Group-directed criticism in Indonesia: Role of message source and audience

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KEYWORDS

identity threat • intergroup sensitivity effect

ABSTRACT

Research in individualist cultures has shown that group members are more likely to agree with criticisms of their group when the criticisms are made by another ingroup member as opposed to an outgroup member (the intergroup sensitivity effect). However, evaluations of ingroup critics are often harsher when they take their comments to an outgroup audience. In light of research on facework and tolerance for dissent, it seems important to test whether these effects are generalizable to a collectivist culture. Indonesian Muslims (N = 191) received a criticism of their religion stemming either from another Muslim or a Christian, and published in either a Muslim or a Christian newspaper. Participants agreed with the comments more when they were made by an ingroup as opposed to an outgroup member. Furthermore, consistent with previous research in Australia, the effects of audience on agreement were moderated by levels of group identification. Results are discussed in relation to theory about the functional role internal critics can play in group life.

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