



Prospective Teachers' Intercultural Sensitivity alongside the Contextual Factors as the Affective Domain to Realize Multicultural Education

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The multicultural education of Indonesia calls for prospective teachers (PTs) with sufficient intercultural sensitivity. Hence, this mixed-method intercollegiate study aimed to quantitatively measure the intercultural sensitivity of PTs at UIN Raden Fatah Palembang and IAIN Curup and to qualitatively investigate the contextual factors underlying their intercultural sensitivity. 1,800 PTs of both universities were involved as the quantitative participants, and 10% of them were purposively selected as the qualitative participants to join interviews and FGDs. The findings revealed that the PTs of both universities had high intercultural sensitivity. Their intercultural sensitivity was underpinned by six contextual factors, such as interests in other cultures, frequently joining activities of other cultures, living in a multicultural environment, experiences of interacting with people of different cultures, the senses of family and friendship, and learning experiences in the cross-cultural understanding course. The PTs' high intercultural sensitivity implies that they are ready to teach Indonesian multicultural students under the national multicultural curriculum of Indonesia, K-13. However, external empowerments are required to maintain their current state of intercultural sensitivity because intercultural sensitivity is an affective or attitudinal domain vulnerable to change. Research limitations, implications, and recommendations are provided at the end of the data discussion and conclusion sections.

Keywords: intercultural sensitivity, multicultural education, intercollegiate study

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is an archipelagic country with thousands of tribes, hundreds of ethnic groups, and varied religions (Tjipto & Bernardo, 2019). For Indonesians, multiculturalism is a social reality. The essence of their multiculturalism naturally classifies them as a multilingual society. In addition to the Indonesian language, used as the lingua franca for intra-national communication, the Indonesian people speak around 700 different local languages, and each of these languages is used according to their respective

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cultural communities (Kirkpatrick & Liddicoat, 2017). On the one hand, the Indonesian people's multiculturalism is an advantage because Indonesia is rich in cultural diversity, with each culture having values and potencies to support the Indonesia's advancement. On the other hand, the situation in Indonesia, whose population represents a diverse range of cultures, can also be a potential source of cultural conflicts related to race, religion, and ethnicity (Noe et al., 2018).

One cause of the conflicts in the midst of cultural diversity is intolerance (Warsah, 2020; Warsah et al., 2019), and this is a social phenomenon that must be resolved by instilling intercultural sensitivity competencies through educational systems so that future's generations of Indonesians will be more tolerant of differences. Cultural conflicts are very likely if the essence of culture in tandem with its dynamic social affiliations is not accompanied by the competence of Indonesian people's tolerance for differences (Syafri et al., 2020). Thus, based on *Pancasila* as the state ideology, the Indonesian government, through the ministry of education, supports the education of Indonesian children through a multicultural education system so that the values of tolerance and diversity are embedded in their identities (Harjatanaya & Hoon, 2018; Hoa & Vien, 2019). Multicultural education is defined as the education incorporating various values from a variety of socio-cultural affiliations (Barzanò et al., 2017). When interacting in the midst of complex cultural differences, the teacher acts as an active facilitator in multicultural education to teach students intercultural competence (Kazykhankyzy & Alagözülü, 2019). Students can learn intercultural competence if they already have intercultural sensitivity.

Intercultural sensitivity, according to Chen and Starosta (2000), is an affective aspect of intercultural competence that demonstrates a person's desire to understand and accept cultural differences. Thus, intercultural sensitivity is the first domain that students and teachers must acquire in order to master the intercultural competence as one of the goals of multicultural education. If intercultural sensitivity is internalized in the domain of teachers' and students' attitudes, teachers and students will end up with being more tolerant of cultural differences and other social affiliations. Hence, the potential for cultural conflicts will be able to be suppressed in the future with a spirit of tolerance. The foregoing concept demonstrates the importance of acquiring intercultural sensitivity. In order to provide an ideal multicultural education for future's generations, teachers must first have acquired intercultural sensitivity even since their college years as the prospective teachers (hereafter as PTs) (Jun, 2016).

Since the last five years, many researchers have driven their interests in the issue of intercultural sensitivity. They have conducted studies on international students' intercultural sensitivity in Korea (Bae & Song, 2017), prospective primary and secondary school teachers' intercultural sensitivity in Istanbul (Demir & Kiran, 2017), graduate students' intercultural sensitivity in Malaysia (Sarwari et al., 2017), students' intercultural sensitivity after they underwent an international mobility program in Andalusia (Rodríguez-Izquierdo, 2018), kindergarten teachers' intercultural sensitivity in America (Monroe & Ruan, 2018), English teachers' intercultural sensitivity in Iran (Alaei & Nosrati, 2018), medical students' intercultural sensitivity in Iran (Nameni &

Dowlatabadi, 2018), international students' intercultural sensitivity in Korea (Kim, 2019), and the intercultural sensitivity of adolescents taking music subjects in America (Mellizo, 2019). Other studies have also sought to see the interactions of intercultural sensitivity with other variables. For example, Kaya et al. (2021) conducted a study on intercultural sensitivity as the main issue among nursing students. The flow of their study was set to see how ethnocentrism and moral sensitivity as the factors contribute to intercultural sensitivity. Their study confirmed that low ethnocentrism contributes to high intercultural sensitivity, and high moral sensitivity leads to high intercultural sensitivity. Çingöl et al. (2021) scrutinized intercultural sensitivity and emphatic skill as the endogenous variables determined by the role of intercultural nursing course. Their study demonstrated that an external intervention, such as the intercultural nursing course, does not make a significant and direct contribution to intercultural sensitivity, but such an intervention is valuable to enhance students' understanding on cultural structures. In a different way, Li and Longpradit (2022) depicted a highly contributive and direct role of an external intervention, the so-called intercultural teaching program, to the enhancement of intercultural sensitivity. The possible reason seems to be central to the comprehensive and detailed design of the intervention in Li and Longpradit's (2022) study compared to that of Çingöl's et al. (2021) study. Subsequently, Üzar-Özçetin et al. (2022) sought to see the interactions of intercultural sensitivity, psychological resilience, and empathetic tendency among the teachers of Syrian refugee children. Their study demonstrated that the teachers' intercultural sensitivity is high, and psychological resilience becomes the main predictor of both intercultural sensitivity and empathetic tendency.

The above studies have contributed to give us valuable insights regarding the essence of intercultural sensitivity for both teachers and students. However, according to our reviews on various reputable journals, limited research on intercultural sensitivity has been conducted in the Indonesian context. There is one study conducted by Sugianto et al. (2022). Their study investigated the intercultural sensitivity of EFL primary school students in Indonesia. Their study indicated that the students' intercultural sensitivity is high, and such a high level is linear to the low level of ethnocentrism. Their study also highlighted a positive relationship between students' intercultural sensitivity and extroversion. Other studies from Indonesia seem to have focused on the other related issues, such as intercultural competence and intercultural communication as the umbrella terms where intercultural sensitivity takes its branch (e.g., Abduh & Rosmaladewi, 2018; Idris, 2020; Morganna et al., 2020). It is worth noting that the foregoing studies by Indonesian academicians only work on intercultural sensitivity in the field of language education. In fact, the essence of multiculturalism in Indonesia encompasses many aspects other than mere language. Given the significance of intercultural sensitivity for PTs in Indonesia and considering the paucity of literature in respect of the studies on intercultural sensitivity in the Indonesian context, the present inter-collegial study, thus, aims at investigating the intercultural sensitivity of PTs at two universities in Indonesia, UIN Raden Fatah Palembang (hereafter as UIN) and IAIN Curup (hereafter as IAIN). They are intended to take part in this study because UIN and IAIN have a large number of students of education majors, and they will be the future's

teachers who will teach Indonesian multicultural students. The basic premise is that PTs with strong intercultural sensitivity will be able to educate future's students under the multicultural education system mandated by the Indonesian government. The following two research questions are formulated to direct this study.

1. How is the intercultural sensitivity of PTs at UIN and IAIN?
2. What are the contextual factors underlying their intercultural sensitivity?

The Theoretical Framework of Intercultural Sensitivity

Intercultural sensitivity is a psychological aspect of intercultural competence (Alaei & Nosrati, 2018). Intercultural sensitivity, according to Chen and Starosta (2000), is an affective element of intercultural competence that demonstrates a person's desire to understand and accept cultural differences. Meanwhile, the cognitive aspect of intercultural competence is known as intercultural awareness, and the conative aspect is known as intercultural adroitness. According to Eagly and Chaiken's (2007) psychological theory of attitude, the affective aspect is the first domain that demonstrates a person's proclivity to do something. Thus, intercultural sensitivity is the first domain that students and teachers must master in order to acquire intercultural competence as one of the goals of multicultural education (Duisembekova, 2021; Hoa & Vien, 2019). In order to provide an ideal multicultural education for future's generations, teachers must master intercultural sensitivity even since their college years (Jun, 2016). Intercultural sensitivity demonstrates a person's ability to motivate himself to accept, value, and comprehend cultural differences (Chen & Starosta, 2000).

Nonetheless, Bennett (1993) defined intercultural sensitivity in a different way, viewing it as the ability to recognize and respect both differences and similarities. He viewed intercultural sensitivity through the dynamics from ethnocentrism to ethno-relativism. The former consists of three stages: negation, defense, and minimization. The latter also includes three stages: acceptance, adaptation, and integration. As previously mentioned, negation represents a rejection of cultural differences. Defense depicts a process of acknowledging cultural differences while still viewing one's own culture as the most qualified. Minimization is the process of recognizing basic cultural similarities while ignoring the essence of differences. Acceptance denotes the ability to recognize both differences and similarities, as well as the understanding that the same type of behavior can be perceived differently by people from other cultures. Adaptation refers to the processes of empathy and environmental adaptation that occur during the development of a person. Lastly, integration is a process of redefining identities in order to connect to various cultural frames. However, the majority of his model appears to demonstrate cognitive responses to cultural differences. This model is theoretically conflicting because it can overlap with the so-called intercultural awareness.

Different from Bennett (1993), Chen and Starosta (2000) have put intercultural sensitivity *in situ* as an affective constituent. They offer a five-domain model which serves as the yardstick for determining one's level of intercultural sensitivity. This model defines intercultural sensitivity as not only one's consciousness in interactions, but also his appreciation and respect for the information exchanged during cross-cultural

communication, as well as acceptance of individual complexities. The domains of Chen and Starosta's intercultural sensitivity are critical and can assist teachers and students in implementing multicultural education (Jun, 2016). Reviewed from Chen and Starosta (2000), the first domain, engagement in intercultural interactions, indicates a person with an empathetic attitude towards others and a willingness to actively and continuously participate in the complexities of cross-cultural interactions. The second domain, respect for cultural differences, describes a person with an open mind who is willing to express himself as he is and to accept others as they are. The third domain, confidence in cross-cultural interactions, denotes someone who has a high self-esteem and values the complexity and ambiguity during cross-cultural interactions. The fourth domain, enjoyment of cross-cultural interactions, demonstrates a person with a nonjudgmental attitude that leads him to enjoy accepting others' views and cultures without jumping into premature conclusions corresponding to any information he receives during cross-cultural interactions. Furthermore, the fifth domain, attention during cross-cultural interactions, describes a person who applies good self-monitoring to identify challenges that arise in cross-cultural situations so that he can make appropriate behavioral adjustments. Broadly speaking, people with intercultural sensitivity can be identified by empathy, active and ongoing involvement, open-mindedness, high self-esteem, non-judgmental attitude, and good self-monitoring during cross-cultural interactions.

METHOD

Design

This study adopted a pragmatic worldview to see research problems using multiple perspectives (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This worldview allowed us to use the lenses of deductive and inductive reasonings as the modes to investigate intercultural sensitivity and its contextual factors. Practically, the pragmatic worldview led us to the adoption of an explanatory sequential mixed-method design whose research pattern was initiated by a quantitative investigation and ended by a qualitative investigation. Grounded in the central problems of this study, the quantitative investigation employed a survey method to find out the intercultural sensitivity level of PTs at UIN and IAIN. Subsequently, the qualitative investigation implemented an instrumental case-study method to probe into the contextual factors underlying the intercultural sensitivity of PTs of both universities. The data garnered from the two methods would complement each other, ensuring the data's credibility.

Participants

A great number of PTs at UIN and IAIN participated in this study. There were 1,000 students of UIN and 800 students of IAIN who became the respondents of survey. They were selected using a convenient sampling technique. It meant that those recruited as the samples were ones voluntarily willing to fill in the given online instrument. In terms of education, the participants' demography can be seen in table 1.

Table 1
Educational demographic data of PTs at UIN and IAIN

UIN					IAIN				
Department	Number of PTs per Semester				Department	Number of PTs per Semester			
	1 st	3 rd	5 th	7 th		1 st	3 rd	5 th	7 th
Islamic education	19	13	31	17	Islamic education	30	26	23	27
English education	40	34	37	13	English education	40	30	33	28
Arabic education	11	24	20	20	Arabic education	20	20	19	12
Madrasah ibtidaiyah teacher education	30	33	23	17	Madrasah ibtidaiyah teacher education	30	25	25	11
Mathematics education	36	29	40	20	Indonesian language education	30	20	20	10
Early childhood Islamic education	38	24	27	11	Early childhood Islamic education	36	24	25	25
Islamic education management	40	20	25	15	Social science education	34	23	19	14
Biology education	28	22	30	13	Natural science education	15	15	13	8
Chemistry education	33	40	30	23	Mathematics education	24	16	17	13
Physics education	17	19	25	13					
Total per semester	292	258	288	162	Total per semester	259	199	194	148
Total Number of PTs at UIN and IAIN		: 1800							

Table 1 does not depict any significant difference between PTs at UIN and those of IAIN because, despite a few differences in majors, they all studied in the faculty of education. It meant that all of them received various learning interventions on the basis of pedagogical theories and practices. Such common ground implied that the Pts of both universities could be merged into one sample group for the purpose of this study. In terms of cultural affiliations, most of the participants (92%) were from the lands of Palembang and Bengkulu with different ethnic groups, such as Palembang, Tebing Tinggi, Musi Rawas, Semende or Pagar Alam, Bengkulu, Rejang, and Lebong. The rest came from other provinces. Their cultural affiliations demonstrated that the PTs of both universities were of multicultural people that were appropriate to take part in this study.

Furthermore, the instrumental case study involved 100 students of UIN and 80 students of IAIN. They were selected using a purposive sampling technique (Yazan, 2015). The main criteria of their selection as the study's participants were that they were easily accessed, communicative, representative of all on-going semesters, and adequately competent at providing detailed data *vis-à-vis* the contextual factors underlying their levels of intercultural sensitivity. Because they were the students from various regions

and ethnicities in the cities of Palembang and Bengkulu, all students involved in this research were, by nature, associated with the essence of multiculturalism.

Techniques of Collecting Data

In this study, the survey deployed a scale already developed by Chen and Starosta (2000) to precisely measure the PTs' levels of intercultural sensitivity. Chen and Starosta (2000) had constructed a rigorous scale of intercultural sensitivity alongside attesting its validity and reliability. Also, various researchers studying the variable of intercultural sensitivity had adopted this scale for measurement, demonstrating the strength of this scale (Alaei & Nosrati, 2018; Bae & Song, 2017; Demir & Kiran, 2017; Nameni & Dowlatabadi, 2018; Sarwari et al., 2017; Strekalova-hughes, 2017; Zhang & Han, 2019). Table 2 shows the domains underpinning the scale of intercultural sensitivity.

Table 2

The blueprint of intercultural sensitivity scale adopted from Chen and Starosta (2000)

No	Domains	Items	Scale of judgment
1	Engagement in intercultural interactions	Items 1, 11, 13, 21, 22, 23, and 24	Strongly disagree (SD), disagree (D), neutral (N), agree (A), and strongly agree (SA)
2	Respecting diverse cultures	Items 2, 7, 8, 16, 18, and 20	Strongly disagree (SD), disagree (D), neutral (N), agree (A), and strongly agree (SA)
3	Confidence in cross-cultural interactions	Items 3, 4, 5, 6, and 10	Strongly disagree (SD), disagree (D), neutral (N), agree (A), and strongly agree (SA)
4	Enjoying cross-cultural interactions	Items 9, 12, and 15	Strongly disagree (SD), disagree (D), neutral (N), agree (A), and strongly agree (SA)
5	Attention during intercultural interactions	Items 14, 17, and 19	Strongly disagree (SD), disagree (D), neutral (N), agree (A), and strongly agree (SA)
Total of items		24 items	

The domains displayed in table 2 were invented by Chen and Starosta (2000) in their research which analyzed the intercultural sensitivity factors involving 414 students. The factor loading for each of the five domains was 0.50. According to their findings, the 24 items constructed from the 5 domains, had a high internal consistency with a reliability coefficient of 0.86. They further tested the concurrent validity of the scale by incorporating 162 students in a way that correlated the scale with seven other intercultural scales already developed by previous researchers. The computation deployed the Pearson product-moment correlation formula. Their findings revealed that the intercultural sensitivity scale had a significant correlation with the seven prior scales, with $p < 0.05$ and r ranging from 0.17 to 0.74. This analysis demonstrated that the intercultural sensitivity scale was valid. In the present study, the 24 items were translated into Indonesian by our colleagues who were well-versed in translation studies and had taught translation courses, particularly bilingual translation (English and Indonesian). The back translation technique was conducted to avoid meaning deviations. Once ready for data collection, the scale was copied into the Google form and distributed online to 1000 students at UIN and 800 students at IAIN. This study was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic, so data collection processes had to be

undertaken online. We tracked the PTs via their cellphone numbers and social media accounts, which were provided by the campus administrators of both universities.

Furthermore, the instrumental case study conducted interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) to reveal the contextual factors underlying the PTs' intercultural sensitivity. Interviews involved 100 students of UIN and 80 students of IAIN. Out of them, 60 students of UIN and 50 students of IAIN continuously took part in FGDs. Both interviews and FGDs were held online. All data obtained from interviews and FGDs were recorded using cell phones and video recorders. Furthermore, written transcripts were made to take a note of detailed information addressed during interviews and FGDs. We used the five domains of Chen and Starosta's (2000) scale as the main discourses to negotiate the contextual factors of intercultural sensitivity during interviews and FGDs. In such a way, the interview questions and the flow of FGDs were oriented towards negotiating to the participants about what factors influencing their engagement in intercultural interactions, respecting diverse cultures, confidence in cross-cultural interactions, enjoying cross-cultural interactions, and attention during cross-cultural interactions. Adapting Chen and Starosta (2000) intercultural sensitivity domains was a valid way to investigate the participants' intercultural sensitivity factors because the previous survey data were anchored in these domains. The FGDs also included two multicultural education experts to help us discuss the contextual factors of intercultural sensitivity with the students of the two universities. With their expertise of multicultural education, the two experts could help formulate many contextual questions on the basis of the five domains of intercultural sensitivity to solicit in-depth data on the intended factors. The two experts also contributed to the process of inter-coder reliability (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020) to help us generate valid and reliable data codes after the raw data of interviews and FGDs had been solicited.

Techniques of Data Analysis

The survey data on the intercultural sensitivity of PTs at UIN and IAIN were analyzed descriptively to find the means, standard deviations, and total number as recommended by Healey and Prus (2015). Furthermore, the instrumental case study's data corresponding to the contextual factors underlying the PTs' intercultural sensitivity were analyzed using Miles' et al. (2014) interactive analysis model. This model operated across four dimensions: data collection, data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. As previously explained, the data were collected using interviews and FGDs. Data condensation was done in a way that grouped and mapped the raw data according to the emerging themes. The data were continuously displayed in the form of codified themes. It was worth noting that the process of data coding applied an inter-coder reliability technique (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020) to guarantee that the themes generated from the raw data of interviews and FGDs were valid and reliable. To do so, we, two researchers of this study, and two multicultural education experts initially constructed our own versions of coded themes during the analysis of raw data. After that, we met up to match our own versions of data codification and held discussions to find common ground so that a set of shared thematic data could be reached. The shared data codification was to be used for data presentation. Several excerpts from the

interviews and FGDs were chosen as the most representative in order to provide an effective data presentation. Another way to pursue data credibility was by conducting a triangulation technique (Yeasmin & Rahman, 2012). To this end, we worked together with the multicultural education experts to compare the linearity of data flow of those obtained from interviews and those garnered from FGDs. The triangulation technique helped us avoid the possible bias of data. In addition, the data presentation was followed by scientific interpretations and cross-theoretical discussions. Lastly, the data were concluded comprehensively.

FINDINGS

Intercultural Sensitivity of PTs at UIN and IAIN

The survey data were collected over a two-week period and showcased that the PTs of UIN and IAIN had a high level of intercultural sensitivity with the mean of 4.024. The results of the intercultural sensitivity measurement are presented in table 3.

Table 3
Intercultural sensitivity of PTs at UIN and IAIN

No	Intercultural sensitivity of PTs at UIN and IAIN Domain	Mean	SD
1	Engagement in intercultural interactions	4.12	0.525
2	Respecting diverse cultures	3.92	0.374
3	Confidence in cross-cultural interactions	3.86	0.363
4	Enjoying cross-cultural interactions	4.28	0.682
5	Attention during intercultural interactions	3.90	0.521
	The mean of all domains	4.02	

According to table 3, the domain with the highest intercultural sensitivity among the PTs of both universities was "enjoying cross-cultural interactions." It could be interpreted that enjoying cross-cultural interactions became the main trigger for the high intercultural sensitivity of PTs of both universities. From highest to lowest, the PTs' intercultural sensitivity domains ranged from "enjoying cross-cultural interactions," "engagement in intercultural interactions," "respecting diverse cultures," "attention during cross-cultural interactions," to "confidence in cross-cultural interactions." Borrowing Chen and Starosta's (2000) concept which positioned intercultural sensitivity as an affective construct, the data implied that PTs of both universities had high potential for empathy, active and ongoing involvement in cross-cultural interactions, open-mindedness, high self-esteem, a nonjudgmental attitude, and good self-monitoring during cross-cultural interactions. However, such survey data mainly demonstrated the PTs' intercultural sensitivity levels on a large but general scale. The contextual factors related to their high intercultural sensitivity, in fact, called for in-depth investigations in a constructive, qualitative way. We proceed to present the data of qualitative investigations in the following section.

Contextual Factors Affecting the Intercultural Sensitivity of PTs at UIN and IAIN

By conducting interviews and FGDs, the data of contextual the factors underpinning the intercultural sensitivity of PTs at UIN and IAIN were eventually uncovered. The data from interviews and FGDs were combined and constructed in a conceptualized arrangement for the ease of data presentation. Several snippets of interview and FGD transcripts are presented in the following data presentation. Such transcripts have been purposefully chosen to represent the existing raw data. Because each name of the PTs is intentionally kept anonymous, the following codes are used: PTUIN 1, standing for the PT 1 from UIN, and PTIAIN 1, standing for the PT 1 from IAIN. To help readers understand the data as a whole, figure 1 shows the results of the data mapping based on the emerging themes.

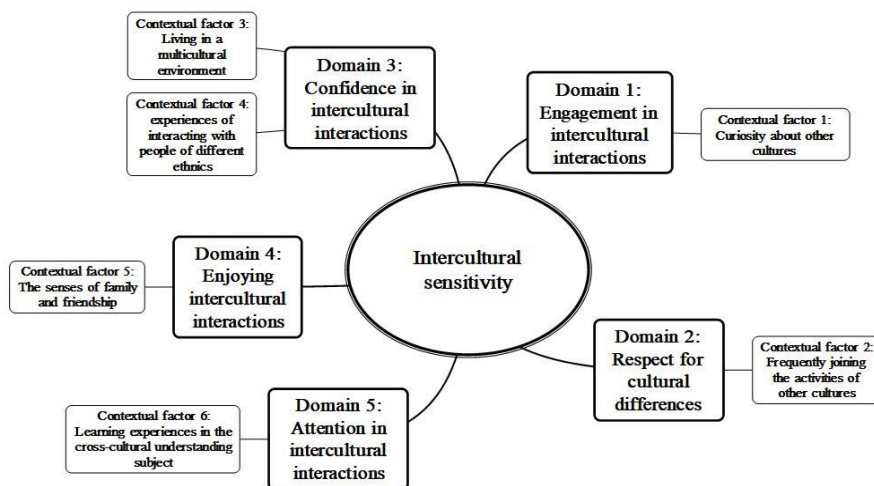


Figure 1
Data mapping of contextual factors underlying intercultural sensitivity

The contextual factors underpinning intercultural sensitivity were mapped into six factors based on the results of interviews and FGDs. **The first contextual factor** was curiosity about other cultures. This factor was revealed when interviews and FGDs addressed the discourse about what motivated the PTs to interact with people of different cultures. This factor is depicted in the following transcripts of interviews and FGDs:

I frequently interact with friends from other cultures on a daily basis. On campus, I have close friends from various regions and cultures, including Musi Rawas, Pagar Alam, and Lebong. I enjoy interacting with them because I want to learn more about their lives and experiences. I have discovered numerous differences between my culture and theirs (interview with PTIAIN 7).

My curiosity about my friends' cultural lifestyles has led me to the joy of cross-cultural communication, so I enjoy participating in cross-cultural interactions. It was indeed awkward at first. But, once I got used to it, I realized how rich in cultural information I was (interview with PTUIN 39).

PTIAIN 7 and PTUIN 39 in the above transcripts depicted how they communicated daily with their friends of various cultures. It was demonstrated that their motivation for participating in cross-cultural interactions was curiosity. PTUIN 54 illustrated a similar factor during FGDs as follows:

Actually, I am not a Palembang native. I come here on a temporary basis to study. I have 19 friends in my boarding house, and all of whom are the students with various cultures. Every day at the boarding house, I am exposed to cross-cultural interactions. I actually enjoy it because I am always curious about new things, such my friends' cultures and ways of living in their hometowns (FGD data from PTUIN 21).

If conceptualized, the data from the interviews and FGDs above demonstrate a concept that curiosity about other cultures triggers one's involvement in cross-cultural interactions, leading to an attitude of intercultural sensitivity.

The second contextual factor underpinning intercultural sensitivity was frequently joining the activities of other cultures. This factor was revealed during interviews and FGDs on the discourse of what motivated the PTs to appreciate the values held by people of various cultures. This factor is depicted in the following interview transcript:

As a migrant student studying at IAIN, I live in a multicultural village. The residents come from Java, Rejang, Medan, and Minang. Apart from being involved in campus lecturing activities, I am also frequently involved in cultural events or activities in the community. One of which is Kenduri (a feast event). This is a Javanese customary event. You know, I did a lot of similar things in the past. This habit has made me realize how many differences there are between my culture and others' (interview with PTAIN 48).

Similar information was discovered during FGDs with one of the UIN students, as follows:

I value cultural differences a great deal. Perhaps, my attitude was formed while undertaking the collegial community service activities in a village whose cultural background differed from the culture that had shaped me since I was a child. We called this community service KKN. During the implementation of KKN, my friends and I were actively involved in every community activity there. Thanks to the programs designed by our KKN group (FGD data with PTUIN 5).

The data portrayed in the above transcripts can be interpreted to suggest that frequently participating in activities of different cultures contributes to an attitude of respect for cultural differences, which in turn forms an attitude of intercultural sensitivity.

Living in a multicultural environment was **the third contextual factor** that contributed to intercultural sensitivity. This factor was revealed during the FGDs while addressing what made the PTs confident in interacting with people of different cultures. This factor can be seen in the following FGD transcript:

Maybe if I rate it, my social interactions are 60% outside and 40% inside my house. In my environment, I interact with people from various cultural backgrounds. I'm more confident in cross-cultural interactions because I've got used to such situations. I can learn a lot about other people's cultures (FGD data with PTUIN 55).

The fourth contextual factor was the ability to interact with people of different ethnicities. This factor was revealed during FGDs in the discourse of what caused self-confidence when interacting with people from other cultures. This factor can be seen in the following FGD transcript:

In everyday life, I am accustomed to interacting with and making friends with people of different ethnicities than mine. This practice naturally boosts my self-esteem in cross-cultural interactions (FGD data with PTUIN 60).

The FGD data presented above represent a conceptualization that living in a multicultural environment and the experience of interacting with people of different ethnicities contribute to the attitudinal formation of confidence in cross-cultural interactions, continuously building a state of intercultural sensitivity.

The fifth contextual factor that underpinned the domain of intercultural sensitivity was the senses of family and friendship. This factor was revealed during interviews when the participants addressed what motivated them to always be excited when interacting with people of different cultures. The following interview transcript exemplifies this factor:

The practice of interacting with friends from other cultures gradually develops a sense of family and a strong sense of friendship. In fact, our differences make us wiser in giving perspectives. To be honest, I'm becoming more enthusiastic, and I enjoy making new friends and engaging in cross-cultural interactions (interview with PTUIN 21).

To be interpreted, the above transcript makes a convincing case that the senses of family and friendship form the domain of enjoying cross-cultural interactions, which in turn contribute to the formation of an intercultural sensitivity attitude.

The sixth contextual factor that underpinned intercultural sensitivity was learning experiences in the cross-cultural understanding course. This factor was uncovered during an FGD with one of IAIN's students while talking about what prompted him to be an active observant when interacting with people of different cultures. The following snippet exemplifies this factor.

A cross-cultural understanding course, in my opinion, provides a significant amount of knowledge input about cross-cultural interactions. I take this course because I major in English education. In this course, my friends and I are learning how to be

attentive and responsive in a positive way when we are involved in cross-cultural interactions. This is significant because we will encounter many differences during interactions, both at the inner and outer cultural levels. Thus, I can conclude that being aware of other cultures when cross-cultural interactions occur is critical so that we do not easily fall into misunderstandings about cultural differences (FGD data with PTIAIN 66).

The above snippet illustrates a conceptualization that learning experiences in the cross-cultural understanding course contribute to shaping the domain of attention during cross-cultural interactions, continuously forming an attitude of intercultural sensitivity.

DISCUSSION

This study was motivated by the importance of multicultural education for Indonesian students who, by nature, represent a multicultural population of Indonesia (Morganna et al., 2020). They are affiliated with a variety of cultures, and these cultures have become the blueprints of their lives (Kirkpatrick & Liddicoat, 2017). Hence, the PTs who will teach and educate them must be inter-culturally competent. If the PTs already have the potential for intercultural sensitivity, it can pave the way for them to acquire the intercultural competence. According to Chen and Starosta (2000), intercultural sensitivity is the first step toward intercultural competence.

In relation to the first research objective, which was to investigate the intercultural sensitivity of the PTs at UIN and IAIN, the findings showed that the PTs of both universities had high intercultural sensitivity with the means of 4.024 out of the maximum value of 5. The domain of enjoying cross-cultural interactions became the most contributive to the PTs' high intercultural sensitivity. From the highest to the lowest, the sequence of intercultural sensitivity domains owned by the PTs entailed enjoying cross-cultural interactions, engagement in intercultural interactions, respecting diverse cultures, attention during cross-cultural interactions, and confidence in cross-cultural interactions.

The findings of this study are consistent with the findings of Alaei and Nosrati (2018) who investigated the intercultural sensitivity and intercultural communicative competence of EFL teachers in Iran. Their study revealed that the teachers had high intercultural sensitivity in all domains. However, there are differences in the order of intercultural sensitivity domains seen from the highest to the lowest. The order of intercultural sensitivity domains in their study ranged from respecting diverse cultures, enjoying cross-cultural interactions, attention during cross-cultural interactions, engagement in intercultural interactions, and confidence in cross-cultural interactions. Their participants' intercultural sensitivity was mostly driven by the domain of respecting diverse cultures. In the meantime, the PTs' intercultural sensitivity in this study was mostly motivated by the domain of enjoying cross-cultural interactions. Overall, the findings of the current study are consistent with those of Jantawej (2011) and Petrović and Zlatković (2009) who discovered that their participants had high intercultural sensitivity.

The current study's findings, however, differ from those of Nameni and Dowlatbadi (2018), who investigated the intercultural sensitivity and competence of medical students in Iran based on four ethnic groups. In terms of data on intercultural sensitivity, their study found that regardless of the ethnic groups into which their participants were classified, the participants had a moderate level of intercultural sensitivity. Reflected on the foregoing, they recommended that educators and policymakers develop programs to improve the intercultural sensitivity and competence of medical students in Iran. Furthermore, the current study's findings differ in some ways but are also relevant to the findings of Sarwari et al. (2017), who investigated the relationship between intercultural sensitivity and intercultural communicative competence of postgraduate students at a Malaysian university. Regarding the data on intercultural sensitivity, their study revealed that the average domain of intercultural sensitivity owned by their participants was moderate, as indicated by the domain of enjoying cross-cultural interactions with a value of 3.7; the domain of attention during cross-cultural interactions with a value of 3.4; the domain of involvement in cross-cultural interactions with a value of 3.2; the domain of confidence in cross-cultural interactions with a value of 3.2; and the domain of involvement in cross-cultural interactions with a value of 3.2. The moderate level of intercultural sensitivity owned by Sarwari's et al. (2017) participants represented that the participants were less sensitive to cultural differences. In contrast, the PTs in this study had high intercultural sensitivity, with average score of 4.02, indicating that they had the ability to accept differences and participate actively in cross-cultural interactions. However, in terms of the main trigger for their intercultural sensitivity, namely enjoying cross-cultural interactions, Sarwari's et al. (2017) participants had little in common with the current study's participants.

In contrast to the current study, demonstrating the data on the high level of PTs' intercultural sensitivity, several previous studies have described direct and observable impacts due to their participants having a low level of intercultural sensitivity. According to Kriaučiūnienė (2014), a low level of intercultural sensitivity can have a direct impact on the emergence of conflict due to immature decision making in dealing with differences. Erdogan and Okumuslar (2020) showed that a low level of intercultural sensitivity is associated with a high level of ethnocentrism, where people feel that their culture is the most powerful and dominant, leading to the perception of other people's cultures as more inappropriate. Bulduk et al. (2017) and Chocce (2014) conducted research that demonstrated and confirmed the foregoing. Furthermore, according to Liu (2016), people with low levels of intercultural sensitivity are unable to collaborate with others as expected. The opposite condition is strongly echoed in one of the data disclosed by Warsah et al. (2021), who conducted collaborative learning research. In their study, students who are open to different points of view, or who have a high level of intercultural sensitivity, participate actively in collaborative learning. Furthermore, as Tabatadze and Gorgadze (2014) discovered, a low level of intercultural sensitivity is characterized by a lack of tolerance of differences in languages, ethnicities, religions, and races. Their participants' tolerance can only be seen in the intra-cultural dimension. In short, a lack of intercultural sensitivity in multicultural contexts leads to increased conflicts, ethnocentrism, ineffective collaboration, and intolerance. According to the

findings of the present study, the PTs' high intercultural sensitivity has the potential to protect them from the aforesaid negative consequences.

As an implication, the PTs' high intercultural sensitivity in this study indicate that they have a high potential to become multicultural educators in the future. They already have the potential to successfully teach on the basis of a multicultural education system, which is one of the components of the Indonesian government's K-13 curriculum (Rohman & Lessy, 2017; Rosyad, 2020). The underlying message of this study's findings is that the PTs must maintain their intercultural sensitivity. The universities in which they are enrolled are also obligated to make efforts to maintain this ideal condition by providing multicultural education interventions to ensure that their intercultural sensitivity is consistently internalized.

The present study's findings subsequently addressed the contextual factors that contributed to the PTs' high intercultural sensitivity. Curiosity about other cultures was the first underlying contextual factor within the domain of engagement in cross-cultural interactions. Curiosity is one element of motivation that supports someone to take action and become more involved in that action. The same principle applied when the PTs of the two universities were getting interested in other cultures. Their curiosity motivated them to engage in cross-cultural interactions, which developed their intercultural sensitivity. Rowland (2016) confirmed a similar point that engaging in cross-cultural interactions necessitates flexibility and curiosity. Flexibility entails being prepared to participate in the complexities and rumination of differences that will be encountered during cross-cultural interactions. Subsequently, curiosity indicates that an individual is interested in learning about and exploring the various cultural differences encountered during cross-cultural interactions.

The second contextual factor was frequently joining other cultural activities that instilled a respect for cultural differences. This point is similar to the findings of a study conducted by Lee and Huang (2015), delving into the motivation of people who attend multicultural festivals in Australia. Their research emphasized that participating in cultural activities is a learning process. Attending events or activities from other cultures is a learning process for individuals from different cultures in order to increase respect for differences, enhance cultural knowledge, and broaden horizons. Meanwhile, individuals of the same culture will have more pride and confidence in their cultural identities. According to the current research data, the habit of participating in activities of different cultures contributes to shaping the PTs' attitudes towards cultural differences, continuously shaping their intercultural sensitivity.

Living in a multicultural environment and interacting with people of different ethnicities were the third and fourth contextual factors identified from the current study's findings. These factors instilled confidence in cross-cultural interactions. Previous studies, such as those conducted by Alaei and Nosrati (2018) and Nameni and Dowlatabadi (2018), clearly confirmed the contribution of these two factors. According to their findings, living in a multicultural and multiethnic environment has the potential to increase intercultural sensitivity. Tamam and Krauss (2014) found that being surrounded by diverse ethnics makes people more accepting and respectful of cultural differences. The

context of ethnic diversity in the foregoing discourse is the same as the context of living in a multicultural environment. The current study's findings describe a concept in which living in a multicultural environment or an environment where people of different cultures interact with one another contributes to PTs' confidence in cross-cultural interactions, subsequently leading to their high intercultural sensitivity.

The fifth contextual factor was the senses of family and friendship, which caused enjoyment during the processes of cross-cultural interactions. This is consistent with Lee's (2006) explanation that one strategy for developing effective intercultural communication is to strive to remove the gap with the interlocutor. The senses of family and friendship will create positive dynamics in the continuum of linkage between a communicant and a communicator of a different culture. When both communicant and communicator encounter differences that have the potential to cause conflicts during cross-cultural interactions, the close relationship that has been built up will be able to put aside any sense of offence. In the context of the current study, it can be conceptualized that the senses of family and friendship drive the PTs of both universities to enjoy cross-cultural interactions, subsequently shaping their intercultural sensitivity.

The sixth contextual factor was the learning experiences gained from the cross-cultural understanding course, which caused increased attention during cross-cultural interactions. Cross-cultural understanding is a course that studies interactions built by people from various cultures (Raymond & Hall, 2008). The cross-cultural understanding course is commonly found in the curriculum of English education departments at Indonesian universities. This course was taken by the PTs of UIN and IAIN who were enrolled in English education departments and were in their fifth or sixth semesters. Those who had taken this course believed that the learning experiences had helped them to be more attentive when engaging in cross-cultural interactions. This course taught them that as the communicators in cross-cultural interactions, they must concentrate on the on-going discourse in order to understand when to respond to the interlocutors and how to make proper responses for the sake of avoiding stereotypical conflicts.

Considering the current study's findings, which demonstrate the PTs' high intercultural sensitivity and various contextual factors underpinning their intercultural sensitivity, there is an implication we can draw. UIN and IAIN must strive to maintain the PTs' current conditions and potential for intercultural sensitivity. As we know, intercultural sensitivity is an affective domain that needs to be strengthened by cognitive and conative domains so that strong intercultural sensitivity can be formed persistently. UIN and IAIN must make consistent efforts to maintain the PTs' intercultural sensitivity by creating a multicultural learning environment.

The findings of this study, theoretically, contribute to the literature on the profile of intercultural sensitivity of PTs in Indonesia, where the samples of PTs in this study were those of UIN and IAIN. So far, there has been very little research on intercultural sensitivity in Indonesia, and most of the existing research is only oriented to the context of foreign language learning that examines in a straightforward way the issue of intercultural communication (Hamied, 2012; Idris, 2020; Kusumaningputri & Widodo, 2018; Morganna et al., 2020; Sukyadi, 2015). Limited research in Indonesia has brought

the issue of intercultural sensitivity in the broader context of education, which is not merely limited to one major. This study has made a contribution by raising the issue of intercultural sensitivity as one of the competencies that the PTs in Indonesia must possess because they will be teaching Indonesian multicultural generations.

This study is not without limitations. Because this mixed-method study was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic, all data were collected online. Thus, the survey data, interview data, and FGD data were all garnered online via social media and the Zoom application. We realize that some technical difficulties arose during the data collection processes, limiting further investigations. However, in processing the interview and FGD data, we had attempted to thoroughly analyze all of the raw data according to the ideal procedure of interactive model. Furthermore, we attempted to increase the data's credibility by confirming all transcripts that were analyzed and thematically grouped to 50% of the PTs who joined interviews and FGDs.

CONCLUSION

This study is guided by two research objectives, which are to measure the intercultural sensitivity of the PTs at UIN and IAIN and to investigate contextual factors underlying their intercultural sensitivity. This study has ended up with conclusive findings that the PTs at UIN and IAIN have a high level of intercultural sensitivity. The basic trigger for high intercultural sensitivity is the domain of enjoying cross-cultural interactions. From the highest to the lowest, the sequence of intercultural sensitivity domains owned by the PTs of both universities entail enjoying cross-cultural interactions, engagement in intercultural interactions, respecting diverse cultures, attention during cross-cultural interactions, and confidence in cross-cultural interactions. This study codifies six contextual factors that underpin the PTs' intercultural sensitivity. Those factors encompass interests in other cultures, frequent participation in activities of other cultures, living in a multicultural environment, experiences of interacting with people of different cultures, the senses of family and friendship, and learning experiences in the cross-cultural understanding course. There is an implication which can be drawn from this study. The condition of high intercultural sensitivity owned by PTs of UIN and IAIN (the samples to represent Indonesian PTs) indicates that they have potentially and demographically been ready to be the future's teachers as idealized by the current national curriculum of Indonesia, K-13. They have also been ready to be the teachers for Indonesian multicultural students. However, it is worth noting that intercultural sensitivity is an affective or attitudinal domain, which calls for external empowerments to stay persistent. Such external empowerments can be in the form of the provision of multicultural curricula for PTs education and multicultural and intercultural education training for PTs. Such empowerments can be valuable to help maintain the state of high intercultural sensitivity owned by PTs.

Resting upon the findings of this study, it is suggested that further research be conducted to continuously investigate the intercultural sensitivity of Indonesian PTs and observe their practices in providing classroom interventions based on the subjects they teach in order to see the conformity of their intercultural sensitivity levels to their pedagogical

practices. Research with this flow can provide academicians interested in multicultural education with a wealth of knowledge related to intercultural sensitivity.

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