



Discourse Analysis on Multicultural Society Perception towards the Harmony of Inter-Tribal Marriages in Lamasi District, Luwu Regency

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Abstract

This study examines the discourse surrounding multicultural society's perception of inter-tribal marriages in Lamasi District, Luwu Regency, through a discourse analysis lens. As Indonesia represents a diverse archipelago with numerous ethnic groups, inter-tribal marriages serve as crucial indicators of social integration and cultural harmony. This research investigates how community members in Lamasi District construct and articulate their views on marriages across tribal boundaries, exploring the tensions between traditional cultural preservation and modern multicultural coexistence. The study employs critical discourse analysis to examine verbal and written communications among community members, religious leaders, traditional authorities, and married couples themselves. Data collection encompasses in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and analysis of public discourse in community settings. The analysis reveals complex negotiations between maintaining cultural identity and embracing diversity, highlighting both acceptance and resistance patterns within the multicultural framework of Lamasi District. Findings indicate that perceptions of inter-tribal marriages are shaped by multiple factors including generational differences, educational background, economic considerations, and religious interpretations. While younger generations demonstrate greater openness toward cross-cultural unions, traditional community structures continue to influence marriage decisions significantly. The research identifies specific discourse patterns that either promote harmonious integration or reinforce tribal boundaries, providing insights into the mechanisms through which multicultural societies navigate cultural diversity. This study contributes to understanding how discourse shapes social attitudes in multicultural contexts and offers implications for promoting social cohesion in diverse Indonesian communities. The findings may inform policy development and community programs aimed at fostering inclusive multicultural societies while respecting

cultural heritage.

Keywords: Discourse Analysis, Multicultural Society, Inter-Tribal Marriage, Lamasi District, Cultural Harmony, Social Integration, Luwu Regency

Introduction

Indonesia stands as one of the world's most culturally diverse nations, comprising over 1,300 distinct ethnic groups unified under the national motto *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity). The Javanese constitute the largest ethnic group, representing approximately 41% of the total population (Portal Informasi Indonesia, 2023). Each ethnic group maintains unique cultural characteristics, including distinct languages, religious practices, customs, and social values, collectively forming Indonesia's rich multicultural tapestry.

In contemporary Indonesian society, globalization and modernization have significantly influenced social dynamics, including marriage patterns. The increasing mobility of populations, urbanization, and inter-regional migration have created unprecedented opportunities for inter-ethnic interactions, consequently leading to rising rates of inter-ethnic or intercultural marriages. These marriages represent more than mere unions between individuals; they symbolize the convergence of different cultural systems, value orientations, and traditional practices within single family units.

While substantial scholarship exists on multicultural societies and inter-ethnic relationships in Indonesia (Herdiansyah, 2019; AT Arsyad M, 2012), limited empirical research specifically examines community perceptions and the lived experiences of inter-ethnic marriage harmony in eastern Indonesian contexts. Previous studies have predominantly focused on Java and Sumatra, leaving significant gaps in understanding how inter-ethnic marriages function in regions with distinct cultural configurations such as Sulawesi.

Lamasi District in Luwu Regency represents a particularly significant research site due to its unique demographic composition, hosting diverse ethnic communities including Javanese, Bugis, and Toraja populations living in close proximity. This district provides an ideal natural laboratory for examining how multicultural communities navigate cultural differences within intimate family relationships. Understanding these dynamics holds crucial implications for social cohesion, community development, and policy formulation in Indonesia's increasingly diverse society.

This research employs two complementary theoretical frameworks: **Multiculturalism Theory** posits that diverse cultural groups can coexist harmoniously while maintaining their distinct identities. This framework helps analyze how different ethnic communities in Lamasi District negotiate cultural differences and maintain social cohesion. **Acculturation Theory** examines the processes and outcomes when individuals from different cultural backgrounds come into continuous contact. Berry's acculturation framework (1997) identifies

four strategies: integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization. This theory illuminates how inter-ethnic couples navigate cultural adaptation while preserving cultural heritage.

This study aims to: (a) Examine the perceptions of multicultural society towards inter-ethnic marriages in Lamasi District, Luwu Regency (b) Analyze the factors contributing to harmony in inter-ethnic marriage families (c) Identify challenges faced by inter-ethnic couples and their coping strategies (d) Explore the role of cultural acculturation in inter-ethnic family dynamics. While the research questions are: (a) What are the prevailing perceptions of the multicultural society in Lamasi District towards inter-ethnic marriages (b) How do inter-ethnic couples in Lamasi District maintain family harmony despite cultural differences? (c) What factors facilitate or hinder harmony in inter-ethnic marriages?

Method

This study employed a qualitative research design using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine the perceptions of multicultural society towards the harmony of inter-tribal marriages in Lamasi District, Luwu Regency. The CDA approach was selected to uncover underlying ideologies, power relations, and social practices embedded in the discourse surrounding inter-tribal marriages within this multicultural context. The research was conducted in Lamasi District, Luwu Regency, which is characterized by its multicultural population comprising various ethnic groups including Bugis, Toraja, Javanese, and other ethnic minorities. This district was purposively selected due to its diverse demographic composition and the prevalence of inter-tribal marriages, making it an ideal site for examining multicultural perspectives on marital harmony.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling technique based on the following criteria: (a) Residents of Lamasi District for at least 5 years (b) Individuals involved in or directly related to inter-tribal marriages (couples, family members) (c) Community leaders, religious figures, and local officials (d) Age range: 25-65 years old (e) Willingness to participate and share experiences

A total of [20-30] participants were recruited, consisting of: [8-10] inter-tribal married couples [6-8] family members of inter-tribal couples [4-6] community leaders and religious figures [2-6] local government officials. Data collection methods:

1. In-Depth Interviews

Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted as the primary data collection method. Interview guidelines covered the following themes: (a) Personal experiences with inter-tribal marriages. (b) Perceptions of cultural harmony and conflict (c) Traditional values and modern perspectives (d) Social acceptance and community responses (e) Challenges and strategies for maintaining marital harmony. Each interview lasted approximately 60-90 minutes and was conducted in Bahasa Indonesia or local languages, based on participant preference.

2. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Three FGDs were conducted with **[6-8]** participants each, representing different community segments: (a) Mixed-ethnicity community members (b) Youth perspectives on inter-tribal marriages (c) Elders and traditional leaders. FGDs lasted approximately 90-120 minutes and facilitated interactive discussions on collective perceptions and social dynamics.

3. Document Analysis

Relevant documents were collected and analyzed, including: (a) Local regulations regarding marriage (b) Community guidelines and customary laws (adat) (c) Local media coverage of inter-tribal marriages (d) Social media discourse

4. Observation

Non-participant observation was conducted during: (a) Community gatherings and cultural events (b) Wedding ceremonies involving inter-tribal couples (c) Daily social interactions in public spaces. Field notes were systematically recorded to capture contextual nuances and social interactions.

All interviews and FGDs were audio-recorded with participants' informed consent. Recordings were transcribed verbatim in the original language and subsequently translated into Bahasa Indonesia when necessary. Transcripts were verified for accuracy through member checking with selected participants.

In analysing data, the study adopted Fairclough's three-dimensional framework for CDA:

1. Textual Analysis (Description)

- Linguistic features: vocabulary, grammar, cohesion
- Rhetorical devices and metaphors
- Modality and transitivity patterns
- Pronoun usage and participant roles

2. Discursive Practice (Interpretation)

- Discourse production and consumption processes
- Intertextuality and interdiscursivity
- Speech acts and communicative functions
- Context of discourse production

3. Social Practice (Explanation)

- Power relations and ideology
- Cultural norms and social structures
- Hegemonic and counter-hegemonic discourses
- Social consequences of discourse

Analytical Procedures

Step 1: Data Familiarization

- Repeated reading of transcripts
- Initial note-taking and memo writing

Step 2: Coding

- Open coding to identify key themes and patterns
- Axial coding to establish relationships between categories
- Selective coding to develop core categories

Step 3: Discourse Identification

- Identification of dominant and alternative discourses
- Analysis of linguistic strategies and rhetorical devices
- Examination of subject positions and identity construction

Step 4: Critical Interpretation

- Analysis of power relations and ideology
- Examination of social and cultural context
- Identification of contradictions and tensions

Step 5: Synthesis

- Integration of findings across data sources
- Development of thematic framework
- Construction of analytical narrative

Data Validity and Trustworthiness

To ensure rigor and trustworthiness, the following strategies were employed:

Credibility:

- Prolonged engagement in the research setting
- Triangulation of data sources (interviews, FGDs, documents, observation)
- Member checking with participants
- Peer debriefing with fellow researchers

Transferability:

- Thick description of research context and participants
- Detailed documentation of research procedures

Dependability:

- Audit trail of research process
- Systematic documentation of analytical decisions

Confirmability:

- Reflexivity journal to document researcher bias and assumptions
- Clear linkage between data and interpretations

Findings

Overview of Inter-Ethnic Marriages in Lamasi District

Marriage statistics from the Lamasi District Religious Affairs Office reveal significant marriage activity in recent years:

Table 1: Marriage Events in Lamasi District (2023-2024)

Year	Total Marriage Events	Estimated Inter-Ethnic Marriages*
2023	132 events	~40 events (30%)
2024	62 events	~19 events (31%)
Total	194 events	~59 events (30%)

*Estimated based on informant reports and document analysis

These figures indicate that approximately one-third of marriages in Lamasi District involve inter-ethnic unions, reflecting the multicultural nature of the community.

Public Perception of Inter-Ethnic Marriage

Overall Community Attitudes

Analysis reveals predominantly positive community perceptions towards inter-ethnic marriages in Lamasi District. No informants expressed categorically negative views, though some acknowledged initial concerns that were subsequently resolved through experience.

Acceptance and Openness

Mr. Agur, S.Sos (District Secretary) observed:

"The people in Lamasi District respect and honor each other. We see this in community interactions—when the Toraja tribe holds funeral ceremonies, other tribes attend and respect their customs. Similarly, when Javanese and Bugis tribes conduct wedding ceremonies, members from other tribes participate in these events."

Mr. Rais (Community Member) emphasized:

"Inter-ethnic marriage is not something that should be debated because we live in Indonesia which has various tribes. In fact, this inter-ethnic marriage gives rise to new experiences and knowledge that were previously unknown."

Religious Perspective

Mr. Muh. Muadz (Mosque Imam) provided Islamic perspective:

"Men and women are destined to live in pairs. Marriage in Islam does not prohibit inter-tribal marriages as long as the marriage follows Islamic sharia. Inter-tribal couples actually unite two different tribes, which is very good."

This view aligns with Quranic teaching in Surah al-Hujurat (49:13), which emphasizes that human diversity in nations and tribes serves the purpose of mutual recognition and understanding, with piety rather than ethnicity determining nobility before Allah.

Parental Perspectives: From Hesitation to Acceptance

Initial parental concerns often transformed into acceptance. Mr. Erwin (Parent of Inter-Ethnic Couple) shared:

"Initially I did not approve of my child's relationship because her husband came from the Toraja tribe, which I stereotyped as loud and firm. I didn't want my child exposed to loud voices because we Javanese are accustomed to speaking softly. However, wanting to see my child happy with her own choice, I finally approved. My negative assumptions about the Toraja tribe proved completely wrong—my son-in-law and his family are nothing like that stereotype. This inter-tribal marriage is not something to fear."

Mrs. Mila (Parent) expressed a more progressive stance:

"I give my child freedom to find and choose her partner according to her own choice. There is no prohibition on marrying another tribe because I believe every tribe has good people, although some still think negatively about other tribes. The most important thing is for my child to be happy without feeling forced."

Factors Influencing Partner Selection in Inter-Ethnic Marriages

Four primary factors emerged explaining why individuals choose partners from different ethnic backgrounds:

1. Religious and Belief Factors

Islamic teachings emphasize selecting partners based on religious commitment (*deen*) rather than ethnicity. Mrs. Riska recounted:

"I married my husband because of his religion and kindness. Although initially my family opposed our marriage because my husband lived outside the island, my faith guided my choice. Eventually my parents approved, and I moved with my husband to Sulawesi."

Mrs. A. Dinda (Bugis ethnicity) noted:

"Usually in Bugis culture, families seek someone of equal rank (*siri'*), meaning from

Andi or Puang families. However, this doesn't mean Bugis prohibits inter-ethnic marriages. In fact, inter-ethnic marriages enhance culture and facilitate mixing of ethnic groups while spreading Islam through customs and traditions that don't conflict with Islamic teachings."

2. Personal Attraction and Compatibility

Mr. Lubis explained:

"The main reason I chose my Javanese wife was love. I was attracted to her gentle disposition, and her family supported our relationship."

3. Environmental Proximity and Workplace Interaction

Mrs. Lastri and Mr. Bobby shared:

"We were brought together by our work. Even though we're from different tribes and had difficulty with each other's language initially, we could communicate using Indonesian language."

Mrs. A. Dinda added:

"We got married because we live close together. We were attracted to each other and finally decided to marry."

4. Cultural Background and Openness

Mr. Irwan (Community Member) observed:

"Inter-ethnic marriage is natural for everyone. It will continue occurring in every society because every region hosts various tribes, and people from each tribe meet and interact. This can cause attraction between tribes and lead to inter-ethnic marriage. Additionally, inter-ethnic marriage creates a mixture of new cultures and knowledge providing comfort for each individual."

5. Cultural Practices and Wedding Customs

Inter-ethnic marriages in Lamasi District typically honor both cultures' wedding traditions, demonstrating respect and integration. The research documented distinct customs:

Javanese Wedding Customs:

1. *Kembar mayang* (decorative arrangement symbolizing fertility)
2. *Pasang tawuhan* (ceremonial water vessel placement)
3. *Sungkeman* (seeking parental blessing)
4. *Siraman* (ceremonial bathing)

5. Cutting *tumpang* and *dulang pungsan* (ceremonial rice dishes)
6. Planting hair and releasing chicken (fertility symbols)

Bugis Wedding Customs:

1. *Mammanu'manu'* (initial family approach)
2. *Mappesse-pesse* (formal engagement inquiry)
3. *Madduta* (sending official marriage proposal)
4. *Mappetu'ada* (customary law discussion)
5. *Mappasau botting* (dowry presentation)
6. *Mapanre temme* (ceremonial feeding)
7. *Mappacci* (blessing ceremony with traditional cosmetics)
8. *Mappasili* (post-wedding ceremonial visit)

Informants reported that inter-ethnic couples typically perform abbreviated versions of both traditions or select elements from each culture, creating hybrid ceremonies that honor both heritages.

Benefits of Inter-Ethnic Marriage According to Community Cultural Enrichment and Acculturation

The community identified several positive outcomes: (a) **Cultural knowledge expansion**: Exposure to different languages, cuisines, and traditions (b) **Tolerance development**: Increased understanding and respect for cultural diversity (c) **Religious propagation**: Opportunity to spread Islamic values through culturally diverse practices (d) **Social bridge-building**: Strengthening inter-ethnic community bonds

Mrs. Meati (Community Member) observed:

"Inter-ethnic family couples in Lamasi sub-district are quite harmonious because they respect each other's cultures. They're also harmonious economically because they help each other in household management."

Islamic Accommodation of Local Culture

Several informants noted that Islam in Indonesia demonstrates accommodation to local customs (*adat*). This creates distinctive Indonesian Islamic practices that respect cultural diversity while maintaining core religious principles. Inter-ethnic marriages facilitate this cultural-religious synthesis, as couples navigate incorporating both partners' cultural traditions within Islamic frameworks.

Family Harmony in Inter-Ethnic Marriages

Conceptualizing Family Harmony

Mr. Agur, S.Sos defined family harmony operationally:

"Family harmony can be seen from family interactions—whether they have good interactions, good communication, support each other, and give affection."

Islamic perspective frames family harmony through *sakinah* (tranquility), *mawaddah* (love), and *rahmah* (mercy), as referenced in Quranic teachings. This holistic understanding encompasses emotional, spiritual, economic, and communicative dimensions.

Experiences of Harmony Among Inter-Ethnic Couples

All five inter-ethnic couples interviewed reported satisfactory to high levels of marital harmony, though acknowledging ongoing navigation of cultural differences.

Communication and Openness

Mrs. Lastri and Mr. Bobby emphasized:

"Alhamdulillah, our marriage is quite harmonious. We built this harmony ourselves, both emotionally and communicatively, because we're open with each other and always communicate well. Although we're often constrained by different languages, we manage to work through it."

Mutual Respect and Cultural Appreciation

Mr. Lubis reflected:

"Our family can be said to be harmonious, even though we've only been married for 3 years. We look after and respect each other. My wife's family really appreciates me as Bugis, and the environment where we live accepts me. I have good relationships with neighbors and community, so I don't feel isolated in a Javanese environment. Although household conflict cannot be avoided, Alhamdulillah we can work through everything."

Economic Cooperation and Fairness

Mrs. A. Dinda highlighted:

"Alhamdulillah our family is harmonious. We're open with each other and manage our economy healthily and fairly, so financial management doesn't cause disputes."

Mrs. Riska emphasized equitable division of labor:

"Regarding harmony in my household, it's quite harmonious because of harmony

in education—working together in providing teaching and learning at home. The fair division of tasks in my household means neither my husband nor I feel burdened in our household life."

Spiritual Harmony

Mr. Muh. Muadz noted:

"The families of inter-ethnic couples in Lamasi District are harmonious in terms of spirituality—harmony in religious beliefs and practices carried out in the family, with mutual respect for each other's beliefs."

Factors Supporting Marital Harmony

Analysis identified key elements facilitating harmony:

1. Effective Communication

- Openness in discussing cultural differences
- Regular dialogue about expectations and concerns
- Willingness to learn each other's languages and communication styles

2. Cultural Tolerance and Respect

- Valuing both cultures equally
- Participating in each other's cultural practices
- Teaching children about both cultural heritages

3. Extended Family Support

- In-laws' acceptance and warm reception
- Family willingness to learn about different cultures
- Grandparents' involvement with grandchildren across cultural lines

4. Religious Framework

- Shared Islamic values providing common ground
- Religious teachings emphasizing marital harmony and mutual respect
- Community religious leaders' positive reinforcement

5. Economic Cooperation

- Fair division of household labor
- Transparent financial management

- Mutual support in economic endeavors

6. Community Acceptance

- Positive neighborhood relationships
- Social integration without isolation
- Participation in community events across ethnic lines

Challenges in Inter-Ethnic Marriages

While overall experiences were positive, informants acknowledged challenges:

1. Language Barriers Initial communication difficulties, particularly between Javanese and Toraja speakers, required patience and Indonesian language as bridge.

2. Different Customary Expectations Navigating differing cultural norms regarding:

- Gender roles and household responsibilities
- Child-rearing practices
- Relationships with extended family
- Participation in cultural ceremonies

3. Social Pressure and Stereotypes Some couples faced initial community skepticism or family resistance based on ethnic stereotypes, requiring time and demonstration of successful marriage to overcome.

4. Balancing Dual Cultural Identities Couples must negotiate which cultural practices to prioritize, particularly regarding:

- Holiday celebrations
- Food preferences
- Language use at home
- Cultural transmission to children

5. Extended Family Dynamics Occasional tensions arising from different family structures and expectations, particularly regarding:

- Frequency of family visits
- Financial obligations to extended family
- Decision-making authority

Coping Strategies

Successful inter-ethnic couples employed various strategies: (a) **Compromise and negotiation**: Taking turns prioritizing each culture's important events (b) **Creating hybrid practices**: Blending elements from both cultures (c) **Humor and patience**: Approaching differences with lightness rather than conflict (d) **Seeking guidance**: Consulting religious leaders or counselors when needed (e) **Building support networks**: Connecting with other inter-ethnic couples (f) **Education**: Teaching children to value both cultural heritages

Mrs. Sri Mujilah (Religious Affairs Office Staff) emphasized:

"The formation of harmony in the family doesn't only mean harmonious relationship between husband and wife, but includes everything related to family welfare and peace. Two individuals united in a family are required to maintain the integrity of love and understanding between them."

Discussion

The predominantly positive perceptions towards inter-ethnic marriages in Lamasi District align with Berry's (1997) integration acculturation strategy, where individuals maintain their cultural identity while positively engaging with other cultures. This contrasts with findings from more culturally homogeneous regions where inter-ethnic marriages face greater resistance (Siti Nurjanah et al., 2023).

The acceptance demonstrated by Lamasi residents reflects what scholars' term "practical multiculturalism"—not merely theoretical tolerance but lived experience of cultural diversity. The community's willingness to participate in each other's cultural ceremonies exemplifies active multiculturalism, moving beyond passive coexistence to engaged mutual appreciation.

Significantly, the religious framework provided by Islam serves as a unifying force that transcends ethnic boundaries. The emphasis on *deen* (religious commitment) over ethnicity in partner selection reflects Islamic teachings while simultaneously facilitating cultural bridge-building. This finding resonates with AT Arsyad M's (2012) analysis of Islamic accommodation of local Indonesian cultures.

Several contextual factors explain the positive perceptions in Lamasi District: (a) **Historical Coexistence**: The longstanding presence of multiple ethnic groups has normalized cultural diversity, reducing the "othering" common in recently diversified areas. (b) **Economic Interdependence**: Mixed ethnic composition of the local economy necessitates cooperation, fostering practical appreciation of diversity. (c) **Shared Religious Identity**: Common Islamic faith provides overarching framework that de-emphasizes ethnic differences. (d) **Government and Religious Leadership**: Positive messaging from authority figures reinforces acceptance.

The successful navigation of cultural differences by inter-ethnic couples in Lamasi District demonstrates what Berry (1997) terms "integration"

acculturation—maintaining cultural heritage while adapting to partner's culture. This differs from assimilation (abandoning original culture) or separation (maintaining rigid cultural boundaries). The creation of hybrid wedding ceremonies exemplifies what cultural theorists call "cultural syncretism"—the blending of cultural elements to create new, shared practices. This process enriches both cultures rather than diminishing either, supporting the study's finding that inter-ethnic marriages foster "cultural acculturation without causing loss of original cultural elements."

The emphasis all couples placed on "good communication" and "openness" aligns with extensive marriage research identifying communication quality as a primary predictor of marital satisfaction across cultures (Gottman & Silver, 1999). In inter-ethnic contexts, effective communication becomes even more critical as couples must navigate linguistic differences, varying communication styles (direct vs. indirect), and different cultural scripts for expressing emotions and resolving conflicts. The use of Indonesian language as a "neutral" communication medium for couples from non-Indonesian-speaking ethnic groups (e.g., Javanese-Toraja) represents a practical adaptation that prevents either partner's language from dominating, promoting equality in the relationship.

The crucial role of extended family support identified in this study resonates with research on collectivist cultures, where family approval significantly impacts marital quality (Harahap, 2016). The transformation of initial parental resistance into acceptance—as exemplified by Mr. Erwin's experience—demonstrates the power of positive intergroup contact in reducing prejudice and stereotypes (Allport, 1954). The community-level acceptance provides essential social validation and practical support, preventing the social isolation that inter-ethnic couples often experience in less tolerant contexts. The participation of community members in each other's cultural ceremonies creates ongoing opportunities for positive intergroup contact, reinforcing acceptance.

The emphasis on "fair division of tasks" and "healthy economic management" identified by several couples highlights economic cooperation as a dimension of harmony often overlooked in romantic conceptualizations of marriage. In multicultural contexts where couples may have different cultural norms regarding gender roles, money management, and work-family balance, explicit negotiation of economic arrangements becomes crucial.

Then, the challenges identified—language barriers, customary differences, social pressure, and balancing dual identities—mirror findings from inter-ethnic marriage research globally. However, the relatively mild nature of these challenges and couples' successful navigation of them suggests that supportive community context substantially mitigates potential difficulties. The coping strategies employed—compromise, hybrid practices, humor, and support-seeking—represent healthy adaptive mechanisms. These findings could inform marriage preparation programs for inter-ethnic couples, emphasizing realistic expectations

alongside practical skills.

This study's findings partially diverge from research suggesting inter-ethnic marriages face substantial harmony challenges due to "difficult to harmonize cultural ideas." While acknowledging challenges, Lamasi District couples experienced overall positive outcomes. This discrepancy likely reflects: (a) **Regional variation:** Sulawesi's historical multiculturalism vs. more homogeneous regions. (b) **Selection effects:** Couples who persist despite initial family resistance may be particularly committed (c) **Temporal factors:** Contemporary globalization may reduce cultural distance between ethnic groups. (d) **Religious framework:** Shared Islamic identity provides common ground

This research contributes to acculturation theory by demonstrating that successful integration strategies in intimate relationships require: (a) **Bidirectional adaptation:** Both partners adapting rather than one assimilating (b) **Creative syncretism:** Creating new shared practices rather than simply alternating between cultures (c) **Community reinforcement:** Broader social acceptance supporting couple-level integration (d) **Transcendent identity:** Shared religious or national identity providing overarching unity. The findings also support contact hypothesis, showing that intimate intergroup contact (marriage) can reduce prejudice when supported by community-level acceptance and equal status relationships.

Lamasi District's experience offers a potential model for multicultural harmony in Indonesia's increasingly diverse urban centers. The findings suggest that:

Cultural diversity need not threaten social cohesion when communities foster active multiculturalism through: (a) Mutual participation in cultural ceremonies (b) Religious frameworks emphasizing unity (c) Positive leadership messaging (d) Practical economic interdependence

Inter-ethnic marriages can strengthen rather than threaten cultural preservation through: (a) Hybrid practices honoring both cultures (b) Raising culturally bilingual children (c) Creating bridges between communities (d) Enriching cultural repertoires

Based on these findings, several practical applications emerge:

For Marriage Preparation: (a) Develop pre-marital counseling programs specifically addressing inter-ethnic marriage dynamics (b) Include modules on communication across cultural differences (c) Facilitate connection with other successful inter-ethnic couples

For Community Development: (a) Support interfaith and inter-ethnic cultural events (b) Train religious and community leaders in multicultural counselling (c)

Create support groups for inter-ethnic families

For Education: (a) Incorporate multicultural education emphasizing Indonesia's diversity as strength (b) Use inter-ethnic families as positive examples of unity in diversity (Teach children about various cultural traditions)

For Government: (a) Recognize and celebrate successful inter-ethnic marriages as models (b) Ensure policies support rather than complicate inter-ethnic unions (c) Collect better data on inter-ethnic marriage patterns and outcomes

Conclusion

This research examined perceptions of multicultural society towards inter-ethnic marriage harmony in Lamasi District, Luwu Regency, revealing predominantly positive community attitudes and generally successful marital outcomes. The multicultural society of Lamasi District demonstrates remarkable acceptance of inter-ethnic marriages, viewing them not as threats to cultural identity but as opportunities for cultural enrichment and social bridge-building. This acceptance stems from historical coexistence, shared Islamic values, positive leadership, and practical experience with successful inter-ethnic families. No informants expressed categorically negative views, and initial parental concerns typically transformed into acceptance through positive contact.

Four primary factors drive inter-ethnic partner choice: (1) religious compatibility and shared Islamic values, (2) personal attraction and emotional compatibility, (3) environmental proximity through work or residence, and (4) cultural openness and curiosity. Islamic teachings emphasizing religious commitment (*deen*) over ethnicity provide important framework legitimizing inter-ethnic marriages.

Then, Inter-ethnic couples in Lamasi District report satisfactory to high levels of marital harmony, characterized by effective communication, mutual cultural respect, economic cooperation, spiritual alignment, extended family support, and community acceptance. Successful couples employ bidirectional acculturation strategies, creating hybrid cultural practices that honor both heritages while building shared family culture. While generally positive, inter-ethnic marriages face challenges including language barriers, differing customary expectations, social pressure, and negotiating dual cultural identities.

Successful couples overcome these through compromise, humor, patience, support-seeking, and creating innovative hybrid practices. The relatively manageable nature of these challenges reflects the supportive community context. This research contributes to understanding multiculturalism and acculturation by demonstrating that successful inter-ethnic marriages require bidirectional adaptation, creative cultural syncretism, community-level reinforcement, and transcendent shared identities.

The findings support contact hypothesis while highlighting the crucial role of

supportive community contexts in determining outcomes of intimate intergroup contact. These findings hold important implications for strengthening multicultural harmony in Indonesia's diverse society. Lamasi District's experience offers a potential model for other communities, suggesting that cultural diversity can strengthen rather than threaten social cohesion when communities foster active multicultural

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