Intercultural Communication Competence and Intercultural Adjustment Problems of International Students in Indonesia and Japan: A Sequential Explanatory Study

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論　文　審　査　の　結　果　の　要　旨

This study used sequential mixed methods that combine both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The questionnaire participants in Japan were 68 international students studying at cities on Kyushu Island, while participants in Indonesia were 58 international students from three major cities on Java Island. There were ten interviewees in Japan and sixteen in Indonesia. A questionnaire was used to find out the international students' intercultural adjustment problems, intercultural sensitivity, intercultural willingness to participate, ethnocentrism, and variables that correlate to them. An open-ended interview was used to explore in-depth the adjustment issues, the coping strategies, and the nature of international students in this study.

The quantitative results for the research questions reveal that international students' adjustment problems in Indonesia and Japan are relatively few. However, the adjustment problems of international students in Japan are statistically more severe than their counterparts in Indonesia. Moreover, the statistical results show that a significant number of international students in Japan and Indonesia have a medium to a high level of intercultural communication competence. A series of statistical tests prove that the level of intercultural sensitivity, ethnocentrism, intercultural willingness to communicate slightly correlate with the intercultural adjustment problems. Thus, individuals with high intercultural communication competence could experience as many problems as individuals with low intercultural communication competence. Some external factors influence the adjustment problems, i.e., course of study, language proficiency, university, and environmental circumstances, such as numbers of culturally-different friends, frequency of communicating interculturally, and impression of intercultural communication.

The qualitative analysis found adjustment problems experienced by participants in both countries in five categories: personal psychological issues, academic issues, sociocultural issues,

general living issues, and language issues. The significant problems faced by international students in Indonesia are general living issues, sociocultural issues, and language issues. Some problems were found only in Indonesia, such as transportation and racial marking, which includes personal violation. Moreover, the participants in Indonesia struggled not only with Indonesian but also Javanese since the study took place in Yogyakarta, Surakarta, and Semarang, where the locals communicate in Javanese. Additionally, they must deal with the insensitive behavior of Indonesians, which explicitly discriminates against them based on their skin color. Moreover, since Indonesia has suffered from terrorist violence for decades, the media and society are more aware of radicalism. Consequently, participants wearing modest Islamic clothing had to deal with negative prejudice.

Meanwhile, the significant problems in Japan are academic issues, sociocultural issues, and language issues. Some problems were only experienced by participants in Japan, such as time management and racial discrimination in a part-time job. The participants also found difficulties understanding cultural constructs, such as *uchi-soto*, *ura-omote*, and *honne-tatemae*. Since those cultural constructs permeate all spheres of Japanese society, participants must deal with the indirect way of speaking and social boundaries. Moreover, some participants were discriminated against racially. Some cultural elements made their life uncomfortable, i.e., *nomikai*.

The findings suggest that a considerable number of international students in Indonesia and Japan have a moderate level of intercultural communication competence; however, they still experienced difficulties in communicating with domestic students and local people. The significant sociocultural issues faced by the students were majorly caused by local people. They may have reasons for being apprehensive over communicating with people from different cultural background. Aside from language differences, they may have a low level of intercultural sensitivity and a high level of ethnocentrism which lead to prejudice and unwillingness to communicate interculturally.

This study, by means of the sequential mixed methods, clarifies the adjustment issues, the coping strategies, and the nature of the international students both in Indonesia and in Japan, which has not previously been done. As such, the committee has decided that the dissertation concerned deserves to be awarded a doctorate in art and science.