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The Importance of Intercultural Communication to Improve Public Sector Leadership Competence

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Abstract. This research is intended to answer the questions of how the ability of the political party cadres is to communicate across culture and what efforts should be made so that political party cadres have competence in intercultural communication. This is a qualitative research using a case study approach. Data collection was obtained from the results of semi-structured interviews with 6 informants consists of 4 public leaders from the district levels and 2 academicians. Informants were determined by purposive sampling which is aimed at making the data obtained more representative. The results of this study prove that intercultural communication competence is indispensable for political party cadres considering that they are potential leaders who will lead various regions in Indonesia with cultural diversity. The results of this study also prove that training related to intercultural communication for political party cadres is crucial and must be carried out by all political parties, not only at the central level but also at every branch office, because through this training, prospective leaders can improve the quality of their leadership.

Keywords. Intercultural Communication Competence, Leadership, Public Sector

1. Introduction

Indonesia is an archipelagic country that has a diversity of cultures, races, ethnicities, beliefs, religions, and languages. According to the motto of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity), even though it has cultural diversity, Indonesia is still one. The diversity that exists in Indonesia is the wealth and beauty of the Indonesian nation. For this reason, the government will continue to encourage diversity to become a force to be able to realize national unity and integrity towards a better Indonesia.

However, this diversity continues to be tested by the emergence of various conflicts that occur in various regions. There are conflicts that are not too heavy but there are also those that cause casualties and have to evacuate.¹

The diversity of society has the potential to cause group segmentation, structural divisions, weak consensus, frequent conflicts, forced integration, and group domination. Of course, this potential is a potential that weakens the movement of people's lives. Diversity is a

¹<https://www.kompas.com/skola/read/2020/02/06/190000569/kasus-kekerasan-yang-dipicu-masalah-keberagaman-di-indonesia?page=all>.

valuable asset to build a multicultural Indonesia. However, this condition also has the potential to divide and become fertile ground for conflict and social jealousy.² Disputes between groups of Indonesian people often occur, even in the current reform era. These conflicts can occur between religious groups, ethnic groups, regions, and even between political groups. Some examples are the Ambon conflict in 1999, the conflict in Sambas in 2000, and the conflict in Poso in 2002.

To be able to resolve conflicts caused by the problems mentioned above, leaders who have communication skills are needed. The ability to communicate is the most important tool for a leader to be able to carry out this role. The decision to be taken by the organisation is the authority of the leader, but appropriate communication can certainly provide convenience in the implementation of these decisions. However, to be able to manage an area consisting of various ethnic groups, cultures, religions, socio-economic conditions, and educational gaps, it is necessary not only for leaders who have communication skills, but also more specific, namely intercultural communication competence. Currently, Indonesia has 34 provinces in which each province is headed by a Governor. Each province has a different number of cities and districts.

In 2019, Indonesia was recorded to have 416 districts and 98 cities. The provinces of Central Java and East Java are provinces that have the largest number of districts in Indonesia, which are 29 districts. Provinces that have the most cities are West Java Province and East Java Province. The number of districts and villages in Indonesia since 2015-2019 has always been increasing and in 2019 there were 7,246 districts and 83,813 villages.³ Each city is led by a mayor, and each district is led by a regent. So if you add up, there are currently 416 regents and 98 mayors. Not to mention that each city is divided into districts headed by head of district (Camat), and villages headed by a head of sub district (Lurah). So if it is calculated, the total number of head of district is currently 7,246 people and the number of head of sub districts is 83,913 people.

To lead these diverse areas with a very large number of people, of course it requires leaders who have broad insight, who can appreciate differences, who can resolve any conflicts with a cross-cultural communication approach. Leaders in every region in Indonesia come from various professions and educational backgrounds. Therefore, we can imagine how diverse the abilities they have, especially in terms of intercultural communication. However, each regional leader are always supported by their respective political parties. In addition, political parties also support their cadres to get seats in parliament. They will become people's representatives with constituents in various regions in Indonesia.

Regeneration for political parties is an important effort, because each party must prepare and develop cadres to become members who have leadership spirit and organisational and communication skills. Regeneration is carried out in a system that is interconnected with one another, including planning, implementing, and evaluating. However, the practice of cadre of political parties in Indonesia is still far from the expectations, because of the failure of the regeneration system, many political parties just produce instant generation. It can be seen from their competence which is not proficient in communicating and resolving conflicts in their area,

² <https://media.neliti.com/media/publications/195079-ID-problematika-keragaman-kebudayaan-dan-al.pdf>

³

<https://data.pu.go.id/sites/default/files/Informasi%20Statistik%20Infrastruktur%20PUPR%20Tahun%202020.pdf>

especially those related to cross-cultural communication. This instant cadre will tarnish the face of parliament and government.⁴

Based on the problems described above, this research is aimed at answering the questions: (1) How is the ability of the people's representatives or parliamentarians to communicate across cultures, (2) What efforts should be made so that political party cadres have competence in intercultural communication? The results of this study will make a major contribution to political organisations in Indonesia and also for related parties to improve the quality of their cadres so that they can become competent leaders to lead regions with cultural diversity.

Literature Review

Public Leader Competence

[1] suggest that competence comes from English "competence" which means skill or ability. Meanwhile, another researcher, [2] explains that carrying out a task based on skills and knowledge that is supported by a professional attitude demanded by the job is also called "competence." Competence itself can be in the form of goals, temperament, self-concept, attitudes or values, problem mastery, or cognitive skills or behavioural skills. Alain Mitrani et al., in [3] say that individual traits can be measured or calculated clearly and can be shown to distinguish between effective and ineffective person's behaviour.

According to Palan in [4] there are 4 types of competencies, namely: (1) Core Competencies that is linked to the organisation's strategy so that it must be possessed by all employees in the organisation; (2) Functional competencies, namely competencies that describe work activities and their outputs, for example skills and knowledge for a job; (3) Behavioural competence, namely the basic characteristics that must be possessed by each individual to carry out a job; (4) Role competence, namely competence that refers to a person's position. In this case, the competence in question will be related to a person's role in a team.

Every organisation and region in today's era requires various leadership competencies. Another researcher who suggests about leadership competencies is [5] who say that competency is a combination of knowledge, skills, traits, and attributes that collectively enable someone to perform a given job. So the aspect of a leader's self-ability is emphasized on aspects of the knowledge, skills and characteristics of the leader to carry out his work. Meanwhile, [6] suggests competence as the enduring traits and characteristics that determine performance, while leadership competencies include: (a) Visionary leadership; (b) Strategic thinking; (c) Entrepreneurial orientation; (d) Change Management; (e) Building organisational commitment; (f) Establishing focus.

Speaking of public leaders [7] emphasizes that a public leader must have at least 7 competencies, namely: (a) self-management competence, (b) communication management competence, (c) plurality management competence, (d) ethical management competence, (e) Competence to manage team, (f) Competence to manage cultural diversity, and (g) Competence to manage change. Of the 7 competencies of public leadership proposed by Warella (2005) there are 3 things that are directly related to intercultural communication, namely the competence to manage communication, the competence to manage pluralism and the competence to manage cultural diversity.

⁴ <http://repository.unpas.ac.id/13089/4/BAB%201.pdf>

Competence in managing communication means the ability of a public leader to convey ideas, attitudes, values to his employees. The role of communication competence should not be considered small because at least it has meaning as a motivation for employees to work diligently and actively, as an expression of leadership emotions, as conveying information, and as controlling employee behaviour.

Managing diversity is something that is placed as a priority especially if a leader has to lead in a culturally diverse area. Pluralism in a public organisation is a natural thing. What is not natural is that they are not treated equally by public leaders. Therefore, strategies that may be applied by leaders of public organisations are: first, public leaders must be able to become coordinators and integrators of various organisational components, so that they can move as a totality [8]. Therefore, the approach that must be used is a holistic and integral approach because public leaders must be able to describe in detail the tasks and activities that must be carried out by the leadership in order to achieve organisational goals. Second, a public leader will not box his actions and ways of thinking. He must understand that pluralism will always exist wherever he leads, and therefore he must know what strategies must be taken to maintain togetherness. The third competency that is directly related to intercultural communication is the competence to manage cultural diversity. Humans are created with a variety of diversity and uniqueness. Therefore, a leader must understand that cultural pluralism in an organisation is a reality. For that, a leader must be able to see cultural diversity as a wealth and not a threat. Every culture must have positive values, which will be input in advancing the organisation. Diversity is based on the principle of mutualism symbiosis. This means that there is no public organisation whose goals and objectives are mutually exclusive [9].

Intercultural Communication

Intercultural communication are studies that emphasize the effect of culture on communication so these are two inseparable concepts as stated by William B. Hart II (1996) in [10]. The producers of messages in intercultural communication are members of a particular culture and members of other cultures will be the recipients of the message [11]. Intercultural communication will involve interactions between people whose cultural perceptions and symbol systems are different in a communication as stated by Larry A Samovar in [12]. So it can also be said that intercultural communication can be interpreted as a process of exchanging thoughts and meanings that occur between different people [13].

Intercultural communication has three socio-cultural elements that have a major and direct influence on the meanings we construct in our perceptions as follows: (a). Values. Values in a culture manifest themselves in the behaviour of members of the culture demanded by that culture. This value is called the normative value; (b).Trust/Belief. In intercultural communication there is no right or wrong as far as trust is concerned. If one believes that the sound of the wind can guide one's behaviour in the right direction, we cannot say that belief is wrong, we must be able to recognize and deal with that belief if we are to have successful and satisfying communication; (c). Attitudes. Beliefs and values contribute to the development and definition of attitudes. Attitudes are learned from the cultural context regardless of our environment. The environment will also shape our attitudes, our readiness to respond and finally our behaviour [14].

Supporting Factors of Intercultural Communication

Talking about intercultural communication, it cannot be separated from a series of factors that support it. As stated by [15], these factors are:

1) The people or groups involved must master the language used in the communication. If the communicator and the audience do not speak the same language, a third party will be needed to help, known as a translator.

2) In intercultural communication there are supporting factors, namely the means or tools to communicate either verbally or non-verbally. In today's digital era, communication has been supported by various media or technologies that will facilitate the communication process with a very wide scope, not only locally, nationally but also internationally. With the better internet connection today, the communication becomes smoother.

3) The fluency of communication is also determined by the thinking ability factor which will affect the smoothness or failure of communication.

4) If the sender of the message has a higher educational background or higher intellectuality, then the sender must adjust to using a lower level language. For this reason, communication becomes more effective and efficient, and in order to achieve its goals, good thinking skills are needed.

5) Another factor that also affects intercultural communication is the environment. If the communication is done in a quiet environment, the results will be different from a that of a noisy place.

Intercultural Communication Barriers

Barna in [16] states that there are 6 barriers in intercultural communication, including:

a) Assumption of similarities. The assumption of similarity is not only about the spoken language that is commonly used but also has to mean nonverbal language, signs and symbols.

b) Language differences, which includes vocabulary, syntax, idioms, slang, dialects.

c) Nonverbal misinterpretation or nonverbal misunderstanding. People from different cultures have different sensory observations. Lack of understanding of nonverbal signs and symbols such as gestures, posture and other body movements will be a limitation of communication.

d) Prejudice and stereotypes are obstacles for communicators because they prevent someone from thinking objectively where it is not easy for us to justify others.

e) Tendency to evaluate, namely barriers to mutual understanding between people with different cultures or ethnic groups. What happens is often a tendency to judge, agree or disagree which is exacerbated when feelings or emotions are deeply involved.

f) High Anxiety is also known as stress. This is common in intercultural experiences because of the uncertainty that arises. The two words "anxiety" and "tension" are closely related because something cannot be psychologically anxious without being physically tense.

According to [17] communication can be hampered due to these factors, namely:

a) Socio-anthro-psychological barriers, which consist of: sociological barriers, anthropological barriers, psychological barriers, semantic barriers and mechanical barriers. What is meant by socio-anthro-psychological barriers are communication that takes place in the context of:

- Sociological barriers, namely the importance of communicators paying attention to the situation when communication takes place, such as the existence of two types of association in

society, namely *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft*. The difference in the type of association causes differences in character so that it often causes differences in treatment.

- Anthropological barriers occur because of differences in humans such as posture, skin colour, and culture.

- Psychological barriers occur if at the time of communication, the communicant does not first examine the condition of the interlocutor.

- Semantic barriers, namely communication that is a problem because of language.

- Mechanical barriers are found in the media used to facilitate communication, for example the technology that supports the communication.

b) Interest factor because interest will make someone selective in responding to a message.

c) The motivational factor because it will encourage someone to do something in accordance with the wishes, needs, and shortcomings. The more appropriate the communication with one's motivation, the more likely it is that the communication can be well received by the parties concerned. On the other hand, the communicant will ignore a communication that is not in accordance with his motivation.

Meanwhile, another researcher Turnomo Rahardjo argues that there are three most fundamental differences in the process of intercultural communication, namely ethnocentrism, stereotypes, and prejudice [18]. LeVine and Campbell in [19] state that ethnocentrism is an attitude that tends to see its own group (in-group) as a superior and virtuous group rated as low group. Ethnocentrism is the attitude of assessing elements of other cultures using their own culture. Ethnocentrism can also be interpreted as an attitude that considers the way of life of its people as the best way of life. Thus, ethnocentrism hinders understanding of other people's customs and also hinders the growth of a creative understanding of customs in one's own culture [20].

Meanwhile, stereotype is defined by [21] as a representation that reduces people to a series of exaggerated, usually negative character traits, that is a representation that gives meaning to others through the operation of power. Myers in [22], stereotypes are a form of belief held by a person or a group about personal attributes that exist in certain groups. Another researcher, [23] suggests the notion of "prejudice" namely biased and usually negative attitudes toward social groups and their members. [24] in *The Blackweel Encyclopedia of Social Psychology*, define prejudice as: building beliefs and attitudes that tend to insult, express negative feelings or show hostility/discriminatory behaviour towards members.

Opinions regarding barriers to intercultural communication from experts can be summarized in table 1 below.

Figure 1
Communication Barriers according to experts

Barna in Samovar (1994:337-342)	Turnomo Rahardjo (2005)	Onong Uchjana Effendi (2009)
(a) Assumption of Similarities	(a) Ethnocentrism	(a) Socio-anthro- psychological:
(b) Language Differences	(b) Stereotype	- Sociological
	(c) Prejudice	- Anthropological
		- Psychological

(c) Non verbal misinterpretation		- Semantics
(d) Prejudice or stereotype		- Mechanical
(e) Tendency to evaluate		(b) Factors of Interest
(f) High Anxiety		(c) Motivation Factor

Sources: Barna in Samovar (1994:337-342), Rahardjo (2005) and Effendi (2009)

Intercultural Communication Competence

Intercultural communication competence (ICC) is the ability to carry out various communication behaviours effectively and appropriate, which can integrate one cultural identity with one another or various identities in different cultural environments [25]. Today, the ICC is of concern both internationally and among domestic cultures residing in multicultural countries. However, it needs to continue to be developed not only at the theoretical level but to a practical stage that can help others succeed in their intercultural encounters [26].

Communication competence according to William Howel in [27] has the appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes in managing the exchange of verbal and non-verbal messages based on certain standards. The components of competence are described as a combination of knowledge, skills and attitude. Meanwhile, three competency measures are: understanding of the communication process in various contexts, the ability to communicate verbally and non-verbally appropriately, and oriented to a positive attitude towards communication. There are two views regarding the nature of competence, namely that it should be within a person or communicator and competence should exist on both sides. At first glance, it is argued that competence must be possessed by individuals (communicators) because that person facilitates a process of communication between individuals of different cultures [18].

In intercultural competence, [28] explained that the entire process of cross-cultural communication is always related to context. Cross-cultural communication covers many variables including: a) the background of the people interacting (ethnic minorities/racial, religious, immigrants, refugees, migrant workers, entrepreneurs; b) the context of the interactions (traveling/studying abroad; c) socio-demographic (e.g., employment / education), and similarities (eg, linguistic or cultural; d) aspects of the duration of the interaction. Given this context, intercultural communication competence influences effectiveness and congruence with the goal of producing desired cross-cultural adaptation (i.e. changing one's behaviour due to the environment) and adjustment (i.e., mood states such as self-esteem, stress, and self-confidence that accompany adjustment).

According to [29] there are several components in intercultural communication competence:

a. **Motivation**

A person can be motivated because he is close emotionally and physically in interacting with other people. Although this is a natural reaction, it can sometimes distance the person from understanding the experiences of others [29]. The most important aspect for a person to improve his ability to communicate is that there must be a personal desire and motivation related to intercultural communication competence. When interacting with other people, one must be able to show motivation and enthusiasm and when interacting with people from different cultures, one must have a broad view. This is intended so that the intercultural communication it does will run well [29].

b. Knowledge

Basically, in order for each individual to become a competent person, he or she must have 2 types of knowledge, namely content knowledge and procedural knowledge [30]. In content knowledge, the aspects that need to be understood are themes, words, meanings or meaning in a situation. While in procedural knowledge, the important points are knowledge of how to make, plan and show in certain circumstances. Both types of knowledge are very necessary because a culture needs to be observed in order to achieve the right communication strategy [29].

c. Ability

The ability to hear, observe, analyse and interpret is the ability that must be possessed by an intercultural communicator. Not only that, he must also be able to apply these aspects in the right way to achieve the goal. What is meant in this case is that each individual must be able to adapt his behaviour to the host culture as stated by Smith and Bond in [29].

d. Sensitivity

Sensitivity, according to [31] includes flexibility, patience, empathy, curiosity about other cultures, being open to differences, and feeling comfortable with others. Roberts and McGovern add that sensitive communicators have a tolerance for ambiguity. This means that when you see a strange and unusual habit and behaviour, you will not feel confused. [31] believe that sensitive communicators will be more tolerant of other people and other cultures and develop feelings of *alopphila*, namely liking others and inspiring behaviour [29].

Research Method

This is a qualitative research with a case study approach. A case study is an exploration of “a bound system” or “a case/multiple cases” which from time to time goes through in-depth data collection and involves various sources of information that are “rich” in a context. This bound system is bound by time and place while the case can be studied from a program, event, activity or an individual. [32] states that in qualitative research, data collection is carried out with natural settings (natural conditions), primary data sources and data collection techniques are mostly on observation, participating in interviews and documentation. The interview technique is carried out directly with the informant, besides that documentation aims to obtain information in books or in writing. According to Esterbeg in [32] an interview is a meeting of two people to exchange information and ideas through question and answer, so that meaning can be constructed in a particular topic. This study uses a semi-structured interview type where this interview provides an opportunity for the author to develop questions but does not mean that the dialogues are separated from the research context.

Interviews were conducted with 6 informants, consisting of: 4 public leaders from the sub-district level and 2 academicians. Informants were determined by purposive sampling, which is a technique for determining samples based on certain considerations aimed at making the data obtained more representative [33]. For this reason, researchers have determined 4 areas in Indonesia where intercultural conflicts have occurred, namely: Surabaya (case of the tearing and disposal of the Indonesian flag allegedly by Papuan students -2019), Bogor (case of church establishment and objections from Islamic community organisations, since 2006 until now it has not been resolved), South Lampung (conflicts between 2 ethnics that occurred in South Lampung, namely the Lampung and Balinese ethnics as migrant tribes in 2012), East Nusa Tenggara (conflict cases between 2 ethnics - 2020).

Interviews with academics were aimed at getting an overview of their opinions regarding the competence of intercultural communication possessed by public leaders in 4 provinces and what strategies should be taken to improve the competence of party cadres in

intercultural communication because mini things will be related to the ability of leaders to interact with its citizens, especially in solving problems or conflicts caused by cultural problems. Meanwhile, interviews with 4 public leaders at the city and district level were to obtain in-depth data and information regarding cases that occurred in their area caused by cultural differences and how their experiences as cadres of political parties who were elected to become public leaders were equipped with intercultural communication skills. Due to ethical issues and objections from the informants, the names of the informants are not mentioned transparently in this paper.

Data analysis in this study used flow model analysis techniques. The steps for analysing the data flow model according to [34], are as follows: First, the researcher collects data by means of observation, interviews, and documentation by determining the data collection strategy that is deemed appropriate to determine the focus and deepening of data in the next data collection process. Then the researcher did data reduction. Considering that quite a lot of data is obtained from the field, it is necessary for researchers to be careful in reducing data [35].

Data reduction will also make it easier for researchers to collect further data and look for it when needed. The next step in the analysis is the presentation of the data where the reduced data is presented in the form of brief descriptions, charts, relationships between categories, flowcharts, and the like (Miles and Huberman in [35]). By presenting the data, it will be easier to understand what happened, plan further work research based on what has been understood. The last stage is drawing conclusions aimed at finding or understanding meaning, regularity of explanation patterns, causal paths or propositions. Since the beginning of data collection, the author must understand and be responsive to things encountered in the field by compiling patterns of direction and cause and effect [36].

Results

From interviews conducted with 4 district-level public leaders in 4 provinces, data were obtained as summarized in the table below.

Table 2
Result of the interview with 4 public sector leaders

Question themes	Informants	Responses
The stages of public leaders in resolving intercultural conflicts	Head of District 1 (Surabaya)	(a) Finding the source of the problem (b) Accommodating (c) Compromising (d) Decision making
	Head of District 2 (Lampung)	(a) Finding the source of the problem by collecting data and facts in the field (b) Understanding the real problem (c) Coordinate with officials related to this matter (d) Communicating with conflicting parties without taking sides with one of them by taking into account the cultural background of each party (e) Strive to be a wise mediator

Question themes	Informants	Responses
		(f) Discuss alternative solutions with related parties (g) Evaluating several proposed alternatives (h) Taking Joint Decisions
	Head of District 3 (Bogor)	(a) Mapping the problem (b) Finding the source of the problem (c) Applying SOPs to analyze problems (d) Looking for several alternatives to decide (e) Decision making
	Head of District 4 (East Nusa Tenggara)	(a) Collecting data related to the problem (b) Understanding the problem (c) Provide several alternative solutions (d) Decision Making
Training on intercultural communication for its cadres	Head of District 1 (Surabaya)	The training held for cadres is only limited to training on national insight, leadership, management, knowledge about parties. There is effective communication training but it does not specifically discuss intercultural communication.
	Head of District 2 (Lampung)	In addition to training related to politics, HR management, national insight and cadre nationalism, the party also programs training related to soft skills, such as character building and communication. However, special intercultural communication was never given.
	Head of District 3 (Bogor)	There has never been any training related to communication, let alone intercultural communication. More training on politics, public management, leadership, and national insight.
	Head of District 4 (East Nusa Tenggara)	Periodically there is training for party cadres related to leadership, insight into the archipelago, public management, and effective communication but not specifically related to intercultural communication.

Table 3
Results of Interviews with academics

Questions themes	Responses
Quality of public	(a) Still far from expected

leadership in general	<p>(b) The inability of party cadres who have become public leaders can be seen from how to resolve conflicts in their area, especially those caused by cultural and religious backgrounds.</p> <p>(c) There are still conflicts that have not been resolved for more than 15 years.</p>
Efforts must be made to improve the competence of intercultural communication of political party cadres.	<p>(a) Each party must provide training to its cadres, not only training related to politics, patriotism, or public management, but training in intercultural communication must be given considering that our country is a very diverse country.</p> <p>(b) By participating in the training, every party cadre will understand that as a leader in a very diverse country, he cannot be ethnocentric, stereotyping, prejudiced, because if that happens he will actually lead this nation towards racism.</p> <p>(c) Party cadres must have cultural sensitivity, so they can resolve any conflicts that occur more carefully.</p> <p>(d) Each party must be responsible for the quality of its cadres, especially in resolving conflicts that occur in their territory.</p> <p>(e) Every party cadre must have a high sense of tolerance and be able to respect differences.</p>

Discussion

The results of interviews with regional leaders who are party cadres show that of the 4 leaders, it turns out that 3 people use a management approach in resolving cultural conflicts that occur in their regions. Only one person understands that communication is an important factor in resolving intercultural conflicts:

“As a leader in a large and very diverse country like Indonesia, the competence to communicate between cultures has become a non-negotiable absolute requirement. All leaders must have this competency. Currently, the party I belong to has started providing training related to communication but not specifically about intercultural communication. I myself gained knowledge about intercultural communication from the leadership training I attended which was organized by a training centre outside the party. In my opinion, it is time for all political party cadres to be equipped with knowledge and skills of intercultural communication so that they can become leaders who have high cultural sensitivity and become more tolerant so that they can prevent intercultural conflicts in their area” (AR-Lampung).

This statement is in line with that stated by [31] who believe that sensitive communicators will be more tolerant of others. What is very concerning is that from the results of this interview, it is known that political parties only provide training to their cadres in fields related to politics, national insight, and management, but training related to communication, especially more specifically, namely intercultural communication has never been given. From the interviews, only 1 regional leader had attended intercultural communication training when he took professional leadership training independently through a training centre.

Meanwhile interviews with 2 academicians showed that it is now very crucial for all political parties to provide intercultural communication training to all their cadres so that these prospective leaders have more competence in intercultural communication and can prevent conflicts caused by the problem of cultural differences.

"A public leader must have the skills to manage communication, manage pluralism, especially in terms of large gaps in education level, socio-economic level and others, as well as managing cultural diversity. Leaders who do not have cultural sensitivity tend to have a higher

ethnocentrism brush, which is always stereotyping and prejudice. This will hinder the resolution of conflicts that occur.” (LS – Academician)

This statement is very much in line with what was conveyed by Barna in [16] and [18]. So, to be able to lead a region full of pluralism like Indonesia, it takes a leader who can facilitate the communication process between individuals of different cultures [18] and can provide support so that discussions and negotiations between their cultures can run smoothly [18], [26]. In addition, political party cadres are candidate leaders who one day will receive the mandate to lead a region. Therefore, every cadre must understand how to adapt his behaviour to the host culture so that it can be well received by the community as stated by Smith and Bond in [29].

Conclusion

From the analysis and discussion above, it can be concluded that intercultural communication competence is very necessary for political party cadres considering that they are prospective leaders who will lead various regions in Indonesia with various cultural and religious diversity and diversity. By having competence in intercultural communication, leaders can anticipate conflicts caused by cultural differences. The results of this study also prove that training related to intercultural communication for political party cadres is very crucial and must be carried out by all political parties, not only at the central level but also at every branch office, because through this training, prospective leaders can improve the quality of their leadership. The limitation of this study is that this study only examines the intercultural competence of leaders who are cadres of political parties. Therefore, for the next research, the researcher suggests that research on intercultural communication competence for leaders with different approaches be conducted.

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