

An Analysis cultural shock of education system by Indonesian students in Singapore

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ABSTRACT

Indonesian students who study in Singapore experience a lot of cultural shock. This happened because of the many differences in the education system between Indonesia and Singapore. This study aims to analyze the cultural shock experienced by Indonesian students in Singapore. The research applied a qualitative descriptive research method that using library research based on Sverre Lysgaard (1955) theory, some Indonesian students who are still in college and have also graduated from college in the last 5 years in Singapore became the object of research in the internet site "Quora" about how it's like studying in Singapore. The result shows that many Indonesian students experience cultural shock based on the opinions or comments given in the comments column. The percentage of stages experienced by Indonesian students shows that the honeymoon stage is 20%, frustration stage is 30%, adjustment stage is 20%, and also adaptation stage is 30%. There are many differences in the education system in Indonesia and Singapore which are the main challenges in getting an education, one of which is about activities in learning and the attendance system in class. Not only that, the support from the teaching workforce and language also triggered the Cultural shock experienced by Indonesian students studying in Singapore

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INTRODUCTION

Basically, education is a very important thing that everyone should have. Everyone will definitely be competing to learn. As the saying goes "Seek knowledge as far as China". No exception, Indonesian students who also want to get the best education, one of which is in Singapore, which has the best education system. However, without realizing it, because of the differences in the education system, many Indonesians have experienced cultural shock because they are not used to the learning culture there. For example, Indonesia is more passive than Singapore, which is more disciplined. The education system is also very influential in the creation of quality education. In a country will definitely try to make the best education, Indonesia and Singapore are no exception. Therefore, every education system in each country must be different. This causes cultural shock if students try to study in other countries.

The term 'Cultural Shock' has been defined by Levine and Adelman (1993), i.e. as the response a person may have in a new country that allows the person to feel confused and disoriented, and every aspect of life may be difficult. Not only Levine and Adelman who provide an opinion about culture shock, Milton (2005) states that culture shock occurs in different environments. The most severe and costly cases of culture shock occur in individuals who live outside their home country for a long period of time such as Indonesian students studying in Singapore. Studying abroad can be a daunting task for Indonesian students as many of them experience culture shock while adjusting to a new culture such as the different atmosphere of overseas universities, different attitudes of lecturers and students towards study and research, and the need to adapt study habits the vintage with the brand new manner of operating.

There are several variations of reaction to a new culture. Levine & Adelman (1993), Jandt (1998), Pavese, Bohlmann & Gladding (2003), Thomas (2001) identify several stages of culture shock as initial euphoria, irritation and hostility, gradual adjustment, acceptance and integration. First, initial euphoria, newcomers may feel euphoric and happy with all the new things they encounter. They may have some issues but usually accept it only as part of the novelty, but only temporarily. The euphoric stage, everything is fine, nothing is wrong and the individual is having fun (Schneider: 2005). Second, the irritation and hostility stage, the individual is immersed in new problems such as facing difficult times and crises in study habits so that feelings of dissatisfaction, impatience, anger, sadness, feeling unable, and starting to complain about the host's usual learning culture arise. occurs when a newcomer tries to compare a new culture that is very different from their own. Third, the gradual adjustment stage, the individual becomes more comfortable in the new culture, begins to relax in new situations so that daily activities are no longer the main problem. At this stage, they begin to feel more at home in their new environment and accept the habits of learning there. Fourth, in the acceptance and integration stage the individual has the ability to function in both cultures which occurs when he feels at home in the host culture and has the ability to live successfully in the two cultures without feeling anxious or troubled again.

Previous studies to conducted to improve, develop, foster and preserve cultural shock of education system by Indonesian students at Singapore such as (1) Singapore's Education Concept: Comparative and Applicative Study to The Quality of Indonesia's Education by Euis, E, P., 2019. (2) Culture Shocks Experienced by Indonesian Students Studying Overseas by Ernofalina., 2017. (3) Cultural Shock in a study abroad program in An Indonesian context by Arifah, M., Annisa, L., 2021. (4) Differences between Indonesia and Singapore based on PISA 2015: Five-factor students' perception in science education by Arlinwibowo, J., Kistoro, H., Retnawati, H., Kassymova, G., Kenjaliyev, B., 2020. (5) Asian students experience of culture shock and coping strategies by Anjalin, U., Mazumdar, A., Whiteside, E., 2017. (6) Culture Shock Experienced By Foreign Students Studying At Indonesian Universities by Poedjiastutie, D., 2009.

Research on cultural shock has often been done. The difference from some previous studies is the object study. The object of research in this study is Indonesian students who study at Singapore. Researchers are interested in doing this research because several reasons: a) the researcher found that many Indonesian students study abroad, one of which is in Singapore, b) the education system is different according to their background, culture, and habits so that researchers are interested in researching it, c) The cultural shock experienced by Indonesian students while studying there made researchers feel it was important to study them.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Culture shock is a common phenomenon experienced by someone who gets a new atmosphere. While it may take months to develop, this phenomenon often affects people living away from home in unexpected ways. Culture shock is the feeling of disorientation that a person experiences when suddenly exposed to a foreign culture and way of life.

According to Sverre Lysgaard (1955), cultural shock is divided into 4 different stages, as follows:

1. Honeymoon Stage

The Honeymoon stage is the first stage of culture shock, and can often last for weeks or even months. This is the euphoric stage when a person is fascinated by all the interesting and different aspects of his new previous life such as cultural quirks. During this phase, a person quickly identifies similarities between the new culture and the old culture, which generally should always end. For example, "In the beginning the whole

process will seem weird for you. Open your mind, observe, try not to compare everything with what you have seen in your country,” said Iryna.

2. Frustration Stage

The frustration stage is a stage marked by frustration and anxiety. This usually reaches around the three month mark, although it can be earlier for some individuals. As excitement gradually dissipates, a person is constantly faced with difficulties or uncomfortable situations that may be offensive which are frustrating. In this stage, a person also begins to miss the culture of the country of origin. For example, “For me, it was difficult at the beginning, but then it became the best experience I have ever had,” said Esmelin.

3. Adjustment Stage

The adjustment stage is the stage where a person begins to understand the new culture so that adjustments and changes occur to cope with the new culture gradually for the better and the routine begins. This stage is usually about six to twelve months. In this phase, a person may have adjusted to and better understand the local culture. For example, “When I got here, the people that I interacted with made a world of a difference. The fear that I had when I came to the United States was made easier by the people I met, especially at my school,” said Romaine.

4. Adaptation Stage

The Adaptation Stage is the stage where a person feels comfortable in a new and more integrated country, and has successfully adapted to your new way of life. A person no longer feels isolated and lonely and is used to daily activities and new friends. Although one may never return to the high euphoria felt during the honeymoon stage, one now gains a strong sense of belonging and finally feels at home in a new environment. For example, “I became more fluent in speaking English and I could adopt local dialects, talk about topics on media and get accustomed to local issues that gave me chance to get more local friends,” said Ks.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative research design by conducting research on words, phrases or sentences that contain the feelings of Indonesian students who are experiencing cultural shock. Shank (2002) defines qualitative research as “a form of systematic empirical inquiry. It is planned, regulated and generalized by following the regulations and accredited by the participants of the qualitative research network. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) state that qualitative studies include interpretation and naturalistic methods: “meaning qualitative researchers look at things in their herbal settings, seeking to capture, or interpret, phenomena in the phrases people bring them to them. experienced by Indonesian students in Singapore in an academic environment.

The data collection technique was carried out by library research, by collecting comments or comments from Indonesian students who experienced cultural shock in Singapore. Library research is a technique of collecting data by learning and understanding data which has close relations with the problems from books, theories, notes, and documents. It is a general or specialized library that collects materials for use in intensive research projects (Mary George, 2008). The respondents of this research are Indonesian students studying in Singapore which are grouped into two categories: 1) 10 students who are still studying in Singapore, 2) 10 students who have studied in Singapore and have completed their studies in the last five years.

The data is obtained from the "Quora" internet site which was uploaded in 2019, entitled "Bagaimana rasanya berkuliah di Singapura", <https://id.quora.com/Bagaimana-rasanya-berkuliah-di-Singapura>. The data analysis using Sverre Lysgaard (1955) theory classifies cultural shock into 4 stages such as honeymoon stage, frustration stage, adjustment stage and also adaptation stages. The research is closer to examine the comparison of Indonesian education with Singapore by Indonesia student. So that, the researcher can analyze the cultural shock study abroad.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Table 1 Stages of Cultural Shock

NO	Stages of Cultural Shock	Datas	Percentages
1	Honeymoon stage	8	20%
2	Frustration stage	10	30%
3	Adjustment stage	8	20%
4	Adaptation stage	10	30%

1. HONEYMOON STAGE

a) *“When I first visited the NTU campus, there were already several senior Indonesian students who were ready to help take care of the completeness of the college files, from medical tests, student visa processing, to bank account creation. NTU is one of the universities where there is a student organization of Indonesian students so that it is not too difficult for Indonesian students to adapt to this university.”*

(Erland Ang, an Indonesian student who studies in Singapore at the Nanyang Technological University (NTU) Singapore majoring in civil engineering.)

Based on the data above, Erland Ang experienced the Honeymoon stage which still amazed him because he had successfully studied in Singapore. Therefore, he is still welcome by describing one of the universities that has an Indonesian student organization so that it is not too difficult for Indonesian students to adapt to this university. In fact, this is still the beginning.

b) *“At first everything looks cool. The campus is modern, construction and renovation are carried out continuously, complete facilities, even food franchises such as MC Donalds, Starbucks, subway, KFC, and so on are available in the Nanyang technological university campus area.”*

(Fransisca Andriani, studying in Singapore at the Nanyang Technological University (NTU) Singapore majoring in Statistics (Academic Sciences) & Finance.)

Based on the data above, participants still have not experienced difficulties. He felt that everything looked beautiful, the differences were stunning, and seeing what was seen in the new place was more beautiful than the original place was like praising the modernity of the campus, and its facilities.

c) *“First of all, the system for selecting courses is unique. To my knowledge, generally choose that module on a first-come-first-serve basis. So, hurry up until the class is full.”*

(Giovanni Jessica, studying at National University of Singapore majoring in chemical Engineering)

Based on the data above, participants were still impressed by the differences in campuses in Singapore with a unique system of choosing courses that might be said to be different from the system of choosing courses in their home country.

The data reveals that there are several respondents who experience the honeymoon stage or early euphoria where everything still looks new, interesting, exciting, enchanting, and unique. Besides that, other respondents even skipped this stage. This happened because they were very afraid and nervous about being accepted to study in Singapore. Therefore, the table shows 20% of students feel this phase. However, this stage will not last forever, because they will enter a new phase that really creates difficulties.

2. FRUSTRATION STAGE

- a) *“I still remember very well my first three months in college. In my bag I always carry the English-Indonesian dictionary by “John M. Echols” (formerly this dictionary was considered the most complete and correct English dictionary). Every time I enter class, I find it quite difficult to hear lessons in English, especially those that are not delivered by English native speakers (eg Chinese, Indian, etc.) because their pronunciation is still influenced by their native dialect. Not to mention meeting non-Indonesians for the first time. When I want to speak, in my head I always have to write first what I want to say in Indonesian, then translate it into English, then say it to the other person.”*

(Erland Ang, an Indonesian student who studies in Singapore at the Nanyang Technological University (NTU) Singapore majoring in civil engineering.)

Based on the data above, participants have experienced the transition from the honeymoon stage to the frustration stage by experiencing many challenges. The first challenge, is the language challenge. This challenge is quite difficult, especially for Indonesians, because in Indonesia they are only required to use Indonesian, so it is quite difficult to practice English in everyday life. Because as it is known, if there is an Indonesian who speaks English in Indonesia, surely that person will be ridiculed or laughed at by his friends.

- b) *“Our culture is very different from the culture in Singapore, both in our daily interactions and in our interactions with college friends. In Singapore, students are very individual and very few students want to share their knowledge with other students.”*

(Ali Akbar, studying at Nanyang Technological University (NTU) Singapore.)

Based on the data above, participants have seen another side of studying in Singapore, such as students are very individual so only a few are willing to share their knowledge with other students.”

- c) *“The difference is the assessment and this makes you feel dizzy and stressed. In the NUS system the value is a bell curve. So the value of each person depends on the average value of the class. If you get 90 but the average grade is 95, for example, it means you end up getting B- or C+. So it's stressful when you're in the same class with smart and diligent people hahaha.”*

(Iedo Radityo, studying at Nanyang Technological University (NTU) Singapore majoring in Public Policy at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy (LKYSPP)

Based on the data above, participants experienced a cultural shock frustration stage in the scoring system in the exam which made participants feel dizzy and stressed. In the NUS system the value is a bell curve. So everyone's grades depend on the grade point average. If you get 90 but the average is 95, for example, it means you'll get a B- or C+. Become stressed or inferior if you are in the same class with smart and diligent people. In contrast to Indonesia, getting 90 means getting an A, not depending on the class average.

Based on the table, the percentage for Indonesian students going through this phase is around 30%. Respondents reported that they had language problems when they came into contact with a new culture. Not only that, the individual way of learning becomes a difficulty experienced by the participants so that they have to learn independently and a different scoring system compared to Indonesia.

3. ADJUSTMENT STAGE

- a) *“When I was in the world of music in guitar and learned from scratch, after that life felt so much fun. One day a friend of mine said that when I was playing the guitar, my aura of handsomeness came out, and because of the compliment it made me more motivated. After that I also tried to learn guitar self-taught.”*

(Suhendy Lie, studying at National University of Singapore majoring in Computer Science and Software Engineering)

Based on the data above, participants have accepted the situation or adapted to music extracurricular such as playing guitar and learning from scratch, so that life again feels very enjoyable. That is, the participants have gone through a difficult time.

- b) *“This process also applies to Indonesian students and will take about 1 to 6 months depending on the ability of each individual. Doubling the effort is indeed the effort, but the benefit that I can get now is that I can speak English fluently without having to think first (even though the grammar is sometimes not quite right). Reading articles in English has become as easy as reading articles in Indonesian.”*

(Erland Ang, an Indonesian student who studies in Singapore at the Nanyang Technological University (NTU) Singapore majoring in civil engineering.)

Based on the data above, the participants experienced a transition from frustration stage to adjustment stage which took about 1 to 6 months depending on each individual's ability. Participants are used to reading articles in English.

- c) *“So, I'm afraid that people won't want to help or teach to lower the class average. It turns out, there are many friends who want to study together, make assignments together. In fact, I don't think I would have graduated on time without my friends”.*

(Giovanni Jessica, studying at National University of Singapore majoring in chemical Engineering)

Based on the data above, the participants went through a phase that was scary as well as natural. Because after living it, it was too scary. It turns out that there are many friends who want to study together, make assignments together and even graduate buses on time.

Based on the table, the adjustment stage shows 20%. This happens because there are some students who are still trapped in the frustration stage. However, in this phase, respondents began to rise to adjust the learning culture. They also do some ways to get out of crisis problems, namely by participating in extracurricular activities that help make learning comfortable.

4. ADAPTATION STAGES

- a) *“That's how good it is to study abroad. Not all classes that I attend require mandatory attendance. In other words, each student is given complete freedom to choose whether they feel the need to enter the class or not.”*

(Erland Ang, an Indonesian student who studies in Singapore at the Nanyang Technological University (NTU) Singapore majoring in civil engineering.)

Based on the data above, participants are used to and understand the surrounding conditions. Here, participants have mingled with the lecture system in a new place.

- b) *“In Singapore, students are considered adults. Not only legally, but in everyday college life. We are not required to come to all classes. The university accepts that every child*

learns differently. We are given a choice, we want to learn from lecturers, lecture, Youtube, or read our own books. In contrast to the lecture system in Indonesia, all of which are still absent.”

(Eko Edita, studying at Nanyang Technological University (NTU) Singapore)

Based on the data above, participants have understood and followed the course of studying in Singapore well. So that at this stage, everything is back to normal and can accept the situation happily without any pressure.

c) *“I am very grateful to be able to study at NUS. Of course, there were many ups and downs, but all of them made me stronger, independent and not having a soft mentality.”*

(Giovanni Jessica, studying at National University of Singapore majoring in chemical Engineering)

Based on the data above, participants have got a normal life again, without any fear or worry about the lectures or study they are undergoing. Participants have regained their confidence.

The percentage shows 30% in this stage, where respondents can go through the acceptance stage with different experiences. They become accustomed to language, academic situations, and social interactions. They are able to overcome longing and loneliness. They feel comfortable with the host culture and feel at home in the host country. Several respondents stated that they had no problems with language after several months of living in the host country. Then, respondents are also able to involve themselves in social interactions and are no longer depressed. Even some of the brands are very grateful to be able to get a lot of experience in other countries. The students are finally able to adjust to the new environment successfully and pass through several stages.

CONCLUSION

Studying in another country has its own joys and difficulties. Financially, not all Indonesian students are able to study abroad. The percentage of stages experienced by Indonesian students who have studied in Singapore shows that the honeymoon stage is 20%, frustration stage is 30%, adjustment stage is 20%, and also adaptation stage is 30%. The highest percentage is frustration and adaptation, both of which are transitions that initially had many problems, the pressure of stress turned into an adaptation that goes through daily life without stress. In frustration stage, the difference in the education system in Indonesia and Singapore is a challenge in itself, such as in Singapore, they prefer to prepare for the exam by actively going to the library, while Indonesia mostly studies the day before the exam takes place. Not only that, the education system in Singapore always provides a record after teaching so that it helps students who are not present or explore the material better, while Indonesia only leads to lecturer explanations at the same time. Because of this, most of Indonesian students must experience cultural shock at the beginning of their arrival until they are finally used to the culture of Singapore. However, in the end Indonesian students were able to pass or face these challenges, and were in the adaptation phase with a percentage of 30% of students feeling it. At that phase, they are used to facing a new culture and living a normal life again.

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