

Intercultural Communication in Forming Community Perceptions about Dalem Betawi Temple

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Abstract: Human activity is in a cultural and communication environment to build a unity of creativity, taste and intention in the learning process. Communication provides space for humans to think, perceive, and make decisions. Intercultural communication occurs between two or more people from different socio-cultural backgrounds. Intercultural communication aims to form a harmonious life, unite cultural differences to form a new culture without leaving the original culture so that it remains sustainable. For Hindus, the temple is a sacred place to worship Ida Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa. Dalem Betawi Temple is very unique in its Buddhist Shiva concept. There are two different cultures that unite in the Dalem Betawi Temple area, namely the uniqueness of the Gedong Ratu Kaler shrine, a place to worship Dewi Kwan Im with a Buddhist concept. Intercultural communication plays a role in maintaining harmonious interactions between the Padukuhan community as temple patrons and Chinese people who come to worship and pray. Intercultural communication is also used to equate people's perceptions of the existence of temples so as to build a sense of solidarity and create harmonious religious moderation. A qualitative method with a descriptive approach is used in this study together the necessary information and to analyze and draw conclusions.

Keywords: Intercultural Communication, Public Perception, Pura Dalem Betawi

I. INTRODUCTION

Humans are social creatures who need other people to maintain their survival. The human desire to interact with other people on an ongoing basis will form a social system to fulfill their physical, psychological and social needs. Human interaction requires communication, because human actions fulfill the need to interact with other people (Suranto, 2011: 44). Human nature as a social creature can be fulfilled through communication. Social interaction without the support of communication will not give rise to communication actions in the form of actions and reactions. Communication provides space for humans to think, perceive and make decisions. Communication also opens up human thought patterns in increasing knowledge and information, so that it can change attitudes and behavior in forming culture, developing thinking, and bridging human relationships (Cangara, 2013: 22).

Human behavior reflects culture. Communication and culture influence each other, seen in habits, behavior, language patterns and communication styles. Culture develops patterns of behavior that lead to systems of beliefs, attitudes, values, knowledge and experiences. Meanwhile, communication emphasizes a dynamic and continuous process (Sihabudin, 2013: 19). Martin and Nakayaman explain that perceptions are formed due to culture influencing the reality process, meaning that culture as a basis for communication provides space for the development of various cultures in different communication practices, so that communication is able to provide innovation in cultural reality (Effendy, 2003: 86).

Intercultural communication can preserve culture and bridge barriers of understanding in society so that miscommunication does not occur. Intercultural communication occurs when the producer and recipient of the message have different racial, ethnic, ethnic and social class backgrounds (Liliwari, 2016: 47). Elements in intercultural communication include humans, messages, codes, media or channels, feedback, encoding and decoding, and interference (Nasrullah, 2014: 39-47). Cultural differences have the potential to cause uncertainty and anxiety, so intercultural communication is important because it can describe customs and emotional intensity in order to create a harmonious relationship between aims and objectives. Living side by side with religious and cultural differences often gives rise to social conflict. Durkheim emphasized the importance of social solidarity towards values that are agreed upon and integrated harmoniously in society (Muhtadi, 2019: 22). Religion and culture are considered the main identity of society.

Yuliani, Pramesti Dasih, and Indraswari (2022) in their research "Intercultural Communication Equalizes Community Perceptions at Pura Dalem Betawi" explained that: First, Pura Dalem Betawi is a place of worship for Hindus. However, what happens a little differently at Pura Dalem Betawi is that it has a unique Buddhist Shiva concept. The history of the temple's existence has not been written, but can be known through the stories of community leaders. The community's belief system is built with confidence so that it remains maintained in harmony. Second, advances in technology and information provide opportunities for the public to increase their knowledge and insight so that questions arise among the public regarding the existence of the Dalem Betawi Temple and its uniqueness. From questioning to the emergence of various perceptions in society, especially the arrival of ethnic Chinese to join in praying at Pura Dalem Betawi. The application of intercultural communication is considered to be able to bridge the community in uniting perceptions about the existence of Pura Dalem Betawi. Third, harmony of diversity builds religious moderation in prayers at Pura Dalem Betawi in accordance with what was passed down by ancestors in the Siwa Buddha concept.

Factors that influence human perception are interpersonal perception and self-concept. Interpersonal perception is the meaning given to sensory stimuli, originating from communication in the form of verbal and nonverbal messages. Accuracy in

interpersonal perception will influence the success of communication. Meanwhile, self-concept is a person's views and feelings about himself. Views about oneself are reflected in the communication process. Thus, interpersonal perception and self-concept provide meaning for humans as individuals to have conscious choices in assessing the reality they face, when interacting with other individuals or groups of society (Bungin, 2011: 55-56).

II. RESEARCH METHODS

This article is included in the type of qualitative research with a descriptive approach, because the data was obtained through the process of extracting information in the field based on observation, interviews and literature study techniques. Primary data sources were obtained from interviews with informants, and secondary data were obtained through books, journals and previous research results. The technique for determining informants uses purposive sampling, with the consideration that the selected informants are considered to know and understand the research topic so that the data obtained is valid. Informants are temple officials, community leaders and the surrounding community. The data analysis technique uses the Miles and Huberman model, namely that during the interview an analysis of the informant's answers has been carried out, if it is deemed unsatisfactory then the interview process will continue until the data obtained is deemed credible. Data analysis was carried out through a process of data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions (Sugiyono, 2016: 334-337).

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 The existence of the Dalem Betawi Temple

As explained by Jero Mangku Kardha (interview, 19 November 2022), the location of the Dalem Betawi Temple is in Banjar Jumpayah, Mengwitani Village. One day a polite, wise and wise ascetic came to the Gunung Sari Temple in the Mengwitani Village area. The ascetic asked permission from Ida Bhatara Pura Gunung Sari to meditate and stay temporarily in Padukuhan. In his meditation, the ascetic saw a faint light to the south of Gunung Sari Temple and tried to get closer, now called the Lebah area. Through the power of *tapa brata yoga samadhi*, the ascetic can communicate virtually with the inhabitants of the cave (called Taman Brerong) who have high *kawisesan* powers.

Ida Bhatari Dalem as the ruler of Brerong Park agreed to a meeting with the hermit. In his communication, it is believed that the meditation and *samadhi yoga* carried out by the ascetic caused the people of Mengwitani Village to feel safe and no more residents suddenly disappeared. People feel comfortable in carrying out activities, working and carrying out religious rituals. The meeting agreed that Ida Bharari Dalem was a manifestation of Shiva and the ascetic was a manifestation of Buddha. After that, the ascetic returned to Padukuhan and placed the *panca datu* for the first time and ordered that a temple be built with the Siwa Buddha concept. On the advice of Ida Bhatara Gunung Sari Temple, another meeting was held between the ascetic and Ida Bhatari Dalem to agree on Padukuhan as a temple with the Siwa Buddha concept. In the temple area there will be placed a palinggih in the form of a hermit flanked by a Chinese dragon. Now people know it as Pura Dalem Betawi, but many still call it Pura Dalem Tanah Cina.

The name Betawi is taken from the word Berawi which means *ida sane nuenang setra* (lord of the grave). In the past, the land of Pura Dalem Betawi was a Setra Rare (children's grave). Many people also associate Pura Dalem Betawi as originating from the words Bata and Wi, meaning *panugrahan bata saking ida bhatara*. It is evident from the temple structures that most of them use brick as the main material. Over time the word Berawi or Batawi changed to Betawi. The people of Mengwitani Village know the name Pura Dalem Betawi, but many also call it Pura Dalem Tanah Cina.

3.2 Intercultural Communication Equalizes Public Perceptions

Devito states that perception is an experience regarding objects, events, or relationships obtained by inferring information and interpreting messages. Perception is also defined as a process that makes a person aware of the many stimuli affecting the senses. Perception is an internal process carried out to select, evaluate, organize stimuli from the external environment (Ridwan, 2016: 64). Perception will automatically influence the stimulation in absorbing the message and interpreting the stimulus when the individual reaches awareness. The formation of perception starts from a cognitive process that is influenced by experience, horizons and knowledge. Experience and the learning process will provide shape and structure for objects captured by individuals, which will then play a role in determining the availability of answers in the form of individual attitudes and behavior towards objects (Rohim, 2016: 69).

The perception process goes through several stages until the individual is able to respond to other people. These stages are: 1) stimulus reception stage, the five senses receive physical stimulus or social stimulus for recognition and gathering information about the existing stimulus; 2) stimulus processing stage, intended for processing social stimuli through the process of selecting and organizing information; 3) stimulus change stage, individuals interpret the environment through a cognitive process which is influenced by experience, horizons and knowledge. There are two factors that influence perception, namely external and internal. Internal factors come from oneself, such as: attitudes, habits and desires. External factors come from stimulation received in the form of physical stimulus or social stimulus (Ansari, 2013: 12-13).

The perception process also has a very strong power to influence an individual's feelings towards the situation appropriately and logically. The power of logic to shape human behavior consistently based on agreed rules. There are four types of logical power, namely: 1) causal power, behaving without restraint or responding with anger; 2) practical power, behaving strategically to obtain

future results; 3) contextual forces, behaving in trust with actions and interpretations; and 4) implicative power, behavior shows a reflective relationship between intention and action (Littlejohn, 2014:257-259). Perceptions are formed based on actions that are influenced by contextual understanding, thus showing a reciprocal relationship.

Society has the ability and power to form perceptions through observations or experiences they have. Society is a unity of human life that interacts according to a certain system of customs and is continuous in nature and is bound by shared feelings and identity. Individuals in society always need each other, because they have joint activities but have different roles in social aspects. The role of society in the environment includes educational and religious aspects. So it can be described that public perception is the impression that a person receives from a subject or event in the unity of human life, to interact according to a certain system of customs so that the results can be observed. More simply, perception can be defined as the impression that people receive from an event or reality in their environment so that it becomes their observation.

Wirata (interview, 19 November 2022) explained that initially the view of the elderly community in Mengwitani Village was that the Dalem Betawi Temple was very sacred, because it was unique. People believe that Ida Bhatara Bhatari, who is standing, has high wisdom. Many people ask for blessings and safety both in terms of health and fortune, especially traders so that they can sell well. The development of technology and information has also brought progress to the mindset of the people of Mengwitani Village, so that many questions arise regarding the existence of Pura Dalem Betawi. Many interpret and relate the name to the history heard through the stories of the elders. Apart from that, there are also those who perceive the prayers at Pura Dalem Betawi as different because they include elements of Chinese culture and *piodalan* takes place three times a year.

As stated by Ariana (interview, 19 November 2022) that *piodalan* at Pura Dalem Betawi is held three times a year. The first, called *Piodalan Purusha*, is held every six months at Buda Kliwon Matal. This is the peak of the *pujawali* at Pura Dalem Betawi; Second, called *Piodalan Pradana*, it is held to coincide with Purnama Sasih Kadasa, marked by Ida Bhatara Bhatari *Tedun Napak Pertiwi* with a performance of *katakanarang*. Third, called *Piodalan Cina*, it is held to coincide with the Chinese New Year holiday which is centered on the Gedong Ratu Kaler shrine where Goddess Kwan Im resides.

Different public perceptions regarding the meaning of *Piodalan Cina* give rise to various interpretations regarding the existence of Pura Dalem Betawi. Moreover, with the development of information in society, ethnic Chinese people are coming to pray at the Dalem Betawi Temple. Not only that, many traders from outside the Mengwitani area came to pray at the Dalem Betawi Temple. This has become a new phenomenon for the people of Mengwitani Village, so intercultural communication is used to maintain harmony among the community regarding the phenomenon at Pura Dalem Betawi.

Communication is likened to a transaction process where the symbolic process requires humans to regulate their environment by building relationships between individuals, so that the process of exchanging information can strengthen attitudes and behavior to make changes in mutual understanding. Formally, culture cannot be separated from communication because it is related to the way humans live. Humans learn to think, feel, believe and strive for what is appropriate according to their culture, so that this includes the concept of arousing interest. Culture is a system of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, time, roles, spatial relationships, concepts of the universe, material objects, which are acquired by large groups of people from generation to generation through individual efforts and group (Mulyana, 2009: 18).

Intercultural communication involves communicators representing individuals, individuals or groups with an emphasis on differences in cultural backgrounds that influence the communication behavior of participants. Intercultural communication also refers to a communication phenomenon, where participants from different cultural backgrounds are involved in contact with one another, either directly or indirectly (Liliwari, 2016). Intercultural communication occurs because individuals are involved in social interactions, cultural perceptions and different symbol systems (Pramesti Dasih, 2021: 41).

Jero Mangku Kardha (interview, 19 November 2022) explained that when the Chinese *Piodalan* was held, apart from using ritual facilities in the form of offerings, offerings typical of Chinese New Year celebrations made by Chinese people in general were also presented, such as basket cakes, mandarin oranges, Fuji apples, and many more. The Palinggih Gedong Ratu Kaler, where Goddess Kwan Im is worshiped, is decorated with red knick-knacks and red lanterns are installed as a form of kindness and to ward off evil forces. Joint prayers were carried out in harmony led by Jero Mangku. Social interaction continues to be carried out well regardless of where you come from and what culture, but prioritizing an attitude of tolerance. Even though there are differences, interaction can be developed between the communicator and the communicant so that they have the same meaning in the message being discussed in accordance with experience and knowledge through intercultural communication.

People have the freedom to express themselves in their culture so that they can be responsible, so that they are not too free and oppress other people's cultures (Muhtadi, 2019: 10). Social reality shows that the interaction process does not only involve behavioral activities, but also the psychological activities of each individual involved (Liliwari, 2013: 22). The goal of intercultural communication is that individuals are essentially able to adapt for the sake of stability, so that they are able to build communication in relationships between people. Human needs are basically to have desires, gain benefits, and interact. Intercultural communication provides space for humans to have cultural meetings and exchanges, which helps in the adaptation process and strengthens stability. Harmonious intercultural interactions are achieved because a balance is created between ideas and realities from different cultures.

Intercultural communication approaches include: social psychology, interpretive, critical, dialectical and cultural dialogue approaches (Liliwari, 2013: 246-249). The intercultural communication approach also includes immaterial components such as trust, which is an intangible creation but reflects cultural values that influence personal and social behavior (Wood, 2013: 139). The

intercultural communication approach used by religious leaders and elders, to equalize public perception of the phenomena found at Pura Dalem Betawi, is the approach of social psychology, dialectics and cultural dialogue. The social psychology approach is used to influence people's perceptions so that they are able to show changes in behavior and can develop thought patterns and be ready to adapt to other cultures. A dialectical approach and cultural dialogue are used to build conducive communication without pressure from any party and always emphasize a sense of brotherhood. From the use of the three approaches, the emphasis is on attitudes, behavior and actions such as: 1) respecting the dignity of others; 2) don't be easily offended; 3) don't criticize so as not to raise sensitivity; 4) develop an attitude of tolerance towards other people's cultures; 5) maintain behavior and not blaspheme; 6) have initiative; 7) do not disturb other people's privacy; 8) suppressing power politics so as not to develop cultural domination; 9) respecting traditions and culture, 10) maintaining the continuity of Pura Dalem Betawi (Subrata interview, 20 November 2022).

The intercultural communication approach chosen by the religious leaders and elders of Mengwitani Village was based on the consideration that the elements of intercultural communication that influenced the process were passed. These communication elements include humans, messages, media or channels, feedback, code, encoding and decoding, and interference. If explained according to the conditions at the Dalem Betawi Temple, then humans have two roles at once, namely as a source of messages and a recipient of messages. Humans as the source of the message or called the communicator are the party who initiates a message, while the recipient of the message or called the communicant is the party who is the target of the message. Each individual does not perform both roles independently, but acts as a message source and message recipient simultaneously and continuously. Neither message sources nor message recipients respond to all messages uniformly or convey messages in the same way. Message sources and message recipients have different characteristics that influence individual habits in sending and receiving messages, such as: race, gender, age, culture, values and attitudes (Liliweri, 2021: 45).

Messages in intercultural communication can be verbal and nonverbal. Messages are considered as a form of ideas, thoughts and feelings communicated by the communicator to the communicant. Messages are defined as the content of interactions in the form of symbols, used to convey ideas accompanied by facial expressions, body movements, gestures, physical contact, tone of voice, and other nonverbal codes. The message is conveyed briefly and is easy to understand. Furthermore, a channel is a channel or medium for conveying messages either from communicator to communicant or vice versa. Messages move from source to recipient through media or channels, with communication channels in the form of air waves, sound waves, cables and others.

Feedback is the response of the recipient of a message, either verbal or nonverbal, to respond to the message conveyed by the communicator so that it is ensured that the message can be received effectively. Feedback is serialized according to the communication situation, it can be direct or indirect, in the form of responses or actions. Codes are symbols used to create meaning. Symbols are words, phrases and sentences, which are used to evoke ideas, thoughts or create images. Verbal and nonverbal codes are used in intercultural communication. Verbal codes consist of symbols and grammatical structures, like language. Nonverbal codes consist of symbols that are not words, such as body language, space and time, clothing, and so on.

In communication there is a process where a message is managed (encoding) until the message is received (decoding). In simple terms, encoding is the process of creating a message using certain codes, while decoding is the process of receiving using codes to interpret a message. The encoding process is called an encoding activity which can be done once or repeatedly. The encoding stage involves creating ideas or ideas which are arranged using codes or symbols to be distributed to the public through certain media channels. The communicator's activity is interpreting what is in his mind and interpreted by the senses. The coding ability of each communicator varies depending on the source background such as educational, social, environmental and ideological background. This is different from decoding which encodes behind the encoding process, where the communicant interprets, describes, interprets the message in various ways. Decoding activities in interpreting and interpreting messages physically so that they have a certain meaning that can be received by the communicant. The decoding process can occur in stages or non-stages which is influenced by the number of communicants. If the number of communicants is single then communication can take place without any levels, whereas when communicating in large numbers or groups then communication takes place in stages. During the encoding and decoding process, communication problems can occur which can reduce the clarity of the message being conveyed. Communication disorders are problems that occur in the ability to receive, send, process and understand communication concepts in the form of verbal, non-verbal or graphic symbols. The cause can be hearing or pronunciation problems, it can also be due to mental, psychological or semantic disorders.

3.3 Religious Moderation at Pura Dalem Betawi

Religious moderation emphasizes a way of life in harmony, mutual respect, care and tolerance without having to cause conflict because of existing differences. Religious moderation is a dynamic process in an effort to develop religious perspectives, attitudes and practices in multicultural life. In essence, religious moderation is an endless process of realizing essential religious values carried out in the context of protecting human values. Intercultural communication and religious moderation have almost the same goal so that there are no dominant factors in the interaction process in order to avoid cultural clashes. Conditions that are less conducive to intercultural interaction often foster the view that oneself and one's group are the best. If this attitude is allowed to develop, it will become ethnocentrism, namely the habit of considering the culture of one's group to be the best.

Intercultural communication can maintain harmonious relations between social groups. Intercultural communication becomes a process to actualize problems that arise in different societies, seen from attitudes, actions, behavior, social structures, so that

religious moderation can be created in harmony (Thadi, 2021: 215-216). Religious moderation provides a middle way to prevent excessive attitudes and behavior from developing. Intercultural communication builds people's perceptions so that they do not act radically. This is strongly emphasized by religious leaders and elders in Mengwitani Village regarding the existence of Pura Dalem Betawi. Religious moderation is very clearly visible when the Chinese Piodalan is held which coincides with Chinese New Year. The series of ceremonies centered on the *Palinggih Gedong Ratu Kaler* were carried out in stages, with the concept of *ngayah* carried out by the krama *padukuhan* and the Chinese community who came voluntarily. In the preparatory stage, activities were carried out to clean the temple area, altar, and *palinggih*. Followed by the installation of wastra, but there is something unique in the lamak used which is written with the Chinese letters Dewi Kwan Im. The *Palinggih Gedong Ratu Kaler* is also decorated with lanterns and lanterns with Chinese ornaments. Lanterns for the Chinese people mean happiness (interview with Jero Mangku Kardha, 20 November 2022).

Sukra further explained (interview, 20 November 2022), in the preparation stage, sugar cane was also installed in the area in front of the Dalem Betawi Temple, precisely in the *angkul-angkul*. For the Chinese people, sugar cane is a special plant that means long life. Each segment of sugar cane has a red paper attached with Chinese characters written on it which contains good wishes. The more sugar cane segments, it is believed that the more luck it will bring. It is hoped that the philosophy of sweet sugar cane can provide a sweet life for the Chinese people.

The next stage is the *piodalan* procession called *pujawali*. The *banten* as the main ceremonial means is placed in front of the altar in the *Palinggih Gedong Ratu Kaler*, then the regent leads the *pujawali*. The *pujawali* series is carried out like the *dresta* in Bali, followed by group prayers. For the Chinese community, it begins by carrying out worship using red incense and prostrating at the Pura Dalem Betawi Temple. After prostrating, stand in front of the highest *Gedong Ratu Kaler* and bow your head three times. After the incense is finished, it is stuck in the incense holder which is available on the edge of the *Gedong Ratu Kaler*. At the same time, the authorities finished worshipping, followed by joint prayers in the Hindu religion which was attended by the temple administrators, the *Padukuhan* community, and the Chinese community who were present at the Dalem Betawi Temple. After the group prayer, the ritual of cleaning the jewels continues, and the *wangsuh* is distributed to the *pemedek*.

Religious moderation is clearly visible when *pujawali* is carried out, especially during group prayers. The Hindu community and the Chinese community blend into one without distinction, because the goal is the same, to offer prayers with sincerity to Ida Bhatara Bhatari who resides at Pura Dalem Betawi. A form of tolerance also occurs, many Hindus also participate in worship using red incense and prostrate themselves and bow their heads at the *Palinggih Gedong Ratu Kaler*, exactly the same as the Chinese community does. This is done on the basis of the trust and confidence of each individual.

The prayers are over, followed by a cultural performance featuring a Kecak dance performance followed by a Barong Sai dance. The aim is as a form of *sraddha bhakti pangempon* and *pemedek*, as well as to build a sense of solidarity. The next ritual is burning paper. Generally, offerings of burning gold paper are referred to as spirit money, with various forms of paper used such as clothes, houses, cars and daily equipment. Paper is burned in a furnace as an offering to gods and ancestors. The final stage is the distribution of red packets. The nominal value of the *angpao* is free according to ability and sincerity, but the spirit is very noble to continue to respect each other and maintain good relations regardless of differences between family, friends and all living creatures (Ekawati interview, 20 November 2022).

IV. CLOSING

Communication plays an important role in human life, because it includes the process of transferring ideas from communicator to communicant with the aim of changing behavior. The homogeneous life of society in society experiences shifts due to communication, as does culture. Intercultural interactions in different societies can generate interest and form new orders of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values and attitudes. Intercultural communication is used in a new order of social interaction in different cultural contexts, so that it is able to provide people's perceptions of social objects before determining social actions in the form of behavior. Pura Dalem Betawi is a place of worship with a multicultural concept, which brings differences into one unity in harmony with religious moderation. Intercultural communication activities are carried out in stages by religious leaders and elders so as to create an attitude of solidarity without differentiating between cultural background and social status. Building public perception requires time and the right strategy.

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