

Pekanbaru City Citizens Motivations in Communicating with Refugees in Indonesia

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Abstract: Discovering the motive of why local citizens like to engage in communication with refugees can provide an overview and insight to us in the study of intercultural communication in the situation of local citizens and refugees in Pekanbaru city, Indonesia. This study used a qualitative method and rely on the researcher, an open-ended in-depth interview, and observations to collect data. Data collected analyzed by using thematic for the transcription and disclosure analysis for the observation data. Informants gathered by using purposive sampling, other than requirement applied for that, the informants willingness to be involved in the study also be considered. As this study focus on fulfilling the objective of the study, the result revealed the motive the local citizens have why they want to communicate with the refugee is: inclusion, friendliness, and potential prospect.

1 INTRODUCTION

social issue in society.

A discovery of Pekanbaru city citizens motive of communication branched from researcher curiosity on why the local as the host community would engage in communication with refugees despite there was no obligation for them to do so and with the situation where both parties disabilities in the language barrier. The local could leave refugees alone since they are under UNHCR and immigration care, but they dont. Instead, they are trying to have a relationship with refugees, communicate with them casually, hang out with them, and maintain a friendship with them. In addition, quoting the authority, the situation between the local in Pekanbaru with refugees is *conducive, orderly and fine*. As a result, researcher attracted to understand the motive of the local behavior in communicating with refugees.

This study of how Indonesian treats and behaves on refugee is expected to contribute to government policy on how to treat its society, on how to have a role in a global level by involving the community, and bring out the image of the Indonesian intercultural communication act and view toward the new phenomenon, and foreign issues. Indeed, with that purpose, this study would be beneficial not only for the government but also for any institution related department to refugees and the host community and the

2 BRIEF PICTURE OF REFUGEES AND HOST COMMUNITY SITUATION

The wave of refugees begins for a reason where a person, a group of people, sometimes a village forced out of their country because of combat, conflict or violence in their country. Usually, refugees remain close to the nearest countries from which their origin before joining resettlement to the third country. For example, Rohingya to Indonesia or Somali to Kenya, while others keep moving on in the hope to get permanent protection or permanent place to continue their lives restored. These people, later taken care by UNHCR or related humanity organization to channel to a certain developed country to get protection or even new permanent citizenship.

Now there are approximately 68, 5 Million of them around the world (UNHCR, 2018). Under the reason of humanity, many countries help these people temporarily, including Indonesia as one of the transit countries in South Asia.

Despite the fact that refugees need to be helped because of their situation, the continuity life between

the host community and the refugees is not necessarily peaceful, most of it is in a fragile situation where mistrust swirl around the air. For example, xenophobia and anti-refugee in German (Benček and Strasheim, 2016), the protest of South Korea toward Yemeni refugee to the government (Smith, 2018) even though the government is trying to transforming its policies and practices toward the growing population of refugees (Schattle and McCann, 2013), and other patterns that can be easily found on the news nowadays.

If the assumption toward the issues between host community and refugee is because dissimilarities of the people and the refugee in those countries have to one another, apparently, that is not necessarily true. Such as Jordanian and Syrian which eventually after two years accommodating them, high tension rise between them (Luck, 2013) By the same token, a Somali refugee in Kenya, where the Human Security Issues there was in solving the easily broken social environment between both (Kumssa and Jones, 2014).

In contrast to those phenomena, the local citizens and refugees in Indonesia known as a secured and nonviolent up until now. Then this becomes unique and worth to examine in depth form so it can be revealed what an advantage in the situation Indonesia might be.

3 REFUGEES IN INDONESIA

As a transit country, Indonesia government together with the UNHCR, actions in three steps to help the refugees: discovering-settling-monitoring during the time refugees remain in Indonesia. As for how it has been known that refugees mostly coming from paths that mostly not in the safe way, such as Myanmar refugees who arrived after moment wobbling in the sea and helped by Indonesia fishery who found them. That is why Indonesia government start its work by discovery.

Once in the past, Indonesia successfully participates in helping the victim of the Vietnam War by serving one from its islands in Pulau Galang, Batam City, Indonesia to accommodate Vietnam War refugees in 1970s-1990s. The camp is emptied by now since the Vietnam Wars refugees fled back to their country. However at the time 1970s-1990s many things happened there, as a human being there were sickness, life, and death, so things from the past remain there.

Pekanbaru City is one of the 13-pointed city to accommodate international refugees, known for it's an encouraging and safeguarded relationship between

the local citizens and the refugees (Putra, 2015). There is 1,133 population of refugees in Pekanbaru city who come from 11 countries, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, Srilanka, Myanmar, Palestine, Bangladesh, Jordan, Somalia, and Sudan (Harismanto, 2019).

Acting as a transit country means Indonesia giving momentary accommodation for refugees. It is, but practically it doesn't. According to the Pekanbaru immigration officer, truthfully it is unlimited. After 10 years accommodated in Indonesia, its up to the refugees with UNHCR where will they be going next (Harismanto, 2017). Apparently, with third countries undermining their acceptance, refugees may be stuck for a lifetime in Indonesia (Bemma, 2018; Cochrane, 2018).

Table 1: Refugees in Indonesia in December 2016

Country	Refugees	Asylum-seekers	Total
Afghanistan	4,379	2,775	7,154
Myanmar	887	67	954
Somalia	545	898	1,446
Sri Lanka	343	197	540
Nigeria	-	725	725
Iraq	374	572	946
Others	1,296	1,344	2,640
Total	7,827	6,578	14,405

Source: UNHCR Indonesia Factsheet, December 2016

4 PEKANBARU CITY ON REFUGEE

According to UNHCR, Pekanbaru is in the top five cities that accommodate the most refugees from 13 cities (Ant, 2018) with the number growing, recent data stated there are 1.176 refugees in Pekanbaru (Putra, 2018).

Refugees in Pekanbaru is coordinated under legal political and human rights coordination ministry, managed by the authorized immigration together with International Organization for Migration (IMO) that also part of UNHCR. So the immigration work in discovery, accommodate, security, and observation. Since this a coordinated work from the central government, then local authorization continue the responsibility following the guidance from the center.

Because the number continues to grow, immigration in Pekanbaru had to manage refugees onto several places called as community house and detention house. Those named Wisma Panel Rumbai, Siak Resort,, Hotel Rina, Hotel Satria (1, 2, 3), Hotel D Cops, Wisma Indah, Hotel Tasoya, and Wisma Novri where

this study conducted (Putra, 2018). In addition, recently the Pekanbaru immigration had to move some of refugees onto farther place named Hotel Orchid (Armanda, 2019), with the reason to make refugees comfortable, minimize clash between them, and other reason related to health and sanitary.

Pekanbaru is the capital city of Riau Province, in Indonesia. It is in Sumatera Island; with its 1,046 Million residents (Jumlah Penduduk, 2017) make it one of the most populous cities on this island, after Medan and Palembang. Since it is located on the Siak River, which drains into the Strait of Malacca and with its access to the busy strait and trading port, made Pekanbaru City famous for its trade route (Pekanbaru, 2019). Known as Malay island, Pekanbaru city shared Malay cultural value and Muslim religion as the major religion followed by the society.

Most of refugees are Muslim, since they come from Muslim country such as Afghanistan, Iraq, and Iran which researcher thought this similarity could be the aspect that chance of those refugees to stay in Pekanbaru bigger. Even some of them come from Myanmar, however those who arrived in Pekanbaru happened to practice Islam too. However, further research on this is necessary that researcher would like to ask it to the informants in this study.

5 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Pekanbaru city hosts 1,133 international refugees onto 8 community houses and 1 detention house (Harismanto, 2019). Community house placed among locals residence which made refugees immediately contact with locals in their daily activity.

Table 2: Refugees in Wisma Novri

Nation	Total
Palestine	33
Myanmar	32
Iraq	27
Afghanistan	11
Iran	8
Somalia	5
Sri Lanka	4
Syria	1
Jorda	1
Pakistan	2
Total	124

Source: Pekanbaru city Immigration, 2015

In the first place, following the Interpersonal Communication Motives Model (ICM) by Graham et al.,

(1993), directed that motive communication evaluated by the reflection in how a person talks with others (communicator style), who a person talks to (relationship level), and what a person talks about (self-disclosure). Considering those aspects, there are three themes arises as to the result of the research objectives. The motive of communication is for the sense of inclusion by the local citizens toward the refugees, then as the sign of friendliness, and the last is potential prospect which means informants see refugees as a potential market.

In addition to this aspect, the researcher also considers the result of the Hofstede cultural dimension, to see the possibility of locals behavior from a culture point of view. The Hofstede insight releases the result on the page with the details of Indonesia as follow: low score in uncertainty avoidance, a high score in power distance, a collectivist culture, considered low masculine, and a long term orientation culture.

Table 3: Refugees in Wisma Novri

Name	Gender	Age	Brief Background
Yul	Female	52	The wife of the leader who often interacts with refugees.
Dre	Male	23	The son of the leader, a young local citizen who likes to mingle with the young refugees.
Jok	Male	49	A local citizen who used to work as a security guard.
Sya	Male	45	A local citizen who works as a security guard.
Gar	Male	45	A local citizen who annually mingles with refugees.

5.1 Inclusion

Local citizens have a habit to communicate with the refugees for the purpose of passing the time or they usually say it like just feeling like it. In most cases, the conversation between Yul (one of the informant) and the refugees usually takes place in a house while selling food for lunch. Meanwhile, Mar who is a refugee mother of four from Myanmar and her sons often visited and helped Yul in arranging the items. Furthermore, both wore similar theme clothes named as *daster* in Indonesian language. *Daster* is a simple blouse, usually has *batik* pattern that is usually worn by mothers at home.

Yul stated that she recognizes most of the refugees around the community house. However, she only talks with those who often communicate with her such as Mars family from Myanmar. Mar often visits her house to sit down or sometimes help her prepare food to sell every day. Mar has four kids; hence, she will bring the kids together when visiting Yuls house.

In addition, Yul likes to share food with Mar and her family after all the chores are done, while Mars kids also like to buy snacks from Yuls store.

On the other hand, **Jok, Sya,** and **Gar** have random refugee friends to talk to; however, Moh (censored) from Iran and Nor from Myanmar are the most often ones. In particular, they always share conversation regarding *war, family, or jokes.*

As the whole interview is done, most informants said the situation what they feel and think of refugees were, I feel sorry for them, the second said They are the victim of war I could not imagine how sad is that the third said They have no place to go, the fourth showed a gesture of sigh, the fifth sad frowned and said Well Pity

Sometimes, the inclusion between the local and refugees in their interaction means they will sit, talking, and doing nothing together under this one big tree around the area. They spent their break time there, mostly after 4 PM both parties would start to gather around the spot. Yul said, this is not an obligation, but somehow both parties know about this habit, its like a thing they have to control each other presence. For example, if Gar didnt see Moh several times when he was together at the spot, he would ask other refugees about Moh, what happen to him or simple where he was.

5.2 Friendliness

The informants stated that their communication occurs normally and they kept repeating Just happen like that as the same answer. In addition, they even answered using *masa iya mau ditolak* in Bahasa Indonesia expression which showed that they are fine when the refugees come to approach and appreciate them.

On the other setting, informant Gar and Moh often talk under the tree near the community house. Gar with his black and blue security uniform and Moh with his t- shirt and short pants, both sat side by side chatting. They were joking and smoking together. It is a casual gesture for them to share cigarettes when they are engaging in a conversation. One time, Moh jokingly insisted to Gar to give him cigarettes because he knew that Gar just got an incentive from his works, Gar then shared his happiness. Not only that, when some of informants and refugees saw that, they wanted it as well, so that time refugees and informants enjoyed cigarettes while talking together.

While informants being asked, how usually the communication started, they said the communication Just happens like that. In a situation where they dont expect visit by their refugees friend, they still interact

with them, they answered in Indonesia language *masa iya mau ditolak* which has an expression even though they dont feel like to have a guess or not in the mood to interact, they dont find any reason to reject if so, they dont want to.

Ya They come to you or sit near you. *Do you want to shush them off?* Of course not. They are not doing anything wrong. **Sya** said.

. I close with Mar (the Myanmar refugee), she comes daily here. Help me with cook, chores, *I do not ask her to, but she comes, and I am just welcome to her.* I guess it is boring there (refer to inside the building), that is why they like to be outside around the building. Yul said.

Then beside being friendly researcher would propose to being understanding because the informants understand that refugees may need friends to talk to and they wanted to support.

This also probably affected by a collectivist culture, where they like to keep harmony and peace to one another. Hofstede said collectivists are less concerned with people who belong to some other group the out-group and tend to view boundaries between one group and another to be relatively impermeable. Then this may because Yul and Mar not engage in disclosure conversation these times. So regardless of refugees is in fact out a group of the local community, the locals through the informants behave in the sake of harmony to their environment.

5.3 Pontential Prospect

Lastly, informants see refugee as a potential consumer. In the beginning, informants not that aware of this idea. Because they were focusing more on the excitement of foreign people come to their area. Then after times goes by, after engaging longer with them, from the information shared, they start to realize the possibility. Then, informants started by renting them vehicles that in the present moment no longer permitted by the government, other than that the local still sell vegetables, and else as needed by the refugees.

The locals will come to the refugees and ask what they need, then they search the items and when they found it, they sell it to refugees. In other time, for example, if they think its something refugees possibly need, they do not ask, they directly bring the items and offer to them. In addition, near the refugee building, in the same alley, there are six houses that own personal stores. Couple of them positioned at the front of the building, and besides the building, they

sell food, mineral water in galloon that has refugees as their daily buyer.

Seeing items they sell and how they sell it, it doesn't seem like the local would like to dig refugees money, because they knew at the first place how and why refugees could have arrived at their area and they feel sorry for that.

6 INDONESIA'S CULTURAL DIMENSION

Hofstede research about Indonesia national cultural dimension concluded in the site named Hofstede-Insight. According to the result of study, Indonesia cultural dimension can be read as follows.

6.1 Low Score of Uncertainty Avoidance

According to the previous study, Indonesia known as the average position in the range (Irawanto et al., 2011). Meanwhile Hofstede stated that *Indonesia has a low preference for avoiding uncertainty*. Means there is a strong preference of separation of internal self from external self when facing the uncomfortable situation, for example when in an angry state; she would try not to show negative emotion externally. So, it is possible for an Indonesian, in this matter the local as they might intentionally hides his or her negative feeling toward refugees existence.

6.2 High Power Distance

According to Hofstede, Indonesia scores high on this dimension with the following characters; reliant on hierarchy, imbalanced rights between power holders and non-power holders, superiors distant, leaders are directive, management controls, and delegates. Furthermore, the communication is indirect and negative feedbacks are hidden. In that situation, it is possible in the field that the local citizens acceptance in the moment when they started accepting refugees in their area is because they are affected by the government as they acknowledge its central position.

6.3 Collectivism

Momeka (as cited in Forysth, 2006) said collectivists feel a close empathy with one another and, so, are more possible to adopt a mutual orientation to their groups. They emphasize their tie and energy on people who fit in to their group the in-group and are less concerned with people who belong to some other

group the out-group. They assess their involvements in their groups more, this relationship consider to be steady and long-term, and tend to view limitations between one group and another to be relatively impermeable.

So, as is in the Chinese philosophy where collectivism is valued, its not grounded on what a person has done as an individual, but what a person has done as a group member. They have faith in helping family or company is far more important than helping yourself (Berko et al., 2010). Another example is African cultures wherein communication; explicit verbal messages are avoided, as a result showing rejection or saying no directly is often avoided. This culture focused on keep up a good relationship with others (Hebbani et al., 2010). In this situation, it would one thing be hold by the local citizen in keep up in harmony with refugees.

6.4 Femininity

Agreeing to Hofstede, *Indonesia considered low Masculine* (i.e., high Femininity culture). However, he points that it is not so low like North European countries. Indonesia is less masculine than other Asian countries like China, Japan, and India. Means, in Indonesia status and visible symbol of success are essential but it is not always material gain that brings motivation. In feminine culture, people value equality and solidarity where conflicts fixed by compromise and negotiation.

Furthermore, local citizens agreed that the refugees may misbehave at some points, but they stated they would not take it personally and choose to be understanding. The local citizen chose not to give much attention on it for the first time as the local also emphasize the value of tolerances if there is a miscommunication. All these signs showed by the informants describe the characteristic of this assertive behavior.

6.5 Long Term Orientation

Long-term orientation is the extent to which a culture emphasizes pragmatic, future-oriented perspective (Moon et al., 2014). Besides, Hofstede talked about this culture as for how every society has to maintain some relations with its past while dealing with the challenges of the present and future. Thus societies handle these two objectives differently. The long term usually thinks more because they tend to think for future sake, while the short term cultures think for the present moment.

Hofstede said that Indonesia has a realistic culture

with high in long term orientation. Means, the society show an ability to adapt traditions effortlessly, also has a stout tendency to save and invest, thriftiness, and diligence in accomplishing outcomes.

7 METHODOLOGY

This is a pure research that objects to understand the experience of the local citizens on their communication interaction with refugees, by focusing on the reasons why they want to be involved in communication activities with refugees. The research area will be in one of the 8 community houses, namely Wisma Novri, where in this area there are around 124 refugees from 11 nations. Wisma Novri itself is a building owned by a local citizen that has been hired since 2014 by UNHCR for temporary refugee residences even if it is not determined.

There were five informants selected based on the purposive sample. The researcher also considers the willingness factor for informants to be involved in this research. Informants interviewed mostly with some refugees around, so researcher benefitted by the interaction both made along with the interview.

There is a classification of data sources, such as primary and secondary data sources. Primary, including informants as those who are directly experienced in the phenomenon under study. Secondary are supporting documents such as the release of reports from UNHCR, Indonesian immigration, and other related authorization as well as testimonies or answers directly from the authorities, who in this study were from the Head of Tanah Merah Village where the Wisma Novri area is located.

In the field, 5 informants were selected. Where these five people will be given the same questions in the theme of exploring what their motives for communication are to refugees. Along with the interview given, the researcher also applied observations on the gestures delivered by them during interviews.

Additionally, observations were carried out outside interview period, which later would be confirmed again with the informants. From the data collected, researchers will conduct daily transcripts of interview data and note fields for observation. Next, the daily results will be seen from the code generated to consider the data saturation point. Until finally, all data will be analyzed using discourse analysis for data from observation and analysis thematic for data from transcript texts.

All data that has been collected, then analyzed, will be validated using Triangulation, which is used is the method triangulation, theory triangulation, and

data source triangulation. For example, all the data later, will be asked again or confirmed again to the informants involved.

8 CONCLUSION

As the result of this research, five informants and three supportive refugees were selected. For the most part, the informants refer to local citizens who had the most interaction and highest communication rate with the refugees. Secondary data from the authority was obtained from the village leader as part of data affirmation. The research used the thematic analysis for data interview as well as a discourse analysis for data observation after the data collection process reached the saturation point. The data was then validated by using triangulation.

In the beginning, before refugees directed to the research area, UNHCR together with the immigration officers went approach the local community through small meeting with the head of the village and the head of the area. They told the local and related officials that they would bring refugees in and live in the building. They came couple of times and with that, they also asked the local to eagerly participate in refugees adjustment moment. In addition, Indonesian government guaranteed the local with safety in case problems occur between them and the refugees. As the result, the early briefing by the authority on refugee before they actually settled and the safety, could have made the locals confidently wanted to engage in the communication with refugees.

There were five informants presented and a supportive three refugees. Informants were the local citizens who had the most interaction and communicate constantly with refugees. Also, as data affirmation, there was secondary data from the authority that was the village leader. After data collection reached a saturation point; this research proceeded to use the framework analysis for data interview and discourse analysis for data observation. Then data validated by using triangulation.

Then, relying on proxemics zone, the local citizens and refugee are in an intimate zone, where they stay or sit comfortably close to each other, share the cigarettes and delivered jokes to each other. However, speaking from the quality of their interpersonal relationship, they are not that close in term of an interpersonal relationship, which is to be in this relationship it required self-disclosure that not occurred in the local citizens refugee relationship in the researched area.

According to the field observation, Yul frequently interacted to Mar the Myanmar refugee inside her

house, both of them wore the typical casual dress of Indonesian motherly for homey setting, called daster, both wore short hijab, and they discuss a casual topic such as food seasoning or weathercast. Correspondingly, based on the topic of their conversations, self-disclosure such as favoritism (favorite food, favorite movie) was absent in the interaction.

In addition, cultural discussion in communication considered as one since they connect to each other. Many scholars look it based on the values it united. Because values give order and guidance to peoples thought and actions as they face the commonality in the social order (LeFebvre and Franke, 2013) so that, it can be used to predict the behavioral pattern in society.

Hofstede's result in cultural dimensions in Indonesia seen in both areas (the Hofstede's result and research field). Since as known that Hofstede's result covers a national area, however, looking at how distinctive a culture in an area, the result may or may not entirely be pictured in the local area. In that sense, the Hofstede's result combined with the actual condition of research area. Which then helped in explaining the cause of certain behavior made by the local.

In a nutshell, the local citizen engaged in communication with the refugees based on three aspects, that is to say inclusion, friendliness, and potential prospects. Resulting, the local citizens and refugees were observed to be in an intimate zone based on the proxemics zone because they stayed or sat comfortably close to each other. However, they are not that close judging from the quality of their interpersonal relationship. Self-disclosure is required to be in this relationship, but none was found in the local citizens' refugee relationship.

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