

THE INVESTIGATION OF CROSS-CULTURE ADJUSTMENT OF EXPATRIATE IN SEMARANG (Based on the DMIS Stage by Milton J. Bennett)

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the barrier of cross-cultural adjustment ability of expatriates in Indonesia, with demographic factors such as gender and age.

This study uses a qualitative method by collecting data with interview to get deeper information about the cross-cultural adjustment process of expatriate while in Indonesia. The participant used in the form of female respondents with Japanese citizenship who have spent 10 years in Indonesia, and applying Milton J. Bennett's Theory of Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity.

The results of this study indicate that some of the barriers to the cross cultural adjustment process are the use of language at an early stage, the level of privacy at the time of socialization, and also the time management of Indonesian people.

Keywords: Cross Cultural Adjustment, Intercultural Sensitivity, International Assignment, Expatriate

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research is to investigate the ability of adjustment on the cross-culture of expatriates residing in Indonesia. This study was conducted to determine differences in the results of previous research that can be useful for some organizations and companies in Indonesia who hire expatriate. Expatriate or international employees are opening many organizations and multinational corporations in Indonesia. This study was conducted to follow up the differences in previous research related to socio-culture adjustments, such as the ability of intrapersonal to increasing their job satisfaction (Robbins & Judge, 2015)

Indonesia as a developing country is one of members in ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), which is an enactment of a system free trade in the ASEAN region that have resulted in foreign workers in Indonesia. Indonesian workers shall prepare matters related to the commencement of the AEC, one of them knows the organizational theory of foreign labor, which will be incorporated in an atmosphere of the same organization. Large and small companies today are an attempt to expand their business location following the globalization, they try to increase interaction with the state and other companies (Briscoe, Shuler, and Claus, 2009). Expatriates as international employees who will represent the company of origin, should carry out responsibilities with a cross-cultural situation of the organization, build relationships with the community, and apply the values that exist in the company's culture . (Cheng & Lin, 2009).

This study is purpose to investigate the barriers of cross-cultural adjustment process faced by expatriate in Semarang.

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METHODOLOGY

This research used a qualitative narrative descriptive design. According to Creswell 2007, the design format of qualitative narrative research is a biographical study in which the researcher writes and records the experiences of another person's life. Autobiography is written and recorded by the individuals who are subject to the study. A life history portrays an individual's entire life, while a personal experience story is a narrative study of an individual's personal reflections of events and their causes and effects from one individual or several individuals.

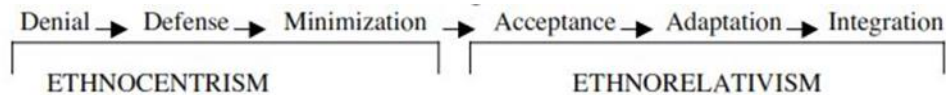
The respondent of this research is a Japanese expatriate who have stayed in Semarang for International Assignment at least 1 year. The participant have stayed in Semarang for 10 years.

Data analysis in this using the three dimensional space approach by Clandinin and Connelly (2000) that analyzing the data for three elements; interaction (personal and social), continuity (past, present, and future), and situation (physical places or the storyteller's places). In this approaches, there will be common elements of narrative analysis: collecting stories of personal experiences in the form of field texts such as interviews or conversations, retelling the stories based on the three dimensional narrative elements, rewriting the stories into a chronological sequence, and incorporating the setting or place of the participant's experience.

RESULT

The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity Stage

Figure 1 The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity



Ethnocentrism Stage

The first stage of Ethnocentrism stage is Denial of differences, in this study the respondent shows they can shows such as excitement shows nice attitude to the host country people or can feels that there is no difference in culture. Mrs. Yuko was not worry at that time, she has prepared quite well. "Waktu masih di Jepang belajar sendiri kalau Indonesia gimana, Islam gimana, dari buku, tanya ke suami juga. Karena suami Islam, saya ikut Islam. Karena kalau di Jepang image Islam ga bagus, teroris. Jadi saya tanya-tanya" (Mrs. Yuko, 39 years old, Japanese Expatriate).

She said that she learn about some of Indonesian attitude, ethics, etiquette and religion especially Islam from book, and from her husband. Before she came to Indonesia she looking for information about how to act to people, what are allowed and prohibited to do in Indonesia, and what things that she have to do if she convert to Islam such as 5 times pray, fasting at Ramadan.

The second is Defense stage of differences, the respondents finds differences between Indonesia and Japan. The first things that she realized is about time management in Indonesia. She feels Japan has better treat to respect how manage times, besides, is about the privacy. "Jepang on time in schedule ya kalau soal waktu. Kalau di Indonesia agak jam karet ya. Di Jepang, kereta 20 detik terlambat sudah minta maaf. Di sini setengah jam biasa saja, satu jam, diam saja. Sama kalau ketemuan main, datang saja." (Mrs. Yuko 29 years old Japanese Expatriate)

She explained that the time management in Japan is more way better than Indonesia, she takes an example for train arrival (public transport) in Japan. If the train is

delay about 20 seconds, the employee will apologize immediately to the passengers. In Indonesia, she experienced delayed public transport for a half an hour but the employees do nothing about the delay, even it an hour. It shows that Mrs. Yuko feels Indonesia's time management are not better than Japan not only individually, but commonly in Indonesia.

The last stage of Ethnocentrism stage is Minimization Stage, Mrs. Yuko gradually found her convenience. She started an activity to applied as a lecture for Japanese Literature major in UDINUS and UNDIP. Activity as a lecture makes her feels more relaxed because she can speak and having conversation in Japanese and experienced more about daily life in Semarang. She was using public transport such as bus Damri and Trans Semarang during her activity as lecturer. She also found out about public transport intercity in Indonesia still needs improvement. "Masih kurang banget ya, selama saya ngajar di UDINUS saya pernah coba pakai Damri, sama Trans Semarang juga 2010 ada. Kekurangannya karena schedulennya ga ada, kalau Trans Semarang masih oke. Tapi Damri itu di mana-mana berhenti, itu bahaya. Harusnya kayak Trans Semarang banyak, biar berangkat kantor pakai transportasi umum jadi ga macet ya. Kalau di Jepang berangkat kerja biasanya pakai bus atau train, atau subway, jarang pakai motor atau mobil sendiri." (Mrs. Yuko 29 years old Japanese Expatriate)

She said Trans Semarang is need improvement to add more bus stop and units for Semarang citizen have willing to use public transportation. She also wish Jakarta Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) at Jakarta is improved well, because Jakarta's problem about traffic jam, and a lot of expatriate works in Jakarta. Mrs. Yuko said she is so sure about the developing in Indonesia will be fast and very good in the future. Because throughout she lives in Indonesia for 10 years, she undergo the improvement of Indonesia's infrastructure.

Ethnorelativism Stage

The first stage is Acceptance of differences stage that shows from the respondents is Japan and Indonesia as Asian cultural country has some manners and etiquette. There are several etiquette that have similarities between both countries, which will be not do by the two countries. "Karakter menurut saya baik banget, semua baik, terus apa ya respect sama orang tua ya. Ibu sama Bapak semua orang Indonesia sopan, terus suka telfon setiap hari. Itu saya kaget. Suami saya asli Jepara tapi tinggal si sini (Semarang) waktu itu ya setiap minggupulang Jepara, saya kaget. Tapi balik masih telepon, itu di Jepang ga ada. Kalau Jepang mulai dari tinggal sendiri jarang pulang ke rumah orang tua, Telfon juga jarang. Itu saya kaget itu bagus. Tetangga juga karakternya baik jadi sudah mau bantu saya. Di manapun ya. Kalau naik bus atau naik pesawat duduknya sebelah pasti ngomongnya, "Bu dari mana?". Itu di Jepang ga ada. Nunggu di waiting room juga "Bu dari mana?". Itu bagus." (Mrs. Yuko 29 years old Japanese Expatriate)

She expressed that the character of Indonesian people is very good and very friendly and have a big respect to parents. In Japan, if the children is living by themselves, it is really a rare moment to contact their parents or came to their parent's house. Since in Indonesian she see her husband and her parents in law had a good non-stop communication. Her husband and she often come to Jepara to visit her parents in law. That is one of tradition of parent and children bonding that very rare in Japan.

The next stage is Adaptation stage. After 10 years living in Semarang, Mrs. Yuko is feels like home. She said she ever thought of what if she were born as Indonesian because she feels like at home recently. But she still keep some of value of Japanese people. "Kalau sarapan, orang Indonesia makan nasi, saya masih makan roti. Sama kalau Ibu Ibu tetangga tanya apapun, baru belanja apa, sedang apa, masak apa, nama anaknya siapa. Saya tidak tanya. Karena kalau di Jepang tidak ada seperti itu. Tidak sopan. Jadi saya ngga tanya."

She said that she still keep the personal privacy that Japanese people do. Even she was asked about her personal life, she will not asking back to her neighbor. Because she will keep the value of Japanese people. As a Japanese and her habit of having breakfast with eating bread, she keeps doing it. Most people in Indonesia having breakfast with rice and high carbo and protein. But she said it will not change because she comfort to it.

The last stage is Integration stage after the struggling 2 years of adjusting with the new culture in Indonesia, and has been living in Semarang for 10 years, Mrs. Yuko feels Indonesia is her home. She is very often to ask her friends and family to come and stay in Indonesia especially Semarang. Because she feels that Semarang is still have a bold culture of Indonesia than Jakarta or Surabaya.

“Kalau ada yang mau ke sini ya ajak aja ya. Stressnya ga ada kalau di sini dalam bentuk kerjanya, hidupnya, ga ada kalau di sini. Kalau di Jepang stressnya tinggi kalau kerja, kalau di sini santai banget. Yang kerja perusahaan Jepang suka marah, stressnya tinggi.”

Mrs. Yuko said that Indonesia has ‘chill’ habit. Sometimes it doesn’t good when talk to the management time or process of work. But everyday living in Indonesia is more giving her feels health especially in mental health.

DISCUSSION

The framework of this study using DMIS Stage by Milton J. Bennet shows that not all of the stage are experienced by the expatriate. The first is the Denial Stage of Expatriate. According to the Developmental Model Intercultural Sensitivity, the default condition of the first stage is the denial of cultural difference. In this stage, expatriate had failure to perceive the existence or the relevance of culturally different. Mrs. Yuko from the interview did not shows the denial stage that give discriminations among the differences. She did not feels that her culture as home country Japan and makes thinks that has way better than host country, and learn more about the differences between Indonesia and Japan before she came to Indonesia. Denial stage occurs when difference is acknowledged by procedures such as multiple-language forms or incorporating visual diversity into corporate publications. In this study, the respondent shows that she had facing several differences such us weather, food, and even the language barrier. The result from the respondent of this study shows that the barriers of denial stage can be face with the help of environment and the mindset of the expatriate itself to be ready and prepared well to accept all of the differences between the different cultures.

The last is the Adaptation stage of Expatriate, in this research is resolving the issue and has a context-shifting that assumedly enabled by neurological executive function that allows the differences. In this study Mrs. Yuko shows the stage very well. After 10 years in Semarang, she feels like at home. She can adjust with the cultural adjustment by shifting cultural frames of reference not only in Indonesia but other culture. In this stage mostly expatriate will be fine with the differences of the culture that usually the home country will not do, but keep and do the value of the home country. Expatriate with Adaptation worldview are able to interpret and evaluate situations from more than one cultural perspective.

CONCLUSION

This study had investigated the cross cultural adjustment stage by employing a cultural adjustment framework Bennett’s framework is reliable to understanding the cultural adjustment stage and to find out the barriers of cross cultural adjustment in Semarang. Language is the first barrier that expatriate will face when they first came to Indonesia especially Semarang. Because not all of Indonesian can speak English fluently. But in times, language barrier can be done by keep the conversation with the neighborhood

and environment. Besides, there are food and weather adjustment. For Japanese people there are differences situation adjustment for weather and food because it was feels by their physical experience, not only physiological. Besides, the “friendly-act” of Semarang neighborhoods sometimes is not fit with some countries values such us personal private things. There are several privacy values things in different countries and culture such us knowing about age at the first meet, visiting house without have an appointment before. Time management in Indonesia is still the most popular barrier for expatriate. Especially for the appointment, deadline of work. The respondent also say that Indonesia is feels comfortable because of more chilled than her home country. Even the time management is affected.

RESEARCH LIMITATION

This study has research limitations. The nationality of the expatriate. According to Dinas Tenaga Kerja dan Transmigrasi Jawa Tengah (2019), since December 2018 there are expatriate came from different countries to Central Java such as from China, South Korea, India, United States, Philippine, Malaysia, Australia, United Kingdom, etc. This study has only Japan nationality. The second is the amount of the respondent. This study using narrative research qualitative method that has minimum 1 respondent. According to Dinas Tenaga Kerja dan Transmigrasi Provinsi Jawa Tengah (2019) there are 14.736 expatriate came to Indonesia. The result can be more affective if the future study can represent more respondent to representative the study. The last is the respondent’s answer. The respondents seems avoid the sensitive answer, even this study has an agreement about the confidential data. The respondents talk the positive way and the better way of the experience about the cross cultural adjustment.

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