

Intercultural communication competence: A case study of international students' intercultural intelligence in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

The experience of everyday intercultural communication events and encounters will always shape one's intercultural communication perspective. This perspective is also fully interwoven in our deeply held beliefs and values, which guide our thoughts and actions both within and across cultural boundaries, as well as our understandings of the other cultures we encounter. Therefore, it is a must to have intercultural communication competence in crossing these cultural differences. This study aims to develop Intercultural Communication Competence: a Case Study on Intercultural Intelligence of International students in Melaka, Malaysia. Using the concept of Intercultural Communication Competence, this study investigates studies related to the intercultural communication competence of international students in Melaka, Malaysia. The paradigm used in this study is constructivism. This study uses a qualitative method with a single case study design and data collection techniques with interviews and documentation studies. The subjects of this research are international students studying in Malaysia. Miles and Huberman's data analysis technique was used in this study, which includes three activities, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (verification). The findings of this study provide a description of international students' intercultural communication competence as evidenced by their attitudes, skills, knowledge, and behavior in accepting a culture other than their own. They have a strong desire to be able to adapt to a new culture, even though they are frequently hampered by language differences and stereotypes during the adaptation process.

Keywords: Intercultural, communication, competence, foreign student

INTRODUCTION

Immigrants find it difficult to deal with diversity and cultural differences. This is due to the fact that they must contend with the characteristics and identities of other cultures that may differ from their own. These differences can be in terms of language, culture, habits, ways of interacting, or the use of different symbols and communication symbols (Putra, 2019).

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Many theories explain how people adapt to the cultural environment. The most common theory is the U-curve theory of adaptation (Szkudlarek, 2010). The central idea of this theory is that when migrants adapt to new cultural situations, they go through predictable stages. The first experience is one of excitement and anticipation, followed by periods of shock and disorientation (at the bottom of the U-Curve), and finally gradual adaptation to a new cultural context. More specifically, the U Curve Model describes four stages of intercultural adaptation: 1) euphoria, positive interest in a new environment; 2) Culture shock caused by unexpected experiences is usually negative in a new environment; 3) acculturation, or the process of adjusting to a new environment; and finally 4) a stable state, which is achieved when the acculturation process is successful.

In their book *Intercultural Communication Contexts*, Martin and Nakayama (2010), also explain that the process of adjusting to a place that is not one's home is also difficult. Many events and discrepancies occur during the adaptation process, as they do for most students who must study abroad. However, this is often not seen as a success. The knowledge and skills they acquire are not properly utilized and appreciated, as if the arduous process never occurred.

In addition, during the adaptation process, their spirit of nationalism and ethnic characteristics are frequently absent. This is due to the many stereotypes that emerged during the adaptation process. For example, white students often feel unwelcome because they come from the United States. This assumption appears to be a barrier to their ability to adapt well. As a result, they are sometimes afraid to show their speaking style or nationality, so they prefer not to be noticed or stand out when interacting with others.

In intercultural communication, someone who communicates using one's own culture will interact with other people who also have their own culture. According to Liliweri (2013), intercultural communication will be able to bring up intercultural communication that exists between communicators and communicants due to differences in culture and backgrounds. Liliweri's (2013) viewpoint is supported by several expert opinions in his book, including Charley H. Dood, who contends that in intercultural communication, there is an emphasis on cultural inequalities and different cultural backgrounds, which can influence communication behavior to communication participants. In addition, intercultural communication includes communication participants representing group communication, personal communication, and interpersonal communication. Furthermore, it includes communication that involves communication participants who represent personal, interpersonal, and group relationships, with an emphasis on cultural differences that affect participants' communication behavior.

When we meet people from different cultures, we must also consider other issues. We cannot predict their behavior unless we understand their culture and the important values it implies. Our thought patterns will become stuck in a culture that dictates our partner's communication behavior that differs from our own.

People communicate to adjust themselves to the environment. Adjustment does not imply that we must agree with or imitate everyone else's actions. Rather, we must understand the reason behind their actions without being intimidated by the situation. Therefore, we must make an effort to communicate effectively with people from various cultures. The problem is that most of us think that when the way people think is similar to our way of thinking, it is right and that when it is different, it is wrong. We are not always aware that there are various ways of conceiving what the world is like (Mulyana, 2012). To put it another way, people have preconceived notions about others who are not like them. The British, for example, are quiet, Americans are kind but tough, Italians are emotional, and Germans are stiff.

In addition, differences in understanding of other cultures occur not only in interpreting verbal communication, but also in interpreting nonverbal language displayed by people from different cultures. The cultural background adopted has a strong influence on body language and symbols as well.

The formation of a symbol's meaning is inextricably linked to the role of the individual who responds to the symbol. Individuals in social life constantly respond to their surroundings, including physical objects (objects) and social objects (communication behavior), which gives rise to meaning. Individuals define what they experience or see, rather than mechanical processes, which produce the responses. Thus, the individual's role can provide meaning and response in social life (Susilo et al., 2020). The statement refers to the requirement for abilities such as appropriate knowledge, skills, and attitudes in managing the exchange of verbal and nonverbal messages in the context of intercultural communication, also known as intercultural communication competencies.

Intercultural communication competence (ICC), according to Chen and Starosta (Moulita, 2019), is the ability to carry out various communication behaviors effectively and appropriately, which can combine one cultural identity with another or various identities in different cultural environments. According to them, the study of intercultural communication competence, in addition to increasing attention to the concept of intercultural sensitivity in recent decades, also tries to answer the confusion associated with intercultural sensitivity, which is also increasing, and unfortunately, this concept is not widely understood.

Another thing was also expressed by Koester and Lustig (Moulita, 2019) also stated that the study of intercultural communication competence was one of the studies that received attention in multicultural countries. However, this must be further developed not only on a theoretical level, but also in order to provide practical benefits to society, particularly in a multicultural society.

In terms of the components of intercultural competence, researchers are largely in agreement. Deardorff (2006) conducted a survey of intercultural competence scholars and international university administrators and discovered that the vast majority of scholars (80%) agreed on the 22 core components of intercultural competence. There was also broad agreement on the definition of intercultural competence, which Deardorff defined as “the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one’s intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (Patel et al., 2011). The following are the core components that can be found in many conceptual models:

- a. Attitudes: respect for other cultures; curiosity about other cultures; willingness to learn about other cultures; openness to people from other cultures; willingness to suspend judgment; willingness to tolerate ambiguity; and valuing cultural diversity.
- b. Skills: skills of listening to people from other cultures; skills of interacting with people from other cultures; skills of adapting to other cultural environments; linguistic, sociolinguistic, and discourse skills, including skills in managing breakdowns in communication; skills in mediating intercultural exchanges; skills in discovering information about other cultures; skills of interpreting cultures and relating cultures to one another; empathy; multiple-perspectives; cognitive flexibility; and skills in critically evaluating cultural perspectives, practices, and products, including those of one’s own culture.
- c. Knowledge: cultural self-awareness; communicative awareness, especially of the different linguistic and communicative conventions within different cultures; culture-specific knowledge, especially knowledge of the perspectives, practices, and products of particular cultural groups; and general cultural knowledge, especially knowledge of processes of cultural, societal, and individual interaction.
- d. Behaviors: behaving and communicating effectively and appropriately during intercultural encounters; flexibility in cultural behavior; flexibility in communicative behavior; and having an action orientation, that is, a disposition for action in society to enhance the common good, especially through the reduction of prejudice, discrimination, and conflict (Kojour, 2016).

Achieving intercultural communication competence is not only important for improving and making individuals more communicative, but also important for future leaders, professionals, and educators with the skills necessary to promote successful intercultural collaboration (Sinicrope et al., n.d.). Individuals must consider and respect the differences of other cultures to obtain a good level of intercultural sensitivity by preventing cultural prejudice by enhancing their intercultural communication competence.

The issue of cultural diversity is always an interesting topic to discuss. This demonstrates that it is not only how we attempt to tolerate cultural differences, but also how we attempt to accept these differences as part of the beauty of communication. In addition, culture contributes to the formation of thoughts, ideas, and perspectives, whereas rational identity provides interaction and social patterns that shape how individuals project their character based on their interactions with other people or the dominant culture. (Fauzi et al., 2021). This is especially true for Indonesia, which is rich in various cultures. Not only Indonesia, Malaysia is also a country that has a diverse culture. The Malay race, Chinese race, and Indian race constitute the majority of Malaysian population groups.

Malaysia, as a multicultural country, aspires to be the preferred destination for international students seeking higher education. In a promotional video for Education Malaysia, Mahathir Mohamad encourages international students who want to continue their education to “come and study in Malaysia” (Tay, 2019). In the video, the prime minister also stated, “Students studying abroad become explorers and we are in an amazing part of the world where so many cultures coexist in harmony, and you will find extraordinary, exotic customs and traditions, and great food, and amazing social dynamics.” In today's world, where the workplace is also concerned with real-world experiences outside of one's confines, studying abroad is critical to being a successful global citizen. Those who study in Malaysia find it to be a rewarding experience (Chan, 2019).

Based on this argument, the author believes that a more thorough investigation is required to assess the intercultural communication competence of international students studying in Malaysia. This study examines studies on the cultural intelligence of international students and provides an explanation of the components of intercultural communication competence possessed by students.

RESEARCH METHOD

The paradigm used in this study is constructivism by using qualitative methods with case study design. Jankowski and Jensen (Briandana et al., 2020) explained that the constructivist paradigm is an antithesis of understanding that places observation and objectivity in determining reality or science. This paradigm views social science as a systematic analysis of socially meaningful actions through detailed observations of social actors interested in creating and maintaining or managing their social worlds.

A case study was used as the research method in this study. The case study research method is a set of scientific activities that can be carried out in programs, events, and activities at the individual, group, institutional, and organizational levels to gain a thorough understanding of events (Yin, 2009)

In determining the research subject, the researcher used the purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling is a sampling technique with certain considerations (Sugiyono, 2010). International students studying at Multimedia University in Melaka, Malaysia, were chosen as informants. The ten informants for this study came from Timor-Leste, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh.

Data collection techniques in this study were interviews, observations, documentation studies, and focus group discussions. In this study, Miles and Huberman's (Basrowi, 2008) data

analysis technique was used, which includes three activities: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (verification). The researcher performs triangulation to determine the validity of the data. In this study, source triangulation is used as a triangulation technique. The researcher compares and rechecks the level of confidence in the information obtained through source triangulation by: (1) comparing observation data with interview data, (2) comparing the consistency of source answers by comparing what the informant said with what was said personally, and (3) comparing one's perspective with others on the work team.

Those who participated as informants in this study were as follows:

Table 1. Research Informant

| No | Name | Age | Country of Origin | Length of stay in Melaka, Malaysia |
|-----|----------------------------|---------|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. | Marcia Da Costa | 25 y.o. | Timor Leste | 6 years |
| 2. | Maria Cardoso Leite | 25 y.o. | Timor Leste | 6 years |
| 3. | Bokhait Muhammad Amin | 25 y.o. | Yemen | 4 years |
| 4. | Meshal Rashed H Al-rashed | 29 y.o. | Saudi Arabia | 3 years |
| 5. | Omar Nasser | 25 y.o. | Yemen | 3 years |
| 6. | Omar Ahmed | 23 y.o. | Yemen | 3 years |
| 7. | Muhammad Humayun Dogar | 23 y.o. | Pakistan | 3 years |
| 8. | Syed Fahmidul Huq | 22 y.o. | Banglades h | 3 years |
| 9. | Faiza Osama Abdalla Hashim | 19 y.o. | Sudan | 1 year |
| 10. | Avindu Bhagya Bandara | 21 y.o. | Sri Lanka | 2 years |

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Intercultural competence is competence possessed by someone (either individually, in groups, organization, or ethnicity and race) to increase capacity, skills, knowledge related to the main needs of other people in different cultures. Intercultural Competence is a congruent behavior, attitude, structure, and policies that come together or produce cooperation in intercultural situations (Zubair et al., 2019)

The purpose of this study is to assess and describe the ability of international students to accept cultural differences that are vastly different from those found in their home countries. The researcher then attempted to deepen the informants' experience when they began studying in Melaka, Malaysia, so that they could survive for years with cultural differences such as language, food, how to interact, and how to dress.

International students' Attitudes Toward Cultural Differences While Studying in Melaka, Malaysia

This study aims to identify and describe the intercultural communication competence of international students studying in the city of Melaka, Malaysia. They are students from outside Malaysia who have different cultural backgrounds. When they first arrived in Melaka, Malaysia, some of them had differing opinions about the city.

Attitudes in the component of intercultural communication are situations in which individuals respect other cultures; are curious about other cultures; are willing to learn about other cultures; are open to people from other cultures; are willing to suspend judgment; are willing to tolerate ambiguity; and respect cultural diversity. Individuals who are open to differences and eager to learn more about the new culture they encounter can be used to assess intercultural competence (Kojour, 2016).

According to the findings of the study, the international students who served as informants in this study were curious about the new culture they encountered in Melaka, Malaysia. This can be seen from their desire to learn and understand local culture by trying to interact with local students. Some of them even showed enthusiasm to learn and get to know more about the cultural differences they encountered. This is because they have a high curiosity about something.

Although some of them admit to differences in how they deal with local students who prefer to be in groups, they remain open to interacting with local students. This is supported by several informants who believe that cultural differences are not an impediment to making friends with local students.

However, there was little effort made by some of the informants who came from the Middle East to understand and learn more about Malaysian culture. They identify as introverts who are more at ease with their race without having to care about or interact with others. Meshal, a Riyadh student who also has a speech disorder, explained that he did not have close friends while studying in Melaka. He just wanted to study and graduate as soon as possible, not only because of his limited ability to speak, but also because of the language barrier and the purpose of his visit to Melaka. Based on the observations of researchers, Meshal's daily life consists of only going from dorm to campus and back.

Acceptance of cultural differences can also be seen in their desire to begin liking traditional types of food in Melaka, Malaysia, such as Nasi lemak, Nasi Ulam, Asam Pedas, Laksa, and a variety of other traditional Malaysian foods. However, not all of these international students are beginning to like traditional Malaysian food, particularly students from the Middle East who do not try to like it but instead use the many Middle Eastern restaurants in Melaka as their place to eat in order to satisfy their craving for authentic food from their home country.

Overall, based on the researchers' observations, it appears that all of the informants the researchers met were still resistant to the differences in culture and habits that they observed in Melaka. There is still an opinion that their culture is superior to other cultures. This is referred to as ethnocentrism in sociological studies.

Regarding the research about *Student Attitude to Intercultural Communication and Intercultural Interaction in Social Networks* (Akhmadieva et al., 2020), ethnocentrism is a dangerous social phenomenon that can destabilize inter-ethnic relations and intercultural communication. Ethnocentrism is the natural tendency or tendency of all people to see reality through the lens of their own cultural experiences and perspectives (Yamada, 2013). In a nutshell,

ethnocentrism is a fanatical attitude toward one's ethnicity. Ethnocentric people value other groups in comparison to their own, particularly in terms of behavior, language, customs, and religion. Ethnocentrism is the belief that one's own culture is superior to other cultures (Martin & Nakayama, 2010). Based on this definition, ethnocentrism is not always as negative as it is commonly perceived. This is because it can be interpreted as a strong love for the country, culture, customs, and religion.

According to the informants' narratives, there are both positive and negative views when attempting to adapt to local students on campus. All informants, however, agreed that differences must be handled wisely and correctly, by not forming prejudices or stereotypes about foreign cultures without first learning the truth and explanations about them.

The U-curve theory of adaptation, as explained by (Szkudlarek, 2010), influences the informant's perception of the need to adapt to a new culture. The view of this theory is that an immigrant will go through predictable phases in adapting to a new cultural situation. The first experience is one of excitement and anticipation, followed by periods of shock and disorientation (at the bottom of the U-Curve), and finally gradual adaptation to a new cultural context.

From the explanation given by the informants, international students initially have an interest in the new culture when they are in the process of accepting it. This is demonstrated by their strong desire and motivation to get to know and learn about Malay culture from local students. However, as a result of these cultural differences, some international students experienced culture shock. Dayakisni (Nazihah Umaimah An, Atmasari Ayuning, 2020) explained that culture shock is experienced by individuals who move to a different environment with their area of origin, both domestically and abroad. At this point, culture shock is seen as a process that must be passed in order to adapt sooner or later. Some international students, on the other hand, are still unable to be open to cultural differences because they believe their culture is superior to the Malay culture in Malaysia.

International students' abilities to accept cultural differences in Melaka, Malaysia

Being able to adapt well is a challenge for international students studying in Melaka, Malaysia. Apart from being separated from their families, these students face numerous challenges. The first barrier, of course, is language. Almost all of the informants met by the researchers were from Middle Eastern countries, specifically Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sudan. They speak Arabic in their home country but are forced to speak English while studying in Melaka, Malaysia.

The second barrier is resident stereotypes. Daryanto (Dewi, 2019) explained how stereotypes influence an individual's intercultural communication. The influence includes three things. First, strong negative stereotypes cause people to choose places to live and work that minimize contact with people from the group's disliked culture/subculture. Second, negative stereotypes that emerge during the process of intercultural communication will have an impact on the quality and intensity of interactions. Third, the stereotype itself actively engages people in illocutionary and discriminatory behavior toward a group of people they dislike. Both parties face confrontation and open conflict as a result of this.

Many of these international students accepted the stereotypes that developed among the local population when they first arrived in Melaka. These stereotypes are formed not only because of their physical appearance, but also because of their country of origin. Marcia and Maria, for example, are international students from Timor Leste. According to them, many of their friends are residents who think they are from Africa or Papua, because of their skin color and curly hair.

The third barrier is Malaysians' unique culture and eating habits, which differ from those of their home country. The majority of the informants, who were Middle Eastern students, stated that they did not fit into the local culture and way of eating, such as eating rice for breakfast.

In addition, the taste of different foods is also an obstacle for them in adapting to Malaysian culture. Malaysian cuisine is well-known for its spicy and oily flavor. This flavor is sometimes disliked by foreigners living outside of Malaysia. For example, Maria and Marcia, international students from Timor Leste, revealed that the food in Malaysia is extremely spicy, to the point where they are unable to eat it.

Being a newcomer in a culture that is very different from ours is difficult. There will always be challenges to overcome in the process of adapting. There are times when these efforts are successful, but many of them fail because the original culture is too attached to us, and we do not allow the new culture to enter us. As a result, they must be able to quickly address cultural and linguistic differences in order to continue living their daily lives in Malaysia.

They need to have the skills of listening to people from other cultures; skills to interact with people from other cultures; skills to adapt to other cultural environments; linguistic, sociolinguistic, and discourse skills, including skills in managing communication disorders; skills in mediating intercultural exchanges; skills in finding information about other cultures; skills in interpreting culture and connecting cultures with each other; empathy; multiple perspectives; cognitive flexibility; and skills in critically evaluating cultural perspectives, practices, and products, including one's own culture (Kojour, 2016)

Facing many differences and cultural inequalities is a challenge for these international students. However, they must survive and try to adapt to all these differences. This section describes what efforts or methods international students use to overcome cultural barriers. This is consistent with what (Braslauskas, 2021) explained about the concept of intercultural competence, which is related to the readiness to accept differences and includes social and cultural aspects.

To deal with these cultural differences, the first thing they do is build relationships and increase the amount of interaction with local students. Although these international students initially believed that local students were unfriendly, almost all of the informants stated that interacting with local students was a powerful way to adapt to and learn about Malaysian culture. This is because interacting with local students who can provide a deeper understanding of Malaysian culture causes everything to become more focused and clear.

The second approach is to use all available means to be understood by the local community. When they are unable to express themselves verbally, they may resort to nonverbal communication techniques such as pointing and drawing. When they first arrived in Malaysia, almost all informants did this. The third option is to enroll in a language course.

The ability of international students to understand local culture is determined by each international student's personality. This is because the researchers observed a tendency for these students to be introverted toward local students during the research. This is not only because of language differences, but also because of their incompatibility with the way of interacting shown by local students. According to one of the informants, Omar Ahmed, local students do not care about or empathize with international students. This is because, in the eyes of international students, there is a culture that explains why local students tend to focus on themselves, on the problems that exist within themselves, rather than being involved and caring about other people.

Cultural differences, on the other hand, do not prevent students with extroverted personalities like Amin from making new friends and developing international relations. Cultural differences are not a reason for him not to develop, but rather a means for him to improve himself. For him, understanding different cultures can be done through interaction and friendship with local students. This is because it is so simple for him to ask questions and learn more about a new culture, and as a result, he has no prejudice against cultural differences.

In addition, several informants demonstrated their abilities and skills in interacting with the surrounding community through various means and media. When they are unable to communicate with the local community due to language barriers, they use media such as pictures and body

language to convey their wishes. Not only do they use supporting media on campus, but they also use it to communicate when they want to order something or ask for directions if they want to go somewhere.

They also hone their skills by enrolling in language classes for several months. This is due to the fact that all of the informants the researchers met did not come from countries where English and Malay are the official languages. Therefore, when they first arrived in Malaysia, they were determined to overcome the language barrier by enrolling in language classes.

International Students' Knowledge of Malaysian Culture

Knowledge is cultural self-awareness; communicative awareness, particularly of different linguistic and communicative conventions in different cultures; culture-specific knowledge, particularly of the perspectives, practices, and products of specific cultural groups; and cultural knowledge in general, with a focus on the interaction of culture, society, and individuals (Kojour, 2016)

When asked about international students' knowledge of Malaysian culture, almost all of the informants said they learned about it through their observations, experiences, and interactions with local students. When they first came to Melaka, they had started to try to observe the local culture in Melaka, starting from the traditional food, the basic language used by the local people, the way of dressing, and the way of interacting. These observations were then reinforced by the experiences they had when interacting with the surrounding community, such as when ordering food at a restaurant, asking for directions, and so on.

Their knowledge of local culture is also aided by interaction with local people. Examples include interactions in class during lectures, group assignments with local students, receiving material from lecturers in class, and so on. In addition, some of these international students are involved in student organizations, which allows them to get to know local students better. They even often gather for "lepak", a term commonly used by local students for "hanging out". This activity also helps them to get closer to local students. Because they are frequently "hanging out" and spending a lot of time with local students, they have the opportunity to ask questions and learn more when there are things they do not understand about culture, customs, or beliefs.

From the narratives presented to researchers, the knowledge they gain from these interactions helps them understand the cultural differences they face. However, for some of the informants, their difficulty lies in the inability to interact with other people because they are introverts. ~~Such~~ These students' knowledge of local culture is solely based on observation and experience, not on a desire to learn more about the new culture they encounter, but rather on their perceptions of each other.

International students in Melaka, Malaysia, exhibit this behavior by accepting cultural differences

Behaviors behave and communicate effectively and appropriately during intercultural encounters; flexibility in cultural behavior; flexibility in communicative behavior; and has an action orientation, namely the disposition to act in society to enhance the common good, especially through the reduction of prejudice, discrimination, and conflict (Kojour, 2016).

When discussing behavior, almost all informants demonstrate a desire to be open to the cultural differences they encountered. However, the most common barrier to being open is language. Some informants admit to being indifferent and unconcerned about their surroundings due to limitations in conveying what they want to convey. On the other hand, they can still strive for effective communication, for example, by using a variety of written and visual media to ensure that both parties understand what is being said.

However, some of the stereotypes they hold can make it difficult for them to be flexible when dealing with cultural differences. For example, stereotypes about international students who are unable to focus on their studies, lack goals and objectives, and have their national origins misinterpreted by local students are common. Some students from the Middle East are also referred to as wealthy students. Not only do they accept stereotypes in class or when they socialize on campus, but they also occasionally receive from food vendors who charge them higher prices than local students.

For open-minded students, this stereotype is not an obstacle, but one that must be emphasized. This is accomplished by attempting to foster positive interactions, such as when studying together in class, working on group projects, or gathering with friends who are local students. This is done to reduce prejudice and discrimination that often occurs. Based on the results of observations made by researchers, almost all international students are still able to think positively about dealing with this problem. This is because they believe they cannot make someone like them because they come from different cultures, habits, and perspectives.

CONCLUSIONS

According to the findings of the study, the intercultural communication competence of international students in Melaka can be seen through several components, namely attitudes, skills, knowledge, and behavior.

According to the attitude component, international students who became informants in this study showed some curiosity about the new culture they encountered in Melaka, Malaysia. This is evidenced by their desire to learn about and understand local culture by attempting to interact with local students. Some of them even expressed a desire to learn more about the cultural differences they encountered, whereas others remained loyal to their native culture and displayed ethnocentrism.

In terms of skills, it demonstrates that their skills to understand foreign cultures is heavily influenced by their personalities. This is because the researchers noticed a difference in the ability of introverted and extroverted international students to understand cultural differences during the research.

Meanwhile, in terms of knowledge, it was explained that the informants' insights into the new culture came from observations, experiences, and interactions with local students. When they meet with local students, they take advantage of the opportunity to ask questions and learn more about culture, customs, and beliefs. Then, in terms of behavior, it appears that all informants want to be open to the cultural differences they are confronted with. However, language is the most common barrier to being open, and some of the stereotypes they hold are also a barrier to being flexible in dealing with cultural differences.

The researchers hope that this study will stimulate further research on intercultural communication competence, which includes not only understanding intercultural communication but also being able to face and adapt to existing cultural diversity.

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