

# THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

## Interpersonal Communication Barriers among International Students at Graduate School of Bogor Agricultural University, Indonesia

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### **Abstract:**

*This study focused on interpersonal communication barriers, the sociocultural and language difficulties of adaptation among international students can lead to academic issues. and aimed to identify the barriers and factors which influence interpersonal communication among international students and to examine the extent to which these factors have affected international students' adaptation to cultural transition in learning and living in the Bogor agricultural University. This study involved both quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative component utilized data collected through semi structured questionnaires on 40 International students representing international students from postgraduate school of Bogor agricultural University, the qualitative component of this research utilized interviews method, while the data analysis techniques used to answer the research hypothesis is statistical analysis with SPSS and ANOVA. The study reached to many results, the most important of them are, there was a significant difference with respect to Characteristics of individuals in the perception of barriers to interpersonal communication among international students, though there was a significant difference in opinion among international students regarding various dimensions of academic adaptation. The majority of international students mentioned that barriers were due to the source of communication especially in Indonesian language, where Mean score of international students who have good proficiency in Indonesian language were only (M=9), while (M= 19, 12) were between not bad and bad, and 80% of international students speak English very well. in addition, the results revealed that, mean score of international students had a Slight difficulty to Socio cultural Adaptation were (M = 22), while (M = 6.42, M = 1.85) students have a great difficulty and extreme difficulty respectively.*

**Keywords:** Academic adaptation, cultural barriers, language barriers, socio cultural adaptation

### **1. Introduction**

Bogor Agricultural University (IPB) established on September 1,1963 as an institute in the field of agriculture, bioscience, and various fields related, IPB looking forward to having international students with highly GPA in graduation and ability to understand the language and local culture, A more structured post graduate education at IPB began in 1975, started with several program, these programs emphasized on the implementation of master program for science and were centrally managed by the graduate school (SPs), therefore, in 1978 IPB graduate school officially opened the doctoral program. foreign students may be accepted on any program deliver in Indonesian language as long as they could meet the standard criteria such as, proficient in Indonesian language, and fulfill all the requirements. peoples may belong to different religions and communities, often speaking different languages. But still all of them can speak or interact with each other. Such interaction is paramount for societies to survive. communication can help peoples to understand each other and fix problems, individual intellectual and social development are largely determined by the quality of communication with others, communication with others individuals can find the real self(Mainhard et al. 2018). Communicating is a must for peoples, because with communication human needs will be fulfilled, the process of communication between people is a basic process to feel and understand environment and world, communication in general based on the transfer or exchange of information between the parties influential and affected resulting in a change in behavior or attitudes, communication is a process of social interaction aimed at strengthening social relations in society through the exchange of thoughts, information, and feelings which lead to understanding, This implies that every

individuals communication skills affect both personal and organizational effectiveness (Mainhard et al. 2018). Understanding the different aspects of verbal and non-verbal communication, and the important roles they play in our interactions with others, is the first step to foster positive communication and nurturing relationships (Tiwari. 2015). There are several interpersonal communication barriers and it can happen in any step or time in communication. These barriers mean, obstacle in study place or a workplace that prevent effective communication and effective exchange of ideas or thoughts (Pal et al. 2016). Such barriers include, status differences, gender differences, cultural differences, prejudices, and the organizational environment (Alriyami. 2015). In addition, there are a lot of barriers can be caused unsuccessful communication such as language barriers, listening barriers, and environmental and cultural barriers (Klimova and Semradova. 2012). Language barriers area term used to imply all the issues faced by an individual as he attempts to communicate with a group of people who speak a tongue other than his own. It is common in settings which involve the conglomeration of people from different cultures, utilizing different languages (S and Ivey. 2011). Language reflects culture and tends to influence or control processes used to think and to perceive, sometimes, the barriers are not due to the use of words in the language, but the ways the speakers go about saying it or the ways the listeners go about perceiving it (Garcia et al. 2006). Effective communication with students of different cultures is particularly difficult. Cultures offer individuals ways of thinking, ways to see, to hear and interpret the environment. The same words can mean different things to people from different cultures, even when they speak the same language (Giovannoni and Xiong. 2017). There are various cultural factors that can induce cultural barriers, which are the most perceived at the level of communication, because communication is the base for any relation (Vrânceanu and Leca. 2015). language and cultural barriers are systematically identified as one of the major challenges related to the student's miscommunication. These barriers lead to communication problems that may have adverse effects on the academic and sociocultural adaptation (Blume and Board. 2011). In some cases, interpersonal communication between students faces difficulties that lead to cut out or hinder the communication (Dumessa and Godesso. 2014). Many other researches talk about the interpersonal communication barriers. Some of them, agree that there are internal factors such as paying attention and not listening carefully and external factors related to the environment factors. Whatever the case, in this study, will be talked about the interpersonal communication barriers that international students face at Graduate School of Bogor Agricultural University. Then, identify the most common barriers that affect the interpersonal communication process.

## 2. Research Methodology

### 2.1. Research Design

This study was conducted by using descriptive approach, and Quantitative and Quantitative methods as well as the statistical study and the historical method. The reason for utilizing Qualitative method in this research is to be as a basic for the Quantitative data and to gain more interpretation for the research problem, and to provide insights into the problem, helps to develop the hypotheses of this quantitative research. while the Quantitative method were used to quantify the problem by way of generating numerical data or data that can be transformed into usable statistics. The population for this study comprised international students from master and PHD programs, and the total of foreigner's students were 40 students. however, Data and information were collected through personal interviews and questionnaires. the study hypothesis explains the relationship between Cultural barriers, language barriers and the adaptation capacity of international students, the impact between adaptation capacity and the GPA of international students.

### 2.2. Location and Research Time

This research carried out at Graduate School of Bogor Agricultural University, Bogor city, west java, Indonesia. starting from August, 2018 up to November, 2018.

### 2.3. Data Analysis Method

To analyze the data which have been collected, through Quantitative data analysis methods, The Quantitative data were analyzed through following steps: 1) checking the data. 2) Input of data into computer. 3) Selecting the most appropriate tables and diagrams to use according to research objectives. 4) Selecting the most appropriate statistics to describe the data. 5) Selecting the most appropriate statistics to examine relationships and trends in data. In addition to ANOVA as well as SPSS, IBM 21, to find out whether there are significant differences in opinions of foreigner's students related to these barriers, and to know if these barriers have significant relationship with academic and Sociocultural Adaptation. Qualitative data has been analyzed through following three steps; 1) Content analysis, categorizing verbal or behavioral data to classify, summarize and tabulate the data. 2) qualitative data interpretation, scanning primary data for words and phrases most commonly used by respondents, comparing similarities and differences. 3) Summarizing the data, and link research findings to hypotheses, and research objectives.

## 3. Findings and Discussion

### 3.1. Characteristics of Individuals

Characteristics of international students are considered as one of the important elements that determine the level of participation and effectiveness of communication as well as interaction with each other's and with Indonesian

students. The results of this study indicate that there was a significant difference with respect to Characteristics of individuals in the perception of barriers to interpersonal communication among international students. The overall result indicates that, the majority of the respondents were between 26 and 30 years old, the total was 27 students while 7 students between 20 and 25 years, and 6 students in arrange between 31-35 years old. In terms of nationality was measured by the state of belonging to a particular country or being a citizen of a particular nation or a group of people of the same race, religion, traditions, etc., the findings shows that, 25 students were from Africa, 13students from Asia, one student from America, and one student from Australia. were 7 student's females and 33 male's students in this study. In field of study or Study program for each student at Bogor agricultural university, nearly half as many respondents (15 students) came from science fields of Engineering and information technology, while 7 students from science fields of Economics and management, 10 students from science fields of Plants science, 6 students from science fields of Animals science, and 2 students from science fields of Social science. all students (40) taking master degree while no one in the PHD degree in this study. In marital status the results reveal that, 32 students from the total of international students were Single, while 6 students were Married, one Widowed and one Engaged. however, the results indicate that, 17 students were Muslim, 14 students Christian, and 9 students who were have others belief.

### 3.2. Language Barriers

The differences between the structure of Indonesian language or English language and the student's first language might lead to a language barrier as well. The causes of language barriers are complex. From this study, the researcher managed to identify several common causes for language barriers. The most common factor is the majority of students are not familiar with the Indonesian language. Table 1 shows the Indonesian language proficiency for international students. Bogor agricultural university utilizing Indonesian language in all study program, where the findings revealed that there were barriers related to Indonesian language, where which it has influence in their study for example they spends a lot of their time translating the materials in order to understand the courses, mean score of international students, those who were selected scale (not bad) in Indonesian language was (M = 19), (M = 12 were bad), while only (M = 2), (M = 7) were excellent and very good respectively, in Indonesian language. Bogor agricultural university evaluates the admission of international students based on the English test in addition to other general admission factors. It is generally assumed that with the requirement of 450 or above on the English test, the students admitted will have fairly good command of the language and will suffer less from language barriers. however, 50 % of international students accomplished A, 25% achieved AB, and 25% gained B. which mean there is no any barriers related to English language among international students. In general, mean score of those who are very good in English language were M=18 and M=1.5 students were bad.

Data	Excellent		Very Good		Not Bad		Bad		Total
	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent	
listening proficiency in ENG	15	37.5	18	45	5	12.5	2	5	40
Speaking proficiency in ENG	11	27.5	18	45	10	25	1	2.5	40
Reading proficiency in ENG	18	45	17	42.5	4	10	1	2.5	40
Writing proficiency in ENG	12	30	20	50	6	15	2	5	40
Mean	14		18		6.25		1.5		
listening proficiency in IND	3	7.5	8	20	14	35	15	37.5	40
Speaking proficiency in IND	1	2.5	7	17.5	20	50	12	30	40
Reading proficiency in IND	3	7.5	7	17.5	19	47.5	11	27.5	40
Writing proficiency in IND	1	2.5	6	15	24	60	9	22.5	40
Mean	2		7		19		12		

Table 1: Language Barriers

Table 1 presents the results of language barriers variable where most of study population by (45%) agree that It frightens them when they don't understand what the lecturers are saying in the Indonesian language, in addition, (17.5%) disagree, (25%) strongly agree, and (12.5%) strongly disagree, as mentioned before this issue has effect in their abilities and skills to understand the lectures. (12.5%) students strongly agree that, they keep thinking that other international students are better at the Indonesian language than them, and It embarrasses them to create a conversation in Indonesian language with others, while (12.5%) agree, half of international students (50%) disagree, and (25%) strongly disagree. which means they have real intention and strong determination to speak Indonesian language.

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### 3.3. Cultural Barriers

This part aimed to know how often foreigner's students interact with Indonesian students and with local population in general, the extent of understand and accept local cultural differences, and point of view of foreigner's students about what is good or bad and desirable or undesirable related to Indonesian culture and intercultural issues guidelines in all situations. The results show that, there were a statistically significant relationship between language barriers and Cultural barriers, which means without good skill in language of any nation you can't understand and accept this culture, and international students are facing difficulties to accept and understand the local culture.

Data	Never		Seldom		Frequently		Always		Total
	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent	
Organizing activates	5	12.5	16	40	12	30	7	17.5	40
Face-to-face communication	0	0	9	22.5	16	40	15	37.5	40
Indonesian friends' invitation	3	7.5	13	32.5	18	45	6	15	40
Asking for help	1	2.5	7	17.5	21	52.5	11	27.5	40
Data	No Difficulty		Slight Difficulty		Great Difficulty		Extreme Difficulty		
	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent	Total
Understand & accept the local value	11	27.5	20	50	8	20	1	2.5	40
Understand cultural differences	11	27.5	20	50	7	17.5	2	5	40
Interaction with different ethnic	10	25	25	62.5	4	10	1	2.5	40

Table 2: Cultural Barriers

Table 2 gives more results about opinions and abilities of international students in how to understand and accept the Indonesian culture, where 50% of the international students think that, there is slight difficulty, to understand and accept the locals' value system, while (2.5%) student find extreme difficulty, International students tended to retain their original cultural values; whereas, others students tended to appreciate or criticize Indonesian culture, due the lack information and knowledge about Indonesian culture which should be provided by this university through organizing events or invite International students during Indonesian student's activities to share or give information about culture, almost half of international students 50% find slight difficult to understand local cultural differences, on the other hand (27.5%) student mentioned that there is no difficulty. in the question of interacting and communicating with people from different ethnic groups, (62.5%) students says there is slight difficulty, while (25%) student mentioned that, there is no difficulty. the results showed that (40%) of international students are seldom participate in activities organized by Indonesian students, while that (12.5%) never, and that because of the lack of Indonesian student's initiative spirit to invade international students, and they cannot join to them without invitation in order to break these obstacles and that embarrassing them. others students said graduate school should ask them to join in any public activities with local students and provide to them all facilities and information to participation, for engage in face-to-face communication with Indonesian friends and students were (40%) students are engaging in face-to-face communication frequently, (22.5% = seldom), and (37.5% = always). the results showed that 45% of international students are invites Indonesian friends to join them their activities frequently, and (7.5%) never.

### 3.4. Academic Adaptation

The purpose of this part to know the perceptions of the international student's respect to their academic performances at this university and it is relationship with the mentioned interpersonal communication barriers, academic adaptation is a complex process in international students' intellectual, personal, social.

Data	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		
	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent	Total
Academic performance level	8	20	28	70	4	10	0	0	40
Skilled with academic work	11	27.5	28	70	1	2.5	0	0	40
Deal with future challenges	13	32.5	24	60	1	2.5	2	5	40
Study program expectations	11	27.5	23	57.5	4	10	2	5	40
Good communication	15	37.5	24	60	1	2.5	0	0	40
Trouble concentrating	7	17.5	19	47.5	13	32.5	1	2.5	40
Decision to attend this university	18	45	21	52.5	1	2.5	0	0	40
Academic ability	7	17.5	26	65	7	17.5	0	0	40
Mean	11,25		24,125		4			.625	40

Table 3: Academic Adaptation

The interpersonal communication barriers among international students especially language barriers have a significant relationship with Academic Adaptation, where shows a lot of international student's encounter challenges in their academic adaptation process while studying in Bogor agricultural university, mean scale for Academic Adaptation was, (M = 24.125) agree, and (M = 0.625, M = 4) disagree and strongly disagree respectively. By contrast, the results showed that the grade points average GPA of international students in the last semester of their study program were good, where (70%) student their GPA between (3.60 and 4), while (27.5%) student between (3-3.5), and (2.5%) less than 3. More barriers that international students facing is trouble concentrating on their study due the, where (17.5%) students strongly agree that, they don't have trouble concentrating on their studies, while (47.5%) agree, (32.5%) disagree, and (2.5%) student strongly disagree, More than 26 international students see that due the lecturers speak too fast in the class without give any attention to international students whether they understand the lecture or not, that lead some of them to open translation apps which make them miss some information from lecturers while they translating. as mentioned before, GPA shows the international student academic ability, where (17.5%) student strongly agree that their grades accurately show their academic ability in the specified study program, (65%) agree, (17.5%) and disagree.

### 3.5. Socio cultural adaptation

The Socio cultural adaptation is concerned with the skills that are required to manage everyday social situations in a new cultural context. The Socio cultural adaptation requires international students to indicate the amount of difficulty experienced in a number of areas by using a four-point scale (from no difficulty to extreme difficulty).

Data	No Difficulty		Slight Difficulty		Great Difficulty		Extreme Difficulty		Total
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent	
Make friends	18	45	19	47.5	2	5	1	2.5	40
Deal with problems	8	20	24	60	7	17.5	1	2.5	40
Make Indonesian understand you	4	10	21	52.5	12	30	3	7.5	40
Find your way around	12	30	24	60	4	10	0	0	40
Deal with the pace of live	11	27.5	25	62.5	3	7.5	1	2.5	40
Find food you enjoy	6	15	18	45	11	27.5	5	12.5	40
Deal with unpleasant peoples	9	22.5	23	57.5	6	15	2	5	40
Mean	9.71		22		6.42		1.85		40

Table 4: Socio Cultural Adaptation

Language communication is a critical component of international student's socio cultural experience. Through language communication, students in a new social environment may be able to build social relationship, express their

needs and difficulties, and obtain necessary help to adapt to a new society in learning or living, the results revealed that mean score of international students had a Slight difficulty in Socio cultural Adaptation were ( $M = 22$ ), while ( $M = 6.42$ ,  $M = 1.85$ ) students have a great difficulty and extreme difficulty respectively, in Socio cultural Adaptation.

#### 4. Conclusion and Recommendation

This study has provided updated interpersonal communication barriers information in international students, especially in regards to international students' adaptation to Indonesian language and culture in learning and life. This study, there was a significant difference in opinion among the international students regarding various dimensions of communication barriers. This study shows that there are some communication barriers that international students faced such as Indonesian Language, and cultural barriers, usually international students seem to have more difficulties in classes or to understanding from lecturers. where 77% student are bad in speaking Indonesian language, (54%) student find slight difficulty to understand and accept the Indonesian culture, which and the end effect in their academic and sociocultural adaptation, however, the result of this study indicated that language may be another potential factor influencing international students' academic and sociocultural adaptation. the graduate school should provide the appropriate environment for international student, organize small meetings/get to gathers/group discussions of local students with International students to minimize language barriers/Cultural and motivate international students to join, especially in local cultural, the Indonesian language class should be more effective in teaching international students about everything related to the local cultural, habits and values, International students should create close relationship with Indonesian students so as to avoid the communication barriers.

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