How Millennials Can Promote Social Harmony through Intercultural Communication at Higher Education

by Sukardi Weda
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**Abstract**

Intercultural communication is a fundamental key to build social harmony. This study aims to investigate students’ perceptions on promoting social harmony through intercultural communication practices in Indonesia as a multi ethnic and multi culture country. It also investigates the elements that are needed to build social harmony in Indonesia, so that the government of the Republic of Indonesia could take the study report as a reference for formulating policy in social development in Indonesia. This study uses a mix-methods research design (quantitative-qualitative) with a descriptive statistical paradigm that describes the mean, SD, percentage, weight, and rank followed by a detailed explanation of the statements given by the subject. The subjects of this study were students of the Department of English, Faculty of Language and Literature, Universitas Negeri Makassar for the 2019/2020 academic year. The research instrument was a closed and open questionnaire. Therefore, this study indicates that: (1) The results show that several positive behaviors of people from different ethnic groups need to be encouraged, for example tolerance, mutual understanding, mutual respect, not demeaning different tribes, and (2) The results also show that positive stereotypes and inclusive behavior are very important in building social harmony and peace in multi-ethnic countries. The implication of this research is to build social harmony in Indonesia as a multiethnic country that is hampered by hundreds of ethnic groups, cross-cultural competence (CCC) and intercultural communication are very important among Indonesian people, especially for millennials as important elements of social life.
Keywords: millennials, social harmony, intercultural communication

Introduction

Almost all countries in the world inhabited by diverse ethnic groups experience with conflict. A number of countries in the Middle East with differences in ethnic groups and beliefs were hit by conflict and civil war. In other parts of the world, such as Kashmir, East Turkey (Uyghurstan), a number of countries in Africa, Myanmar, and others came up as examples. Even in Indonesia as a multi-ethnic country, with hundreds ethnic groups can experience with conflicts that have potential to create disharmony in the community. To avoid conflict, millennials need to maintain intercultural communication and have intercultural competence. Weda and Atmowardoyo (2018, p. 9) argue that as a large nation with a variety of cultures and languages, everyone needs to maintain good relations with others and is hoped to have intercultural competence in expressing ideas and thought with people from other cultures. This statement is vital to build harmony and social tolerance with the motto Bhinneka Tunggal Ika which means unity in diversity. This is in accordance with Wing-Wah Law and Wai-Chung Ho (2011, p. 371) whose focus their study on the study of the Chinese state, which states that throughout China's history, the ethical perfect of social harmony has played an critical part in reinforcing national solidarity, improving cohesion of the nation, and upgrade companionship with neighboring countries. To avoid conflict amongst people from different cultural backgrounds, intercultural communication is needed to build social harmony in a pluralist society.

One of the most important elements in the society is millennial generation. Millennial needs to be empowered to promote the importance of intercultural communication. The millennial generation as a generation that is IT literate and lives in the digital age needs to maintain intercultural communication with people from different cultures, in other harmony can be realized in society. Sharma (2015, p. 7) states that the cornerstone to achieving social harmony lies in being really social which can be done by not as it were understanding one’s needs and needs but moreover respecting others equally.

The purpose of this study is to examine the concepts and elements of millennials’ perception on promoting intercultural communication to build social harmony. For the purposes of this study, intercultural communication amongst people from different ethnic groups is considered very vital in daily life to build social harmony.

Literature Review

Millennials

Millennials (born between 1982 and 1994) have been exposed to the explosion of online technology platforms since its emergence, as it has been incorporated into almost every aspect of their daily lives (Duffett, 2014, p. 499). Millennials in the daily lives using various technological devices and media to maintain communication to others. Internet and social media are currently potential to be main means to promote mutual understanding and intercultural communication in digital era.

The Grail report, published in 2011, illustrates the contrasts between each era, and the table 1, adjusted with extra discoveries from Horsaengchai and Mamedovaas cited in Chandler (2015, p. 16), summarize some of the important findings of the Grail report.
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