



## Anxiety and Uncertainty Management in Intercultural Communication Experienced by Indonesian Students during Short-term Study Abroad

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### **Abstract**

This study aims to determine how Indonesian students manage their anxiety and uncertainty in intercultural communication contexts during their period of study abroad. This research is a qualitative descriptive study. The analysis is carried out based on the theory of Anxiety & Uncertainty Management (AUM) using interviews carried out online through WhatsApp Call as the data collection technique. The author uses seven axioms to analyze Anxiety & Uncertainty Management of Indonesian students overseas. Informants are returnees from South Korea, India, and China who have lived there for five to eight weeks. Of the 13 informants interviewed, the results of the study show that in general, Indonesian students can adapt well to their new environment. They have passed the anxiety phase in the role of intercultural communication. They are quite confident to establish relations with foreigners abroad both with foreign students and local residents.

**Keywords:** *Studying Abroad; AUM; Intercultural Communication; Communication Competence*

### **Introduction**

(Parnawi, 2019) explains the definition of study as a series of mental and body activities to obtain a change of behavior as a result of individual experience in interaction with his environment concerning cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. Meanwhile (Gagne, 1984) writes that study is a process of behavior change as a result of experience and practice. Based on those opinions, it can be concluded that the notion of study, in general, is a relatively constant change in behavior or behavioral potential as a result of strengthened experience or practice. The term "study" in this research refers to the activities of Indonesian students who go abroad to take part in various activities at the host universities within five to eight weeks. Sharpening adaptability, building relationships, and adding experience are three of many urgencies of student involvement in overseas activities. In addition, students who take part in overseas activities can also be involved in collective action related to problem-solving.

Indonesian students who are abroad must try to adjust themselves to social life in a new environment both with other foreign students and with local residents. In intercultural communication, when individuals live in a new environment, the transition of identity that is motivated by cultural

differences occurs because they are experiencing new cultures that are very different from their previous culture. To be able to interact in the new environment, self-adjustment is needed so that they can have a good role as a communicator or communicant in conducting interaction.

For migrant students, education abroad can bring some changes and cause pressure that results in cultural shocks. In intercultural communication, differences often occur. Because of cultural differences, anxiety is a phenomenon that is often experienced by Indonesian students who study abroad.

In order to adapt to the new environment and the people around them, Indonesian students will certainly try to manage themselves so that they can reduce anxiety caused by prejudice and other problems that can hinder the adjustment process in a new environment. By this adaptation process, it is hoped that they will feel comfortable in living life in their new environment, and a communication dynamic will be created which will ultimately be able to make Indonesian students implicate themselves in interacting with people in their new environment more broadly. This research can give guidance in understanding how individuals manage anxiety and uncertainty in facing cultural differences.

### ***Literature Review***

Communication is something that cannot be avoided in human life, even the whole life of a person is full of communication. Communication can be defined as a process of giving messages, ideas, or information, which aims to equalize understanding between the sender and the recipient of the message. (Trenholm, S., & Jensen, 2008) argue that interpersonal communication refers to dyadic communication in which two individuals share the roles of sender and receiver of messages, and become connected through mutual meaning-creating activities. Interpersonal communication involves at least two people with unique and different characteristics, values, opinions, attitudes, thoughts, and behaviors. Gradually, interpersonal communication is more aimed at initiating new relationships and building those relationships. When first getting to know the environment outside the home such as school, a person will meet new friends of the same age and will start the stages of the communication process (Sari, 2017).

Culture is a comprehensive way of life. Culture has complex, abstract, and broad characteristics. Many aspects of culture also determine communicative behavior. These socio-cultural elements are spread over many human social activities and are important components in intercultural communication (Kartika, 2013). Culture is a form or pattern of life. What people do, how they act, and how they live and communicate are responses to their culture. Culture and communication cannot be separated because all communication behavior depends on cultural background (Makmur, Kuswarno, Novianti, and Sjafirah 2019).

(Gudykunst, W. B., & Kim, 1984) suggest that people we know have tried to reduce uncertainty through accurate predictions or relationships. Gudykunst also emphasized that the ability to deal with uncertainty and anxiety affects an individual's ability to communicate effectively and adapt to new environments. Individuals develop communication plans with others to reduce the uncertainty they face (Gudykunst, W. B., & Kim, 1984).

Previous research on students studying abroad for a short period of time by (Koyanagi, 2018) identified the impact of intercultural communication during short-term study abroad which includes five categories of influence: 1) the use of English, 2) interpersonal communication skills, 3) involvement in a global society, 4) an opportunity to open up greater opportunities and 5) a positive attitude towards life. Another study from (Chiocca, 2021) mentioned the importance of dialogue, both with local residents and within the classroom community for transformative learning. These findings encourage international educators to provide an instructional framework that encourages students to engage with local communities critically.

From those of the previous research above, it can be concluded that Indonesian students are involved in communication activities with people in their learning environment. This type of communication is included as interpersonal communication. This research is communication research on the perspective of Indonesian students as communicants. The essence of interpersonal communication is how individuals build, look after, and maintain relationships. In this study, the focus of the authors is on the level of building and maintaining relationships. To find out how Indonesian students build relationships with foreigners, especially abroad, and its relation to culture, the author uses Gudykunst's Anxiety/Uncertainty Management (AUM) theory. AUM theory also mentions how communicators reduce anxiety and uncertainty in cross-cultural situations. Given that there are obstacles to building effective communication. (Gandasari & Kurniullah, A. Z., Sari, H., Mustar, M., Nilamsari, N., Yusa, I. M. M., ... & Ulya, 2021) say that communication is at the core of all cross-cultural interactions. Communication involves sending messages to other people, which translates those messages by giving them meaning. Misunderstanding often occurs in the transmission of messages that are encoded by the sender and decoded by the receiver (Gandasari et al., 2021).

In AUM (Gudykunst, 2005) there are 39 of 47 axioms that present a causal relationship between anxiety and uncertainty which usually occur in intercultural communication. According to (Utami, 2015) AUM is a theory that talks about the effectiveness of intercultural communication. The theory says that the basis for being able to achieve effective communication with strangers or people from different cultures is the ability to control feelings of anxiety and uncertainty.

In this study, the researcher will only use several axioms that will help in understanding the initial encounter of a person with a different culture. The first axiom is self-concept. According to Gudykunst, self-concept is a willingness to see the individual's self-worth when interacting with people of different cultures. This ability will result in advancement in a person to manage anxiety. Self concept consists of personal identities, social identities, and collective self-esteem. The second axiom is motivation to interact with strangers. A communicator needs to seek as much information as possible about a stranger to find alternative explanations for the behavior of the stranger and increase his interest in interacting with strangers. Motivation to interact with stranger includes need for predictability, need for inclusion, and sustain self-concept.

The third axiom is reaction to strangers. A person's ability to process very complex information about people of different cultures will enable him to predict their behavior more accurately. Reaction to strangers consists of empathy, tolerance for ambiguity, and rigid intergroup attitudes. The fourth axiom is the social categorization of strangers. Social category is a person's way to organize the social environment by grouping people into appropriate categories according to him. Social categorization of strangers involves positive expectation, perceived personal similarities, and understanding perceived difference. The fifth axiom is situational processes. Everyone has a concept about the interaction that will be carried out when meeting other people in certain situations and conditions. An increase in the power to perceive that individuals have strength over strangers will result in a decrease in anxiety and a decrease in predictive accuracy in their behavior. Situational processes include of cooperative task, in-group power, and presence of in-group members.

The sixth axiom is connections with strangers. A person's attraction to people of different cultures will reduce anxiety, in other words, anxiety can be minimized when the individual's attraction to other people from different cultures increases. Connections with strangers consists of attraction with strangers, interdependence with strangers, and quality and quantity of contact. The seventh axiom is ethical interaction. Mutual respect and treating fellow human beings according to their dignity and worth is the basis of ethical attitudes that must be possessed by every human being. ethical interaction includes maintaining dignity, moral inclusiveness, and respect to strangers.

To be able to overcome obstacles as a result of cultural differences, communicators must have communication competence. Competence in the field of communication can be seen from two points of view, the first point of view views competence as something that is internally inherent in a person (communicator), while the second point of view considers competence arises when someone interacts with other people so that he is not something. Inherent in the communicator but the impression that is built (Gudykunst, W. B., & Kim, 2003).

### **Method**

This research is a qualitative research through literature and field studies. The initial stage of the research was carried out by collecting library sources, both primary and secondary sources. Researchers create complex images, examine words, report detailed reports from the respondent's point of view, and study cases in real situations. Interviews were conducted with open-ended questions, and to explore the depth of information, the interview format was not formally structured. The purpose of the interview is to explore the views of the researched informants on many things that are very useful for extracting further, complete, and in-depth information. This study used an online interview method with 13 participants who are returnees at a state university in the city of Semarang, Central Java. They are returnees from South Korea, India, and China who had been abroad for five to eight weeks during the 2017-2020 period.

Data analysis in this study begins by examining all data collected from interviews with respondents. Then, the researcher reduces the data by editing, grouping, summarizing the data, and annotating ideas that lead to theories that will be used to find themes or data patterns. The data is presented by organizing steps from the themes or patterns found in the data reduction stage. The data from the literature study and the results of field studies are presented as research findings, abstracted to obtain complete information, and interpreted to produce knowledge for drawing conclusions (Darmalaksana, 2020).

### **Results and Discussion**

The researcher selected 13 informants who were returnees at one of the Semarang state universities. The returnees were selected according to certain criteria determined based on the research objectives as informants.

#### **1. Self-Concept**

Judging from the concept of social identities, the knowledge possessed by informants about the destination country varies. The knowledge they have about the destination country can reduce their anxiety in intercultural contexts. The following are some of the knowledge possessed by the informants regarding the destination country:

“Aku nanya-nanya ke temen aja kayak bajunya, makanan khasnya. Paling baca-baca sama nanya itu... Aku juga nyari tau sih seberapa dinginnya, apakah turun salju dan lain-lain (I just asked my friends how they dress and what traditional food they have. I read information from various sources and asked some questions. I also tried to figure out how cold it was, whether it snowed or not, and so on)”. (Informant 3, India, interview conducted on September 12, 2021)

“Kalo dari negaranya sendiri aku uda riset dari lama karena aku juga ada ketertarikan dengan kultur Korea, musiknya dan macem-macem... Kalo riset tentang negaranya aku mostly cari tau tentang makanannya terus cari tau tentang culture, bersosialisasinya sama tempat-tempat rekreasi yang harus aku kunjungi (About the country, I've been researching for a long time because I also have an interest in Korean culture, its music, and so on. When it comes to researching the country, I mostly try to find out about the food and the culture. I also researched how to socialize with the

environment of the recreational places I had to visit)". (Informant 5, South Korea, interview conducted on September 13, 2021)

From the statements of informant 3 and informant 5, it can be seen that their knowledge of the destination country is quite high. Such knowledge includes; 1) traditional clothing and food. Knowledge of traditional food needs to be done to avoid what Indonesian students should not eat. 2) Knowledge of the weather, it is important to find out how the weather is in the destination country to adjust what clothes to bring before going abroad. 3) Knowledge of the culture of the destination country, it aims to prepare students to minimize culture shock while abroad. 4) Knowledge of must-visit places in South Korea.

## 2. Motivation to Interact with Stranger

The need for Indonesian students to predict the imagination of their new life, as well as various information about the destination country, has been obtained during the training provided by the committee. In the training, the committee provided several materials to prepare prospective students to face bad things or something that did not go well while abroad. The training is mandatory. The following are the results of interviews that show the need to predict the new life that students will lead:

"Materinya itu ada kayak culture shock gitu terus cara pembawaan diri kita di luar negeri biar orang Indonesia dipandang baik sama belajar tentang SDG. Sama advice sih karena perpanjangan visanya kan beda-beda di tiap negara (The material presented was about culture shock and lessons on how to present ourselves abroad so that Indonesians were seen as good individuals. We also learned about the SDGs. Besides, we were advised about visas because the extension of the visa varies from country to country)". (Informant 1, China, interview conducted on September 3, 2021)

"Yang aku inget banget tuh diajarin, dikasih tau tentang culture shock gitu. Jadi step-stepnya culture shock, dari awal datang misal kayak adaptasi, culture shocknya beneran sampek di level uda nyaman banget dan itu pas disananya aku ngerasain banget sih (What I really remember about what was being taught, we were told about culture shock. The steps for culture shock from the first arrival were explained, such as from the adaptation process to the comfortable adjustment stage. I could really feel it when I was there (China))". (Informant 11, South Korea, interview conducted on September 19, 2021)

Materials about culture shock were given during the preparation training for Indonesian students abroad. Although the duration of students staying abroad is relatively short, around five to eight weeks, culture shock can still occur in students. The committee described the stages of culture shock. The first stage is the honeymoon phase, a stage that will make one feel happy when arriving in a new country, especially a country that has never been visited before. The second stage is the crisis phase. Differences in the new country made people feel uncomfortable. These differences are partly due to different foods, difficult accents, and feelings of loneliness. For this reason, one can feel alienated from the outside world. The third stage is the adaptation phase. The phase where a person has started to interact with the environment in a new country. The fourth stage is the two-cultural phase, a person feels comfortable living with two cultures at once, so it is hoped that in this phase, Indonesian students can predict what they will face and how to behave in certain situations.

## 3. Reaction to strangers

In this axiom, Indonesian students realize that they have similarities with other foreign students that they share the same vision and mission. The similarity that they have creates a sense of empathy for the informants so that the communication carried out by the informants can be said to be effective. Informants in this situation choose to be tolerant of the attitudes or values of other foreign students that do not suit them. An increased tolerance for ambiguity results in a decrease in anxiety in intercultural communication.

“Ada yang dari Rusia itu dia pengen seenaknya sendiri, kalo yang dari Inggris itu banyak maunya tapi yauda toleransi aja. Cuma ada suatu saat kita ingetin mereka gak boleh gini gak boleh gitu (There were those from Russia who were selfish, while those from England who wanted a lot. In dealing with them, we just could try to tolerate their behavior. There was a time when we needed to remind them that they couldn't do this, they couldn't do that)”. (Informant 4, China, interview conducted on September 12, 2021)

“kita sering meeting sama panitia sana buat bahas materi perminggu dan enaknyanya jadwalnya gak padet banget. Perkenalan korea gitu, kita saling bonding satu sama lain. Setelah rehearsal persiapan kelas, kita campaign dan tour (We often had meetings with the committee there to discuss weekly material and the good thing was that the schedule was not too tight. They shared information about the introduction of Korea, and we bonded with each other. After the rehearsal of class preparation, we did a campaign and tour)”. (Informant 11, South Korea, interview conducted on September 19, 2021)

Reaction to strangers during interactions is also important to reduce the anxiety and uncertainty felt by Indonesian students. This reaction can be seen from how communication occurs during the ongoing activity. If the reaction given by foreigners to Indonesian students is positive, the anxiety and uncertainty experienced by Indonesian students will decrease as experienced by informants 4 and 11.

#### 4. Social Categorization of Strangers

Informants have a good view of local residents because they have religious tolerance and good backgrounds. The informants are aware of the various perspectives, so they try to adjust to the attitudes of the majority group. The understanding they have of group differences and the efforts of communication skills with different cultural awareness can reduce anxiety and increase their ability to predict the behavior of others on the appraisal given to them.

“Terus anak-anak sd disana tuh diajarin semua pakaian (daerah), tiap minggu atau tiap bulan tuh ada acara jadi mereka harus tau pakaian-pakaian daerahnya apa aja. Mereka sangat pede (Then the children there in elementary school are taught all (regional) clothes every week. Even every month, there was an event to showcase their regional clothes so they had to know every regional clothe. They were very confident)”. (Informant 3, India, interview conducted on September 12, 2021)

“Mereka cukup respek juga sama aku. Aku kan muslim, mereka ini nonmuslim. Bapaknyanya agamanya Hindu, ibunya Sikh. Aku solat ya ditempat sembahyangnya mereka, gak masalah. Beradaptasi dengan keluarga mereka sih, cuma ya yang aku culture shock ternyata mereka gak setiap hari makan daging ya. Mereka makan daging cuma hari selasa dan sabtu kalo gak salah. Jadi selain hari-hari itu, mereka pantang makan daging (They had respect on me too. I am Muslim, and they are non-Muslim. His father is Hindu, and his mother is Sikh. I prayed at their place of prayer, and they had no problem about it. I had adapted to their families. However, the culture shock I was facing is that they don't eat meat every day. They only eat meat on Tuesdays and Saturdays if I'm not mistaken. So apart from those days, they don't eat meat)”. (Informant 13, India, interview conducted on October 15, 2021)

Informant 3 said that children in India must know all the traditional clothes in India, there are even special events made as a platform for local residents to showcase their traditional clothes. Informant 13 did not find it difficult to perform the obligatory prayers as a Muslim in India because his host family permitted him to pray at the place where his host parents pray.

## 5. Situational Process

The situational process made informants categorize other foreign student friends based on the closeness of their relationship to be able to give warnings related to things they think are wrong. This situation shows a communication skill related to interaction management related to attitudes towards with whom they should communicate in managing anxiety that may arise due to various perceptions in intercultural communicators.

“dikit-dikit aku harus liat komposisi makanan kan, ini ada *dwaeji* (babi)nya gak, ini ada hamnya gak terus nanya temen aku ini ada komposisi babinya atau enggak (I always have to look at the composition of the food whether it contains *dwaeji* (pork) or not, whether it has ham in it or not, and I also ask my friend whether it has pork in it or not)”. (Informant 5, South Korea, interview conducted on September 13, 2021)

“Konfliknya lebih ke personal sih. Jadi klub malam di Indo gak terlalu diekspose kayak di Korea. Nah kebetulan temen cewe, yang satu projek aku ini, diajak ketemuan sama temen di club malam. Sejak saat itu dia sering ke klub tiap malam. Waktu itu aku ilegal untuk keluar kemana-mana karena under age, jadi aku minta tolong temen aku yang dari Aussie ini untuk liatin temen cewe tadi. Aku takut dia kenapa-napa. Dan dia sempet ilang sampek satu guest house itu panik. Soalnya dia gak bisa dihubungin sama sekali. Sampek penjaga guest house bilang kalo gak bisa ditemuin seharian disuruh lapor polisi, aku panik. Terus dia balik paginya. Dia sempet didiemin sama satu guest house dan dia bilang kita over reacting jadi kita sebel juga (The conflict is more personal. Nightclubs in Indonesia are not as exposed as they are in Korea. Well, coincidentally, a girl friend who was on my project was invited to meet her friend at a night club. Since then, he often goes to the club every night. At that time, it was illegal for me to go out anywhere because I was under age, so I asked my friend from Aussie to keep an eye on my girlfriend. I was afraid if something bad would happen. One day, she was lost until the whole people guest house got panicked because she couldn't be contacted at all until the guest house guard said that if she couldn't be found all day, we had to report to the police, I got more panicked. Then she came back in the morning. The whole house was annoyed with her, and she said we were overreacting so we got irritated too)”. (Informant 8, South Korea, interview conducted on September 13, 2021)

The closeness between informant 5 and his foreign friends can be said to be quite close, considering that they always pay attention to informant 5 to avoid eating pork. Then, informant 13 has a close relationship with his foreign friend. It can be seen from the feeling of annoyance when his friend had left without telling him and made him feel worried. This closeness relationship creates a sense of care for others.

## 6. Connection with Strangers

When Indonesian students have an interest in foreigners and want to start interacting with local residents and students from other countries, various worries will surround Indonesian students to start these interactions. The following are the results of interviews with informants:

“Enggak sih, biasa aja. Aneh sih itu padahal aku tuh kalo di lingkungan kuliah sebenarnya kalo mau nyapa orang agak gimana gitu. Waktu itu aku berusaha biar mereka tuh gak punya bad impression. Jadi aku berusaha ramah gitu, talkative lah. Jadi ya coba aja ngobrol sama mereka (No, it's normal. However, it's weird for me because when I was in college, I was afraid to greet people. At that time, I just tried to do so so that they didn't a bad impression on me. I tried to be friendly and talkative. I tried to talk to them)”. (Informant 1, China, interview conducted on September 3, 2021)

Informant 1 tries to be a person who likes to talk and does not feel awkward with foreigners abroad. Informant 1 hopes that foreigners who have interacted with him have good thoughts about the personality of Indonesians.

“Mungkin lebih ke murid-murid sih kak karena mereka masih SMA dan aku semester dua jadi umurnya gak jauh-jauh banget. Jadi aku lebih nervous, deg-degan, aduh gimana ya kalo misalkan mereka ngejudge aku. Takutnya mereka gak ngerti apa yang aku sampein. Tapi ada rasa tertarik sih untuk ngasih materi, ngejelasin ke mereka gitu (Maybe it was more about the students because they were still in high school and I was in the second semester, so the age difference was not far apart. I felt more nervous wondering they would judge me badly. I was also afraid that they could not get what I explained. However, there was a feeling of interest in giving the material and explaining it to them)”. (Informant 6, South Korea, interview conducted on 13 September 2021)

Informant 6 felt anxiety when running the program. This situation was triggered by fears that the students would judge the informant badly considering that the age difference between the informant 6 and the high school students was not far apart. In addition, the informant was also worried about the students' understanding of the material presented by informant 6. But over time, the informant finally had a connection with the students.

## 7. Ethnical Interaction

The strength of ethnic groups or the encouragement that individuals receive from their ethnic groups can be seen from how Muslim ethnic groups still maintain the prohibition in their belief as can be seen from the habit of not eating non-halal food. Several things are done by Indonesian students in looking for halal food:

“Kalo masalah makanan halal, mereka uda ngerti. Leader aku, buddy aku uda tau kalo aku muslim, mereka berusaha nyariin aku restoran yang halal. Kalo gak ada yauda mereka beliin aku makanan sandwich (When it comes to halal food, they already understood. My leader and also my buddy already knew that I am a Muslim, so they were trying to find me a halal restaurant. If there was no halal restaurant, they would buy me a sandwich)”. (Informant 2, China, interview conducted on September 5, 2021)

“Beberapa restoran tau kan karena aku dan temen aku pake kerudung, mereka tau mereka ngomong ini ada daging babinnya emang bisa terus kita bilang yauda diilangin aja daging babinnya atau ya masak sendiri karena ada beberapa bahan yang dibawain ibu aku dari Indonesia. Kalo snack-snack di convenience store biasa aku cek komposisi (Some restaurant waiters recognized us because my friend and I were wearing headscarves, then they said that the food has pork in it. We could ask to remove the pork or cook the food ourselves because there are were ingredients that my mother brought from Indonesia. When it comes to snacks at convenience stores, I usually check the composition)”. (Informant 5, South Korea, interview conducted on September 13, 2021)

Informant 2 had previously informed her Chinese friends that she was a Muslim and provided information about what foods that were not eaten by her. Therefore, the people around informant 2 helped him to find a halal restaurant. This condition greatly facilitated informant 2 to quickly adapt to a non-Muslim environment. Furthermore, informant 5 conveyed how easy it is to avoid eating pork because she wears a hijab so that some local residents know that she does not eat pork. In addition to this method, informant 5 chose to cook the food from the ingredients she brought from Indonesia.

Anxiety that arises in Indonesian students when interacting with foreign students and local residents includes concerns about the existence of different cultures and customs, as well as tension because they do not know much about the customs values of the destination country. This anxiety is



overcome in ways such as instilling self-confidence, being open to new environments, and having the willingness to build relationships. The uncertainty experienced by Indonesian students is uncertainty in the form of thinking about whether they will be able to adapt well, whether they can carry out activities smoothly and behavioral uncertainty in whether other foreign students can work well together. Efforts to reduce uncertainty can be done by obtaining information about the destination country, such as finding out how the local culture is, how the habits of local residents are, and other important information.

In intercultural communication between Indonesian students and foreign students and local residents, Indonesian students are aware of the differences in the background of each individual, and Indonesian students can adjust the style of communication carried out according to the individual's background. In interacting with foreign students and local residents, Indonesian students create new categories according to the individuals they encounter. Indonesian students are also open to a variety of new information, both obtained from other parties and independent information seeking.

Being open to new information means that Indonesian students do not rely on previous experiences but are also open to all information that can enrich their perspectives. When interacting with someone from a different culture, the individual needs to have a perspective outside of what was previously owned. In interactions between Indonesian students and foreign students as well as local residents, Indonesian students do things that show an open attitude towards other perspectives. Through this, Indonesian students see other perspectives outside the perspective of themselves or their groups. Cultural differences can have implications for activities, where individuals must be able to make adjustments to the cultural background of the communication partner. The efforts made by Indonesian students with foreign students as well as local residents to be sensitive to the situation are the hallmark of communication between two or more cultures. The communicator's sensitivity to the dynamics of communication encourages a more appropriate response, which in turn results in more effective communication.

Inter-cultural communication is cannot be separated from obstacles and potential problems that may arise in the process. Such as undelivered messages to the communicant or comprehension in understanding different meanings. These obstacles and potential problems can be overcome by developing intercultural communication competence.

### ***Conclusion***

The cultural differences that Indonesian students have with foreign students and local residents create alienation in the communication process, causing great anxiety and uncertainty. Anxiety and uncertainty must be managed mindfully to produce effective communication. When Indonesian students live in a new environment abroad, they have both positive and negative feelings. Positive feelings that arise are enthusiasm and a sense of pleasure to be able to carry out various activities that they have never done before. While the negative feelings that arise are anxiety and worry because they do not have definite knowledge about local culture.

Indonesian students who are informants in this study have adapted well to their new environment. They have passed the anxiety phase in the role of intercultural communication. They have friends and host families, participate actively in campus activities and learn about the local culture. This situation occurs because they have gone through stages under Gudykunst's AUM theory in seven axioms. In addition, the confidence and courage possessed by Indonesian students are high enough so that they can build relationships with foreigners. The individual's ability to communicate following local cultural norms and values depends on the results of the adaptation process carried out. This research shows that maximum intercultural adaptation has been achieved because Indonesian students and local residents can accept each other's culture.

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