

Forgiveness among Javanese Ethnicity Mancanegari Subculture: A Case Study in Indonesia

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Abstract - *This study was aimed to examine a model of forgiveness among Javanese ethnicity from Mancanegari subculture. The hypothesis was the model of the effect of religiosity on forgiveness with mediating effects through agreeableness trait and interpersonal attachment showed a good fit to the data. This study has used the forgiveness, agreeableness trait, religiosity, and interpersonal attachment scales. Participants were 275 Javanese ethnicity Mancanegari subculture (the area of culture in East Java). The result of this study indicated that the model of the effect of religiosity on forgiveness with the mediating effect of agreeableness trait and interpersonal attachment was fit to the data. It was confirmed that forgiveness influenced by religiosity with agreeableness trait and interpersonal attachment as mediating effects among Mancanegari-Javanese.*

Keywords - *forgiveness, agreeableness trait, religiosity, interpersonal attachment, Javanese ethnic*

I. INTRODUCTION

The ideal form of living together in society is a recognition and respect for cultural and religious diversity (multiculturalism). In a multicultural society, it is expected that the relationships between individuals show mutual understanding, tolerance, and cooperation. If there are differences or conflicts between individuals or groups, then these should be resolved in a good way [1], such as through forgiveness. Forgiveness was the individuals' ability to developed cognitive, affective, and interpersonal relationships with other people who committed an offense unfairly and followed by an individuals' willingness to leave negative things that come from an interpersonal relationships with others [2].

Forgiveness is a way to resolve conflicts that can occur between individuals, groups, and even countries [3]. Forgiveness has shown to improve self-control [4], resilience [5] [6], psychological well-being [7] [8], life satisfaction [9], gratitude [10], and meaning in life [11] [12]. Also, forgiveness is directly affected endurance and physical health by boosting the immune system at the cellular and neuro-endocrine level, releases antibodies, and influences central nervous system processes [13]. Moreover, forgiveness is also enhanced of well-being,

self-acceptance, competence to deal with challenges [14], reduced depression [15], reduced bullying [16], and negatively correlated with revenge [17].

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Religiosity, interpersonal attachment, agreeableness trait, and forgiveness

Forgiveness is to help individuals to deal with conflicts or differences that exist. Through forgiveness can make individuals have a better quality of life by having good interpersonal relationships with others. Thus, psychologists need to understand the process that leads to forgiveness. Forgiveness influenced by religiosity and mediated by personality traits, in this case agreeableness and neuroticism [18]. Then, an individual's personality also shaped by their religious values and beliefs. Personality will determine how the individual response to the problem of conflict and the way he/she solved it. Among the five personality traits (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience), the most forgiving personality was emotional stability (an acronym of neuroticism) and agreeableness [19].

The model presented by McCullough [18] should be corrected before being used to understand people from collectivistic culture. In a collectivistic culture, the presence of another individual would shape the individual's behavior. In a collective culture who prioritizing tolerance and harmony is made the individuals try to show good attitudes towards others to maintain the interpersonal relationships that have been established. This also affected by the culture and personality itself. Therefore, the authors were focused on *how* individuals' forgiveness in a collective culture, especially among Javanese ethnic in Mancanegari subculture.

People who lived in Asia countries have a strong presence of interpersonal relationships [20]. The factors that affected the forgiveness of the collectivistic ethnic of Javanese culture in Indonesia was the interpersonal attachment. Interpersonal attachment is the individuals' tendency to consider the views and opinions of people who are based on experience before making a decision [21] [22]. Then, it determined how the individuals take their attitudes toward other people who are different or have conflicts with them. If the individual felt that interpersonal relationship and harmony are more important so it will make him forgive that person who in conflict. Thus, the culture had an influence on individual behavior, such as interpersonal relationships and interpersonal attachment.

Forgiveness shown by Negarigung-Javanese who living in Yogyakarta was affected by religiosity and interpersonal attachment through personality traits [23]. Then, forgiveness shown by Maduranese ethnic was affected by religiosity and interpersonal attachment through personality traits [24]. The result of two research showed that religiosity, personality traits

(agreeableness and neuroticism), sociocultural, and interpersonal attachment have some effect in shaping the forgiveness. People who lived in Negarigung cultural area, who are often called *tiyang negari* (those who lived in the center of the nation), have characteristics that prioritize kindness through the use of language or art combined with religious life. [25]

Javanese ethnicity Mancanegari subculture (Mancanegari-Javanese)

In addition to Negarigung-subculture, Javanese ethnicity has other subcultures with distinctive characteristics. The area of Javanese culture was divided into five subcultures, namely (1) Negarigung, the area of culture is around Yogyakarta and Surakarta, (2) Banyumasan, the area of culture is around Purwokerto, (3) Bagelen, the area of culture is around Purworejo, (4) Pesisir, the area of culture is on the north coast of Java, which is divided into the Pesisir Kilen (north shore of Central Java) and Pesisir Wetan (north shore of East Java), and (5) Mancanegari, the area of culture is in East Java [26]. The cultural area of Bagelen and Banyumasan are included in the Negarigung cultural area. Thus, Javanese subcultures can be divided into at least three different types, namely Negarigung, Pesisir, and Mancanegari. [25]

The Mancanegari subculture then can be divided into several sub-sub cultures, namely Mataraman (ex Kresidenan Kediri, ex Kresidenan Ngawi), Panaragan (Ponorogo area), Arek or Suroboyoan (Surabaya, Gresik, Sidoarjo, Jombang, Mojokerto, Malang, Batu), Samin (Bojonegoro in East Java and Blora in Central Java), Tengger (Probolinggo), Osing (Banyuwangi), and Pandalungan (Pasuruan, Probolinggo, Lumajang, Jember Situbondo, Bondowoso). Among these areas of culture, the one that shows the most opposite to the characteristics of Negarigung is the culture of Arek or Suroboyoan. Arek or Suroboyoan tends to be more expressive than Negarigung. [27]

The Mancanegari-Javanese people generally are religious society. Their religiosity was created very high respect for the significant figures around them. In addition to parents, Islamic religious leaders (*ulama* and *kyai*) are the ones who are highly respected. Advice from these significant figures were highly valued and well-considered in decision making. This suggests two things, namely Mancanegari-Javanese Muslims has high levels of interpersonal attachments to others and the interpersonal attachment was strongly driven by their religiosity [28]

The characteristics of the Mancanegari-Javanese people are very open or honest and make them slightly different from the Negarigung-Javanese ethnicity in terms of emotion regulation. Unlike the Negarigung-Javanese people who consider that kindness or refinement are the important things in interpersonal relationships and interpersonal attachment in their culture, the

Mancanegari-Javanese people are providing freedom to express themselves (in thoughts, feelings, and behavior). The freedom of expression enables them to use verbal communication more frequently. They are more likely to express their disagreement when receiving inappropriate behavior from others, even they will immediately respond to others' inappropriate behavior. Consequently, they consider that expressed themselves were important than to stabilizing their emotion, such as going through think or felt about others' feelings or opinions before they expressed themselves [25] [27].

Therefore, the Mancanegari-Javanese people were not considered that emotional stability as important as Negarigung-Javanese because they tend to immediately express themselves when they faced inappropriate behavior from others. Emotional stability in Javanese, especially in Negarigung-subculture, was represented as more calm, self-control, not easily surprised, and not easily amazed. The emotional stability, such as the ability to regulate emotions from stress or another pressure, was one of the characteristics from neuroticism trait in the big five personalities [29]. Based on the explanation above, the hypothesis in this study was to determine the model of the effect of forgiveness among Mancanegari-Javanese on religiosity with mediating effects, namely agreeableness trait, neuroticism trait, and interpersonal attachment.

III. METHOD

The respondents in this study was 275 (134 males and 141 females) Mancanegari-Javanese people who met the following criteria: (1) during this study, they lived as citizens in the areas that are mostly known for having the characteristics of Mancanegari, which is the areas of Arek or Suroboyoan (Surabaya, Gresik, Sidoarjo, Jombang, Mojokerto, Malang, Batu) in the East Java Province, (2) they admitted that they were Javanese, (3) during the last 10 years, they had lived in the areas categorized as having Javanese culture with Mancanegari-subculture, particularly in the area of Arek, (4) particularly for adolescent respondents, their parents should be Javanese from Mancanegari-subculture and in the last 10 years, they had lived in the area of Mancanegari-subculture, (5) they used Javanese language with Mancanegari dialect in their daily interactions, and (6) participants are Muslim aged 12-72 years.

The sampling technique used in this study was a stratified cluster random sampling. Using this technique, the sampling process was carried out with the following steps: (a) Choosing at random three districts/municipalities in the cultural area of *Arek*. This resulted in Surabaya, Malang, and Mojokerto (East Java), (b) selecting two sub-districts among several other sub-districts in the selected districts/municipalities. (c) Randomly choosing two urban villages from each sub-district elected, resulting in six urban villages. (d) Randomly choosing two hamlets

(RW or Rukun Warga) from each of the selected urban villages, resulting in twelve hamlets. (e) Randomly choosing two neighborhoods (RT or Rukun Tetangga) from each selected hamlets, resulting in 24 neighborhoods. From each neighborhoods, 15 people were chosen as participants. The sample includes adolescents, young adults, middle adults, and older adults.

The measurements of this study are the Forgiveness scale ([30]), Agreeableness scale ([30]), Neuroticism scale ([30]), Religiosity scale ([30]), and Interpersonal Attachment scale ([30]). All measures were found to be reliable and had been pilot tested to 70 Javanese participants. Referring to Kline [31], a scale's alpha coefficient of 0.9 was considered excellent, 0.80 – 0.90 was considered very good, and 0.70 – 0.80 was considered good. The scales developed by Nashori [30] have met the reliability and validity criteria (**Table 1**).

Table 1. Alpha Coefficient of Scales

Scale	Alpha Coefficient	Category
Forgiveness Scale	0.935	Excellent
Agreeableness Scale	0.743	Good
Neuroticism Scale	0.908	Excellent
Religiosity Scale 1 (Religious belief, Religious practice, Religious effect, Religious feeling)	0.950	Excellent
Religiosity Scale 2 (Religious knowledge)	0.870	Very Good
Interpersonal Attachment Scale	0.928	Excellent

The scales were completed by eligible respondents who indicated their willingness to participate. All participants (with an educational background of middle school up to postgraduate study) completed the scales in the presence of data collectors. For older adults who experienced difficulties in reading, data collectors read the scale aloud.

This study was used a structural equation modelling (SEM) to examined the model of forgiveness among Mancanegari-Javanese subculture. The numerous of criteria should be fulfilled to ensure that hypothesis or the theoretical model was fits to the empirical data: Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) < 0.08 (good fit), Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) > 0.90 (good fit) or 0.80 - 0.90 (marginal fit), Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) >0.90 (good fit) or 0.80 – 0.90 (marginal fit), Tucker Lewis Index (TLI) or Incremental Fit Index (IFI) >0.90 (good fit) or 0.80 – 0.90 (marginal fit).Comparative Fit Index (CFI) >0.90 (good fit) or 0.80 – 0.90 (marginal fit). Chi square $p > 0.5$ [32].

There are latent and measured variables in this study, which include: (a) exogenous latent variable of religiosity, consisting of religious belief, religious practice, religious effect, religious feeling, and religious knowledge as measured variables, (b) endogenous latent variable of interpersonal attachment, consisting of measured variables such as behaviour and attitude of relationship partner, relationship quality of the individual and his/her partner, and consideration of a third party, (c) endogenous latent variable of agreeableness which include the measured variables of tender-mindedness, modesty, compliance, altruism, straightforwardness, and trust, (d) endogenous latent variable neuroticism, consisting of measured variables such as anxiety, hostility, depression, self-consciousness, impulsiveness, and vulnerability, and (e) endogenous latent variable of forgiveness consisting of measured cognition, emotion, and interpersonal. Data analysis was done using Lisrel version 8.8.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Hypothesis testing results showed that the religious influence model on forgiveness through agreeableness trait and interpersonal attachment on Mancanegari-Javanese subculture needed to be corrected because of the lack of effect of neuroticism trait as the mediating effect on forgiveness and religiosity to forgiveness directly in this model (see **Figure 1**). The first hypothesis was corrected or modified. The modification was done who considered the lack of effect of neuroticism trait on forgiveness. Therefore, the second model was tested. The second model stated that forgiveness on Mancanegari-Javanese was affected by religiosity through agreeableness trait and interpersonal attachment as mediating effects (see **Figure 2**).

Figure 2 clearly showed that the final model of forgiveness was supported by empirical data as seen from the value of RMSE (0.044). The figure showed that (a) exogenous variable of religiosity (factor loading of 5.55) has an absolute role in contributing to agreeableness, (b) exogenous variable of religiosity (factor loading of 3.61) has an absolute role in contributing to interpersonal attachment, (c) the variable of interpersonal attachment (factor loading of 3.05) has a role in affecting forgiveness, and (d) variable of agreeableness (factor loading of 2.84) has a role in influencing forgiveness. The results of factor loadings, t values, and their significance can be seen in **Table 2**.

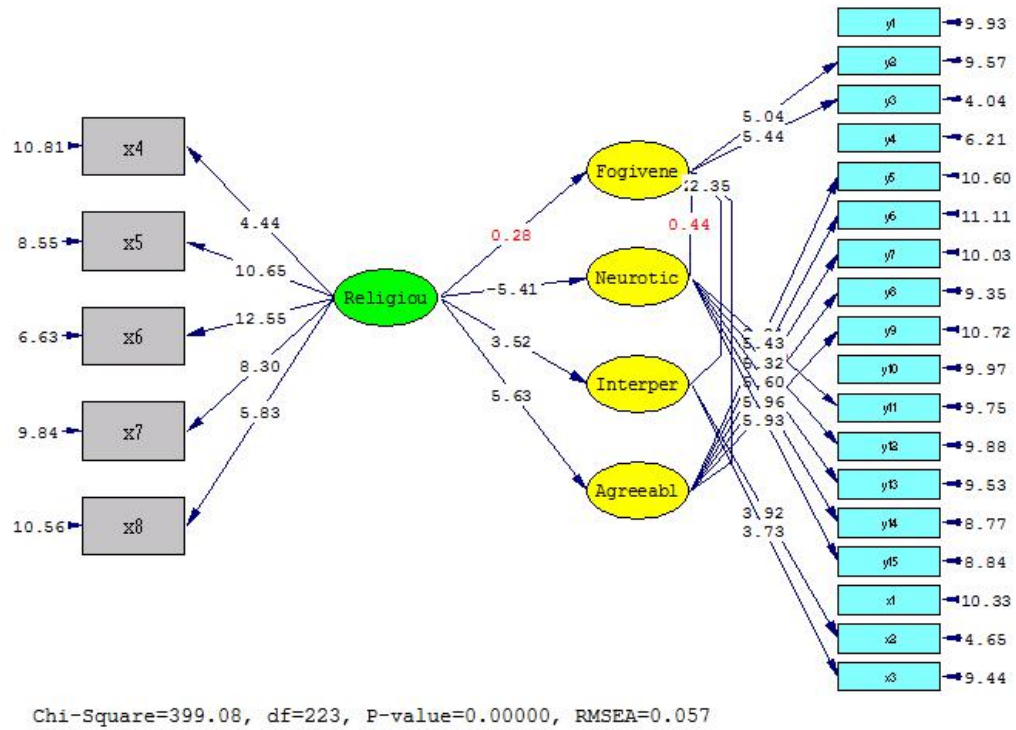


Figure 1. Model showed the effects of religiosity on forgiveness through agreeableness trait, neuroticism trait, and interpersonal attachment as the mediating effects.

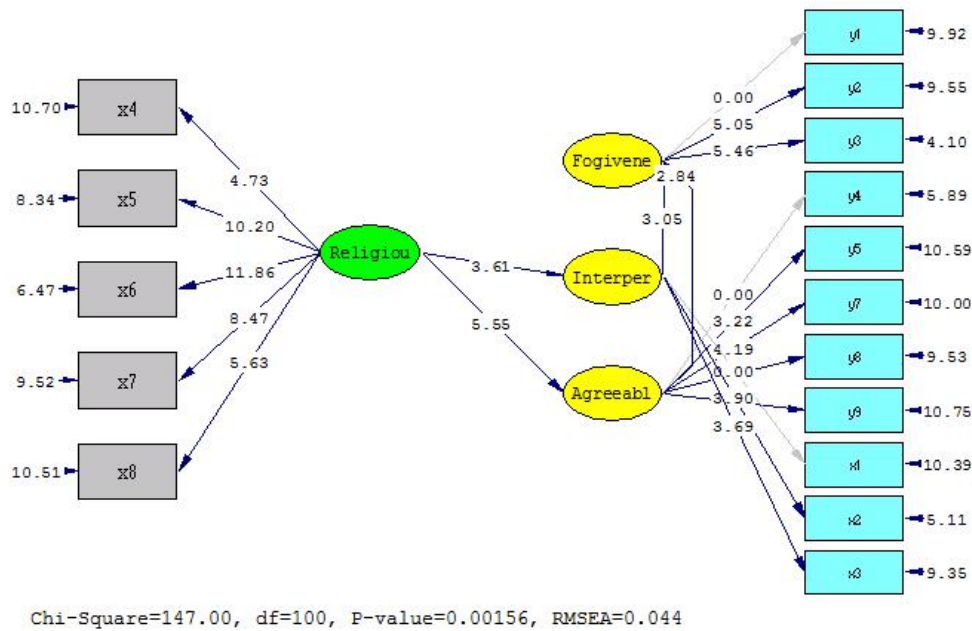


Figure 2. Model showed the effects of religiosity on forgiveness through agreeableness trait and interpersonal attachment.

Table 2. Effect Coefficient among Variables in the Study on Participants

Relationship	Effect Coefficient	t-value
Interpersonal Attachment – Forgiveness	0.50	3.05
Agreeableness – Forgiveness	0.50	2.84
Religiosity - Agreeableness	0.30	5.55
Religiosity - Interpersonal Attachment	0.29	3.61

The new findings in the Model Fit Figure above are as follows: First, among the five indicator variables of religiosity, only four showed significant effects, the one that has the largest effect was moral (factor loading = 11.86), followed by worship (factor loading = 10.20), excellence (factor loading = 8.47), and faith (factor loading = 4.73). Second, among the three indicator variables of interpersonal attachment, the most influential one was quality of relationships (factor loading = 3.90), followed by reasoning from significant person (factor loading = 3.69), and attitude and behavior (factor loading = 0.00). Third, from the six indicator variables of agreeableness, only five had significant effects, these include straight-forwardness (factor loading = 4.59), altruism (factor loading = 4.19), modesty (factor loading = 3.22), trust (factor loading = 2.81) and tender-mindedness (factor loading = 0.00). Fourth, from three indicator variables of forgiveness, the ones with the most significant contribution were as follows: interpersonal relationships (factor loading = 5.46) and cognition (factor loading = 5.05), while emotion only yielded a parameter estimate with a factor loading of 0.00.

Discussion

The results showed that the model of the effect of forgiveness among Javanese from Mancanegari-subculture on religiosity with mediating effects of agreeableness and interpersonal attachment showed a good fit to the data. This implies that the forgiveness model by Nashori, Iskandar, Setiono, Siswadi, Andriansyah [23] and Nashori, Wijaya, Diana, Herawati [24] was modified by including mediating effects of agreeableness trait and neuroticism trait on the relationships between religiosity, and interpersonal attachment and forgiveness. Neuroticism trait as a mediator variable was not confirmed. Among Javanese from Mancanegari-subculture, the relevant mediator variables were agreeableness and interpersonal attachment (see **Figure 3**).

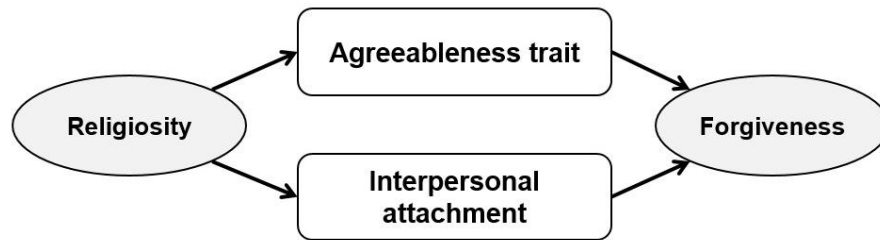


Figure 3. Forgiveness model among Mancanegari-Javanese

The result supports the view of McCullough [18] and the previous studies [21] [23] [24] [33] regarding the effect of religiosity on forgiveness through agreeableness trait. Religiosity makes individuals, in this case Mancanegari-Javanese subculture, follow their religious teachings. Religious teachings encourage them to nurture some facets of agreeableness traits, such as hospitality, generosity, simplicity, reliability, and honesty. Religious teachings taught in schools, mosques, and boarding schools (Islamic boarding schools) conditioning individuals to have obedience to their religion in daily life, such as forgive others. Through these traits also will make them prioritize harmony in interpersonal relationships and avoided conflict as they could with forgiveness. Then, agreeableness trait becomes strongly attached to the individuals and they will develop a moral responsibility to others. The moral responsibility makes the individuals do some kindness to others and it enables them to forgive. Therefore, they considered to do not some injustice behavior (*zalim*) because this responsibility was important. The injustice behavior in this case are caused from terrorist attack, physical or emotional abuse, rape, anger or actions taken between different cultures or religion, etc [18].

These findings confirmed that forgiveness influenced by religiosity through interpersonal attachment. In the values of Abrahamic religion (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam), the individuals' quality of relationship to God was reflected in their relationship to others [34]. When the individual believes their values of religion then it will make them respect and made a good relationship to others [28] [35]. Therefore, the more religious individuals are will make them have a good interpersonal attachment to others

The results of this study confirmed that the interpersonal attachment influences forgiveness. When an individual was interpersonally attached to others, he/she will respond according to the signals and needs of others, including an offender. If an offender expresses a significant regret, then the individual will provide interpersonal forgiveness [36]. Furthermore, if the offender asks

for an apology, then the victim will usually forgive the offender [37]. The existing relationships between the victim and offender enable the victim to forgive the offender [38]. Also, the individual will forgive when he/she receives advice or suggestions from highly respected people [21].

It is interesting to note that neuroticism trait did not mediate the relationships between religiosity and forgiveness. This is in contrast to the views of McCullough [18], the study by Watkins and Regmi [19] among Nepalese, and the study by Nashori [30] among Negarigung-Javanese (Yogyakarta). Previous studies have shown that neuroticism has a negative relationship with forgiveness. However, in this present study, the relationship between neuroticism and forgiveness was not found. Instead, it confirms an earlier assumption that Javanese from the Mancanegari-subculture did not dwell on negative emotions due to their honesty [25] [27]. This prevents them from developing neuroticism, and consequently, neuroticism does not appear as a variable that influences forgiveness.

The limitations of this study: First, the population was limited to people who lived in Surabaya, Malang, and Mojokerto (east java). Future studies should include a wider range of population groups, in terms of the ethnicities and also in a national or global scope. Second, the constructs tested in this study (forgiveness and interpersonal attachment) were only relevant for Javanese. They have not yet tested in other cultures in Indonesia or in other countries. Future studies should involve other ethnicities outside of Java. The recommended ethnicities include ethnic groups that have a large number of members in Indonesia, such as Minangkabau, Madura, Bugis-Makassar, Mandar, Gorontalo, Sunda, Melayu, Chinese, and others. This should be done because the mentioned ethnicities are considered to be collectivistic ethnicities.

The conclusion is that the model of the effect of religiosity on forgiveness among Javanese from Mancanegari subculture with mediating effects of agreeableness trait and interpersonal attachment was fit to the data. Thus, in collectivistic societies, forgiveness was not only affected by personal factors (religiosity, agreeableness) but also affected by other factors related to groups or sociocultural factors (interpersonal attachment). The authors would like to express thanks to for Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education, the Republic of Indonesia who funding this study.

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