

People's Perception Towards Immigrants Based on Acceptance in Pekanbaru (Riau Province)

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Abstract

Immigrant is a person who migrates to another country due to some reasons. Immigrants in this research are refugees and asylum seekers who stay for a while in Pekanbaru. They are waiting to be sent to resettlement. Sometimes, this process takes a long time. Since they live in Pekanbaru, they get some psychological problems. Some researchers found that psychosocial intervention work better for them than individual or group intervention. However, applying psychosocial intervention in Pekanbaru seems difficult. First of all, some local communities in the city are afraid of them. Second, there is a legal aspect. The aim of this research is to know how people in Pekanbaru perceive immigrants based on their acceptance. This research used quantitative methods. A total of 262 people were taken as the number of samples. The result showed that social perception was affected by acceptance. Acceptance contribute to social perception as much as 10.7%; $\beta = -3.27$; $p < 0.00$.

Keywords: Stereotyping, halo effect, non-judgement, local community, Indonesia.

1. Main text

Immigrant issues have already been a hot topic in every country today. Immigrant is a person who migrates to another country due to some reasons, for instance war or conflicts in their country. Immigrants in this research are refugees and asylum seekers who stay for a while in Pekanbaru. Before immigrants get a new country or *resettlement* they are going to stay for a while in some country and called as refugees or asylum seekers. There are some differences among immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers based on legal perspective. Immigrant is someone who chooses to be a citizen in other country permanently (CNN, <https://edition.cnn.com/2014/07/15/us/immigrant-refugee-definition/index.html>, accessed on February, 2, 2018). A refugee is a person who flees to a foreign country or power to escape danger or persecution (Mariam-Webster dictionary, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/refugee>, accessed on February, 2, 2018), meanwhile an asylum seeker is someone whose request for sanctuary has yet to be processed (UNHCR, <http://www.unhcr.org/asylum-seekers.html>). The similarity from terms are about people who migrate from their country due to some reasons. At least there are four reasons why people migrate to another country (migrant types and reasons, <http://uki.vdu.lt/wp-content/.pdf>, accessed on February, 2, 2018). First of all, people migrate from their country due to social problems. Second, due to political problems. Third, due to economical problems. Fourth, due to environmental problems. A large number of people migrate due to these reasons.

Migration issues have already been a common issue in the world, therefore a set of rules to organize it is needed. Immigrants' issues are handled by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). UNHCR is a part of United Nations who organize and give protection and solutions for refugees and other forcibly displaced people (Crisp & Dessalegne, 2002). As UNHCR has already worked, immigrant issues are much resolved than before. However, it cannot be avoided because immigrant issues will never finish. Immigrants' issues are about immigrants' life and host country. Host country is a resettlement before immigrants are sent to a third country. According to UNHCR in 2015, over 15 million refugees had been accommodated in developing countries. Most of the host countries are developing countries. When refugees come to a host country, it will cause social and economical problems for host country (Russel, 2012; Taylor et al., 2016; UNHCR, 1997). On the other hand, migration causes some effect to immigrants. Some refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants get physical and psychological problems or mental health problems during waiting period for resettlement. For instance, fear, anxiety, depression, PTSD and schizophrenia (Bugra & Jones, 2001; Das et al., 2015; Greenberg, 2018; Nabi, 2014). Some of them have tried to commit suicide. They get health problems too, for example tuberculosis, malaria, HIV, obesity and cardiovascular diseases.

Today, there are 1174 (Data IOM Pekanbaru, 2018) immigrants living in Pekanbaru. Immigrants came to Indonesia due to some reasons. First of all, Indonesia is located between two continents, namely Asia and Australia (Can be seen in the map). Second, Indonesia is located between two oceans, namely Indian and pacific oceans. These reasons make Indonesia easily accessible to visit by people of many countries... Most of the immigrants want to get resettlement in Australia and New Zealand. They come to Indonesia because they think that it is easy to go to Australia and New Zealand through Indonesia. Both of these countries are still accepting refugees as their citizen.

Table 1. Numbers of immigrants in Pekanbaru

Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Asylum seeker	437	37.2
Refugee	720	61.3
First rejection	12	1
Final rejection	5	0.4
Total	1174	

Source: IOM Pekanbaru report on 2018

Table 1 describes the number of immigrants in Pekanbaru in 2018. About 61.3 % of immigrants are refugees. There were two types of immigrants they are asylum seekers and refugees. Twelve immigrants have got first rejection, it means their desire to go to a third country has ended (but they still have a chance for opening a new application, meanwhile five of them have got final rejection, it means that they do not have chance to go to a third country or resettlement process was rejected).

Immigrants in Indonesia are waiting for resettlement process. Some of them have been rejected to get new resettlement and most of them are still waiting for getting resettlement. Both of them are vulnerable to get psychological problems. IOM has done something to overcome it. Immigrants who needed help were sent to consult a psychiatrist or a psychologist for getting treatment. Counselling and psychotherapy (individual and group) are popular treatments that are given by psychologist. However, it does not work maximum. Immigrants' recovery is too long and sometime it is not stable. Though psychologists (also researcher) have given psychological services for immigrants in Pekanbaru, still we find that some immigrants have mental illness even after they have got psychological services. It seems individual treatment still has not worked to an optimum.

Table 2. Kinds of immigrants' activities. Psychological service was the common activity for immigrants

Activities	Frequencies	Percentage (%)
Children education	10	12.8
Sport activity	7	9
Art activity	4	5.1
Environment—facilitating environmental related activities	4	5.1
Psychoeducation	6	7.7
Peer Support Group	4	5.1
Family Support Group	2	2.6
Psychological assessment	2	2.6
Psychotherapy	2	2.6
Others	37	47.6
Total	78	

Immigrants need to get their life as real as possible. It means they need to live in a community where they live, interact with each other and do something that worth for them. Once, they need to join with local community to do that. In psychology, we call activities that involved immigrants with local community as psychosocial intervention. Psychosocial perspective stated that mental health is affected by environment. Environment could be a reason to cause mental health problems (Saari, 2002). Psychosocial is a kind of intervention that emphasized relation between psychology and social aspect. The aim of this intervention is to increase individual or group resilience by strengthening protective factors and reducing risk factors. Some of the protective factors are individual condition and environment that improve individual ability to solve a difficult situation, whereas risk factors are individual environment condition that lower individual ability to face a difficult situation (Pelupessi, 2011). Some researches show that psychosocial interventions are effective and recommended to overcome psychological problems in refugees and immigrants (Abrams et al., 2016; Gitao et al., 2017; Herr & Kurtz, 2016; Jong et al., 2004; Tribe et al., 2016).

Even though some researches have shown positive impact of psychosocial intervention to improve immigrants' mental health, still it is not easy to be applied in Pekanbaru. At least there are two reasons why it is difficult to apply. The first reason is legal problem. Every country that has been specified accommodating immigrants has different rules to organize immigrants' life. Law in Indonesia restricts immigrant's activities during their stay in Indonesia. Immigrants may not follow a joint activity in local community. Joint activity in local community is a part of psychosocial intervention. Legal problem is a common issue to apply psychosocial intervention in community based environment.

However, it seems that handling of immigrants in Pekanbaru will be more comprehensive, relating to the issuance of the Republic of Indonesia's presidential regulation on the handling of refugees from abroad in 2016. It is a new regulation that manages immigrants' life in Indonesia, which did not exist previously. Perhaps chance for applying psychosocial intervention based on community can be done. Second, social perception from local community to immigrants is the other thing that obstructs psychosocial intervention applied in Indonesia. A local article from Pekanbaru (Riau Province) expressed negative stigma from local community to immigrants. For instance, they thought that some immigrants do prostitution activities and worry if immigrants spread their belief (Data Riau.com, 2017).

When local community has negative perception towards immigrants, then it will be dejected to apply psychosocial intervention. The objective of this study is to know whether social perception towards immigrants affected by acceptance. Local community who accept immigrants well is a model for giving psychosocial intervention.

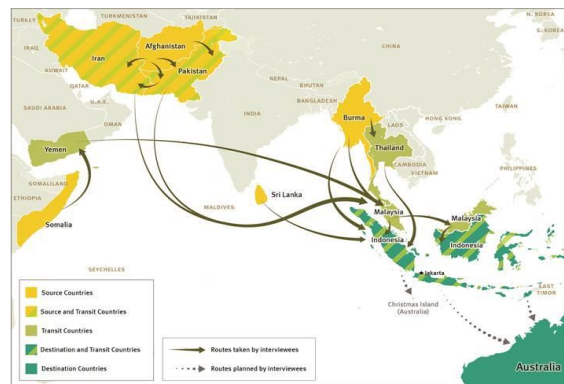


Figure 1. Immigration map to Indonesia



Figure 2. Indonesia between two continents and two oceans

2. Literature review and theoretical background

2.1. Social perception

There are so many theories that define perception. According to philosophy, psychology and cognitive science, perception is the process of attaining awareness or understanding of sensory information. The term perception comes from the Latin word *percipio*, which means receiving, collecting and action of taking possession, apprehension with the mind or senses (Nysthul, 2014). According to Unumery (2009), perception is the process whereby people select, organise and interpret sensory stimulations into meaningful information about their work environment. In other words,

perception can be defined as a way to give meaning for something or someone through sensory organ (audio, visual, tactile). When perception is used to relate with other people and our perception then affects our behaviour, so we call it as social cognition. For instance, we say someone is humble, grumpy, spooky or rude. Social cognition focusses on how people process, store and apply information about other people and social situations or giving information about people or situations) (Bordens & Horowitz, 2008; Cherry, 2017). Perception is first step in social cognition process (Bodenhausen & Hugenberg, 2009).

Perception can be addressed to things or humans. Perception towards humans is named as social perception. Social perception is a process by which we come to comprehend the behaviour, the words and actions of other people (Bordens & Horowitz, 2008), a process to know and understand people (Baron and Byrne) Penington, 2002). Borkowski (2005) stated that social perception is an individual way to see others and how others perceive individual and it can be done by some ways, such as: to classify an individual based on a single characteristic or halo effect, to evaluate a person's characteristic by comparison to others or contrast effect, to perceive others in ways that really reflect a perceiver's own attitudes or projection, to judge someone on the basis of one's perception of the group to which the person belongs or stereotyping, to cause a person to act erroneously based on another person's perception or *pygmalion* effects or to control another person's perception of oneself or impression management.

Social perception is used for forming impression formation, social schemas and social representations. The aim of social perception is to gain enough information to make relatively accurate judgements about people and social situations.

2.2. Acceptance

According to Webster's Encyclopaedic Unabridged Dictionary, acceptance means the act of taking or receiving something willingly or favourably accordingly (Bernard, 2013). Williams and Lynn (Bernard, 2013) defined acceptance by five domains, which are: (a) nonattachment—accepting that objects of experience wax and wane, and that to allow them to come and go naturally is preferable to any attempts to control or retain them; (b) non-avoidance—refraining from pointless running away when no physical threat is present; (c) non-judgment—a conscious abstention from the categorization of experience as good or bad, right or wrong, describing stimuli rather than evaluating stimuli; (d) tolerance—to be able to remain present and aware even when stimuli are frustrating or undesirable; (e) willingness—exercising a choice to have an experience. Some of the researches showed that acceptance has contributed for perception. Acceptance will be measured by using acceptance scale. The scale is arranged from five dimensions.

The hypotheses provided in this research are social perception towards immigrants is affected by acceptance.

3. Research methodology

3.1. Variables

Social perception was a dependent variable and acceptance was an independent variable.

3.2. Instrument development

There are two scales arranged by researchers. Social perception scale consists of 20 items and acceptance scale consists of 26 items. Social perception has four aspects, which are Halo effect, contrast effect, projection and Pygmalion effect, whereas acceptance has five aspects, which are non-

attachment, non-avoidance, non-judgement, tolerance and willingness. Item numbers for both the scales decrease after reliability test.

After reliability test, some items from both the scales were erased. Item numbers for social perception scale was 13 (Cronbach's alpha is 0.771) and number for acceptance scale was 20 (Cronbach's alpha is 0.747). Reliability test was given to 73 participants.

3.3. Data collection

Data were collected by using social perception scale and acceptance scale. Participants were asked to complete the scales. Three hundred and thirty scales were distributed to participants, however only 262 scales were returned. Item had to be answered in Likert scale. Participants must choose one answer (1 = I do not agree at all; 2 = I do not agree; 3 = neutral; 4 = agree; 5 = completely agree).

3.4. Participants

Overall, 262 persons in an age range of 20–50 years of age took part in this research. Productivity age and ability to think abstractly were reasons to decide the participant's age. They also must live in Pekanbaru. Participants were chosen by random technique and taken from 17 districts.

Table 3. Number participants in every district

Districts	Number of participants	Percentage
Sukajadi	11	4.2
Rumbai Pesisir	13	5.0
Rumbai	17	6.5
Payung Sekaki	21	8.0
Bukit Raya	74	28.2
Marpoyan Damai	42	16.0
Siak Hulu	7	2.7
Tampan	6	2.3
Tambang	1	0.4
Rumbio Jaya	1	0.4
Tenayan Raya	6	2.3
Kampar Timur	1	0.4
Sail	14	5.3
Senapelan	12	4.6
Tangkerang Tengah	2	0.8
Limapuluh	15	5.7
Pekanbaru Kota	18	6.9
District wasnot complete	1	0.4
Total	262	100.0

3.5. Research method

This is a quantitative research. Data were processed by using SPSS 20 version by using regression analysis.

4. Result

Data obtained by simple regression analysis, acceptance was proven significantly to influence social perception. Acceptance contribution to social perception is 32.7%; $R_2 = 0.107\%$; $\beta = -3.27$; $p < 0.00$.

Based on analyses we can say that hypothesis provided is accepted. Social perception towards immigrants is affected by acceptance.

Table 4. Acceptance contribution to social perception is shown

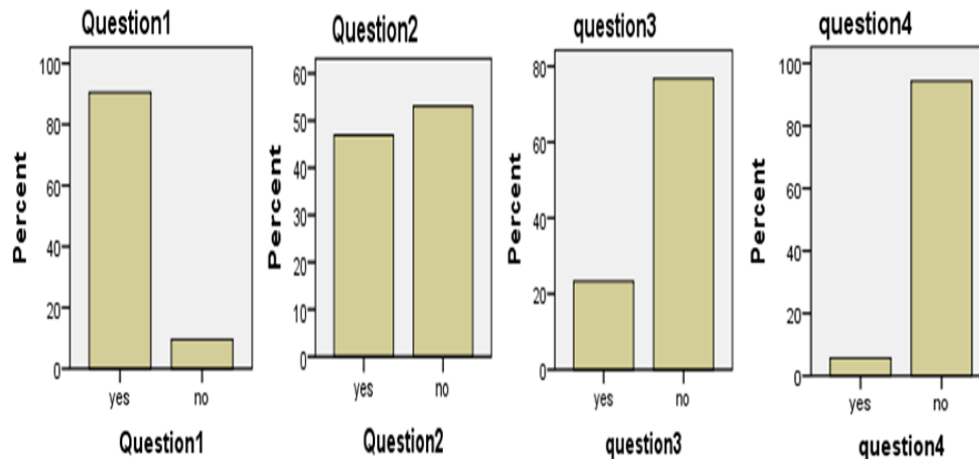
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of the estimate
1	0.327 ^a	0.107	0.103	6.16250

^aPredictors: (Constant), Acceptance

Table 5. Acceptance influence to social perception. Acceptance significantly influence social perception (p, 0.05)

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. error	Beta		
(Constant)	64.005	2.593		24.688	0.000
Acceptance	-0.218	0.039	-0.327	-5.574	0.000

About 68.3% participants are workers (public servant, private, traders) and 30.2% participants are students. The number of female is 59.2% and male is 40.8%. Some questions that were put at demographic information sheet are: Do you know if there are some immigrants who live in Pekanbaru? (Question 1), Do you know where do immigrants come from? (Question 2), Do you know the reason why Pekanbaru is chosen as the place to be occupied by immigrants? (Question 3) and Do you know how long immigrants stay in Pekanbaru? (Question 4). All answers can be seen at the picture (Picture 2) given below:



By comparing mean hypothesis and mean empiric we find that social perception and acceptance were categorized at middle level. It means, immigrants were received pretty well.

5. Discussion

The findings show that social perception was influenced by acceptance. Social perception is defined as the way how people see or think about others. Acceptance is an attitude indicated by positive behaviour. Perception towards immigrants means how do we perceive them, whether we thought they will treat our existence, hurt us or take our right (as a legitimate citizens). A study at Europe showed that people in Europe tend to have negative perception towards immigrants because they feel insecurity (some immigrants were perceived as terrorist), competition in economic (afraid that their job will be taken by immigrants) and social problem (due to immigrants arrival, their nation tends to be crowded) (Beautin et al., 2006; Callens, Meuleman & Valentova, 2015; Duffy & Smith, 2014).

Perception is about how people judge others from where they come from. Immigrants who came from conflict country tend to be perceived as terrorist. It is called as stereotyping. Stereotyping is part of perception Borkowski (2005). Stereotyping relates to acceptance.

Positive acceptance towards immigrants is shown by positive behaviour, for instance non judging, non-attachment, to be tolerant and to be able to remain present and aware even when stimuli are frustrating or undesirable. If people show this behaviour they tend to have positive perception towards immigrant and by the same token. The reason why people have negative perception towards immigrants is because they are threatened by immigrant. It seems that local community has not accepted immigrants well because their information about immigrants is little. Picture 2, question numbers three and four have explained it. About 60% of the local community do not know why Pekanbaru is chosen for immigrants and more than 80% of the local community do not how long immigrants will live in Pekanbaru. Ignorance about something influences our perception.

Group threat theory states that immigrant related threat perceptions arise because of intergroup competition for scarce resources and when the self-interest of the individual or the position of the group is put in question by the arrival of newcomers (Blalock, 1967; Bobo, 1999; Jackson, 1993, cited in Callen et al., 2015). Members of the majority group respond to these threats by developing anti-outgroup attitudes and prejudices. Even if the self-interest of the individual is not at stake but there is a perception that the majority group's interests are threatened, such a person will develop more negative out-group attitudes (Bobo, 1999). This has been proven by several empirical studies (Jackson, 1993; Meuleman, 2011; Schlueter, Schmidt & Wagner, 2008; Schlueter & Scheepers, 2010; Semyonov et al., 2006, cited in Callen et al., 2015).

6. Conclusion

Data showed that people's perception towards immigrants is affected by social perception. Acceptance contribution to social perception is as much as 10.7%; $\beta = -3.27$; $p < 0.00$. How people accept something depends on some factors, for example information and knowledge. Still now local community do not have complete information about immigrants, they do not know much about immigrants. It is affecting their perception.

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