

# Social Interaction in Intercultural Marriages (Case Study of Mixed Marriages Between Foreigners Married to Balinese Ethnic and Converted to Hinduism)

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to describe the social interactions of married couples from different cultures, especially foreigners who are married to Balinese ethnic, and to find out how foreigners adapt to their married life as Balinese and follow the Hindu religion. The research is based on the theory of social interaction from Soerjono Soekanto. This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach through the method of case study. This research will use semi-structured interviews with three couples of key informants and two informants. The research data obtained were sourced from interviews, non-participant observation, documentation study and literature study. The conclusion of this research is that the social interaction between foreigners who are married to ethnic Balinese are running relatively well. Although there are differences in language and culture, tolerance towards the culture of each partner is the main key in maintaining the integrity of their married life. Then, the key informants of foreign nationals are not religious Hindus, but they still respect and appreciate every existing custom and tradition by participating in the implementation of traditional ceremonies and traditions in Hinduism.

**Keywords:** *Mixed Marriage, Balinese Ethnic, Hinduism, Social Interaction, Cultural Adaptation*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is known as a country that has a diversity of cultures because it consists of various races, tribes, religions, languages, customs. This is in line with a statement from Sastrapradja that says Indonesia is one of the unique countries in the world because it has a very high cultural diversity. The diversity of culture can be seen from the customs, customs, norms and values and behaviors of the people [1]. Bali province is one of the provinces in Indonesia that is famous for its unique culture so that it becomes a tourist destination that is visited by many domestic and foreign tourists. According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) until 2019 Bali became the province with the most foreign tourist visits, which was 6,239,543 people, with the most foreign tourist visits coming from Australia, followed by China, India, and the United Kingdom [2]. Not a few foreign nationals who then chose to live and settle even married to native Balinese and converted to Hinduism [3]. Intermarried marriage is not a new phenomenon in the life of today's global society. The very high level of human mobility and rapid development of communication and information technology allows people to meet, get along, establish relationships even until marriage without any restrictions of ethnicity, nation, and country [4].

According to data from the Office of Community Empowerment, Village, Population and Civil. Registry of Bali Province, throughout 2015 to 2019 there were 1,601 couples who performed intermarial marriages in Bali Province [5]. Intermarried marriage in Indonesia is officially regulated in the Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 1 of 1974 chapter 57. It is said that mixed marriage is a marriage between two people who in Indonesia are subject to different laws, because of differences in nationality and one of the parties of Indonesian citizenship [6].

According to hinduism, marriage can be said to be valid if it is carried out in accordance with Hindu law and both couples are adherents of Hinduism. Therefore, every foreign citizen who wants to marry a Balinese must first follow Hinduism [7]. Foreign nationals who marry Balinese and convert to Hinduism face differences due to the large differences with the original culture of their country. Differences in mixed marriages will easily cause various difficulties and obstacles, especially in terms of communication, such as the use of language, speech style, and the differences in values and norms that are lived in mixed marriages [8].

Differences between the values and norms of each culture will affect a marital relationship. But it depends on how inter-cultural marriage couples deal with it [4]. According to Ting-Toomey in Pratamawaty, the key to success in intermarro marriage is the ability to adjust to a partner.

Intercultural marriage demands adaptation to the character and cultural background of each.

In addition, communication and interaction are also two things that are interconnected and influential in the life of intermarriage.

Social interaction according to Soerjono Soekanto, is a dynamic social relationship that concerns the relationship between individuals and individuals, individuals with groups, and groups with groups. When two people meet, social interaction begins at that point. And social interaction is the main requirement of social activity [9]. The author was interested in taking the topic of research entitled Social Interaction in Intercultural Marriage (Case Study of Intermarried Marriage Between Foreigners Who Married with Ethnic Balinese and Converted to Hinduism), because the author wanted to know the social interaction in married couples of different cultures, which is expected to have many challenges especially in terms of communication, especially in foreign nationals who are married to ethnic Balinese citizens. The author also wants to examine how foreign nationals adapt their married lives as Balinese and Hindus, especially how foreign nationals can adapt to the traditional banjar environment in Bali which is considered very important in Balinese life. This research uses the theory of social interaction put forward by Soerjono Soekanto, because it explains how social interactions can be intertwined, as well as what obstacles can occur in the process. Another reason to examine this problem is because research on social interactions on intercultural marriages between foreign nationals and ethnic Balinese has never been researched before.

## **1.1. Related Work**

### **1.1.1. Social Interaction between Dayak Community and Chinese Community in Singkawang**

The Research Journal was written by Wensi dan Suzy S. Azeharie from Faculty of Communication, Tarumanagara University in 2020. This research discusses how forms of social interaction are intertwined between Dayak community and Chinese community. This research was conducted because researchers were interested in the social interactions that are intertwined between Dayak and Chinese communities today after the conflict in 1967. The theory used in this study is the theory of social interaction according to Soerjono Soekanto. This study uses phenomenological approach. The result of this research showed that Dayak community and Chinese community groups have long lived side by side in Singkawang city so that the social interaction between the two is relatively well-run, although there are some obstacles in the process of interacting, the two communities chose to settle in deliberation with representatives of each community [10].

### **1.1.2. Intercultural Communication of Ethnically Different Couples (Phenomenological Study of Couples of Different Ethnic Groups of Sulawesi – Java in Makassar)**

The Research Journal was written by Hadawiyah from Faculty of Communication, Indonesia Muslim University in 2016. This research discusses how the harmony of intercultural communication between married couples of different ethnic of Sulawesi and Java. The study focused on four families with ethnically diverse family backgrounds. The theory used in this research is the theory of intercultural communication and the theory of family harmony. This study uses phenomenological approach.

The results showed that a mixed marriage family becomes a unique combination, especially when each party tries to solve problems in the household. The results also found a variety of variations to describe a form of mixed marriage, among others: - Consensus, i.e. all forms of agreement that have been decided between husband and wife involved in mixed marriage to achieve a common goal. - Similarities and misunderstandings, which include various differences that can lead to a conflict. 3 Adjustment, in mixed marriages must be taken ways to harmonize different cultures. 4 Contradictions, i.e. the existence or absence of consistency between consensus and the reality lived daily by both parties [11].

### **1.1.3. Cultural Adaptation in Chinese-Javanese Ethnic Marriage**

The Research Journal was written by Ratih Kumala Dewi from Faculty of Communication, Diponegoro University in 2017. This research discusses the adaptation of Ethnic Chinese-Javanese marriage culture in building family harmony in Semarang City. In the city there is Kampung Semawis which is an area with a majority ethnic Chinese, but has adapted to the Javanese ethnicity. This study uses phenomenological approach. The theory used in this research is adaptation theory and communication accommodation theory. The results of this study showed that the adaptation process is carried out by all couples with the aim of understanding the nature of each other. The success of the adaptation process also reflects the success of couples in building communication so that harmonious relationships are established [12].

## **2. BACKGROUND**

### **2.1. Intercultural Communication**

Andrea L. Rich and Dennis M. Ogawa in Alo Liliweri, say that intercultural communication is communication between individuals and other individuals who have different cultures, for example between ethnic groups, races, ethnicities, and social classes [13]. Meanwhile, according to Tubbs and Moss in Ahmad Sihabudin, intercultural communication can occur if the sender of the message and the recipient of the message have a different culture [14].

In DeVito's view, intercultural communication is a communication that culturally has different beliefs, values and ways of acting, so it will affect the content and form of communication. DeVito also states that culture can influence every aspect of the human experience in communicating [15].

### **2.2. Social Interaction**

Human beings are born as social beings which means humans live dependent and need other individuals. Therefore, in the life of human society is required to interact with fellow individuals in order to create a peaceful and orderly society. According to Soerjono Soekanto, social interaction is a dynamic social relationship and concerns the relationship between individuals and individuals, individuals with groups, and groups with groups that aim to build systems within social relationships [9]. Meanwhile, according to Bimo Walgito, social interaction is the relationship between individuals and each other that can influence each other, thus creating mutual relationships [16]. Furthermore, Abu Ahmadi said that social interaction is a reciprocal influence between individuals and groups in their efforts to solve the problems they face and in their efforts to achieve their goals, in other words the two-way communication process that each individual or group stimulates other individuals and changes behavior from participants [17].

### **2.3. Cultural Adaptation Theory**

According to Ruben and Stewart, cultural adaptation is a process of adjustment involving persuasion, just as education is done by parents to their children that aims to provide useful knowledge, value, and rules [18]. In the study entitled *Theories of Inter-Cultural Adaptation* by Lusya Savitri Setyo Utami, it was explained that adaptation is a problem that must be solved when individuals or groups conduct communication processes with other individuals who have different cultural backgrounds [19].

### **2.4. Intermarracial Marriage in Inter-Cultural Communication**

According to Samovar, et al, married couples with different cultural backgrounds will more often cause a lot of problems. Some simple issues such as what food to eat, where a decent place to live for a long life, or what holiday celebrations to celebrate together. It is more complicated when couples have to face gender differences, face conflicts, relationships with extended families, patterns of educating children, and many other issues. Therefore, communication is key in dealing with these challenges in order to find a mutually beneficial way out for both parties [20]. Whereas according to Salomon in Naraudya, in the early stages of couples building relationships, they will learn the culture of each partner, so that they should be able to get used to the cultural differences that exist. Mixed marriage couples will also determine mutual agreement on several things in married life, such as one of which is determining the values and beliefs they will carry out [21]. According to Collins in Lorin, married couples of different nationalities can have certain consequences such as the emergence of various problems, both internal and external problems, this is because there are differences in terms of mindset, lifestyle, and culture [22].

## **3. METHODS**

This research uses descriptive qualitative research approach. According to Sugiyono, qualitative research method is a research method based on the philosophy of post-positivism used to examine the condition of natural objects. The results of qualitative research emphasize more on meaning than generalization [23]. Sugiyono also stated that descriptive method is a method used to describe or analyze the collected data without intending to make more general conclusions. This study uses case study method to answer the formulation of research problems. A case study according to Martimis Yamin is an explanation of a particular problem, event or situation, and is used to develop a critical way of thinking to find new solutions to a topic solved [24]. The case study method allows the author to find, obtain and know information about social interactions between married couples of different cultures, especially for ethnic Balinese who are married to foreign nationals.

Data collection method by conducting interviews, observations, documentation studies, and literature studies. In this study, the subjects of the study were married couples of different nationalities, especially ethnic Balinese who were married to foreign nationals. The object of the research is social interaction in married couples of different cultures in Bali. Five speakers interviewed by the author were 3 married couples named Hendra and Anna, Vaughan and Evie, Robert and Marina, in addition there was Melinda Cowan as coordinator of mixed marriage organization of

Bali province, and I Gede Permana as the stakeholder in Hinduism.

In this study, the authors used triangulation techniques by comparing the data that has been obtained with various other sources so that the analysis results can be credible and valid data, and can be trusted accuracy. Furthermore, from the data will be processed and analyzed by sorting the existing data, so that the author can summarize the important things that are the subject of research problems in order to obtain conclusion

## **4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### ***4.1. Social Interaction between Foreign Nationals Who Marry Ethnic Balinese***

Based on the results of the interview that the authors conducted, it was revealed that intermarried couples uphold each other's tolerance attitudes. This is in accordance with Robert's statement that tolerance is important and must be owned by every couple. Without tolerance, it is impossible for couples to continue to have the same vision especially with different customs and cultural differences. Although Robert said that he is not a very religious person but by deciding to become a Hindu, it has become a form of tolerance that he gave to his wife.

The same was said by Vaughan who said that he had great respect for Hinduism and the ancestors who existed as a form of tolerance towards his wife and family. According to Deddy Mulyana, tolerance attitude towards different beliefs and behaviors of others will help create effective communication [25].

The author found that the most prominent form of tolerance between intermarried couples can be seen in terms of the beliefs of foreign nationals who are hindus and participate in carrying out religious and cultural activities owned by their spouses.

The authors also found that social interactions were intertwined between key informants of foreign nationals and banjar citizens. Based on the results of the interview with Ana, it was revealed that she has a good relationship with banjar residents. This is called Ana who said that banjar residents enjoy communicating with her because for them it is very nice to have a foreign national in the local banjar environment. The same was said by Vaughan who said that banjar residents have a good view of his presence. This is because although Vaughan is a foreign national, banjar residents rate him as a person who has a high concern for Balinese culture.

The authors found language differences to be a factor inhibiting social interactions between intermarried couples. The results of interviews with married couple Hendra and Ana revealed that the social interaction between them sometimes creates misunderstandings due to differences in the point of view of the meaning of a word in English usage. In addition, according to Vaughan and Evie, differences in pronunciation in certain letters in Indonesian and English can also be an obstacle in interacting.

A similar thing was found in married couple Robert and Marina, who said that intonation became an obstacle in undergoing social interaction between them.

According to Deddy Mulyana, in intercultural communication people often interpret nonverbal cues unconsciously, so the message received is often different from what the speaker intended. One example is in vocal cues such as the volume of sounds used differently in different cultures as well [25].

Based on the results of interviews that have been conducted on married couple Hendra and Ana, husband and wife couple Vaughan and Evie, as well as married couple Robert and Marina, it is known that each couple of intermarried have their own way of communicating through agreement in the use of language to communicate daily in order to create mutual understanding.

In married couple Hendra and Ana, they use English in their daily interactions as a married couple. In addition, social interaction is also established through Ana's communication with local banjar residents. In social interaction with local people, he uses two languages, English and Indonesian. Until now Ana also said she was in the process of learning Indonesian and Balinese by taking language classes at the Indonesian Institute of the Arts. He did this in order to communicate well with Hendra's family and also with the residents of banjar where he lived.

A similar thing was found in married couple Robert and Marina. Robert who is an Austrian citizen and Marina who is an ethnic Balinese uses English as a language in everyday communication. Robert, who has lived in Bali for 16 years, can also communicate using Bahasa Indonesia. He uses Indonesian to communicate with marina's family as well as with the local community. However, in communicating in Balinese, Robert is still unable to understand and has not been fully fluent.

The same is found in Vaughan and Evie's married couple who use English and Bahasa Indonesia as a language for their daily communication. Vaughan, who has lived in Indonesia for 23 years, is fluent in Indonesian and even Balinese. The use of Balinese language was used to communicate with evie's family as well as with local banjar residents.

In this study the authors also found that in the marriage of intermarried couples of different nationalities there will be two different languages so that in interacting it is necessary to agreement in the use of daily language in order to create mutual understanding. In social interaction between couples, the three married couples both use English as a language in their daily communication. While in social interaction in banjar environment and family of couples, key informants who are foreign nationals use Indonesian or Balinese.

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## **4.2. Cultural Adaptation Between Foreign Nationals Who Married to Ethnic Balinese and Converted to Hinduism**

In the study entitled *The Ories of Inter-Cultural Adaptation* by Lusya Savitri Setyo Utami, it was explained that adaptation is a problem that must be solved when individuals or groups conduct communication processes with other individuals who have different cultural backgrounds [19].

### **4.2.1. Adaptation of foreigner to banjar**

Based on the results of the interview with Mangku Gede, he stated that the existence of banjars has a big impact on The Balinese. This is because the presence of banjar is a place to organize and bind the community in order to always carry out religious and ethical norms in society. With banjars, Balinese people will always put the nature of togetherness and mutual assistance in a state of joy and sorrow.

Based on the results of the author's interview with Ana, it can be seen that the adaptation she made to banjar environment is to participate in participating in the activities in banjar. As in wedding ceremonies, *ngaben* ceremonies, and big holiday ceremonies such as *Nyepi*, *Saraswati*, *Galungan*, and *Kuningan*. Ana also helped banjar residents in making prayer equipment such as *sajen*, *canang*, and *penjor*.

Adaptations to the banjar environment can also be found from the results of interviews the author conducted with Vaughan. He said that since marrying Evie he can get to know more about the culture and habits of Balinese based on family and *gotong royong*. In addition, Vaughan's relationship with banjar residents is also getting better and closer. This happened because he was often invited to play gamelan both in his own banjar and other banjars.

The author summarizes that by participating in participating in the activities in banjar, it is a form of adaptation of key informants of foreign nationals to the banjar environment where they live.

This is in accordance with the statement from Mangku Gede which states that foreign nationals who have followed and believe in Balinese religion and customs, then the person concerned is basically obliged to be active in the activities of customs in a Banjar. Because the existence of Banjar has a big impact on Balinese culture, especially in terms of applying the nature of togetherness and *gotong royong*.

Especially Robert, it is known that he has never been active in participating in any activities held in banjar. Not adapting Robert to banjar environment according to Mangku Gede Permana, it can happen. Although foreign nationals already believe in Hinduism and are required to be active in activities in a Banjar, Gede said that basically Balinese people are flexible and never impose the will on foreign nationals to follow the activities in banjar.

### **4.2.2. Adaptation of foreigners as Hindus**

Based on a statement from I Gede Permana as a Stakeholder in Hinduism, one of the conditions for a person to marry an ethnic Balinese citizen is that the person must adhere to Hinduism. If one of the prospective spouses is not a Hindu, he/she must convert to Hinduism by performing *Sudhi Wadani* ceremony. This is done with the aim that the life of marriage is based on the same belief so that it can run harmoniously.

Based on the results of the interview that the author has done, the author found that three key informants of foreign nationals who are married to ethnic Balinese have become Hindus and have performed the ceremony of *Sudhi Wadani*, a ceremony to ratify the promise of someone sincerely who declares himself a Hindu. The ceremony is performed as a sign that a person has been born as a Hindu [7].

In this study the authors also found the main reason key informants of foreign nationals converted to Hinduism is in order to be able to conduct marriages with their spouses who are ethnic Balinese citizens. This is in accordance with Ana's statement that there is no other reason to make her a Hindu other than to marry Hendra. The same thing was said by Robert who said that the reason he became a Hindu is to be able to marry Marina.

But unlike Vaughan who said that in addition to marrying Evie, his love of Balinese gamelan was the reason he became a Hindu. This is because Balinese gamelan has a close relationship with Hinduism so he wants to deepen his knowledge by becoming a Hindu.

However, foreign nationals who become Hindus still respect and respect Hinduism by studying various teachings in Hinduism such as the teachings of *Tri Hita Karana*, *Himsa*, *Tat Twam Asi*, and *Karmaphala*. Based on the results of the research, it is known that the three key informants of foreign nationals who are adherents of Hinduism strongly believe and uphold the teachings of *Tri Hita Karana* which teaches every Hindu to maintain balance with God, with fellow human beings and with nature. This is because for them *Tri Hita Karana* is a fundamental teaching for Hindus and can be implemented directly in daily life, especially in banjar life.

According to Sirtha, *banjar adat* also uses the basic philosophy of balance between man and man, man with nature, and nature with his God, known as *Tri Hita Karana*. These three elements are manifested in three zones, namely: (1) *Parhyangan*, a zone where people and God can realize harmony; (2) *Pawongan*, in the form of a zone of harmony between people and each other; and (3) *Palemahan*, which is a zone where human harmony is realized and its natural environment [26]. It is also known that the form of adaptation of key informants as Hindus is to follow the ceremony of the feast and prayer to the temple. Based on Ana's statement, she often prays to the temple especially when commemorating big holidays such as *Galungan*, *Kuningan*, *Nyepi* and *pujama*. Although it is not every day of prayer in the temple he still performs prayer in his own home. Hendra and Ana said that every day they take turns

doing *mebanten* as a form of belief and respect for the gods in Hinduism.

The same thing was also done by Robert, who said that although he never attended the activities and ceremonies in banjar but he still attended the ceremony commemorated at the temple along with his wife and extended family such as *Galungan, Kuningan, Nyepi* and *Purnama*.

Unlike Vaughan who said that the purpose of his trip to the temple was simply to play gamelan so it can be said that the role he gave as a Hindu was only as a gamelan player. According to him, playing gamelan at the temple is also one of the forms of offerings that he can give to God.

Based on the results of the interview conducted with Mangku Gede Permana, it was explained that there is no regular schedule for Hindus to pray to the temple. Because he said in Hinduism there are good days and certain days that are considered to contain holiness more than ordinary days. For example, when the moon is full, so it would be better if Hindus can hold prayers in the temple. However, prayer anywhere and anytime is still allowed in Hinduism. The author summarizes that the cultural adaptation of key informants of foreign nationals as hindus is to participate in the implementation of traditional ceremonies and holidays in Hinduism. In addition, adaptation can also be seen from foreign nationals who study various teachings in Hinduism.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions in this study are:

- The social interactions that exist between foreign nationals who are married to ethnic Balinese are running relatively well. Even though there are differences in language and culture, tolerance towards the culture of each partner is the main key in maintaining the harmony of their married life.
- The most important way of tolerance can be seen from foreign nationals who convert to Hinduism and follow various traditions and ceremonies in Hinduism.
- There are obstacles in the process of interacting between foreign nationals who are married to ethnic Balinese citizens, this is due to differences in language, especially in different points of view of the meaning of a word, differences in pronunciation, and also differences in intonation that can cause misunderstandings.
- In social interaction, both of married couples use English as the language in their daily communication. Meanwhile, the social interaction in the banjar environment and the family of the spouse, foreign nationals use Indonesian or Balinese.
- One of the way to adaptation by key informants of foreign nationals to Balinese culture is by participating follow the activities that are in banjar, such as attending the wedding ceremony, Ngaben ceremony, and the other ceremony of hari raya in Hinduism.
- The main reason key informants who are foreign nationals become followers of the Hindu religion are

so that they can marry their spouse who is an ethnic Balinese.

- Although the key informants of foreign nationals are not religious Hindus, they still respect and appreciate every existing custom and tradition by participating in the implementation of traditional ceremonies and traditions in Hinduism.

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