend's family and vice versa. Other indicators, such as staying overnight at a friend's house, also appeared in this study. Moreover, relationship continuity, which comprises communication continuity and friendship duration, is one of the aspects that prompts closeness. The longer the friendship, the more stable the communication between them, offline or online meeting. Moreover, it can strengthen the closeness between friends. Having known each other for a long time, staying in touch, and being hospitable to each other are among

the behavioral indicators that confirm relationship continuity as one of the aspects that can increase the quality of closeness in friendship.

Study Limitation

This study only involved adolescent girls as study participants because the decision on involving participants was made on the basis on the previous quantitative study, which indicated participants with high scores of closeness. Thus, future study should also involve male participants.

5. Conclusion

This study reveals that closeness formed in interethnic friendship is attributed to disclosure, comfort, compatibility, reappraisal of character, and other ethnic groups, support, similarity, and togetherness. Closeness leads to sustainable or continued friendship, which leads to positive emotions, such as excited, comfortable, fun, happy, joyful, content, safe, and proud. This process may happen when the situation facilitates togetherness, which is also affected by personal quality, experience, appraisal toward other ethnic groups, and common values shared among all ethnics involved.

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