

Cross-Cultural Communication of the Dalem Sakti Housing Estate Community, Sungai Tabuk District, Banjar Regency in Maintaining Harmony

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ABSTRAK

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Masyarakat Indonesia yang multikultural memerlukan komunikasi lintas budaya yang efektif untuk menjaga keharmonisan di tengah keberagaman etnis, budaya, dan agama. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis bagaimana masyarakat Komplek Dalem Sakti, Kecamatan Sungai Tabuk, Kabupaten Banjar membangun komunikasi lintas budaya dalam mempertahankan kerukunan sosial. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis penelitian lapangan melalui observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi. Data dianalisis melalui tahapan reduksi, penyajian, interpretasi, serta triangulasi sumber untuk menjamin keabsahan temuan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa komunikasi lintas budaya berlangsung secara efektif karena didukung oleh sikap toleransi, saling menghormati, dan hubungan interpersonal yang kuat. Interaksi sehari-hari dibangun melalui komunikasi timbal balik, partisipasi aktif dalam kegiatan kemasyarakatan, serta penggunaan bahasa yang adaptif, termasuk pemanfaatan bahasa Banjar sebagai bahasa bersama di antara warga yang berasal dari latar belakang etnis berbeda. Hambatan komunikasi seperti etnosentrisme, prasangka sosial, dan diskriminasi relatif tidak berkembang karena kuatnya ikatan kekeluargaan dan intensitas interaksi sosial. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa komunikasi yang inklusif dan adaptasi budaya menjadi faktor penting dalam memelihara kerukunan masyarakat multikultural serta dapat menjadi rujukan bagi komunitas majemuk di wilayah lain.

ABSTRACT

Keyword:

Cross-Cultural
Communication;
Cultural Adaptation;
Harmony;
Multicultural
Society; Social
Cohesion

Indonesia's multicultural society requires effective intercultural communication to sustain social harmony amid ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity. This study examines how residents of the Dalem Sakti Housing Estate, Sungai Tabuk District, Banjar Regency, develop cross-cultural communication to maintain harmonious social relationships despite differences in cultural backgrounds. A qualitative field research approach was employed using observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Data were analyzed through data reduction, presentation, interpretation, and source triangulation to ensure credibility. The findings indicate that intercultural communication within the community functions effectively because it is supported by high levels of tolerance, mutual respect, and strong interpersonal relationships. Daily interactions are characterized by reciprocal communication, active participation in community activities, and adaptive language practices, including the use of the Banjar language as a shared medium among residents from different ethnic groups. Potential communication barriers, including ethnocentrism, prejudice, and discrimination, are minimized through continuous social interaction and a strong sense of kinship. These findings demonstrate that inclusive communication practices and cultural adaptation play a central role in preserving harmony within multicultural communities and provide practical insights for strengthening social cohesion in other culturally diverse residential environments.



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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is widely recognized as one of the world's most multicultural countries, characterized by its rich diversity of ethnicities, religions, languages, and cultural traditions spread across thousands of islands (Rahmawati & Dhewantoro, 2025). This diversity represents an important social asset that strengthens national identity, yet it also creates challenges in maintaining harmonious relationships among communities with different cultural backgrounds. Indonesia's strategic geographical position and abundant natural resources have historically attracted various political and economic interests, making social cohesion an important foundation for national stability (Tamburian, 2018). Consequently, harmonious interaction among culturally diverse communities remains an important issue in contemporary Indonesian society.

Culture strongly shapes the way people communicate. Samovar and Porter explain that cultural background influences communication patterns, meanings, values, and behavioral norms adopted by individuals. Differences in language and cultural interpretation frequently affect how messages are delivered and understood, creating the potential for misunderstanding when individuals from different cultural backgrounds interact (Rakhmat & Mulyana, 2006). Effective intercultural communication therefore requires not only language competence but also mutual understanding, openness, and respect toward cultural differences.

Indonesia provides many examples of how cultural diversity influences everyday communication. Differences in customs, social norms, and communication styles often appear even in ordinary social interactions (Hidayat & Hafiar, 2019). For instance, among the Minahasa community, finishing all the food served by the host is regarded as a sign of appreciation, whereas several other ethnic groups consider leaving a small portion of food as a symbol of politeness (Nasruddin, 2023). Such differences illustrate that cultural values shape communication practices and may become sources of misunderstanding when not properly understood.

Intercultural interaction may also produce broader social tensions when differences are accompanied by prejudice or weak social integration (Ramdana et al., 2022). Several conflicts that occurred in Kalimantan, including those involving Dayak-Madurese and Malay-Madurese communities, demonstrate that cultural differences can escalate into horizontal conflict when communication and mutual understanding fail to develop effectively (Hernawan, 2010). These experiences highlight the importance of strengthening intercultural communication as a foundation for social harmony in multicultural societies.

The increasing use of digital communication and the changing dynamics of contemporary society further influence intercultural interaction (Fauzan et al., 2025). Social media and various digital communication platforms have transformed how individuals establish relationships, exchange information, and negotiate cultural identities (Putri & Nabila, 2022). Differences between generations and cultural groups may create new communication patterns that require greater intercultural competence. Previous studies have shown that intercultural communication competence plays an essential role in strengthening tolerance, reducing misunderstanding, and maintaining harmony within culturally diverse communities (Weda et al., 2022).

Despite these challenges, the Dalem Sakti Housing Estate in Sungai Tabuk District, Banjar Regency presents a different social reality. The community consists of residents from various ethnic backgrounds, including Banjar, Dayak, Javanese, Bugis, and Madurese, while embracing different religious affiliations, particularly Islam and Christianity. Although residents generally maintain independent daily lives and interactions are relatively limited outside community activities, harmonious relationships have been sustained for many years. Minor disagreements

occasionally occur, yet they rarely develop into prolonged social conflict because residents prioritize mutual respect, tolerance, and neighborhood solidarity.

Previous studies on intercultural communication have predominantly examined communication barriers, cultural adaptation, or conflict resolution in multicultural settings. Less attention has been devoted to communities that successfully maintain long-term harmony despite substantial cultural and religious diversity. This situation creates an opportunity to explore how everyday communication practices, shared social values, and interpersonal relationships contribute to sustainable harmony within multicultural residential communities.

Accordingly, this study investigates intercultural communication among residents of the Dalem Sakti Housing Estate, Sungai Tabuk District, Banjar Regency. It seeks to understand how communication practices support harmonious relationships among culturally diverse residents and how potential communication barriers are minimized in everyday social interaction. The findings are expected to enrich intercultural communication studies while providing practical insights for developing harmonious multicultural communities in Indonesia. Recent bibliometric evidence also indicates increasing scholarly attention to religious tolerance and interfaith dialogue, emphasizing the growing relevance of research on harmonious multicultural societies.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research methods

This study employed a qualitative approach using a field research design to examine intercultural communication practices within the Dalem Sakti Housing Estate, Sungai Tabuk District, Banjar Regency (Sugiyono, 2011). A qualitative approach was selected because it enables an in-depth understanding of naturally occurring communication processes in everyday social life without manipulating the research setting. The study focused on residents of the housing estate and religious leaders who actively participate in community life and possess extensive knowledge of intercultural and interfaith relations. The object of the research was the pattern of intercultural communication that develops in daily interactions among community members.

Data source

The study utilized both primary and secondary data sources (Moleong, 2010). Primary data were obtained through direct observation and in-depth interviews with community members and religious leaders regarding communication practices, interaction patterns, and challenges encountered in maintaining harmonious relationships. Secondary data were collected from documents, archives, field notes, and other relevant written sources describing the social and cultural characteristics of the research setting. The combination of these data sources provided a comprehensive understanding of intercultural communication within the community.

Data collection

Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation (Sugiyono, 2022). Observation was conducted to examine naturally occurring communication activities, while interviews explored participants' experiences and perspectives regarding intercultural interaction. Documentation was used to complement and verify the empirical findings. The collected data were organized, reduced, interpreted, and presented to identify recurring themes and communication patterns. To enhance the credibility of the findings, source triangulation was applied by comparing information obtained from different informants and supporting documents throughout the research process (Miles et al., 2020).

Data analysis

Data analysis was carried out systematically through several stages, including data organization, reduction, interpretation, and presentation, to identify key themes and patterns of intercultural communication emerging within the community. Data obtained from observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation were initially organized and categorized according to their relevance to the research objectives. The selected data were then systematically reduced and interpreted to uncover patterns of interaction, forms of communication, participants' experiences, and factors that either facilitated or constrained the development of harmonious social relationships. The findings were subsequently presented using a descriptive-interpretive approach to provide a comprehensive account of the dynamics of intercultural communication within the community. To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, source triangulation was employed by comparing and cross-checking information obtained from different participants with relevant documentary evidence (Miles et al., 2020). This analytical process was conducted iteratively to ensure that the emerging interpretations were consistent and adequately reflected the patterns of intercultural communication within the research setting.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings reveal that intercultural communication has become an integral part of everyday life in the Dalem Sakti Housing Estate, Sungai Tabuk District, Banjar Regency. Despite differences in ethnic background, language, and religious affiliation, residents maintain harmonious relationships through continuous social interaction and shared community activities. Rather than becoming a source of division, cultural diversity functions as a social resource that strengthens mutual trust and neighborhood solidarity.

Analysis of the interview, observation, and documentation data indicates that harmonious communication is supported by reciprocal interaction, adaptive language use, and strong social participation. Residents actively exchange information, cooperate in neighborhood activities, and participate in religious and social events without emphasizing differences in cultural identity. These interaction patterns demonstrate that social harmony is maintained through everyday communication rather than formal mechanisms of conflict resolution.

Cross-Cultural Communication in Maintaining Community Harmony

Daily communication among residents reflects a high degree of social adaptation. Individuals from Banjar, Javanese, Bugis, Madurese, and Dayak backgrounds communicate openly in routine neighborhood activities, including community meetings, mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), religious celebrations, and informal social gatherings. These interactions create opportunities for residents to understand one another's cultural values while strengthening interpersonal relationships. Similar patterns have been identified by Hariyanti (2024), who found that tolerance practices within multicultural communities contribute significantly to social cohesion.

Communication within the housing estate is characterized by reciprocal participation. Residents simultaneously act as information providers and information recipients, particularly when discussing neighborhood security, community programs, religious events, and other matters affecting daily life. Face-to-face interaction remains the dominant form of communication because it allows immediate feedback and reinforces emotional closeness. Digital communication

through WhatsApp groups complements these interactions by facilitating rapid dissemination of information without replacing direct interpersonal contact.

From the perspective of DeVito's interpersonal communication theory, these interaction patterns illustrate the dynamic exchange of sender and receiver roles in everyday communication (DeVito & DeVito, 2019). Communication is not limited to transmitting information but also functions to strengthen interpersonal relationships and maintain collective identity within the neighborhood. The findings suggest that communication effectiveness is closely associated with residents' willingness to participate actively in community life rather than with communication skills alone.

The study further indicates that both verbal and nonverbal communication contribute to maintaining harmonious relationships. Besides exchanging information through conversation, residents express respect through greetings, smiles, handshakes, and participation in collective activities. These seemingly simple expressions reinforce social closeness and create a sense of belonging among individuals from different cultural backgrounds.

Positive feedback also characterizes communication within the community. Differences of opinion are generally addressed through discussion and consensus rather than confrontation. Residents tend to prioritize collective interests over personal preferences, particularly during neighborhood meetings and community decision-making. This pattern is consistent with previous findings highlighting deliberative dialogue as an effective mechanism for strengthening tolerance and reducing social tension in multicultural societies (Seran, 2025).

Viewed through Gudykunst and Kim's intercultural communication model, the effectiveness of communication in the Dalem Sakti Housing Estate reflects successful adaptation across cultural, sociocultural, psychocultural, and environmental dimensions (Kim & Gudykunst, 2020). Residents demonstrate openness toward cultural diversity, low levels of ethnocentrism, and mutual respect across religious and ethnic boundaries. These conditions create a communication climate that supports cooperation rather than competition.

The findings are consistent with Hakis (2015), who emphasized the importance of dialogue, tolerance, and peaceful communication in sustaining interreligious harmony. They also support Hernawan (2010), who found that intercultural communication strengthens trust and cooperation within diverse communities. However, this study offers a different perspective by showing that harmony is maintained primarily through routine everyday interaction instead of formal dialogue forums. Continuous social contact, adaptive language use, and shared community participation appear to be the principal factors sustaining harmony within the Dalem Sakti Housing Estate. Comparable interaction patterns have also been reported among Mandailing and Javanese communities, where dialogue, shared traditions, and religious values reinforce social cohesion (Harahap & Mailin, 2025).

Barriers to Cross-Cultural Communication in Maintaining Community Harmony

One of the notable findings of this study is that communication barriers commonly reported in multicultural societies were relatively minimal within the Dalem Sakti Housing Estate. Although residents differ in terms of ethnicity, language, and religion, these differences rarely develop into obstacles in everyday interaction. Long-term coexistence has fostered familiarity and mutual understanding, allowing residents to communicate comfortably without emphasizing cultural distinctions. The relationships established over many years have strengthened a sense of kinship that transcends ethnic and religious identities.

The findings further indicate that tolerance functions as the principal foundation for harmonious communication. Residents actively participate in collective activities, including *gotong royong*, Independence Day celebrations, neighborhood meetings, and social assistance for families facing difficulties, regardless of cultural or religious background. Such continuous interaction strengthens interpersonal trust and reinforces solidarity within the community. Rather than separating residents into distinct cultural groups, these shared activities cultivate a collective identity centered on neighborhood membership.

From the perspective of intercultural communication, ethnocentrism is often regarded as one of the primary barriers to effective interaction. Individuals who perceive their own cultural values as superior tend to experience greater difficulty accepting differences, increasing the potential for misunderstanding and conflict (Samovar et al., 2013). The present study, however, found little evidence of ethnocentric attitudes among residents. Informants consistently described diversity as a normal aspect of community life and emphasized respect for cultural differences rather than cultural superiority. This pattern suggests that prolonged social interaction has encouraged a process of cultural adaptation in which shared community values become more influential than ethnic identity.

A similar pattern was observed regarding racism and discriminatory behavior. None of the informants reported experiencing unequal treatment based on ethnicity or religion during their residence in the housing estate. Community participation is open to all residents, while neighborhood discussions and social activities provide equal opportunities for everyone to contribute. These findings indicate that interpersonal relationships are primarily shaped by shared social responsibilities rather than by cultural or religious affiliation. Inclusive participation has consequently become an important element in sustaining harmonious communication.

Social prejudice, another barrier frequently discussed in intercultural communication studies, was likewise found to be relatively weak. Residents demonstrated a willingness to interact openly with neighbors from different backgrounds and expressed little concern regarding cultural or religious differences. Everyday communication has gradually reduced stereotypes that might otherwise emerge in a heterogeneous community. Continuous interaction appears to have strengthened mutual trust while minimizing negative assumptions between groups.

These findings can be interpreted through Gudykunst and Kim's intercultural communication model, which emphasizes that stereotypes, prejudice, ethnocentrism, and communication anxiety often influence interactions across cultural boundaries (Kim & Gudykunst, 2020). In the Dalem Sakti Housing Estate, these factors appear to have diminished as residents accumulated shared experiences through routine social engagement. Long-term interaction, adaptive communication, and mutual familiarity created an environment in which differences became accepted as part of everyday community life rather than sources of social division.

The results differ from those reported by Khairana and Fauzi (2020), who found that ethnocentrism, prejudice, and cultural differences continued to hinder intercultural communication in another multicultural community. In contrast, the Dalem Sakti Housing Estate demonstrates that diversity can strengthen rather than weaken social relationships when supported by tolerance, openness, and sustained interpersonal interaction. This distinction suggests that the effectiveness of intercultural communication is influenced not only by cultural diversity itself but also by the quality of social relationships developed within the community.

Overall, the findings indicate that barriers to intercultural communication in the Dalem Sakti Housing Estate remain relatively limited. Ethnocentrism, racism, and social prejudice—commonly identified as obstacles in multicultural communication—have largely been mitigated through strong social cohesion, reciprocal communication, and a shared commitment to maintaining harmonious neighborhood relationships. These conditions demonstrate that effective intercultural communication is built not merely through recognition of diversity, but through continuous interaction that cultivates trust, mutual respect, and collective responsibility among community members.

Implications for Intercultural Communication in Multicultural Communities

The findings demonstrate that harmonious intercultural communication is not determined solely by cultural similarity but by the community's capacity to develop mutual trust, shared norms, and inclusive patterns of interaction. Residents of the Dalem Sakti Housing Estate have gradually established communication practices that emphasize cooperation rather than cultural distinction. This process enables differences in ethnicity, language, and religion to become part of everyday social life without undermining social cohesion.

An important contribution of this study lies in showing that harmony is sustained through routine interpersonal communication rather than formal conflict-management mechanisms. Daily conversations, neighborhood meetings, collective work, and participation in social activities create repeated opportunities for interaction, allowing residents to understand one another beyond cultural stereotypes. These continuous encounters gradually strengthen interpersonal trust and reduce the likelihood of prejudice developing into social conflict. Such findings extend previous studies that primarily associate intercultural harmony with structured dialogue or institutional mediation (Hakis, 2015; Seran, 2025).

The findings also highlight the importance of adaptive communication within multicultural communities. Residents do not abandon their cultural identities; instead, they negotiate differences by adopting communication practices that are widely understood and socially accepted. The frequent use of the Banjar language as a shared means of communication illustrates how linguistic adaptation can facilitate interaction while preserving cultural diversity. Rather than creating cultural uniformity, this adaptation encourages inclusiveness and strengthens a collective sense of belonging.

From a theoretical perspective, the study reinforces DeVito's interpersonal communication framework by demonstrating that reciprocal communication and positive feedback contribute to stronger interpersonal relationships (DeVito & DeVito, 2019). At the same time, Gudykunst and Kim's intercultural communication model provides a useful explanation for how low levels of ethnocentrism, prejudice, and communication anxiety create conditions that support effective interaction across cultural boundaries (Kim & Gudykunst, 2020). The empirical evidence suggests that these theoretical dimensions are closely interconnected within everyday community life.

Overall, this study indicates that maintaining harmony in multicultural residential communities depends less on reducing cultural diversity than on strengthening opportunities for meaningful interaction. Continuous communication, shared social participation, adaptive language practices, and mutual respect collectively create a social environment in which diversity becomes a source of cohesion rather than division. These findings provide practical insights for community leaders and policymakers seeking to promote social integration in culturally diverse

neighborhoods while contributing to the broader development of intercultural communication studies.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that intercultural communication plays a central role in maintaining social harmony within the multicultural community of the Dalem Sakti Housing Estate, Sungai Tabuk District, Banjar Regency. Despite differences in ethnicity, language, and religion, residents have developed communication patterns characterized by openness, mutual respect, and active participation in community life. Daily interactions, collective activities, and adaptive language use have strengthened interpersonal relationships while minimizing the potential for misunderstanding and conflict. These findings indicate that cultural diversity does not inevitably generate social tension but can instead become a source of community cohesion when supported by effective communication.

The study further reveals that barriers commonly associated with intercultural communication, including ethnocentrism, racism, and social prejudice, are relatively insignificant within the research setting. Long-term social interaction, shared community values, and strong neighborhood solidarity have encouraged residents to prioritize collective interests over differences in cultural identity. This finding reinforces the view that harmonious multicultural communities are built through continuous interpersonal engagement rather than through formal conflict-management mechanisms alone. The combination of DeVito's interpersonal communication perspective and Gudykunst and Kim's intercultural communication model provides a comprehensive explanation of how reciprocal communication, adaptive interaction, and mutual trust contribute to sustainable social harmony.

This study contributes to intercultural communication scholarship by demonstrating that everyday communication practices constitute an important foundation for preserving harmony in culturally diverse residential communities. The findings also offer practical implications for community leaders and policymakers seeking to strengthen social integration through inclusive communication, community participation, and respect for cultural diversity. Future studies may expand this research by examining intercultural communication in other multicultural communities with different demographic and socio-cultural characteristics, allowing broader comparisons regarding the factors that support sustainable social harmony.

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