Research Article

Cross-Cultural Mediators in Resolving Conflicts in Indonesia

Lusinana Margareth Tijow, Andhika Yudha Pratama*, Daya Negri Wijaya, Evania Yafie

State University of Malang, Malang City, East Jawa Indonesia, Indonesia

ORCID
Andhika Yudha Pratama: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5837-0045

Abstract.
This article focuses on the role of cross-cultural mediators in resolving conflicts related to cultural violence in Indonesia and provides an overview of the cultural context in Indonesia and the factors that contribute to the prevalence of cultural violence. The article then discusses the role of cross-cultural mediators in facilitating dialogue and promoting understanding between different cultural groups. Using a qualitative research methodology, the article explores the experiences of cross-cultural mediators working in different parts of Indonesia. Diverse references like literature, academic papers, scientific publications, dissertations, and similar materials concerning delicate cultural aspects, categorization of aggression within Indonesian society, and elements impacting the development of a violent culture are mentioned within the paper. The article highlights the challenges and opportunities that mediators face in their work, including the need to build trust and develop effective communication strategies. The article argues that cross-cultural mediation can be an effective tool for resolving conflicts related to cultural violence in Indonesia. The article emphasizes the importance of developing culturally sensitive and context-specific mediation strategies that take into account the unique cultural and historical factors that contribute to violence in different regions of the country. In conclusion, the article highlights the need for greater support for cross-cultural mediators in Indonesia, including training and capacity-building programs, as well as increased awareness and recognition of the important role that mediators play in promoting peace and resolving conflicts related to cultural violence. The article argues that cross-cultural mediation has the potential to contribute to building a more peaceful and just society.

Keywords: cross culture, mediation, conflict, resolution

1. INTRODUCTION

"In our increasingly diverse societies, it is essential to ensure harmonious interaction among people and groups with plural, varied, and dynamic cultural identities, as well as their willingness to live together. Policies for the inclusion and participation of all citizens are guarantees of social cohesion, the vitality of civil society, and peace." [1]

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Organization (UNESCO) voiced by the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity in 2002 to invite the public and government to ensure the realization of harmonious interaction between people and groups with a plural, dynamic cultural identity and their willingness to live together. In general, harmony will be related to the willingness or reluctance of people in a pluralistic environment to establish intercultural relations. Therefore, it is not surprising that we can still find conflict situations in various corners of the world, including Indonesia. Countries with a higher level of social diversity, such as Indonesia, tend to be more vulnerable to conflict or disputes. Heterogeneity or diversity within a country often causes many cases in Indonesia, which are commonly referred to as clashes of clans, religions, races, and beliefs (SARA). Moreover, if there have been violations of humanity in the form of destruction of the rights to life or residence, freedom of endeavor, and freedom from fear, then inter-ethnic or intercultural conflicts will be difficult to avoid. Intercultural conflicts became more open or visible for various reasons. First, the environment of upheld freedom and shifts in the political constellation during the reform period provided fertile ground for expressions of unrest among several ethnic groups. Second, the development of polarized or non-polarized societies into opposing groups in various regions of Indonesia based on cultural, ethnic, or ethnic similarities Such groupings are difficult to prevent because people tend to categorize themselves and others as members of ingroups or outgroups and ultimately form cultural identities and ethno-ethnic views [2]. Third, it cannot be denied that cultural identity plays an important role in the life of Indonesian society, either in the sense of a more universal identity such as national identity, which tends to be sidelined by each member of the group.

The more individuals think of themselves as part of a group or ingroup, the clearer their awareness of differences in status or identity. When they are in the same environment, differences in identity will encourage them to have negative stereotypes and prejudice against each outgroup, to the point of committing discriminatory actions [3]. Even though intercultural and interpersonal conflicts and their causes can still be found today, this does not mean that there have not been efforts or strategies aimed at solving or preventing these problems. In intercultural conflicts, Galtung, in his Theories of Conflict (2008), states that making decisions that are final for all members of each group can be one of the conflict resolution strategies. Decision-making is carried out using the mediation process as a problem-solving strategy through a third party who is also called a mediator. Likewise, for interpersonal conflicts, the presence of mediators or mediation strategies can help overcome problems of violence against intimate partners or families, where the victims are mostly women and children [4].

Reviewing the results of mediation strategies has been found to resolve conflicts, especially between cultures, in previous research, so in this article, we would like to discuss the elements or factors involved in the process of implementing mediation. This discussion is necessary for individuals as part of a family, community, or certain groups to understand the importance of mediation as a strategy for resolving problems with other individuals or groups. In addition, third parties, namely mediators or mediation organizers, will gain a broader understanding of the dynamics and determining factors for the success of mediation.

2. METHODS

In this study using a qualitative approach. Data collection techniques were used through literature studies involving research and data collection from available sources in the library. In research, researchers will read, record, and process relevant information found in the literature. To obtain the data needed for research. Studying the literature can use secondary data types collected through studies. References to various sources such as books, journals, scientific articles, theses, and others related to sensitive culture, classification of violence in Indonesian culture, and factors that influence a culture of violence. Data were obtained from various sources, compiled, analyzed, and conclusions drawn based on few studies [5].

3. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Before starting to discuss the classification results from the literature regarding the process and the importance of mediation strategies, we first explain how individuals perceive themselves as part of a group. This individual's assumption will be related to self-identity, which will almost always experience a shift and at certain times will require him to choose his identity [6]. This shift generally occurs between three types of identities, namely: a human identity that distinguishes it from other creatures; personal identity or self-definition as a unique person; and finally, social identity as a differentiator from outside group members. Therefore, individuals tend to identify themselves in groups that can be analogous, such as individuals as part of the human group (related to violence against other living things), the group of men/husbands or women/wives (related to violence against intimate partners or households), or the Javanese group (related to violence within internal groups or with other groups with different backgrounds).

3.1. Social Contact

Why can mediation strategies resolve conflicts? This strategy can be a medium for individuals or groups in conflict to make contact with each other. Increased contact between people from different groups can lead to recognition of similarities between them or at least to increased knowledge that group norms are not as "anti-outgroup" as individuals initially believe. Likewise, in intercultural conflicts, contacts need to be made regularly to foster trust in terms of information sharing and cooperation. The existence of contact between groups will be able to reduce hostility and increase trust in cooperation, as well as the desire to share information between groups [2]. Other studies have also found that contact can change the negative attitude of majority group members towards minority groups where the social status of the two groups is not equal. Nonetheless, the facts on the ground show that contact between the two does not necessarily lead to an intercultural understanding, like in the post-conflict situation between the Salam and Sarane groups in Ambon, Indonesia. Lohy and Faturochman argue that efforts to eradicate segregation require dialogue in space and time as a liaison between individuals from two groups with different backgrounds who are in conflict [7].

3.2. Intercultural Dialogue

Erosion of social segregation will be difficult to achieve with only contact between cultural groups. The British Council, as stated by Cantle (2012), encourages the implementation of intercultural dialogue because of the need for cultural groups to be involved with the differences encountered. Intercultural dialogue is necessary because people today not only regularly meet very diverse people but also because it can help address and open insights into some of the challenges of today's globalized world. Intercultural dialogue is not just two-way communication between cultural groups that are in conflict or less harmonious. Providing a place for dialogue or contact can have an impact on trust, cooperation, and eroding segregation, which can increase understanding between cultural groups over time [8]. Involvement in intensely structured dialogue will encourage members of each cultural group to make contact so that sensitivity to past conflicts increases and understanding between groups increases.

In cases of conflict or violence that have occurred, structured contacts and dialogue are structured in mediation strategies in an effort to increase understanding between individuals and groups. Misunderstanding can occur because of a connection with how

a person reacts or interprets as part of an ingroup towards outgroup differences that tend to be ethnocentric or ethnorelative, as well as whether there is motivation to establish relationships [9].Thus, we need mediators stages to increase understanding the culture of members each group when carrying out intercultural dialogue.

3.3. Intercultural Mediation

The mediator seeks to improve the decision-making process and help the parties reach an outcome that can be agreed to by each party without having a binding decision-making function. As for intercultural mediation, Sani (2015) emphasizes this as a form of effort to open opportunities for members of each group to obtain equal rights and encourage cultural integration through mutual knowledge and exchanges between different cultures [10]. In the implementation of intercultural mediation, the roles and approaches used by the mediator are very important. Mediators, both individuals and groups, need to take a positive approach to conflict to gain acceptance and be respected by the conflicting parties. Furthermore, Mayer (2020) explains that mediators must also be people who emphasize impartiality and are trusted because of their special expertise. Impartiality means that they empathize with all involved and are willing to understand what has been said without judging their interests by providing a framework for constructive discussion of the conflict without specifying its content. As such, they help others express their emotions and needs and are responsible for ensuring that everyone gets the space that is rightfully theirs [11].

Mediators need a certain awareness and self-knowledge and a strong sense of self-esteem for the application of mediation techniques. In an intercultural context, recognition of one's self-esteem becomes very important to inject transcultural confidence and a sense of security during the process with all its cultural shocks and sometimes unexpected twists and turns. Mediators build positive self-esteem, and congruent communication can refer to the five forms of freedom in the sense that everyone can allow themselves to be free. Freedom is divided based on its purpose, namely for the sake of: 1) Seeing and hearing what is currently in the mediation process; 2) revealing what is felt and thought; 3) acknowledging your own emotions; 4) Asking for what is needed rather than always waiting to be given permission; 5) Taking risks in a familiar environment instead of always staying safe or not taking risks without daring to start something new. The mediator may remove sociocultural restrictions, for example, in selecting taboo topics, or may not mention or speak directly to conflicting groups.

For intercultural mediation, this freedom is essential for both the mediator and the conflict partners, as it allows all involved to be in the present, to draw attention to what is in the moment, to feelings and needs to be adopted and spoken for, to act and communicate actively and responsibly, to ask for what is important, and to take risks. Cultural mediation can also have an impact on conflicts between groups that have different identities. Segregation between cultural groups, such as after the Ambon conflict, can be minimized through the presence of a community with Pro-Peace as a mediator who provides a structured space-time dialogue for the Salam and Sarane groups [7].

3.4. Barriers to Intercultural Mediation

Previous studies tried to reveal the obstacles experienced by mediators, especially in intercultural cases. We summarize these obstacles as follows: (1). Objectivity. The impact of partiality will place the mediator in the position of risking the equity of the mediation they are carrying out [12]; (2). Threat restrictions. Agreements made in mediation based on wanting to protect the lives of the mediators themselves or prioritizing the lives of armed groups over civil society, have the potential to encourage further violence [13]; (3). Perceived as an external party. Professional mediators are seen as external experts who act alone and, at certain times, are not included in implementing curriculum or educational projects. The lack of cooperation between the two parties occurs due to a lack of professional culture and mutual understanding, which creates tension [14]; (4). Mediators are not trained. Mediators need to be trained so have the skills to run culturally diverse teams according to the needs of leaders from all professional fields [15].

4. CONCLUSION

Countries with a higher level of social diversity, such as Indonesia, tend to be more vulnerable to conflict or disputes. Even though intercultural and interpersonal conflicts and their causes can still be found today, it does not mean that there have not been efforts or strategies aimed at solving or preventing these problems. In intercultural conflicts, making decisions that are final for all members of each group can be one of the conflict resolution strategies. Decision-making is carried out by way or process of mediation as a problem solving strategy through a third party, also called a mediator. Likewise for interpersonal conflicts, the presence of a mediator or mediation strategy

can help in overcoming problems of violence against intimate partners or families, where the victims are mostly women and children. Reviewing the results of mediation strategies for resolving conflicts especially between cultures - from previous research. In addition, for third parties, namely mediators or mediation organizers, they will gain a broader understanding regarding the dynamics and determining factors for the success of mediation.

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