

Cultural Adjustment Problems in Academic and Social Life Experienced by Indonesian Postgraduate Students Studying in London

Authors : Erizal Lugman

Abstract : An increasing number of students from Indonesia study in universities in the UK. Because of the substantial cultural differences between the Western and Indonesian cultures, this study investigates the issues in academic and social life experienced by Indonesian postgraduate students, with a sample of 11 Indonesian postgraduate students (8 male, 3 female) studying in London during the cultural adjustment stage. This research made use of a semi-structured interview and was analyzed qualitatively using thematic content analysis to reveal key areas of concern in the academic setting, social life, and language-related issues. The findings confirm that the most challenging aspects experienced by the participants are the use of academic English in academic situations and the students' lack of critical thinking. Nine out of 11 students agreed that they had problems with writing essays during the cultural adjustment stage. Because of the collectivist culture in Indonesia, making friends with locals was the most concerning issue in the participants' sociocultural adjustment, followed by difficulty in finding places to pray, looking for Halal food and using the Western toilet system. The findings suggest recommendations that the students must be more aware of the cultural differences between Indonesian and Western cultures, including in the academic setting and social life. Also, the lecturers should pay more attention to their speech in the British accent which is sometimes difficult to understand.

Keywords : academic adjustment, cultural adjustment, Indonesian culture, intercultural communication

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