Acculturation, Mental Health, and Well Being: the Experience of Indonesian Students in Germany

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Abstract. Being sojourners in Germany may cause Indonesian students stress due to acculturation. Acculturation in this study defined as culture change resulted from contact between two cultural groups. This study was to identify symptoms of general mental health status related to acculturation. The acculturation orientation and the general mental health status were measured using standardized psychometric instruments.Hypotheses were developed to see if there were any significant different on general mental health status of the students with regard to acculturation, length of stay and presence of families in Germany. A survey of 201 Indonesian students in Germany was conducted. Results were then compared to Indonesian students in Indonesia. It shows that more than a half of the sojourners kept their Asian values and behaviors. Significant different was observed on some aspects of psychological well-being, partly moderated by length of sojourning. "Hostility" was maximal in the first 2 months of sojourning and declining thereafter.

Key words: acculturation, sojourners, Indonesian students, mental health

Abstrak. Menjadi sojourner di Jerman bagi mahasiswa Indonesia barangkali dapat menyebabkan stress terkait dengan akulturasinya. Akulturasi didefinisikan sebagai interaksi dua kultur yang berbeda yang dialami pada waktu yang sama dan terus-menerus. Studi ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi symptom kesehatan mental terkait dengan akulturasinya. Orientasi akulturasi dan kondisi mental mahasiswa diukur dengan instrument psikometris yang standard. Hipotesa: apakah ada perbedaan kesehatan mental secara umum pada mahasiswa Indonesia di Jerman terkait dengan orientasi culturalnya, lama tinggal, serta keberadaan keluarga di Jerman. Survei terhadap 201 mahasiswa Indonesia di Jerman dilakukan secara "cross-sectional". Hasilnya dibandingkan dengan mahasiswa Indonesia di Indonesia dengan kelompok yang sama. Hasil menunjukan bahwa lebih dari 50% mahasiswa Indonesia di Jerman tetap berorientasi pada nilai-nilai dan perilaku Asia terlepas dari lama tinggal di Jerman. Perbedaan signifikan ditemukan pada beberapa aspek kesehatan mental terkait dengan lama tinggal di Jerman. "Hostility" paling tinggi dialami oleh mahasiswa untuk 2 bulan pertama di Jerman.

Kata kunci: akulturasi, pemondok, mahasiswa Indonesia, kesehatan mental

Introduction

Acculturation has been defined as culture change that results from continuous, firsthand contact between two distinct cultural groups. Change in the cultural context might exceed the individual's capacity to cope because of the magnitude, speed or some other aspect of change leading to serious psychological disturbances, such as clinical depression or incapaciting anxiety (Berry & Kim, 1988; Jayasuriya et al., 1992), even up

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to drinking and substance abused (Akin et al., 2008; Losaya, et al., 2008; Prado et al., 2008; Ojeda et al., 2008; Torres et al., 2008). The process of acculturation may involve risk factors that can reduce individual's health status, especially from collective to individual culture (Yeh et al., 2007).

Individuals who are experiencing acculturation can be found in different kind of migrated groups, such as immigrants, refugees, asylum-seekers, and sojourners. This study focused on the sojourners, especially Indonesian students as sojourners.

Sojourners and acculturation's factors

Sojourners are defined as those who live in

another culture for a period of time, with the intention of returning to their home countries (Dion & Dion, 1996). Sojourning students who have to attend foreign universities have to adapt to a different culture and stressors during acculturation, in addition to the usual demands of student life.

Zheng and Berry (1991) in a longitudinal study of a group of sojourners showed that acculturative stress increased from pre-departure up to 3-4 months post arrival and declined slowly for several years thereafter to the pre-departure baseline, forming an inverted U-curved function.

In somes cases, sojourners' education in their home countries, including training in the language of the host country, provides an added leverage for building communication competencies after moving into a new system (Kim, J., 1977; 1980; Yum, 1982). An interesting study of Chinese sojourners in Canadian universities (Dyal & Chan, 1985) reported that female sojourners appeared to have a different stress symptom structure than male sojourners.

It has been known that, degree of similarity or difference between the original culture and the host culture is considerably important. A considerably dissimilarity can be assumed between Indonesia and Germany.

Acculturation: Types and Conceptual Framework

According to Berry (1980), there were two important mechanism during the acculturation, namely (1) cultural maintenance (to what extend are cultural identity and characteristics considered to be important, and their maintenance strived for), and (2) contact and participation (to what extend should they become involved in other cultural groups, or remain primarily among themselves). Interaction of those two mechanism, resulted into four difference groups of adjustment in acculturation, namely: assimilation, integration, marginal, and separation. Approach of this study, however, did not use entirely Berry's theory on acculturation. Instead, employing indicators of acculturation stated by Suinn-Lew, who has developed four difference types of cultural orientation. Historically, Richard Suinn and his colleagues developed a 21-item measure of acculturation, entitled the Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation (SL-ASIA) scale. This scale

was initially intended for use with respondents of East Asian background (Chinese, Japanese, and Korean, among others) in the United States. However, most of the items are adaptable to other countries (Suinn, Ahuna, and Khoo, 1992; Suinn, Rickard-Figueroa, Lew, and Vigil, 1987). It yields information on the cultural orientation of the sojourners with regard to their values and behaviour (details reported in the "measures and the study factors" of this article)

Objective of the Study

This study aimed to examine the role of factors related to acculturation on the general mental health status of Indonesian students during their stay in Germany. Those factors were: cultural orientation, length of time living in Germany, gender and whether or not their family accompanying them living in Germany.

Hypotheses

Five hypotheses were examined, namely: (1) The longer sojourners live in Germany, the more they shift to bicultural (or even Western) orientation. (2) Shifting to a bicultural (or Western?) orientation will be accompanied by decreasing symptoms of stress, depression, and physical complains. (3) The longer sojourners live in Germany and the better their level of acculturation, the less symptoms of stress, depression and physical complains are experienced by them (Because of a reason stated in the later part of this paper, the 3rd hypothesis can not be tested. Therefore an alternative and less complex hypothesis was examined, instead). (3a) The length of stay in Germany (independent from level of acculturation) is signicantly associated with the occurrence of symptoms of stress, depression, and physical complains. (4) There are gender differences in experiencing symptoms of stress, depression and physical complains among sojourners. (5) Living together with at least one family's member or not having the family in Germany may affect the experience of symptoms of stress, depression, and physical complains among sojourners.

Method

Generally, the hypotheses 1 to 3 would require a longitudinal study. However, due to the restricted temporal frame of the study, we adopted a cross-sectional cohort study design of five groups differing in their duration of living in Germany. A group of students in Yogyakarta (Indonesia) having similar characteristics with those in Germany was recruited to act as a control group.

Participants

The main study was carried out in Germany. Survey of a total of 201 Indonesian students was completely done in Germany and with 89 students with a similar level of education in Indonesia as a control group. About 5 respondents had refused to participate in the study. They stated that they had no time to complete the questionnaires. All of the respondents were students, who were enrolled in a master or doctorate program at universities. The ages of the students in Germany ranged between 18 and 45 years. They were grouped in different categories based on their length of stay in Germany, ranging between 1 and 160 months. Proportion and equality of different gender and academic orientation (e.g., Social or engineering sciences) were taken into consideration in this study.

Among those who lived in Germany, 147 (73%) were males and 54 (27%) were females; whilst those who lived in Indonesia were 55 (63%) males and 34 females (37%). With regard to the length of stay, 40 (20%) of the students had been living in Germany less than 2 months, 28 (14%) were less than a year, 44 (22%) were less than 2 years, 49 (24%) were less than 5 years, and 40 (20%) were longer than 5 years. There were only 74 (37%) of the students were having his or her families living with them in Germany, whilst the other 127 (63%) students were not.

Data Collection

Data was collected using psychometric questionnaires. The self-administered questionnaires were sent to the respondents who had already confirmed their willingness to participate in the study. They were asked to fill out the questionnaires and send them back afterwards. The distribution of the questionnaires was carried out by six different pools of ”research assistants” in Dresden, Berlin, Hamburg, Bremen, Göttingen and Mannheim. Any questions about filling out the questionnaire or even about the whole study related to the questionnaire were answered in email-and phone-communication. Feedback from the respondents during this stage was recorded and taken into consideration.

The data collection of the control group in Indonesia was done using a classical model of questionnaire administration. They were asked to get together in a class of 50 people, two classes were run at the same time, and were given the questionnaires. Any questions, both technical and content, were answered right away.

Measures and the Study Factors

This study used international and standardized instruments of measurement. The instruments were all linguistically and culturally validated from English or German to Indonesian. The study factors are presented, as independent and dependent variables.

The independent variables are: (1) cultural orientation, expressed in values and behavior, as measured in SL-ASIA, (2) length of stay in Germany, (3) Gender, and (4) whether or not having family in Germany. The dependent variables are the general mental health statues as measured in the Daily Hassles Scale, Perceived Stress Scale, Depression (CES-D), Psychological Well-being (German: "Skalen zur Psychische Gesundheit"), General physical and emotional health (SF-36), and Symptoms of psychopathological experiences (SCL-90).

The Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation (SL-ASIA) asses the respondents reported language abilities (e.g., "What language can you speak?"), language preferences (e.g., "What language do you prefer?"), ethnic self-identity (e.g., "How do you identify yourself?"), friendship choices (e.g., "What was the ethnic origin of the friends and peers you had, as a child from 6 to 18?"), food preferences (e.g., "What is your food preference at home?"), generational status of the original culture (e.g., "What generation are you?"), cultural preferences (e.g., "How

would you rate yourself?"), migration history (e.g., "Where were you raised?") and entertainment preferences (e.g., "What is your movie preference?"). These aspects of assessment account for the majority of the variance (Suinn et al., 1992). Most items incorporate five response options, and all items are keyed in the same direction of acculturation. With regard to the use of the scale, each participant was then assigned to one of four types or classes of cultural orientation, focusing on values and behaviour: (1) predominan-tly Asian orientation, (2) neither Asian nor western orientation, (3) bicultural, (4) predominantly western orientation.

The Hassles Scale was a predictor of concurrent and subsequent psychological symptoms, it shared most of the variance in symptoms accounted for by life events (e.g., Misplacing or losing things"). The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) was employed as psychological instrument for measuring the perception of stress. It measures the degree to which situations in one's life are appraised as stressful. Items were designed to ascertain how unpredictable, uncontrollable, and overloaded respondents find their lives (e.g., "In the last month, how often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?"). The CES-D was designed to cover the major components of depression identified in the literature, with an emphasis on affective components: depressive mood, feelings of guilt and unworthiness, feelings of helplessness and hopelessness, psychomotor retardation, loss of appetite, and sleep disorders (e.g., "Are you often sad and depressed?").

The Psychological Well-Being scale was developed by Tönnies, Plöhn, and Krippendorf (Tönnies et al., 1994). It covers seven different attitudes related to mental health. The whole scale consists of 76 items, and each item is assigned to 5 different attitudinal scales. The 7 subscales are: Autonomy (e.g., "I have rarely lost my courage"), Volition (e.g., "Difficulties don't easily take me away from my plans"), Optimism (e.g., "Generally I am quite confident in life"), Being one-self (e.g. "I can accept any mistake I have made"), Self reflection (e.g., "I consider my behavior"), Social Integration and Open-mindedness (e.g., "I have frequently participated in the surrounding events"), Self-realization and Calmness (e.g., "Looking back at my life, I have a positive attitude about the way I have lived").

The SF-36 includes one multi-item scale that assesses eight health concepts: 1) limitations in physical activities because of health problems; 2) limitations in social activities because of physical or emotional problems; 3) limitations in usual role activities because of physical health problems; 4) bodily pain; 5) general mental health (psychological distress and well-being); 6) limitations in usual role activities because of emotional problems; 7) vitality (energy and fatigue); and 8) general health perceptions. The survey was constructed for self-administration by persons being 14 years of age and older. E.g., "Compared to one year ago, how would you rate your health in general now".

The SCL-90 is a scale yields 9 primary symptom dimensions, namely: Somatisation (e.g., "Soreness of muscles"), Obsessive-compulsive (e.g., "Repeated unpleasant thoughts"), Interpersonal sensitivity (e.g., "Feeling inferior to others"), Depression (e.g., "Feeling low in energy or slowed down"), Anxiety (e.g., "Feeling tense or keyed up"), Hostility (e.g., "Getting into frequent arguments"), Phobic anxiety (e.g., "Feeling afraid in open spaces or on the street"), Paranoid ideation (e.g., "Feeling that most people cannot be trusted"), and Psychoticism (e.g., "Feeling lonely when you are with people").

Results

Results of the study show that there was no significant difference on the values (Chi-square=14.19, df=12, p>.05), neither behavior (Chi-square=5.36, df =12, p > .05) of the students with different length of time living in Germany with regard to their cultural orientation. The Pearson Chi-square of cultural orientation in regard to values yielded an error probability of p = .29, therefore, the 1st Hypothesis related to cultural values was rejected. However, there was an interesting finding: the data showed a strong asymmetry in the frequency of the SL-ASIA scale of acculturation. Most sojourners were located in these *values* of Asia group (see table 1). Along to this hypothesis, the Pearson Chi-square of cul-tural orientation in regard to behaviour yield a p = .95, with similar results. Most sojourners' behaviour were in the Asia group (see table 1)

It has been found that none of the observed symptoms seem to be significantly different across these

different categories of acculturation in the SL-ASIA questionnaire. This can be due to the imbalance distribution of the respondents to the SL-ASIA scale's categories (see table 1). The items of SL-ASIA assessed the respondent's reported language abilities, language preferences, ethnic self-identity, friendship choices, food preferences, generational status, migration history, cultural preferences, and entertainment preferences. The scoring system put the respondents into the first 4 categories: low Asia, low Western, high Asia, and high Western. Combination between two of them were then determined their cultural orientation. Bicultural orientation consists of those having high Asia and high Western, whilst low Asia and low Western made them into neither Asia nor Western. Asia orientation was determined by having high Asia and low Western, whilst Western orientation was constituted by low Asia and high Western.

With regard to hypothesis 3: "Th*e longer sojourners live in Germany and the better their level of acculturation, the less symptoms of stress, depression and physical complains are being experienced by them".* This hypothesis was not testable due to the very big asymetry of the SL-ASIA's classes. The assumptions to run 2-factorial ANOVA was not fulfilled.

Next hypothesis was: *"The length of stay in Germany, independent from level of acculturation, is significantly associated with the occurrence of symptoms stress, depression, and physical complains".* Results show that most frequent daily hassles were experienced by those who had been living in Germany less than 2 months (see table 2).

The frequency declined to a significantly lower level in those who lived since more than 2nd year and remain stable up to the 5th year, and rising again up again to a middle level. The same pattern hold for the severity of daily hassles.

In terms of psychological well-being, students who lived in Germany showed a significantly better level in being able to be oneself, which was characterised by being able to disclose oneself, to be spontaneous, congruent, and flexible. With regard to the perceived social integration, those who lived in Germany between 1 to 2 years regarded themselves to be significantly better –socially integrated- than that of those who were living actually in Indonesia. Social integration was defined among others as having characters of being friendly and open-minded.

Among all of the specific domains in the SCL-90, only hostility of those who already stay 2 – 12 months in Germany was significantly higher than that within the control group.

A part of the psychological well-being, results showed that being oneself and feeling to be socially integrated seemed to be significantly different between both sexes of both countries. It shows that each group in Germany seems to be significantly better in both aspects. See table 3.

Table 1
SL-ASIA (Distribution of Values and Behavioural Orientation)

	Less 2 month		Less 1 years		Less 2 years		Less 5 years		Longer 5 years		Total	
	Val	*Behav*	Val	*Behav*	Val	*Behav*	Val	*Behav*	Val	*Behav*	Val	*Behav*
Asia	22	20	22	16	27	21	30	25	24	22	125 (62%)	104 (52%)
Neither	16	15	6	8	10	16	16	15	11	13	59 (29%)	67 (33%)
Bicultural	2	5	-	4	4	6	1	9	4	5	11 (6%)	29 (14.5%)
Western	-	-	-	-	3	1	2	-	1	-	6 (3%)	1 (.5%)

Chi-square Values=14.19 df =12   p < 0.29   n.s.
Chi-square Behavior=5.36 df =12   p < 0.95   n.s.

Table 2
Symptoms of Stress, Dpression and Physical Complains Related to the Length of Stay (Means)

Length of Stay	Less 2 mt	Less 1 yr	Less 2yrs	Less 5yrs	Longer 5 yrs	Control grp
Dep. Var. (effect size)						
Daily Hassles						
Frequency (8%)	74a,b	68	57a	58b	69	67
Severity (9%)	1.5a,b	1.4	1.1a	1.1b	1.4	1.4
Psychological well-being						
Being one-self (34%)	2.86°	2.96b	2.97c	2.91d	2.94e	2.59abcde
Soc. Integration (10%)	3.02	3.08	3.17a	3.14	3.16	2.96a
Psychopathological experiences (SCL-90)						
Hostility (2%)	0.62	0.69a	0.63	0.49	0.50	0.35a

a,b : indicated the significant difference on the related variables

Table 3
Symptoms of Stress, Depression and Physical Complains Related to the Gender(means)

Gender	Male		Females	
Identity	In Germany	In Indonesia	In Germany	In Indonesia
Dependent variable (effect size)				
Psychological Well-being				
Being one-self (3%)	2.91ab	2.62ac	2.96cd	2.58bd
Social Integration (1%)	3.1a	3.0a	3.2b	2.5b
General physical and emotional health (SF-36)				
Physical Functioning (2%)	76.4ab	58.3bc	62.0a	64.0c
Bodily pain (4%)	68.2	66.5a	60.6	74.2a

a,b,c : indicate the significant difference on the related variables

In the SF-36, it is interesting to see that Indonesian males in Germany seem to be considerably healthier than those living in Indonesia.

Among all of the subscales in the SCL-90, only hostility seemed to differ hardly across the different groups. Indonesian males living in Indonesia were more hostile than Indonesian females living in Indonesia. But this was a common finding in many societies, and therefore there was no cross-cultural relevance about it.

The frequency of experiencing daily hassles was different between both groups. Those who lived a-lone in Germany had experienced more hassles. The same result was found in regard to the severity of daily hassles (see Table 4).

Regarding SF-36, the general mental health and vitality of those who lived with at least one family's member in Germany were significantly healthier and higher vitality than those who had been living without their families in Germany (see Table 4).

Table 4
Symptoms of Stress, Depression and Physical Complains Related to the Status Living With or Without the Family Members (means)

Indp-Var.	With family members	Without family members
Dependent Variable (Effect size)		
Daily Hassles		
Frequency (3%)	59.0	67.5
Severity (3%)	1.2	1.4
Depression (2%)	11.7	14.0
Psychological Well-being		
Being one-self (34%)	2.9	3.0
Social Integration (8%)	3.1	3.1
General physical and emotional health (SF-36)		
General mental health, covering psychological well-being Distress and (5%)	81.4	74.6
Vitality, energy and fatigue (4%)	82.2	76.2
Psychopathological Experiences (SCL-90)		
Hostility (0.2%)	0.54	0.59

Discussion

Perhaps the most important and unexpected result of this study was the finding that more than half of the Indonesian students kept their Asian orientation in regard to their values and behaviors, even after living some years in a western culture. According to Berry's (1980) dichotomy, cultural maintenance is the predominant mechanism in their process of acculturation. Only a rather small minority adapted a bicultural orientation, somewhat more in regard to their behaviors and their values. On the first look, this might be a rational strategy, because as sojourners, they always know that they will return to their home country after a more or less long lasting stay in the Western country. The data did not tell us more about the reasons of this strong cultural maintenance. Probably this fact was due to some interactive mechanism of a high solidarity and some networking within the Indonesian community in Germany on one hand, and a rather "cold" and indifferent attitudes of the Germans, sometimes even hostile toward the Indonesian community, on the other hand. Further research about this interactive mechanism would be of great interest. It is also im-

portant to see if the limited timeframe (started from less than two months up to longer than five years) was too short allowing significant shift of cultural orientation for the sojourners. No empirical data was collected on that issues in this study. Findings that the U-curve level of stress was consistently found across different studies having sojourners as the study participants all over the world. It is possible, however, different type of acculturating groups may lead to significant shift related to their different cultural orientations, e.g. immigrant, asylum, native people or ethnic group of acculturation, but not the sojourners, since they have different futuristic orientation. It has been admitted, that somehow a slight cultural different, in the forms of valuing the time, direct communica-tion, speed of working and any other matters were observed and perceived differently among those who had been exposed to any foreign cultures for a given period of time, including in being in Germany as sojourners, compared to themselves with regard to the similar matters before they had been. This was expressed by DAAD (German Study Exchange Program) alumni during the verification phase of this study. We may conclude that statistically, there was no significant diffe-

rent of cultural orientation of Indonesian sojourners in Germany regardless of their length of stay, but there was qualitatively shift in some aspect of cultural orientation, which was not covered in the SL-ASIA scale, after living in Germany for a given timeframe. At this stage, this finding seems to be more related to the type of acculturating group rather than to the type of research design. If the study would have been carried out using a longitudinal study design, the results might not be that much different.

This study also shows that the type of cultural orientation has no impact on mental health and well-being. So, evidently even keeping a strictly Asian cultural orientation does not harm psychologically Indonesian students in a such western context. But we cannot exclude that at least a part of this non-association of cultural orientation and health as well as well being has a methodological reason given this strong asymmetry of the types of cultural orientation.

Generally, we did not find severe impairments in mental health and well-being of those sojourners, even several years in Germany, compared to those living in Indonesia, they was not more depressive nor anxious of affected by other psychopathological symptoms than the home country students. We found differences sometimes moderated by the duration of time already spent in the Western country in regard to everyday hassles, specific aspects of the psychological well-being, and "hostility".

In regard to the daily hassles, we have found a U-shaped relationship: these hassles were most frequent and severe immediately after arriving in the Western country, minimal in the 2nd year of sojourning and then rise up again thereafter. Within the 2nd year sojourners also experienced the highest level of feeling to be oneself and socially integrated. This level is considerably significantly higher than those of the students living in Indonesia. During the most stressing time frame (the 1st year), the Indonesian students had to undergo cross-cultural transition and had to cope with stress provoking life changes, moving from Indonesia to Germany. According to Ward (1996), this relates to stress and coping related matters. Our results showed that the stress provoking life changes (hassles and hostility) were experienced by the students extremely in the first year. During this time (the 1st year) culture-specific skills were required in the host cultural milieu. According to the preliminary data and personal experiences, these skills are for example: speaking the language (German), getting used to the banking system, academic environment ("immatric-ulation"), attending seminars or lectures, dealing with the public transportation (ticketing and bus-train schedules), settling down in an apartment & getting access to telephone line or internet, getting along with the neighbors, getting used to working with co-workers and professors at the universities, etc. Furnham and Bochner (1982) and Ward (2000) however, stated that these required skills, and those mostly focused on skills of communication.

"Hostility" in this context should not be regarded as psychopathological features, but more as somewhat extreme but understandable normal reaction to the stress of becoming aquinted with the norms and customs of a different culture. This perspective is supported by the fact that within the progressing 1st year, "hostility" was maximal and much higher than that of the students living in their home country. This reaction is quite understandable as a kind of coping to acculturative stress.

Results concerning the influence of gender on health and well-being reflected either sexual stereotypes or are rather unique, but again not reflecting cross-cultural aspects. So these are not going to be further discussed in this context. A similar condition was given by the results of the influence of having or not having a family's member in Germany. The data reflected the common facts from clinical psychological research, stated that social support given by family members has a protective function to prevent psychological harms. It is hoped that results of this study would be helpful in preparing Indonesian students who will sojourn for an education at an European or perhaps other western universities, even before they leave Indonesia.

Conclusions

The Indonesian students stated that significant experiences of being in Germany were experiences related to the weather, living place, presence of the family in Germany, friendship (with Indonesians and Germans), language (German) and freedom/ liberalism. Positive attitude was expressed in regard to the

weather, friendship with Indonesians in Germany, and having family staying with them in Germany. Receiving acknowledgment in academic activities seems to be very important for all of the students. The study reveals further that language and the fact that they have to be independent in managing household and professional life have been experienced as somehow unfavorable. The need of having Indonesian friends in Germany was observed significantly highest among sojourners just at the beginning of the stay in Germany and least after living in Germany between 2 and 5 years. A similar pattern was also observed in regard to fat and alcohol consumption. The lack of a sense of belonging to the German society was a major problem for most sojourners. Among sojourners, competition and need for perfection were also high among those who had just arrived in Germany, and least among those who had been living in Germany between 2 and 5 years.

Using the A, B, C's theory of Ward, the Indonesian students have gone through behavioral acculturation (called as culture learning) but resistance to cognitive acculturation (called as social identification). Cultural identity maintenance is the predominant mechanism in their process of acculturation.

The type of cultural orientation has no impact on general emotional and physical health of the Indonesian students. So, evidently even keeping Asian cultural orientation does not psychologically harm Indonesian students in such a Western context. The stress provoking life changes were experienced by the students extremely in the first two years. A U-shaped relationship was observed on daily hassles. These hassles were most frequent and severe immediately after arriving in the Western country, minimal in the timeframe of 1 to 5 years of sojourning and then rose up again thereafter.

No severe impairments were found in mental health (measured in CES-D and PSS) of these sojourners, even after sojourning several years in Germany. Compared to those living in Indonesia, they are not more depressive, anxious or affected by other psychopathological symptoms than students in the home country. The best circumstance in terms of psychological well being was reported by the students living in Germany between one and two years and last up to 5 years. These are the years of the family arrival and the length of time required to get acquainted with the host culture, but later under the pressure of exams and preparation of going back to Indonesia declined a little.

Methodologically, a longitudinal prospective cohort study design would be suggested for further research on the same topic to enable us to ascertain the continuation of the cohort undertaking acculturation. This would require longitudinal data of the students before departure and directly after returning back to Indonesia (e.g. a follow-up study).

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