

Intercultural Communication Strategy for the Development of International Student Service Systems

Marieti Debyora Gardiana^{1*}, Rino Ardhian Nugroho², Albert Muhammad Isrun Naini³, Sulistiyo Joko Wahyudi⁴

Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta

Corresponding Author: Marieti Debyora Gardiana md.gardiana@staff.uns.ac.id

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: Communication Strategy, Intercultural Communication Competence, International Students, University Performance

Received : 11, March

Revised : 07, April

Accepted: 16, May

©2023 Gardiana, Nugroho, Naini, Wahyudi: This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Atribusi 4.0 Internasional](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).



ABSTRACT

The number of international students is an indicator of tertiary performance assessment, so each tertiary institution tries to attract prospective students from abroad with various program offers and services provided. This research was conducted using a qualitative descriptive approach with in-depth interviews with international student services staff with the aim of knowing and analyzing their communication strategies as well as the intercultural communication competencies that international student services staff need to possess. The study results were analyzed referring to the Theory of Communication Accommodation and Theory of Intercultural Communication, which then mapped out the findings based on Byram's Intercultural Communication Competence model (attitudes, knowledge, connecting skills, discovery and interaction skills, and critical cultural awareness). Knowing the intercultural communication strategies needed to serve international students is expected to improve the quality of services provided.

INTRODUCTION

Since 2003, Quacquarelli Symonds World University Rankings (QS WUR) has annually released the world's top university rankings. QS is a rating agency used as an official performance indicator for Indonesian tertiary institutions from the Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education (2015–2019) and the Ministry of Education and Culture (2020–2024).

The ranking methodological framework carried out by QS is very consistent, compiled using six metrics that are believed to effectively assess the performance of a tertiary institution, which consist of: academic reputation (40%), employer reputation (10%), faculty/student ratio (20%), citations per faculty (20%), international faculty ratio (5%), and international student ratio (5%) (Craig, 2021).

Based on the above metrics, the presence of international students is an indicator of internationalization in a university, which plays an important role in the academic ranking of universities around the world, in addition to many other indicators of academic activity. The demand of higher education institutions to internationalize their academic practices is indicative of a process of rapid globalization and transformation that is contributing to changes in the landscape of the existing education system. So universities need to target more international students to maintain their competitive advantage compared to other universities (De Jager & Gbadamosi, 2013).

International students become a bridge between their home country and the host country, which can lead to prospective business relationships between multiple countries and even global collaborative research activities at a later stage (Rasli et al., 2016). On the other hand, every country and university that accepts international students does not only aim to increase the university's ranking in the world but also to provide social assistance or increase the income of the university and the country (Grehenson, 2020). In the Indonesian context, the government accepts international students or provides scholarships with the aim of introducing Indonesian culture and language, as well as assisting academic exchange programs to improve the quality of resources in friendly countries (Grehenson, 2020).

Universities must demonstrate their unique value proposition to attract the best talent from around the world, which includes a strong research base, internationalization of the university, up-to-date programs, and a pool of quality academic staff (Rasli et al., 2016). There were over 5.3 million international students in 2017, up from 2 million in 2000 (UNESCO, 2019).

Students' ability in the process of interpersonal communication is influenced by their experience in organizing and the frequency of public speaking (Alfikalia & Maharani, 2013). However, the diverse language and cultural backgrounds of international students make it a challenge for universities to provide services to them, both academic and non-academic. Low language proficiency causes students' ability to understand lecturers to decrease and can become an obstacle to social communication (Yaser, 2017). Studies find that language is the most important challenge for international students (Kiroglu et al., 2010). Apart from language, social norms, food culture,

interests, dress styles, and relationships with other genders are some of the most important adjustment problems faced by international students (Sungur et al., 2016). Points of cultural difference stem from interpersonal communication, which causes relationship difficulties between people who come from different cultural backgrounds (Borghetti, 2011).

International students face challenges in language, cultural adaptation, the education system, the legal and social systems, as well as the health care system in Indonesia. Direct involvement in various community activities and academic activities on campus is a cultural adaptation strategy. For this reason, campuses need to provide support so that international students can face and overcome these challenges.

Studies of higher education service quality from the perspective of international students have been widely analyzed in the existing literature. Previous researchers have discussed quality gaps in educational service perception and satisfaction (De Jager & Gbadamosi, 2013) (Yousapronpaiboon, 2014) (Rasli et al., 2016).

International students' daily activities undoubtedly necessitate interaction and communication with other parties. One of them is the staff of the college where the student is enrolled, including academic, administrative, and technical personnel. As a result, both faculty and international students must respect one another and employ a variety of cultural approaches and intercultural communication strategies to ensure the smooth operation of the teaching and learning process.

Previous research found that to expedite the teaching and learning process in the UMS Pharmacology Class, international students from Thailand implemented the following intercultural communication strategies: using the Malay language in communicating, learning Indonesian, and diligently practicing it when interacting with other people (Nurani, 2015). The results of other studies also state that in order to reduce the level of anxiety and uncertainty when entering and interacting with a new environment at the Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta, international students from Zimbabwe apply the following intercultural strategies: increase and strengthen friendly relations, increase the intensity of communication, and have self-confidence in interacting (Khatimah, 2019).

Apart from international students, of course, higher education staff also need to have intercultural awareness as a means of developing their professionalism and as a reference for compiling a curriculum and learning environment that provides more opportunities for students to engage productively in academic learning in an intercultural context, resulting in a learning process with an international character (Jin & Cortazzi, 2016).

Intercultural communication challenges are frequently caused by people having different perceptions, interpretations, and attitudes toward other people's languages and cultures, particularly in sociolinguistically and culturally diverse contexts (Phumpho & Nomnian, 2019). This disparity in perception results from a lack of experience and knowledge as a foundation (Gudykunst, 2003). Stereotypes and prejudice also pose challenges to

intercultural communication because people make judgments about others based on shared values, beliefs, and images (Jandt, 2003). The challenge is even greater with the differences in the interpretation of verbal and nonverbal cues.

Speaker anxiety and assumptions of similarities rather than differences can widen the communication gap between cultures, lead to negative perceptions of one another, and lead to ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism is based on "the negative evaluation of aspects of other cultures by one's own cultural standards" (Jandt, 2003)).

For this reason, cultural intelligence (CQ) is a communication competency that is needed in the current global era to overcome communication challenges (Iskhakova, 2018). Intercultural communication strategies must also be used to overcome language and cultural barriers (Berardo, 2008). This includes university administration staff, who are at the forefront of service when interacting with international students.

Based on this background, the problem formulations of this research are: (1) What are the barriers to intercultural communication faced by international student service staff at a university? (2) How is the intercultural communication strategy implemented by international student services staff at a tertiary institution?

The results of this research are expected to be a reference in developing norms that can be used to reduce miscommunication conflicts due to cross-cultural differences. In addition, it can also be used as a reference for improving the service quality of higher education administrative staff through improved SOPs, the use of communication products or information systems, and the preparation of staff training programs to reduce miscommunication and cross-cultural conflict.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A) Essence of Intercultural Communication

Intercultural communication is communication between people who have different cultures, beliefs, values, or ways of behaving. Increased international mobility due to cross-country economic dependence and advances in communication technology have made intercultural communication increasingly important (Fajar, 2009).

B) Barriers to Intercultural Communication

There are three categories of intercultural communicative barriers: cognitive, affective, and behavioral (Vivatananukul, 2016). Cognitive barriers arise when speakers cannot understand other people's languages and cannot use the right language choice when communicating. Speakers have difficulty translating words or sentences from one language to another without changing the original meaning. Speakers also do not use language genres at the right time, for example, using slang words in formal or informal conversations or, conversely using formal language when conversing with casual acquaintances or close friends. This cognitive barrier can lead to misinterpretation.

Second, affective barriers such as negative prejudice and stereotype bias lead to misperceptions. Judging other people at the beginning of communication based solely on race, gender, religion, physique, or skin color can result in perceptions that are misleading, inappropriate, and discriminatory.

Third, behavioral barriers are caused by a lack of knowledge about other people's cultural backgrounds and their non-verbal cues, such as gestures, eye glances, smiles, or the use of fingers as symbols to express feelings and opinions. To acculturate oneself to a new cultural environment requires mutual understanding, a flexible mindset, and adaptability on the part of the interlocutor, especially at their first meeting.

C) Communication Accommodation Theory

Formulated by Howard Giles and his team, Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) explains how and why we adapt our communication behavior to the actions of others (Littlejohn et al., 2017). Giles confirms the general observation that when interacting with groups of different identities, communicators often choose convergence as a form of accommodation and adaptation by imitating one another's behavior. Conversely, the communicator will choose divergence if they want to show the uniqueness of their differences from other groups.

There are advantages and disadvantages to both convergent and divergent strategies. Appropriate convergence will likely stimulate positive interpersonal relationships, indicating an increased understanding of one another. However, convergence also has the potential to offend members of the original group because it is considered an aberration. In addition, convergent speakers may also feel that they are no longer authentic.

Conversely, divergence can create interpersonal tensions that hinder the formation of relationships and understanding between groups and cultures. Nevertheless, the positive side for speakers is the reassertion of social identity and solidarity that comes from implementing different strategies. In that sense, divergence can be a convergence accommodation strategy for internal groups. Giles believes that understanding CAT can help us to communicate effectively with people who are in different groups, be it generationally, culturally or otherwise.

D) Intercultural Communication Theory

In intercultural communication, ignorance of context usually leads to misunderstandings and conflicts. Intercultural communication theory (Hall, 1959) generalizes the basic characteristics of the two contexts by analyzing actual cases in everyday communication. Context is essential in all communication, but it is relatively more important in some situations than in others. This theory also explains that there are significant differences between cultures in using language and context in communication.

E) Intercultural Communicative Competence

Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) is a term that includes key components, including linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and intercultural competence, which enable individuals to interact with other people who come from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Byram, 1997). ICC is also defined as the speaker's abilities and competencies, namely intercultural sensitivity (affective processes), intercultural awareness (cognitive processes), and intercultural agility (behavioral processes), to achieve effective and appropriate communication in a culturally diverse society (Chen & Starosta, 1996). ICC consists of the speaker's skills and attitudes to communicating in various cross-cultural situations (Lázár et al., 2007).

In summary, ICC can be seen as speakers' communicative abilities, competencies, skills, and attitudes towards other interlocutors concerning their linguistic and cultural identities in multilingual and multicultural contexts.

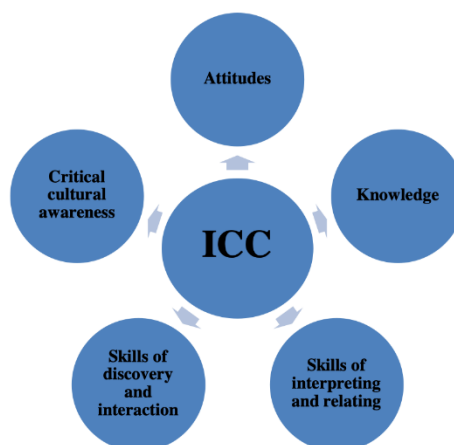


Figure 1. Byram's ICC Model (Byram, 1997)

According to Byram's ICC model (Figure 1), there are five intercultural communication competencies as follows:

- a. Attitude. Attitude is a behavior that consists of curiosity, openness, and a readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and beliefs. This can help develop the intercultural knowledge and skills essential for interacting appropriately and effectively with people from other cultures.
- b. Knowledge. Intercultural knowledge, i.e. information about social groups, products, and practices one has. Byram divides knowledge into two categories: conscious and unconscious; the former is the knowledge that can be more or less refined but is present to some degree, and the latter is knowledge of concepts and processes in interaction.
- c. Skills of interpreting and relating. The skill of interpreting information from different cultures and then relating it to one's own culture.
- d. Skills of discovery and interaction. Skills to acquire new knowledge discoveries from other cultures and use knowledge, attitudes, and skills in communication and interaction.

- e. Critical cultural awareness. Critical cultural awareness, which can be referred to as the ability to evaluate critically based on explicit criteria of perspectives, practices, and products in the individual's own culture and that of others.

The success of interaction in intercultural communication can not only be judged from the effective exchange of information but also in terms of maintaining and forming human relations, which in general depends on three intercultural communicative competency factors: attitude (affective), knowledge (cognitive) factors, and skills (Byram, 1997).

METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative descriptive approach because the research process and understanding are based on a methodology to investigate phenomena (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The problem-solving procedure is investigated by describing the current state of the subject or object of research (a person, institution, community, etc.) based on the facts that appear or are as they are (Nawawi, 2013). Qualitative research aims to understand the meaning symbolized in people's behavior according to the perspective of the community itself (Suprayogo & Tobroni, 2001).

This research is included in phenomenological research, which produces an in-depth reflective description of an experience (Denzin & Lincoln, 2009). The phenomenon studied is the intercultural communication strategy used by university staff in serving their international students. In this approach, the researcher creates a complex picture, examines words, reports details from informants' views, and conducts studies in natural situations.

Sources of data collected in this study are secondary data and primary data. Primary data is from first-hand data sources in the field, while secondary data is from secondary sources (Kriyantono, 2006). Data collection techniques in this study were literature review, documentation, and in-depth interviews. The process of collecting data through literature review comes from scientific journals. Literature review is a way of collecting data through scientific journals, books and the internet (Setyorini & Irwansyah, 2018). Meanwhile, the technique for taking informants used a purposive sampling technique where researchers selected informants who understood the conditions of international student services. Observations and interviews were conducted with 12 (twelve) informants who served as international student service staff from 5 (five) universities in Indonesia, with the following profiles:

Table 1. List of Research Informants

No	Name	University	Duties/Positions	Work Experience (Years)
1.	Mustika Ernawati	UNS	KNB Scholarship Manager	>10
2.	Indra Setyawan	UNS	International Student Admission Staff	5
3.	Safitri Bonea Palakkarisma	UNS	International Cooperation Manager	8
4.	Karina Astary	UNS	Immigration Administration	3
5.	Ferdian Ahya Putra	UNS	International Student Services	2
6.	Dien Novita Safitri	UNS	International Student Services	2
7.	Abdul Rohman	UNDIP	Student Mobility Coordinator	>10
8.	Winda Febiana Puspitaningrum	UNDIP	Resident Permit Specialist	3
9.	Siti Lussiyandari	UNAIR	International Program Development	4
10.	Ni'man Nashier	UNAIR	International Program Development	3
11.	Anas Fauzi	UNNES	International Cooperation	6
12.	Achmad Fathoni	UMS	Resident Permit Administration	7

The unit of analysis in this study comes from the results of interviews and documentation that have been carried out by researchers. Data analysis used qualitative analysis with Miles and Huberman's interactive model, where the stages in this study were data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions (Miles et al., 2014). Qualitative data was collected to strengthen and emphasize the findings of the data that has been obtained.

RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The data found by researchers in answering all questions regarding cultural communication strategies for developing international student service systems are mapped according to Byram's ICC model (Byram, 1997) as follows :

a) Attitude

The most basic level of ICC is the attitude, including respect, openness, and curiosity (Deardorff, 2006). Intercultural communication also emphasizes the importance of affective processes such as empathy, flexibility, and adaptability (Borghetti, 2011). Determining the right attitude

will help the development of intercultural knowledge and skill factors that are important to expedite the interaction process with people from other cultures.

In general, university service processes for international students use websites or applications that can be accessed online. However, some services require the physical presence of international students, thus enabling verbal communication with service staff. The cultural differences of each country often lead to misunderstandings or differences in interpretation, so communication does not run smoothly. For this reason, service staff try to be open to understanding the students' cultural backgrounds and adjust their attitudes when communicating with them.

“As those people from Southeast Asia are relatively similar to Indonesians, those from Africa and the Middle East have a mix of student characters, while those from Europe prepare well for what they need, and some students are less able to accept issues related to grades or recommendations”. (Siti Lussiyandari, 2021)

“I try to be more assertive when communicating with students from other countries so they don't go around like that. And for those from Europe, for example, I am more careful in terms of international issues such as gender, because most of them are more sensitive to these issues” (Indra Setyawan, 2021)

“Students from Africa, for example, are pretty fierce, but we have to be gentle because they come to ask for services at our place. However, when it comes to immigration regulations, we have to be tough so that students are also aware of maintaining the good name of UNDIP” (Winda Febiana, 2021)

When providing services, the officers show a friendly but firm attitude, thereby reducing the level of anxiety of international students towards the new environment. The officers also find out the cultural background of each country and then behave accordingly when interacting. This strategy increases understanding of each other to produce positive interpersonal relationships.

b) Knowledge

Intercultural communication is not always successful, and stressful events often occur (Lustig & Koester, 1993). Knowledge of the cultural background of the international students being served will reduce differences in perceptions and misinformation.

“Indonesians, when communicating with older people, will use the title "Mr." or "Brother", but international students immediately call names and use the words "I" and "you", so that sometimes it makes the service staff uncomfortable.” (Achmad Fathoni, 2021)

Ignorance among international students about Indonesian culture, which is strong in terms of manners and etiquette, creates an unfavorable perception. International students who have not been able to use the right choice of language when communicating can cause officers to be reluctant to serve. For this reason, service officers need to have knowledge of the cultural background of students, and vice versa, they need to provide explanations regarding Indonesian culture to the students concerned.

“I always look for the student's culture of origin, but I do not use it as the only reference. Because, like the Javanese, who are known to be gentle but some are hot-tempered, not all people from the same country have the same behavior”. (Dien Novita, 2021)

Knowledge of a country's cultural background should not lead to stereotypes about that country because it will create bias and cause misunderstandings when communicating.

Apart from university officials, students must interact with people in their surroundings. For this reason, the knowledge is not limited to culture but is also related to the order of social life and the system of government that applies in Indonesia.

“Foreign students must understand the functions of RT/RW (neighborhood/ward), so they know that when they live in their environment they cannot do as they please, because they are under surveillance. ” (Anas Fauzi, 2021)

For this reason, universities need to hold campus and environmental orientation activities at the time of the arrival of international students, followed by intensive explanations, so that these students have in-depth knowledge about culture, customs, and habits that apply in Indonesia.

c) Skills of interpreting and relating

The third ICC level is the skill to acquire and interpret other cultures, then relate them to one's own culture (Deardorff, 2006). To hone these skills, the university conducts monitoring and evaluation activities that involve not only international students but also parties who often have contact with these students, for example dormitory managers, lecturers, administrative staff, and local students in the student's study program. So that this skill is owned by all parties who carry out intercultural communication, both the entire academic community of tertiary institutions and international students.

“We hold an iftar activity together in the month of Ramadan, so they can also feel the warmth and togetherness in the campus family. Apart from that, they also came to know the customs of the Solo people during the fasting month, and told each other about

the customs in their respective countries.” (Achmad Fathoni, 2021)

“We try to provide complete information in one forum for the orientation period, the aim is so that they can find out their status, position and role, as well as be able to engage with their friends.” (Ni'man Nashier, 2021)

“At the end of each semester, we evaluate college progress with study programs. On various occasions, we also ask each student individually about the problems of lectures and others so that if there are problems with the campus or immigration, they are immediately found out.” (Anas Fauzi, 2021)

The communication strategy carried out by the service staff is persuasive so that international students feel safe and comfortable when telling various things that happen on campus and around where they live. For this reason, the relationship between service staff and international students should not be limited to formal relationships but also build emotional ones. Proximity will facilitate the identification and formulation of solutions if a problem occurs. Apart from that, service staff also need to find information related to the daily activities of international students. One way is by following and observing the student's social media.

The use of symbols or emblems in public places often creates different interpretations. For this reason, service officers must provide clear and complete information, starting from the registration process, the selection stages, the preparation period for arrival to Indonesia, the lecture process, to the time they have graduated and returned to their country of origin. This information can be provided through the university website, written in a guidebook, or orally. Service officers must also be available to answer questions and inquiries from students.

“There are students who cannot understand the information provided via WA. Text writing and the use of WA emoticons often have multiple interpretations, so they prefer to meet in person to confirm. Not demanding, but just wanting to make sure that the steps are correct.” (Ni'man Nashier, 2021)

“For students who don't understand even though they have been told many times, I will write down the information on paper. Then I summoned the student to the office to read the writing together, giving signs for important things, for example, by adding an underline or by coloring certain words or sentences.” (Indra Setyawan, 2021)

In order for students to understand exactly the information provided, the service staff can repeat it more slowly and use intonation to emphasize important points. Meanwhile, suppose a student has a strong character. In that case, the service staff will also be more assertive by giving a to-the-

point explanation followed by eye contact and supportive body movements.

“I use a different design for each student, so if the student, for example, pushes or demands, it's a bit inappropriate for the culture here, so I use words with a firmer diction. In direct language, I will use a high tone, for example, "If you don't like this, you will be like that later." Meanwhile, in written language, I will use firm and official words with punctuation marks that indicate firmness, for example, an exclamation mark (!), etc. But if, for example, the good one cooperates with the smooth one earlier, the language is smoother and more friendly.” (Indra, 2021)

d) Skills of discovery and interaction

In the course of lectures and daily life, sometimes there are international students who deliberately do not comply with the rules or norms that apply in Indonesia. For this reason, service officers must remind and provide awareness to these students about the need to comply with all rules and norms to avoid conflicts and problems, especially those related to immigration laws and regulations. Officers can also provide examples of past events related to sanctions received by international students who violate certain rules or norms.

“Some international students are often stubborn, don't obey when told about certain rules. So we add more information with the consequences and consequences if they break the rules” (Siti Lussiyandari, 2021)

“When they break the rules, we'll find out what's wrong and we summon them to the office informally, to meet with the head of the International Affairs Office.” (Winda Febiana, 2021)

Apart from being carried out formally, warnings can also be conveyed in non-formal situations in a personal and family manner. In a relaxed atmosphere, the officer can persuasively ask about the causes and reasons for the student committing the violation and then, in a more instructive and assertive tone, ask him to comply with every rule and norm that applies in Indonesia. If there is no agreement, the officer conveys the risks and sanctions that the student will bear.

“Sometimes when they are at the ISS (International Student Services) just before break time, we all invite them to have lunch together while chatting like that. We remind them again about the validity period of their visas and residence permits so that they don't miss the deadline” (Karina Astary, 2021)

“It just so happened that at that time I invited my student friends to play badminton together, so they became closer. The distance

that previously might have been wide between me and international students has become closer through communication, so that when the International Office has various activities, it becomes easier for us to get them involved." (Ferdian Ahya, 2021)

Establishing a closeness with students is an attempt to establish friendly or family relationships, facilitating communication and maintaining a more comfortable ongoing interaction. Thus, the information conveyed by the officer can be received, understood, and implemented by the student. However, students must also be informed about relationship boundaries and communication ethics, including not contacting outside working hours.

"In the personal WA number info, I wrote "For students: office hours Monday to Friday, 08.00 - 15.00". If there is a message coming in outside of working hours and it is not too urgent to respond, I will reply during working hours." (Karina Astary, 2021)

e) Critical cultural awareness

Service officers at the Office of International Affairs have awareness and understanding that intercultural communication is prone to causing problems that can impact the academic achievement of international students, so they implement an intensive mentoring strategy by providing a buddy during lectures and in carrying out daily activities. This understanding and awareness also needs to be disseminated to all academics, including administrators and student organization activists.

"Unair recruited local students in the "Best Buddy Program," whose job is to assist international students in adapting to life in Surabaya, starting from pick-up when they first arrive, an introductory tour of the campus and the surrounding environment, and assisting in the communication process with other parties so as to reduce anxiety levels and minimize misunderstandings." (Siti Lussiyandari, 2021)

"UNS has a UNS Sharing Day program and also a UNS Cultural Night that aims to introduce the cultural diversity of international students to the entire UNS academic community. We want local students to also be able to feel and adapt to the internationalization atmosphere echoed by the leadership of UNS. One of the real manifestations is being aware of and able to adapt to the different cultural backgrounds of the various countries of origin of international students." (Safitri Bonea, 2021)

Differences in culture, beliefs, values, or ways of behaving between international students from various countries certainly have the potential to create obstacles in communicating with university service officers, especially in the international affairs office. However, these obstacles can be overcome if all

parties have multicultural communication competence, which includes attitudes, knowledge, and skills.

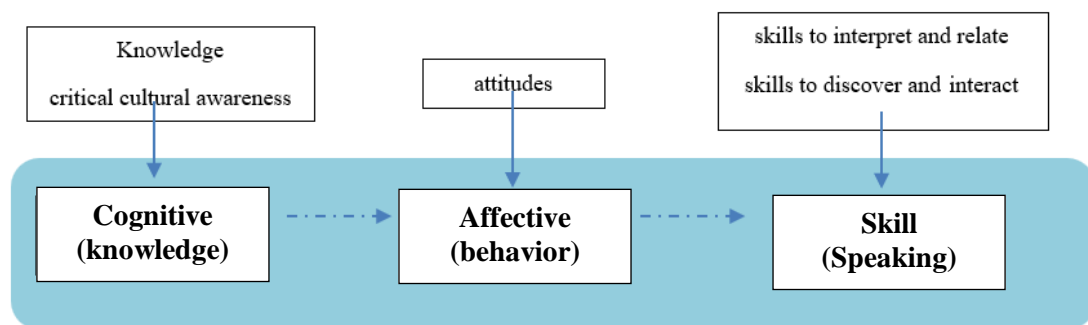


Figure 2. Theoretical Framework Intercultural Communication Strategy

Understanding and knowledge about the characteristics of each country are the most basic things that must be possessed by service personnel in order to then adapt or adapt convergently to these characteristics when interacting, so that there is a common perception of the message transactions that occur. This adaptation also includes verbal word selection, speech intonation adjustments, and the use of non-verbal cues.

This process of understanding and adaptation also needs to be conveyed to international students so that they also learn to recognize and adapt to the culture, customs, and habits prevailing in Indonesia. They also need to be taught several local regional languages so that they can establish close but polite relations with the people in the neighborhood where they live.

To expedite the flow of communication and minimize the emergence of problems, the interaction between international students and service staff is not only limited formally but also needs to have non-formal relations, both those that are part of university activity programs and those that are spontaneous, so that friendship or family relations are established. Service officers also need to pay special attention to delivering legal and immigration regulatory information so that no violations occur that result in sanctions.

Service officers must realize that the quality of their services will impact the university's performance assessment, which in turn will impact the university's image and reputation. With satisfactory service, it can be a means of promotion through word of mouth, which can attract more and more international students to continue their studies at the university.

The interactional perspective sees communication strategy as a joint effort by two interlocutors to agree on meaning in situations where the necessary meaning structures are not shared (Tarone, 1980). For the effective intercultural communication development strategy used in this study, concepts (Schmidt et al., 2007) were used because they emphasize the internal features of the communicator in terms of cognitive intelligence, emotional intelligence, and behavioral skills, which are correlated to intercultural communication challenges. Development efforts must continue to be carried out by the university to achieve effective communication for international students.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that, in general, international student service officers face three factors that pose obstacles in carrying out intercultural communication: cognitive aspects (mastery of language), affective aspects (negative prejudice and stereotypes), and behavioral aspects (knowledge about background culture). To overcome these obstacles, service personnel need to adjust their communication behavior in a convergent manner with the actions of the students being served, with the following strategy:

1. Affective strategy: be assertive and friendly so that students feel comfortable, but remain polite and respect the officers.
2. Cognitive strategy: find out the cultural background of each student's country of origin, but not necessarily make it the only standard.
3. Skill strategy: establish formal and non-formal relations; hold non-academic activities that also involve local students and residents to get to know each other's cultures and customs of each country.

If all obstacles can be overcome using the intercultural communication competencies of service officers at the international affairs office, the anxiety level of international students will be reduced without risking communication goals, thereby supporting the smooth process of studying in Indonesia.

Intercultural communication competence must be possessed not only by officers at the international service office, but also by the entire academic community, including teaching staff, education staff, and students, in order to increase international student satisfaction with university service performance, which will have an impact on increasing the number of international students in the future.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

This research still has limitations, so it is necessary to carry out further research related to the topic "Intercultural Communication Strategy for the Development of International Student Service Systems" to complete the information in research and add insight to readers.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author expresses gratitude to the informants in this study, the Institute for Research and Community Service, the Integrated Research Unit for International Cooperation and Services, and the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences at Sebelas Maret University, who supported the implementation of this research to completion.

REFERENCES

- Alfikalia, & Maharani, A. (2013). Faktor-Faktor Pendukung Kompetensi Komunikasi Interpersonal: Studi Kasus pada Mahasiswa Tingkat Pertama di Universitas Paramadina. *Jurnal ILMU KOMUNIKASI*, 6(1), 25–44. <https://doi.org/10.24002/jik.v6i1.205>
- Berardo, K. (2008). *The intercultural profession in 2007: Profile, practice, challenges*.
- Borghetti, C. (2011). How to teach it? Proposal for a methodological model of intercultural competence. In *Intercultural competence: Concepts, challenges, evaluations* (pp. 141–159). Peter Lang.
- Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and Assisting Intercultural Communicative Competence*. Multilingual Matters.
- Chen, G. ., & Starosta, W. . (1996). Intercultural communication competence: A synthesis. *Annals of the International Communication Association*, 19(1), 353–383.
- Craig, O. (2021). *QS World University Rankings-Methodology*.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design; Choosing Among Five Approaches*. SAGE Publications.
- De Jager, J., & Gbadamosi, G. (2013). Predicting students' satisfaction through service quality in higher education. *The International Journal of Management Education*, 11(3), 107–118.
- Deardorff, D. K. (2006). Identification And Assessment Of Intercultural Competence As A Student Outcome Of Internationalization. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 241–266.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2009). *Handbook of Qualitative Research (Terjemahan Dariyanto dkk)*. Pustaka Pelajar.
- Fajar, M. (2009). *Ilmu Komunikasi : Teori & Praktik (Pertama)*. Graha Ilmu.
- Grehenson, G. (2020). *Mahasiswa asing ugm gelar acara kumpul bersama [Gathering of international students at UGM]*.
- Gudykunst, W. . (2003). *Cross-Cultural and Intercultural Communication*. SAGE Publications.
- Hall, E. T. (1959). *The silent language*. Doubleday.
- Iskhakova, M. (2018). Does Cross-cultural Competence Matter when Going Global: Cultural Intelligence and Its Impact on Performance of International Students in Australia. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*, 47(2), 121–140. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17475759.2018.1437463>

- Jandt, F. . (2003). *Intercultural Communication: A Global Reader*. SAGE Publications.
- Jin, L., & Cortazzi, M. (2016). Practising cultures of learning in internationalising universities. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2015.1134548>
- Khatimah, K. (2019). Intercultural Friendship AS Strategy To Reduce Anxiety And Uncertainty Of Zimbabwe Students In Muhammadiyah Surakarta University. *Jurnal Komuniti*, 11(1), 45-57.
- Kiroglu, K., Kesten, A., & Elma, C. (2010). Türkiye’de öğrenim gören yabancı uyruklu lisans öğrencilerinin sosyo- kültürel ve ekonomik sorunları. *Mersin Üniversitesi E Ğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 6(2), 26-39.
- Kriyantono, R. (2006). *Teknik Praktis Riset Komunikasi (Pertama)*. Kencana.
- Lázár, I., Huber-Kriegler, M., Lussier, D., Matei, G. ., & Peck, C. (2007). *Developing and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence: A Guide for Language Teachers and Teacher Educators*. European Centre for Modern Languages.
- Littlejohn, S. W., Foss, K. A., & Oetzel, J. G. (2017). *Theories of Human Communication* (11th ed.). Waveland Press, Inc.
- Lustig, M. W., & Koester, J. (1993). *Interpersonal competence: Interpersonal communications across cultures*. HarperCollins College Publishers.
- Miles, matthew B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldana, J. (2014). *Qualitative data Analysis “a methods sourcebook.”* SAGE Publications.
- Nawawi, H. (2013). *Metode Penelitian Bidang Sosial*. Gajah Mada University Press.
- Nurani, D. (2015). Komunikasi Antarbudaya Mahasiswa Thailand Dalam Proses Belajar Mengajar Di Kelas Farmakologi Fakultas Farmasi Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta. *Jurnal Komuniti*, VII(1), 13-17.
- Phumpho, R., & Nomnian, S. (2019). Challenges of Thai business people using English in ASEAN. *Kasetsart Journal of Social Sciences*, 743-750.
- Rasli, A., Jurgita, S., Baghirov, F., & Ye, Z. (2016). Assessment of service quality and satisfaction: comparative study of Turkish students in Lithuanian and Malaysian universities. *Transformations in Business and Economics*, 15(2).
- Schmidt, W. ., Conaway, R. N., Easton, S. S., & Wardrope, W. J. (2007). *Communicating Globally: Intercultural Communication and International Business*. SAGE Publications.
- Setyorini, D. A., & Irwansyah, I. (2018). Managing Social Media Activist as a

- Crisis Management Strategy. *2nd Indonesia International Graduate Conference on Communication (Indo-IGCC) Proceeding*.
- Sungur, M., Can, G., Sahin, M., Duman, K., Pektaş, B., Dogan, S., Alkan, A., & Onuk, H. (2016). Düzce üniversitesinde yükseköğrenim gören yabancı uyruklu öğrencilerin yaşam doyumları ve sosyal uyumlarını etkileyen faktörler. *Düzce Üniversitesi Sağlık Bilimleri Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 6(2), 101–109.
- Suprayogo, I., & Tobroni. (2001). *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif*. PT. Remaja Rosda Karya.
- Tarone, E. (1980). Communication strategies, foreigner talk, and repair in interlanguage. *Language Learning*, 417–428.
- UNESCO. (2019). *Education: outbound internally mobile students by host region*. UNESCO Institute of Statistics.
- Vivatananukul, M. (2016). *Intercultural Communication*. Chulalongkorn University Press.
- Yaser, S. (2017). International students in Turkey: research on problems experienced and social service requirements. *The Journal of International Social Research*, 10(50), 800–808.
- Yousapronpaiboon, K. (2014). SERVQUAL: Measuring higher education service quality in Thailand. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S187704281400367X>