

Research Article

Thriving Together: How Sharing Sessions Empower Eastern Indonesian First-Year Minority Students

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Abstract.

This study aims to examine the effectiveness of sharing sessions in enhancing adaptability and confidence of first-year minority students from Eastern Indonesia in a university setting. Using a purposive sampling technique, we focused on 59 undergraduate students from Eastern Indonesia enrolled at Hasanuddin University in Makassar, who were in their first or second semester and did not live with family. The participants were grouped according to their respective faculties and engaged in structured sharing sessions designed to foster discussion and community building. Data were collected through pre- and post-test adaptability scales, with results analyzed using paired *t*-tests. The findings revealed a significant increase in participants' confidence in their adaptability, indicated by a strong correlation between pre- and post-test scores. This underscores the effectiveness of sharing sessions in supporting minority students' integration into the campus environment. The study emphasizes the importance of targeted interventions for minority students, contributing to a more inclusive educational setting. Future research should explore the long-term impacts of such programs across diverse student demographics and institutional contexts.

Keywords: adaptability, Eastern Indonesia, first-year student, minority student, sharing session

1. Introduction

While in higher education, students will be faced with a variety of new challenges and demands that are different from those perceived previously [1–3]. This is because higher education is a time when individuals need to go through various adaptation processes in a new social educational environment [2–4]. These various problems are personal, academic, and interpersonal relationships that provide demands in adapting to lecture material, learning processes, new friends, lecture schedules and existing rules [5]. Adaptation to the campus environment includes so many processes that should be done during the first year that it requires the ability to maximize personal resources.

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Adaptation must consider the end result, adaptation function and the process itself, which means that when students are able to pass through the initial stages that tend to produce emotional tension and stress, they can reach the final stage of the college process with more well-being and adequate adaptation function.

A good first-year transition period includes independent functioning including the ability to negotiate a new, more complex world, develop internal motivation to learn, manage time and finances better, attend classes and do assignments better. Studying in a campus environment provides students with a number of new challenges related to academic demands, autonomy over personal needs and activities, and more independence in learning which is different from the demands of previous education. This makes students need to master how to manage new social environments, develop orientations based on the institutions where they are accepted, become productive community members and adjust to new roles and responsibilities [2]. [1] suggests that students who lack psychological, emotional and physical preparation, can experience stress and difficulty adapting to the various demands in college. Entering university should be an exciting challenge for students, but some studies show that most students experience a number of obstacles whose impact is seen from the second to fourth year of college, such as dropping out or not being able to graduate on time.

This adaptation problem will be more challenging or difficult for immigrant students, especially minority students. [6] argues that living or studying in a socially and culturally different community is likely to have certain social and psychological impacts. One of the social-psychological impacts that usually occurs to them is the difficulty in adapting to the new environment. Differences in language, values and customs, beyond the geographical climate, are the main obstacles. Language skills are necessary to adjust to an unfamiliar environment. If migrants cannot speak the language of their new environment, they will feel isolated. As minority students who have entered the emerging adulthood stage and are mature enough, they should have independence in adjusting themselves so that they are not vulnerable to experiencing difficulties in self-adjustment [7].

Minority students experience major life transitions that require adjustment in a very limited amount of time. Students' adjustment is especially difficult in the first year of college compared to subsequent years, which is usually most associated with friendship issues, away from home, environmental changes, which can then increase the risk of retention and dropping out of college [8–11]. Some minority students believe that they do not feel the need to engage with their university and often feel separated from their

peers as a result of their minority status [12,13]. Many of them feel underprepared for college, citing difficulties in time management and challenges in understanding the college culture [14–19].

Many changes must be faced in aspects of life as a minority such as changes in roles, social environment, and behavior. So, adaptability in this case is important to be able to overcome these conditions. So far, it can be concluded that the number of students who want to continue their education to higher education is growing rapidly every year. There are challenges and difficulties that tend to be greater faced by students who have minority characteristics or ethnicities, giving rise to special attention to increasing the presence of minority students in higher education. Many symptoms related to physical and mental health, in this case feeling stressed, occur in the first year of adapting to the campus environment. This then illustrates that adaptation in the campus environment is prone to causing stressful effects on students, the increasing number of students who drop out of college is one sign that students in managing stress during adjustment in college are less successful. As stated by [20] that demographic and environmental changes can increase the emergence of stressors, so it is important to develop an understanding of what allows students to be successful in college. This is not only limited to good academic performance and timely graduation, which are often used as indicators of success, but also related to social and emotional adjustment. Santrock (2019) also added that the presence of new students in college is more stressful and depressing. The fear of failure in a success-oriented world is often the reason for stress and depression in college freshmen. Taylor & Ali (2017) suggested that first-year students face difficulties in getting used to it which causes feelings of anxiety and depression. This is due directly to a controlled change to an environment that expects individuals to take responsibility for themselves with regard to academic aspects and social life.

Sharing sessions can impact minority students' confidence in their adaptability to the campus environment by fostering a sense of community, promoting collaboration, and providing a platform for mutual support and learning. These activities create a supportive environment where minority students can openly express their thoughts, experiences, and challenges, leading to increased social cohesion and a sense of belonging within the campus community [21]. By encouraging students to share their experiences, sharing sessions can increase empathy, cultural awareness, and inclusiveness, which are crucial for improving adaptability among minority students. In addition, sharing sessions provide opportunities for collaborative learning and knowledge sharing. Through interactions with peers, minority students can gain new insights, perspectives, and skills that can

contribute to their personal and academic growth [22]. By engaging in collaborative activities during sharing sessions, minority students can develop critical thinking skills, improve academic performance, and adapt more effectively to the academic demands of the campus environment.

In addition, sharing sessions can be a forum for emotional support and motivation. Research shows that self-disclosure sharing interventions can increase students' perceived social support availability and self-efficacy for learning and performance [23]. By creating a space for students to share their challenges and successes, sharing sessions can help reduce feelings of isolation, anxiety, and stress commonly experienced by minority students. This emotional support can contribute significantly to improving the mental well-being and resilience of minority students, thereby increasing their adaptability in navigating the campus environment. By creating opportunities for open dialogue, collaborative learning, and shared experiences, sharing sessions can contribute to the overall well-being and academic success of minority students, ultimately enhancing their ability to thrive in a diverse educational environment. Based on this, it became the basis for the researcher to conduct a study with the hypothesis that sharing sessions are effective for increasing the confidence in the adaptability of minority students in the campus environment.

2. Research Methods

Researchers used a sampling technique with purposive sampling technique. The indicators that are taken into consideration in determining research participants are minority students at the undergraduate level (S1), are at the level of semester 1 to semester 2 (the first year of study), do not live with family, and are native to the Eastern region and not of Sulawesi descent. Researchers determined minority students from outside Sulawesi specifically to the origin of the Eastern Indonesia region, namely from the Maluku Islands, Nusa Tenggara, Papua and Southwest Papua. The subjects in this study were minority students from Eastern Indonesia at Hasanuddin University Makassar. Of the 292 undergraduate students of class 2023 from Eastern Indonesia who were recorded, 60 participants could be collected who were then grouped according to their respective faculties. The data regarding the FGD groups that have been conducted are as follows (Table 1):

This research was conducted in 2 stages, namely stage 1 to develop the sharing session module and stage 2 to test the research hypothesis. The first stage was carried

TABLE 1: FGD Group Data of Research Participants.

No.	Faculty	Total	Subject (Regional Origin)
1.	Agriculture	7	AFN (Biak); AAS (Jayapura); KS (Bima); FM (Bima); NF (Bima); ADB (Mimika Papua); NY (Bima)
2.	Engineering	8	EA (Maumere NTT); LMI (Jayapura); RSS (NTT); FWS (Ambon); ZAZ (NTB); PKR (Jayapura); MF (Maluku); GBD (Jayapura)
3.	Pharmacy	8	MAA (Timika); OK (Asmat); RCR (Manokwari); ANA (Raja Ampat); AE (Merauke); IMQ (Merauke); ARR (Jayapura); RPJ (Jayapura)
4.	Psychology Cultural Sciences	7 2	MA (Jayapura); GMT (Jayapura); SG (Jayapura); JJN (East Sumba); RAP (Timika); MII (Papua); PRA (Sanana Maluku) AR (Bintuni); MPA (Timika)
5.	FISIP	10	AI (Sorong); NZN (Timika); IK (Bima, NTB); NW (Ambon); ARK (Sorong); MSA (Timika); ZDR (Jayapura); INV (Ternate); AF (Sorong); RAP (Timika)
6.	Nursing	4	RRA (Kaimana); ASI (Manokwari); MC (Manokwari); RS (Maluku)
7.	FKM	7	JW (Timika); CCP (Bima NTB); NCY (Manokwari); APS (Timika); VDL (Sorong); MAT (Sorong); GMR (Nabire)
8.	Law	7	KK (Timika); AMN (Asmat); JMT (Maumere NTT); ZR (Sikka NTT); DNH (Bintuni West Papua); SHA (Timika); HR (Biak)

out by compiling a sharing session module through the FGD (Focus group discussion) method, as for the schedule and activities can be seen in the table below.

TABLE 2: Schedule and activities of minority student sharing sessions.

Agenda	Activity Objective	Methods	Time
Introduction	Obtaining data related to participant biodata, filling out research informed consent, and pre-test data	Instructions	15 minutes
Opening	Understand the overview and purpose of the activity	Instructions	5 minutes
Session 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the experiences of minority students in interacting on campus. Identify challenges and opportunities facing minority students. Collect recommendations to improve inclusion and support for minority students 	FGD	45 minutes
Session 2	Responding to narratives of minority student adaptation stories and reflecting on student adaptation cases.	FGD	25 minutes
Ice breaking	“PepTalk Express”, providing a motivational boost and increasing students’ confidence in a fast and dynamic way, is expected to leave a positive impression.	Motivational sharing	15 minutes
Cover	Obtain data related to implementation evaluation and post-test data	Paper pencil	10 minutes

The second stage was carried out starting with testing the scale to be used, compiled by the researcher and going through the validity and reliability test process. The validity test was carried out using Pearson product moment, while the reliability test was carried out with Cronbach alpha analysis with the help of SPSS. Furthermore, testing the effectiveness of sharing sessions in increasing confidence in the adaptability of minority students in the campus environment.

The researcher also conducted evaluation and feedback through a questionnaire given at the end of the session, with the aim of obtaining evaluation results and feedback from the implementation of the sharing session from the participants' perspective. The questionnaire consisted of five questions with Likert-scale response options and three supplementary questions. These nine questions were designed to obtain information related to the smooth process of implementing the sharing session, including clarity of activity objectives, assessment of the facilitator's ability, ease of interaction among sharing session participants, topic suitability, participant comfort, as well as related expectations and insights of participants after participating in sharing session activities.

3. Findings and analysis

All of the adaptability items are valid and can be used in collecting research data because the validity test produces a significance value on the continuum of 0.00-0.012 with a r value on the continuum of 0.822-0.492 (r table value with a significance level of 5% and n = 59). Table 3 below shows that the number of items on the adaptability scale is 9 items with a Cronbach alpha value of 0.841. These results indicate that the Cronbach alpha value is> 0.60 which means that the scale is reliably used in data collection.

TABLE 3: Reliability of the items.

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.841	.851	9

The next stage, before the data is analyzed using the T test relates samples, the normality of the research data is tested as a requirement that must be met, namely the data obtained must be normally distributed. Kolmogorov Smirnov was used to test the normality of the research data, the following results:

Tests of Normality						
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
POST TEST	.103	59	.184	.973	59	.205
PRE TEST	.093	59	.200 [*]	.965	59	.086

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Figure 1: Data normality test.

Figure 1 above shows that the research data both pretest and posttest have normally distributed data, because the significance value of each data > 0.05. This shows that the data requirements for the T test relates samples as normal data are met. Furthermore, Figure 2 below shows that between the pretest and posttest have a strong relationship as indicated by a correlation value of 0.748 and a significance value of <0.001.

Paired Samples Correlations				
		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	PRE TEST & POST TEST	59	.748	<.001

Figure 2: Paired samples correlations.

Meanwhile, the results of the T test relates samples show that the t value is -5.044 and the significance value is <0.001 which is smaller than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$) so that the data proves that there is a difference in belief in adaptability in minority students before being given treatment with sharing sessions and after being given treatment.

Paired Samples Test									
		Paired Differences							
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	PRE TEST - POST TEST	-2.186	3.329	.433	-3.054	-1.319	-5.044	58	<.001

Figure 3: Paired T test.

These results show that the sharing session was able to increase the confidence in the adaptability of minority students in the campus environment. This implies that interaction and information exchange between minority students, especially those who may feel underrepresented or uncomfortable, can provide significant benefits in helping them feel more connected and adapt well in a campus environment that may be culturally, socially, or otherwise diverse.

4. Additional Findings

Evaluation and feedback were taken from participants' responses to a questionnaire at the end of the session. Five questions related to the clarity of the purpose of the activity, assessment of the facilitator's ability, ease of interaction among sharing session participants, suitability of the topic, and participant comfort by filling in a Likert scale score. The majority of participants rated the clarity of the activity objectives with a score of "clear" (score 4) to "very clear" (score 5), with an average score of 4.85. The majority of participants rated the facilitator's ability with a score of "clear" (score 4) to "very clear" (score 5), with an average score of 4.88. The majority of participants rated the ease of interacting with fellow participants as "easy" (score 4) to "very easy" (score 5), with an average score of 4.53. The majority of participants rated the suitability of the topic as "suitable" (score 4) to "very suitable" (score 5), with an average score of 4.33. Fifth, the majority of participants rated the clarity of the activity objectives with a score of "comfortable" (score 4) to "very comfortable" (score 5), with an average score of 4.8.

While feedback on open-ended questions to the sharing session aimed to understand the factors that helped or hindered participants in adapting to the campus environment. Through open questions, participants were asked to share their thoughts, new ideas (insights), hopes, and future plans after participating in the sharing session activities. From the results of the feedback obtained, data processing was carried out through the coding process. The overall data revealed that the language barrier was the main obstacle in starting the adaptation process. However, support from friends and positive environmental acceptance were able to help participants undergo the adaptation process better.

Reflections from participants showed a positive response and cathartic effect on most of them. They no longer felt alone in facing the difficult adaptation process, and this made them more motivated to continue their studies. In addition, the hopes and future plans expressed by the participants mostly focused on personal self-development, increasing independence, as well as the opportunity to explore more things about the city where they studied. This suggests that the sharing session not only provided a better understanding of the challenges of adaptation, but also generated enthusiasm and motivation to reach their full potential in the new campus environment.

5. Discussions

Sharing sessions have been shown to be effective in increasing the adaptability beliefs of first-year minority students on campus. The results of a study involving 59 minority students divided into 8 discussion groups showed a significant increase in beliefs in adaptability after participating in the sharing session, as indicated by a strong correlation between pretest and posttest scores. This improvement was also supported by the results of a paired t-test that showed a significant difference in pre- and post-treatment coping beliefs, confirming the effectiveness of sharing sessions in fostering coping beliefs among minority students. Peer-assisted learning has also been highlighted as beneficial for first-year students, with student tutors playing an important role in anticipating and addressing challenges faced by their peers, thus helping to overcome learning difficulties [24]. This collaborative approach not only improves academic performance but also contributes to students' overall adjustment and adaptability to the campus environment. Moreover, the literature emphasizes the importance of factors that contribute to minority students' success, with paradigms that promote success and models to increase their participation being crucial in fostering a supportive and inclusive educational environment [25]. By creating a culturally diverse climate and promoting equality and inclusion, educational institutions can significantly impact the psychological adjustment and overall well-being of minority students.

Peer-assisted learning has been a topic of interest in the field of psychology, especially in understanding its impact on students' academic achievement and social development. Research by [26] explored the effectiveness of peer-assisted learning in clinical skills training for medical students, revealing that this approach was highly valued across a range of parameters, including increasing students' confidence after training. This research underscored the positive impact of peer-assisted learning not only on academic outcomes but also on students' confidence and competence in the clinical setting, highlighting the psychological benefits of collaborative learning experiences. In addition, studies by [27] studied the intricate dynamics of peer effects in learning, emphasizing that these effects are multifaceted, complex, and often reciprocal. These insights highlight the social and cognitive processes involved in peer-assisted learning, indicating that interactions among peers can have profound implications for students' learning outcomes and psychological development.

The above studies have shown that peer-assisted learning and peer teaching can also contribute to students' academic performance and overall adjustment to the campus environment. By engaging in peer-facilitated collaborative learning experiences, students can not only improve their academic outcomes but also enhance social adaptability and integration within the campus community. Additionally, creating a culturally diverse and inclusive educational climate is critical to supporting minority student success. Models that promote equality, inclusion, and cultural pluralism have been identified as key factors in fostering a supportive environment for minority students, thus positively affecting their psychological adjustment and overall well-being.

In discussing the results of research related to the effectiveness of sharing sessions in increasing the confidence in the adaptability of minority students in the campus environment, it is very important to consider the various dimensions that have an impact on the well-being and integration of minority students (Bagais et al., 2020). In addition, studies by [28] emphasized the role of social networks, particularly relationships with other ethnic minority students, in facilitating positive adjustment and acclimatization to the campus environment. This suggests that fostering relationships within the minority student community can contribute to their overall well-being and adaptability.

In addition to campus climate, research by [29] explored the impact of campus racial climate, ethnic group cohesion, and cross-cultural interactions on students' sense of belonging. This research underscores the importance of creating inclusive spaces that foster a sense of community and belonging among minority students, which in turn can improve their adaptability in the campus environment. In addition, research by [30] highlighted the importance of the physical campus environment in providing adequate support for Asian-American and Pacific Islander students. Understanding the spatial dynamics of the campus environment and ensuring that these spaces are safe and supportive for minority students is an important factor in promoting their adaptability and overall success. Based on these, related aspects of inclusive and supportive environments, higher education institutions can improve the adaptability and overall well-being of minority student populations, ultimately contributing to a more inclusive and diverse campus community.

6. Conclusions

This study demonstrates that sharing sessions significantly enhance the adaptability and confidence of first-year minority students from Eastern Indonesia at Hasanuddin University. By fostering an inclusive and supportive environment, these sessions encourage open dialogue, peer collaboration, and emotional support, which are crucial for minority students navigating the challenges of a new academic landscape. The findings indicate a strong correlation between participation in sharing sessions and improved adaptability, as evidenced by the marked increase in confidence levels post-intervention. This highlights the importance of targeted interventions that facilitate community building and cultural exchange among minority students, ultimately leading to enhanced academic and social integration. In light of these results, educational institutions should prioritize implementing such supportive programs to promote the well-being and success of minority students.

7. Future Research and Limitations

Future research should explore the long-term effects of sharing sessions on minority students' adaptability and overall well-being throughout their academic journey. Investigating the sustainability of these positive impacts beyond the first year could provide insights into how ongoing support can facilitate student success. Additionally, studies could examine the effectiveness of sharing sessions across various demographic groups and institutional contexts, such as different universities or regions in Indonesia. Further exploration into the specific elements of sharing sessions that contribute most significantly to students' adaptability, such as types of activities, facilitator roles, and participant demographics, could enhance the design and implementation of these programs. Qualitative research, including interviews or focus groups, could also provide deeper insights into students' personal experiences and perceptions of these sessions.

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the sample size of 59 participants, while sufficient for initial findings, may not fully represent the diverse experiences of all minority students in Eastern Indonesia or at Hasanuddin University. A larger, more varied sample could yield more generalizable results. Additionally, the study relied solely on quantitative measures (pre-test and post-test adaptability scales), which may not capture the full range of participants' experiences and challenges. Future studies should incorporate qualitative methods to gain a richer understanding of the

impact of sharing sessions on students' social and emotional well-being. Finally, the research focused exclusively on first-year students who do not live with family, which may overlook the experiences of students who live with family or those in later semesters. Expanding the scope to include these groups could provide a more comprehensive view of adaptability in different contexts.

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