

Discovering Variables of Acculturation for Sojourners: An Explorative Study of Indonesian Students Living in Germany

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Sojourners are those who live in another culture for a period of time, with the intention of returning to their native land. Sojourning students have to adapt to a different culture and experience stresses due to acculturation. Most of the acculturation studies were about Chinese, Korean, or Japanese in the USA or foreign students other than Indonesians. No information was available on the significant variables of acculturation for Indonesian sojourning in Germany. This study aimed to explore variables of acculturation of Indonesian students in Germany, using qualitative approach. Results showed the following variables to be significant: (1) seasons and weathers, (2) living place, (3) current social relationship, (4) togetherness with Indonesians in Germany, (5) language, (6) the roles of work or academic environment, and (7) freedom. Details are discussed in this article.

Keywords: acculturation, sojourners, Indonesian students in Germany

Sojourner adalah mereka yang hidup di luar negeri yang nantinya akan pulang lagi ke tanah air. Mahasiswa di luar negeri termasuk dalam kelompok sojourner. Mahasiswa yang juga sojourner di luar negeri tidak hanya harus menghadapi stress beban studi melainkan juga harus mampu menghadapi proses akulturasi yang dilaluinya. Sebagian besar studi yang terdahulu masih tentang mahasiswa China atau Korea di Amerika atau mahasiswa asing, non-Indonesia. Karenanya studi ini bertujuan untuk eksplorasi variabel yang penting dalam akulturasi mahasiswa Indonesia di Jerman, dengan pendekatan kualitatif. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa variabel akulturasi yang penting adalah sebagai berikut: (1) musim dan cuaca, (2) tempat tinggal, (3) hubungan sosial saat “ini”, (4) kebersamaan dengan sesama orang Indonesia di Jerman, (5) penguasaan Bahasa Jerman, (6) peran dalam kerja atau akademik, dan (7) kebebasan. Detail didiskusikan dalam artikel ini.

Kata kunci: akulturasi, sojourner, mahasiswa Indonesia di Jerman

Sojourners are those who live in another culture for a period of time, with the initial, continuous intention of returning to their native land (K. L. Dion & K. K. Dion, 1996). They can be migrant laborers or students obtaining their education background (K. L. Dion & K. K. Dion). Sojourning students attending a foreign university have to adapt to a different culture and experience stresses due to acculturation, in addition to the usual demands of student life. They were also susceptible to drinking and substance abuse (Losaya, Knight, Chassin, & Little, 2008; Prado, Szapocznik, Maldonado-Molina, Schwartz, & Pantino, 2008, Ojeda, Patterson, & Strathde, 2008; Akin, Mosher, Smith, & Gauthier,

2008; Torres, Pena, Westhoff, & Zayas, 2008). The risks of going through acculturation might even lead to reduction in individual's health status, as it was observed in the transition from collective to individual culture (Yeh, Ching, Okubo, & Luthar, 2007). Limited previous experiences in traveling abroad (Church, 1982) and being racially discriminated (Dion & Toner, 1988; K. L. Dion, K. K. Dion, & Pak, 1991) were strongly experienced by the Far East and Chinese students, respectively, in the United States. In reference to those previous studies, this study is limited only to Indonesian students in Germany.

Previous studies focusing on acculturation and stress of Chinese students on American university campuses reported that those who anglicized their names were more acculturated into American society in several regards (more likely to associate with Americans, joined non-Chinese students organization, were familiar with American magazines, and acculturate to American tastes and values) than were those who did not change

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