

Prejudice towards Host Culture and Acculturative Stress: Studies on Internal Migrants in Indonesia

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Abstract: Many researchers on prejudice have focused on minority ethnic students at the receiving end of prejudice by the host cultures. This study focuses on the prejudice of minority ethnic students towards the host culture and its contribution to acculturative stress. It also attempts to analyse the influence of perceived language proficiency (c.q. Javanese language) and gender on acculturative stress. Participants comprised 69 undergraduate students studying in a state university and coming from various ethnicities other than Javanese that was considered the host culture in Surakarta. Results indicated that prejudice to the host cultures was a predictor of acculturative stress. Meanwhile, perceived language proficiency and gender didn't have significant effect on acculturative stress. Implications, limitations and future research direction are discussed.

1 INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a populous country with tremendous tribe diversity. Pusat Data dan Statistik Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan/PDSPK (Center of Data and Statistics of Education and Culture) Ministry of Education and Culture of Republic of Indonesia (2016) stated there were at least 250 ethnic groups in Indonesia. Despite already having some areas as their basis, tribe members travelled across the country for many reasons, such as gaining access to better or higher education. Movement within the country is usually referred to as internal migration. Sukamdi and Mujahid (2015) in a monograph series of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) about internal migration defined internal migration as "...the movement of population nation-state...". The number of internal migrants in Indonesia increased significantly, reaching 9,800,000 citizens in 2010. This number outstripped the number of international migrants which was estimated at 4,579,903, and most of those migrants were 15 – 34 year old individuals. According to Sunarto (1984), this was due to the difficulties in enrolling in universities and transportation infrastructure improvements. Moreover, Java is the most attractive island for internal migrants (Sukamdi and Mujahid, 2015).

As with any other migrant group, migrant students also face difficulties in adjusting to the surrounding neighbourhood, culture and conditions in their new residence. Various researches showed that adjusting to new places is a form of significant stress (Holmes and Rahe, 1967; Vingerhoets, 2005) influencing physical and mental health, causing diabetes mellitus as well as other immune-affecting diseases after the movement (Van Tilburg, Vingerhoets and Van Heck, 1996). Kleiner and Parker (1963) found that born-and-raised American inhabitants migrating across the United States showed symptoms of psycho-neurotic and neurotic disorder (cited from Fisher, 2005). Migrant students must not only deal with academic tasks more difficult than those of the previous education level, but also adjust to a new environment and different culture unlike their previous origin. New environments and cultural differences experienced by migrant students potentially cause acculturative stress, which is stress as an impact of undergoing an acculturation process (Berry, 1997; Yeh and Inose, 2003; Schwartz and Zamboanga, 2008).

Students experiencing acculturative stress encounter various consequences. Berry, Kim, Minde and Mok (1987) emphasized that the stress led to decreasing physical, psychological and social well-being. Johnson and Sandhu (2007) suggested

that consequences of acculturative stress included the feeling of missing accustomed behaviors or having to change ways of doing things, routines, habits, and altering close relationships. In some students, acculturative stress affected their academic performance. For example, Albeg (2014) concluded that acculturative stress correlated negatively with students' academic performance; also Lee (2016) and other researches associated acculturative stress with GPA. In academic circumstances, acculturative stress not only affected students' GPA but also led to students' drop out (Castro, 2010). Aside from recognizing difficulties students face related to acculturative stress, identifying factors influencing those difficulties may also help students overcome them (Charles-Toussaint and Crowson, 2010).

Theoretically, in his meta-analysis, Kuo (2014) mentioned that researches on acculturation process and coping strategies used – including acculturative stress – were based on international migration, hence on what level theories from international migration can be used to explain acculturation process for internal migration was uncertain, and those studies require more attention to fill the existing literature gaps.

Cultural differences and consequences following the acculturation process don't necessarily happen in different countries, but also happen in the same region, even in the same ethnicity. For instance, such situation was mentioned in the study by Wu and Mak (2012) upon acculturative stress in non-local students from mainland China in Hong Kong, or in the study of Benita (2016) on acculturative stress in rural students studying in urban areas. This current research focuses on acculturative stress in non-Javanese students continuing their study in Surakarta as the center of Javanese culture, and referring to Wu and Mak (2012) this study uses the term *non-local* students as such acculturation process occurs among citizens with the same nationality.

Numerous literatures show prejudice as a significant determinant of acculturative stress (Fernandez, 2016; Torres, Driscoll and Voel, 2012; Ahmed, Keating and Tsai, 2011), which then grows into discrimination. Allport (1954; in Brown, 2010) defined ethnic prejudice as an antipathy based on false or inflexible generalization. Prejudice leads individuals to choose certain facts and neglect others, causing one to see all group members as alike. Due to the emotional quality that prejudice has, attitudes towards the prejudice itself tend to last (Simpson and Yinger, 1985). Most prejudice will be

addressed to minorities, though it can also be addressed from minorities to majorities.

Most studies on prejudice in international students saw non-local students as the target of prejudice from host-cultures (Pu, 1994; Corey, 2000). This is due to the situation where non-local students are more prone to prejudices, making them experience difficulties in adjustment, feel stressed-out, isolated, and other psychosocial obstacles. Discrimination, prejudice and stereotyping may be overwhelming, especially to students who were raised in homogenous society (Constantine, et al., 2005; Eustace, 2007).

On the other hand, it is highly possible for non-local students to hold prejudice towards host-cultures. In general, obstacles that non-local students confront in an acculturation context are related to the adjustment process, and Verkuyten (1996) discovered that difficulties in adjustment lead to prejudice. In certain perspectives, prejudice has a function towards an individual's personality, such as how it plays a role in maintaining an individual's self-esteem (Verkuyten, 1996).

Inter-group Threat Theory (ITT) is another theoretical perspective can be used to explain prejudice from minority group to dominant group (Riek, 2006; Fernandez, 2016). Stephan and Stephan (2000) classified 4 types of inter-group threats: realistic threat, symbolic threat, inter-group anxiety, and negative stereotype. Realistic threat is related to perception of competition, colliding purposes between parties, and threats to physical and economic well-being. Symbolic threat involves threat coming from conflicts of value, norms and beliefs. Inter-group anxiety refers to the feeling of stress and discomfort in the presence of people from other groups, and a sense of uncertainty of how to respond, making interaction such a terrifying thing to conduct. Negative stereotype creates threat because it puts negative expectation upon behaviors of members from other groups.

Dovidio, Hewstone, Glick and Esses (2010) implied that most prejudices were reactive, reflecting anticipation of being treated with discrimination by members of the majority group. Prejudice, however, is a phenomenon occurring at an individual level. Thus, members of minority groups can also hold prejudice towards members of majority groups. Fernandez (2016) found acculturative stress to be correlated with prejudice towards a host culture. In the internal migrants context, the question would be, does this prejudice towards a host culture also play a role in influencing acculturative stress in non-local students from

outside Java? As a country, Indonesia has “Bhinneka Tunggal Ika” as its slogan, meaning unity in diversity. At what level prejudice would influence acculturative stress, considering shared value as citizens of the same country despite ethnic or racial differences, is yet to be answered in studies about acculturative stress.

Individuals being the victims of prejudice may drown in depression or withdrawal, while others may get stuck in the prejudiced stereotype. Sinclair and Kunda (1999) mentioned that prejudice could lead individuals to have low self-esteem or other mental problems. Asamen and Berry (1987) examined the influence of prejudice accepted by Asian students from a majority group and its influence on self-concept. This research showed that students who perceived stronger prejudice felt loneliness, social isolation, helplessness and poor self-concept. Pu (1994) discovered that perception of prejudice created obstacles in minority individuals to acculturate with dominant society. Dominant groups tended to attribute negative stereotypes to minority groups, while minority groups would also develop negative perceptions of dominant groups.

Redfield, Lincoln and Herskovits (1936) defined acculturation as a phenomenon resulting when groups of individuals having different cultures came into direct contact, causing changes in original cultural patterns of either or both groups. Mena, Padilla and Maldonado (1987) discovered acculturation as the process of cultural adaptation which leads individuals through some conditional changes to adjust to local cultural norms. This process occurs as a result of interactions between two or more autonomous culture groups. In addition to group level phenomena, Graves (1967) mentioned the term psychological acculturation as changes in individual psychology resulted from the acculturation process. Psychological acculturation refers to internal processes and psychological changes occurring as a result of the individual acculturation process (Berry, 1997), and may occur in six areas: language, cognitive style, personality, identity, attitude and acculturative stress.

Schwartz and Zamboanga (2008) defined acculturative stress as a negative side effect of acculturation, which occurs when acculturation experience causes problems to the individual (Berry, 2003). As a consequence of experienced stress, physical, psychological and social health of an individual deteriorates (Berry, Kim, Minde and Mok, 1987). Johnson and Sandhu (2007) found that consequences of acculturation process included feeling of losing some accustomed behaviors or

having to change ways of doing things, routines, habits, and altering close relationships. Gil, Vega and Dimas (1994) stated that acculturative stress could come from incongruity among cultural values and practices, language difficulties and discrimination. For international students from China, Bai (2012) found that sources of acculturative stress were academic pressure, language difficulties, inferior feeling, difficulties in adjusting to new food or cultural values, lack of support, feeling of being discriminated against and homesickness (Sandhu and Asrabadhi, 1994; Yeh and Inose, 2003).

Other than prejudice, language is also an obstacle for international students in an acculturation process (Sandhu and Asrabadhi, 1994; Bernal, 2014; Schimdt, 2017). Language difficulties related to language mastery in common include varying dialects, pronunciation, and different meaning applied to certain words. Yeh and Inose (2003) suggested that language difficulties international students had would influence academic performance, and furthermore their psychological adjustment. Difficulties in language mastery also prevent non-local students from interacting properly with fellow students or society. The situation in Indonesia is unique regarding this language barrier, since local language is intensely used in daily conversation, making it difficult for non-Javanese students to adjust. On the other hand, there is Bahasa Indonesia as *lingua franca* that almost every citizen masters. However, communication difficulties are still reported to be one of the obstacles in the acculturation process of non-local students (Rundenganm, 2013; Utami, Wisadiran and Nasution, 2014; Lagu, 2016; Miagoni, 2015).

A certain demographic condition influencing acculturative stress is gender. Gender-related behavior refers to characteristics according to the notion of men and women in every culture (Unger, 1979), and O’Neill (1990) found that gender roles were determined by cultural conception of feminine and masculine. Several studies showed that women were more prone to acculturative stress than men (Mahmood, 2014; Sirin, Ryce, Gupta and Sirin, 2013). Nevertheless, some studies showed that there was no correlation between gender and acculturative stress (Manning, 2004). A few studies concluded that compared to teenage boys, teenage girls reported more symptoms related to internalization, depression, anxiety, somatization, and withdrawal (Sirin, et al., 2013). Gender concept may differ from one culture to another, giving it possible differences in experienced acculturative stress, as well as

changes in gender concept. This research also observed whether gender had any influence on acculturative stress experienced by non-local students as internal migrants.

2 METHOD

2.1 Participants

Participants in this research were 69 non-local students of Universitas Sebelas Maret Surakarta (UNS) chosen by purposive sampling, with following criteria:

1. Students of Universitas Sebelas Maret Surakarta (UNS).
2. Migrants in Surakarta and surrounding areas.
3. Originally from outside Java Island.
4. Do not identify themselves as Javanese or use Bahasa Java as mother tongue.

Initially there were 101 respondents completing the uploaded questionnaire, but after inclusion and exclusion process, only 69 respondents were qualified for this research.

2.2 Procedures

The research team provided an on-line questionnaire and distributed the link to students groups of every faculty in UNS. All of the survey results offered complete data, but some were not suitable for the use of this research, since inclusion and exclusion criteria as research respondents were not met. It took around 20 - 30 minutes for respondents to complete all items in the questionnaire.

2.3 Measures

For measurement in this research, the predictor variables were prejudice, fluency in speaking Bahasa Java, and gender. And the criterion variable was acculturative stress.

2.3.2 Acculturative Stress

In measuring acculturative stress, this research used the adaptation of Acculturative Stress Scale for International Students/ASSIS (Sandhu and Asrabadhi, 1994), consisting of 36 items with 5 answer options. This scale was adapted by analyzing ASSIS' construct, also by using forward translation and back translation. Alpha cronbach coefficient for this instrument was 0.916.

2.3.2 Prejudice

Prejudice was measured by adapting items referring to the research conducted by Fernandez (2016). This instrument consisted of 12 items with 5 answer options, and the Alpha cronbach coefficient was 0.757.

2.2.4 Fluency in Speaking Bahasa Java

In order to measure fluency of speaking Bahasa Java, respondents completed a self-reported questionnaire. Method and questionnaire used for this measure referred to the research of Yeh and Inose (2003). There were 3 items used to measure fluency of speaking Bahasa Java as daily local language in Surakarta:

1. How fluent are you in speaking Bahasa Java?
2. How comfortable do you feel in using Bahasa Java to communicate?
3. How often do you communicate in Bahasa Java?

Participants were given a Likert type scale with 5 answer options. Alpha cronbach coefficient of this questionnaire was 0.753.

3 RESULT

Table 1: Descriptive Data of Research Participants.

		Total	Percentage
Gender	Men	22	32
	Women	47	68
Age	18 – 21	58	84
	> 21	11	16
Duration of living in Java	< 1 years	17	25
	1 – 2 years	16	23
	2 – 4 years	29	42
	> 4 years	7	10

Research participants were 69 non-local students with more women (68%) than men (32%) participants. The age of participants ranged from 18 to 23 years old, with 84% under 21 years old and others (16%) 21 - 23 years old. From the duration of living in Java, participants were divided into 4 categories: those living in Java for less than a year

(25%), 1 - 2 years (23%), 2 - 4 years (42%), and more than 4 years (10%). Participants came from diverse ethnic groups, from Papua, the farthest from Java, to Batak, Melayu, Bugis, Sasak, Minang, and so on. Some didn't identify their ethnic group, some wrote island name instead of ethnic group, and some others wrote as mixed ethnic group (e.g. Minang-Batak).

Table 2: Correlation, mean, and standard deviation for each variable.

	1	2	3	4
1. Accul. Stres	-	.484	-.276	
2. Prejudice		-	-.302	
3. Language			-	
4. Gender				
M	2.307	2.249	2.068	
SD	.559	.385	.687	

Table 3: Summary of regression analysis for variable predicting acculturative stress (N=69). Note: Language = language fluency; F (3) = 8.65, P < 0.001; Total R² = .252.

	Sig.	B	SE B	β	t
Gender	.091	-.226	.132	-.190	-1.715
Prejudice	.000	.641	.159	.443	4.024
Language	.493	-.065	.094	-.080	-.690

Table 2 shows correlation, mean, and standard deviation of each variable, and Table 3 is the summary of regression analysis for variable predicting acculturative stress. In this research, regression analysis was conducted by using prejudice, language and gender as predictor variables and acculturative stress as criterion variable. Overall regression model was significant with F (3) = 8.65, p < 0.001 and explained 25.2% of acculturative stress variant. In this model prejudice explained 44.3% variant of acculturative stress. Prejudice was the significant predictor of acculturative stress (P < 0.001), while language and gender were not the significant predictors of acculturative stress.

4 DISCUSSION

This research sought to observe the influence of prejudice, fluency of speaking Bahasa Java, and gender as predictors of acculturative stress in non-local students living and studying in Surakarta, which is one of the centers of Java. Prejudice was proven to be the strong predictor of acculturative stress, while fluency of speaking Bahasa Java and gender were not.

The main finding of this research was that prejudice towards host culture, which was the majority group, was proven to influence acculturative stress experienced by non-local students. In other words, as prejudice towards host culture increased, acculturative stress did too. This result was in accordance with the research by Fernandez (2016) and Zick, Ulrich, Van Dick and Petzel (2001). Prejudice towards host culture seemed to have a certain function in maintaining students' self-esteem, as a reaction to perception of experienced prejudice from a host culture (Branscombe and Wann, 1994; Riek, Mania and Gaertner, 2006).

In this psychological situation, non-local students would be more resistant to acculturative stress, due to the belief that such negative perception would last despite their ability to mingle with the dominant culture (Padilla & Perez, 2003). Individuals trapped in that stigma would become more aware of information about negative reaction or evaluation from other people which led to prejudice and discrimination (Crocker, et al., 1991). In order to protect themselves from the impact of rejection from a dominant culture, they would identify themselves with a stronger ethnic background, making them more sensitive to prejudice and discrimination from a dominant culture (Nguyen, Messe and Stollak, 1999).

Physical characteristics, language, values, as well as different habits would easily trigger prejudice from a host culture towards minority groups (Brown, 2010). Different forms of prejudice would then grow into discriminative actions. For instance, distinct psychical appearance of students from Papua triggered discriminative actions towards them, such as having difficulties finding a dormitory, being declined to rent a motorbike, feeling underestimated, being laughed at, being hindered in academic life as well as identification card or driving license administration, and given higher prices when shopping (Hasan, 2016; Ransun, 2016; Putranto, 2017). Even so, the dynamics of prejudice towards

host culture causing acculturative stress demands different explanation.

Explanation from Inter-group Threat Theory (Stephan and Stephan, 2000; Stephan, Stephan and Gudykunst, 1999; Stephan, Diaz-Loving and Duran, 2000) provided perspective triggering threat as a source of prejudice, which then caused acculturative stress. From a realistic threat point of view, discrimination experienced by non-local students was potentially disrupting their physical, mental and social well-being. Symbolic threat in the form of value differences may put pressure on individuals, for example some expressive behavior of the non-locals was responded to rather negatively, since Javanese people preferred quietness and a more harmonious situation. From the inter-group anxiety point of view, value differences brought about situations where non-local students feel awkward and uncertain of how to behave in the face of fellow Javanese as host culture. Some stereotypes about Javanese people, like the tendency to appreciate more polite attitudes and behavior, would be considered as “*baper*” or overly-sensitive by non-local students from outside Java.

This research pointed out congruity among various theories on acculturative stress based on international migration to observe internal migration. Prejudice, in this case towards host culture, was found to be correlated with acculturative stress experienced by non-local students. However, perception of fluency in speaking a local language, which was predicted to be the main instrument in communication, was proven to have insignificant influence on acculturative stress. Some earlier studies on non-local students still saw obstacles regarding communication process and language as the main difficulties of non-local students (e.g. Rundengan, 2013; Utami, Wisadiran and Nasution, 2014; Lagu, 2016; Miagoni, 2015). This might be explained by the emotional function of language, hence the emphasis was not on the exchange of information between languages, since it could be represented by Bahasa Indonesia. The emphasis would be more on the awkward and uneasy feeling experienced by non-local students, whenever unable to converse in a local language. Such feeling made them unaware and uncertain to face the current situation. This situation resembled inter-group anxiety concept from the Inter-group Threat Theory (Stephan, 2000). Plant and Devine (2003) concluded that unpleasant inter-group contact and negative expectation would lead to inter-group anxiety. Meanwhile, Hassan (1987) found that people with higher anxiety often showed higher

prejudice. These findings provided a hypothesis that the function of language in multicultural relationship context in Indonesia may rather lead to emotional function in communication process, including possible escalation of prejudice in the communication process itself.

Several studies showed that gender played a role in influencing acculturative stress (Mahmood, 2014; Sirin, et al., 2013). Nonetheless, current research found that gender had no significant influence on acculturative stress. This might be explained by all participants having the same obligation as college students, with no different academic treatments of either men or women. However, results also showed that despite not having significant influence, female students reported slightly higher acculturative stress than male students, in accordance to the study conducted by Cuellar, Arnold and Maldonado (1995). Character differences between male and female students at a certain level might correlate with emotional function (Manning, 2004).

5 IMPLICATION, LIMITATION AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTION

Results of the current research provided an insight into accordance of various theories on acculturative stress from studies on international migration to be applied to internal migration. Nevertheless, in order to comprehend acculturative stress in the internal migration context, more attention should be put on the local context factor, in this case Bahasa Indonesia, in relation to local languages. Future research may attempt to explore local cultural context which may influence acculturative stress or other issues related to multicultural relationships, such as, is there a certain belief system moderating prejudice and acculturative stress?

Future research may also focus on studies on acculturation by noticing characteristics often labelled to certain ethnic groups in Indonesia. Regarding geographic movement, some ethnic groups in Indonesia are well-known for migrating, like Minang tribe from Sumatera and Bugis from Sulawesi. On the contrary, Java tribe is more attached to their place of origin, having principles such as “*mangan ora mangan sing penting kumpul*” (meaning the most important thing is to stick together living in the same region, whether or not they live in prosperity) which doesn't support migration. Future studies may put efforts into

comparing acculturative stress among different ethnicities in terms of their principles and belief system. Berry (1997) suggested that research which didn't embrace cultural and psychological characteristics in an individual would not be able to truly comprehend the adaptation process.

The shortcoming of the current research is that it was a correlational study, which did not allow causal explanations. Also, instruments and measures used in this research were self-report measures, making it more likely to hold bias.

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