

## **Cirebon Students' Cultural Shock In Adaptation To Lectures In Germany**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Germany is one of the destination countries for prospective students as a destination to continue to the university level. The researcher conducted this study with the aim of finding out the adaptation of Cirebon students in lecture activities and obstacles in lecture activities in Germany. This study uses a qualitative research method using a descriptive approach. The data collection technique was carried out using in-depth interview techniques, observations, and studies of relevant previous research articles and research-related documents. This research uses the theory of cross-cultural communication which is explained in it about culture shock and the stages of adaptation to new cultures. The results of this study show how the stages of Cirebon students when adapting to a new culture through the honeymoon phase, which is the introduction and enthusiasm for the new culture, then the frustration phase because they experience culture shock facing the new culture. The next stage is to start the reading phase by understanding and starting to learn new cultures in the environment around the residence and campus environment. The last stage is the resolution phase where Cirebon students accept the new culture that exists in Germany. Before the adaptation process occurred, this study showed the obstacles faced during lecture activities in Germany caused by internal or internal factors such as religion, food and weather.

**Keywords:** *Communication, cross-cultural, culture shock, Adaptation, Germany*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Germany is one of the destination countries for prospective international students to continue to the university level. Germany is the most popular study destination for prospective international students in the world, as Germany is home to some of the highest-ranked universities in Western Europe. LMU Munich has the highest ranking at 32nd, Heidelberg University 47th and Humboldt University Berlin 67th in the world, while many other institutions are in the top 100. The resources in many of these institutions are also often unparalleled, as the State of Germany funds a lot of research projects, which is of great interest to master's students

In addition to bringing many advantages, studying in Germany will also face many challenges, one of which is being faced with a new culture, this is very basic because the ability to adapt to new environmental situations is an important stage in a person's development. According to (Kim, 2017), cultural adaptation is a long-term process carried out by individuals to adapt to their environment through communicative exchanges and learning, until they feel comfortable in a new environment. From this experience, of course, it will affect the student's ability and help him when looking at or understanding a new habit. Adaptation is a process in which a person is able to overcome external and internal obstacles when experiencing culture shock due to a new culture. The reality that occurs, the process of adapting to a new culture is not easy for an individual to adjust to a new culture, in this case it is not uncommon for students to fail to adjust to a sense of mental and physical discomfort, as a result they experience culture shock which results in students becoming stressed and depressed.

Culture shock or commonly known as culture shock is when a person does not know the social habits of a new culture. This understanding rejects the mention of culture shock as a very strong obstacle to an individual's routine, ego, and self-image (Dayaksini & Yuniardi, 2004). The term culture shock is used to describe feelings of confusion due to a new culture shock that affects feelings and behaviors from a person's experience in another region/country or Region/Country of Origin.

Previous research is so important as a reference and has been selected according to the problem of this research, the researcher reviews the previous research related and relevant to the research that the researcher will conduct. Therefore, the researcher received references to support, complement, and comparator in compiling this journal to be more adequate. In addition, the study in the previous study is useful to provide a preliminary overview of the study related to the problems in this study. Previous research conducted by Farida, Falah and Kurniawati, Indah (2015) in its international journal entitled *"Character Education Communication Model Nation to Form the Integrity of Self in Students.*

*"The formation of self-identity can be built through the establishment of a character that is applied to every aspect of education, one's identity is determined more by the actions and character of the person. The purpose of this study is 1. To find out how to approach communication in shaping the nation's character education integrity of the student; 2. To determine the communication barriers in shaping the nation's character education integrity of the student; 3. To study the response of the students in the communication model of character education in the formation of the nation's integrity students. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative research. Subjects will be selected purposively as appropriate, for which explored in this study is the depth of information, not quantity informant. This study is expected to serve as a guide and reference for Higher Education and Civitas Academica in applying the Model Communications National Character Education in Shaping Student Integrity"*

From the journal above, it can be interpreted that the formation of self-identity can be built through the formation of the character that is applied to every aspect of education, a person's identity is more determined by the person's actions and character. The method used in this study is a qualitative descriptive research. The subject will be chosen purposively as appropriate, because what is explored in this study is the depth of information, not the quantity of informants. The result of this research is to find out how to approach communication in shaping the integrity of the nation's character education for students, knowing the communication barriers in shaping the integrity of the nation's character education from students, and knowing the students' responses in the character education communication model in the formation of students with national integrity.

Research conducted by Pratimi, Suci and Satyawan, (Gejir et al., 2017) entitled "Communication and Interaction Patterns in Facing Cultural Shock in the Adaptation of Foreign Students at Sebelas Maret University Surakarta". This research method uses a qualitative descriptive method, using a case study approach. The data collection technique was carried out using in-depth interview techniques, systematically arranged questions and observations. This research focuses on how intercultural communication occurs when foreign students come and settle in Indonesia. The results of this research show that seeking knowledge abroad is not a new or foreign thing in today's time, foreign students who study in Indonesia will certainly be faced with primary communication patterns, cultural shock, the need to adapt to a new environment, get to know social, cultural, and so on. So that the results can be concluded if foreign students have their own strategies in dealing with the adaptation process, such as tolerance, positive attitudes, and active socialization. Therefore, there is a difference in previous research with the research that will be researched by the researcher. The objectives of the research: 1. To find out the adaptation of Cirebon students in lecture activities in Germany. 2. Obstacles experienced by Cirebon students in lecture activities in Germany.

## METHOD

In this study, the method used by the researcher is by using a qualitative method. The researcher chose a qualitative approach with a phenomenological descriptive case study. Phenomenology is used to uncover the meaning of an individual's event or experience. The meaning contained in it depends on the relationship of the individual with the events experienced (Hasbiansyah, 2008). The phenomenological approach is a form of qualitative research that aims to foster an understanding that explains the meaning of objects, symptoms, or events experienced by both individuals and groups consciously and really.

The collection technique in this study is using interview techniques. The researcher chose two Cirebon students in Germany as resource persons. The resource persons or informants selected to fulfill this research are informants who are considered to be in accordance with the phenomenological approach. This phenomenological approach aims to make it easier for researchers to study an object and social situation to be studied (Rini et al., 2023).

Table I List of names and status of informants

No	Informant's name	Status	Department
1	Sairoh	S1 students	Business science
2	Ilik Dewanti	S2 students	German as a foreign language and technical language

The theory used in this study is the theory of cross-cultural communication. According to Liliweri, Alo (2009) cross-cultural communication is interpersonal communication carried out by people with different cultural backgrounds.

Adaptation of intercultural communication is an important factor for immigrants who enter a new frontier where an individual has a culture different from the culture from which the individual comes from and will face a phase of culture shock. Culture shock or commonly called culture shock was first introduced by (Oberg, 1960) to describe the deep and negative response of depression, frustration, and disorientation experienced by people living in a new cultural environment. This term can be said to be the process of uncertainty of direction, and feeling that we do not know how to do everything in a new environment, and do not know what is not appropriate and know what is certain (Dayaksini & Yuniardi, 2004).

According to (Hamad, 2013), there are four stages of culture shock, namely:

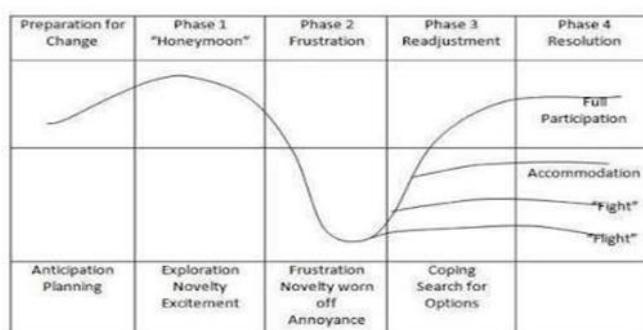


Figure 1. Shock Cultur Stage Curve

The first stage of the culture shock phase is the honeymoon phase (introduction), the second is frustration (shock/frustration with the new culture), the third is readjudgment (seeking and choosing to accept or not to accept the new culture) and the last phase is resolution, which is the acceptance phase as a way out of the discomfort of the new culture.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This research is focused on the adaptation of Cirebon students in lecture activities in Germany. Basically, adaptation refers to the process of socialization that aims to achieve group harmony. There is a reciprocal relationship that can be seen from the forms of interaction that occur between the two objects between individuals or groups with different cultural backgrounds. Adaptation involves the struggle to achieve a balance between the individual and his environment (Lewthwaite, 1996). Referring to Gudykunst and Kim, in order to gather information in order to adapt, individuals must have an open attitude in accepting new cultures and habits. Individuals are required to be able to choose the information needed about the culture of the new community in overseas places with the aim of building effective communication. The most difficult adaptation obstacle for Cirebon students in Germany is the weather obstacle, because in Germany there are 4 different seasons while in Indonesia there are only two seasons, and another obstacle is Language, where most universities in Germany for the s1 and s2 levels can only use German.

The adaptation process carried out by Cirebon students in lecture activities in Germany has a different time span, between 1 year to less than three months. Cirebon students go through a lot of adaptation phases while in the process of learning activities in Germany, adaptation is a common thing, one of which is when an individual lives somewhere new or a place that is very far from his comfort zone (Martin & Nakayama, 2006).

The following are the results of the research that researchers have conducted:

### **Fase Honeymoon**

The honeymoon phase is a stage that describes the excitement of a new culture. At this stage the individual is in a place that is all new and different from the place where an individual came from. This stage is the stage when an individual still has a high sense of enthusiasm and curiosity as well as a feeling of excitement with the new atmosphere that he will face. "I felt very happy when I first came to Germany, in my heart I said that Masya Allah is like a dream already in Germany, because in addition to a good campus building, when I first came I immediately felt the winter season which when I was in Cirebon only had a dry and rainy summer" (interview with Cirebon S students)

As the informant felt when he first set foot in Germany, the informant felt that everything was very foreign, because they had never lived in Germany or any other country other than Indonesia before. They feel that all the things in Germany are very beautiful, such as clean public facilities, clean streets and other things still look very beautiful. For some time they felt very happy because they saw all the new things that were different from their home country. In addition, they still feel that everything is fun because at this stage they are in a place full of new people, new languages, new foods and new environments and situations. In this phase of introduction, the two informants have not felt anything new as a foreign thing, have not felt

homesickness and have not felt alone, because this stage is a fun stage where an individual feels still complacent with the beauty that exists in Germany.

Halal food on campus because it often provides non-Halal food. The 2nd informant added that he felt the same thing, namely frustration due to the limitations of Germany and experiencing difficulties in lecture activities on campus and communication problems outside the campus environment. "I was very sad when I was on campus different from when I was studying in Indonesia, if here because I am a minority and wear a hijab, people see me strangely because in 2015 it was still rare for me to wear a hijab, especially for me Asian, right. And here on campus you really have to be able to speak German, even though the lecturers can speak English, but they don't want to answer my questions in English, even though at that time I was still not fluent in German, and at that time I often cried because every day I had to study over so that I could pursue lessons, especially if I wanted to take the exam, I had to study a month before" (interview with resource person I)

At this stage, individuals experience culture shock. They had difficulties in Germany, weather and punctuality in everything. According to the interviewees, they said that most of the Germans are very fanatical about their culture, for example the use of German which is very thick in all parts of Germany, and accuracy in various things, such as very punctual public transportation, and a very very orderly life.

### **Fase Readjustment**

The readjudgement phase is the stage for readjustment, at this stage a person will begin to reorganize their frustration in various ways in order to adapt to the new culture. An individual will seek justification for what he or she is doing by looking for information that he or she does not yet know about an event or occurrence that can reduce the discomfort from the frustration stage. "I was really down when I first went to college in the first semester, because the lessons really had to be learned from the basics because in Germany everything was structured aka neat and disciplined, fortunately at that time there were people who said that in every university there was a psychologist, so yes thank God the help of a psychologist can help ease my overthinking a little, and yes I have to change if I want to be better and can continue my studies, so that they graduate well" (interview with Cirebon S student)

A person begins to reduce the completion of the critical period experienced at the stage of frustration, this way is characterized by the process of readjustment of an individual to find solutions such as learning a new language and a new culture. When the informant had difficulties with the problem of Germany, the thing he did at that time was to seek information from the campus, where all campuses in Germany provided professional psychology services for free for students. After the informant came to the psychology and told all the difficulties, the informant got advice that was in accordance with the problem he was facing, the advice he gave was to catch up with the language by contacting the lecturer of German literature to further deepen the German language, and the time provided by the campus for consular services and the language was very unlimited.

### **Fase Resolution**

This last stage is the problem-solving stage, this stage shows the solution of each conflict. At this stage, several answers will emerge to solve the readjudgment stage, namely individuals regain a sense of harmony and comfort of a new culture, develop meaningful relationships and students choose to survive with all situations and conditions in a new environment.

"After two years of living in Germany, I feel very comfortable even though at first it was very difficult with the language, weather and food, but now I am getting used to food, and like the weather, and it is actually more comfortable because maybe here everything is easy, especially if I am in lectures, for example I can't do it, I immediately email the lecturer to ask him and definitely respond quickly, I keep using an appointment if I want to meet even though sometimes it takes a long time to get the date, but for me personally, it doesn't matter because this has been my initial motivation to study in Germany" (interview with S student)

### **OBSTACLES IN THE ADAPTATION PROCESS**

In the process of adaptation of Cirebon students in lecture activities in Germany, Cirebon students are required to be able to adapt to the conditions and culture that prevail in the local community and country. The problem is that when they are in a new place, of course they experience culture shock which then becomes an obstacle when adapting.

"I was surprised at first because here, it is very clean even though it is in an open park like a square. And here the weather is sometimes very extreme, I can't get to the same cold as autumn before winter, my body is sick and I miss Indonesia continuously, if it's already that season, I definitely want to go home to Indonesia and then I don't want to be here anymore" (interview with Student S)

Cultural shock is a state felt by a person when in a new social territory, where a person feels that he has lost the signs and symbols that he has been familiar with in establishing social interactions. Signs and symbols are such as words, gestures, habits, symbols, facial expressions and norms acquired by individuals throughout their lives since they are born (Mulyana, 2006). Germans tend to be disciplined, obey government regulations, be firm, be punctual and also be ambitious in positive ways.

**Table II. External and Internal Obstacles Faced by Cirebon Students in Lecture Activities in Germany**

External constraints	Internal constraints
Rarity of food labeled halal	Not understanding campus and state regulations
Weather in autumn and snow	The use of very complex standard German
Extreme hot weather	Lack of confidence to learn German
Lack place Worship to Muslims (mosques)	High levels of racism against immigrants or foreign students

The table above shows several obstacles that hinder adaptation for Cirebon students. The obstacles that Cirebon students experience when adapting to lecture activities in Germany are internal obstacles which are obstacles from within individuals related to psychological conditions, such as language, race, government regulations. The external obstacles are obstacles that come from outside psychological control such as weather, food and religion constraints.

## CONCLUSION

Based on this study, the results can be concluded that the adaptation and constraints of Cirebon students in lecture activities in Germany greatly affect the acceptance of a new culture. The stages of the adaptation process for Cirebon students in Germany are through a honeymoon where students from Cirebon feel a new and fun atmosphere from a new country. Then the phase of frustration where Cirebon students experienced culture shock towards the new culture of Germany. After that, there is a phase of readjudgment or readjustment, where they accept and find solutions to the obstacles they face. The last stage is the resolution stage. This stage describes how the Cirebon students go through the process of adaptation and acceptance of a new culture in their lecture activities and new environment in Germany. In addition, the obstacles faced by Cirebon students in lecture activities in Germany are external obstacles such as limitations to get halal-labeled food, very minimal places of worship for a Muslim and very extreme weather changes because Cirebon students come from tropical countries while Germany has four seasons, namely heat, cold, autumn and snow. And the next obstacle is the second obstacle is an internal obstacle, where the obstacles faced by Cirebon students in lecture activities are the use of standard German which is very extreme difficult, the amount and lack of knowledge of official regulations in writing and unwritten both state and campus, and the lack of confidence to ask questions when not understanding the course during the lecture process.

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