The Concept of Harmony in Javanese Society

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Harmony is an important value that guides the behavior of Javanese. The purpose of this study is to explore the meaning of harmony for Javanese. Data were collected through in depth interviews of 12 participants, consisting of four fathers, four mothers, and four teenagers from Surakarta. Harmony is identified as maintaining connections, compatibility, resolving conflicts peacefully and empathy. Harmony consists of two categories, pseudo-harmony and essential harmony. Pseudo-harmony is maintaining relationship by burying conflicts. Essential harmony is maintaining harmony in togetherness with empathy toward each other. The implication of this study on the realm of education is discussed.

Keywords: exploration study, indicator of harmony, Javanese

Rukun merupakan salah satu nilai penting yang memandu perilaku orang Jawa. Studi ini bertujuan mengeksplorasi makna rukun bagi orang Jawa. Data diperoleh melalui wawancara mendalam pada 12 partisipan, terdiri atas empat ayah, empat ibu, dan empat remaja yang berasal dari Surakarta. Rukun dicirikan dengan menjaga keterhubungan, menjaga keselarasan, serta mengelola konflik dan bersikap peduli. Rukun mewujud dalam dua kategori yakni rukun semu dan rukun esensial. Rukun semu berarti menjaga keterhubungan dengan memendam konflik. Rukun esensial adalah menjaga harmoni dalam kebersamaan disertai sikap saling peduli. Didiskusikan implikasi hasil penelitian pada dunia pendidikan.

Kata kunci: studi eksplorasi, indikator rukun, orang Jawa

Harmony is a term that has been around in the society for a long time. The term itself comes from an English word, harmonious. Harmonious relationship means a relation that is harmonious in nature. Harmony itself means a state of suitability and peace (Echols & Shadily, 2005). The word harmony is a concept that refers to the achievement of balance in a relationship (Kwan, Bond, & Singelis, 1997). Han (2008) states that social harmony is a complex phenomenon that exists in social psychology. It determines interaction between social value, people, and society. In order for a society to function properly, all of its components need to cooperate. There is togetherness in cooperation, but it also means that conflicts, compromises, and mutual benefits are inevitable.

Social harmony in Javanese society is seen as an important thing to be maintained. Individuals are advised to continually maintain harmonious relationship in their social lives. In reality, there are many disharmonious behaviors that disrupt or even damage social harmony every day. In the recent news, there is a rise on individual as well as group conflicts, such as teenage riots and inter-village conflicts. Vertical and horizontal conflicts are also commonly seen on the news. Even inter-ethnic conflicts have happened many times for various reasons, such as the conflict between the Maduran and the Dayak at Sampit.

Alongside the various conflicts that devastate society, an individualistic lifestyle is also on the rise. Communication technology advancements bring about a new lifestyle, including the myriad of people that enjoy communication through the virtual world. The effects of such a lifestyle have the potential to erode the warmth of direct social interaction between individuals and slowly replacing it with indirect interaction through social media. Society's love of communicating through social media decreases the empathy of individuals toward each others.

The effects are also seen in group activities done by the communities. Phenomena of lending a hand and volunteering frequently seen in the old days are

becoming uncommon. People that regard themselves as financially capable would prefer to use catering service when holding an event, rather than asking the neighbors to help prepare the meal. This shifting phenomenon makes this study of people's understanding of harmony, an interesting fact to be studied.

Although the term harmony has been understood for a long time in the Javanese society, it is still difficult to formulate the definition of harmony from the literature. From the literature research, the term harmony was found as a suggested behavior for social interaction, or as a term that describes a state of peace, tranquility, and the absence of conflict. The suggestions are found in the form of widely known sayings and proverbs such as, *harmony brings prosperity, conflicts brings destructions, don't let a stream of water turns into a waterfall, be humble in victory, be gracious in defeat.*

According to the considerations above, in addition to formulating the concept for harmony, another important thing to do in this study is to contextualize the concept of Javanese harmony in the present time. Is the above mentioned concept of harmony still relevant in maintaining the social harmony in interpersonal and intergroup relationships in the society?

Method

This study used a qualitative approach that utilized in-depth interviews as a tool to gather the data. The participants of this study are four Javanese families consisting of four fathers, four mothers, and four teenage children. The search for the families was planned through snowball effect. The first family was acquired through the author's friend. The family is of pure Javanese descent, still uses Javanese as the main language, and their eldest child is a teenager. The second family was acquired from the first family, with the same criteria. But on the next stage the second family failed to provide a recommendation. Hence the authors had to restart the same process again. The same process was repeated in the search of the third and fourth family.

The criteria for the Javanese family were the father and mother are of pure Javanese descent and are currently living in Central Java – in this case Surakarta. Magnis-Suseno (2003) stated that a Javanese is someone whose mother tongue is Javanese language. Hence a Javanese is an individual who resides in Central or East Java and speaks Javanese. Pure Javanese language can only be found in Central

and East Java. The participant's demographic data is shown on Table 1. Interviews for each participant were done separately in respectively agreed times. The interview processes were recorded and from which transcripts were made. The interview guidelines are shown on the appendix. Data were thematically analyzed (Hayes 2000) in order to find reoccurring themes, and then grouped into themes category. The execution of analysis utilized the method of phenomenology (Creswell, 2007). The method allows the data to be detached from established theories at the time of data gathering, and focuses on the field findings. Triangulation in this study uses the data source triangulation, which means that data concerning the concept of harmony are acquired from multiple sources, namely the father, mother, and child.

Results and Discussion

The aim of this study was to explore the concept of harmony from the perspective of a Javanese. Based on analysis from the results of in-depth interviews, the reoccurring themes were the definition of harmony, indicator of harmony, the motive for harmony, and the category of harmony. The following are each of the theme categories, explained in details.

The Definition of Harmony

Based on the interviews of the 12 of the participants (see Table 1), the definition of harmony is explained below.

Harmony is interpreted as togetherness. Interviews with the fathers discover that harmony is interpreted as the ability to feel what others feel (Mr. Arman), helping each other, doing good deeds for others, and looking out for each other (Mr. Bagir), the willingness to share and help (Mr. Cepi), being considerate and helping each other (Mr. Dino). From the interviews with the mothers, harmony is a condition where people are being helpful even though they do not agree with each other (Mrs. Arni), helping each other, completing each other, and making each other's life better (Mrs. Bilqis), loving each other, relying on each other, helping each other (Mrs. Cici), sharing, making sure not to offend others, and not ignoring others (Mrs. Dian). Interviews with the children found that harmony is interpreted as a harmonious relationship (Arya), the absence of fights and conflicts (Badriah), staying peaceful, compromising in disagreements (Coki), and helping each other while avoiding conflicts (Dedi). Based on the opinions of the participants, harmony occurs in social

interactions that are reciprocal in nature. This creates a possibility of togetherness on both sides.

Harmony is interpreted as minimizing conflicts with others.   Harmony is also interpreted as minimizing conflicts by avoiding fights, arguments, and being ignorant. In this sense, harmony means maintaining compatibility and tolerance in differing interests. It is still considered harmonious if there are disagreements in a relationship; as long as there are no arguments and both parties are still willing to help each other. The important note is that the differing opinions are openly communicated so that a compromised solution might be achieved. This is shown in the interview of Mrs. Arni.

(Javanese text extracted for its main ideas)

I do not agree with your ways. If I were you, this is how I would do it, don't you agree? That is harmony for me. It is not cool to argue. (Mrs. Arni, 40)

Harmony means caring for others.   Harmony is also interpreted as caring for others. The essence of harmony is not only found by avoiding conflicts, but also by being interested with the well being of others, especially our relatives. The idea is found on the following interview with Mr. Bagir.

(Javanese text extracted for its main ideas)

We should be proactive in helping people, rather than waiting for people asking us for help, we should be more understanding and proactive in giving help to people (Mr. Bagir, 47)

From the interview quoted above, it is apparent that in order to create harmony, a sense of empathy toward others and proactivity in assisting others are needed. That empathy is expected to be a guide for individuals to do the right thing. Another example is also shown from the interview with Mrs. Dian. She states her preference to discipline her own child rather than other people's child when there is a conflict. This is done to avoid harming her relationship with the child's parent.

Based on the three meanings of harmony mentioned above, it can be concluded that the meaning of harmony is: a state in which compatibility and togetherness are maintained and accompanied by a shared feeling of empathy. The subject for such a state may be an individual or a group. Conclusively, harmony can occur between individuals, between individuals and group(s), or even group(s) and group(s).

The definition of harmony that is formulated in this study has shown its similarities and differences with the definitions found in a number of literatures. The definition in this study has some similarities with the definition of harmony explained by Mulder. According to Mulder (Dissertation of Magnis-Suseno, 2003), harmony means "Being in a state of compatibility/harmony", "peace and tranquility", "without conflict and opposition", "Unity with the goal of cooperation". A state of harmony will occur if all composing parties are in a state of peace, cooperation, and acceptance in a calm and tolerant environment. While Jay (Magnis-Suseno, 2003) reveals that harmony can also refer to a way of behaving. Being harmonious means banishing restlessness in society or between individuals. Harmony contains a continuous effort done by every individual to be calm and to eliminate elements that may cause animosity and restlessness. Geertz (1961) calls a state of harmony as *harmonious social appearances.*

It should also be noted that the definition of harmony explained in the earlier literatures (Geertz, 1961; Jay in Magis-Suseno, 2003; Mulder in Magis-Suseno, 2003) only refers to the indicators of harmony as the realization of togetherness and maintaining compatibility. The indicator of a person who is caring and proactive in creating harmony has not been mentioned. The definition of harmony from a number

Table 1

Participants Demographic Data

Number.	Family	Status	Name	Age	Education	Occupation
1.	A	Father	Arman	47	Master's Degree	Branch manager of a Bank
		Mother	Arni	40	Bachelor's Degree	Beauty salon owner
		Child	Arya	15	9th grade	---
2.	B	Father	Bagir	47	Senior High	Non government employee
		Mother	Bilqis	47	Bachelor's Degree	Bank teller
		Child	Badriah	17	12th grade	---
3.	C	Father	Cepi	46	Bachelor's Degree	Public servant
		Mother	Cici	43	Bachelor's Degree	Public servant
		Child	Coki	15	10th grade	---
4.	D	Father	Dino	48	Bachelor's Degree	Public servant (teacher)
		Mother	Dian	43	Specialized High School (SMK)	Housewive
		Child	Dedi	17	11th grade	---

of experts had only scratched the surface of social harmony conditions and not the deeper concept of attitude that are crucial for acting harmoniously.

Indicators of Harmony

According to the participant's interview, there are three themes categories, which are explained as follows.

Firstly, maintaining connectedness. Connectedness is the earliest indication of harmony. The act of maintaining connectedness is done by doing acts such as visiting neighbors, or getting together in a forum. Mr. Arman said that his father used to frequently visit his relative's house. This has bring about a good relationship with the relatives. Mr. Arman's father used to take little Arman to *silaturahmi* (friendly visits). The habit of conducting *silaturahmi* was a habit also shared by Mr. Cepi's father. Mr. Cepi stated that his father even has a family tree record that spanned for six generations; unfortunately the record has not been updated by anyone. Knowing one's position in a family tree is also considered as an attempt to understand one's connectedness with relatives.

Secondly, avoiding conflict. The effort to maintain the harmony in a relationship may be done by being polite and courteous when interacting with others. Such concept can be seen in Mrs. Arni's attempt to avoid conflict with her children so that they would be open to her. Also to be noted is Mrs. Arni's choice to conform to the social norms such as helping older relatives (in this case, her aunt) even if she is not particularly fond of her. This shows Mrs. Arni's use of repression to hide the negative feelings that she has.

The effort on maintaining harmony in the society is achieved by joining group activities such as joining a working bee in the neighborhood or helping a neighbor cook when he/she is hosting an event, visiting neighbor who is unwell, and becoming the neighborhood's officials. As the society grows and changes, the definition of harmony in the society also changes. The activities mentioned above are becoming less relevant, and the culture of togetherness is now slowly fading away. Few examples are catering services are now preferred than cooking with neighbors and teenagers now feel awkward when they have to join neighborhood events.

Thirdly, managing conflicts and being considerate. Harmony in social relationships can be achieved if there is empathy for others. This is expressed by helping those in need, and being considerate. From the interviews, the term "help" may refer to: giving advices (Mrs. Arni), financial aid (Mrs. Bilqis), conflict mediation (Mrs. Dian), giving special price for neighbors on special occasion (Mrs Arni), and giving a place to stay for older relatives (Mrs Dino). Helping each others is also achieved by doing household chores (Mrs Bilqis, Badriah), sparing the parents who financially support the children's education by choosing a less expensive university (Mrs Arya). Examined closer, the acts of helping and sharing also contain elements of putting the needs of others before one's own.

The value of harmony that became one's guide for behaving in social interactions also affects the ways that an individual handles conflicts. There are three ways used by an individual to handle conflicts, namely:

Silence. Mr. Dino chose to be quiet when he had a disagreement with Mrs. Dian, regarding their son's Deni, who wished to sell prepaid phone cards through Multi Level Marketing.

(Javanese text extracted for its main ideas)
I just want to stay quiet and defer to my wife's wishes. (Mr. Dino, 48)

Forgoing. Badriah chooses to forgo her rights in order to maintain harmonious relationship with her sibling, especially when her mother was out of town and she was made responsible for her little sibling. The information above is revealed in a following interview with Mrs. Bilqis.

(Javanese text extracted for its main ideas)
Badriah is very attentive and caring toward her sibling, so she would usually let her little sibling win. (Mrs. Bilqis, 47)

Mr. Cepi also prefers to be forgoing in handling differences of opinions with his mother in-law about where to live and with his wife about parenting.

(Javanese text extracted for its main ideas)
I used to live in Sragen. After my father in law passed away, I thought it would be best to bring my mother in law to live with us there, but she didn't want to. So I let her have her way and I moved to her place instead. (Mr. Cepi, 46)
Sometimes we (Mr. Cepi and his wife) argue when we have different opinions, and it often escalates unnecessarily. Hence I tend to let my stubborn wife have her way. (Mr. Cepi, 46)

Forgoing was also a method chosen by Mrs. Arni by apologizing to her relatives, even though she didn't do anything wrong. This was done to restore a damaged relationship.

Discussion forum. Mrs. Arni states that whenever there is trouble in her immediate and extended family, they always seek a solution through a family discussion.

Table 2

Indicators of Harmony and Forms of Harmonious Behavior

Indicator of harmony	Form of harmonious behavior
Maintaining Connectedness	Friendly greetings
	Attending invitations or group events
	Visiting relatives or acquaintances
	Knowing the relatives better
	Spending time with family
Maintaining harmony/ compatibility	Avoiding prejudice and being positive in thinking
	Apologizing when guilty
	Avoiding envy
	Maintaining proper distance in a relationship
	Staying silent or forgoing
	Altruistic helpfulness and kindness
	Staying out of other people's business
	Being tolerant of the condition of others
	Avoiding asking for help if possible
	Avoiding differences in opinions
	Lending a hand
Conflict management and empathy	Being careful not to hurt other's feelings
	Being democratic in decision makings
	Willing to forgive and forget
	Sharing when in troubles
	Offering to help
	Creating intimate and friendly relationships
	Willing to remind others when someone is at fault
	Finding happiness in the happiness of others
	Being sensitive to the condition of others

This way they can work out the differences of opinions. After having the discussions, Mrs. Arni feels that relationships between relatives are better. This was mentioned in the quote below;

(Javanese text extracted for its main ideas)

It seems that after we discussed the disagreement, we became more harmonious. (Mrs. Arni, 40)

Discussion to find a compromise was also done by Mr. Arman and his wife, Mrs. Arni wanted to start her own business but Mr. Arman expected his wife to be home taking care of their children due to his busy schedule at work. As a compromise, Mr. Arman suggested that his wife started her business at home, by opening a beauty salon.

According to the exposition above, it can be concluded that harmony has three indicators, which are: (1) Maintaining connectedness, (2) Maintaining compatibility and (3) Managing conflicts and being caring/empathetic (refer to Lestari, Faturochman, & Adiyanti, 2013). Each of those indicators can be further specified in forms of behaviors, as shown in Table 2.

Indicator of Disharmony

Indicators of disharmony are also organized based on disharmonious behaviors revealed in the interviews. There are three categories of the indicators of disharmony:

Breaking off relationships/cutting off relationships. Breaking off a social relationship because of conflicts or having disagreements is an indicator of disharmony. When an individual was visited by his or her neighbor(s) but does not visit back, he or she is seen as someone who does not want to behave harmoniously. Individuals that choose to not participate in communal works such as neighborhood working bee, visiting a sick neighbor, attending each other's events, or assisting neighbor are seen by society as behaving disharmoniously.

Disrupting compatibility/harmony. Buried or latent conflicts may be caused by envy, prejudice, blaming others, vengeance, and selfishness. Buried or latent conflicts may cause a disruption in harmonious social relationships. If this is allowed to grow, it will result in open conflict.

Table 3

Indicators of Disharmony and Forms of Disharmonious Behaviors

Indicators of Disharmony	Forms of Disharmonious Behaviors
Cutting off connections	Avoiding contact with others
	Choosing not to invite relatives
Disrupting harmony	Prejudice
	Blaming
	Envy
	Vengeance and Revenge
	Selfishness
Open conflict	Verbal attacks
	Arguments
	Passive aggression
	Fighting
	Intention of physical harm physical conflict
	Contesting for something

Open conflicts. Not managing a conflict well can cause disharmonious situations such as, arguments, physical conflict, and ignoring each other.

Arguments. Arguments for adults usually occur because of stubbornness and the inability to accept or compromise on the opinions of others. This is revealed in the following interview.

(Javanese text extracted for its main ideas)

I avoid arguing in front of the children, and if they manage to know of a conflict, I will tell them the reason of the conflict. (Mrs. Arni, 40)

On children, arguments are usually caused by things that are considered trivial and insignificant for adults, such as: fighting for the television, fighting for the PlayStation, being annoyed by older siblings, etc.

Fighting. Arya told his experience of a physical conflict with a bully at school. His friend's treatment has caused Arya to punch him. The fighting was cut short by the teachers and both students were called and counseled by the teacher. Consequently, the parents of both students were being summoned to the school.

Passive aggression. Passive aggression refers to an effort to avoid any interaction by one or both conflicting parties. This is exemplified when Mrs. Arni gave advice to both of her children, as seen on the following interview quote.

English translation of the original Javanese to Indonesian translation:

Infighting between siblings is not good. Imagine when we're (parents) old and my children (Arya and Arum) are fighting. They won't visit us if the other one is at our place, such a situation would be really sad indeed. (Mrs. Arni, 40)

From Mr. Arni's advice to her children, it is found that passive aggression is an unwanted behavior because it damages harmony between siblings.

Types of disharmonious behavior revealed on the interviews are detailed on Table 3.

Categories of Harmony

Based on the interviews, harmony is categorized into two, pseudo-harmony and essential harmony.

Pseudo-harmony. Pseudo harmony is maintaining harmonious relationships with others by burying unfinished conflict within the relationship. Pseudo harmony usually happens when the individual wants to have a seemingly perfect social life, hence he/she chooses to repress the negative feelings and maintain harmony even if it is insincere. In Javanese culture there is a term called *ben ketok rukun* (So that it would seem harmonious). In pseudo harmony, it is common to find indicators of harmony such as visiting others, and participating in group activities, but there is a distinct lack of sincerity and conflict management.

As an example, Mrs. Arni's experience of being mistreated when she was brought up by her aunt still lingers in her mind. Having been brought up by her aunt, Mrs. Arni fears that the neighbours might blame her and consider her as an ungrateful person. Knowing that, Mrs. Arni chooses to behave harmoniously and nicely toward her aunt, although in reality she is repressing her true feelings. This form of harmony is revealed on the following interview with Mrs. Arni.

(Javanese text extracted for its main ideas)

I care for her (her aunt), but it is only superficial and is only done as a formality. (Mrs. Arni, 40)

Essential harmony.   Essential harmony is maintaining harmony and togetherness by sincere empathy toward others. In essential harmony, indicators of harmony are found and they are all based on empathy, sincerity and the will for peace. The achievement of essential harmony in a neighborhood gives a feeling of peace and tranquility for the individuals. In perspective, essential harmony supports the forming of peace in society.

From the explanation above, it may be concluded that pseudo and essential harmony is a continuum. Pseudo harmony may turn into essential harmony when elements of empathy and sincerity toward others are found, repressed conflicts are communicated openly and a solution is found. In essential harmony, whilst there is an argument, there is nothing stopping both parties to help each other. Empathy and efforts to manage a conflict constructively always present in essential harmony.

In an effort to maintain harmony, Hwang (1997-8) states that expressing conflicts openly is a behavior that should be avoided because it may damage social harmony. When conflicts occur, opposing sides are expected to maintain a superficial harmony by conforming to norms and mannerism. Opposing sides are advised not to humiliate each other in public as it can lead to open confrontation, and advised to use indirect means of communication. Leung, Koch, and Lu (2002) challenged Hwang's ideas. According to Leung and friends, conflicts prevention is not a classic Confucius teaching, but is an influence from collective cultures. Referring to classic Confucian teachings, harmony is understood as a need to maintain a state of respect, humanity, and morality rather than a need to avoid conflicts in order to achieve a uniform paradigm and attitude. In Confucianism, confrontation, debate, and disagreement in order to achieve a greater good are recommended, while obedience and conformity that sacrifices core values are avoided and shunned. Sometimes in crucial conditions and situations where relationships are important, disagreement is avoided. In such condition, personal agendas are hidden in private while agreeing to the opposing side's opinion in public. It is advisable that harmony should be made under the higher cause such as benevolence and righteousness.

According to Magnis-Suseno (2003) in order to fulfill the demands for harmony, there are two important things to remember, namely; not disturbing existing harmony and maintaining harmony in social lives by preventing open conflicts. It is not a surprise if there is a saying that Javanese tend to say hurtful things indirectly, through the habit of *ethok ethok*

(pretending). Santosa (2010) adds that the saying means that Javanese tends to be superficial and their words are ambiguous. Whatever problem they have, they always put on a sweet and innocent face. The broader meaning is that Javanese aren't always open, tend to be symbolic, full with sayings, metaphors, and connotations. Many things are stated indirectly or camouflaged.

Another effort done to maintain social harmony is forgiveness. Forgiving others and apologizing when one is not at fault is also found in the exploratory stage. There is a Javanese saying that goes, "*sing uwis ya uwis"*, which is similar to the English saying, "what is done, is done". This means that conflicts and animosity that had happened once should not be kept for long. People need to forgive and forget in order to turn a new page (Sartono, 2010). According to Hook, Worthington, and Utsey (2009) forgiveness is an effort done to maintain social harmony. Collective forgiveness happens in a context of social harmony, reconciliation, and restoring relationship.

Misunderstanding, disagreement and having different ways of life are triggers of an argument or even a fight. This is considered normal in human interactions. As described by the saying "Plate breaks, so does man", human interaction is vulnerable to opposition, all of which may lead to a conflict. Knowing that it is the case, men are advised to be mindful when interacting with one another. They are advised to consider their thoughts, words, and actions carefully in order to avoid conflict and animosity (Sartono, 2010). A small conflict should be resolved quickly so that it does not develop into a bigger conflict. This prevention will happen successfully if individuals are empathetic to the conditions of others. On the contrary, selfishness and apathy will disrupt existing harmony, and may even cause a serious conflict. As an example, the interview with Mrs. Arni conveys a disharmonious relationship between siblings.

(Javanese text extracted for its main ideas)
I happened to know a dark background of someone who wanted to marry my husband's older sister. My husband tried to communicate this information to the family, but they thought we were spreading a rumor. One of his brothers even tried to kill him with a sword. (Mrs Arni, 40.)

Harmony is seen as an important goal to be achieved in Javanese society. The need to achieve a state of harmony is not only based on cultural factors, but also based on religious teachings. The teachings command that a man should pass on the blessings he received to others. Even though people generally understand that

harmony is important, the motif to be harmonious plays a major role to determine the harmony, whether it is pseudo or essential. This is in line with the opinions of Bandura (1986), Bodenhausen, et al., (2003), and J. Heckhausen and H. Heckhausen (2008) which state that the motives hold an important role in the behavior of individuals.

It is revealed from the interviews, that harmony is universally considered to be important. This implies that in Javanese families, harmony is still considered as an important thing. From the interviews of Mr. Arman, Bagir, and Cepi, it is known that the foundation of harmony is family ties. A family is seen as a body, so that when a part of the body is hurt, the other parts feel the pain as well. A family can mean a nuclear family, an extended family, and even a brotherhood of men.

The belief of the importance of harmony is also based on religious teachings as noted by Mr. Bagir below.

(Javanese text extracted for its main ideas)

Harmony is, firstly found in family ties, secondly when we can always carry out a good deed as according to the teachings of God.

The family ties remind us that all blessings come from God, hence we should be kind to those who are less fortunate than us. (Mr. Bagir, 47)

Although individuals generally agree that harmony is important, maintaining a harmonious environment isn't always easy to do. Experts state that motive plays an important role of individual's behavior in maintaining harmony. From the interviews, motives that encourage and hinder individuals are discovered, as follows:

Putting the needs of others before or after our own. Putting the needs of others before our own encourages harmony. And vice versa, putting our own needs first hinders harmony. An example of putting the needs of others first is seen from the interview with Mr. Bagir, where he sacrificed the only house he owns in order to help his indebted sibling. As a consequence of his action, Mr. Bagir's family is now renting a house because they no longer own a house.

Being selfish and putting our needs before others may ruin a harmonious environment. This is revealed in the interview with the teenagers, for example, who get to watch their favorite TV program. Envy and jealousy caused by child favoritism may cause disharmony between siblings. This is revealed in an interview with Dedi as noted below.

"Father prefers my little sibling to me. Whenever she asks my dad for something, she always gets it. I never get anything from my father when I ask him for something. (Dedi, 17)

On the contrary, a younger sibling may feel the same way, causing them to fight. This is revealed in an interview with Mrs. Arni.

My daughter was enrolled to a religious school and her older brother was not. This has caused jealousy. (This implies that the daughter does not like the religious school). (Mrs. Arni, 40).

Being considerate. In an attempt to be considerate, one needs to have self-control. This is shown by Mrs. Dian when her three year old toddler cried when playing with his/her friend. Mrs. Dian tried to control herself by not blaming the other child. This was to avoid conflict with the other mother. In this case, Mrs. Dian's effort to control herself prevented conflicts with others. A similar act was done by Mr. Arman who controlled his actions, so that he would not bother or hurt his neighbors' feeling. As a result, good relationships are being maintained.

An individual who is hurt may take revenge on the person who hurts him. When this happens, harmony may be disrupted. But with self-control, revenge may be avoided and harmony can be maintained. This is stated by Mrs. Arni below.

(Javanese text extracted for its main ideas)

I was entrusted a secret from a friend. I said to her that I only shared that secret to my husband and not to anyone else.

But she presumed I shared that secret to someone else and miss judged me. I told her the truth; I only shared her secret to my husband and not to anyone else. (Mrs Arni, 40).

Here Mrs. Arni's self control prevented her to take revenge and she maintained to keep the secrets entrusted to her. This way, Mrs. Arni avoided a conflict with her friend.

Feedback from the environment/society. The individuals will get an appreciation when they are harmonious and a scorn when they are disharmonious. An experience of receiving appreciation is revealed by Mr. Arman who chooses to socialize indiscriminately. When Mr. Arman was sick, many people visited him, and some even stayed over with him when he was in a hospital. Mr. Arman's harmonious behavior was respected by others.

In Javanese society, there is a culture of scorning a disharmonious behavior. To avoid the scorn, Mrs. Arni continues to care for her aunt who brought her up, even if she is not fond of her. Mrs. Arni tries to be harmonious even if it is not sincere. This is revealed on the interview below.

(Javanese text extracted for its main ideas)

I care for her (her aunt), but it is only superficial and is only done as a formality. (Mrs Arni, 40 years old)

Obeying religious teachings. Mr. Bagir and Mrs. Bilqis are motivated to maintain harmony as a will to obey God's commandment. One example is by being kind toward one another, especially relatives. A lack of faith in religious teaching may also affect harmony.

Obeying the counsel of parents/elders. This is elaborated by Mr. Bagir and Mrs. Bilqis who sacrificed their only house to help an indebted sibling. Mr. Bagir does this because of his mother's counsel. In children, disharmonious condition happens when a child intentionally or unintentionally disregards a parent's counsel for harmony. For example, a stubborn child is unconsciously disregarding his parent's counsel to be harmonious.

If an individual has succeeded in maintaining harmony, the individual will experience a comfortable life, as stated by Mr. Arman on the quote below.

Having many friends is good for life. (Mr. Arman, 47)

In that quote, Mr. Arman stated that he found comfort from his many friends in life. The friends came from various backgrounds.

Mrs. Arni was sad when her relationship with her husband's extended family was not harmonious. This is revealed in the interview below;

(Javanese text extracted for its main ideas)

I chose my husband, firstly because he was religious and secondly because his relationship with his siblings was harmonious. But why is it like this now? (Mrs. Arni was accused of spreading rumors about the husband of her sister in law. Because of which, they were not invited to their wedding). My children saw when their uncles confronted us with such hatred. (Mrs Arni, 40)

A feeling of discomfort is also felt by parents when they see their children being disharmonious with their siblings or relatives. Mrs. Arni explains her sadness to her children in the quote below;

(Javanese text extracted for its main ideas)

Infighting between siblings is not good. Imagine if when we're old and my children (Arya and Arum) are fighting. Both of them won't visit me at the same time, only when the other is not around, such situation is really sad indeed. (Mrs Arni, 40)

Disharmony may also cause disappointment, like what Mr. Dino experienced when he found out that Dedi's relationship with his cousin becomes embittered because of a girl issue. There was a girl that Dedi liked, and she liked him back. But his cousin also fancied the girl. Mr. Dino asked Dedi to let his cousin had the girl. Mr. Dino advised Dedi that harmony with relatives is more important than courting. Dedi obeyed his father so that his relationship with his cousin got better.

It can be concluded from the explanation above that efforts to maintain harmony are based on a belief that rooted from Javanese society. The belief states that maintaining harmony is essential and is also promoted by religious teaching, which commands us to be kind to one another. Individual's act of harmony or disharmony depends on the motivation he or she has. If the motivation is strong, the effort to maintain harmony will be strong as well. When an individual is in a state of harmony, he will feel peace and calm. When they are in a state of disharmony, they will feel sad or disappointed.

From the existing Indonesian literatures (Table 4 – see Appendix), an individual's motive to act harmoniously is influenced by old Javanese culture, which advises people to be harmonious with one another. The proverb "In harmony we thrive, in conflicts we disintegrate" advises that harmony brings prosperity, whilst argument brings destruction of social relations. Another old Javanese saying '*dikena iwake, aja nganti buthek banyune*' meaning "take the fish but don't get the water murky" advises people to solve a conflict without damaging existing relationships.

Every attempt to manage a conflict must be done carefully and wisely in order to prevent more negativity and escalation in the conflict. A solution to the conflict should also be found without degrading any conflicting sides. Such conflict management technique is based on Javanese harmony seeking attitude. The Javanese maxims '*wani ngalah luhur wekasane*' (meaning 'one who has the courage to give in, will, in the end, be victorious and glorious'), the attitude of '*menang tanpa ngasorake*' (meaning "gain winning without degrading the defeated"), '*ngluruk tanpa bala*' (meaning "fighting alone without the necessity to bring masses") advise people to be gracious and humble in conflicts, advising sacrifice of personal interest in order to avoid conflicts and maintain harmony. Conflicting sides need to understand that "winning" will not give spiritual peace if conflicts still exist and are not solved properly. A spiritual "victory" that brings harmonious relationships is the one that should be prioritized and sought after. (Santosa, 2010; Suratno & Astiyanto, 2009).

In Javanese culture, a bond of brotherhood or family ties is seen as an important foundation for creating a

harmonious environment. The strength of the bond is described by the old Javanese saying which goes "*banyu pinerang ora bakal pedhot*". The saying literally means, water divided will not break (This refers to the "unbreakable" nature of water). The meaning behind the proverb is that a conflict between family members will never be able to break the bond of the family. Family will have conflicts, but there is still love in the family ties even to the conflicting members (Sartono, 2010). Forgiveness is also encouraged, as can be seen from the saying "*sing uwis ya uwis*", which is similar to the English "what is done is done".

In addition to the teachings of Javanese culture, harmonious behavior is also encouraged by the individual's will to practice religious teachings, and to listen to the counsel of parent/s. This means that there is an internal reward for those who practice to act harmoniously.

East Asian society encourages harmonious social behaviors through the values of harmony taught in Confucianism. They refer to the concept of "face" and *guanxi* Leung, Koch, & Lu (2002) state that in East Asian society, avoiding conflict saves one's "face" in public. Open conflict is seen as an embarrassment and will cause one to lose a "face". In a culture that puts so much emphasis on "face", instrumental harmony becomes a dominant motive because losing a "face" often leads to changes of goals, thus making harmony harder to achieve. On the other hand, *lian* (moral face) is not closely related with instrumental harmony, but is closely related with value harmony. *Lian* contains elements of respect and honesty, which are in line with value harmony.

Similar to East Asian culture, saving "face" is a common phenomenon in Javanese social interactions. Teachings to camouflage and avoid open conflict indicate that saving the "face" of one self's and others is indeed important. Social harmony in social life needs to be maintained in order to achieve peaceful society.

Eagly and Chaiken (as cited in Olson & Maio, 2003) proposed a composite model for behavior-attitude consistency. The model explains five factors that influence attitude and behaviors, which are: habits (past behaviors), attitude towards target (especially target of behaviors), utilitarian outcomes (reward and penalty as a consequence of a behavior), normative outcomes (certain expectation upon agreement and disagreement of certain behaviors), and self-identity outcomes (implication of behavior on self concept). In light of Eagly and Chaiken's opinion, inconsistencies in Javanese behaviors may be related to the habits taught through socialization. They desire to avoid penalties, attain rewards, and conformity for having behaved according to Javanese social norms. Habits and responses that are a product of society will in turn influence a Javanese person's self-identity.

Conclusion and Suggestions

Based on research findings, it can be concluded that the concept of harmony in the perspective of Javanese has similarities with the concept of social harmony in East Asian society. The difference is that the Javanese perspective puts more emphasis on togetherness, hoping for a united harmony, while the East Asian society puts emphasis on the achievement of balance of harmonious value and instrumental harmony.

Harmony that is achieved by maintaining connectedness will encourage individuals to minimize conflicts in order to avoid negative judgments from social environment. Harmony that is achieved by maintaining compatibility and harmony itself will also encourage individuals to minimize conflicts to avoid disintegration. On the other hand, harmony that comes from constructive conflict management will encourage individuals to acknowledge the existence of conflicts, understand the position of conflicting parties, and strive to solve the conflict through negotiation, compromise, or reconciliation. This will lead to the achievement of an essential harmony.

The implication of this study for the academic world is; in order to develop one's harmonious behaviors, it is important that the focus is on essential harmony. This implies that when developing harmonious values, the training to manage conflict and to be considerate is more important than putting a focus on togetherness. Conflict that happens in interpersonal relationship is not to be avoided, but rather to be admitted and managed constructively in order to achieve an acceptable solution. Being considerate also needs to be developed by practicing empathy toward others and to always be ready to help those in need. The concept of harmony is also a will to receive rewards, avoid penalties, and to maintain a good relationship with others.

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(Appendix follows)

Appendix

Interview Guide

Interview guide for parents
1.   How important is harmony for your daily life?
2.   From where do you learn about harmony?
3.   How did you learn about harmony?
4.   What is harmony to you?
5.   What kind of behaviors that are considered harmonious?
6.   In your experience, how is the harmony in your family?
7.   How do you act harmoniously in your neighborhood?
8.   How important is teaching harmony to your child?
9.   How is the relationship of your children with his or her peers in your neighborhood?
10. How is the relationship of your children with his or her schoolmates?

Interview guide for the teenagers
1.   What did your parents taught you about interacting with your siblings?
2.   What is harmony to you?
3.   To whom should you be harmonious?
4.   What is your parent's response when conflicts between siblings occur?
5.   How do you behave harmoniously with others?
6.   Do your parents discuss family problems with you before making a decision about the problems?
7.   How do your parents divide chores at home?
8.   What chores do you usually do?
9.   If doing the chore(s) is not possible, what will you do then?

(Appendix continues)

Table 4

Comparison of Definition, Indicator, Category, and Motives of Harmony as a Result of Exploration and Literature

No.	Aspect	Research Findings	Indonesian Literature	Non-Indonesian Literature
1.	Definition	A state where harmony is maintained and empathy is shared between one another.	• Harmonious means "to be in a state of harmony", "calm and serene", "without arguments and conflicts", "united in purpose to help each other." (Mulder, as cited in Magnis-Suseno, 2003) • Harmony means a continuous effort made by everyone to be calm and eliminate elements that might lead to arguments and restlessness (Jay, as cited in Magnis-Suseno, 2003) • Harmony is a manifestation of harmonious social life. (Geertz, 1961)	• Achieving a balance in relationships. (Kwan, Bond, & Singelis, 1997) • In classical Confucianism: harmony means to maintain a respectful relationship and putting priority to humanity and morality, not by avoiding disagreements or reaching a uniformed perspective. (Leung, Koch, & Lu, 2002).
2.	Indicator of Harmony	• Maintaining connectedness • Maintaining harmony • Managing conflicts	• The principle of harmony is not disturbing the existing harmony and preventing open conflict (Magnis-Suseno) • Harmony is maintained by Javanese mannerism, and the habit of camouflage • Javanese thoughts and acts tend to be indirect and symbolic	• Cooperation and working together (Han, 2008) • Avoiding open conflicts (Hwang, 1997-8) • Restrain oneself by avoiding conflicts in order to maintain harmony within the family (Williams & Guendouzi, 2005). • Forgive to maintain social harmony (Hook, Worthinton, & Utsey, 2009) • Avoid conflicts by using self control; when in conflict, attempt to find a compromise (Hwang, 1997-8) • Avoid conflicts to save a 'face' (Leung, Koch, & Lu, 2002)

(table continues)

(Appendix continues)

No.	Aspect	Research Findings	Indonesian Literature	Non-Indonesian Literature
3.	Indicator of Disharmony	- Breaking off relations - Disrupting harmony/compatibility - Open conflicts	*dadi dalan emoh ngambah, dadi godhong emoh nyuwek, dadi banyu emoh nyawuk (apathy is bad)* *selagine piring wae benthik apa maneh manungsa (Just like plates, man can break)* *kriwikan dadi grojogan (Little thing turns into big things)*	- The conflict's style is influenced by attention given to self-face or other -face (Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2003; Peng & Tjosvold, 2011). - The conflict in relationships tends to be concerned with the relationship itself rather than the achievement of instrumental goals (Zhang & Andreychik, 2013). - Proposition 10, 16 in the face-negotiation theory: the conflict faced by members of collectivist cultures with indirect strategies such as avoiding conflict or being obedient. Proposition 24: keep the face of others positive, correlate by avoiding conflict or being obedient. (Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998).
4.	Category of Harmony	Harmony is divided into two categories, Pseudo-harmony and essential harmony		- Harmony is divided into 2: Genuine harmony – sincere and holistic; and superficial harmony - calm but repressive of conflict - Two perspectives of harmony: Increase of harmony and avoidance of disintegration - Instrumental harmony puts more emphasis on "face", whilst value harmony emphasizes on a moral face that contains respect and honesty (Leung, Koch, &LU, 2002)
5.	Motives for harmony	- Obeying religious teachings - Obeying the counsel of parents - Achieving harmony - Social acceptance	*rukun agawe sentosa, crah agawe bubrah (In harmony we thrive, in conflicts we disintegrate)* *dikenaa iwake, aja nganti buthek banyune(fish for the fish, don't disturb the waters)* *wani ngalah luhur wekasane, sikap menang tanpa ngasorake, atau ngluruk tanpa bala.(humility is nobility)* *banyu pinerang ora bakal pedhot* *sing uwis ya uwis(what is done, is done)*	Confucian teachings