

# Harmonious Coexistence: Intercultural Communication Dynamics Between Legal Immigrants and Residents in Gading Serpong

Mardiana Simbolon<sup>a,1\*</sup>, Ummanah<sup>b,2</sup>, Iswadi<sup>c,3</sup>

<sup>a,b,c</sup> Universitas Esa Unggul, Jl. Arjuna Utara No. 9, Duri Kepa, Kec. Kb. Jeruk, Kota Jakarta Barat, DKI Jakarta 11510, Indonesia

<sup>1</sup> mardianasimbolon16@student.esaunggul.ac.id\*; <sup>2</sup> ummanah@esaunggul.ac.id; <sup>3</sup> iswadi@esaunggul.ac.id

\* corresponding author



## ARTICLE INFO

## ABSTRACT

### Article history:

Received: June 12, 2023

Revised: July 07, 2023

Accepted: October 11, 2023

### Keywords:

*intercultural communication*

*social integration*

*cultural diversity*

*harmonious coexistence*

This research delves into the intricate dynamics of intercultural communication within the context of legal immigration, focusing on the community of Gading Serpong. This study employs qualitative research methods to explore the multifaceted interplay of language, social norms, economic collaboration, and government initiatives in fostering harmonious relationships between legal immigrants and residents. Despite linguistic and cultural disparities, the residents of Gading Serpong exhibit a remarkable willingness to engage in dialogue, mutual understanding, and reciprocal respect. The study uncovers the pivotal role of collaborative efforts, inclusive educational practices, and responsible media portrayals in facilitating social integration. Furthermore, the proactive involvement of the local government and community initiatives contributes significantly to creating an inclusive environment, ensuring immigrants are valued members of society. The findings underscore the importance of sustaining efforts to promote ongoing dialogue, cultural awareness, and inclusivity, solidifying Gading Serpong as an exemplar of cultural harmony and diversity within the Indonesian context.

This is an open access article under the [CC-BY-SA](#) license.

 <https://doi.org/10.12928/channel.v11i2.455>



## INTRODUCTION

According to intercultural adaptation theory, cross-cultural adaptation is a dynamic and interactive phenomenon shaped by communication activities among individuals entering new sociocultural environments (Utami, 2015). Intercultural communication, a pivotal component of this adaptation process, entails exchanging information, ideas, and values among individuals or groups from diverse cultural backgrounds. Central to this exchange is the imperative to comprehend and respect disparities in language, norms, values, beliefs, and behavior inherent to distinct cultures. A critical facet of intercultural communication lies in adapting and surmounting challenges stemming from these cultural discrepancies (Yusa et al., 2021).

Language is a fundamental element in intercultural communication, enabling effective communication while embodying specific cultural thoughts, values, and worldviews. Proficiency in understanding both the language itself and the cultural nuances it embodies is essential to mitigate inadvertent misunderstandings or offenses in intercultural interactions. The awareness of the cultural context behind language use is imperative in navigating the intricacies of cross-cultural communication (Suryani, 2013). Self-awareness and empathy are crucial attributes in intercultural communication. Acknowledging one's cultural background and recognizing the



potential disparities between one's perspectives and those of other cultures are vital. The ability to perceive the world through the eyes of others and appreciate their experiences and viewpoints constitutes an invaluable skill, fostering effective intercultural communication (Liliweri, 2017).

Intercultural communication presents intricate challenges demanding patience, cooperation, and positive intentions from all involved parties. Addressing emerging cultural conflicts, negative stereotypes, and misunderstandings necessitates open dialogue, education, and mutual respect (Panuju, 2018). This complexity underscores the importance of comprehending, respecting, and appreciating cultural, linguistic, and value-based differences. By establishing bridges through intercultural communication, relationships can be fortified, understanding enhanced, and a more inclusive, harmonious global community fostered (Salim et al., 2023).

Edward T. Hall, a renowned American anthropologist and communication expert, laid the foundation for understanding intercultural interactions. Hall's seminal work, "The Silent Language" (1959), introduced the concept of Proxemics, exploring the role of space in human communication (Hall, 2017). Culture, Hall argued, profoundly shapes both verbal and nonverbal communication, emphasizing the pivotal role of cultural context in interpretation. Hall delineated high and low context cultures, where high context implies communication assumes deep cultural knowledge, while low context is more explicit and accessible to outsiders (Hall & Whyte, 2008).

Moreover, Hall's theory delved into temporal orientations, classifying cultures as polychromatic (time-flexible) and monochromatic (time-structured). Polychromatic cultures view time as a flexible tool, while monochromatic cultures regard time as a finite, strictly managed resource (Glander, 1996). Hall also scrutinized interpersonal space, categorizing it into intimate, personal, social, and public zones, emphasizing the importance of understanding these distinctions to prevent inadvertent cultural transgressions (Carter, 1955). Hall's insights have profound practical implications, especially in the context of immigration. Legal immigrants entering new areas necessitate effective communication with existing residents, fostering understanding, tolerance, and social integration (Eguchi, 2022).

The influx of legal immigrants into new communities inherently brings forth diverse languages, values, norms, traditions, and ways of life, giving rise to challenges and opportunities in intercultural communication dynamics. This juncture underscores the pivotal role of intercultural communication as a bridge facilitating understanding and fostering mutually beneficial relationships between immigrant populations and residents (Pratyaksa & Najicha, 2022). A fundamental aspect of intercultural communication amidst immigration lies in surmounting language barriers. Language stands as a linchpin for understanding and effective communication between immigrants and residents. Immigrants often need to acquire a new language to engage with the local populace, a process that can be facilitated through the support of residents. Through adept verbal communication, mutual comprehension is enhanced, enabling the exchange of ideas, experiences, and perspectives.

Social norms and cultural values are paramount in intercultural communication within immigrant contexts. Immigrants and residents frequently harbor differing expectations, norms, and values, encompassing nonverbal communication, attitudes toward time, and social behavior. Effectively managing these disparities necessitates mutual respect, understanding, and adaptability. Both parties are called upon to recognize and accommodate these cultural differences through a lens of mutual understanding. In this dynamic exchange, intercultural communication emerges as a reciprocal teaching and learning conduit. Immigrants bring elements of their culture to the local community, while locals reciprocate by sharing their values and traditions. This exchange of knowledge and experience enriches intercultural communication, transforming it into an opportunity for mutual learning and an enhanced understanding of each other's cultural backgrounds (Ilmih, 2017).

The intercultural communication landscape within the context of immigration is multifaceted, encompassing interactions laden with challenges and potential conflicts. Stereotypes, prejudice, and cultural misunderstandings pose significant hurdles, impeding effective communication and social integration among immigrant and local populations. Overcoming these barriers necessitates educational interventions, open dialogue, and a foundation of mutual understanding, which is pivotal in fostering harmonious relations between immigrants and their host communities. Within legal immigration, intercultural communication involves intricate exchanges between immigrants and residents drawing from diverse cultural backgrounds. This dynamic interplay encompasses various facets, including language, norms, values, and traditions, shaping interpersonal and group interactions. Failure to comprehend the nuances of intercultural communication often leads to intercultural and ethnic conflicts. These conflicts stem from disparities in language, norms, values, beliefs, and behaviors across different cultural groups, perpetuating tensions and discord. A primary catalyst for conflict lies in stereotypes and prejudice, wherein generalized negative perceptions of specific cultural groups exacerbate miscommunication and interpersonal discord (Wirasto et al., 2016).

Additionally, conflicts arise from misunderstandings related to cultural norms and values. Each culture possesses distinct social norms and values, and ignorance or disregard for these aspects can engender friction and discord. Misinterpretation or inadvertent breaches of cultural norms further exacerbate conflicts. Insufficient

intercultural communication skills also contribute significantly to conflict situations. Understanding differences in verbal and nonverbal communication styles, including body language and other communication norms, is crucial. Inadequate communication skills in diverse cultural contexts can lead to misinterpretation or ineffective reception of messages, heightening tensions and conflicts among cultural groups (Lubis, 2002).

Intercultural or ethnic conflicts often stem from varying approaches to conflict resolution within different cultures (Mughtar et al., 2016). Some cultures avoid confrontation, while others embrace open and confrontational methods. Ignorance of these diverse conflict resolution strategies can escalate existing tensions, necessitating a comprehensive understanding of cultural differences, and encouraging open dialogue. Addressing intercultural conflicts requires acknowledging and respecting these differences, raising awareness about existing stereotypes and prejudices, and learning other cultures' norms, values, and communication styles (Risky et al., 2022). Embracing inclusivity, cultivating intercultural communication skills, and employing constructive conflict resolution methods are essential in resolving intercultural conflicts.

Education and public awareness campaigns play a pivotal role in mitigating intercultural conflicts. Educational initiatives promoting understanding, tolerance, and respect for diverse cultures are vital in reducing prejudices and stereotypes. Additionally, organizing events and activities that facilitate direct interaction between different cultural groups fosters communication bridges and mutual understanding among communities. These efforts dismantle barriers by promoting awareness and understanding, fostering a climate conducive to harmonious coexistence (Afiah, 2015). The complexities of intercultural communication underscore the potential for conflicts, ranging from minor disagreements to severe disputes. Issues like cultural disparities and lack of adaptability can lead to conflicts, sometimes escalating to extreme levels, including violent incidents. Recognizing these challenges, this study focuses on the intercultural communication dynamics between legal immigrants and residents in the Gading Serpong dormitory.

## METHOD

Qualitative research methodologies are employed to pursue a comprehensive understanding of intercultural communication phenomena. As articulated by Murdiyanto (2020), qualitative research emphasizes profound comprehension, interpretation, and illumination of the meanings encapsulated within collected data. Researchers have opted for a case study approach in exploring intercultural communication between legal immigrants and residents in the Gading Serpong dormitory. As elucidated by Iswadi et al. (2023), this methodological choice allows for an in-depth exploration of the context, processes, and intricacies inherent in the studied phenomenon. The study, conducted within the confines of the Gading Serpong dormitory, utilized diverse data collection techniques to enrich the qualitative analysis. Interviews played a pivotal role, involving structured question-and-answer sessions with selected members from the local and immigrant communities residing in the dormitory. The participants were meticulously chosen, encompassing three individuals from each group—locals identified as AD, IS, and M, and immigrants denoted by initials MH, J, and AS. These participants, possessing more than three years of residency in Gading Serpong, offered nuanced insights into the dynamics of their respective communities. Concurrently, rigorous observational methods were employed to discern interaction patterns embedded within daily life, including communal activities among local and immigrant residents. Moreover, a meticulous documentation process involved a comprehensive review of existing literature and prior research studies. The amalgamation of data from interviews, observations, and documentation underwent rigorous analysis utilizing triangulation techniques. This methodological triangulation ensured a robust and multifaceted understanding of intercultural communication dynamics in the Gading Serpong dormitory by integrating data from multiple sources and methods.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Gading Serpong, a swiftly expanding urban center on the periphery of Jakarta, has emerged as a vibrant residence for diverse legal immigrant communities. The imperative of fostering effective intercultural communication within this locale resonates deeply with the efforts to cultivate an inclusive and harmonious society. This study delves into the intricate communication landscape between residents and legal immigrants in Gading Serpong. Despite the inherent cultural disparities, the outcomes underscore a notably fluid intercultural communication process, suggesting a remarkable resilience in interactions.

### A. Linguistic Challenges and Collaborative Efforts

Language diversity from immigrants from various countries constitutes a significant hurdle in intercultural communication. Despite this challenge, a substantial segment of immigrants exhibits a rudimentary understanding of the Indonesian language, fostering a basis for communication with residents. While conveying nuanced concepts

occasionally presents difficulties, the willingness to engage in multilingual interactions is pivotal in fortifying social ties between the groups.

Apart from linguistic disparities, cultural differences manifest in various customs, social norms, and daily habits, potentially impeding effective communication. However, this study underscores the receptive attitude of Gading Serpong residents, who actively seek to understand the cultural intricacies of legal immigrants. Residents welcome immigrants' initiatives to share their traditions, creating a space conducive to productive dialogues and mutual understanding. This inclusive approach has paved the way for robust collaboration between legal immigrants and residents, resulting in a harmonious community environment.

Remarkably, legal immigrants engage proactively in community activities organized by residents, spanning festivals, charity events, and social gatherings. Their enthusiastic participation has broadened social networks and fortified the bonds between the two groups, emphasizing the significance of communal activities in fostering social integration. These findings align with the theoretical framework of intercultural communication proxemics theory elucidated by Edward T. Hall. According to Hall, communication is pivotal in cultural adaptation and intercultural interactions, influencing various aspects, including economic factors.

### **B. Economic Collaboration and Support Networks**

Legal immigrants in Gading Serpong have significantly contributed to the economic sector by establishing small and medium enterprises and bolstering local economic growth. Residents actively support these initiatives, fostering an inclusive business environment marked by mutual benefit. Moreover, collaborative endeavors extend to the realm of education and skills development. Residents volunteer to impart language proficiency, job skills, and cultural knowledge to legal immigrants, enhancing their integration prospects and empowering them to contribute to society positively.

A profound awareness and respect for cultural diversity and immigrant backgrounds underpin maintaining harmonious relations. In Gading Serpong, a collective acknowledgment of differing values and traditions pervades the community. This acceptance of diversity is actively celebrated through communal events and festivals, where immigrants and indigenous residents come together. These gatherings serve as platforms for cultural exchange, allowing immigrants to share their cultural identities enriching the tapestry of experiences for everyone involved.

### **C. Government Programs and Social Initiatives**

The local government of Gading Serpong assumes a pivotal role in ensuring the seamless integration of immigrants into the community. Their comprehensive integration programs encompass language acquisition, skills training, and assistance with administrative procedures related to official documentation. By bolstering the self-sufficiency of immigrants, these programs not only empower them but also eradicate legal uncertainties, fostering a positive societal contribution.

Parallel to governmental efforts, the proactive involvement of the community emerges as a cornerstone of harmonious relations. Numerous residents voluntarily engage in organizations and social groups dedicated to assisting immigrants. These altruistic endeavors range from providing social support to offering temporary housing and employment opportunities for newly arrived immigrants. Such initiatives, rooted in empathy and cooperation, significantly mitigate social tensions and cultivate robust bonds between immigrants and residents.

Beyond social and governmental dimensions, economic equity stands as an imperative in nurturing harmony. Gading Serpong adopts an inclusive economic approach where the government and the private sector collaborate to create job opportunities accessible to all, irrespective of background. This concerted effort ensures immigrants' livelihood and curtails unfair competition within the labor market, a common source of conflict in similar contexts.

### **D. Cultural Awareness and Media Influence**

Recognizing the significance of education is pivotal in fostering harmonious relations within diverse communities such as Gading Serpong. The educational institutions in this region prioritize imparting values of diversity, tolerance, and respect for varied cultural backgrounds. Schools actively facilitate cultural exchange and collaboration between native and immigrant students, thereby challenging stereotypes and fostering mutual comprehension. The media and social networks emerge as crucial facilitators in pursuing harmony between residents and immigrants. Local media outlets are dedicated to objectively presenting news and promoting narratives that embrace inclusivity. Concurrently, social networks serve as platforms for establishing support systems, disseminating information, and enhancing mutual understanding among citizens and immigrants, contributing significantly to social cohesion and integration.

The enduring harmony between native citizens and legal immigrants in Gading Serpong can be attributed to the collective awareness, mutual respect, and inclusive attitudes prevalent within the local community. This harmonious relationship is fostered through well-designed integration programs, active governmental support, and individual social initiatives, all of which contribute to immigrants feeling embraced and valued as members of society. Essential to this cohesion is the presence of equitable economic opportunities, inclusive educational practices, and responsible media portrayals, all of which collectively create an environment that is welcoming and supportive for individuals from diverse backgrounds. The success of Gading Serpong in managing cultural diversity and preserving harmony between citizens and immigrants serves as a notable model for other regions to emulate in their pursuit of social integration and inclusivity.

## CONCLUSION

Based on extensive observational studies and in-depth interviews conducted among residents near Gading Serpong, the research findings unequivocally demonstrate the seamless communication with legal immigrants despite the occasional cultural disparities that may arise. The residents of Gading Serpong exhibit a commendable and inclusive approach toward legal immigrants, actively fostering robust and mutually advantageous relationships within their community. The pivotal factor contributing to the success of communication between these two groups lies in the shared willingness to engage in a process of learning, mutual understanding, and reciprocal respect. Collaborative initiatives and active involvement in communal activities have played a significant role in surmounting cultural differences, thereby establishing enduring social connections in Gading Serpong. It is imperative to sustain efforts to promote ongoing dialogue, enhance cultural awareness, and embrace an inclusive ethos within the broader society to perpetuate and strengthen this positive momentum. These deliberate endeavors will ensure the continued smoothness of communication with legal immigrants and solidify Gading Serpong's reputation as a notable example of cultural harmony and diversity within the Indonesian context.

## E. Acknowledgment

The authors wish to extend their sincere appreciation to the Department of Communication Science at Universitas Esa Unggul Jakarta for their invaluable support and guidance during this research. The department's unwavering assistance and provision of essential resources have played a pivotal role in completing this study.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Afiah, N. (2015). Kepribadian dan agresivitas dalam berbagai budaya. *Buletin Psikologi*, 23(1), 13–21.
- [2] Carter, R. E., Jr. (1955). The Process and Effects of Mass Communication. Edited by Wilbur Schramm. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1954. 586 pp. \$6.00. *Social Forces*, 34(1), 90–91. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2574275>
- [3] Eguchi, S. (2022). *Queer Intercultural Communication*. Obo. <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/display/document/obo-9780199756841/obo-9780199756841-0234.xml>
- [4] Glander, T. (1996). Wilbur Schramm and the Founding of Communication Studies. *Educational Theory*, 46(3), 373–391. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-5446.1996.00373.x>
- [5] Hall, B. 'J.' (2017). Cultural Communication Norms. In *The International Encyclopedia of Intercultural Communication* (1–8). John Wiley & Sons. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118783665.ieicc0116>
- [6] Hall, E. T., & Whyte, W. F. (2008). *Intercultural Communication*. In *Communication Theory* (2nd ed., p. 17). Routledge. ISBN: 9781315080918
- [7] Ilmih, A. A. (2017). Analisis Kebijakan Keimigrasian dalam Upaya Pencegahan Penyelundupan Orang dan Imigran Gelap di Indonesia. *Law Research Review Quarterly*, 3(2), Article 2. <https://doi.org/10.15294/snh.v3i1.20931>
- [8] Iswadi, I., Karnati, N., & Budianto, A. A. (2023). *Studi Kasus Desain & Metode Robert K. Yin (Pertama)*. CV. Adanu Abimata.
- [9] Liliwari, A. (2017). *Komunikasi Antar Personal*. Prenada Media. ISBN: 9786024224158
- [10] Lubis, D. L. A. (2002). *Komunikasi Antar Budaya*. Fakultas Ilmu Sosial Dan Ilmu Politik, Jurusan Ilmu Komunikasi Universitas Sumatera Utara. <https://dupakdosen.usu.ac.id/bitstream/handle/123456789/3785/komunikasi-lusiana.pdf?sequence=1>
- [11] Muchtar, K., Koswara, I., & Setiawan, A. (2016). Komunikasi Antar Budaya Dalam Perspektif Antropologi. *Jurnal Manajemen Komunikasi*, 1(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.24198/jmk.v1i1.10064>
- [12] Murdiyanto, D. E. (2020). *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif* (1 ed.). Lembaga Penelitian dan Pengabdian Pada Masyarakat UPN "Veteran" Yogyakarta Press.
- [13] Panuju, R. (2018). *Pengantar Studi (Ilmu) Komunikasi: Komunikasi sebagai Kegiatan Komunikasi sebagai Ilmu*.

Kencana.

- [14] Pratyaksa, M. N., & Najicha, F. U. (2022). Peningkatan Keamanan Imigran Asing oleh Pemerintah Indonesia Demi Cegah Penularan Virus COVID-19. *Borneo Law Review*, 6(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.35334/bolrev.v6i1.2649>
- [15] Risky, T., Salim, M., Marta, R. F., & Longani, K. D. (2022). Implementation of CSR Program for Clean Water Well Development by PT. Chevron Pacific Indonesia to The Sakai Tribe Community. *CHANNEL: Jurnal Komunikasi*, 10(1), 1-8. <http://dx.doi.org/10.12928/channel.v10i1.21982>
- [16] Salim, M., Wibowo, A. A., & Hariyanti, N. (2023). Kajian Kebijakan Komunikasi Kesehatan Global Terkait Vaksinasi COVID-19. In *Komunikasi dan Isu Global Kontemporer* (pp. 83-98). Penerbit Samudra Biru. ISBN: 978-623-261-557-1
- [17] Suryani, W. (2013). Komunikasi Antar Budaya yang Efektif. *Jurnal Dakwah Tabligh*, 14(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.24252/jdt.v14i1.316>
- [18] Utami, L. S. S. (2015). Teori-teori adaptasi antar budaya. *Jurnal komunikasi*, 7(2), 180–197.
- [19] Wirasto, W., Siregar, M., & Leviza, J. (2016). *Pelaksanaan Pengawasan Warga Negara Asing di Wilayah Kerja Kantor Imigrasi Kelas II Belawan Berdasarkan UU No. 6 Tahun 2011 Tentang Keimigrasian*.
- [20] Yusa, I. M. M., Murdana, I. M., Juliana, J., Iskandar, A. M., Firdausy, S., Nuswantoro, P., & K, H. (2021). *Komunikasi Antarbudaya*. Yayasan Kita Menulis.