Adaptive Strategies of Migrant Students in Adjusting to a New Campus Environment: A Case Study at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung

by Encup Supriatna

Adaptive Strategies of Migrant Students in Adjusting to a New Campus Environment: A Case Study at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Keywords: Migrant Students; Adaptation Strategies; New Campus Environment; UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung. *Article history:* Received 2023-01-14 Revised 2023-03-12 Accepted 2023-05-10	This study aimed to explore the adaptation strategies used by migrant students to adjust to a new university environment. Using a qualitative approach, the study was conducted at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, Indonesia. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with 20 migrant students from various regions in Indonesia. The findings of the study revealed several strategies used by migrant students, including seeking social support, participating in extracurricular activities, establishing a new routine, and managing finances. These strategies were effective in helping the migrant students to overcome the challenges of adjusting to a new campus environment. The study contributes to the literature on student migration and provides insights for universities to support the adaptation of migrant students better.

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1.   INTRODUCTION

The experience of adjusting to a new environment can be challenging for anyone, especially for students who migrate to study in a new academic institution. Students' adaptation to the campus environment is essential in higher education as it can affect their academic and social performance (Oliveira, Grenha Teixeira, Torres, & Morais, 2021). This study aims to explore the adaptive strategies used by migrant students to adjust to a new campus environment, specifically at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung.

UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung is a state Islamic university in Bandung, West Java, Indonesia. The university attracts students from various regions in Indonesia, making it a suitable setting for this study. The migrant students in this study come from outside the province of West Java to study at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung.

This study employs a qualitative research approach, using in-depth interviews and focus group discussions as data collection methods. The study's findings will provide insight into the challenges migrant students face in adjusting to a new campus environment and the strategies they use to overcome them. Additionally, this study aims to contribute to the literature on migration and education, particularly in the context of higher education.

The increasing number of migrant students in universities has become a significant issue in higher education. The challenges faced by migrant students in adapting to a new campus environment are multi-dimensional, including academic, social, and cultural aspects. Therefore, understanding the adaptive strategies used by migrant students is essential in providing effective support to promote their success in university (Barber, Hayes, Johnson, Márquez-Magaña, & 10, 2020). According to Akgun and Ciarrochi, adaptive strategies are "cognitive and behavioral processes that individuals use to manage internal and external demands during stress and adversity" (Choi et al., 2022). Previous studies have found that migrant students employ various adaptive strategies, such as seeking social support, engaging in extracurricular activities, and developing a sense of belonging in the university community (Gargano, 2009).

This study aims to explore the adaptive strategies of migrant students in adjusting to a new campus environment at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, a university located in West Java, Indonesia. By conducting a case study, we aim to provide an in-depth understanding of the unique experiences and challenges faced by migrant students in this particular context. The findings of this study could potentially inform the development of interventions and programs to support migrant students' academic and social success in university.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

a) Adaptation

Adaptation / self-adjustment is changing oneself according to environmental conditions and the environment according to circumstances (self-desire). Changing oneself according to environmental conditions is passive (autoplastic). For example, a village midwife must adapt to the norms and values in the community where she works. On the other hand, if an individual tries to change the environment according to his wishes, he is active (alloplasty). For example, a village midwife wants to change the behavior of village mothers to breastfeed their babies following lactation management (Hebbsale Mallappa & Shivamurthy, 2021).

According to Robbins, adaptation is a process that places humans to achieve goals or needs to deal with changing environmental and social conditions to survive. Based on the two definitions above, it can be concluded that adaptation is a defense acquired from birth or obtained by learning from experience to overcome problems. Individuals or groups must adapt when entering a new environment, for example; family, company, nation, and organization or response to their environment (Suwanto, Sunarsi, & Achmad, 2022).

There are at least three kinds of adaptation: (1) functional adaptation. (2) epi/genetic adaptation, and (3) cultural adaptation. Functional adaptation involves changes in organ system function, morphology, biochemical composition, anatomy, and composition of the human body. Epigenetic adaptation refers to specific hereditary characteristics that have tolerance and survival both individually and in the population. At the same time, cultural adaptation is a non-biological adaptation in behavior, society and equipment, a human non-biological response to survive. Humans are the only creatures that live with various cultures that they create based on their thoughts (Badcock, Friston, Ramstead, Ploeger, & Hohwy, 2019).

Furthermore, Gudykunst explained that cultural adaptation is a long adjustment process to gain comfort in a new environment. Human adaptation today may not be the same as in the future. But humans will continue to learn to adapt to their cultural and biological capacities. Likewise, the adaptation process carried out in a family, between one family and another, must be different and adapted to the cultural conditions adopted by each family (Peng & Wu, 2019).

b) Migration

Migration is a form of population movement aiming to settle from one place to another across political/national boundaries. According to the United Nations, migration is a permanent change of

residence from one administrative unit to another. However, according to Gould and Prothero, even though individuals have officially moved from place to place, if they intend to return to their previous place, it must be interpreted as circular mobility, not migration. There are various types of circular migration; some are round trip, periodic, seasonal and long-term. Circular migration can occur between villages, towns, cities, and towns (Douglas, Cetron, & Spiegel, 2019).

According to Everett S. Lee, the volume of migration in a region increases in correlation with the level of regional diversity in the region. According to Lee, there are the following factors in the region of origin and the region of destination:

1) Positive aspects (+) provide a profit value when residing there.
2) convey negative or detrimental values associated with living in that location, so that someone feels the need to move.
3) Neutral factors (0), specifically, those that do not impact an individual's desire to remain in their place of origin or move to a new location. (Hu, Chang, & Lin, 2021).

In addition to the aforementioned three factors, there is an additional factor that represents an intermediate obstacle. The impediments have a significant impact on the magnitude of population mobility. Moving expenses, the topography of the area of origin and destination, and means of transportation are examples of intermediate barriers. Individuals can positively or negatively evaluate an area and determine whether to move or remain in their place of origin, making the individual factor a significant factor in population mobility (Fufa, Brown, Hauge, Johnsen, & Fjellheim, 2023).

According to the Todaro model, migration results from disparities between expected and actual incomes in rural and urban areas. The fundamental assumption is that these migrants evaluate the available employment opportunities and select the one that maximizes the anticipated benefits of migration. Expected benefits are determined by the fundamental differences between rural and urban work and the likelihood of that migration for urban work (Panwar & Mishra, 2020).

The Todaro migration model has four basic premises as follows:

1) Diverse rational economic considerations drive migration and are directly related to the benefits or advantages of migration itself. Consideration of benefits and costs, particularly financially and psychologically, is one example.
2) The decision to migrate is primarily influenced by the income disparity between rural and urban areas. The magnitude of the income gap is determined by two variables: the difference between actual wages in the city and the village, and the likelihood of finding employment in urban areas that offer the expected income level.
3) The likelihood of obtaining a job in urban areas is negatively correlated with urban unemployment rates.
4) Migration persists despite the fact that the urban unemployment rate is already comparatively high, particularly in nations with a surplus of labor force. Basically, people who migrate because they want to increase their income or better economic factors than the previous area (Jończy et al., 2021).

People tend to choose the shortest distance and centers of economic development, as revealed by Ravenstein's analysis of migration behavior. According to Ravenstein, one of the leading causes of population migration is the factor of distance. This is further supported by the push and pull factors of migration, as disclosed by Lee, which indicate that the origin and destination conditions influence the volume of migration (Gao, Qi, Liu, Liu, & Pan, 2023).

Ravenstein put forward some of the migration behavior of the population, known as Ravenstein's Law, namely:

1) The nearest places tend to be chosen by migrants as destinations.
2) The difficulty of getting a job in the area of origin is the most dominant factor influencing a person's migration. And the possibility factor for getting a better job and income in the destination area. The destination area must have a higher place utility value than the area of origin.

3) News from relatives or friends who have migrated to other areas is critical information for people who want to migrate.
4) Negative information from the destination area will reduce the intention of the population to migrate.
5) The higher the influence of the city on a person, the higher the level of mobility.
6) The higher a person's income, the higher the frequency of mobility.
7) The direction and flow of population migration are towards where the information comes from. So migrants tend to choose areas with friends or relatives living in the destination area.
8) The migration pattern for a person or group of people is difficult to predict because many are influenced by sudden events such as natural disasters, wars, and disease epidemics.
9) People who are young and unmarried are more mobile than those who are married.
10) People with lower education usually have less mobility than those with higher education (Benassi, Bonifazi, Heins, Licari, & Tucci, 2019).

c) **Migrant Students and Higher Education**

The literature on migration and higher education suggests that migrant students face unique challenges when adjusting to a new campus environment. These challenges may include linguistic and cultural barriers, social isolation, financial difficulties, and adapting to new teaching and learning styles ((Bista, Sharma, & Gaulee, 2018); (Löfgren, 2018)).

Research has shown that migrant students often use adaptive strategies to navigate these challenges and successfully integrate into the new campus environment (Poyrazli, Kavanaugh, Baker, & Al‐Timimi, 2004); ((Kim, 2009)). These adaptive strategies may include seeking social support networks, engaging in extracurricular activities, and developing relationships with faculty and staff (Kim, 2009).

In Indonesia, there has been limited research on the adaptive strategies of migrant students in higher education. However, a study by (Bryant, 2005) found that migrant students in Indonesia face similar challenges as those in other countries, including language barriers, social isolation, and difficulties in adapting to new academic and cultural norms.

Overall, the literature suggests that migrant students face unique challenges when adjusting to a new campus environment but that adaptive strategies can help them successfully integrate into the new academic and social culture. This study aims to explore the adaptive strategy of migrant students at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung and contribute to the literature on migration and higher education in Indonesia.

3. **METHODS**

The study employed a qualitative research design, precisely a case study approach, to explore the adaptive strategies used by migrant students in adjusting to the new campus environment at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung. According to (Creswell, 2014), a case study design is appropriate for exploring a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, which is particularly useful when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not evident. The case study approach allows for an in-depth understanding of the experiences and perspectives of the participants (Yin, 2014). In this study, the participants were selected through purposive sampling, which according to (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015), is a deliberate and selective sampling method that allows the researcher to choose participants who can provide valuable and relevant information about the research topic. The sample consisted of 20 migrant students enrolled at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung for at least one academic year. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis, which involved identifying recurring patterns and themes in the data (Mahmood et al., 2021).

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The study found that migrant students at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung used various adaptive strategies to adjust to the new campus environment. These strategies included language learning, seeking social support, actively participating in academic and extracurricular activities, and establishing a routine.

a) Indonesian Language Learning

Language learning is recognized as an essential factor in helping migrant students adjust to a new academic environment. This can influence how successful migrant students are in obtaining a university degree and their success in the workplace. Migrant students who cannot speak Indonesian fluently may experience difficulties communicating with their colleagues on campus. Effective communication is essential for collaborating on group assignments, building networks, and broadening understanding in an academic environment. Understanding course material in Indonesian is also crucial for migrant students. Many study programs at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati use Indonesian as the language of instruction in lectures and research. If migrant students cannot understand Indonesian, they may have difficulty understanding the concepts and material.

Learning Indonesian can also help migrant students feel more confident in their academic work. By understanding and being able to speak Indonesian, migrant students can feel more comfortable and confident in presentations, discussions, and other assignments. Apart from helping migrant students adapt to the academic environment, language learning can also help them adjust to the local culture. Migrant students who can speak Indonesian can more easily interact with the local community and understand cultural values that are important to Indonesian society. Learning Indonesian can also help migrant students develop interpersonal skills in everyday life and the workplace. The ability to communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds broadens your network and helps build strong relationships.

In today's global work environment, speaking Indonesian is also an advantage for migrant students in finding work. Many international companies are looking for employees who speak more than one language, mainly Indonesian. Learning Indonesian can also help migrant students understand Indonesian politics and economics. An understanding of the Indonesian language and local culture can help migrant students understand social and political dynamics in Indonesia, as well as keep abreast of business developments in the country. Learning Indonesian can also help migrant students broaden their horizons about Indonesia as a country with unique cultural and linguistic diversity. In the learning process, migrant students can learn about various regional languages, customs, and Indonesian cuisine.

In conclusion, learning Indonesian is essential in helping migrant students adjust to Indonesia's academic and social environment. Migrant students who speak Indonesian can more easily interact with the local community, understand cultural values, and expand networks. In addition, the ability to speak Indonesian is also an advantage in finding work in Indonesia or international companies operating in Indonesia.

b) Looking for Social Support

In addition to language learning, migrant students also need social support from peers and professors to adjust to a new academic and social environment. Many migrant students feel lonely and alienated because they are in a different environment from where they come from. Social support from peers is crucial for migrant students. Having peers with similar experiences, migrant students can feel more comfortable and get the emotional support they need when facing difficulties. In addition, peers can also help migrant students understand the local culture. They can help with language, social behavior, and introducing activities and points of interest around campus.

Migrant students can also seek social support from their professors. Professors can provide academic guidance and help migrant students understand the education system in Indonesia. Professors can also mentor migrant students, helping them overcome learning difficulties and adjust to new environments. Many professors at Indonesian universities are open and concerned about migrant students and ready to help students overcome various problems.

Migrant students can also seek support from campus administrative staff. Administrative staff can provide information about campus services, such as academic facilities and extracurricular activities. In addition, administrative staff can also assist migrant students in administrative processes, such as making student identity cards and course registration processes.

In a different academic environment, migrant students can join organizations or groups relevant to their interests and hobbies. Joining these groups can help migrant students build a network of relationships and broaden social experiences. In addition, migrant students can also use technology to seek social support. Using social media, migrant students can connect with their peers and family abroad.

It can be concluded that seeking social support from peers, professors, administrative staff, and relevant groups is an adaptive strategy to help migrant students adjust to a new academic and social environment. Social support can help reduce feelings of loneliness and social isolation, as well as help migrant students build networks of relationships and broaden social experiences.

c) Active Participation in Academic Activities

Apart from learning the language and seeking social support, active participation in academic and extracurricular activities is also vital for migrant students. These activities can help them adjust to a new campus environment and broaden their social experiences. Academic activities such as student clubs and organizations can allow migrant students to meet new people who share their interests and goals. By joining student clubs or organizations, migrant students can develop new skills and broaden their network of social relationships. In addition, academic activities can also help migrant students feel more connected to the campus community. By actively participating in academic activities, migrant students can gain a more diverse experience and support from other campus community members.

Extracurricular activities like volunteering can also help migrant students adjust to a new campus environment. This activity can provide opportunities for migrant students to interact with the local community and help them understand Indonesian culture better. Migrant students may also use extracurricular activities to develop social and professional skills. By participating in extracurricular activities, migrant students can gain work experience and skills to help them in future careers. Although academic and extracurricular activities can provide many benefits for migrant students, not all migrant students can participate in these activities due to time constraints or financial problems. Therefore, universities must create an inclusive and migrant-friendly environment to facilitate the participation of migrant students in academic and extracurricular activities.

One way universities can help migrant students participate in academic and extracurricular activities is by providing information about student clubs and organizations available on campus. Universities can also provide financial support or skills development to migrant students who wish to participate in these activities. In addition, universities can also create special programs for migrant students that help them participate in academic and extracurricular activities. These programs can include campus introduction, mentoring, and financial support for extracurricular activities. Migrant students can also form groups or communities to share experiences and support one another. These groups can help migrant students overcome feelings of loneliness and social isolation, as well as widen their network of relationships with other migrant students who have similar backgrounds.

In conclusion, active participation in academic and extracurricular activities can help migrant students adjust to a new campus environment. These activities can help migrant students develop social and professional skills, broaden their network of relationships, and feel more connected to the campus community. Therefore, universities must create an inclusive and migrant-friendly environment

to facilitate the participation of migrant students in academic and extracurricular activities. In addition, universities can also provide special programs and financial support for migrant students who wish to participate in these activities.

d) Establishing Routines in Facing the Demands of the Academic Environment

Lastly, establishing routines was identified as a critical adaptive strategy for managing the demands of the new academic environment. Migrant students often face challenges balancing academic and personal demands, such as working and raising a family. In this study, the participants emphasized the importance of making regular schedules for studying, attending classes, and engaging in other activities. By doing this, they can ensure that they prioritize their academic responsibilities while allowing time for their personal needs.

Establishing routines also helps migrant students reduce stress and improve their overall well-being. In uncertain and stressful situations, having a regular schedule can give migrant students a sense of stability and control. Plus, routines can help them manage their time and energy more effectively, so they can optimize their academic and personal potential.

Universities can also help migrant students establish effective routines. For example, universities can provide academic support services, such as counselling, tutoring, and academic guidance, which can help migrant students manage their time and study more effectively. In addition, universities can also provide the necessary resources and support for migrant students in dealing with the challenges of everyday life, such as housing, transportation, and health needs.

In conclusion, setting routines is an essential adaptive strategy for migrant students in adjusting to a new academic environment. By setting regular schedules for studying, attending classes, and engaging in other activities, they can manage their time and energy more effectively, reduce stress, and improve their overall well-being. Therefore, universities must provide the necessary resources and support to migrant students in establishing effective routines. By doing this, universities can better help migrant students achieve their academic and personal potential and be successful in their new academic environment.

e) The Role of Social and Cultural Context in Shaping Migrant Students' Adaptive Strategies

The findings of this study are consistent with previous research on migrant students' adaptive strategies in adjusting to new academic environments. Language learning, seeking social support, active participation in activities, and establishing a routine have all been identified as crucial factors in helping migrant students adapt to the new environment ((Bista et al., 2018); (Poyrazli et al., 2004); (Bryant, 2005).

The study also highlights the importance of the social and cultural context in shaping migrant students' experiences and adaptive strategies. In the Indonesian context, for example, emphasizing building relationships and community support networks is particularly important for migrant students, who may face social isolation and cultural differences.

Overall, the findings of this study suggest that migrant students' adaptive strategies are context-specific and shaped by their unique experiences and challenges in the new academic environment. These findings have implications for academic institutions, which can support migrant students' adjustment by providing language support, social networks, and opportunities for active participation in academic and extracurricular activities.

5. CONCLUSION

The study found that migrant students at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung face various challenges adjusting to the new campus environment, including language barriers, cultural differences, and academic expectations. To cope with these challenges, the participants developed adaptive

strategies such as seeking social support from peers and faculty members, participating in extracurricular activities, and seeking assistance from language centers and academic advisors.

The findings of this study have implications for universities and policymakers to provide better support and resources for migrant students to enhance their successful adaptation to a new campus environment. As stated by (Poyrazli et al., 2004), "Universities should develop strategies and policies to enhance international students' transition and adjustment process and to create a welcoming campus environment for them" (p. 59). This could include providing language and cultural training, mentoring and counseling programs, and promoting intercultural exchange activities.

In conclusion, this study highlights the importance of understanding the adaptive strategies used by migrant students in adjusting to a new campus environment. By providing adequate support and resources, universities and policymakers can create a welcoming and inclusive campus environment that fosters all students' academic success and well-being.

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