



# THE ADAPTATION OF INDONESIAN STUDENTS IN MALAYSIA

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**Abstract:** *Adapting to a new environment is not easy for some people. Malaysia is a country that many people think has a very similar culture and language to Indonesia which makes many people think that adapting to the culture and language in Malaysia is an easy thing. This research aims to find out how Indonesian students studying at Universiti Sains Malaysia adapt to the culture and language that exist there. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative in which the researcher wants to examine this research without changing the actual conditions of the phenomenon to be researched. This research conducted by the phenomenological method Husserl. The final result of the research obtained from this research is the discovery of varied methods from informants to be able to adapt to culture and communication in Malaysia, to be precise at Universiti Sains Malaysia. Unlike what we expected, the reality faced by the informants in adapting was something that was not so easy, even though the culture and language shared between the two countries were not that far apart.*

**Keywords:** *Adaptation, Culture, Language, Indonesia,*

**Abstrak:** Malaysia merupakan negara yang menurut banyak orang memiliki kemiripan budaya dan bahasa dengan Indonesia sehingga membuat banyak orang menganggap bahwa beradaptasi dengan budaya dan bahasa di Malaysia adalah hal yang mudah. Penelitian ini bertujuan mendeskripsikan mahasiswa Indonesia yang belajar di Universiti Sains Malaysia beradaptasi dengan budaya dan bahasa. Metode penelitian ini adalah deskriptif kualitatif, dengan menggunakan metode fenomenologi dari Edmund Husserl yang menjadikan penelitian ini fokus pada sudut pandang orang pertama. Hasil akhir penelitian yang diperoleh dari penelitian ini adalah ditemukannya metode yang bervariasi dari para informan untuk dapat beradaptasi dengan budaya dan komunikasi di Malaysia, tepatnya di Universiti Sains Malaysia. Berbeda dengan perkiraan kami, kenyataan yang dihadapi para informan dalam beradaptasi bukanlah hal yang mudah, padahal budaya dan bahasa yang dimiliki kedua negara tidak terpaut jauh.

**Kata Kunci:** Adaptasi, Budaya, Bahasa, Indonesia, Malaysia.

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

Communication is the process of sending and receiving information between two or more individuals (Setiawan, 2023). Communicating in this neighboring country is indeed a challenge for people who are coming to Malaysia for the first time, but in terms of communicating Indonesia and Malaysia have similarities. Based on the results of the researchers' observations, the speech of the languages used by Malays and Indonesians can be said to be almost the same, from the types of words and the arrangement of sentences. These similarities in communication are of course inseparable from the history shared by these two countries. Based on innovation and adaptation, communication increase into huge networking and enhance many kind of positive changes (Abbas et al., 2022; Albin et al, 2022; Marinho et al., 2022).

As we know, Indonesia and Malaysia define themselves as Malays, where they call themselves *serumpun*. Various literature published in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei Darussalam often mention that they are Malay people and their descendants. The origin of the word Malay first appears in historical records around the second century AD. Claudius Ptolemaeus better known as Ptolemy (90-168 AD) mentioned that there was a *tanjong* in *Aurea Chersonesus* (Malay Peninsula) named *Maleuo-kolon*, which is believed to have originated from the Sanskrit *Malaya kolam* or *malai kuram*. Malay people can be said to have started coming to Indonesia in the 7th century, and this is reinforced by evidence that in 684 AD Malays had become part of the Sriwijaya Kingdom. This strengthens the evidence that the relationship between Indonesia and Malay Malaysia has existed since ancient times (Venus, 2015).

In the field of educational cooperation itself, Indonesia and Malaysia have been doing it for decades after they became independent countries. In 1960-1970, Indonesia sent teachers to Malaysia as a form of educational cooperation between the two countries. Not only from the Indonesian side, the Malaysian side also sent many of their students to Indonesia in the hope of getting a higher quality education (Sriwiyanti, 2015; Lailiyah et al., 2021; Wilczewski, 2023; Tasmagambetova et al., 2024). In building education in Indonesia, the Government of the Republic of Indonesia has adhered to one of the nation's goals as stated in the 4th paragraph of the 1945 Constitution which reads "*mencerdaskan kehidupan bangsa*". In the constitution of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, among others, there are Articles 20, 21, 28 C paragraphs (1), 31, and 32, which give the government a mandate to organize a national education system. Finally, this was realized in Law No. 20 of 2003 which contained the education system. The national education system is the entire education component that is interrelated in an integrated manner to achieve national education goals (Budi & Kemendiknas, 2012).

According to data published by the *World Population Review*, Indonesia is not included in the top 10 in the category of countries with the best education system in the world. It is noted that Indonesia has a 277,534,122 population and unfortunately still ranks 54th out of 78 countries that have a good education system (Aisyah, 2022). We can say that the recorded ranking is very low because it influence more changes and diversity of situation in any country.

Indonesia is a big country, has a lot of population, has a lot of resources, but having an undeveloped education is a big problem for this country. This is the reason why Indonesia has not been able to become an advanced country. This is reinforced by data which says that there are still 23.61 percent of the population or 65 million people who have not finished school. This discrepancy is very clear from the percentage of the population who have completed senior high school as many as 20.89 percent or 57 million people (Anngita, 2023).

This is caused by the quality of education in Indonesia which is quite apprehensive. This deplorable quality is also caused by several problems that come from the existing education system, for example, such as weaknesses in education management, gaps between educational facilities and

infrastructure in urban and rural areas, government support that is still uneven, old-fashioned mindsets of society, limited teaching staff, and weak learning evaluation standards. According to detik.com (2021), Indonesia is ranked 4th in Southeast Asia in terms of the quality of education. The first rank is Singapore, which is ranked 21 in the world. Then followed by Malaysia in 2nd place in Southeast Asia by being ranked 38th in the world. In 3<sup>rd</sup> place, we can find the country of white elephants Thailand which is ranked 46th in the world. Finally, in the 5th rank in Southeast Asia, there is the Philippines which is ranked 55th in the world, exactly 1 rank below Indonesia (Aisyah, 2021).

Of the many universities that Indonesia has, only a few universities can compete with top universities in Southeast Asia. According to data from Webometrics, the top 10 rankings are controlled by well-known campuses from countries such as Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, and Indonesia. The first rank is occupied by well-known campuses in Asia and Southeast Asia, namely the National University of Singapore (47th in the world), followed by Nanyang Technological University (87th in the world), the University of Malaya (291st in the world), Chulalongkorn University (447th in the world). Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (ranked 450 in the world), Universiti Putra Malaysia (ranked 470 in the world), Chiang Mai University (ranked 488 in the world), Universiti Sains Malaysia (ranked 521 in the world), Mahidol University (ranked 523 in the world), and the last one is University of Indonesia (Rank 583 in the world) (Webometrics, 2023).

From the data above, universities originating from Indonesia can only send 1 university to compete with well-known campuses throughout Southeast Asia. This also indicates that Indonesia's education is still far below neighboring countries. If we continue with our previous discussion, the quality of Indonesian education is also one of the reasons why they choose to continue or start their education abroad.

According to data obtained from the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (2022), Malaysia is the country that is the best educational destination chosen by the Indonesian people. Not only in terms of health, but Malaysia is also superior in terms of education compared to Indonesia. 8,440 students from Indonesia chose Malaysia as their destination to study. This has also been proven through data that researchers have included, that several universities from Malaysia have better quality and predicate than universities in Indonesia (Unesco Institute for Statistics, 2022).

Another attraction that arouses the interest of the Indonesian people to study in Malaysia is the many scholarships that present a lot of benefits for prospective scholarship recipients. These scholarships also come in various variations, there are scholarships presented by each university, some are presented through the Indonesian government, some are presented directly by the Malaysian government, and some are held by institutions or foundations.

In terms of its language, Indonesia uses Indonesian which comes from Malay which is still used by the Malaysian people there to this day. At first, Indonesian students living in Malaysia thought that communicating there would be quite easy due to the similarities in the languages we have (Mustaqim et al., 2020; Wisman, 2017). However, the reality is not as easy as people imagine. We need to know that in Malaysia there are 3 majority races living there, namely the Malay Race, the Chinese Race, and the Indian Race. Each race has its language, the Malay race uses Malay, the Chinese race uses Mandarin, and the Indian race uses Tamil (Chepkemoui, 2020). This makes it difficult for Malaysians there to communicate with one another.

Therefore, based on the background described above, the researcher is interested in conducting research with the title "The Adaptation of Indonesian Students in Malaysia (A Phenomenological Study of Indonesian Students at Universiti Sains Malaysia)". The focus of this research is to find out the communication patterns of Indonesian students who are continuing their studies at Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia. This is what makes this research different from previous studies which are almost similar.

## 2 | RESEARCH METHOD

In this research, the researcher used a qualitative descriptive research methodology, in which this descriptive qualitative is defined as the type, design, design, and research that is commonly used to examine natural objects or can be said to be in real situations and not mixed up like experiments. Descriptive itself can be interpreted as research results that are presented openly based on research that has been carried out by the researcher. According to Sugiyono (Thabroni, 2022) said that the qualitative research method is a research method based on the philosophy of post-positivism which is used to examine objects with real and unchanging conditions in which the researcher becomes the key instrument. Creswell said that the qualitative research method is a process to understand something to obtain data, information, and texts of the views of respondents who use various methodologies in a problem or social phenomenon (Thabroni, 2022).

In carrying out the research, researchers used the phenomenological method. Phenomenology itself is a qualitative research method that is commonly used to see a phenomenon experienced by a person or group of individuals in their lives (Thabroni, 2022). In this research, the researcher chose the phenomenology that was formulated by Edmund Husserl because it was considered consistent with this research. The phenomenology formulated by Edmund Husserl is more focused on one's consciousness from the first-person point of view. Even though it focuses on the first-person view, this phenomenology formulated by Husserl also has the concept of meaning, which is an important content of human consciousness.

According to him, people's experiences may be the same, but the meaning resulting from each experience will be different. Edmund Husserl also said that intuitive experience of phenomena is a starting point for constructing meaning from one's experience (Rahmawati, 2022). Therefore, researchers took phenomenology from Edmund Husserl because researchers would examine the experiences experienced by informants who had the same experience, namely having continued their studies in Malaysia. However, researchers would like to focus more on the meaning stored behind these experiences for research.

## 3 | RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Description of Research Object

In this research, researchers have selected 5 main informants. These informants were selected based on their experience in adapting and communicating with local students. These informants were also selected based on the duration of their stay at Universiti Sains Malaysia with a minimum duration of 1 year. The selected informants have different cultural backgrounds and ways of communicating, which means that their perspective on things is very different. Not only cultural and communication backgrounds, some of them also entered in different years, and some still have experience of approximately 1 year to 3 years. Based on tabel 1, it can explain the differences of informan and with the difference in the duration of education, of course, the experiences they experience must have significant differences, especially in terms of cultural adaptation and ways of communicating.

**Table 1.** Informant (s) List

<b>Informant (s) List</b>					
<b>No</b>	<b>Informant Initials</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Educational level</b>	<b>Origin</b>
1	AM	Male	21	Undergraduate	Medan
2	RH	Male	21	Undergraduate	Medan

3	DA	Male	20	Undergraduate	Aceh
4	FA	Male	20	Undergraduate	Lampung
5	RP	Male	21	Undergraduate	Tangerang

Source: Research Result (2023)

The background of this research is at Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang Island, Malaysia. Universiti Sains Malaysia is one of the most prestigious universities in Malaysia and also Southeast Asia which has a long and extraordinary history. Universiti Sains Malaysia itself was established on June 1, 1969, which makes Universiti Sains Malaysia one of the oldest universities in northern Malaysia. Universiti Sains Malaysia has 3 campuses which are on Penang Island as the main campus, a health campus located in Kelantan, and finally, there is an engineering campus in Nibong Tebal, Penang. Universiti Sains Malaysia is one of the best campuses in Malaysia for a reason, namely because this campus is endowed with the APEX (Accelerated Program for Excellence) program, which only exists at Universiti Sains Malaysia and is the only one in Malaysia. This program is what attracts the interest of international students who come from outside Malaysia to continue their studies in Malaysia, for example, the informants who study there. Because the APEX program is a program that will help a university to have an educational program that is on par with other world-class universities (USM, 2023).

In this research, the informants will be interviewed by the researcher. These informants are also students from Indonesia who have at least 1 year of experience in adapting and communicating with local students at Universiti Sains Malaysia. In the interview that will be conducted, the researcher will ask about the experiences of Indonesian students in adapting and communicating there. The results of the interview process are expected to help researchers to be able to conduct this research. The expected result is the obtaining of valid and accurate data from informants regarding the purpose of this research, which is about the experience of communicating between Indonesian students and local students (Malaysian students) at Universiti Sains Malaysia.

### **Background of Indonesian Students Studying in Malaysia**

Continuing study abroad itself is also a common phenomenon, where many students from various countries go to other countries to continue their studies. There are many ways to get the opportunity to study abroad. Most international students try their best to be able to get scholarships held by their country or the university they are going to. These international students have their reasons why they would like to get scholarships, one of which is to support their lives in the destination country, in which in most cases they want scholarships to get financial assistance.

Opportunities like this, of course, will not be missed by students from Indonesia. As explained in the background of this research, many students from Indonesia choose to study abroad. This is because the general public thinks that continuing their education abroad is a better choice than having to study in Indonesia. This also makes many Indonesian people think about sending their children to study in other countries. Quoted from (the Unesco Institute for Statistics, 2022) it is recorded that in 2022 around 53,604 Indonesians are studying abroad.

From the data taken from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, we can see that the interest of the Indonesian people to study abroad is very large. In 2022, there were 53,604 students from Indonesia spread all over the world to study at world-renowned universities. This is of course influenced by the quality possessed by universities in Indonesia which people think are still not good. The best university in Indonesia at the moment is the University of Indonesia which is ranked 583 in the world and is still far away in quality compared to universities in neighboring countries such as Singapore and Malaysia (Webometrics, 2023).



According to the results of the researchers' observations, Singapore, Thailand, and Malaysia are favorite destinations for students from Indonesia to continue their studies. This is also reinforced by the data above which states that Malaysia and Thailand are the favorite educational destinations for Indonesian students. This is also influenced by the quality of education in these three countries, where they have a higher quality of education than Indonesia. However, as we need to know, many Indonesian students have to choose the university they want carefully. Because factors such as distance, culture, language, and finances can be barriers that they must consider first. Based on the observations of researchers while still at Universiti Sains Malaysia, many students from Indonesia did not choose Singapore and Thailand for their reasons.

These personal reasons can be explained based on the cost of living that students have to pay. Not only the cost of living but culture and language are also a serious consideration besides the cost and ranking of a university. In terms of costs, Singapore has a fairly high cost of living in the eyes of most Indonesian students. Singapore is known for having classy universities, even in the eyes of the world. However, with the quality offered, the costs that must be incurred for Indonesian students are not insignificant if they go to Singapore.

In contrast to Thailand, this country has a low cost of living and has several prestigious universities at the Southeast Asian level. However, what is a problem for them is the culture and language in Thailand. They think that language and culture can be the biggest obstacle for them because not many people in Thailand can speak English, which is very different if they go to Singapore and Malaysia. Even though in terms of costs they think that the cost of living they have to pay is not much different from that in Indonesia, still the price of plane tickets that they have to bear will be an obstacle for some students.

Then in the end they took the middle road where they ultimately chose Malaysia as their educational destination. They think that they can learn the culture and language in Malaysia quickly, which is where our language and culture are very similar. Then they also chose Malaysia because in terms of costs where Malaysia has a cost of living that is not too far from Indonesia and has a fee per semester that is still affordable for those who do not have scholarships. In terms of ranking, universities in Malaysia are the best at the Southeast Asian level, whereas in the top 10 universities in Southeast Asia, universities from Malaysia contribute to at least 6 universities (QS World University Rankings, 2023). It is also proven that Malaysia is one of the favorite destinations for students and prospective students from Indonesia to continue their education.

### **Reasons Why Indonesian Students Choose Universiti Sains Malaysia**

Universiti Sains Malaysia is one of the best universities we can find in Southeast Asia. Reporting from QS World University Rankings, Universiti Sains Malaysia is ranked 6th best in Southeast Asia (QS World University Rankings, 2023). Apart from a good ranking, Universiti Sains Malaysia itself also has a program that is only owned by Universiti Sains Malaysia in the Malaysian region, namely the APEX program, where not just any of the best universities in the world can get this APEX program. APEX plays an important role for Universiti Sains Malaysia to be able to attract international students to enter this university. APEX itself is a program that has a function to improve the quality of learning at the university so that it can be on par with other top-world universities, in short, all learning programs at Universiti Sains Malaysia will comply with high-quality international standards. Moreover, in 2023 Universiti Sains Malaysia is again the center of attention for international students, where Universiti Sains Malaysia has won the 4th world ranking in the category of the most influential universities in the world. This of course will be more attractive for any student including Indonesia to increase their interest in studying at Universiti Sains Malaysia (Times Higher Education, 2023).

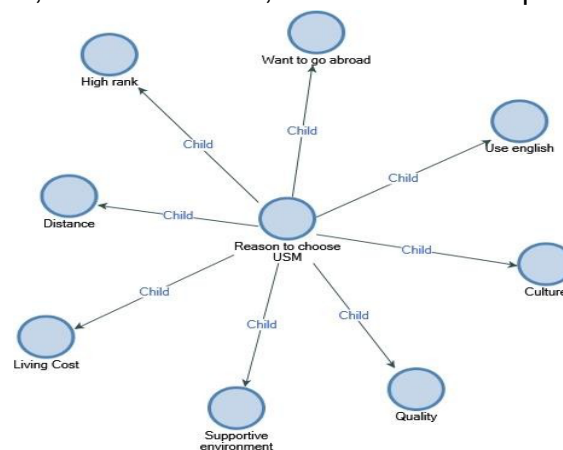
Not only in terms of education, Universiti Sains Malaysia itself also has its charm from the aspect

of its area. According to the observations of researchers who once studied at Universiti Sains Malaysia for one semester, Universiti Sains Malaysia has a fairly large area and a neat and orderly structure. Filled with old buildings that make this place very historic and has a retro look in some areas. Not only that, with an area this wide, Universiti Sains Malaysia also has many facilities ready to facilitate its students, such as a library that is open 24 hours, a swimming pool, a sports center, lots of co-working spaces, and public transportation provided by the university.

University ranking is one of the things that Indonesian students consider the most. As the researchers discussed earlier, Universiti Sains Malaysia is one of the most well-known campuses that we can find in Southeast Asia. Of course, this shows that the quality of Universiti Sains Malaysia is one of the best in Southeast Asia. It is recorded that Universiti Sains Malaysia itself in 2023 is ranked the 8th best in Southeast Asia and followed by the other Malaysian universities such as Universiti Malaya, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, and Universiti Putra Malaysia which are ranked above Universiti Sains Malaysia (Webometrics, 2023). Another factor that could be found as one of the reasons the informant chose Universiti Sains Malaysia was the desire of the informant to study abroad, and this reason was put forward by the informant with the initial AM. AM's reasons didn't end there, he also revealed that he chose Universiti Sains Malaysia to practice his English skills as soon as the informant found out that the campus uses English as their main language for international studies.

The informant with the initials FA also added that he chose Malaysia and Universiti Sains Malaysia as his education destinations due to living costs. According to the informant, the costs that must be incurred are not as expensive as living in other countries such as Singapore. FA while studying at Universiti Sains Malaysia lived in a campus dormitory, where he occupied a normal classroom, so he had to pay RM 150 or approximately IDR 500,000 (Five Hundred Thousand Rupiah).

To clarify the opinions of the informants, the researcher had several experiences which were quite similar to those of the informants who had expressed their opinions. Even though the researcher's experience was only 5 months long, the researcher quite agreed with the statement of an informant with the initials RH regarding adaptation through culture. RH said, "Malaysia has a culture that is not much different from Indonesia, of course, it is easier to adapt". From the results of observations and analysis of the researchers themselves, the statement made by RH can be said to be quite true, even though what differentiates the culture from Malaysia and Indonesia comes from the Chinese Race and Indian Race which we may rarely find in Indonesia or even only find in some certain areas. On Penang Island itself, where the researcher and informant live, the cultural distribution of the 3 major races, such as the Malay Race, Chinese Race, and Indian Race, can be said to be quite even.



**Figure 1 Reason to choose USM**

Source: Analyzed by researcher through NVIVO (2023)

Furthermore, RP also believes that the environment owned by Universiti Sains Malaysia is very supportive. A supportive environment is one of the strongest reasons why RP chose Universiti Sains Malaysia. Based on the experience of the researchers themselves, the environment at Universiti Sains Malaysia is very supportive as RP said. The local students who are there have a high enough competitive level to get the best results, which can make us excited to be able to achieve the best. However, behind this competitive competition, they are also very informative and would like to help others so that they can succeed together in a team.

### **The Adaptation Process of Indonesian Students**

The adaptation process of the Indonesian students is divided into 2 parts, namely adaptation to culture and communication. The adaptation process itself is a very important thing for Indonesian students there to be able to mingle or blend with the situation. These Indonesian students were faced with 2 big problems when they arrived at Universiti Sains Malaysia, namely adaptation to culture and communication. Malaysia itself has 3 main races, namely the Malay Race, the Chinese Race, and the Indian Race (Chepkemoi, 2020).

This makes Malaysia a country inhabited by a different language and culture from every racial ethnicity that is there. This phenomenon certainly makes Malaysia a country that has diversity like Indonesia, although with a different context. At Universiti Sains Malaysia, informants must be able to adapt to the culture and language of the three major races which is certainly a challenge for them. However, informants also have their way of being able to adapt to their culture.

From the data that the researcher has, there were 7 factors in which the informants tried to adapt to the culture at Universiti Sains Malaysia. The informant with the initials RP tries to behave like the locals in such a way "From the way they drive vehicles, queue up, respect the other person, and many other cultures, the conditions are surprisingly very different from those in our own country". This shows that RP sees the culture that exists at Universiti Sains Malaysia from a disciplinary perspective. RP admitted that the discipline at Universiti Sains Malaysia was very different from what he saw in Indonesia, he even said that the discipline was 180 degrees different from Indonesia in terms of discipline.

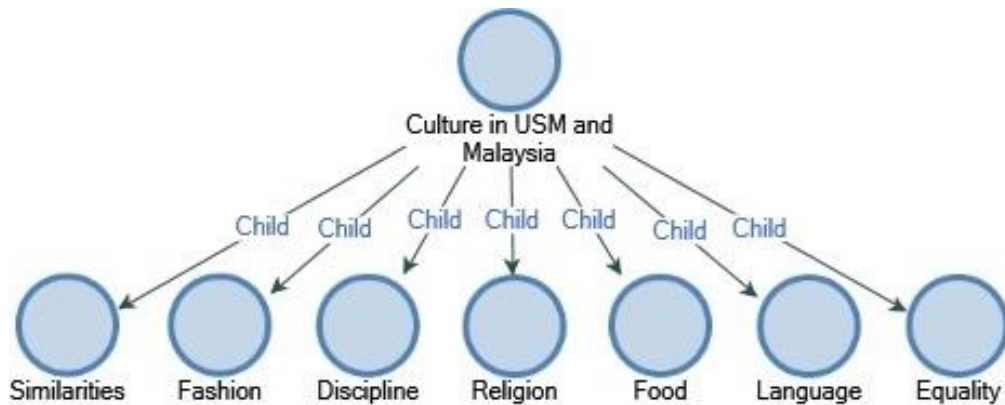
The informant with the initials AM also revealed that he had no difficulty adapting to Malaysian culture. AM said "In my opinion, the culture of Malaysia and Indonesia is not much different. while I was here, I did not feel that there was such a significant difference, so I could immediately adapt to the surrounding environment and culture". This answer was of course different from the other informants who answered that they still had to adapt to Malaysian culture, but AM thought that the cultures of Malaysia and Indonesia were not very different which made AM easily adapt to the culture in Malaysia. This can also be influenced by AM's nature which makes it very easy to get along with other people. This is also incorporated in the way that AM can easily adapt to the culture that is there.

RH thought that it was easier for him to adapt by increasing communication with the local students who were there. He thinks that by communicating as much as possible with local students, he can adapt and get to know the culture and language of Malaysia more easily. Another opinion was also expressed by an informant with the initials DA who said "Just follow what they usually do". DA emphasized that he only followed what the local people there were doing. This is the DA's personal opinion which according to him is one of the things that is quite easy for him to do to adapt to the local environment there.

Different from all the informants who preferred to approach socially, this informant with the initials FA tried an approach that was quite different from the other informants, namely through the food he could try there. FA said, "One of the adaptations that I did was with food in Malaysia which is quite



different from Indonesia. In Malaysia, the food is much sweeter and richer, like curry". The FA said that he adapted through food. Unlike the other informants who prefer to look at it from the social side, FA thinks that it is through food that he can adapt to the culture in Malaysia and also at Universiti Sains Malaysia. Adaptation was not only carried out outside the campus, but the informants also had to face the culture they would find on campus. Like universities in general, Universiti Sains Malaysia is filled with local students who come from various other parts of Malaysia and not only students from the State of Penang.

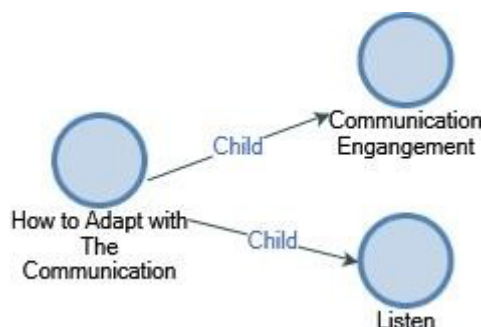


**Figure 2 Culture Adaptation in USM**

Source: Analyzed by researcher through NVIVO (2023)

As many as 3 out of 5 informants, namely AM, FA, and RH, thought that the culture in Universiti Sains Malaysia was not much different from what they encountered or encountered in Indonesia. Meanwhile, AM also believes that the style of fashion for local students is quite different from what he often finds in Indonesia. From his words, AM highlighted the difference in dress styles when AM was doing activities such as exercising. From the experience of the researcher himself, who has lived for 5 months at Universiti Sains Malaysia, the researcher also thinks so, which is quite difficult to find local students, especially men from the Malay ethnicity, who wear shorts when they are doing activities such as sports. Most likely this happened due to the strong influence of Islam there, according to DA.

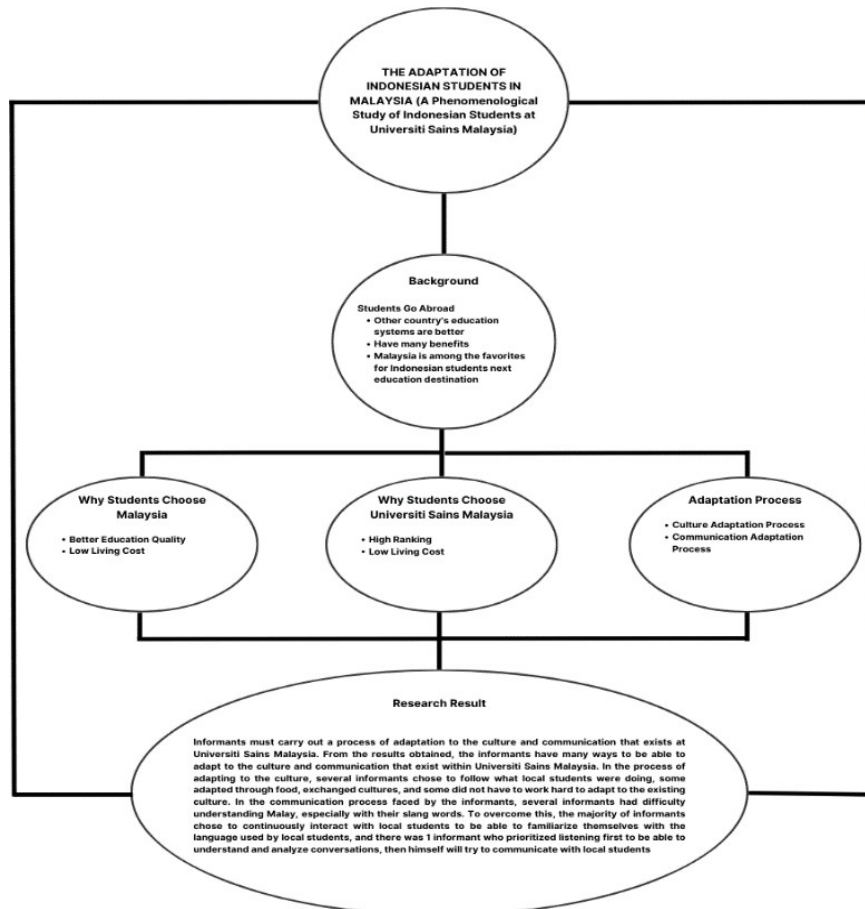
Apart from the religion and style of dress, other informants also assessed that discipline was very good. RH and AM agreed that the culture of discipline they witnessed within Universiti Sains Malaysia was excellent. This also proves that Malaysia or Universiti Sains Malaysia itself has a better disciplinary culture compared to what the informants found in Indonesia. They consider that local students at Universiti Sains Malaysia highly uphold the value of discipline to get the comfort and safety that they want.



**Figure 3 Communication Adaptation in USM**

Source: Analyzed by researcher through NVIVO (2023)

Regardless of the way they adapt to the culture and communication that exists at Universiti Sains Malaysia, they have their own chosen methods. We can see these methods in the previous discussion where they take a cultural approach by exchanging cultures, through food, and so on. Not only culture, they also make adjustments or adaptations by communicating with local people and local students who are there with their methods. It is believed that the method they chose was based on the thoughts of the informants who felt that the method was suitable for them in adapting to culture and communication.



**Figure 4 The Adaptation of Indonesian Students in Malaysia**

Source: Analyzed by Researcher (2023)

Based on the results of the discussion that has been presented, we can correlate it to the theory chosen in this study, namely the adaptation theory of John William Bennett. In this research, it was also said that the adaptation process is very important to do when we are in a new environment. John William Bennett also said that the process of adaptation to the socio-cultural was very important for immigrants, and in this study, the informants and other Indonesian students were the intended immigrants. This adaptation process is intended to support their lives in exploring and studying communication and culture in Malaysia and Universiti Sains Malaysia to be more precise. From the results of the discussions, we can see that there are several problems experienced by Indonesian students when they come to Universiti Sains Malaysia. They can overcome this problem by adapting to their new environment, especially in terms of communication and culture.

## 4 | CONCLUSION

Based on the results obtained from this research, the informants had a safe and comfortable communication experience. The informants said that communicating with local students at Universiti Sains Malaysia was not an easy thing to do at first, but over time the informants started to get used to the language used in Universiti Sains Malaysia, which is Malay language. The informants also emphasized that there is nothing to worry about when we communicate with local students in the Malay language and have a language barrier in the middle of a conversation. This can be handled by using English to be able to convey our communication messages that we cannot convey in the Malay language. The attitude of local students themselves is very good towards foreign students who want to try to learn the Malay language and use it to communicate with local students there. The majority of informants also emphasized that local students would understand if we still had problems communicating in Malay with them, and not infrequently they would provide suggestions and input to help us improve the Malay language skills of foreign students. The majority of informants choose to interact intensively with local students to improve their Malay language skills and conduct independent studies when they have free time. However, it was also found that there were informants who prioritized listening first to understand the language and communication patterns that local students used to be able to create suitable communication patterns to be applied when having conversations with them. After the informant found a suitable communication pattern so that communication could run smoothly, the informant would try to interact with local students.

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