

Research Article

Navigating Cultural Diversity: The Lived Experiences of Timor Leste Students

Syiddatul Budury*, Nurul Latifatul Azizah, and Wiwik Afridah

Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama Surabaya, Indonesia

ORCID

Syiddatul Budury: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0545-3709>

Abstract.

Strong adaptability skills and a supportive learning environment are essential for international students, particularly if they are attending a university with a strong religious affiliation and come from diverse cultural, religious, and moral backgrounds. The aim of this study was to have a better understanding of the significant experiences that Timor Leste students had while attending a private university in Surabaya, Indonesia. In this phenomenological study, sampling was purposive and was based on information shared by two Timor Leste students. The data were collected through interviews, and the analysis was thematic. Five key elements were identified: recognition of diversity, social justice, tolerance, equality, and social integration. These components are required to promote interaction between students with different backgrounds. In terms of interaction within diversity, they felt they received the same treatment as local students. The findings revealed that they sometimes struggle with language when conversing with their peers, who occasionally use Javanese. According to the study's findings, more assistance should be provided to Timor Leste students residing in Surabaya, Indonesia, who are having communication difficulties.

Keywords: timor leste, diversity, students, multiculturalism

1. INTRODUCTION

Multicultural campuses, where people from different cultural backgrounds interact and negotiate unfamiliar social settings, have grown in popularity as a result of students' increased worldwide mobility. In Surabaya, Indonesia, a city that has grown to be a major hub for international students pursuing higher education, this tendency is especially noteworthy. Fostering inclusive learning settings and enhancing these students' well-being require an understanding of how they encounter and negotiate cultural variety. Multiculturalism understanding plays a crucial role in fostering social harmony and inclusivity, enhancing appreciation for cultural diversity. It not only promotes understanding among diverse groups but also contributes to improved academic outcomes and personal development, particularly for international students [1].

Corresponding Author: Syiddatul Budury; email: syddatbr@unusa.ac.id

Published: 25 September 2025

Publishing services provided by Knowledge E

© Syiddatul Budury et al. This article is distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution License](#), which permits unrestricted use and redistribution provided that the original author and source are credited.

Selection and Peer-review under the responsibility of the 2nd International Office Conference 2024 Committee.



According to earlier studies, students who study overseas frequently face major social, linguistic, and cultural obstacles that have an impact on both their academic performance and general well-being [2]. Previous research highlights the challenges faced by international students, such as socio-cultural adaptation and culture shock, which significantly impact their academic and social experiences. For instance, Hapsari and Hamamah's study reveals a limited relationship between intercultural sensitivity and socio-cultural adaptation among international students in Indonesia, indicating a need for further investigation into these variables [3]. Additionally, Bamford and Pollard emphasize the importance of student narratives in understanding the cultural journeys of diverse student populations, suggesting that educational institutions must adapt to these changing demographics [4].

Despite the existing literature, there remain notable gaps, particularly regarding the specific experiences of international students in Indonesia. While studies have explored the challenges faced by various student groups, such as Western Indonesian students in Javanese institutions, the unique experiences of international students in Surabaya have not been thoroughly examined [5]. Although these findings provide valuable insights, research on the experiences of international students in non-Western countries, including Indonesia, remains limited. Moreover, while some studies touch on multicultural adaptation in urban centers like Jakarta, there is a noticeable gap in literature focusing specifically on Surabaya, a city with unique cultural and social dynamics. Addressing this gap is crucial for gaining a deeper understanding of how international students navigate cultural diversity in different parts of Indonesia.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Qualitative research was chosen in this study with descriptive phenomenology since it is most appropriate [6] when the purpose of the study was to explain the individuals' practices according to their perceptions of their experiences. The qualitative research is a process of gaining in-depth understanding through a special methodological approach designed to examine social problems or issues related to humans [7]. By using qualitative methods, researchers are able to provide a comprehensive picture and study the phenomenon in the natural environment of research [7]. Further phenomenological approach will be explained on next part.

2.1. Phenomenology

A descriptive phenomenological study design based on Husserl’s philosophy [8] was conducted in this study. This method was used because it provided an opportunity for participants to understand and give the meaning to their experiences related to the significant experiences that Timor Leste students had while attending a private university in Surabaya, Indonesia. Based on Husserl’s view [9], descriptive phenomenology focuses on describing phenomena as “a pure description”, without additional interpretation. By using a phenomenological approach, researchers were able to explore how significant experiences that Timor Leste students had while attending a private university in Surabaya, Indonesia [10].

2.2. Participant

The participant was two Timor Leste international students who study at a private university in Surabaya. The aim of the study was to have a better understanding of the significant experiences that Timor Leste students had while attending at that university. The reason behind selecting those participants was because it provided a diverse individual background who had different cultural diversity among local student. The participant was limited to Timor Leste International Student since was suitable with the research topic and the participants were obtained from different study program.

At the time of the study, this private university had 16 International students with two of them were coming from Philippines and the other were coming from Timor Leste. This study only involved two selected participants from Timor Leste since they had different religion background with the local students, so it appropriates to find the recognition of diversity, social justice, tolerance, equality, and social integration. The demographics of participants can be seen at Table 1.

TABLE 1: Demographics of Participants.

Participant	Gender	Number of Years in Surabaya	Study Program	Semester
P1	Male	2 Years	Bachelor of Medicine	4
P2	Female	2 Years	Bachelor of Nursing	4

In this study, there were two participants with different backgrounds but had the same duration of staying in Surabaya, which was 2 years. The first participant (P1) was a man who was studying for a Bachelor of Medicine and was currently in semester 4.

Meanwhile, the second participant (P2) was a woman who was studying for a Bachelor of Nursing and was also in semester 4. Both of them reflected students from the health sector who were in the secondary education stage of their undergraduate program. The selected participants had been ensured by the researcher that they had experienced to answer the research question [11]. The phenomenological study can be applied to single cases or to samples selected by chance or purpose [12]. Each participant was given a consent form (Appendix A) that informed regarding the aimed of the study and their personal identity. The researcher then informed some interview points that would be asked to them before they had to signed the consent form. The data collection in this study only used interview and the question were well arranged according to the research questions. One participant (P1) was interviewed directly at the campus (face to face interview) on September 30th, 2024 and all the data were recorded by using mobile phone then later were transcribed. Meanwhile the other participant (P2) was interviewed through online meeting using zoom meeting on October 8th, 2024 were then all the data were recorded through that application and for later transcription. The procedure of the data collection first, asking inform consent to participants. Second, arranged the schedule to interview the participants. Third, conducting the interview based on the availability of the participants. Fourth, transcribing the data and the last was analyzing the data.

2.3. Interview Question

A total of two participants were interviewed for this study. Each participant was asked five themes' questions to help them convey their experienced regarding recognition of diversity, social justice, tolerance, equality, and social integration. This interview was started with a brief description of the study and each interview was around 60 minutes long. Those components are required to promote interaction between students with different backgrounds.

2.4. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach [13], which involved the following steps: (1) understanding the transcripts of the interview through repeated reading; (2) coding the data to find important patterns and formulate initial themes using an inductive approach; (3) developing theme through identifying and refining the most relevant

TABLE 2: Interview Questions.

Theme	Question
Recognition of Diversity	1. How do you assess the cultural diversity at your university?
	2. Do you feel that your cultural identity is recognized and appreciated at your university? If yes, how is this recognition demonstrated?
	3. Have you ever experienced in situation where diversity was not appreciated? How did you deal with it?
Social Justice	1. Do you feel that you have equal rights and opportunities compared to other students in terms of access to campus facilities, academic activities, and social activities?
	2. Have you ever experienced discrimination or unfair treatment based on your cultural background, religion, or nationality?
	3. How does your university support international students in dealing with social problems that they may face?
Tolerance	1. How do you interact with local students and other international students in the context of cultural diversity?
	2. How are the attitudes of students and staff towards cultural and religious diversity at your university?
	3. Do you feel that your university encourages mutual respect and intercultural tolerance?
Equality	1. Do you feel that you receive the same treatment as local students in terms course assignment, roles in groups, or opportunities to participate in campus activities?
	2. Is there any specific experience that you may face related to equality or inequality?
	3. How do you feel about the equality between local students and international students at your university?
Social Integration	1. To what extent do you feel you have integrated into the academic and social community at your university?
	2. Have you experienced difficulties in making friends or collaborating academically with students from different cultural backgrounds?
	3. Does your university provide programs or activities that help international students integrate with local students?

Theme. Once the themes were formulated, validation was carried out through member checks and external audits by experts in higher education internationalization to ensure the accuracy, credibility, and reliability of the research results [14]. The data coding that used in this study was formulated on Table 3.

TABLE 3: Data Coding.

Code	Details
T.1	Theme 1
T.2	Theme 2
T.3	Theme 3
T.4	Theme 4
T.5	Theme 5
Q.1	Question 1
Q.2	Question 2
Q.3	Question 3
R	Participant 1
O	Participant 2
I	Interview
30.9.2024	September 30 th , 2024
8.10.2024	October 8 th , 2024

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Result

Two International students participate in this study. They have varying background and experience during study at one of private university in Surabaya. The researcher uses five main interview themes to guide the collection of the data. Those five themes will be explained further on next part.

3.1.1. Theme One: Recognition of Diversity

The first point of the first theme described the assessment of the cultural diversity at their university. It is found that the cultural diversity is considered very good by the participants. P1 said that the majority of students at this private university are Muslim, but the tolerance is very good. This can be seen from the acceptance of students from other religions, such as Hinduism, Christianity, and Catholicism.

*“There are more Muslims here, and the tolerance is good because this univer-
sity also accepts non-Muslim students, such as Hindus, Christians, and Catholics.”*

T.1.Q.1/R/I/30.9.24

The second point of the first theme described their feeling regarding the recognition of their cultural identity at this private university and how is this recognition demonstrated. It is found that the participants feel that their cultural identities are recognized and respected at this university. P2 said that she feels very respected at this university, for example before starting class, they always pray, and she is given the freedom to pray according to his own beliefs.

“At my campus, I feel very respected. For example, before starting classes, they always pray, and they allow me to pray according to my own faith.” T.1.Q.2/O/I/8.10.24

The third point of the first theme describe whether the participants ever experience in situation where diversity is not appreciated and how did they deal with it. It is found that the recognition of diversity from both participants shows positive experiences. P1 explains that so far, he never experiences a situation where diversity is not appreciated. He gives a light example of a joke from his friends who are mostly Muslim, such as inviting him to join Friday prayers. However, he understands that it is just a joke and he responds casually.

“So far, no, maybe my friends are just joking. For example, on Fridays, most of my friends are Muslim and need to attend Friday prayers. They often have a joke by inviting me to the mosque, saying like “Come on, Larry, join us for Friday prayers”. But I know they are just joking, so I respond casually, I understand that it is just a joke.” T.1.Q.3/R/I/30.9.24

3.1.2. Theme Two: Social justice

The first point of the second theme is regarding their feeling whether they have equal rights and opportunities compared to local students in terms of access to campus facilities, academic activities, and social activities. It is found that the majority of participants feel that they have equal rights and opportunities with local students in terms of access to campus facilities, academic activities, and social activities. Unfortunately, P1 stated that although he feels that he has equal rights, there are differences in his academic experience because he is a non-Muslim who is taking a medical fiqh course. In group assignments, he only contributes a little because of the specific topic, but he still has to attend the class. On the other hand, in terms of access to campus facilities, he gets equal right to local students.

“Yes, I have an equal right, but the difference is that I have a medical fiqh course in class, while I am a non-Muslim. So, when we have group assignments, I only help a little. And I still need to attend this class. Regarding access to campus facilities, I have the same access with other students.” T.2.Q.1/R/I/30.9.24

P2 also said something similar, that she has equal rights and opportunities, including access to the laboratory and library. This shows that in general, access to campus facilities is considered inclusive by the participants.

“Yes, I have equal rights and opportunities with other students. For example, I have the same access to the laboratory and the library.” T.2.Q.1/O/I/8.10.24

The second point of the second theme regarding their experiences in discrimination or unfair treatment based on their cultural background, religion, or nationality. It is found that the participants have never experience any discriminations or unfair treatments based on their cultural, religious, or national background. P1 explains that during his first three semesters, he has never experience discrimination, and everything run well.

“I have not experienced any discrimination during my first until three semesters; everything has been fine.” T.2.Q.2/R/I/30.9.24

This shows that the campus environment is considered fair and inclusive by the participants in terms of treating differences in culture, religion, and nationality.

The third point of the second theme regarding the way this university support international students in dealing with social problems that the students may face. It is found that this private university is considered to provide support to international students in dealing with the social problems that they face. P2 also stated that the campus always pays attention and helps the international students in overcoming the social problems that they face. This shows that this private university is trying to create a supportive and inclusive environment for international students.

“They always caring of us, helping us to overcome our social problems.” T.3.Q.3/O/I/8.10.24

3.1.3. Theme Three: Tolerance

The first point of the third theme regarding the way they interact with local students and other international students in the context of cultural diversity. It is found that the interaction between international students and local students at this university takes place in the spirit of cultural diversity and tolerance. P2 said that at first semester, she

has difficulty interacting with local students because of language differences, especially between Indonesian and Javanese. However, her friends understand that she is from Timor Leste and they try to communicate with her in Indonesian. This reflects mutual understanding and an effort to respect cultural differences among students at this university.

“In my first semester, I had difficulty interacting with local students due to the differences between Indonesian and Javanese. But my friends know that I am from Timor Leste, so they communicated with me in Indonesian. We are understanding each other.” T.3.Q.1/O/I/8.10.24

The second point of the third theme regarding the attitudes of students and staff towards cultural and religious diversity at this private university. It is found that the attitudes of students and staff towards cultural and religious diversity at this university are considered quite diverse. P1 said that he does not pay much attention to the attitudes of the staff, but in the medical faculty, he feels that there are some friends who might not like him because he is the only non-Muslim student.

“I do not pay much attention to the staff’s attitudes, but in the medical faculty, there may be some of my friends who do not like me because I am the only non-Muslim student. For example, before classes in the first semester, we prayed according to our respective beliefs, but in the second semester, the prayers were standardized according to Islam, so I prayed according to my own religion.” T.3.Q.2/R/I/30.9.24

On the other hand, P2 stated that her friends have a tolerant attitude. She also feels more attention and support from the staff at the beginning of his studies, especially because she is still in the process of learning Indonesian. This shows that there are efforts to support diversity, even though there are some challenges in social interactions on campus.

“My friends have tolerant attitude. For the staff, during the initial classes, they give me more attention and support because I was still learning the Indonesian language.” T.3.Q.2/O/I/8.10.24

The third point of the third theme regarding their feeling whether their university encourages mutual respect and intercultural tolerance or not. It is found that the participants convey that the campus encourages mutual respect and intercultural tolerance in the academic environment. P2 adds that there is complete mutual respect and intercultural tolerance on campus. This reflects her university’s efforts to create an

inclusive and harmonious atmosphere for all students, regardless of their cultural or religious background.

“Yes, they fully have mutual respect and intercultural tolerance.” T.3.Q.3/O/I/8.10.24

The support and respect felt by students indicate that this private university has succeeded in building an environment that encourages values of tolerance and cultural diversity in its campus community.

3.1.4. Theme Four: Equality

The first point of the fourth theme regarding their feeling whether they receive the same treatment as local students or not in terms of course assignment, roles in groups, or opportunities to participate in campus activities. It is found that the participants have varying experiences regarding equal treatment with local students at this university. P1 said that in academic assignments, especially in Islamic courses, he feels that he does not get equal opportunities because he is only asked to participate without being required to complete assignments, such as studying the Qur'an, which affects his academic grades. He hopes that he has the opportunity to study according to his religion. However, for other academic activities such as seminars and webinars, he said that he gets equal opportunities.

“When it comes to task assignments like I mentioned before, for Islamic courses, the lecturer asks us to study the Qur'an. I am just asked to join in, but I'm not required to complete the tasks, so I feel like I'm missing out an equal opportunity. Since these tasks contribute to our score. I hope, I have the chance to study according to my own religion. For other academic activities such as seminars and webinars, I am given equal opportunities.” T.4.Q.1/R/I/30.9.24

P2 stated that she gets the same treatment as local students, even though at the beginning of his studies she receives more attention from staff and lecturers as a new student.

“Yes, I got the same treatment now although in my early semester I got the more attention from the staff and lecturers because I was freshman student.” T.4.Q.1/O/I/8.10.24

The second point of the fourth theme regarding their specific experience that they may face related to equality or inequality. It is found that international students at this university receive equal treatment in various academic aspects. P1 mentions his positive

experience related to equality, it is when he is asked to present material according to his religion in an Islamic medicine class in the second semester. This shows inclusive treatment and respect for differences.

“In terms of equality, during the second semester in an Islamic medicine class, I was asked to present according to my own religion. This is an example of the equal treatment I have experienced. For the inequality, I think I do not find it.” T.4.Q.2/R/I/30.9.24

Both agree that they did not have specific experiences related to inequality while on campus. This reflects the university efforts to create a fair and equal atmosphere for all students.

The third point of the fourth theme regarding their feeling about the equality between local students and international students at this university. It is found that the participants feel that the equality between local and international students at this university is well established. P1 said that before coming to Indonesia, he feels very introvert, but after arriving at Surabaya, he feels a pleasant and interesting atmosphere of friendship, especially between international and local students. He feels that there is no difference in treatment, and all are considered equal.

“When I was in Timor Leste, I felt like I was very introvert, but after coming to Indonesia, the friendships here have been really interesting and fun, especially between international and local students. They do not see us as different people. We are the same.” T.4.Q.3/R/I/30.9.24

3.1.5. Theme Five: Social integration.

The first point of the fifth theme regarding their feeling whether they have integrated into the academic and social community at their university or not. It is found that the participants feel well integrated into the academic and social communities at this university. P1 said that he has been adapt well to the academic environment for example by joining student organizations, participating in community service activities to Malaysia, and visiting Islamic boarding schools twice. The visits include health empowerment tasks at Islamic boarding schools by conducting outreach on HIV/AIDS in Madura, as well as taking a short course to learn about Islamic boarding school culture.

“I think, I have integrated quite well into the academic environment. I joined student organization, I went to Malaysia for community service, and I have even been to Islamic boarding schools twice. The first time, I have an assignment for Health Empowerment

in Islamic Boarding School where we were asked to conduct a socialization about HIV/AIDS in Madura. The second time, I participated in a short course to learn about the culture at Islamic Boarding School.” T.5.Q.1/R/I/30.9.24

The second point of the fifth theme regarding their experience difficulties in making friends or collaborating academically with students from different cultural backgrounds. It is found that the participants have different experiences regarding the difficulties in making friends or collaborating academically with students from different cultural backgrounds. P1 admits that at first, he faces difficulties, especially related to language and religious differences. However, after going through one till two semesters, he manages to adjust by learning the culture and respecting what is prohibited in his friends' religions.

“At first, I faced difficulties, especially with the language and religion. However, after going through the first until two semesters, I can blend with them by learning about the culture and respecting what is prohibited in my friends' religion.” T.5.Q.2/R/I/30.9.24

On the other hand, P2 stated that she never experiences difficulties in making friends or collaborating academically. This reflects the efforts to build harmonious relationships in the multicultural environment of this university.

“No, I never experienced it.” T.5.Q.2/O/I/8.10.24

The third point of the fifth theme regarding university programs or activities that help international students integrate with local students. It is found that this university provides various programs and activities that help international students integrate with local students. P1 mentions that he has participated in programs from the faculty and the International Office. The programs from the faculty, such as article and thesis writing training involving young doctors, it helps him in academic aspects. Meanwhile, the programs from the International Office helps him learn culture, language, and how to socialize.

“Yes, they provide. The programs that I have ever participated is from the faculty and International Office. For example, activities from the faculty taught me how to write an articles and thesis, which involved young doctors. Meanwhile, from the International Office, I learned about culture, language, and how to socialize.” T.5.Q.3/R/I/30.9.24

P2 also stated that the university provides many activities, such as the Student Activity Unit (UKM), which she participates in. Through these activities, she finds it easier to mingle with local students. These programs demonstrate the university's commitment to supporting the social integration of international students.

“Yes, they provide many activities and programs. Such as Student Activity Unit. I join of that activity. It makes me easier to integrate with local students.” T.5.Q.3/O/I/8.10.24

3.2. Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that international students from Timor Leste in Surabaya experience positive outcomes across five key aspects of multiculturalism: recognition of diversity, social justice, tolerance, equality, and social integration. These aspects are crucial in fostering an inclusive educational environment that promotes understanding and respect among students from various backgrounds. The findings align with previous research that emphasizes the importance of multicultural education in shaping positive attitudes and behaviors among students. The emphasis on social justice and tolerance reflects the adaptability and resilience of Timor Leste students when interacting within diverse communities. The acceptance and promotion of fairness within educational spaces are likely driven by the inclusive policies of Surabaya-based universities. According to previous research by Berry [15] showed that effective multicultural experiences are characterized by environments where tolerance and social justice are deeply ingrained in social interactions and institutional practices. The recognition of diversity, for instance, indicates that Timor Leste students feel acknowledged and respected for their unique cultural identities, which is crucial for their psychological well-being and academic success.

The students' reported high levels of tolerance show that their university is comparatively tolerant of cultural diversity, which makes it easier for Timor Leste students to integrate. This result aligns with Verkuyten et al.'s research, which emphasizes how crucial tolerance is to promoting good intergroup relations in heterogeneous cultures[16]. The international students from Timor Leste studying in Indonesia face unique challenges related to cultural diversity, adjustment and language barrier [17]. Students living in Surabaya often encounter situations where their peers engage in conversations using the Javanese language and Bahasa, which at times leaves them unable to comprehend the content of the discussion, not only during conversations with peers but also during lectures, communication barriers often arise, particularly when lecturers use terms that students encounter for the first time [18].

Social integration, another key aspect, underscores the students' ability to form meaningful connections within the host community. This finding aligns with the previous research that who posits that social integration is a critical component of cross-cultural

adaptation [19]. The Timor Leste students' successful integration in Surabaya may be attributed to the city's cosmopolitan nature and the presence of supportive networks, such as student organizations and cultural exchange programs. However, this contrasts with the experiences of international students in more homogeneous societies, where social integration is often hindered by cultural and linguistic barriers [20]. The comparative analysis suggests that the socio-cultural context of the host community plays a significant role in shaping the lived experiences of international students.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The lived experiences of Timor Leste students in Surabaya provide valuable insights into how multicultural contexts can foster positive outcomes. The five aspects of recognition of diversity, social justice, tolerance, equality, and social integration highlight the potential for educational institutions and communities to be sites of intercultural harmony. These findings emphasize the importance of continued efforts to maintain inclusive practices and further research on diverse international student populations in Indonesia.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Thank both participants of this study for the meaningful contributions.

References

- [1] Nisa C. Cultural Management of Religious Tolerance in Multicultural-Based Islamic Education Learning in State Schools. *Istawa: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*. 2021 Jun;6(1):30.
- [2] Smith RA, Khawaja NG. A review of the acculturation experiences of international students. *Int J Intercult Relat*. 2011 Nov;35(6):699–713.
- [3] Hapsari Y, Hamamah. Investigating Socio-Cultural Adaptation of International Students in Indonesian Higher Education. *Proceedings of the Brawijaya International Conference on Multidisciplinary Sciences and Technology (BICMST 2020)*. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*. Paris, France: Atlantis Press; 2020. <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.201021.042..>

- [4] Bamford J, Pollard L. *Cultural Journeys in Higher Education: Student Voices and Narratives*, 1st ed. Bingley: Emerald Publishing Limited; 2019. <https://doi.org/10.1108/9781787438583>.
- [5] Jatmikowati SH. Unveiling the Lived Experiences of Western Indonesian Students in Javan Higher Education Institutions: A Phenomenological Exploration. *Jurnal Administrasi Publik Public Administration Journal*. 2024 Jun;14(1):18–28.
- [6] Stake RE. *Qualitative Research: Studying How Things Work*. New York: Guilford Publications, Inc; 2010.
- [7] Creswell JW. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. 2018.
- [8] Spiegelberg H. *Doing phenomenology*. Dordrecht, Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff; 1975. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-010-1670-4>.
- [9] Matua GA. *Nurse Res*. 2015.
- [10] S. B. T. E. J. Merriam, “Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation. 4th ed. Jossey-Bass; 2016.
- [11] Englander M. The interview: data collection in descriptive phenomenological human scientific research. *J Phenomenol Psychol*. 2012;43(1):13–35.
- [12] Stan Lester Developments. *An introduction to phenomenological research*. 1999.
- [13] Braun V, Clarke V. Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qual Res Psychol*. 2006;3(2):77–101.
- [14] Patton MQ. *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. 4th ed. SAGE Publications; 2015.
- [15] Berry JW. Acculturation: living successfully in two cultures. *Int J Intercult Relat*. 2005 Nov;29(6):697–712.
- [16] Verkuyten M, Yogeeswaran K, Adelman L. Intergroup Toleration and Its Implications for Culturally Diverse Societies. *Soc Issues Policy Rev*. 2019 Jan;13(1):5–35.
- [17] Wahyuningsih M. Challenges of Foreign Students’ Cultural Adjustment to Indonesian Culture and Impacts on Their Academic Achievements. *KnE Social Sciences*. 2020;(Feb); <https://doi.org/10.18502/kss.v4i4.6479>.
- [18] Hapsari Y, Hamamah H. International students in Indonesia: A study on academic and socio-cultural adjustment. *Proceedings of the First International Conference on Advances in Education, Humanities, and Language, ICEL 2019, Malang, Indonesia, 23-24 March 2019*. 2019; doi:10.4108/eai.23-3-2019.2284956
- [19] Kim YY. Integrative communication theory of cross-cultural adaptation. *The International Encyclopedia of Intercultural Communication*. Wiley; 2017. pp. 1–13.

[20] Aydin O. Social interaction between students. *J Int Stud.* 2020 May;10(2):383–400.