INTERCULTURAL CHALLENGES AMONG STUDENTS OF IN INBOUND AND OUTBOUND PROGRAMS OF INDONESIA'S MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE

Ani Fiani[1]
Universitas PGRI Silampari

Afria Dian Prastanti[2]
Universitas Sarjanawiyata Tamansiswa

Andhi Dwi Nugroho[3]
Universitas Sarjanawiyata Tamansiswa

Novita Sumarlin Putri[4]
Universitas Sarjanawiyata Tamansiswa

Rini Eka Sari[5]
Universitas Sarjanawiyata Tamansiswa

Rina Setyaningsih[6]
Universitas Sarjanawiyata Tamansiswa

annie_fiani@yahoo.com[1]

ABSTRACT

This paper shows the cultural barriers in the higher education setting and advises that the university makes certain preparations to welcome inbound and outbound students of exchange program upon their arrival. Students have accepted resources primarily generated from the university to overcome these obstacles. Therefore, as revealed by this study, the university or college is better able to identify students' needs and provide appropriate campus resources and services when they have a deeper grasp of their academic issues. The university must be equipped not only intellectually, but also socially and culturally, to meet the demands of its students.

Keywords: *Cultural Issues, Inbound and Outbound students*

INTRODUCTION

Given the increasing drive for globalization in Indonesia, cross-border student mobility has resulted the influx of multi-regional students during the *Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka* (MBKM) has expanded dramatically. Multiple-regional students attend thousands of Indonesian institutions and universities in over 30 provinces. They contribute to the multiculturalism and diversity of their classrooms, universities, and communities. For instance, these students contribute unique viewpoints to the classroom and increase mutual understanding and admiration of the country's diversity. Therefore, it is crucial to accept these multi-regional students on Indonesian universities, as their contributions have favorably impacted the student body on multiple levels. These impacted levels include academic renown, cultural interaction, and economic revenue.

Moreover, the students in the inbound and outbound programs have the opportunity to constitute an increasingly relevant and important source of diversity on college. They enrich the cultural diversity of campuses with their home culture and ethnic experiences. In addition, these students help the faculty and students to develop their cultural sensitivities and skills in working with people from different backgrounds. Inbound and outbound students can provide opportunities for other student to experience different habits, cultures, and traditions. Hammer et al. (2003) discovered that "as one's experience of cultural difference become more complex and sophisticated, one's potential competence in intercultural relationship increases." It explains that an individual is exposed to diverse cultures, he or she has multiple opportunities to compare and construct a more diverse worldview.

However, students in the programs face challenges as they pursue higher education outside of their hometown (Constantine et al., 2005). They face obstacles and challenges, such as different food, unfamiliar living circumstances, financial problems, balancing work, studying schedules, learning styles, or any difficulties related to social and culture barriers. A series of transitional difficulties can be from daily life to cultural adaption in their new environment.

LITERATURE REVIEW

An intercultural aspects covers attitudes, knowledge, skills of relating and interpreting, skills of discovery and interaction and critical cultural awareness. Attitudes include respecting individual from other cultures, being open and eager to learn about other cultures, and developing positive attitudes towards other cultures. Knowledge component involves knowledge about cultural practices and products of the other cultures. Skills of relating and interpreting are the abilities to interpret a text from another culture and being aware of similarities and differences between cultures. Skills of discovery and interaction are the abilities to perform

skills and attitudes while communicating with others in real situations, (Gedik Bal, 2020).

Entering universities and colleges can be a daunting life and cultural change for the majority of students from multiple regions. Several studies examined the difficulties and obstacles faced by multi-regional students attending higher education institutions in multiple nations. This includes, but is not limited to, language difficulties, difficulties adjusting to the academic culture, lack of comprehension, and problems in communication with faculty and peers; stress, anxiety, feeling of isolation, social experiences, culture shock, financial hardships, lack of appropriate accommodation, isolation and loneliness, and any adaptations to their daily lives.

When studying away from their homeland, multiregional students experience isolation and loneliness in certain ways. Recent research involving 900 overseas students in Australia uncovered the following: According to Harzing and Pudelko (2013), 41% of multi-regional students feel high levels of stress. This anxiety may be caused by homesickness, cultural shock, or the perception of prejudice. Samovar & Porter (2013) conducted a study on the utilization of counseling services by out-of-state students at a large institution in Texas, United States of America. The purpose of this study was to determine why these students seek counseling services. According to data collected over a six-year study period, many out-of-state students with challenges or psychological concerns rely on family and friends. Unfortunately, not all students had the necessary support, and many individuals lacked compassion for hosting out-of-state students. Although the university offered a counseling service, few students took advantage of it. Many viewed therapy as a replacement for family and friends, only to be utilized if a student lacked these relationships (Gregersan-Hermans, 2017). A conclusion of this study could be that these students should be informed of various options, such as counseling and professional help, to aid in their adaptation to their new surroundings. Universities often open campuses in foreign countries and accept exchange students. They offer courses targeted at easing students' transition between different cultures. Evidently, these programs have proven beneficial (Kazemian, et. al., 2021).

METHOD
Research Plan

The objective of this study was to gain a comprehensive understanding of the issue of adaptation experienced by multi-regional students attending a university in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Case study is the appropriate qualitative research approach for the current investigation because it

emphasizes experiential knowledge of the case and special attention to the impact of its social, political, and other circumstances.

Participants

Twenty participants were selected as multi-regional students enrolled in the English Language Teaching undergraduate program at a private university in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, Indonesia.. In this study, representativeness was limited due to the use of convenience sampling; however, some demographic characteristics were controlled to increase representativeness. Participants were picked from Java, Sumatera, Borneo, Sulawesi, and Papua, among other areas across islands.

Data Gathering

The interviews were conducted using Google Meet and Google forms. Each oral interview lasted 15 minutes, while form completion took 60 minutes. The interviews were digitally recorded. The interview questions pertain to the experiences of multi-regional students who were enrolled as inbound and outbound participants in an exchange program initiated by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The study included semi-structured interviews; hence, each participant responded to the same research questions, allowing the researchers to glean more information from their responses. The purpose of this method was to comprehend the respondent's perspective rather than to generalize about conduct. This style of interview was advantageous because it provided possibilities to investigate regions. There were interviews held in Indonesian. Interviews were immediately transcribed afterward. The reflection and notes of the researchers were also compiled for comparison with the interview transcripts.

Data Analysis.

Informed by qualitative investigations, the data analysis was predominantly inductive and literature-based. Individual interviews were examined and transcribed. Open coding was used to code the data, and emerging themes were explored individually and across interviews for additional examination. The order of these categories in the coded transcripts was as follows: (1) struggles and difficulties encountered by participants in various settings (academic, social, and cultural); (2) tactics employed to overcome these struggles; and (3) recommendations for universities. Under each category, each topic is discussed, followed by participant-recommended potential strategies.

FINDINGS

The findings demonstrated that the inbound and outbound students faced certain obstacles. To adapt to the new environment, they must deal with the people, society, school, psychological state, and behavioral changes. The findings will be

organized into academic, social, and cultural categories. There were several themes related to their issues with academic learning under academic hardship.

Academic Barrier

During interviews, participants spent a considerable amount of time discussing study-related topics. All participants, regardless of their ethnic backgrounds, described their instructors as friendly, competent, and approachable. However, many reported having trouble communicating with their professors due to language limitations, cultural differences, and varying professorial expectations.

Theme 1 (Interaction with Professors)

In the classroom, interaction and communication issues occurred. Students from both collectivism and individualism cultures experienced this. For instance, one participant (Excerpt 2) remarked that it is considered rude to interrupt a professor when he or she is lecturing. Additionally, exchange students are concerned about recognition as an exchange student. Student stated that the acknowledgment is essential because they would like greater accommodations from teachers and peers

Excerpt 2

I also attempted to ask a question by raising my hand. However, I remained silent until the instructors arrived. I must wait. In Korea, it is impolite to interrupt a professor while they are speaking. If I was ignored and the opportunity to participate has passed, I may no longer contribute. Even when some students did not raise their hands, the professor continued speaking to them. I just do not respond to the professor's queries with my opinions. No one will await my arrival. They continue to speak (LR, South Sulawesi).

Excerpt 4

I was interested as to whether or not the professor was aware that I am an overseas student. I would like to participate, but I am concerned that he will not understand me. I suppose he may suspect that I did not study diligently if I can articulate myself clearly. Occasionally, grading and writing are also quite distinct. I was unfamiliar with their grading system for papers. For example, they asked me to express my viewpoint in a more straightforward manner, rather than in a complicated manner. I did my best to learn in class, but sometimes I need additional time to adjust (MIA, West Nusa Tenggara).

Social Barrier

Theme 2 (Isolation from Classmates)

When fitting in and making friends occurs, isolation results. In class and in their social lives, students in this study have encountered varying degrees of social

isolation. Initially, these children tend to play a more passive role, but they eventually develop various tactics for participating in social gatherings and classroom discussions.

Excerpt 3
I enrolled in a Frisbee club. When they began selecting teammates, I was always the last one chosen. [Researcher asked], why do you believe you are not initially chosen? I have no idea why! Perhaps they believe I am a foreign student, or they do not recognize me as a member of their team. I am accustomed. I must approach an organization that needs more members to join (MZ, West Borneo).

Excerpt 14
The lecturers utilized several group discussions. My peers did not typically invite me to join their group discussions. (GS, North Sumatra).

Excerpt 5
My primary challenge now is "making friends" in class and in daily life. Currently, the majority of my friends are members of a Japanese student organization. I do not know how to make classmates my friends. I am awaiting the arrival of my classmates so we can converse (RC, East Java).
Excerpt 11
I believe I only get the opportunity to interact with my classmates in one or two classes. I came alone to study, and I had no family in the city. My classmates and I meet a few times every week, but we rarely discuss personal matters. They have their own family and friends. Typically, they vanish after class (KS, South East Sulawesi).

Cultural Barrier
Participants hailed from many cultures that were distinct from the Indonesian society. Therefore, the individuals experienced culture shock due to various sorts of beliefs and value systems. They had to adapt to diverse value systems, communication patterns, signs and symbols of social contact, and interpersonal connection patterns when entering a new society. For instance, these students were exposed to distinct cultural norms regarding time conduct. Occasionally, it could easily lead to misunderstanding and unease. Following are discussions of further connected specialized themes.

Theme 6 (Responses to the Concept of Punctuality) Exposition 12
I had a scheduled appointment with a peer-tutor at the language learning center, yet I still had to wait for thirty minutes. I disagree that it makes sense (CL, East Java).

Excerpt 13

I needed to pass the driving exam. Although I arrived early to wait, I must still wait at least two hours to obtain my driver's license. Everyone was waiting outside the office, and I was curious as to why they were not let anyone inside. People in my town are not required to wait. They will be given a ticket number and served when their number is called (FSD, Maluku).

Theme 7 (reacting to prejudice against eastern students).

Prejudice and discrimination were reported by eastern students in their academic and social life. Even though they were not explicitly excluded from class and social events, they felt uneasy to their environment. Participants asserted that their classmates may not comprehend their origins, and that they draw conclusions on their behalf. Participants indicated that they were willing to discuss their background in order to increase familiarity with them. This statement indicated that the students are willing to offer their perspectives to improve cross-cultural understanding.

DISCUSSION

1. Repercussions

On the basis of this study's findings, institutions of higher education in Indonesia were given advice on how to aid inbound and outbound students in achieving success. First, colleges and institutions should provide these students with an language program to improve their language skills. Academic learning, participation in various events, and cultural comprehension could all be impacted by linguistic hurdles. Universities can conduct workshops in which the students become acquainted with colloquial language, regularly used slang terms, and the social and cultural norms of the society in order to communicate effectively in both academic and non-academic settings, (Tolosa et al., 2018). Secondly, students and lecturers should be aware of the importance of welcoming the inbound and outbound students and appreciating their differences, (Krajka, 2013). For instance, college could host orientation programs for the students' learning. Faculty ensured that all students have equitable access and learning opportunities. These students also gained intercultural competency in order to interact with other students comfortably. This can be accomplished through training dealing with students across cultures. Thirdly, it is expected that the inbound and outbound students received tutoring and counseling in order to thrive academically and to alleviate their psychological burden. Universities provided overseas students with an unique

orientation to the culture and academic culture as a whole (Demirkol, 2019). Efforts of this nature included lectures given by specialists, the students recounting their personal experiences and groups that facilitate the formation of friendships with locals.

2. Adjustment Strategies.

There is evidence that inbound and outbound students encounter a variety of adjustment concerns that can have an influence on their studies and overall experience while studying in/outbound. Despite the fact that colleges frequently offer support services for these students, the personal experiences including the identification of obstacles and ways for overcoming them, can be beneficial to other students. The institution has played a significant role in facilitating the adjustment of inbound and outbound students.

CONCLUSION

Using qualitative research methodologies, this study investigated the academic, social, and cultural adaptation of multi-regional students. To preserve the generalization, inbound and outbound students from various islands are included in this study. The findings suggested that the students attend universities and colleges frequently experience a number of transitional challenges. On the other hand, these obstacles also encourage the students to develop problem-solving strategies. When students become autonomous learners, they create new ways for overcoming obstacles. Adjustment and adaptation require time, effort, and a great deal of help from a variety of sources. The university is typically the initial source of available resources; therefore, the institution needs to focus on the obstacles faced by these students and give them with more adequate support.

REFERENCES

Brannen, M.Y., R. Piekkari & S. Tietze (2014). Unpacking the forms, functions, and characteristics of a significant challenge to MNC theory and performance: the multidimensional role of language in international commerce. 45(5) *Journal of International Business Studies*: 495–507

Constantine, M. G., Kindaichi, M., Okazaki, S. Gainor, K. A., and Baden, A. L. (2005). A qualitative investigation of the cultural adjustment experiences of Asian international college women. Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 11(2), 162–175.

Demirkol, T. (2019). Exploring intercultural sensitivity level at a study-at-home context. *European Journal of English Language Teaching*, 4(4), 93-111. doi.org/ 10.5281/zenodo.2819664

Gedik Bal, N. (2020). Intercultural Sensitivity of EFL Learners at a State University. *The Journal of Language Teaching and Learning*, 10(2), 1-19.

Gregersan-Hermans,J. (2017). Intercultural competence development in higher education. In D.K Deardorff & L.A. Arasaratnam-Smith (ed), *Intercultural Competence in Higher Education: International Approaches, Assessment and Application*. Routledge.

Gunia, B.C., J.M. Brett, A.K. Nandkeolyar & D. Kamdar (2011). Paying a price: Consequences of culture, trust, and negotiating. *Applied Psychology Journal*, 96(4): 774-789.

Hammer, M. R., Bennett, M. J., and Wiseman, R. (2003). The intercultural development inventory: a measure of intercultural sensitivity," International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 27, 421–443.

Harzing, A.W. & M. Pudelko (2013). A detailed analysis and comparison of the language competencies, policies, and practices of Anglophone, Asian, Continental European, and Nordic MNCs. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 48(1): 87–97.

Kazemian, M., Khodareza, M. R., Khonamri, R., & Rahimy, R. (2021). Instruction on intercultural communicative competence and its application by Iranian EFL male and female learners. *Education and Self Development*, 15(2), 21–39. doi: 10.26907/esd16.1.04.

Krajka, J., Marczak, M., Tatar, S., & Yildiz, S. (2013). Building Esp Teacher Awareness Through Intercultural Tandems–Post-Practicum Experience. *English for Specific Purposes World*, 14(38), 1-18.

Minkov, M. & G. Hofstede (2011). The development of Hofstede's theory. *The Journal of Cross-Cultural Management,* 18(1).

Samovar, L.A. & R.E. Porter (2013). *A Reader on Intercultural Communication*. Belmont, California, United States: Wadsworth.

Tolosa, C., Biebricher, C., East, M.P., & Howard, J.R. (2018). Intercultural language teaching as a catalyst for teacher inquiry. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 70, 227-235.