
	<h1>Gema WIRALODRA</h1>
	<p>Editor-in-Chief: Yudhi Mahmud</p> <p>  Publisher: Universitas Wiralodra </p>

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To cite this article:

Rosyidi, I., Khumaeroh, K., & Wahid, A. A. (2025). Intercultural Communication at Nurul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School. Cirebon Regency. *Gema Wiralodra*, 16(1), 176 – 184.

To link to this article:

<https://gemawiralodra.unwir.ac.id/index.php/gemawiralodra/issue/view/34>

Published by:

Universitas Wiralodra

Jln. Ir. H. Juanda Km 3 Indramayu, West Java, Indonesia

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Abstract

Intercultural communication is a process of interaction involving individuals from different cultural backgrounds. In Indonesia, especially in Cirebon Regency, Islamic boarding schools have an important role in educating the younger generation, and are often a meeting place for various cultures from all over the country. This study aims to explore the dynamics of intercultural communication that occurs at the Nurul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School, located in Cirebon Regency. The research method used is a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation studies. The results of this study indicate that the Nurul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School is a space rich in cultural diversity, with students coming from various regions and different social backgrounds. Despite challenges in terms of language, social norms, and customs, this Islamic boarding school has succeeded in creating an inclusive atmosphere that supports intercultural interaction. Factors that influence intercultural communication in this Islamic boarding school include the role of caregivers in building tolerance values, multicultural education implemented in the curriculum, and active participation of students in joint social activities. The positive impact of this intercultural communication is reflected in the increased appreciation of differences, tolerance, and interpersonal skills among students.

Keywords: Intercultural Communication, Islamic Boarding School, Multicultural, Tolerance, Islamic Education.

1. Introduction

Intercultural communication is a very relevant phenomenon in multicultural societies, including in educational environments, such as Islamic boarding schools. In Indonesia, Islamic boarding schools are one of the educational institutions that have a central role in teaching Islam, as well as in the formation of the character and morality of the students. Islamic boarding schools, as a gathering place for students with diverse cultural backgrounds, often become a space that is very rich in social interaction between individuals from various ethnic groups, including the two most dominant large ethnic groups in Java, namely Sundanese and Javanese. Although both come from the same island, there are quite significant cultural differences between the two, both in terms of language, customs, mindsets, and how to interact in everyday life.

Intercultural communication between Javanese and Sundanese in Islamic boarding schools is an important topic to study, considering the cultural diversity in Indonesia. Islamic boarding schools are often places for students from various regions in West Java and Central Java to live and study together. In this context, effective intercultural communication between Javanese and Sundanese students is crucial to creating a conducive and harmonious learning atmosphere. This is especially important because Islamic boarding schools are not only places

for religious education, but also places that instill social values such as tolerance, mutual respect, and cooperation.

The differences in language, customs, and norms between the Javanese and Sundanese can create challenges in social interaction. Language is one of the main elements that differentiates the two tribes. Although Indonesian is used as the language of instruction in Islamic boarding schools, students from both tribes often bring their native languages, Javanese and Sundanese, which can influence the way they communicate and interact with each other. The Javanese tend to use Javanese which has a variety of speech levels, while the Sundanese have Sundanese characteristics with different social nuances. In addition, the customs and social norms brought by the two tribes also have quite obvious differences, such as in terms of manners, ways of speaking, and family and community values that are upheld.

In the context of Islamic boarding schools, these differences can cause tension, both directly and indirectly, if there is not adequate understanding of how to interact with others from different cultures. Therefore, it is important to dig deeper into how intercultural communication between Javanese and Sundanese students takes place in the pesantren environment, and how this affects their social interactions in everyday life. Islamic boarding schools, with their unique educational systems, are expected to be places that not only teach religious knowledge but also teach tolerance towards cultural differences and how to communicate between individuals from different backgrounds.

This research is driven by the urgency to understand the dynamics of intercultural communication within the context of multicultural Islamic boarding schools. As educational institutions, pesantren not only emphasize religious instruction but also play a pivotal role in shaping character and social values. They serve as complex spaces of interaction among individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. The interaction between Javanese and Sundanese students—two dominant ethnic groups on the island of Java—illustrates the cultural diversity that often gives rise to communication challenges due to differences in language, social norms, and customs. Therefore, this study aims to explore in depth the forms of intercultural communication that occur, the obstacles encountered, and the mechanisms of adaptation and integration that develop within the pesantren environment. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of intercultural communication studies in Islamic education and serve as a reference for fostering inclusive and harmonious learning environments in culturally plural societies.

This research is essential due to the increasing relevance of intercultural communication in multicultural settings, including educational environments such as Islamic boarding schools (pesantren). In Indonesia, pesantren play a central role not only in providing Islamic religious education but also in shaping students' character and social values. As institutions that bring together students from diverse cultural backgrounds—particularly Javanese and Sundanese ethnic groups, which have distinct differences in language, customs, and social norms—pesantren often face communication challenges that may affect social harmony and the effectiveness of the learning process.

Ineffective communication between culturally diverse students can lead to misunderstandings, social tensions, or even conflicts. Therefore, a deeper understanding of how intercultural communication takes place in pesantren is urgently needed. This includes exploring the forms of interaction, the obstacles encountered, and the strategies of cultural adaptation and integration that emerge in daily life.

The findings of this study are expected to contribute significantly to the field of intercultural communication in Islamic education and provide practical insights for fostering inclusive, respectful, and harmonious learning environments in culturally plural societies.

2. Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design at the Nurul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School, located in Cirebon Regency. Data were collected through three main techniques:

1. In-depth Interviews: In-depth interviews were conducted with students, pesantren caretakers, and teachers to explore their perspectives on Javanese and Sundanese intercultural communication. Interviews were conducted using semi-structured questions to provide space for informants to share their experiences and opinions freely.
2. Participatory Observation: Researchers are involved in daily life at the Islamic boarding school to observe social interactions between students from various cultural backgrounds.
3. Documentation Study: Documentation is used to complement the data obtained from interviews. The documents analyzed include the pesantren curriculum, minutes of caretaker meetings, and reports of pesantren social activities. This documentation provides further context regarding how the pesantren manages cultural diversity among students.

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques, where patterns emerging from interviews and observations were identified and categorized to discuss the forms, influencing factors, and impacts of intercultural communication in Islamic boarding schools.

This study involved five informants who are students (santri) at Pondok Pesantren Nurul Qur'an. The informants were selected purposively based on specific criteria aligned with the objectives of the study. These criteria included having lived in the pesantren for more than one year, representing diverse cultural backgrounds (Javanese and Sundanese ethnicities), and being capable of providing relevant information related to the research theme.

The five informants come from two major ethnic groups—Javanese and Sundanese—which reflect the cultural diversity within the pesantren environment. Their ages range from 16 to 20 years old, typically corresponding to the senior high school to early college level. They come from various regions in Java and have lived in the pesantren for a period ranging from one to three years.

Informants were selected based on their experiences in adapting to and interacting within the pesantren community, as well as their openness in sharing personal views and experiences. With this composition, the study aims to gain a deeper understanding of the dynamics of student life in Pondok Pesantren Nurul Qur'an.

To ensure the validity of the data in this study, the researcher employed several data validation techniques, namely triangulation, member checking, and audit trail. These methods were used to verify that the data accurately reflect the experiences and perspectives of the informants and that the data analysis was conducted systematically and transparently.

Triangulation was carried out by comparing data from various sources and techniques. In this context, the researcher applied source triangulation by interviewing five santri from different ethnic backgrounds (Javanese and Sundanese), and technique triangulation by combining in-depth interviews with observational methods during data collection. This approach allowed for cross-verification of the information from multiple angles.

Next, member checking was conducted to test the credibility of the data. After the interviews were transcribed, the researcher returned the transcripts to each informant for confirmation. This process ensured that the interpretations made by the researcher did not

deviate from the intended meanings expressed by the informants. It also gave the informants the opportunity to add, correct, or clarify their previous statements.

Meanwhile, an audit trail was used to document the entire research process in a detailed and systematic manner. The researcher kept records of data collection activities, methodological decisions, and data analysis results in the form of field notes, interview transcripts, and analytical memos. This documentation aimed to make the research process traceable and accountable, thereby enhancing the dependability and confirmability of the study. By applying these three validation techniques, the research is expected to achieve a high level of validity and be considered trustworthy as a representation of the reality being studied.

3. Results and Discussion

In this section, the author will describe in depth the results of the research findings that have been conducted using in-depth interview and documentation methods. This discussion aims to provide further understanding of Javanese and Sundanese intercultural communication at the Nurul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School, as well as identifying the factors that influence and the impacts caused by the communication.

1) Forms of Intercultural Communication

Intercultural communication at the Nurul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School between Javanese and Sundanese students takes various forms, both in the context of verbal and non-verbal communication. The results of the interviews showed that even though there were differences in language and customs, the communication process remained effective due to several underlying factors.

- Verbal Communication: Verbal communication is a key element in daily interactions between students from different cultural backgrounds. Indonesian serves as the main language of instruction in Islamic boarding schools, but many students still use their mother tongue (Javanese or Sundanese) in informal communication. Javanese students tend to use Javanese in daily meetings, while Sundanese students use Sundanese. Nevertheless, students who speak their mother tongue still try to understand the language used by peers from other ethnic groups. Indonesian is often the main alternative used to bridge communication. Students tend to choose Indonesian when interacting with friends who do not understand their mother tongue. Interview results show that the agreement to communicate in Indonesian as the language of instruction is carried out naturally in formal and official situations at Islamic boarding schools, thus reducing the potential for miscommunication that can arise due to differences in mother tongue.

Case example: A Javanese student stated that he often speaks Javanese when talking to fellow Javanese students, but he tries to speak Indonesian when talking to Sundanese students. This shows the language flexibility that is very necessary in intercultural interactions in Islamic boarding schools.

- Non-Verbal Communication: In addition to verbal communication, non-verbal communication also plays an important role in intercultural interactions in Islamic boarding schools. Non-verbal communication includes facial expressions, body movements, eye contact, and body postures used to convey messages. Although these expressions are not dependent on spoken language, they can often convey deeper understanding and help strengthen interpersonal relationships between students.

Based on the interview results, several students revealed that their body language was very helpful in communicating with students from other tribes. For example, a friendly

gaze and an open body posture often indicate good intentions and a willingness to interact despite language differences.

Case example: A Sundanese student explained that although he was not very fluent in Javanese, he found it easier to communicate with his Javanese friends through smiles or hand gestures that showed openness. This shows the importance of non-verbal communication in maintaining smooth interactions in a multicultural Islamic boarding school.

According to the Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language, a santri is someone who tries to study Islam seriously or earnestly. A santri is a student or college student who is educated in an Islamic boarding school environment. Meanwhile, the definition of an Islamic boarding school is an educational institution and broadcasting of Islam, a place for the implementation of the obligation to learn and teach and the center for developing the congregation (community) which is organized in a residential area with a mosque as the center for education and development. Communication patterns are something that describes the process of communication in a group that shows the relationship between one communication component and another component.

From the results of interviews with several sources, the communication patterns applied by new students are based on the theory of communication patterns, namely the star communication pattern, regular communication occurs with the presence of communicants, communicators, the contents of the message delivered can be understood and comprehended by each other. The emergence of responses from both parties is due to the communication that occurs, namely face-to-face intercultural communication. The star communication pattern is a communication pattern that describes the communication process between members or individuals in a group without exception. It can be concluded that the most dominant communication pattern among students at the Nurul Qur'an Cirebon Islamic Boarding School is the star communication pattern. Where students from different regions communicate with each other without any obstacles, so that communication occurs between each new student member at the Nurul Qur'an Cirebon Islamic Boarding School.

Intercultural communication certainly has supporting factors, namely how communication can be well received by each individual living in a community group. Here are some findings of researchers on supporting factors of intercultural communication among new students of Nurul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School Cirebon

- 1). Easy to understand messages
- 2). Mutual respect
- 3). Use of language

Barriers to intercultural communication are a very important aspect, because by paying attention to the factors that become barriers to intercultural communication, conflict can be minimized, and by avoiding these factors, intercultural communication can run effectively. Based on the presentation of data obtained from several informants, Intercultural communication barriers of students at the Nurul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School in Cirebon. as follows, Language and accent differences, Individual character, Perception of communication actors and Influence of other cultures.

2) Factors Influencing Intercultural Communication

Several factors influence the quality and smoothness of communication between Javanese and Sundanese cultures at the Nurul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School, both internal and external factors. Based on the results of interviews and documentation, the following factors are key in the intercultural communication process in this Islamic boarding school.

- Language Differences:

One of the significant factors in intercultural communication is language differences. Javanese and Sundanese have different structures, vocabulary, and dialects. Even though Indonesian is the main language of instruction, differences in the use of mother tongues can still affect interactions in Islamic boarding schools.

Some students expressed that these language differences could create confusion, especially in the context of informal communication or everyday conversation.

However, they admitted that awareness of these differences motivated them to be more open in choosing words and speaking clearly, especially when communicating with students from different ethnic groups.

Case example: A Javanese student stated that he felt a little difficulty when speaking with a Sundanese student friend who had a different accent or pronunciation of words. However, he realized that using Indonesian as the main language was very helpful in uniting them in communication.

- Social Values and Customs:

Differences in Javanese and Sundanese social values and customs also affect the way students communicate. In Javanese culture, the use of polite and formal language is highly emphasized, with language levels such as *ngoko* and *krama*. In Sundanese culture, social interactions are more relaxed and open. These differences in social values sometimes affect the way students interact. Javanese students may feel the need to speak in a more formal manner, Sundanese students may feel more comfortable with a more relaxed communication style. However, this can be overcome through learning about equality and mutual respect instilled by the Islamic boarding school caregivers.

Case example: A Javanese student revealed that he felt awkward speaking with Sundanese friends at first because they tended to use more relaxed and less formal language than was commonly used in his hometown. However, he learned to adjust to the way his friends spoke.

- Role of Islamic Boarding School Caretakers:

The *pesantren* caretakers play an important role in creating an atmosphere that supports good intercultural communication. The caretaker of the Islamic boarding school is not only responsible for teaching religious knowledge, but also has a role as a mediator in building relationships between students who come from various cultural backgrounds. The caretakers of the Nurul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School actively teach the values of tolerance and respect for cultural differences through social and religious programs. Based on interviews, students feel that the *pesantren* supervisors play a role as instructors in creating an inclusive and harmonious climate. They always remind students to respect cultural differences and treat everyone well regardless of origin.

Case example: The caretaker of the Islamic boarding school, in one of the joint meditation activities, conveyed the importance of recognizing and respecting cultural differences as part of the nation's wealth. This helps the students to be more open to their friends who come from different cultures.

3) Impact of Intercultural Communication

Intercultural communication at the Nurul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School has a significant impact on the formation of character and social values of students. Some of the impacts found through interviews and documentation include:

- Increased Tolerance:

The interaction between Javanese and Sundanese students creates harmony and respect for differences. Students are taught to accept differences, both in language and customs,

which enriches their social experiences. In this diverse Islamic boarding school life, they learn to be more tolerant of diversity and not to see differences as obstacles.

- Social Skills Development:

Through intercultural communication, students also develop better social skills, such as the ability to adapt in various social situations and respect others with different cultural backgrounds. They learn to create harmonious relationships and collaborate well despite their differences.

- Increasing Multicultural Awareness:

The experience of communicating with friends from different cultures develops multicultural awareness among students. They increasingly understand the importance of living side by side with other people from different tribes or cultures without reducing the sense of national unity.

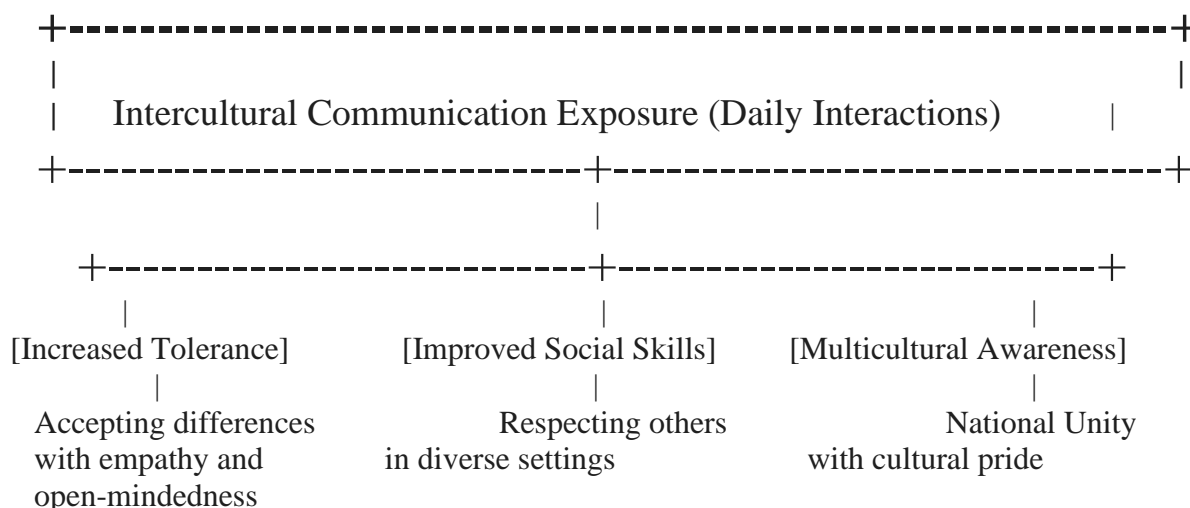
1. Communication Impact Matrix

Communication Dimension	Intercultural Practice	Resulting Character/Social Value	Examples/Observations
Tolerance	Daily interactions between Javanese and Sundanese	Openness, Respect for Diversity	Students attend prayers, meals, and dorm life together with different customs/languages.
Social Skills Development	Conflict resolution, joint group projects	Cooperation, Adaptability, Empathy	Joint study sessions or school events promote teamwork and understanding.
Multicultural Awareness	Celebrating local cultures (e.g. traditional arts day)	Nationalism, Cultural Pride, Inclusiveness	Cultural performance nights help students appreciate different cultural roots.

2. Cultural Interaction Table

Activity	Javanese Culture Elements	Sundanese Culture Elements	Resulting Interaction
Meal Times	Formal, often quiet and structured	Informal, social, often shared humor	Students blend styles, learning mutual respect
Religious Ceremonies (e.g. Tahlilan)	Emphasize ritual order	Emphasize collective harmony	Shared rituals increase bonding
Dormitory Life	Respect for hierarchy, indirect speech	Friendly, warm interpersonal approach	Creates balance between formality and warmth
Daily Communication	Politeness markers (krama language)	Friendly greetings, humor	Enhances understanding of language nuances

3. Character Formation Chart



Conclusion

Intercultural communication at Nurul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School runs effectively despite challenges in terms of differences in language, customs, and social norms. The multicultural education implemented in this Islamic boarding school, as well as the role of the Islamic boarding school supervisor in guiding the students, are the main factors in creating harmonious communication between cultures. The impact of this intercultural communication is very positive, namely the creation of a more tolerant, inclusive and mutually respectful environment among students, which contributes to the personal development of the students themselves.

This study shows that intercultural communication between Javanese and Sundanese at the Nurul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School is running well thanks to efforts of adaptation and mutual respect between students. Even though there are differences in language and customs, communication can still take place effectively by using Indonesian as the language of instruction and paying attention to the values of tolerance taught by the pesantren teachers. Therefore, Islamic boarding schools can be an effective space in teaching social and religious values in the context of cultural diversity.

Overall, communication between Javanese and Sundanese cultures at the Nurul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School can run well through the use of Indonesian as the language of instruction, as well as through mutual understanding and adaptation to differences in language and customs. Factors such as language differences, social values and customs, as well as the role of Islamic boarding school administrators have a major influence on the success of this intercultural communication. The positive impact resulting from this intercultural communication is increased tolerance, social skills, and multicultural awareness among students.

Suggestion

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that Islamic boarding schools be more active in developing programs that introduce the values of tolerance and harmony between cultures, such as through cultural activities and inter-ethnic dialogue. Islamic boarding school administrators can also provide more in-depth training on intercultural communication for students so that they become more open and understand the diversity around them.

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