

Integrative communication model in intercultural communication on independent student exchange

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ABSTRACT

Background: This research is motivated by the problems faced by exchange students, one of the problems is carrying out the adaptation process of cultural differences, culture, language, adaptation to the environment and communication barriers. **Purpose:** The aim of the research is to explain the integrative communication model in intercultural communication in the aspects of personal communication, social communication, environment, personal condition tendencies, and intercultural transformation. **Methods:** The research method used was descriptive method with a qualitative approach. The data collection techniques used were observation, interviews, literature study and documentation. The research subjects were determined by using a purposive sampling technique, consisting of nine informants who were independent student exchange participants from Garut University and two students from Garut Indonesian Institute of Education. **Results:** The results of the research show that intercultural communication in the aspect of personal communication shows attitudes and behavior of tolerance towards cultural differences, even though from a cognitive perspective they do not know yet about Garut culture. In the experience of social communication, interaction is carried out in formal and informal activities, and there are barriers due to differences in dialect and language. On the environmental side, Garut residents welcomed and accepted it well. Environmental barriers include information confusion and language difficulties. In the aspect of personal conditions, they tend not to prepare themselves by getting to know the culture in Garut, and building closeness in the process referring to personal conditions, as well as aspects of cultural transformation, the psychological conditions of independent student exchange participants. **Implications:** In intercultural transformation, independent student exchange participants can get used to existing cultural differences and minimize the culture shock that occurs when migrating, namely with a positive mindset. The assimilation experienced should not result in the complete loss of one's cultural identity.

Keywords: Adaptation; culture; integrative communication; communication social; student exchange

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INTRODUCTION

Humans are social creatures, which means they must always communicate with everyone. There is a strong need to learn effective and proper communication in order to interact harmoniously with others (Muchith, 2015). The communication process carried out in an environment can cause conflict, let alone in a new environment, it definitely requires adjustments (Mukrimaa et al., 2016). Everyone who enters a new place needs to adapt well, especially in the field of intercultural communication (Anwar, 2018). Good intercultural communication needs to be carried out by every person who arrives in area (Suryani, 2013). The process that every immigrant goes through when entering each environment or region is different (Hadawiah, 2019).

The need of newcomers, in this case students who will undertake student exchange, is preparing themselves to face the diversity of customs, languages and different behaviours (Khoiruddin et al., 2016). When cultural adaptation is carried out, the process of cultural acculturation is also carried out simultaneously (Ou & Gu, 2020). Culture helps a person to determine how to present messages, meanings, conditions, and circumstances through various messages that may not be interpreted (Nadeem, 2020). However, currently the government is focusing on how to develop intelligent millennials, through various programs, namely the Independent Student Exchange Program

which is a program of the Independent Learning Independent Campus (ILIC) (Mayasari & Sumadyo, 2018). Students will always have problems in terms of adapting to intercultural communication in the areas where they are placed to implement the Independent Student Exchange (ISE) program (Kementerian Pendidikan, Budaya, Riset, 2022).

The Independent Campus Learning Program, abbreviated as Independent Learning Independent Campus (ILIC), is a new innovation by launching a policy to transform the higher education system, with the aim of producing graduates who are more relevant in Indonesia, as determined by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (Setiawan et al., 2023). This program is implemented based on four policy pillars, namely: opening new study programs, implementing a higher education accreditation system, the existence of legal entities and the right to study in study program rooms (Maizan et al., 2020), then the Merdeka Student Exchange Program, which is part of the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka program, is a student mobility initiative for one semester. This program provides an opportunity for students to gain learning experience (Kementerian Pendidikan, Budaya, Riset, 2022). The benefits of student exchange include gaining in-depth experience, not only gaining academic knowledge but also a deeper understanding of global perspectives, languages, and traditions, and exchange programs aim to foster cultural exchange, personal growth,

Table 1 Overall Data on ISE Participants for 2023 Island Cluster

Island	Total Number of ISE Participants in 2023	
	Number of Students	Percentage
Sumatera	3.171	19.82%
Jawa	9.023	56.39%
Kalimantan	267	2.29%
Sulawesi	1.549	9.68%
Bali Nusa	1.090	6.81%
Maluku-Papua	800	5.0%

Source: Freedom to Learn, 2024

and mutual understanding among people from different countries (Yasya et al., 2022).

Intercultural communication carried out by ISE program students requires communication adaptations which inevitably involve various conversation patterns and communication barriers experienced (Putri et al., 2023). This Independent Student Exchange (ISE) program is carried out in every region in Indonesia,

therefore there will be a process of adapting to different cultural interactions. One of them is student placement activities carried out by the Ministry of Education and Culture in Garut City, West Java Province. The Independent Student Exchange (ISE) Program placement refers to the appointment system from the Ministry of Education and Culture. Based on the results of researchers' observations, students who were placed in Garut Regency had difficulty adapting because the students were originally from outside Java (Andari et al., 2021).

Based on Independent Student Exchange (ISE) participant data in 2023, a total of 15,286 students were recorded as participants in Independent Student Exchange (ISE) 3. Independent Student Exchange (ISE) participant data is divided into 6 island clusters (Table 1 and Table 2).

Based on data from observations made by researchers, several problems were identified

Table 2 Number of ISE participants in Garut Regency Universities

Island	Year of Implementation of PMM in Garut Regency		
	2021 (ISE 1 Garut Univeristy	2022 (ISE 2 Indonesian Education Institute	2023 (ISE 3 Garut University
Sumatra		18	20
Nusa Tenggara			2
Kalimantan		1	
Sulawesi	18	11	5
Maluku			1
Papua		2	1
Jumlah	18	32	29

Source: ISE data in Garut Regency 2021-2023

that emerged, including: interactions that were hampered due to cultural differences, and the need for an adaptation process, even though the national language was still used, different dialogues still created miscommunication, because most of it came from outside the city, which certainly has a different culture, and creates obstacles to interaction, especially in terms of language and dialogue.

The research conducted by researchers is relevant to previous research entitled “Intercultural Communication between Migrants and Local Communities in Garut”. The focus of the problem in this research is the conversation patterns in communication between migrants and local communities in Garut, which involves an adaptation process in various aspects. The aim of this research is to determine the direct communication experiences felt by migrants in Garut Regency. The results of this previous research show that the conversation patterns of migrants in interacting with local communities are based on their adoption of experiences and first impressions when they came to Garut. These findings were derived from the responses given by local residents in Garut. Most of the migrants carry out two-way communication and are open to interacting and learning to adapt by getting closer to the local community in Garut, or learning from the media. However, there are also those who carry out one-way communication and are indifferent and do not open up. The form of personal migrant communication interaction uses verbal

language so that goals can be conveyed, and is formed from feelings of comfort. Then the form of communication interaction is in formal form, carried out using body signals or non-verbal communication. Then the communication barriers felt by migrants, namely language, the physical appearance of migrants who are not trusted by the community, and differences in terms of delivery when interacting and there are communication values in Garut Regency that are different from those of migrants, both in the environment and work (Nurhadi et al., 2022).

The second previous research was related to the title Intercultural Communication Experiences of Students Participating in the Independent Student Exchange Program, Phenomenological Study of participants in the Independent Student Exchange Program, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Nusa Cendana University, Kupang. This research discusses the experiences of Independent Student Exchange (ISE) participants at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences at Nusa Cendana University Kupang in communicating. The problem of this research focuses on the difficulties faced by Independent Student Exchange (ISE) program participants when conveying messages due to cultural differences, such as differences in language and intonation. The results of the research show that the communication experience of Independent Student Exchange (ISE) participants at FISIP, Nusa Cendana University, Kupang, involves adaptation, where in interactions there is language learning,

courage in opening up, building relationships. Apart from that, there are two factors, namely, supporting factors, the same goal and mutual response to each other, while the inhibiting factors are differences in interpreting language, cultural differences and dialects (Ndoen et al., 2023). So it can be said that identity is identity is an internal trait that differentiates individuals from one another (King & Bailey, 2021).

The Merdeka Student Exchange Program provides a unique opportunity for students to learn and adapt to various cultures, both collectivistic and individualistic, according to their destination country. In collectivistic cultures, there are values such as interdependence, harmony, and social influence. Students will get the opportunity to understand the importance of cooperation, a sense of belonging, and social values that play a role in the decision-making process. On the other hand, individualistic cultures emphasize freedom, autonomy, and competition. In this context, students can develop independence, adaptability, broader communication skills and social networks (Fatehi et al., 2020).

The third previous study is related to the barriers to intercultural communication of foreign students at Universitas Teknologi Semarang. The focus of this study is to identify the barriers to intercultural communication experienced by foreign students at Universitas Teknologi Sumbawa. Foreign students who come from abroad, especially those who are not yet fluent in Indonesian, often face difficulties

in communicating. There are 21 foreign students at Universitas Teknologi Semarang who entered through a scholarship program. The main challenge they face in communicating comes from the striking language differences. This study uses an in-depth qualitative approach, focusing on the experiences of foreign students at the Universitas Teknologi Semarang. The purposive sampling technique was used to select participants, namely active students who have studied for at least 6 months and have experience interacting with local students or the Sumbawa community. The data collected were analyzed through several stages, starting from transferring data into text form, data reduction, data presentation, to data verification. The results of the study show that language differences are the main barrier to intercultural communication. Foreign students feel that there is a “big wall” blocking them because the vocabulary used is difficult to understand. In addition, there is a tendency to judge that limits their interactions, especially based on gender. Misinterpretation of nonverbal cues is also a significant barrier. This situation is caused by a lack of understanding of the local culture, which can trigger misunderstandings due to different cultural backgrounds. As a result, communication that should be effective is hampered by various cultural differences that affect their interactions (Haq, 2023).

The fourth previous research is the Adaptation of Exchange Students in Facing Culture Shock. The main focus of this study

is to examine how exchange students with diverse backgrounds can cope with culture shock. When entering a new environment with different cultural customs, various phenomena will emerge, one of which is social interaction, which often results in culture shock and the adaptation process that must be gone through. This study aims to explain the experiences of students when entering a new campus, as well as the stages of the adaptation process they experience. The method used in this study is a qualitative approach. The adaptation process and culture shock experienced by students participating in the Independent Student Exchange (ISE) program at Malikussaleh University are the subjects of this study, based on interviews conducted by the researcher. Students from Java, especially those with Sundanese, Javanese, and Betawi surnames, are the subject categories in this study. In data collection, this study uses several methods, such as interviews, documentation, observation, and literature studies. The results of the study showed that the sample of exchange students experienced culture shock, especially in terms of language, social customs, food, and transportation. Those who migrated to participate in the exchange program in Aceh experienced different phases in dealing with culture shock. However, all participants tended to enjoy the differences and face each challenge with a positive attitude. The adaptation phases they went through were closely related to the culture shock they experienced. In dealing with

a new culture, they tried their best to recognize different cultures and continue to establish good communication (Ardila, 2023).

Seeing these conditions, it shows that every communication interaction carried out by immigrants in a region will experience an adaptation process and obstacles. In this study, it can be analyzed using integrative communication theory which is the theoretical perspective of intercultural communication adaptation. Intercultural communication skills are essential for newcomers moving into a new environment with a different culture, and having skills in intercultural communication entering a new environment with unfamiliar cultural norms and practices. This allows them to express themselves clearly while respecting cultural differences, and personal success (Kartika et al., 2024).

The theory used in this research, is Integrative Communication theory. It defines that in intercultural interactions, it is necessary to match one's abilities in the adjustment process in occupying the culture in one's area. This approach emphasizes the importance of aligning multiple communication channels to achieve the same goal, ensuring that messages are consistent and effective across platforms. This theoretical approach pays attention to the layer boundaries and dynamics of the intercultural communication adaptation process that occurs, which will form a phenomenon (Kim, 2001). In theory, there are 5 interrelated things, which are called the ICT model, namely

as follows: (1) Personal Communication; (2) Social Communication; (3) Environment; (4) Personal condition tendencies of immigrants, background; (5) Intercultural transformation (Kim, 2001).

The reason that prompted researchers to conduct this research is that there are several unique features when conducting studies on intercultural communication, especially in Independent Student Exchange (ISE), where intercultural communication has its own meaning, as well as differences in background and culture. These differences result in the experience of each participant involved in it being unique and interesting to explore, so that the experience of intercultural exchange communication and their motives for participating in the program can be interpreted and constructed according to their culture.

The novelty of this research shows that Independent Student Exchange (ISE) participants go through different adaptation processes due to diverse environments. It was found that there were efforts to build close relationships with lecturers, students and fellow exchange participants. In this process, language use is dominated by Indonesian as the national language, supported by local regional languages as intermediary languages. However, it was also found that inhibiting factors such as dialect and cultural background still dominate. The motive that was developed in communication was that Independent Student Exchange (ISE) participants took part in this program because

they felt interested in the new program, there was a desire to gain communication experience and new insights, and they wanted to have a positive impact.

The aim of this research is to explain the integrative communication model in intercultural communication of independent student exchange programs. The study explores five aspects: personal communication, social communication, environment, personal tendencies and intercultural transformation.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method used is a descriptive method with a qualitative approach. In practice, a qualitative approach emphasizes collecting meanings from participants, focusing on a phenomenon being studied, bringing personal values into the study, validating findings, and interpreting data. This approach is interpretive, which is part of interpretive research, explaining what is seen, heard and understood (Nurhadi & Suseno, 2021).

An important step towards research is gathering information. Researchers used a purposive sampling technique, a sampling technique carried out through certain considerations. The data collection techniques used were observation, interviews, documentation and literature study. Apart from that, data analysis techniques are used in three ways, namely data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions (Sugiyono, 2018).

Table 3 Data of informants who attended lectures at Garut University and IPI Garut

Name	Island	Information
PW	Papua	Student at the Agamua College of Management and Computer Engineering, Wamena, Papua, ISE participant, Garut University
NR	Maluku	Pattimura University Student, Garut University ISE Participant
GPB	Nusa Tenggara	Widya Mandiri Kupang Catholic Student, Garut University ISE Participant
FA	Sumatra	Indonesian Technological University Student, Participant of ISE, Indonesian Education Institute, Garut
NAID	Sulawesi	Makassar State University Student Participant ISE Indonesian Education Institute Garut

Source: Researcher observation results, 2024

Table 4 Data Source

Name	Profession
Dr. Sukmawati Saleh, S.Pd., M.Si.	Academic lecturer in Intercultural Communication and anthropologist at ISBI Bandung
Dr. Ciwuk Musiana Yudhawasti, M.Hum.	Lecturer at Bhayangkara University, Greater Jakarta and also PIC Coordinator of the Independent Learning Independent Campus (ILIC) Kemdikbudristekdikti Program

Source: Researcher observation results, 2024

The main factor in data collection in qualitative research is the determination of informants and sources. Researchers use purposive sampling techniques, namely sampling methods that are carried out based on certain considerations. This technique was chosen because the information obtained needs to be experienced directly. With this approach, researchers can adjust the number of informants and sources according to the data needs required during the research process (Sugiyono, 2018).

Research informants are individuals who

provide important information related to the situation and background conditions of the research. They are people who truly understand and understand the problems being studied. In this context, informants act as research subjects who will answer questions asked by researchers (Nurhadi & Suseno, 2021). The informants in this research are as Table 3 and 4.

There are several criteria for informants and sources used in the research conducted, including informants who are students from outside Java as participants in the Inbound student exchange,

students who have passed the selection from the ministry and are placed on campuses in the Garut area. Meanwhile, the sources interviewed certainly have expertise and insight that are in accordance with the research being conducted and are competent with the topics being studied with the criteria as practitioners who oversee student exchange programs at the University of Garut and the Indonesian Education Institute Garut, academics of the archipelago module, academics and practitioners of cultural anthropology and intercultural communication and coordinators of the Independent Learning Independent Campus (ILIC) program of the Ministry of Education and Culture, Research, Technology, and Higher Education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Personal communication in the integrative communication model in intercultural communication adaptation is conceptualized into three types of components, namely cognitive, affective and operational. In an interview with an informant named Persela Wenda who comes from East Papua, she explained that:

In the cognitive aspect, experience is gained from the learning process and activities of the Indonesian module in the ISE program. Although the internal condition is a bit awkward. Then from the operational aspect, even though the informant still feels uncomfortable in communicating, the behavior displayed tries to be friendly and respect differences (Interview with informant in February 2024).

In an interview with an informant named

Nadia Rumatoras from Maluku, she explained that:

In this case, we conducted a search regarding Garut Regency with the aim of making it easier to adapt and have emotional sensitivity, in order to have closeness to the new culture (Interview with informant in February, 2024).

Interview with an informant named Gordianus Pratama Baho from East Nusa Tenggara, he explained his experience in the aspect of personal communication.

In the cognitive aspect, his internal conditions are lacking, this creates internal obstacles. In the affective aspect, I am quite sensitive to the emotions shown by someone when, for example, someone likes or dislikes me. In the operational aspect, the informant most importantly showed his pride in the proven diversity of cultures (Interview with informant in February, 2024).

In the social communication aspect of the integrative communication model, there are 2 aspects, namely host communication and ethnic communication. In an interview with the first informant, Persela Wenda from Papua, she told about her experience.

In the host aspect, the informant carried out various social activities, especially during social contribution activities and the Indonesian archipelago module. It was quite difficult to communicate and the informants conveyed at least some of which I did not understand. Not only in outside activities, learning activities on campus also provide social benefits. In the ethnic aspect, all activities in ISE maintain the cultural strength possessed by each participant, strengthening is carried out through cultural performance activities

of each ISE participant. The identity remains strong because the informant has a different skin color and a strong character from the East but in the adaptation process can accept the culture that has taken root in Garut (Interview with informant in February, 2024).

In an interview with Nadia Rumatoras from Maluku, she shared her experiences which were closely related to aspects of social communication.

On the host aspect, the communication process is not too difficult in terms of language. The informant really appreciated the culture that was still strong, namely the use of mother tongue which was used by almost all the people he met. In the aspect of ethnic communication, as ISE participant from Uniga, there is a strengthening of the culture of each participant in the archipelago module activities and small interactions with the community of origin. This makes the informant look like a Garut resident because he is easy to adapt. (Interview with informant in February 2024).

In an interview with Gordianus Pratama Baho, he shared his experiences which were closely related to aspects of social communication.

In the host aspect, communication is carried out when interacting incidentally, with local traders and the surrounding community. He knew the gentle way of speaking of the Sundanese people from the communication he had with his host. In the aspect of ethnic communication, cultural reinforcement carried out in campus activities for ISE, and from the different language accents conveyed by informants, makes the strong presence of eastern culture still felt. Cultural experiences are also shared with the community of origin, and even introduced, this is positive for the adaptation process (Interview with informant in February, 2024).

In an interview with Feby Amanda, she shared her experiences in the social communication aspect.

In the host aspect, communication is carried out formally in ISE activities and informally, namely interacting with local residents where they live in Garut. The informants got to know the daily habits of the Sundanese people. A polite accent is a challenge for informants as Sumatran people. In the ethnic aspect, there are activities that introduce the culture of each ISE participant. This activity provides meaning for students in Garut, where their own regional cultural experience begins. However, it is not meant to be compared and misinterpretations occur, but it has just been introduced (Interview with informant in February, 2024).

In the environmental aspect of the integrative communication model, it explains how the environment influences immigrants during the adaptation process, where the extent to which they participate in the social communication process is closely related to the existing environmental conditions. There are three aspects of the environment, namely host acceptance, host conformity pressure, and ethnic group strength. In an interview with informant Persela Wenda from Papua, he explained his experience regarding environmental aspects.

The host aspect of acceptance, namely students and lecturers at Uniga, are very accepting in the learning process or even outside campus. The local community where they live is also very welcoming of their arrival as ISE participants. In the aspect of pressure for suitability from the host, there were many new lessons and knowledge so that Sundanese culture entered into him, as if forcing him to adapt to his native people. The environment is accepting but often creates awkwardness in communication, especially in interactions, the language used makes ISE students not

understand. The strength of ethnic groups was not felt by the informant, because there was no group environment of the same ethnicity when in Garut (Interview with informant in February, 2024).

In an interview with Nadia Rumatoras from Maluku, she shared her experiences related to environmental aspects.

The aspect of the host's acceptance is that at first the environmental response was not immediately accepting, it still felt awkward, especially the language really made it difficult for me, and a little hampered my comfort at the beginning, but over time the environment was very receptive because the informants themselves tried to interact slowly with the students. at Garut University. The aspect of host conformity pressure, where the behavior exemplified by the host environment tends to be positive and makes the informant not feel negative pressure. The lack of adjustment was felt at the beginning due to differences in character and language. The aspect of the strength of ethnic groups was also not felt by the informant the same as the first informant, because there are no ethnic groups in Garut, most of them are Sundanese (Interview with informant in February, 2024).

In an interview with Gordianus Pratama Baho from East Nusa Tenggara, he experienced good experiences in the environmental sector.

The aspect of host acceptance, where the environment in Garut accepts the informant so that he often plays with friends from Garut. In the activities visited, the campus also supported the activities carried out. The aspect of host conformity pressure, where the pressure that arises is not from the attitude shown but the language that makes the informant need to adapt, and that is difficult. The aspect of the strength of ethnic groups was not felt by all ISE 3 participants at Uniga because the majority of the Garut people who were accepted were Sundanese (Interview with informant in February 2024).

In the aspect of personal condition tendencies in the integrative communication model, there are 3 aspects or indicators, namely change preparedness, ethnic closeness and adaptive personality. In an interview with Persela Wenda from Papua, she shared her experiences which were closely related to aspects of personal condition tendencies.

In terms of readiness for change, I only mentally prepared myself to adapt to the new environment. In terms of ethnic proximity, I tried to interact with colleagues on the same campus. However, I did not really build closeness because I felt awkward and even wanted to be interested. In terms of adaptive personality, based on my own experience, it is not very adaptive because I feel very awkward when meeting new people (Interview with informant in February, 2024).

In an interview with Nadia Rumatoras from Maluku, she shared her experience based on aspects of personal condition tendencies.

In the aspect of preparedness for change, the informant researched the Garut area long ago, but only the campus environment. In terms of ethnic closeness, because the informant has an attitude that easily blends in, he is also quite close to students in Garut. In the aspect of adaptive personality, the informant tends to adapt easily, he takes advantage of adaptation gaps during free time at college (Interview with informant in February 2024).

In his interview with Gordianus Pratama Baho, he explained his experience based on aspects of personal condition tendencies.

In the aspect of preparedness for change, the informant did a little research on living in Garut and the results were very helpful, in accordance with the reality he experienced. The thing that is quite challenging is the weather because in NTT

the weather is hot but in Garut it is cold. Another thing is that he just follows the culture to appreciate and learn new things. In the aspect of technical closeness, the informant tries to start a conversation so that it is not awkward and tends to actively talk so that students, lecturers or the surrounding community become familiar. In the aspect of adaptive personality, the informant interacts little by little, namely looking for hot topics of conversation, and trying to adapt the language by learning a little about Sundanese (Interview with the informant in February 2024).

In the aspect of intercultural transformation, the process of acculturation is deculturation in which some of the old cultural habits are replaced with new cultural habits. There are 3 aspects to it, namely functional strength, psychological health, and intercultural identity. In an interview with Persela Wenda from Papua on aspects of intercultural transformation, namely:

In the aspect of functional strength, the informant stated that he did not need to be in line in understanding his culture, but he showed an attitude of acceptance and mutual respect. However, it was quite difficult for him, especially in terms of learning and the environment was very different from that in his area. In terms of psychological health, he experienced culture shock at the beginning because in Garut he did everything himself, and this caused his mental decline too, because the environment was very far from what the informants experienced in Papua. In the aspect of identity, the informant does not feel that there is a new identity attached to him, because he also finds it difficult to adjust (Interview with informant in February, 2024).

In an interview with, Nadia Rumatoras from Maluku, in the aspect of intercultural

transformation, namely:

In the aspect of functional strength, in dealing with differences, the informant really appreciates that even though the culture in Garut is different, whether it is in harmony or not, he thinks there is no culture in Garut that is negative, everything is very positive. In terms of psychological health, he feels happy, and is not too worried about his psychological condition, because he is very comfortable in the city of Garut. He felt the aspect of intercultural identity after I lived in Garut for 1 semester, he still had the identity of the Maluku tribe, but he could look like a Garut citizen when he was in the Garut area (Interview with informant in February, 2024).

In an interview with Gordianus Pratama Baho from East Nusa Tenggara, in the aspect of intercultural transformation he shared his experiences.

In the aspect of functional strength, the informant tried to adapt a positive culture for me, such as greeting friends on campus, and other positive things. In terms of psychological health, from a mental perspective, there are obstacles. The thing I think about is from where I live, I'm afraid I won't be able to adapt in a bad mental condition. Aspects of intercultural identity, the informant as a citizen of NTT remains attached and very strong, but in lectures he still looks the same as other Garut people, he can blend in so he looks like people from Garut (Interview with informant in February 2024).

In this section, the researcher will discuss the research results which involve interviews with sources, and will be enriched with several previous studies.

The first aspect in this research is personal communication, intercultural communication of Independent Student Exchange (ISE) program. In the personal communication aspect, there

are several aspects, namely cognitive aspects, affective aspects and operational aspects. Interviewee 1 said that in the cognitive aspect there is an internal factor, namely culture shock, which must be felt at the beginning when moving to a new place. According to him, culture is in the mind and starts from the heart and is then manifested in behavior. Meanwhile, the affective aspect focuses more on mutual understanding. Apart from that, according to source person, the cognitive aspect comes from psychology and biology, namely that the development of knowledge comes from genetics which can determine a person's source of cognition in the environment they are in. Then in the affective aspect, the principle of upholding, where the sky is upheld, the earth is stepped on. This means we have to understand each other whatever arises when we are in a new area. Apart from operational aspects, in the Independent Learning Independent Campus (ILIC) program there are of course various things that must be done in an effort to make its activities a success.

This is in line with previous research entitled *Adaptation and Culture Shock: Case Study of Independent Student Exchange Participants*, namely that in this research Independent Student Exchange (ISE) participants had different intercultural communication competencies between one individual and another. In this case, communication skills, socialization skills, individual character and cross-cultural experiences greatly influence the culture shock

experience received. However, even though all informants experienced culture shock, they were still able to adapt over time, adapting by showing a sense of tolerance through mutual respect, respect and appreciation despite cultural differences (Mufidah, 2022).

In the second aspect, social communication can be carried out if immigrants are able to communicate in accordance with the norms and practices of local society. The involvement of immigrants with their hosts becomes an adaptation process that they go through. Interviewee 1 said that in the host aspect, the thing that must be done is to understand each other's characters. Of course, those who come must adapt quickly and those who receive must also be able to accept. In the ethnic aspect, cultural identity based on the experiences of Independent Student Exchange (ISE) participants will not be lost. The character of a particular ethnicity or culture will be inherent in a person, so that miscommunication will not occur.

Interviewee 2 said that the host aspect requires preparation before directly participating in activities at Independent Learning Independent Campus (ILIC) such as Independent Student Exchange (ISE) program. Students need to be equipped with how to deal with language differences, how to adapt, and how to live in a different environment. Supervision is also needed so that strategies for social communication become more mature. Meanwhile, there is an aspect of ethnic

communication, resource person 3 provides guidance on how to do and carry out before entering the area or place where students carry out activities, students should come to the university where they will be given orientation.

This is in line with previous research entitled *Intercultural Communication Between Indigenous Communities and Transmigration Communities in Kedataran Village, Maje District, Kaur Regency*, namely that in this research every day social interaction is carried out in formal forum activities and concerns daily life, and is interactive. gathering either individually or in groups, working together, with language barriers, customs and relocation distance. In this research, there were obstacles in interacting socially, namely from differences in language and different language dialects (Pardela, 2023). This is in line with previous research on “Analysis of Intercultural Communication in the Implementation of the Independent Student Exchange Program” that the main obstacle in intercultural communication is in terms of language, because even though Indonesian is used, the influence of regional languages is still strong, so sometimes the vocabulary is the same, have different meanings and meanings. Apart from that, the ethnocentrism experienced by program participants makes it difficult to adapt. Program participants have their own way of adapting, namely by following local cultural patterns, paying close attention to local culture, actively asking questions, and slowly trying to build communication interactions to get the

information they need (Yusup, 2022).

The third aspect of the environment consists of host acceptance, host balance pressure and ethnic group strength. According to resource person 1, environmental aspects are closely related to the adaptation process. The host reception aspect is when people from different cultures meet each other. The aspect of host suitability pressure is when there is pressure from the environment, this is definitely felt when entering a new territory, but with someone's commitment.

According to Interviewee 2, the acceptance of the host is very important in their relationship with someone who comes to a new place. The environment is closely related to the process of adjustment, where the environment is more open.

This is in line with previous research entitled *Cross-Cultural Communication Experiences of Indonesian Student Exchange Participants in South Korea*. Exchange participants from Indonesia in communication in South Korea have communication barriers, namely in terms of language. However, this can actually be broken by building positive social closeness with students from Korea. The environment in Korea is welcoming and provides lessons to become a more open-minded person, respecting other people's privacy and the emergence of new good habits in each informant. Apart from that, obstacles from the environment are the language used, there is a mixture of regional languages and national languages and because

of confusion in information (Afra, 2023).

In the fourth aspect, the trend in the condition of immigrants is the aspect of preparedness for change. For example, as explained by resource person 1, when you want to live in a new place you have to be prepared through research, namely finding out what the culture is like there. Apart from that, the aspect of closeness between immigrants and their hosts is also needed, because it will definitely support the communication carried out. Then the adaptive personality aspect comes into play, someone who is cheerful can definitely adapt quickly, unlike someone who is quiet there will definitely be a problem to solve themselves first, and tends to wait to be greeted, wait to be smiled at, wherever the place is, someone who has an adaptive personality will definitely adapt quickly (Shahlo, 2023).

Resource person 2 explained the aspect of change preparedness, namely preparing how communication will be carried out in new areas, in fact in every Independent Learning Independent Campus (ILIC) program almost all programs come to new areas, so there will be a lot of preparation not just language and it is better to get to know the environment and problems, namely finding out what the environment is like. In the aspect of ethnic closeness between immigrants and their hosts, it is explained that closeness to the community of origin will help the adaptation process.

The discussion regarding trends in personal conditions is in line with previous research

entitled *Barriers to Intercultural Communication of Papuan Students in Semarang City*, namely that in this research there are 9 things that are indicators of barriers, namely physical, cultural, perception, motivation, experience, emotion, language, non-verbal and competition. This is done slowly, mingling with the local community and adapting to the language dialect, then in the adjustment process a closeness is built, namely by socializing little by little with students and university lecturers and greeting them in advance (Fitrianti, 2023).

In the fifth aspect, intercultural transformation, Interviewee 1 said that in the context of intercultural adaptation it can be said to be good when one can easily accept the culture in Garut, the attitude adopted is respect. Then, regarding the psychological health aspect, you need to pay special attention because poor mental health will interfere with the adaptation process.

The discussion regarding intercultural transformation is in line with previous research entitled *Student Adaptation to Culture Shock*. Culture shock is experienced by students in the frustration phase due to language factors, food taste, geographical conditions, social interactions, cost of living, and homesickness. Students prefer to survive and adjust to the resolution phase. Independent Student Exchange (ISE) participants experienced culture shock and other negative things, namely homesickness, but besides that, there were positive things, namely new experiences (Wardah, 2020).

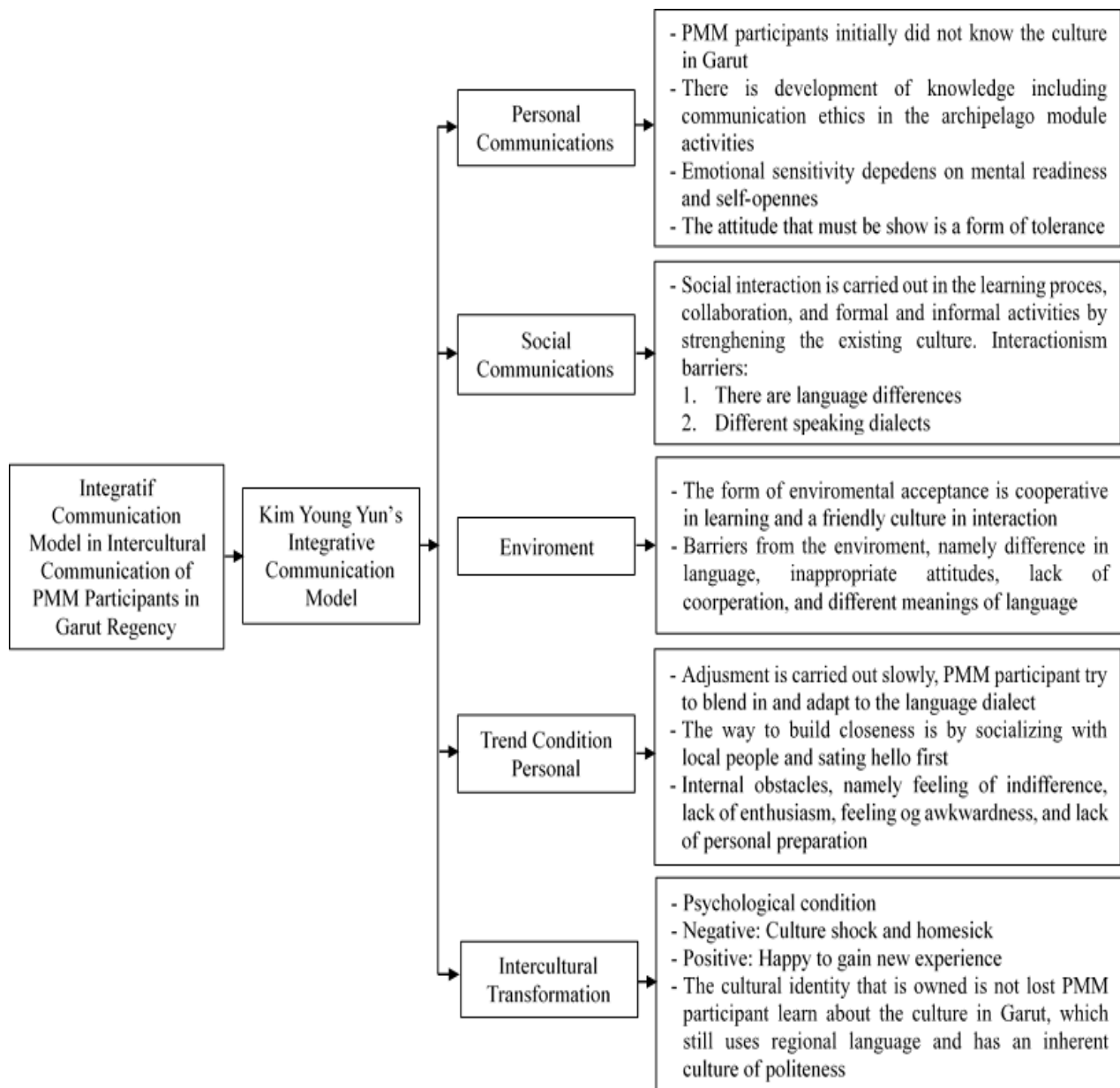


Figure 1 Research Results Framework Model

Source: Modification Researcher, 2024

This is in line with the results of research on Workers Perceptions Regarding Approaches to Intercultural Communication in the Workplace: A Study in A South African University, that in adapting to a work environment with different cultures, it is necessary to try to adapt yourself to your own ways of integrating the information you want. conveyed, as well as the need to understand cultural differences to socialize by

greeting local workers (Mushaathoni, 2024). The following are the results of the interview construction explained in Figure 1.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that in the aspect of personal communication, ISE students are able to prepare themselves through personal

communication in the adaptation process, particularly in acquiring knowledge for academic life on campus. With knowledge of the culture in Garut, almost all ISE participants can adapt well and remain motivated throughout the program. They learned a lot during ISE activities. In the aspect of social communication, ISE participants can do it in various conditions, even though there are obstacles ranging from internal conditions or difficult to pronounce language. Then in the environmental aspect, environmental acceptance for ISE participants is very important, and at the two Garut universities the environment is very supportive. The pressure that is felt comes from not understanding Sundanese, which is the mother tongue of the West Java region. In terms of personal conditions, the problem is that ISE students have not been able to properly prepare to adapt, but ISE participants can accept the situation, because the environment is very open and warm. They were able to adapt quickly, even without prior preparation, relying mainly on mental and physical readiness. Finally, in the aspect of intercultural transformation, there is culture shock and mental breakdown, but it did not prevent the students from maintaining respect for and preserving their own cultural identity.

In personal communication, it is better for student exchange participants as a whole to know the Garut area not only from the campus environment that is targeted as a student exchange program but also the new area and the

culture in it need to be known so that there is no culture shock when entering the new area. It is necessary to add development activities related to cognitive and affective aspects, so that student exchange participants are rich in knowledge of the culture in Garut before the student exchange activity takes place. In social communication, student exchange participants need to learn the local language used in Garut Regency to broaden the language insight Universities in Garut Regency can facilitate students to be able to communicate socially well, not only collaborating with student organizations or through a series of Nusantara module activities but outside of these agendas. In environment, student exchange participants need to understand more about the environmental conditions in the host University area, and face it with a readiness and commitment, so that the less supportive environment will not become an obstacle in the adaptation process. For universities, of course, creating a harmonious environment with closeness needs to be done more often so that exchange students do not feel awkward. In terms of personal conditions, exchange students need to prepare themselves not only physically and mentally or their campus environment, but also how to deal with the cultural environment in the new area.

In addition, universities in Garut Regency must be more cooperative in paying attention to the conditions of exchange students. In intercultural transformation, exchange students need to adapt to the existing cultural differences

and minimize the culture shock that occurs when traveling by maintaining positive mindset. The blending experienced should not make the cultural identity that is owned disappear completely. In addition, the host university also ensures the psychological condition of the exchange students to deal with cultural differences and provides good advice.

The theoretical implications of this research can provide theoretical knowledge about the process of how intercultural communication adaptation must be applied through concepts and theories that refer to one understanding, that in carrying out the adaptation process, there are certainly many factors involved, such as language, environment and customs. The implication of the social aspect is that in social communication, student exchange participants can learn language to increase their insight with the aim of being able to communicate socially well through a series of Nusantara module activities.

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