

Students' Culture Shock and Cultural Intelligence: The Case of International Internship Students in Japan

Irma, Elfiondri*, Oslan Amril

Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Bung Hatta, Indonesia

**Corresponding Author*

Abstract: Culture shock due to failure in integrating with people from different cultural backgrounds has frequently caused some students studying or doing an internship abroad to be so disappointed, frustrated, and even stressed or depressed that they fail in their study or internship. This study examines Bung Hatta University students' culture shock, cultural intelligence, and the effect of the students' cultural intelligence on the students' culture shock, who did an internship in Japan. The study has the objectives to find the students' culture shock and their cultural intelligence concerning their culture shock. This study posits cultural intelligence in the examination does to that cultural intelligence can act to minimize the impact of culture shock. To achieve the objectives, the study applied a quantitative method with an online survey based on the theoretical concept of culture shock. The results were that the students had low culture shock. Most of them did not get the impact of culture shock in integrating with people from the Japanese cultural environment. The students' cultural intelligence had a positive relationship with the low culture shock. Cultural intelligence could minimize the negative impact of culture shock on the students. Most of the students did not feel culturally socked from Japanese culture. In internship activity in Japan, they could act verbally and non-verbally in integrating with Japanese people.

Keywords: Cultural Shock, Cultural Intelligence, Internship, Japanese Culture

I. INTRODUCTION

To improve students' skills in their discipline, universities in the world send their students abroad to do various academic activities some of which are studying and doing an internship. Bung Hatta University, Indonesia does the same activity every year by sending their students to study and to do an internship in Japan. The university sends students of the Japanese Department, Faculty of Humanities to study at Sonoda Women's University and to do an internship on hotel and tourism for a year. As international students, they have to live and integrate with people from different cultural backgrounds. International students have become a focus in cross-cultural studies Ward, Bochner, & Furnham (2001) because the students have to live and integrate with people from a new cultural environment. Living and integrating with the people can lead the students to culture shock.

Culture shock can have an impact on adaptation (Presbitero, 2016), which can lead to psychological impacts

such as feeling disappointed, frustrated, and even stressed or depressed. Cultural intelligence can solve the problem of culture shock (Earley and Van Dyne, 2008), but literature review shows that very few studies discuss how cultural intelligence can solve the problem of culture shock, but according to Presbitero (2016), it is not clear in the literature how intercultural capabilities can solve culture shock to have a faster adaptation and adjustment. Presbitero (2016) studied cultural intelligence in international students' adaptation. The study found that culture shock is not related to both psychological and sociocultural adaptation, but cultural intelligence can lessen the impact of culture shock on students' psychological and sociocultural adaptation.

Presbitero's study (2019) was on international students who studied in Australia, but not on international internship students. The internship environment is certainly different from the academic environment from which international students who study integrate with people. The internship environment is close to the working environment, but not precisely the same characteristics. This study discusses the culture shock of international students in the internship. It examines Bung Hatta University students' culture shock, cultural intelligence (CQ), and the effect of the students CQ on the students culture shock, who did an internship in Japan with the objectives to find out how the internship students' culture shock and how the students cultural intelligence (CQ) affects their culture shock. Such a study is important for Bung Hatta university students to mitigate culture shock to bring about faster adaptation and adjustment in Japan, but literature review on the university students culture shock studies indicate that it is not yet examined at Bung Hatta University.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Cultural Shock and Cultural Intelligence

Culture shock is an individual reaction emotionally as an effect of being unable to control his/her behavior (Pelling, 2000). It happens due to that the individual is not familiar with a new environment (Pedersen, 1995). Thus, culture shock is one's emotional reaction to a new environment with which he/she is unfamiliar. Culture shock is derived from stresses due to moving to a new environment

(Bochner and Furnham, 2001). Furthermore, according to Bochner and Furnham (2001), culture shock occurs because those moving to the new environment have difficulty adjusting themselves to the environment and do not have knowledge related culture of the environment. Common symptoms of culture shock include distraction, longing, loneliness, nervousness, loss of appetite, feeling tired, extreme pride in one's home culture, hypersensitivity or stimulation, confusion, inability, etc.; they can be shocked with food, culture, education, technology, and others (Pujiyanti, 2014).

Culture shock can happen to anybody including students of higher education. Even though they are university students, their higher education cannot guarantee that they can escape from culture shock. Students of higher education who experience culture shock are those who study abroad as international students (Furnham, 2004). Adaptation becomes a rooting problem of culture shock faced by international students (Zhou et al., 2008). It is a change that happens to the students in response to demands of new environment (Berry, 1997). (Forbush & Foucault-Welles, 2016) explained that the adaptation includes two aspects. The first one is called the psychological aspect, which is the aspect related to identity, satisfaction, and mental health. The second aspect is the socio-cultural aspect. According to Ward (1996) and Ward, C., & Searle, W. (1991), the aspect deals with the ability to solve the problem of stresses the individuals experience daily at their new environments at school. Individuals' ability to solve the problem of stresses due to the new environment at school and work is related to intelligence so-called cultural intelligence.

Cultural intelligence is an individuals' ability which can function and work effectively in situations in which cultural diversity exists (Early & Ang, 2003). The ability is a mental and behavioral ability the individuals have. Early & Ang (2003) stated that the ability contains a factor of cognitive, metacognitive, motivational, and behavior cultural intelligence. Ang & Van Dyne (2008) explained the four factors of cultural intelligence. Motivational factor is individuals' ability which contains self-confidence and interest in interacting and living together with people from culturally different backgrounds. The cognitive factor is the ability to know the new cultural environment. The individuals know the cultural conventions, practices, and norms of the new environment. Ng, Van Dyne, Ang, & Ryan (2012) added that with cognitive cultural intelligence, individuals know similarities and differences among cultures. The individual knowledge drives the individuals to the metacognitive ability where they can plan, monitor, and revise models of cultural norms to fit the requirements of a new school and work environment. The last ability in cultural intelligence is a behavioral ability which refers to the ability to behave and act verbally and non-verbally in line with the new environment.

Based on Early & Ang (2003), Ang & Van Dyne (2008), and Ng, Van Dyne, Ang, & Ryan (2012), cultural intelligence is individuals' ability to face the problem of culture shock, meaning that individuals' cultural intelligence

can help them solve the problem. Presbitero (2016) stated that students' cultural intelligence can reduce, lessen, or minimize cultural shock. The students' cognitive, metacognitive, motivational, and behavior ability contained in cultural intelligence help allows them to be mentally and emotionally stable and strong in interacting with a new environment. Thus, it can be concluded that individuals' cultural intelligence affects their culture shock. The effect can be formulated that the higher the cultural intelligence, the lower the culture shock; the lower the cultural intelligence, the higher the culture shock.

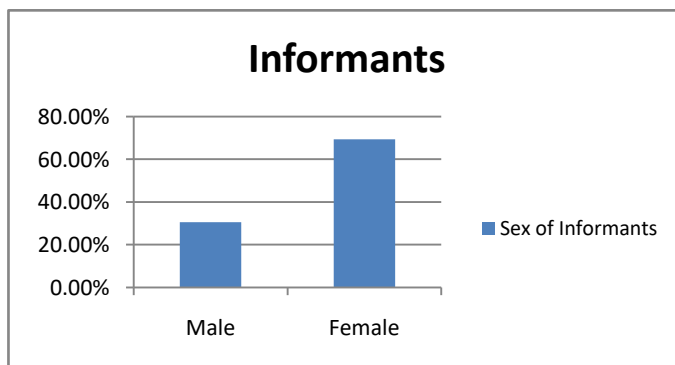
III. METHOD OF RESEARCH

Data of research were collected using questionnaires which were distributed to informants through <http://bit.ly/> from May to September 2020. The informants are students of Japanese Departments, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Bung Hatta, Indonesia who have an internship in Japan for a year in the tourism sector in several locations. They do the internship in Akita, Hiroshima, Wakayama, Fukui, Nagano, Kumamoto, Shizuoka, Yamagata, Chiba, and Tokyo. Of 40 distributed questionnaires, 38 questionnaires are returned by the informants.

Data are analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. Qualitative data are analyzed based on the theoretical concept of culture shock and cultural intelligence. Analysis of data is quantitatively based on SEM-PLS and Smart PLS 3.0 by applying a five-point of Likert scale. Based on Matandare (2018), this study uses two models – measurement and structural model. To get a fit model, the measurement applies Outer Loading, Composite Reliability and Cronbach Alpha, Average Variance (AVE), and Fornell-Lacker criterion, and to see the predictive power and relevance, the structural model applies R-square and Q-square.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Figure 1. Demographic of Informants



As indicated by figure 1, the informants who are students of Japanese Departments, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Bung Hatta, Indonesia who have an internship in Japan consist of 30.6% (male) and 69.4% (female).

Students' Culture Shock

Examination on forms of culture shock based on five-point Linkert scale results in that most of the students do not have problem with self-adjustment to live in Japan, food, living-cost, life serenity, Japanese individual culture, acceptance by Japanese people, unfriendly treatment, making Japanese friend, communication and performing a religious and traditional activity in Japan. They can adjust themselves to Japanese life, enjoy Japanese food, cover living cost, live in comfort, make many Japanese friends, communicate with Japanese people, and be accepted by Japanese people. Besides that, they are treated politely and in a friendly manner by Japanese people. The students just get a little shock with performing their religion and tradition in Japan. The following graph shows the result of the examination where most of the students of the Japanese Department, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Bung Hatta can live in Japanese culture.

Table 2 Students' Response to Cultural Shock

No	Aspects of Cultural Shock	Percentage	
		Disagree	Agree
1	Cultural shock with self-adjustment to live in Japan	63.90	36.1
2	Cultural shock with Japanese food	63.90	36.1
3	Cultural shock with living-cost in Japan	66.70	33.3
4	Cultural shock with life serenity	89.00	11.0
5	Cultural shock with Japanese individualism	61.10	38.9
6	Cultural shock with being unacceptable by Japanese people	88.90	11.1
7	Cultural shock with the unfriendly manner by Japanese people	77.80	22.2
8	Cultural shock to make Japanese friends	72.20	27.8
9	Cultural shock to communicate with Japanese people	69.50	30.5
10	Cultural shock to perform a religious activity at work	47.30	52.7

The study found that most of the students do not get shocked with Japanese culture, except with performing a religious activity at work. It is indicated by the higher percentage of students' disagreement (low culture shock) than that of agreement (Table 2). Most of the students agree (52.7%) that they get a little shock with Japanese culture which does not allow them to perform religious activities while working. The activity of performing religious activities refer to performing Islamic activities such as performing prayer five times a day, having breakfast after fasting for a day in Ramadhan month, and celebrating religion-related days. The students get shocked with the activity when they are at work. It is difficult for them to have time for prayer while they are working. There is no permission to leave their work for prayer, having breakfast after fasting for a day in Ramadhan month, and celebrating religion-related days. They, however, can perform the activity outside of working hours.

Students' Cultural Intelligence (CQ)

Referring to Earley and Ang (2003), one has a cultural intelligence, individual capability to function effectively in different cultures. He/she has cognitive intelligence –knowledge of other cultural environments (Ang & Van Dyne, 2008). This study shows that the students have their cultural intelligence in the form of determination of working-target, the capability of facing unexpected and uncomfortable conditions, feeling easy to face difficulty due to knowing, self-trust of being able to solve a problem, capability of finding a solution to a problem, feeling worried about low working-performance, feeling afraid of making family and friends disappointed, and necessity of understanding Japanese work ethics.

Table 3 Students' Response on Cultural Intelligence

No	Aspects of Cultural Intelligence	Percentage	
		Agree	Disagree
1	Having determined to achieve working-target	94.5	5.5
2	Having the capability of facing an unexpected condition	83.3	16.7
3	Having capability of facing uncomfortable condition	94.4	5.6
4	Feeling easy to face difficulty due to having knowledge	91.6	8.4
5	Having a self-trust of being able to solve a problem	97.2	2.8
6	Having capability of finding solution to a problem	100	0
7	Sometime feeling disappointed in self	77.7	22.3
8	Feeling worried about low working-performance	83.3	16.7
9	Feeling afraid of making family and friends disappointed	88.9	11.1
10	Thinking of necessity to understand Japanese work ethics	86.2	13.8

Table 3 shows the students' cultural intelligence about working in Japan. Most of the students' cultural intelligence aspects are good or strong. There is only one aspect (point number 7 in table 3) that weakens the students in facing culture shock, that is "sometimes feeling disappointed in themselves" (77,7% of agreement), which occurs sometimes and not always. The students are strong at other aspects of cultural intelligence which have significantly higher agreement percentages compared to those of disagreement. Therefore they have a strong cultural intelligence in interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds.

Principally persons having a strong cultural intelligence are those who have interest and confidence when living with people from different cultures, knowledge of the different cultural environments, and can demonstrate verbal and non-verbal actions which are suitable with the new culture (Earley and Van Dyne,2008). According to Ng, Van Dyne, Ang, & Ryan (2012), they also know the similarities and differences between their culture and the new culture (Ng, Van Dyne, Ang, & Ryan, 2012). Based on the principle, the

students have confidence in integrating with Japanese people and knowledge of Japanese environments (cultural norms, practices, and conventions). Besides that, they are successful in demonstrating verbal and non-verbal actions in line with Japanese environments.

Effect of Students' Cultural Intelligence on Their Culture Shock

As previously pictured in Table 2, most of the students have no problem living in Japanese culture. Generally, they do not get the impact of the culture shock of living in Japan because they have a strong cultural intelligence (CQ). Presbitero (2016) stated that cultural intelligence links with culture shock – it has a function to lessen the impact of culture shock. Based on Presbitero (2016), the students' cultural intelligence affects their cultural shock. Qualitatively the effect is that the students, in general, do not get a culture shock. They can adapt themselves to Japanese culture. The following quantitative measurement models also support that the students' CQ has a significant effect on culture shock.

V. MEASUREMENT MODEL

As indicated by Table 4, the measurement shows that all variables have outer loading for valid items bgb 1,3,4,6,9 and smmgb 8, 9, 10 are higher than the cut-value 0.6. It means that indicator validity meets the cut-off value. The value of Cronbach Alpha (CA) and composite reliability (CR) as internal consistency test is also higher than the cut-value (0.7), meaning that AVE is used to see convergent validity of variable and its value is greater than 0.5. In SEM-PLS, the measurement has met convergent validity if it has met a loading factor higher than 0.5.

Table 4. Convergent validity

Variables	Item	Outer Loading	CA	CR	AVE
Culture Shock (bgb)	bgb1	0.79	0.83	0.88	0.59
	bgb3	0.74			
	bgb4	0.79			
	bgb6	0.83			
	bgb9	0.71			
Students CQ (smmgb)	smmgb10	0.85	0.76	0.86	0.59
	smmgb8	0.72			
	smmgb9	0.87			

A discriminant validity test is to find the difference in the validity value of a variable compared to other variables. It uses the Fornell-Lacker criteria (1981) as indicated by Table 5. The way based on Hair et al. (2010) is by comparing the square root value of the AVE through the correlation value among variables. Good discriminant validity is validity that meets the square root of the latent variable value is greater than 0.7. The value of the AVE measurement should be higher than 0.50. The criteria are built by the square root of AVE for each variable. AVE for culture shock is 0.59 and the square root of 0.59 is 0.77. The value of 0.77 is greater than the

coefficient correlation of culture shock and students CQ (0,481). It indicates that the construct of culture shock is a good discriminant validity. The following Figure 1 shows the measurement model.

Table 5. Discriminant validity: Fornell-Lacker Criterion

Variable	Cultural Shock	Students CQ
Cultural Shock (bgb)	0.77	
Students CQ (smmgb)	0.481	0.816

Figure 2. Measurement model

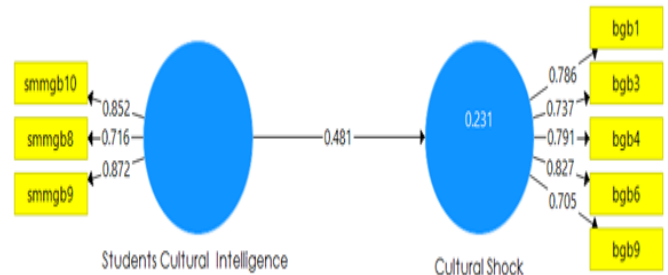
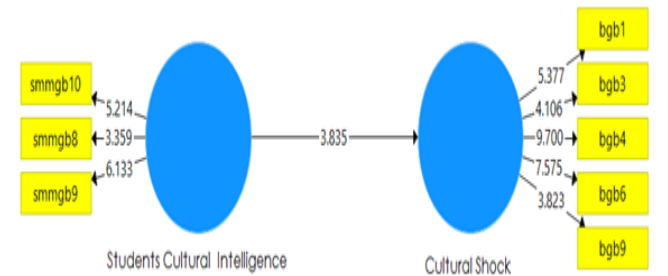


Table 6. Structural model Assessment

Endogenous construct	R square	decision	Q square	decision
Cultural Shock	0.231	Moderate	0.098	Weak
Relationship	Original Sample	t stat	P Values	Decision
Students CQ -> Culture Shock	0.481	3.835	0.000	supported

Figure 3. Structural model



The above measurements result in the decision on the effect of students' CQ on cultural shock as indicated by Table 6. The decision is that students' cultural intelligence (CQ) supports culture shock, meaning that the students' CQ affects culture shock. The much higher percentage of students' disagreement (compared to agreement) to the aspects of culture shock (Table 2) shows that most of the students do not get the impact of culture shock. It is due to their strong CQ as indicated by the much higher percentage of student's agreement to aspects of CQ (Table 3). Thus the effect of

students CQ on culture shock is that the students CQ lessens the impact of culture shock on them.

VI. CONCLUSION

Cultural intelligence has a relationship with culture shock. Strong cultural intelligence (CQ) provides students the power of a readiness to live and integrate with a new cultural environment. CQ allows the students to be ready mentally and cognitively before living and integrating with the new things in the internship environment. They have had prior knowledge of the new things so that they do not get shocked with new things even though they never experience the things before. The examination on Bung Hatta University students resulted in that most students who have a good cultural intelligence (CQ) were not shocked by the new things in their new internship environment. Their CQ could minimize the negative impact of culture shock on them. They could integrate successfully with people, technology, norm, and other things of the new Japanese environment they never experience before. Therefore international students should be equipped with cultural intelligence of which the aspects should be related to the new cultural environment in which they will live and integrate. The cultural intelligence will enable the students to act verbally and non-verbally suited to the new environment.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This study is funded by Universitas Bung Hatta, Indonesia under the management of the university research center (LPPM Universitas Bung Hatta). We thank very much to the university and the research center for funding and research management.

REFERENCES

- [1] Ang, S., & Van Dyne, L. (2008). *Handbook of cultural intelligence*. New York: ME Sharpe.
- [2] Berry, J. W. (1997). Immigration, acculturation and adaptation. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 46(1), 5–34.
- [3] Brisset, C., Safdar, S., Lewis, J. R., & Sabatier, C. (2010). Psychological and sociocultural adaptation of university students in France: the case of Vietnamese international students. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 34(4), 413–426.
- [4] Chiu, Y. P., Wu, M., Zhuang, W. L., & Hsu, Y. Y. (2009). Influences on expatriate social networks in China. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 20(4), 790–809.
- [5] Earley, P. C., & Ang, S. (2003). *Cultural intelligence: individual interactions across cultures*. Stanford University Press.
- [6] Forbush, E., & Foucault-Welles, B. (2016). Social media use and adaptation among Chinese students beginning to study in the United States. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 50, 1–12.
- [7] Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F. (1981). Structural Equation Models with Unobservable Variables and Measurement Error: Algebra and Statistics. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18(3), 382. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3150980>.
- [8] Furnham, A. (2004). Foreign students: education and culture shock. *The Psychologist*, 17(1), 16–19.
- [9] Hair, J. F., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2011). PLS-SEM: indeed a silver bullet. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 19(2), 2011. <https://doi.org/10.2753/MTP1069-6679190202>.
- [10] Matandare, M. A. (2018). Botswana Unemployment Rate Trends by Gender: Relative Analysis with Upper Middle Income Southern African Countries (2000-2016). *Dutch Journal of Finance and Management*, 2(2), 04. <https://doi.org/10.20897/djfm/3837>.
- [11] Ng, K. Y., Van Dyne, L., Ang, S., & Ryan, A. M. (2012). Cultural intelligence: a review, reflections and recommendations for future research. In A. M. Ryan, F. T. I. Leong, & F. L. Oswald (Eds.), *Conducting multinational research projects in organizational psychology*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- [12] Presbitero, A. (2016). It's not all about language ability: motivational cultural intelligence matters in call center performance. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 1–16.
- [13] Pedersen, A. (1995). *The five stages of culture shock*. Connecticut: Greenwood Press.
- [14] Pelling, A. C. (2000). *Culture Shock of International Students in Canada*. Lethbridge: Alberta.
- [15] Pujiyanti, Umi & Fatkhunaimah Rhina Zuliani. (2014). *Cross Cultural Understanding: A Handbook To Understand Others' Cultures*. Yogyakarta: CV. Hidayah
- [16] Smith, R. A., & Khawaja, N. G. (2011). A review of the acculturation experiences of international students. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 35(6), 699–713.
- [17] Sternberg, R. J., & Detterman, D. K. (1986). What is intelligence? Contemporary viewpoints on its nature and definition. Norwood NJ: Ablex.
- [18] Vogelgesang-Lester, G., Clapp-Smith, R., & Palmer, N. (2009). The role of authentic leadership and cultural intelligence in cross-cultural contexts: an objectivist perspective. *International Journal of Leadership Studies*, 5(2), 102–177.
- [19] Ward, C., & Searle, W. (1991). The impact of value discrepancies and cultural identity on psychological and sociocultural adjustment of sojourners. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 15(2), 209–224.
- [20] Ward, C., Bochner, S., & Furnham, A. (2001). *The psychology of culture shock*. Philadelphia: Routledge.
- [21] Ward, C. (1996). Acculturation. In D. Landis, & R. Bhagat (Eds.), *Handbook of intercultural training* (2nd ed., pp. 124–147). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.