

GEN Z AND RELIGIOUS-BASED SOCIAL DISTANCE

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Abstrak. Gen Z merupakan sebuah generasi di mana anggotanya lahir antara tahun 1996 dan 2015. Dalam tulisan ini gen z diwakili oleh mahasiswa yang menjadi responden penelitian ini. Fokus utama dari makalah ini adalah menggambarkan jarak sosial berbasis agama di kalangan mahasiswa. Jarak sosial adalah tingkat pemisahan antara berbagai kelompok sosial. Kelompok spesifik yang menjadi fokus makalah ini adalah kelompok berbasis agama. Teori utama yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah teori Skala Sosial yang menjadi dasar pengukuran jarak sosial. Untuk mengumpulkan data, penelitian ini menggunakan survei dan wawancara. Hasilnya menggambarkan bahwa ada jarak sosial pada kelompok agama tertentu bervariasi. Persentase responden yang merasa jauh dengan kelompok agama tertentu bervariasi. Persentase responden yang mempersepsikan jarak ke Islam hanya 7,5 persen. Sedangkan persentase jarak sosial dengan agama lokal, di sisi lain, mengejutkan pada nilai 84,3 persen. Hasilnya menandakan bahwa sebagian besar responden merasa bahwa mereka memiliki jarak sosial dengan kelompok agama lokal. Responden berpendapat bahwa alasan utama untuk jarak sosial terhadap kelompok agama lokal adalah persepsi bahwa umat beragama lokal lebih cenderung membentuk kultus yang dapat membahayakan keharmonisan sosial di universitas.

Kata Kunci: Jarak Sosial, Kelompok Penghayat, Gen Z, Skala Jarak Sosial.

Abstract. Gen Z is the generation that were born between 1996 and 2015. In this paper the gen z is represented by university students who become the respondents of this research. The main focus of this paper is describing the religion-based social distance among the university students. Social distance is the degree of separation between different social groups. The specific group this paper focuses on is the religion-based groups. The main theory employs in this research is Social Scale theory that provide the basic instrument of social distance measurement. To gather the data this research uses survey and interviews. The result depicts that there are social distances on particular religious groups. The percentages of respondents who feel a distance to certain religious groups are varied. The percentages of respondent who perceived a distance toward Islam is only 7,5 percent. Whereas the percentage that of social distance to local religions, on the other hand, is staggering on the value 84,3 percent. The result signifies that most of respondent feel that they have a social distance to local religious groups. The respondent argues that the main reason for the social distance toward the local religious group is the perception that the local religious believers are more likely to form a cult that might be endangered the social harmony in the university.

Keywords: Social Distance, Religious Groups, Gen Z, Social Distance Scale



INTRODUCTION

This study focuses on the social distance of university students, who are a part of Generation Z, towards adherents of different religions. Social distance is the degree of understanding, attitude, and sympathetic behavior between two individuals or between individuals and groups that are different from themselves (Javakhishvili et al., 2016). Sympathetic understanding, attitude, and behavior towards people from different groups are important in a multicultural society like Indonesia. Diversity in a multicultural society has the consequence that social harmony must be built based on tolerance of differences especially by understanding and accepting the presence of minority groups. Indonesia is the embodiment of a plural society. The main characteristic of this diversity is the cultural differences that can be seen from differences in terms of ethnicity, religion, regional languages, and others. Differences in cultural backgrounds are frequently used as the reason to manifest conflicts between groups, although the actual factors causing the conflict are more on the interests of political interests (power), social inequality, and economic disparity.

According to the National Human Rights Commission (Komnasham, 2016), the scope of minority groups in the Indonesian context is very diverse, which at least includes minority groups based on: ethnicity, race, religion/beliefs, disability, and

sexual orientation/gender identity. This diversity shows that one of the important requirements to build social harmony in Indonesia is awareness to understand and foster good relations with various minority groups. Potential conflicts that lead to the emergence of violence are very likely to occur in a plural society like Indonesia. One of the underlying reasons for violent acts is the classification of people based on their respective cultural identities. Lustig & Koester understand cultural identity as a sense of belonging from individuals towards specific cultures. Lustig & Koester understand cultural identity as a feeling of belonging from individuals towards certain cultures (Samovar et al., 2010). Ting-Toomey & Chung see cultural identity as an emotional feeling from someone to join in a larger culture. For Klyukanov, cultural identity can be understood as group membership where everyone shares the same symbolic meaning (Samovar et al., 2017) People who are divided into groups based on cultural identity then identify themselves as a representation of a particular culture. This cultural identification will in turn determine them into in-group or out-group. How each individual behaves is determined in part by whether they belong to a particular culture or not.

As a multicultural country, Indonesia must utilize diversity to become a force that can make Indonesia unique and harmonious. However, research conducted by LIPI, Wahid Institute, and National Human Rights Commission shows an increasing level of intolerance in Indonesia (Wardah, 2018). The cases of

intolerance acts also occur in universities which should be the center of diversity studies. Rejection and dismissal of discussions related to minority groups conducted on campus is evidence of intolerance acts on campus. A survey conducted by PPIM UIN Jakarta on students and students in 2017 further strengthened the indication of intolerance on campus (Muthahhari, 2017).

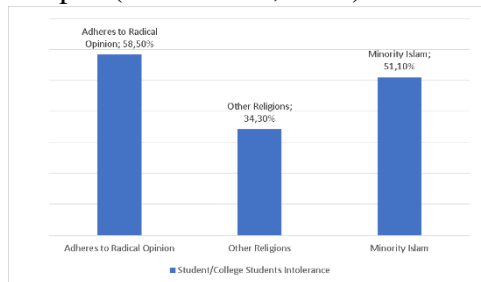


Figure 1. Intolerance among University Students/Students

Data shows that more than 50 percent of students believe in radical ideas and signify intolerance towards other religions and minority Islam sects. This situation is an indication of the great social distance between students to people from different religious groups. Understanding of social distance and the degree of constraints on the relationship with minority groups at the level of knowledge, attitudes, and behavior is needed so that potential conflicts that potentially emerge on campus can be mapped. The mapping of social distance and potential conflict is important to design a model of persuasion and negotiation communication that is in line with the position of minority groups on campus. Shandra Forest-Bank and

David Dupper (Forest-Bank & Dupper, 2016) state that for young people religious membership is an important issue of identity. Therefore, young people need guidance for coping with religious differences and intolerances.

In 2018, LIPI researched 1800 respondents from nine provinces who indicated an attitude of intolerance to leaders who a part of different religious groups and tribes (Wardah, 2018). Intolerance can be seen in the data related regional leaders (from the president to the head of the village) with religious and ethnic differences. Nearly 50 percent of the 1800 respondents had the belief that the president, head of the district, and head of the village who become leaders in their area should have the same religion. A more positive highlight, however, is the result of a study conducted by Rahardjo & Lukmantoro (Rahardjo & Lukmantoro, 2015) on a multi-religious community communication model involving people living in the cities of Semarang and Surakarta who adhered to the beliefs/religions of Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Confucianism. The sample in this study was determined purposively, with each of the 180 respondents having different religious identities in the two cities designated as research areas. The number of samples in these two cities is 360 people. This study found that in the context of social distance in interreligious relations, most respondents did not even

question the background of religious differences when they formed friendships. They show a more moderate attitude in assessing the religious behavior of others. Religion is not at all a barrier to their association. In social relations, they not only show involvement in relationships, but also a willingness to respect religious values and customs that others believe. Still, in the context of social distance in interreligious relations, the majority of respondents asserted that religious differences do not cause social barriers to appear, differences are instead considered as social richness. The social relations of the people of different religions are closely interwoven. They are willing to invite anyone when they have a desire without considering the status of religion.

Conceptually, identity is an abstract concept and has many facets that play an important role in intercultural interaction (Samovar et al., 2017). Globalization, intercultural marriages, and immigration patterns add greater complexity to cultural identity. Identity functions as a link between culture and communication. Identity has an important position because we communicate our identity to others, and we understand who we are through communication. Some previous studies have examined cultural identity and social distance. As research by Abdul Muhid & Mohammad Ivan Fadeli (Muhid & Fadeli, 2018) looked at the correlation between social prejudice and

religious tolerance on student organizational student activists in public universities. The study aims to determine the correlation between social prejudice and religious tolerance in students. This study tests the hypothesis that the higher one's social prejudice, the lower religious tolerance. The subjects of this study were taken using a purposive sampling technique with the criteria of students who were actively involved in student organizations in 2 public universities in the city of Surabaya, with a total respondent of 51 people which consist of 37 men and 14 women; 48 people are Muslim and 3 are Christians. The respondents of the research were spread across 5 student organizations: Persatuan Mahasiswa Islam Indonesia (PMII: 15 people), Himpunan Mahasiswa Indonesia (HMI: 10 people), Ikatan Mahasiswa Muhammadiyah (IMM: 9 people), Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia (KAMMI: 14 people), and Gerakan Mahasiswa Kristen Indonesia (GMKI: 3 people). By using the product-moment correlation analysis test the correlation coefficient = 0.437 results with a significance value of 0.00 and the value of the effective contribution (SE) of social prejudice variables affect the religious tolerance of students by (R Square = 0.189) or 18.9%. This shows that there is a significant negative correlation between social prejudice and religious tolerance among students. This research reaffirms the hypothesis

that the higher one's social prejudice, the lower religious tolerance; and conversely the lower the person's social prejudice, the higher the religious tolerance. The research also shows the fact that student activists tend to have high social prejudice and a low tolerance for diversity.

Another assessment is the research of D.P. Budi Susetyo (Susetyo, 2002) that focused on the relationship between Chinese and Javanese ethnic based on stereotypes and social distance. The relationship between ethnic Chinese and Javanese ethnic has been going on for decades. The relationship between the two experiences dynamic situations across years. Stereotype and social distance are psychological variables that determine and influence inter-group relations. Both of these variables are theoretically able to describe the dynamics of relations that take place. The study examines the relationship between ethnic Chinese and Javanese based on stereotypes and social distance. Methodologically, this study used exploratory methods with Javanese and Chinese students as the subjects. The results showed that the relations between the two parties could take place naturally because each party was able to see the positive side of the other party. Barriers to establishing more intimate relations are triggered by differences in cultural orientation and contact opportunities. This has led to the emergence of negative stereotypes that prevent more intense relations. Relationships between the two parties are easier to

do in social activities that do not involve high intimacy, such as friendship, neighboring life, collaboration at school, and work. For more intimate social relations such as dating and marriage, the Chinese show a stronger resistance than Javanese.

Another social distance-related study is Giovanni Elisha Markali's research (Markali, 2007) entitled Relationship between Ethnic Identification and Social Distance to Javanese Ethnic in Chinese Ethnic (Case Study of Chinese Ethnic Students, Widya Mandala Catholic University, Surabaya). The main aim of the research is to look at the relationship between ethnic identification with the social distance of the Chinese toward Javanese. The research subjects were ethnic Chinese students from the Widya Mandala Catholic University in Surabaya. This research is explanatory. The sampling technique used is random sampling (accidental sampling). Data collection is done by using a questionnaire in the form of a scale. The scale used is the scale of ethnic identification based on the Likert Scale and the scale of social distance to ethnic Javanese based on the Bogardus Scale. The validity test used for a social distance towards Javanese ethnicity is content validity. The data analysis technique used is non-parametric of Kendall's Tau. Based on the calculation, a correlation coefficient of 0.252 is obtained with a value of $p = 0.001$ ($p < 0.05$), which means that there is a relationship between ethnic identification with

social distance towards Javanese ethnicity. The higher the level of ethnic identification, the lower the level of social distance, which means the further the level of social distance. Conversely, the lower the level of ethnic identification, the higher the level of social distance, which means the closer the level of social distance. The effective contribution of the ethnic identification variable on the social distance to the Javanese ethnic group was 6.45%, so there were still 93.65% of other factors influencing social distance towards the ethnic Javanese, such as prejudice, ethnocentrism, and racial outreach.

In the context of symbolic interactionism, intercultural communication is a process of exchanging symbols between individuals who have different cultural backgrounds. The individuals negotiate the meaning of the symbols exchanged interactively. A sense of mindfulness is needed for every individual who communicates with people from different cultural backgrounds. Being mindful is important in communicating with people from different cultures because there is a range of heterogeneity in a culture that includes nationality, race, ethnicity, gender, and religion. As a consequence of the global community, the practice of intercultural communication cannot be underplayed. It is because interacting with people that are culturally different is unavoidable.

Therefore, one of the essential elements in today's society is the capability to communicate effectively with people who have a different cultural background. Intercultural communication competence means that the individual is skilled in reducing cultural misunderstanding, increasing the feeling of closeness, and establishing intercultural relational satisfaction (Griffin, 2012).

The absence of mindfulness in intercultural communication will tend to generate cultural friction and dispute. The awareness of cultural diversity, on the other hand, will facilitate the establishment of supportive intercultural relationships. Therefore, the significant obstacle in intercultural communication is learning and accepting cultural diversity. The attempts to develop a supportive intercultural relationship require various communication skills to comprehend. One of the abilities is reducing cultural misinterpretation and conflict by managing the cultural communication inhibitors such as ethnocentrism, stereotypes, and prejudices.

Conceptually, a stereotype is a terminology that signifies negative or positive evaluations of individuals based on their cultural group associations. A person who has a stereotype will have a firm assumption about characteristics possessed by a particular group of people or negative perceptions ascribed to out-groups (Martin & Nakayama, 2010). Prejudice is a term

that signifies the feeling of resentment and dislikes to a particular group that possesses different traits in terms of ethnicity, race, religion, physical appearance, and sexuality. Because both stereotypes and prejudices judge individuals based on their group membership, the two terms are interrelated. (Jandt, 2004). Prejudice is also can be understood as an assumption or attitude that most likely negative to a particular group of people. The negative attitude does not base on real experiences or proven by valid pieces of evidence. Most of the time prejudice relates to the hatred trigger by misunderstanding, fear, and anxiety toward a particular cultural group. (Samovar et al., 2017). As the final intercultural communication inhibitor, ethnocentrism is the notion of feeling superior toward other cultures.

Therefore, an ethnocentric individual will judge other cultures by using her or his cultural perspectives or standards. (Neuliep, 2006; Samovar et al., 2017). Ethnocentrism (Rogers & Steinfatt, 1999) can lead to the emergence of discrimination, including religious-based discrimination, which is the acts of hatred toward individuals that have different cultures/religions.

Stereotypes, as previously described, are cognitive structures that contain the knowledge, beliefs, and expectations of people perceiving (perceiver) about social groups. Stereotypes can be positive or negative. Stereotypes that refer to

large groups of people as lazy, rude, or brutal are clearly negative. But there are also positive stereotypes, such as the assumption that students from Asia are hard-working, have good personalities or behaviors, and are intelligent (Samovar et al., 2010). Another positive stereotype is that Asian Americans are a "good" minority in contrast to African Americans who are often confrontational and even militant in the fight for equality (Martin & Nakayama, 2010). However, stereotypes are most often understood in a narrow view. In a sense, stereotypes are put on a negative tone and pose a threat to ongoing intercultural communication. Why is that, because stereotypes tend to over-generalize the characteristics of certain groups of people (Samovar et al., 2010). Stereotypes become unprofitable when held rigidly. Research shows that once adopted, stereotypes will be difficult to dispel. People tend to remember information that supports stereotypes, but forget conflicting information (Martin & Nakayama, 2010).

Stereotypes are everywhere. We are not born with stereotypes, because stereotypes are something that is learned. Like culture, stereotypes are learned in a variety of ways. The agent of stereotyping is the process of socialization that starts from our immediate environment, namely the family. The process of socialization continues when a person is a member of various social and religious groups. These groups

intentionally or unintentionally teach stereotypes. Stereotypes will prevent intercultural communication because stereotyping is something that is too simplistic, exaggerated, and highly generalized (Jandt, 2004; Samovar et al., 2010). In terms of inter-religious group communication, Stereotypes will distort the reality of other religious groups, because it is based on-premises and assumptions that are not true. Furthermore, other religious group stereotypes are also resistant to change, because those kinds of stereotypes are usually developed early in life and are repeated and confirmed through in-groups.

As previously mentioned, prejudice is a negative attitude towards another cultural group without any adequate pieces of evidence. In the context of communication, prejudices are displayed through the use of group labels, unsympathetic humor, or cynical utterances that stress the superiority of one group over another group. Tensions between cultural groups, negative experiences, status inequality, and perceived threats can lead to prejudice (Martin & Nakayama, 2010). The "Contact" Theory of Prejudice from Gordon Allport explains that individuals who do not familiar with a particular culture will be more likely to develop a prejudice against people from that culture. Like stereotypes, prejudice is something that is learned. Conceptually, prejudice can be expressed in a number of ways, it can be expressed vaguely/indirectly or

clearly/directly (Samovar et al., 2010). The expression of prejudice based on the results of the Allport study is anti-locution, avoidance, discrimination, physical attack, and extermination. Those three concepts can be contextualized in the context of inter-religion communication. Anti-locution is talking about a member of the target group in a negative and stereotypical emphasis, such as the statement "You should never trust anyone who is an adherent of Z religion" or "Don't pay too much attention to different religious believers. Prejudiced people are those who avoid contact or interact with people who are affiliated with a particular religious group. The third form of prejudice is discrimination. Prejudiced people will try to discriminate or reject the members of different religious groups in terms of work, housing, political rights, educational opportunities, places of worship, and other types of social institutions. In the case of discrimination, it can be observed that ethnocentrism, stereotypes, and prejudices blended in forming fanaticism that blocks the realization of effective intercultural communication. When discrimination takes the place in communication actions, we will see the expression of anger and hatred openly and it terminating the opportunity for others to have something that they should have. Physical violence is a manifestation of the fourth expression of prejudice. The concrete manifestations of this form of

prejudice include the destruction or burning of places of worship of different religious groups. The fifth form of prejudice is extermination. Actions taken lead to physical violence leads to the extermination of out-groups people.

Efforts to avoid prejudice are not easy to achieve. Because, like many other aspects of culture, prejudice is something that is learned early on and strengthened through sustained exposure in everyday life. Stereotypes and prejudices will influence the establishment of effective inter-region communication because people tend to avoid contact with people from other religious groups they don't like. If stereotypes and prejudices are very intensive, then prejudiced people will be involved in active and discriminatory anti-location. Conditions like this will lead to inter-religious confrontation and open conflict.

Anthropologists commonly agree that most people are ethnocentric, moreover, several ethnocentric feelings are the glue in uniting the members of a cultural community. Similar to culture, ethnocentrism is usually studied at the level of the unconscious and expressed at the level of consciousness (Samovar et al., 2010). Identity (culture) can be divided into three categories; personal identity, relational identity, and communal identity (Samovar et al., 2010). Personal identities are things that make a person unique and different

from others. Relational identity is a product of one's relationships with others, such as husband/wife, lecturers/students, or executives/managers. Communal identity is associated with the community on a large scale, for example, nationality, ethnicity, gender, religion, or political affiliation. Identity in its existence can often lead to the emergence of stereotypes, prejudices, ethnocentrism, and racism, all of which can be understood as obstacles in intercultural communication inhibitors. Interaction between parties with different identities, including religious identities, is more or less influenced by the emergence of these obstacles because each party tries to understand their identity as "superior" to the identity of others. Cultural identity is a sense of profound connection with a specific group of people. Cultural identity also refers to how an individual immerses in a group where the member of the group share the chain of symbols and fantasy. Cultural identity has multilayers of identity levels. (Samovar et al., 2010). Cultural identity addresses connections, dissimilarities, and the sense of belonging of individuals to particular cultural groups or characteristics. Cultural identity not only relates to the notion of belongingness but also can drive the feeling of resentment toward a different cultural group that is based on stereotypes, prejudice, and ethnocentrism. Differences in identity can create a social distance that can generate social disputes. In other

words, social distance is underpinned by the idea that those who are close socially to us are those whom we perceive have a close connection with. (Karakayali, 2009). This research will look at the religious-based social distance among university students. Swee H. Chuah et. al. argue that prejudice and untrustworthiness could be triggered by religious denomination (Chuah et al., 2016). Thus, this research will analyze the social distance related to religious identification in the context of the university environment.

METHODOLOGY

This study is quantitative in nature because it measures students' social distance toward the religious-based groups. Bogardus (Karakayali, 2009), makes subjective feelings and emotions on a scale that can distinguish individual positions against different groups. Borgadus tries to continue to conceptualize social distance through reference to subjective attitudes and emotions, but also treats social distance as an objective category that distinguishes the position of respondents against different groups. If someone has a specific emotional reaction to another group, then in fact he has included the group as a different category. The Borgadus scale shows that respondents have a common and common understanding of who is not part of their group. The respondent of this research is university student. The sample or respondents of this study were 415 students. Data collection techniques using self-administrated questioners: asking

respondents to answer questions that have been designed based on the Borgadus Scale. The sensitive nature of the question makes the researcher decide that in order to maintain the confidentiality of identity, the respondent is asked to write his own answer. Literature study is also a data analysis technique by conducting a literature review of research, books, data, and documents relating to social distance from minority groups.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The majority of respondents in this study were female with the proportion of approximately 7:3 of female and male students respectively. All the respondents are active university students which also means they are part of generation Z. In terms of religious beliefs, almost 90 percent of the respondents are Muslim followed by Christians, Catholics, Buddhists, and Confucians. None of them adheres to the local religion.

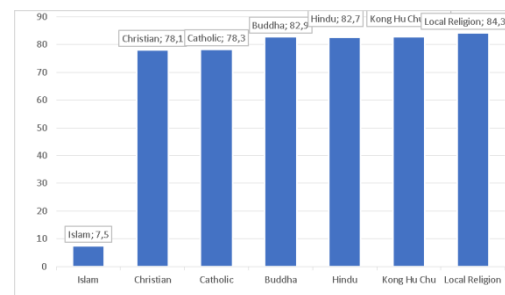


Figure 2. Region-Based Social Distance

Based on religious beliefs, it can be seen that there is a virtually small social distance among university

students. The most insignificant social distance was to students who are Muslim whereas only 7,5% of the respondents perceive some kind of distance to Muslim students. While the social distances toward students who have Christian, Catholic, Buddhist, Hindu, and Confucian beliefs, on the other hand, show relatively high (in the range of 75% to 82%). In a more detailed description, the social distance toward Christian students reached 78.1%, Catholic students 78.3%, Buddhist students 82.9%, Hinduism students 82.7%, Confucianism students 82.9%, and Local Religion students 84.3%. The social distance formed is mostly on the issue of marriage. The data signifies that most respondents do not mind dealing with people of different religions but not for marriage or intimate relationships.

This situation is in accordance with the results of the arguments of Jaffe, Rudert, & Griefeneder (Jaffe et al., 2019) which argue that individuals tend to cooperate with diverse people when carrying out psychologically distant activities. On the other hand, individuals will choose people with a similar cultural background when doing things that are psychologically close (Jaffe et al., 2019). In line with this statement, the data in this study indicate that respondents tend not to have problems doing academic activities together with those of different religions but for personal matters such as close friendship and marriage, they tend to prefer those who share the same religion. The rejection to have a personal relation to individuals with different religions indicate that many

of respondents look at other religious groups by using ethnocentrism.

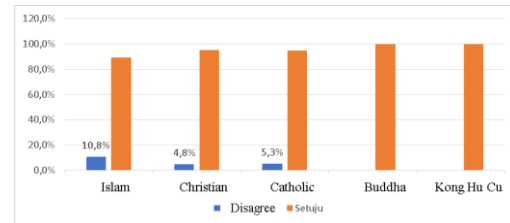
Etymologically, ethnocentrism is derived from the Greek term, *ethnos* which means nation and *kentron* which means center. However, ethnocentrism can also be applied to ethnic, religious or other micro-cultural groups (Neuliep, 2006). Ethnocentrism, as previously mentioned, is an understanding that one's culture is superior to another's culture. We become ethnocentric when we look at other people's cultures through the narrow lens of our culture or social position. The essence of ethnocentrism is judgments about what is true, moral, and rational. These judgments penetrate every aspect of cultural existence.

Ethnocentrism tends to appear most strongly with out-groups that have the highest social distance and are least favored by in-groups. Out-groups that are perceived to have "a similarity" with in-groups will be treated the same as in-groups. At the level of practice, ethnocentrism appears most strongly in political, moral and religious settings or contexts, because emotional actions will close rationality and cause anger and hatred. In the context of intercultural communication (Jandt, 2004), ethnocentrism will lead to a rejection of the empathy and cultural knowledge of others. Ethnocentrism will prevent the exchange of ideas and skills between individuals with different cultural backgrounds.

Numerous intercultural inhibitors including negative

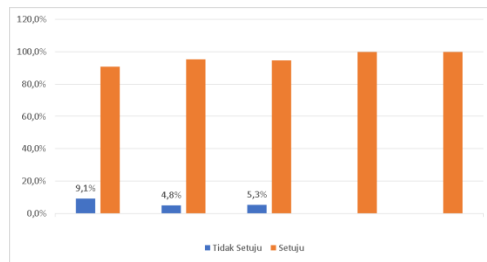
sentiment to other religions are closely related to social distance. In general, social distance is a specific term that cannot be perceived simply as a physical distance or biological/genetic characteristic distance. Research on technological connections has revealed that humans can sense the social distance from other individuals even though physically they are in the same room. (Karakayali, 2009). The concept of social distance that intensively studies at the closeness of affection is the social distance offered by Emory S. Bogardus. The concept is mainly focused on the idea that people will feel emotionally related to those who are socially close to them. (Karakayali, 2009), feelings of sympathy and affection are key elements of social distance: when there is little understanding and sympathy there arises social distance. Whereas if understanding and sympathy are high then social distance will be close.

The data above indicates that respondents have a social distance to different religions that mainly related to close personal relations. Furthermore, this research will focus on describing the social conditions of adherents of local religions because so far there have been many cases of discrimination against adherents of local religions in the field of education, for example, there is no special religious education in local religions at the elementary, secondary and tertiary levels. The first thing that will be seen is the respondent's agreement on the relationship of adherents of local religion to the campus activities.



**Figure 3. Cross Tabulation
Between Religion and the Relation
of Local Religion to Campus**

In the context of local religious students (religious beliefs) involved in various activities on campus, most students who are Muslim, Christian, Catholic, Buddhist, and Confucian (more than 80%) express their agreement. That is, they can accept the presence of individual students who embrace the local religion. They have almost no social distance to people who adhere to local religions. However, some respondents still expressed their disapproval of the existence of students who had a belief on local religion, the percentages of each dominant religion that showed disapproval are less than 11% (Muslim students 10.8%, Christians 4.8%, and Catholics 5.3%). What if individuals from the followers of the local religion do activities on campus? The social distance also signifies in terms of the attitude toward the local religion adheres conducting activities on campus.



Between Religion and Local Religion Conducting Activities on Campus

This study found that more than 80% of the respondents who were Muslims, Christians, Catholics, Buddhists, and Confucians did not question their presence (local religions believers) to engage in activities on campus. Social distance between students who are Muslims, Christians, Catholics, Buddhists, and Confucians towards those who adheres to the local religion is relatively low, which is in the range of 5% to 10%). However, there is still a rejection of adherents to carry out activities on campus. This shows the existence of prejudice against local religious groups which incites a desire to exclude local religious adherents from campus activities. Furthermore, this research will also describe the attitude of the students towards the possibility of the local religion adheres to enroll as the university student.

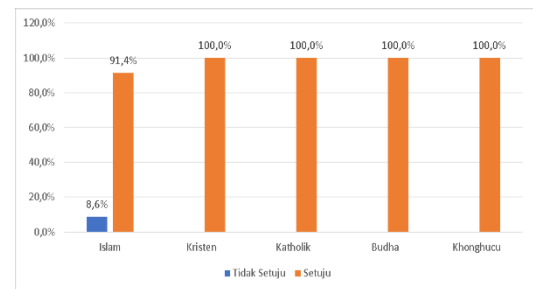


Figure 5: Cross Tabulation Between Religion and Local Religion Believers Enrolling as A Student in university

The data description is almost similar to the response of the respondents to individuals who adhere to local religions in carrying out activities on campus. In terms of enrollment as university students, almost all respondents who are Muslims, Christians, Catholics, Buddhists, and Confucians can accept the presence of local religion adherers as students. However, there is still a small proportion of Muslim students, to some extent, reject the presence of students who adhere to the local religion. The rejection indicates the presence of social distance toward a particular group of people in the university environment.

The concept of social distance from Borgadus approaches social distance as a subjective category. The Borgadus scale marks the emotions and sentiments of particular group members towards different cultural groups. Borgadus stresses that the focus consideration in the study of social distance is the actions related to specific attitudes towards other people from different cultural groups.

(Karakayali, 2009). Borgadus further stated that it would feel empty if conceptualizing social distance without reference to subjective attitudes and emotions. On the other hand, however, there would be logical difficulties if treating social distance exclusively only as a subjective category. In the context of this research, if someone has a specific emotional reaction to another religious group then he has actually identified the group as a different category. The Borgadus scale has implicitly built the assumption that informants have a common understanding of who is not part of their group when they answer questions such as: "Do you (as part of group A) want to live next door to group B members?" another, what is measured by the Bogardus scale is what group members feel about other groups that they already consider to be different/away from their group. All this shows that there are objective or structural aspects of social distance.

Therefore, because intergroup social harmony is primarily constructed by trust, the university students must unblock the perception of an intergroup boundary to different cultural/religious groups (Kung et al., 2018). The strategies that need to be embraced for establishing the situation balancing between maintaining a strong sense of self and respecting the identity (religion) of others. Identity knowledge competency is an understanding of the importance of religious identity and the ability to see the importance of that identity for others. The identity knowledge competency will lead to

mindfulness which is a cultural awareness that has become a habit. That is the readiness to switch to a new perspective or a different perspective so that the person will have the cultural negotiation skill that is the ability to negotiate identity through the willingness to listen, empathy, non-verbal sensitivity, and politeness (Littlejohn, Foss, & Oetzel, 2017). A communicator can comprehend that he or she has negotiated religious identity effectively if both parties feel understood, respected, and valued.

CONCLUSION

The findings signify that religious-based social distance mainly arises on issues of marriage or close personal relationships. As for issues related to campus, it can be seen that the social distance between students who have a variety of religious beliefs is relatively low. But there is still a social distance to the adherents of local religions concerning campus activities. Most respondents can accept the existence of individuals who adhere to local religions. In other words, in the context of associations/linkages with the university in general, most respondents who are part of Generation Z have a close social distance. Thus, communication between individuals of different religions can be done effectively. However, some respondents who are part of the dominant religion refuse the adheres of local religions to become students, carry out activities on campus, and have personal relationships with them. The results of this study, to some extent, indicate

that there are social distances, prejudices, and ethnocentrism of some respondents to adherents of local religions. Therefore, future research is needed in two forms. First, research that explores the logic of students' prejudices against the local minority religious groups. Second, qualitative research provides an in-depth description of the process of developing cultural communication competence in students who have no social distance from the adherents of minority religions.

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