Inter-religious Social Prejudice: Social Prejudice of Indonesian Muslim Students toward the Christian

Abstract: Indonesia is extensively diverse country with multiple languages, ethnicities, and religions backgrounds. While some studies espouse positive outcomes associated with diverse groups, other claim that diversity has potential for social conflict, especially among different religious communities. The aim of this study was to examine the social prejudice model of Muslim students towards Christians in terms of religious mature sentiment, Islamic knowledge, and agreeableness trait. The participants of this study were Muslim students in Yogyakarta aged 18-22 years old ($N = 254$). The data were analyzed using structural equation model (SEM) technique using Lisrel 8.8. The result of this study showed that the social prejudice model of Indonesian Muslim students was fit with the data. Agreeableness trait was mediating the influence of religious mature sentiment and Islamic knowledge about Muslim-Christian relationship. Religious mature sentiment was influenced social prejudice directly and went through agreeableness trait. Agreeableness trait was influenced social prejudice directly but did not influenced by Islamic knowledge. Islamic knowledge also had a direct impact on social prejudice.

Keywords: social prejudice, religious mature sentiment, Islamic knowledge, agreeableness.

INTRODUCTION

The diversity of races, ethnicities, religions, social organizations, or political parties are a necessity that can be a strength in society. These diversities are increased synergies and advantages which arise from the association of different views or backgrounds and knowledge recombination (Milliken, Bartel & Kurtzberg, 2003). Indonesia is the biggest Muslim nation in the world and well known as diversity country with many language, ethnicity, and religion. According to the Indonesia Statistics (2010), Indonesia has 1211 languages, 1340 ethnicities, and 6 six recognized religions (Islam, Christianity, Catholic, Hindu, Buddha, and Khong Hu Cu). Among 237 million population Muslim was the largest community with 87,18% followed by Christians 6,96%, Catholic 2,91%, Hindu 1,69%, Buddha 0,72%, and Khong Hu Cu 0,05%. In other hand, cultural diversity may lead to the high level of conflict (Kankanhalli, Tan & Wei, 2006; Staples & Zhao, 2006).

The difference religious in a community has the potential for social conflicts. It is because religious identity is nonnegotiable. The conflict among identity groups based on their religious is also raising the violence (Querol (2002). Then, tolerance needed between religious communities so that people can live in harmony. Tolerance concerns acceptance of the differences between individuals and others. Tolerance also the thing that stands between intergroup conflict and peaceful coexistence (Doorn, 2014). Inter-religious tolerance is important so those inter-religious believers should respect each other's views, values, and behavior that are different from his/her. One of the essential parts of tolerance is freedom, namely appreciate freedom owned by each individual to run his faith and determine his destiny (Bukhori, 2013).

Islam encourages tolerance and prohibits prejudice. Prohibition to be prejudice is clearly state in the Qur’an that prejudice as a sinful deed (Quran 49: 12). Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon Him, also prohibits prejudice because essentially it is a lie (Nawawi, 2012). With these findings, researches have started to focus on how the Muslim community, especially Muslim students’ social prejudice toward the Christian as other religious community. The previous research showed that Muslim student prejudice toward the Christian influenced by religious mature sentiment, Islamic knowledge about the Muslim and Nonmuslim relationship, and agreeableness trait (Nashori &
Nurjannah, 2015). The point is individuals with good religious mature sentiment, Islamic knowledge, and have the agreeableness trait have low social prejudice. The intrinsic religiosity has a low effect on social prejudice (Brambila, Manzi, Regalia & Verkuyten, 2013), religiosity has an impact on agreeableness trait (Saroglou, 2009), and personality traits especially agreeableness trait has an influence on social prejudice as well (Graziano, Bruce, Shees & Tobin, 2007; Sibley & Duckitt, 2008).

Previous studies that have been done were social prejudice between Islam and Hindu community (Hasnain, 2003), social prejudice against Islam/Islamophobia (Kunst, Sadeghi, Tahir, Sam & Thomsen, 2015), ethnic Chinese (Abidin, 1999), ethnic groups in general (Taufik, 2003), races (Ekehammar & Akrami, 2003), people with mental disorders (Corrigan, Edwards, Queen, Thwart & Penn, 2001), individuals with obesity (Vartanian, Trewartha & Vanman, 2015), and socioeconomic status (Manstead, 2018).

This study focused on interreligious social prejudice between Muslim and Christian with several considerations. First, minority groups, in general, are subjected to social prejudice or intolerance (Ancok & Suroso, 2011). In this case, the Christian community in Indonesia was one of the minority groups and Islam was the majority one. Khusus di Indonesia Timur, tepatnya Propinsi Papua dan Propinsi Maluku, umat Islam merupakan minoritas.

Second, Islam and Christian was Abrahamic religion (Denny, 2004). One feature shared among these religions is that they are all monotheistic. Monotheism is the practice of worshiping one God. Although Abrahamic religions worship one God, each religion refers to God using a distinct name. Third, the importance of strengthening personality in early adulthood, especially at the age of college students or 18-24 years old (Feist & Feist, 2008). College students are the agent of social change where their understanding of several things, especially about social interaction and the role of religion, needed to increase the quality of life both to themselves or community.

**Islam and Christian in Abrahamic Religion**

Islam itself upholds the freedom of religion. Everybody is free to choose the religion what they believe (Ichwan & Muttaqin, 2012). Quran showed the presence of religious freedom, namely there was no coercion in choosing a religion (Quran 10: 99) and God didn’t force people to believe (Quran 2: 256). Specifically to the Christian, the tolerance is highly emphasized. Muslim see the Christians as a part of the people of the book (al-ahl al-kitab). Islam, Christianity, and Jew is part of the religions from Ibrahim a.s. that was monotheistic religion and each having scripture from Allah ‘azza wa jalla (Denny, 2004). Therefore, Muslim commanded to communicate politely to the people of the book (ahl kitab) (Quran 29:46). Especially to the Christians, the Quran named the Christians as well as good for Muslim peers (Quran 5:82).

Islam and Christianity are one branch of religion, namely the Abrahamic religion (Denny, 2004). Both of them teach about peace (Suryadilaga, 2013). Abrahamic religions have a common characteristic is the belief in prophets as the link between God and humanity. God reveals himself to these select few people to offer guidance and instructions to humanity. But history is noted that Islam and Christian experience an uneasy relationship. One of the great events in the past which often brought in the interaction between Muslim and the Christians today was the crusade (1094-1344). According to Armstrong, the crusade presented strong religious sentiment for both of them and against the relationship between the Muslim and the Christians (Armstrong, 2001). In addition, Christianization issues in Indonesia were one of the concerns of the Indonesian Muslim. The issue of Christianization in the areas who were the Muslim based was the beginning of the worst phase in the relationship between the Muslim and the Christians since the Dutch colonial until now.
**Social prejudice theory**

The study on social prejudice has been carried out by psychologists, precisely around the 1950s. The social psychologist who is seen as the pioneer of this study, Gordon W. Allport (1954), expressed his views in the book “The Nature of Prejudice”. He defined social prejudice as a dislike based on false and rigid generalizations. Allport’s famous prejudice theory is called “the contact hypothesis”, namely the intensity of contact with diverse groups will result in positive evaluations of other groups (outgroup) and in turn can reduce prejudice. In general, the studies of individual social prejudice are directed at social prejudice towards other groups.

Social prejudice is the interaction between an individual’s psychology to others. Social prejudice consists of three aspects, namely cognitive, affective, and conative (Voughan & Hoog, 2011). Then, Myers (2013) added some explanation about the aspects of social prejudice, namely belief, feelings, and inclination to act. The belief is associated with the stereotype. Stereotype contains beliefs about the personal qualities that people have in certain groups or social categories. A stereotype can be destructive if an individual ignores evidence of reality and generalized to all group members. In this case, the belief in social prejudice means the individual ignoring the evidence of reality which contains the goodness of the Christians and the joy of generalizing against the negative behavior of Christians. The feelings aspect is negative feeling toward the object in social prejudice. Sears, Freedman, and Peplau (2003) added individuals who are prejudiced have feelings of dislike, discomfort, antipathy, and even hatred toward individual or groups that are used as objects of social prejudice. The inclinations to act aspect is the tendency to do discrimination toward other group members. Discrimination is the acceptance or rejection individual based on his group membership.

**Social prejudice, agreeableness trait, religious mature sentiment, and Islamic knowledge.**

The factors that contribute to social prejudice are agreeableness trait and religiosity (Village, 2011). Religiosity divided into two variables, namely religious mature sentiment and Islamic knowledge about the relationship between Muslim and non-Muslim. Agreeableness trait is part of an individual’s motivational system that comes from a process of self-regulation to get intimacy, unity, and solidarity with others. Specifically, agreeableness trait has distinctive behavior which seems significant in relation to others, such as caring, hospitality, generosity, simplicity, trustworthiness, openness in expressing something (Costa & McCrae, 1997).

Religiosity also influences social prejudice. Religiosity can be seen from the constructs of religious mature sentiment that describe religious behaviors and Islamic knowledge about the relationship between Muslim and non-Muslim. One of the forms of individual maturity is in religious matters. Religious mature sentiment is defined as religious sentiment that is formed through experiences. Sentiments is a system of willingness that is directed and organized around certain value of the objects. In religious things, these experiences form patterns of response to object in the form of certain concepts, principles, and habits (Allport, 1954). Individuals who have religious mature sentiment are being open to all facts, values and giving direction to the framework of life both theoretically and practically (Wulf, 1991).

Islamic knowledge means information about the contents of Islamic teaching. Knowledge defined as information that has been organized in memory and part of a structured information system (Solso, Maclin & Maclin, 2008). In this case, Islamic knowledge can be defined as information contained in the individual’s memory of Islamic teaching relating to how the relationship between Muslim and non-Muslim supposed to be (Nashori & Nurjannah, 2015). The guidance on how a Muslim treats other religion believer (non-Muslim) is also regulated in Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh).
The guidance is about how Muslim behave to non-Muslim in various aspects of life based on Qur’an and hadits, such as the ideology and ritual, interaction and interpersonal relationship, consumption and business, marriage and heritage, and leadership.

The previous research that has been done on Papua and Ambon ethnicity, two provinces in the eastern Indonesia where Muslim as the minority and Christian as the majority, showed that the influence of Islamic knowledge and religious mature sentiment on social prejudice through agreeableness as mediator was fit the data (Nashori & Nurjannah, 2015). Thus, whether this finding on Muslim as minority in the community also occur in the community where Muslim students lived as the majority.

**METHOD**

**Participant**

The participant of the study were Muslim students who are studying on the undergraduate program in Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University, Indonesia. The sampling techniques used in this research was stratified cluster sampling. This technique was the combination of cluster random sampling and stratified random sampling. This study was conducted in the Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University of Yogyakarta. It consists of eight faculties grouped into two, which is the faculty with religion affiliation (faculty of da’wah and communication, faculty of adab and culture, faculty of usuluddin and Islamic idea, faculty of syariah and law, faculty of tarbiyah and teacher education) and faculty with non-religion affiliation (faculty of social sciences and humanities, faculty of science and technology). The data were taken from eight undergraduate programs from eight faculties. The participants were 254 students that consist of 128 female students (50.39%) and 126 male students (49.61%) ($M_{age} = 19.38$ years, $SD = 1.26$ years). The number of participants was determined by reference to structural equation modeling (SEM). The number of participants above 200 people categorized large (Kline, 2005).

**Measurements**

*Social prejudice scale*

Social prejudice scale used to assess social prejudice level of Muslim student toward Christian. This scale was developed according to social prejudice theory by Vaughan and Hogg (2011). Social prejudice scale consists of 29 items and has three aspects, namely cognitive, affective, and conative ($Cronbach’s\ Alpha = 0.884$). Item ratings were made on a scale 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) in favorable items; 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree) in unfavorable items.

*Agreeableness trait scale*

Agreeableness trait scale used to assess individual’s agreeableness trait. This scale was developed according to Big Five Personality theory by Costa and McCrae (1997). Agreeableness trait scale consists of 14 items and has six aspects, namely tender-mindedness, modesty, compliance, altruism, straight-forwardness, and trust ($Cronbach’s\ Alpha = 0.789$). Item ratings were made on a scale 1 (never) to 5 (very often) in favorable items; 1 (very often) and 5 (never) in unfavorable items.

*Religious mature sentiment scale*

Religious mature sentiment scale used to assess religious mature sentiment level among participants. This scale was developed according to religious mature sentiment theory by Allport (Wulff, 1991). religious mature sentiment scale consists of 24 items and has five aspects, namely
differentiation, dynamic character, moral consistency, comprehensive-integrative, and heuristic (Cronbach’s Alpha = 0.818). Item ratings were made on a scale 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) in favorable items; 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree) in favorable items.

Islamic knowledge between Muslim and non-Muslim relationship scale
This scale used to assess participants’ knowledge about the relationship between Muslim and non-Muslim through an Islamic perspective. This scale was developed according to the views of Sabiq (2016). Islamic knowledge between Muslim and non-Muslim relationship scale consists of 26 items with five aspects, namely the ideology and ritual, interaction and interpersonal relationship, consumption and business, marriage and heritage, and leadership. The higher score that individual obtained show the higher their Islamic knowledge about the relationship between Muslim and non-Muslim. The scale has been qualitatively validated as well as psychometrically sound.

Data Analysis
This study used structural equation model (SEM) to test the suitability of the causal relationship model between the research variables with empirical data. In addition, this technique is estimated the direct effect to see the relationship of exogenous variables on endogenous variables. It is also estimated the indirect effect to see the mediation effect between the variables. The data were analyzed using Lisrel 8.8 program. The criterions of the accepted model were RMSEA (< 0.08), GFI (> 0.80), AGFI (> 0.80), CFI (> 0.80), and chi-square (p > 0.05).

RESULT
The aim of this study examined the model of the influence of religious mature sentiment and Islamic knowledge on social prejudice toward the Christian through agreeableness trait as an intermediate variable in Muslim students (table 1). The results showed that the model was fit to the empirical data (RMSEA = 0.058; GFI = 0.91; AGFI = 0.88; CFI = 0.94). Then, these findings also showed that (1) agreeableness trait was the only endogenous variable who had a contribute on social prejudice (factor loading = -4.08; R^2 = 0.45), (2) Islamic knowledge was the only exogenous variable who had a contribute on social prejudice (factor loading = -4.58; R^2 = 0.45), (3) religious mature sentiment as exogenous variable had an influence on agreeableness trait (factor loading = 6.38; R^2 = 0.44), and (4) religious mature sentiment as independent variable had an influence on social prejudice (factor loading = 2.61; R^2 = 0.45) (see Figure 1).

Among the aspects of religious mature sentiment, the biggest role that can be seen from the factor loading, in order were heuristic (X5) (factor loading = 13.59), dynamic character (X2) (factor loading = 9.55), moral consistency (X3) (factor loading = 9.59), comprehensive-integrative (X4) (factor loading = 8.50), and differentiation (X1) (factor loading = 7.13). Then, among the aspects of Islamic knowledge, the biggest role that can be seen from the factor loading, in order were interaction and interpersonal relationship (X7) (factor loading = 5.31), the ideology and ritual (X6) (factor loading = 4.52), and consumption and business (X8) (factor loading = 2.91). Among the aspects of agreeableness trait, the biggest role that can be seen from the factor loading, in order were tenderness (Y1) (factor loading = 6.36), altruism (Y4) (factor loading = 6.20), straight-forwardness (Y5) (factor loading = 6.12), compliance (Y3) (factor loading = 5.99), modesty (Y2) (factor loading = 4.70), and trust (Y6) (factor loading = 0.00). Then, among the aspects of social prejudice, the biggest role that can be seen from the factor loading, in order were affective (Y14) (factor loading = 10.75), conative (Y15) (factor loading = 10.61), and cognitive (Y13) (factor loading = 0.00).
DISCUSSION

The result of this study showed that the model of the influence of religious mature sentiment and Islamic knowledge on Christian social prejudice through agreeableness trait as an intermediate variable in Muslim students was fit to the empirical data. The researchers found the important result that the social prejudice of Muslim students are influenced by religious mature sentiment, Islamic knowledge, and agreeableness. The result of this study supported the model of social prejudice that has done by Nashori and Nurjannah (2015). Their study was conducted among Muslim college students who lived in the majority of the non-Muslim area. The findings of this study showed that religious mature sentiment influences social prejudice directly as well as through agreeableness trait. The Islamic knowledge influences the social prejudice directly, but not affecting the agreeableness trait. While the agreeableness trait influences social prejudice directly (see figure 2).

Religious mature sentiment was influence agreeableness trait

Islam taught individuals to possess good deeds (Quran 25: 36). The individuals with good religious-maturity practiced that command in their daily life and it will produce the kindness or agreeableness trait. Religious mature sentiment makes the individuals lived with the essence of Islam, namely rahmatan lil ‘alamin, the concept that can be defined have mercy to anyone and anything. The Muslim who have basic religious beliefs have a positive relationship with others and positive correlations with agreeableness trait (Khoynezhad, Rajaeli & Sarvarazemy, 2012; Saroglou, 2009). McCullough (2001) said that the personality traits are influenced by the religious values that they are believed and adhered to. Then, it develops in the individuals’ social life. religious mature sentiment strengthens the agreeableness traits to others (rahmatan lil ‘alamin). The affection, as the core of agreeableness traits, makes the individuals have a moral responsibility toward others including those who made mistakes through sharing the good deeds.

Islamic knowledge for reducing social prejudice

The Islamic knowledge has influenced social prejudice directly. It means that the more of Islamic knowledge that individuals have shown the lower of social prejudice to others. Psychologists believe that one of the factors that can influence attitude and behavior is knowledge. The positive behavior influenced by more and comprehensive knowledge. Then, the negative behavior influenced by little, limited, and not comprehensive knowledge (Selvyani, 2008). Therefore, increasing knowledge of individual can reduce social prejudice to others. Religion knowledge is defined as the information of faith and behavioral systems that are related to each other. Azwar (2015) said that the individual’s understanding between good or bad things plays a role in the emergence of an attitude toward others. In addition, the core of the change in individual behavior is repeating. Repeating will increase the good behavioral change in individual (Sears, Freedman & Peplau, 2003).

Increasing Islamic knowledge may the Muslim students understand about the command of the religion to do good deeds and fair to others. An example, the hostility among Muslims toward Christians because they are shackled by the idea that Christians are infidels (kafr), and the infidels must be fought or opposed. But, when continually learning about Islam, individuals will more understand that Islam commands to help each other (ta’awwun), have a good attitude (al-birr), and fair (‘adl) to others of a different religion. Islam encourages people to be fair and objective to other groups, even if the group is most hated and becomes an enemy (Rahman, 2013).
Religious mature sentiment for reducing social prejudice

One of the findings in this study were the religious mature sentiment influence on social prejudice. The result showed that religious mature sentiment can reduce social prejudice. The more mature an individual in religiosity tends to have lower social prejudice. Previous research found that the individual’s obedience to values and religion among members of a group tends to cause negative attitudes and feelings in looking at other group members. Then, it turned into social prejudice and stereotype (Zarin, 2003). Altemeyer and Hunsberger (Rahman, 2013) also found that strong religious beliefs which contain the fundamental truths believe, intrinsic, have fundamental thoughts about humanity and divinity, believe the truth must be followed, and believe that people who get the truth will get a special place in God’s side positively relate to high social prejudice toward others who are outside the groups. However, the findings in this study refute previous research above. Islam basically wants to distance individuals from social prejudice towards other people (Quran 49: 12). Muslim who obey religious orders will try to stay away from social prejudice. Another study showed that high religious mature sentiment among adolescents correlates with a low level of social prejudice (Village, 2011) and interreligious prejudice in relation to religious development (Streib & Klein, 2014).

Agreeableness trait for reducing social prejudice

The result of this study showed that agreeableness trait has an influence on social prejudice. The previous studies found that agreeableness minimized social prejudice (Graziano, Bruce, Sheese & Tobin, 2007; Sibley & Duckitt, 2008). The individuals who have agreeableness trait are motivated to get intimacy, unity, and solidarity with others. The agreeableness trait, also known as social adaptability and likability, it showed the individual who generous, friendly, humble, tend to succumb, avoid conflict, and tend to follow others (McCrae & Costa, 2003). These traits lead an individual to understand and do good deeds to others, even if the person has a different religion. The understanding of others and the motivation to do good deeds makes the individual less prejudiced toward others who come from other religious community.

The good Muslims will do good deeds to anyone in the form of caring, generosity, sincerity, trust, and humility to others. Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon Him, it gave us an example when received unpleasant treatment from Jews still make him showed his kindness to others. The kindness will be shown to anyone, including the individuals who have different principle or religion. The kindness or affection as the core of agreeableness trait makes the individuals have a moral responsibility to others through share their resources to people who make mistakes and do not consider their mistakes (McCullough, 2001). A moral responsibility to others makes an individual minimized the negative feeling and attitude, such as social prejudice.

Implications for reducing social prejudice in diverse communities

A nation or area that has a lot of diversity requires factors that can maintain tolerance and harmony in their community. Based on the results of this study, it can be seen that religious mature sentiment has an influence on social prejudice, especially in interreligious prejudice. The attempts to reduce social prejudice between religious communities can be done by increasing religious mature sentiment and knowledge about religion. These attempts are not only carried out to the majority community but the minority one as well in order to be able to understand and tolerate one another. This is aimed to minimize social prejudice because they do not have enough about knowledge and religious mature sentiment. Governments, religious leaders, education systems, and even families have a responsibility and role in understanding and teaching religion especially to early adulthood/college students. In Indonesia, the conflict and social prejudice between Islam and
Christian can be reduced by optimizing religious mature sentiment and Islamic knowledge on Muslim and Non-muslin relationship.

Limitations of the study

Our study has limitations. Due to sample size was took from one place only, this study can be generalized only on Muslim students. Then, it cannot reveal how the model of the relationship between religion and social prejudice in various other age groups and other religion. Therefore, further research is also expected to be carried out on another religion believer (Christianity, Catholic, Hindu, Buddha, and Khong Hu Cu). It aims to get a more comprehensive explanation of how interreligious and social prejudice relationship occur.

CONCLUSION

The model of the influence religious mature sentiment and Islamic knowledge toward social prejudice on the Christians through the intermediary of agreeableness is fit or compatible with the empirical data. Thus, this research shows the important result that the social prejudice against Christians not only influenced by the agreeableness but also by religious mature sentiment and Islamic knowledge. The way it works is religious mature sentiment influence the social prejudice directly and through the agreeableness trait while the Islamic knowledge about the relationship between Muslim and non-Muslim influence the social prejudice directly without going through agreeableness.

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