

**STAGES OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION AND PATTERN OF  
INTERACTION BETWEEN INDONESIAN STUDENTS AND HUNGARIAN  
STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PÉCS**

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***ABSTRACT***

*This study examines the stages of intercultural communication and interaction patterns among Indonesian and Hungarian students at the University of Pécs. Using the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach, this research explores the lived experiences of six students, three Indonesian exchange students and three Hungarian local students with cross-cultural communication challenges, and how they navigate it. This research utilizes Kim's Cross-Cultural Adaptation Theory (2001) and Gudykunst's Intercultural Communication Theory (2005) as the theoretical framework. The findings indicate that Indonesian students experience a lengthy adaptation process, beginning with initial expectations and progressing to culture shock and eventual integration. Language barriers, differences in direct versus indirect communication style, and varying social norms were discovered to be the most significant obstacles. To adapt, they change their communication tactics, grow their social networks, and gain a better understanding of local culture. Although limited to one university, this study offers suggestions for student exchange programs to improve support for international students in a multicultural academic environment.*

**Keywords:** *Intercultural communication, cultural adaptation, communication barriers, interaction patterns, and exchange students.*

## ABSTRAKSI

Penelitian ini meneliti tahapan komunikasi antarbudaya dan pola interaksi di antara mahasiswa Indonesia dan Hungaria di Universitas Pécs. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan Analisis Fenomenologi Interpretatif (IPA), penelitian ini mengeksplorasi pengalaman hidup enam mahasiswa, tiga mahasiswa pertukaran Indonesia dan tiga mahasiswa lokal Hungaria dengan tantangan komunikasi lintas budaya, dan bagaimana mereka mengatasinya. Penelitian ini menggunakan Teori Adaptasi Lintas Budaya Kim (2001) dan Teori Komunikasi Antarbudaya Gudykunst (2005) sebagai kerangka teoritis. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa Indonesia mengalami proses adaptasi yang panjang, dimulai dengan ekspektasi awal dan berlanjut ke guncangan budaya dan akhirnya integrasi. Hambatan bahasa, perbedaan gaya komunikasi langsung dan tidak langsung, dan norma sosial yang berbeda ditemukan sebagai hambatan yang paling signifikan. Untuk beradaptasi, mereka mengubah taktik komunikasi, mengembangkan jaringan sosial, dan memperoleh pemahaman yang lebih baik tentang budaya lokal. Meskipun terbatas pada satu universitas, penelitian ini menawarkan saran untuk program pertukaran mahasiswa guna meningkatkan dukungan bagi mahasiswa internasional dalam lingkungan akademis multikultural.

**Kata Kunci:** Komunikasi antarbudaya, adaptasi budaya, hambatan komunikasi, pola interaksi, dan mahasiswa pertukaran.

## INTRODUCTION

In the era of increasingly advanced globalization, intercultural communication skills are an important aspect that every student must have. With intercultural communication skills, students will have the ability to interact with individuals who have different cultural backgrounds. In line with that, the motivation to learn of Indonesian students is also increasing and global. Based

on data obtained from GoodStats.id regarding the countries in Asean with the most students studying abroad, Indonesia is ranked second with 59.224 students. This data proves that the interest and motivation of Indonesian students to seek knowledge is not only limited to the domestic environment, but also includes the international level where they can gain cross-cultural experience. The

existence of globalization in the modern era today allows Indonesian students to be more motivated in gaining experience and exposure to international education (Fedolina & Saptandari, 2024).

Of the many countries in the world, Hungary is one of the favorite destinations for Indonesian students to study. This is proven by the number of Indonesian students in Hungary which is increasing every year. In 2024, there are 78 Indonesian students from the IISMA Vocational and IISMA Undergraduate programs studying at the University of Pecs for one semester in 2024 ([iisma.kemdikbud.go.id](http://iisma.kemdikbud.go.id).) Not only that, the number of applicants from the IISMA program to the University of Pecs also shows a very high number, with 662 applicants for the undergraduate program and 185 applicants for the vocational program. This figure shows the great interest of Indonesian students in making Hungary a destination country for them to study.

By having the opportunity to study abroad, Indonesian students can not only increase their knowledge and insight, but also have the opportunity to build friendships and relationships with international students. According to Marciniak et al. (2019), there are several benefits of participating in an international student exchange program, such

as increasing self-confidence and adaptation skills in a new environment, becoming more open-minded and understanding of other and diverse culture, developing foreign language skills, and broadening knowledge of a discipline in a different educational system and cultural environment. The motivation and interest of Indonesian students to gain cross-cultural experience can be channeled through participation in a student exchange program. Essentially, the Student Exchange Program is a program that allows students to study for 1-2 semesters at renowned campuses located around the world.

The student exchange program not only offers the opportunity to study abroad at renowned campuses, but also provides participants with the opportunity to go on international trips, take language courses, and have the opportunity to participate in activities outside of academics that aim to increase experience, knowledge, and social skills (Fedolina & Saptandari, 2024).

In addition to enriching academic experiences and developing in different educational environments, the opportunity to improve cross-cultural understanding, expand international networks, experience different cultures, and expand the possibility of getting better career prospects in the future are the reasons why many Indonesian

students are interested in participating in student exchange programs.

As an initiative to expand opportunities for Indonesian students to study abroad, the Indonesian government and many universities in Indonesia have opened many student exchange programs abroad for Indonesian students. For example, the Communication Science study program at Diponegoro University Semarang has an International Undergraduate Program which has a mandatory program for its students to participate in a student exchange for one semester. The student exchange program in the Communication Science Department at Diponegoro University is divided into two, namely participating in a student exchange at a partner university, or participating in a student exchange program at a campus that is not a partner campus of Diponegoro University, or in other words, participating in a student exchange program independently.

In addition to initiatives from universities in Indonesia, the Indonesian government also provides support for Indonesian students to be able to participate in student exchange programs through the IISMA (Indonesian International Student Mobility Awards) program. Nadiem Makarim as the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology said that the opportunity to study

abroad is not only about academics, but also about enriching cultural experiences. Reported from (Kemendikbud, 2021), IISMA is a scholarship program sponsored by the Government of the Republic of Indonesia to finance Indonesian students to be able to participate in student exchanges at renowned universities around the world, one of which is the University of Pecs in Hungary. The University of Pecs, one of the oldest and most prestigious institutions in Europe, attracts students from all around the world, offering a truly diverse learning environment.

In 2023, there are two student exchange programs attended by Indonesian students at the University of Pecs in Hungary. The two programs are IISMA (International Student Mobility Awards) which is a scholarship program from the Indonesian government and the Study Abroad Program opened directly by the University of Pecs in Hungary.

There are a total of 53 Indonesian students participating in the student exchange program at the University of Pecs in Hungary, each consisting of 39 students from the IISMA Vocational program (Kemendikbud, 2024) and 14 students from the study abroad program. Based on the results of personal communication between the author and the Student Exchange program participants in the University of Pecs back in 2023, these 53

Indonesian students come from various universities. The universities of origin of these Indonesian students consist of the University of Indonesia, Brawijaya University, Diponegoro University, Sursya Institute of Technology, Airlangga University, Sebelas Maret University, Malang State Polytechnic, Nahdatul Ulama University of Surabaya, Tonggak Equator Polytechnic, Bengkalis State Polytechnic, Padjajaran University, Muhammadiyah University of Purwokerto, and Gadjah Mada University.

In the continuation of the Student Exchange program at the University of Pecs in Hungary, Indonesian students from the IISMA Vocational program and those from the study abroad program have different study programs, where students from the IISMA Vocational program are required to take part in an internship program at NGOs in the city of Pecs. With this mandatory internship program, Indonesian students from the IISMA Vocational program not only have good academic provisions, but also have a direct opportunity to enter the world of work abroad.

On the other hand, Indonesian students from the study abroad program do not have an internship program, but they are free to choose courses and faculties as a place to

study. These 14 Indonesian students are spread across various faculties and study various courses from the many faculties at the University of Pecs, such as Architecture Engineering, Business and Economics, Psychology, Humanities and Social Sciences, and Law. With the freedom to choose faculties and courses, Indonesian students from the Study Abroad program have the opportunity to explore their interests and learn new knowledge that they do not get in Indonesia.

Although there are differences in the study program between Indonesian students from IISMA Vocational and Indonesian students from the Study Abroad program, they all have the same experience in terms of forming interaction process where they engage in an intercultural communication between the local Hungarian students and the other International students studying in the University of Pecs in Hungary. With Intercultural Communication competence, Indonesians students have the ability to interact with individuals that has different and diverse cultural background from them.

Additionally, Intercultural Communication competence allows them to exchange knowledge about each other's culture, as well as gaining cultural mutual understanding among students in an

international academic environment (Stepanovienė, 2011) This interaction and communication process are formed from the results of classroom learning that usually combines Indonesian students into one group with Hungarian students and so that interaction and communication are created. Not only from the results of learning in class, the interaction and communication process also occurs outside the classroom, where Indonesian students participate in events organized by other students that aim to get to know each other. From participating in these activities, Indonesian students can form a long-lasting friendship with Hungarian students.

Broadly speaking, Intercultural Communication can be interpreted as a form of global communication because it focuses on the form or process of communication that occurs between individuals with different cultural backgrounds. When the intercultural communication process takes place, misunderstandings can arise between individuals due to differences in cultural background and language limitations (Andersen et al. 2006; Barnett and Lee 2002; Philipsen 2002). Language limitations and differences in cultural background make it difficult for students to adapt to the environment in the host country. This

difficulty in adapting is certainly also experienced by Indonesian students where they have to face many differences such as diverse cultural differences, language, norms and rules, education systems, social classes, beliefs, and many others. When moving from one country to another and faced with many differences, it is not uncommon for students to feel confused because they have to deal with things that are very different from what they usually face in their home country. The result of this confusion can be called culture shock.

The results of a study conducted by Anom and Mayagita (2021) showed that Indonesian students studying in Budapest, Hungary experienced a variety of culture shocks when they first arrived in Europe, such as food, extreme weather differences, language barriers, challenges that must be experienced when in public places, to the characteristics of local residents who are very different. This is in line with the point that the researcher highlighted, namely that the differences in language make it difficult for Indonesian students to adapt to local Hungarian students.

The difficulties experienced by Indonesian students at the University of Pecs in Hungary are then the reason why the interaction and communication process is hampered. Other studies also show that international students

studying in non-English speaking environments tend to experience higher levels of culture shock due to language barriers (Wang & Hannes 2014). This creates a gap experienced by Indonesian students in the process of intercultural communication stages and interaction patterns with local Hungarian students

In other studies, participation of local Hungarian students with international students also tends to be low and local Hungarian students are not easy to approach, which can hinder the process of adaptation and social integration of international students in their new academic environment (Kovacs & Kasza, 2018). This is in line with interpersonal communication that the author experienced with several Indonesian students from the IISMA Vocational program and also from the Study Abroad Program, where they stated that there were many difficulties and confusions that they experienced when they first arrived in Pecs, Hungary.

These Indonesian students had difficulty in socializing and interacting with local Hungarian students and residents because of language barriers and major cultural differences. The points mentioned by the Indonesian students are in line with Furnham's (2007) opinion which states that living in foreign cultures will experience

many problems such as experiencing racial discrimination, feeling difficulties due to language barriers, experiencing economic pressure, feeling alone, difficulty in accommodation, and dietary restrictions.

The large differences in culture and language between Indonesia and Hungary make Indonesian students have unique obstacles in terms of communicating and interacting with local Hungarian students. This can happen because not many Hungarian citizens or local students are fluent in English so Indonesian students have to learn Hungarian vocabulary to be able to interact with local citizens and students. Because of this difference, Indonesian students find it difficult to simply shop, ask for directions, ask, or ask for help from local citizens and students. This difference in language has the potential to greatly affect the quality and process of social interaction and communication with local Hungarian students, making it somewhat difficult for Indonesian students to build social relationships.

Research that discusses more deeply about the stages of intercultural communication and the interaction patterns of Indonesian students in an international academic environment is very important to be conducted because it can explore more

deeply how Indonesian students adapt to an environment that contains various cultures in it. The stages of intercultural communication include the adaptation process experienced by Indonesian students when trying to navigate cultural differences in their interaction process.

On the other hand, the patterns of interaction that occur between Indonesian exchange students and local Hungarian students will shed light on how intercultural relationships are formed and how Indonesian students face communication challenges that arise in multicultural situations. With that in mind, this study will discuss more deeply about the influence of stages of interaction and communication patterns that occur between Indonesian students and local Hungarian students at the University of Pecs in Hungary on social dynamics.

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVE**

This research examines the stages of intercultural communication and the patterns of interaction that Indonesian Exchange students experience with Hungarian local students at the University of Pécs in Hungary, as well as how they navigate intercultural adaptation, recognising the challenges they face.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Research Paradigm**

For this research, interpretive phenomenological paradigm is applied here as the research paradigm. The interpretive paradigm is a social framework that have a goal to understand how an informant interprets experiences or events that they experienced. Moreover, interpretive research paradigm also has an objective, which is to delve deep into informant's experiences or phenomenon, understand their own perspectives, and then understand the meaning of said events or phenomenon according to each phenomenon. Thus, as a researcher, author need to be able to understand deeply and interpret both the mental and emotional status of the answers that the informant gave (Smith & Osborn, 2014)

Phenomenology explores how one gains insight into the world around them through direct experience, or how one acquires knowledge (Creswell, 2007). This approach delves deeper into one's own life experiences. The combination of interpretive and phenomenological approach will help the researcher to explore and examines both similarities and differences in participant's experiences. In light of the information presented thus far, the author applied



phenomenological approach to explore and understand the experience, of Indonesian Exchange Students (IISMAVO Awardees and Study Abroad), how they feel, as well as how they put meaning to a phenomenon.

### **Theory of Cross-Cultural Adaptation**

Theory of Cross-Cultural Adaptation was developed by Young Yun Kim on 1976. This theory sheds lights on the process of adaptation of an individual (international students, immigrants, and refugees) to the new cultural environment on their host country. Moreover, this theory also explores the different ways of how individuals (international students, immigrants, and refugees) adapt when they move to a place with different culture than their own country, both emotionally and behaviorally. Individuals in this theory are believed that the process of adaptation is not linear, where they will experience stress in their first encounter to the new culture, but gradually will feel comfortable and a functional members of the host society.

There are five key factors that Young Yun Kim acknowledge in this theory, which are;

a. **Stress-Adaptation-Growth-Dynamic:**

The focus of this theory is exploring the process of an individual's adaptation to the new culture in their host country, which

includes the anxiety or stress due to the difference in culture, how they adapt to the new environment, and how they achieve full adaptation through the experience. This process is not easy to achieve, as individuals need to make sure that their original cultural identity and the host culture are always interacting.

b. **Communication and Competence:**

This theory believes that in order to achieve a successful adaptation is that an individual has the ability to effectively communicate in the new cultural context. Mastering the language of the host country, socializing and forming relationships with the locals, and recognizing the cultural norms of the host country is called host communication competence, which individuals need to develop.

c. **Acculturation and Deculturation:**

Kim propose that there is acculturation (the process of learning the culture of host country and adapting to it) and deculturation (the process where individuals let go of their own culture that is not relevant in their new cultural environment to be able to adapt) in the cross-cultural adaptation process. Both acculturation and deculturation is important for individuals to be able to effectively function in the host community.

- d. Factors that Influence Adaptation:
1. The characteristic of the individuals: This includes the personality of the individual, their age, and their education.
  2. Ethnic proximity: This includes the similarity between the culture in host country and the original culture of the individual.
  3. Social and communication environments: This includes the chance of an individual to interact and socialize with the members inside the host country and its culture.

e. Stages of Adaptation:

Adaptation according to Kim is step-by-step process, where individuals will experience honeymoon stage, culture shock, adjustment, and integration process into their host country's culture. Theory of Cross-Cultural Adaptation will serve as a clear framework in this research to explain how Indonesian Exchange Students (IISMAVO and Study Abroad Students) adapt to be able to communicate and interact with their local Hungarian peers.

Moreover, this theory will also help to understand the stages and phases of communication, as well as interaction patterns between Indonesian Exchange Students (IISMAVO and Study Abroad Students) and their Hungarian peers by putting the focus on host communication competence and the stress-adaptation-growth cycle. Lastly, it also focuses on how the differences in culture and the closeness between ethnic will affect the interaction and communication process.

### **Intercultural Communication Theory**

This study employs the Intercultural Communication Theory (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003) to examine the communication patterns established in the interactions between Indonesian and Hungarian students. This theory highlights the significance of recognizing the distinctions in communication between high-context (Indonesian) and low-context (Hungarian) cultures, which influence the encoding and interpretation of messages by both parties.

This study discusses how Indonesian students, accustomed to indirect communication, must adapt to Hungarian students who engage in more open and direct communication. Consequently, this theory establishes a basis for comprehending the

dynamics of intercultural communication in both formal and informal interactions.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This research employs a qualitative study, and the phenomenology approach will be applied. In general, the phenomenology approach is used in a study to help researchers understand various social phenomena that exist in society. Phenomenology itself is a research approach that has a goal to understand the world through the lived experiences of individuals (Creswell, 2007). Phenomenology does not only focus on describing an event, but also on how they interpret meaning, perceive, describing an experience, and make meaning of those experiences.

Moreover, phenomenology focuses on questions that are directly related to the meaning of the phenomenon being studied by researchers (Creswell, 2007, p. 58). In this study, researcher is aiming to deeply explore the phenomenon of Student Exchange and how Indonesian Exchange Student in University of Pecs in Hungary interpret the

experiences and navigate the challenges and adaptation that arises from intercultural communication experiences from their Student Exchange program experience.

In this research, in-depth interviews are conducted in order to get information needed from six research subjects. The six subjects in this research are consisted of three Indonesian exchange students and three local Hungarian students from the age of 20-25 at the University of Pécs in Hungary. The data then analysed by Interpretive

Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Interpretive Phenomenological data analysis technique is employed to better understand the lived experiences of Indonesian exchange students in Hungary through an analysis of their own reflections and adaption processes. IPA is especially appropriate for this research as it enables the researcher to transcend mere description and instead investigate how students perceive, emotionally react to, and interpret their intercultural communication experiences (Smith, 2008, as referenced in Frost, 2011

## **RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Stages of Intercultural Communication and Patterns of Interactions**

The findings of this study reveal that the stages of intercultural communication and interaction patterns between Indonesian and Hungarian students develop gradually. The initial expectations, first impressions, and experiences of each Informant in academic informal settings influence this. Intercultural communication and interactions between Indonesian and Hungarian students go through various stages.

In this study, the experience of one Informant is different from the experience of another informant. The differences between these informants depend on their expectations of Hungarian culture before leaving for Hungary, their initial interactions with Hungarian students, and how their communication patterns develop over time. Some informants may have had an easy adaptation process, while others had difficulties in the adaptation process.

However, all informants experienced changes in how they interacted and communicated with Hungarian students. Indonesian students had assumptions and expectations about Hungary long before they left, ranging from optimism to fear of

possible linguistic and social obstacles. While some were uncertain about how they would fit into the social and academic environment, others were worried about how they would be perceived. Their initial impressions differed; some thought Hungarian students were friendly in formal classroom environments, while others found it more difficult to interact with them in informal events.

In contrast, Indonesian students were typically viewed by Hungarian students as being kind yet reserved. The differences in formal and informal interactions between Indonesian and Hungarian students show that cultural expectations in communication strongly influence the dynamics of social relationships. With a clear communication structure, Indonesian students feel comfortable interacting and communicating in an academic environment.

In terms of establishing social relationships with Hungarian students outside the academic environment, Indonesian students find it difficult because of differences in social norms and interaction patterns. On the other hand, Hungarian students do not always realize that their tendency to remain in their social environment impacts Indonesian students, who have difficulty entering their social

environment. The differences in social expectations make informal interactions a challenge requiring more effort from Indonesian and Hungarian students.

### **The Role of Language Barriers and Communication Differences in Shaping Intercultural Patterns**

The findings of this study reveal that language barriers and misunderstandings often become obstacles to developing social relationships for Indonesian and Hungarian students. In addition to language barriers and misunderstandings, differences in communication styles, interpreting interactions, and approaches to different social norms can also affect patterns of interaction and communication between Indonesian and Hungarian students. These obstacles appear in various forms for each Informant.

In this research, Language was a major factor; whereas some Indonesian students found Hungarian students to be fluent in English, others had trouble with accents and direct communication. Supporting these statements, Hungarian subjects assume that most Hungarian students who speak English have low self-confidence in speaking English. This then impacts their willingness to approach and start conversations with

international students, especially Indonesian students. Furthermore, Hungarian students prefer to stay in their social groups rather than join international students, especially Indonesian students. This factor then limits the interaction between Indonesian and Hungarian students.

In addition to the barriers in language factors, the differences in communication styles between Indonesian students and Hungarian students also have an impact on the interaction patterns between the two groups. This can be seen in Indonesian students' culture and communication style, while Hungarian students prioritize direct communication. This difference has an impact on how the two groups interact and communicate with each other. Indonesian students who use indirect communication are more careful in expressing their opinions and avoid confrontation.

On the other hand, Hungarian students who communicate directly will prioritize open communication and tend to be to the point. The three Indonesian student informants admitted that each Informant acknowledged the differences in indirect and direct communication. Differences that emerge in social norms also strongly influence interaction patterns outside the classroom. From the perspective of

Hungarian students, Hungarian students are much more comfortable interacting with their fellow group members, so it would be difficult for Indonesian students to penetrate their social groups.

Moreover, Hungarian students also observed that Indonesian students did not attend social events such as festivals or celebrations that include alcohol, which is related to the social norms of Indonesian students, who may consider alcohol consumption as something less familiar. This, of course, then adds to the reasons why Indonesian students rarely interact with Hungarian students.

### **Adaptation and Growth in Intercultural Settings**

The finding of this study indicate that Indonesian students experience various challenges in interacting and communicating with Hungarian students. These various challenges then encourage Indonesian students to develop their adaptation strategies. Differences in communication styles, language barriers, and social customs influence how Indonesian students navigate interpersonal relationships in academic and social environments. Over time, Indonesian students adjust how they communicate and interact to achieve effective communication

and interaction. On the other hand, Hungarian students also experience changes in perspective and understanding of Indonesian students.

To adapt to the differences between Hungarian students, there are several strategies that Indonesian students develop. First, Indonesian students selected more generic and expansive subjects, such as culture and academic experiences, to facilitate an effective dialogue with Hungarian students. Gradually, Indonesian students adapted their communication style to align with the direct communication culture of Hungarian students.

Second, some Indonesian students adapted themselves to the differences through the amount of time they spent with Hungarian students during the internship by adjusting their indirect communication style to a more direct communication style while still maintaining their culture of politeness in interacting and communicating. Although they felt strange and impolite when they first tried it, they understood that it was not impolite but rather a different cultural character.

Third, Indonesian students acknowledged that it required much time and a subtle approach to cultivate social relationships with Hungarian students. This indicates that

communication strategies in multicultural interactions cannot be executed instantaneously. Indonesian students recognize that interaction patterns in Hungary differ from those in Indonesia. A progressive approach will result in more effective results than the one with an aggressive approach.

The efforts of Indonesian students in the adaptation process to adjust to the existing differences can also be seen from the statement of Hungarian students, who said that Indonesian students were quite active in building social relationships with Hungarian students. For example, Indonesian students often use small talk to get closer to Hungarian students. Starting a conversation with a simple greeting was used by Indonesian students to show their interest in Hungarian students.

Not only do Indonesian students adapt to existing differences, but Hungarian students also do the same thing, where some of them made efforts to engage through casual conversations and collaborative work, while others maintained their usual social circles. In addition to individual strategies, support from the community, mentors, and friends also play an important role in the adaptation process of Indonesian students. Indonesian students mentioned that they received much

help from IISMA University of Pécs alums in Hungary.

Three Indonesian informants used the information they got from the alums to face the challenges and differences that arose. Moreover, the orientation committee also immensely helped Indonesian informants. Community and peer support is crucial for intercultural adaptation, as it offers an initial understanding of potential obstacles and applicable methods. The support received from IISMA mentors and mentors at the internship location helped some Indonesian informants understand more about Hungarian students' communication patterns.

In addition, support from IISMA mentors and internship mentors also helped some Indonesian students understand Hungary laws and norms to minimize mistakes. Over time, communication and interaction patterns between Indonesian and Hungarian students developed. The development from the Indonesian students' side can be seen from the attitude of Indonesian students, who began to be more open in speaking. This differs from the initial attitude of Indonesian students, who felt awkward in social interactions.

On the other hand, the development of communication and interaction patterns from the Hungarian students' side can be seen from

their increasing understanding of cultural differences and their much more flexible nature in interacting and communicating with Indonesian students. Although there are still differences and challenges between Indonesian students and Hungarian students, both parties showed efforts to adjust to each other and bridge the differences in their communication patterns.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the study's findings, the stages of intercultural communication and patterns of interaction between Indonesian exchange students and Hungarian students at the University of Pécs' show a dynamic adaptation process influenced by social integration initiatives, communication barriers, and cultural differences.

### **Stages of Intercultural Communication**

1. Denial Phase: In the early stages, Indonesian students prefer interacting and communicating with international or fellow Indonesian students. This can happen because Indonesian students are not yet fully aware of the significant cultural differences between them and Hungarian students

2. Defense Phase: After Indonesian students began interacting and communicating with Hungarian students, they began to experience discomfort in adjusting to the existing differences, one of which was the Hungarian students' direct communication style. This caused some Indonesian students to believe that their norms and communication styles were better or more polite than the Hungarian students' communication styles and norms.
3. Minimization Phase: At this stage, Indonesian students finally realized that there were cultural differences between them and Hungarian students. However, these Indonesian students still did not consider these differences significant. As a result, miscommunication between Indonesian and Hungarian students often occurred because Indonesian students did not fully understand the applicable social and academic norms.
4. Acceptance Phase: At this stage, Indonesian students understood that the Hungarian students' communication norms differed. Indonesian students also understood



that although the Hungarian students' communication culture was different, the different communication cultures were still valid. Because they already understood this, Indonesian students became much more open to learning the Hungarian students' communication culture. They adjusted their communication and interaction methods with Hungarian students to be more effective.

5. Adaptation Phase: At this stage, Indonesian students actively adjust their communication style to their new environment. They already feel more confident expressing their opinions in class, interacting and communicating, and building social relationships with Hungarian students.
6. Integration Phase: At this stage, Indonesian students have succeeded in developing flexibility in their communication. Indonesian students at this stage can quickly adapt themselves to communication norms in academic and social environments without losing their own cultural identity

### **Patterns of Interaction**

- Formal Engagement: Indonesian students undergo adjustments in their participation within the academic milieu. Initially, they tend towards passivity in the academic setting. Over time, they adapt to a more direct and explicit communication style. By adopting a more direct communication approach, students engage more actively in the adaptation process and navigate academic difficulties more easily.
- Informal Interaction: Indonesian students encounter challenges establishing relationships with Hungarian students in social settings due to the latter's tendency to remain within their groups. Indonesian students engaged in the international community more rapidly and created connections with Hungarian students. In contrast, those who are less involved and have minimal effort to interact beyond the group of Indonesian peers will continue to struggle

with comprehending Hungarian social dynamics.

### **Obstacles and Adaptation Techniques**

Indonesian students encounter significant obstacles in communication. This is primarily attributable to the disparities in language and communication approaches between Hungarians and Indonesian students. Hungarian students engage in more direct and frank communication, frequently resulting in misunderstandings during academic discussions and interactions with Indonesian students. Indonesian students have diverse strategies to adjust to this challenge.

One method is to watch and imitate the communication style of Hungarian students. Moreover, Indonesian students enhance their engagement with international society and pursue assistance from peers and mentors possessing expertise in cross-cultural settings. Indonesian students ultimately adapt to the communicative style of Hungarian students.

This enhances the confidence of Indonesian students in communication, interaction, opinion expression, and the establishment of social interactions with Hungarian students. The responses of Hungarian students also affect the success of Indonesian students' adaptation. Some

Hungarian students are accommodating and receptive to Indonesian students, facilitating the adaption process. In contrast, Hungarian students who exhibit more significant withdrawal hinder Indonesian students' ability to establish social ties.

### **SUGGESTIONS**

Consequently, the author proposes several recommendations for future research, including:

1. Future research could expand participant numbers and university representation by incorporating a greater diversity of students from various institutions in Hungary or other nations to achieve a more comprehensive and representative viewpoint.
2. Future research may employ a quantitative or mixed-methods approach by integrating surveys or communication adaption scales to enhance qualitative findings with robust statistical data.
3. Future research may explore wider dimensions of the social and academic milieu to examine how university policies and institutional support affect the communication

adaption process of international students.

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