

**CROSS CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG INDONESIAN STUDENTS STUDYING IN  
UNIVERSITY UTARA MALAYSIA**

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**MASTER OF SCIENCE MANAGERIAL COMMUNICATION**

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**CROSS CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG INDONESIAN STUDENTS STUDYING IN  
UNIVERSITY UTARA MALAYSIA**

**A Thesis submitted to the Graduate School in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree  
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**By**

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**Program Komunikasi  
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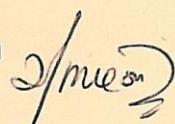
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## **ABSTRACT**

International students have diverse needs when undertaking education in foreign countries. It is in the interest of both international students and the host institution to ensure these students achieve success in their studies. A quantitative methodology, using principles of uncertainty reduction theory was used for the study.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the problems of Indonesian students during process of adaptation in Universiti Utara Malaysia. During the process of adaptation, found that Indonesian students faced with various problems such as in academic, social, and personal lives that may affected to their academic performance. Information was gathered by self-report survey questionnaire. A modified version of Cross Cultural Adaptation Scale (Kuo & Roysicar, 2006) and (Shenay, 2000) were used.

The sample consisted of 108 undergraduate Indonesian students in College of Arts and Sciences (CAS). The most important result showed that problems in academic, social, and personal lives were related to a common of experience difficulties and a lower level of Indonesian students to enrich their academic successfull.

## **ABSTRAK**

Para pelajar antarabangsa mempunyai keperluan yang pelbagai ketika melakukan pendidikan di luar negara. Hal ini adalah demi kepentingan pelajar antarabangsa dan pelajar tempatan untuk memastikan para pelajar mencapai kejayaan dalam pengajian mereka. Sebuah metodologi kuantitatif, dengan menggunakan prinsip-prinsip teori pengurangan ketidakpastian digunakan untuk kajian.

Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji masalah pelajar-pelajar Indonesia semasa proses adaptasi di Univeraiti Utara Malaysia (UUM). Semasa proses adaptasi, mendapati bahawa para pelajar Indonesia menghadapi pelbagai masalah seperti di akademik, sosial, dan kehidupan peribadi yang boleh berpengaruh pada prestasi akademik mereka. Maklumat dikumpulkan dengan borang soal seledik. Soalan selidik yang diubahsuai dari Skala Adaptasi Persilangan Lintas Budaya (Kuo & Roysicar, 2006) dan (Shenoy, 2000).

Sampel terdiri daripada 108 pelajar Indonesia Ijazah Sarjana Muda di Kolej Sastera dan Sains (CAS). Keputusan yang paling penting menunjukkan bahawa pada umumnya masalah yang berkaitan dalam akademik, sosial, dan kehidupan peribadi merupakan kesulitan dan rendahnya tahap pencapaian pelajar-pelajar Indonesia untuk memperkaya kesuksesan akademik mereka.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 Introduction

There are many complex challenges facing by students travelling to other countries to undertake university or other educational courses, particularly if their home country's culture is strikingly different from the host country culture. It is not surprising that the physical and psychological well-being of students, as well as their academic performance, can be affected by these adjustment challenges (Ward, Bochner & Furnham, 2001). These relatively short-term visitors (or sojourners) to a new culture, who come for purposes other than permanent settlement, are likely to experience 'culture shock' (Oberg, 1960) resulting from the sudden loss of all familiar signs and symbols of everyday life, with consequent psychological stress and use of coping strategies to deal with the stresses encountered.

In relating to this, Indonesian students whether sponsor or not , have been attending universities in Malaysia for many years. Universities in Malaysia is one of choises placed for Indonesian students to continue their study. University Utara Malaysia (UUM), for example is destined to impart management education with the aim of producing world-class human resources capable of handling challenges posed by composed of students from different national and cultural communities. UUM is one of the Universities in Malaysia which has many Indonesian students. Currently there are many Indonesian students experience difficulties in adapting themselves when continued their study in foreign country especially in the first semester (Everets & Sodjakusumah, 1996).

Hence, this study will look at the adaptation problems faced by Indonesian students in UUM. Adaptation is an important element that determine the success of international students. It is not only about academic but also adaptation with social and cultural environment. Academic success enhances personal confidence and status, helping students to fit in. Other researchers (Everets & Sodjakusumah, 1996) suggests that social and personal adaptation to life in the host country, and it is characteristic outside and inside the classroom are key to academic success.

### **1.1 Problem Statement**

Those students who interact only with their own community and do not mix with other students from other cultures will fail to understand the culture of others and cannot accomplish their desired (Mahbood, 2004). Practically, students in UUM or elsewhere from different cultures have different habits, different values, and different ways of relating to one another. Hundreds of Indonesian students had successfully completed their studies in Malaysia but there have been some who have failed to complete their degrees.

However, there are not many research have been conducted to identify factors affecting the success or failure of Indonesian students overseas, especially in Malaysia since most studies regarding Indonesian students have been conducted such as in countries like at New Zealand and Canada (Everets & Sodjakusumah, 1996), and Australia (Novera, 2004).

Adaptation can range from showing an interest in another culture's etiquette to taking almost an anthropological interest in the culture and more, sometimes to the point of immersion (Whiteley, 2001). Prior study on Indonesian students in Canada (Sodjakusumah, 1994) showed that the adaptation of Indonesian students in Canada was a complicated process. It involved academic, social, and cultural aspects.

All of them experienced: culture shock, lack of social supports from co-nationals, difficulties in their adjustment to food and climate, low self-confidence, and low satisfaction with host-national interactions. Since they are studying in a different country, Indonesian students have adaptation problems. While Indonesian and Malaysian are both Asean countries, but the different style and ways of ability to adapt are shown by students from each countries.

The factors affecting the adaptation process varies according to the students' such as academic problem, social problem, personal problem, personal changes and their ability to adapt (Everets & Sodjakusumah, 1996). Students from Asia who study abroad usually face with very different environment from the one they grew up in. They inevitably experience some level of culture shock as their usual ways of communicating and socializing prove inadequate or inappropriate. Numerous scholars in a variety of academic disciplines have developed theories on how sojourners and immigrants adapt to a new cultural environment.

### **(i) Academic Problem**

In the process of adaption to the academic system, international students generally faced problems related to language, students and lecturer's relationship, and assignments (Everets & Sodjakusumah, 1996). Therefore, the academic setting language is one of the biggest obstacles for international students when they study abroad as this affects their understanding in lectures, taking apart in a discussion, report presentation and writing assignments (Everets & Sodjakusumah, 1996). According to Ming Zang (2002), language poses an immediate and the most obvious challenge to international students in their day-to-day communication and classroom functioning.

In the academic pursuit of reading, writing, understanding lectures and participating in tutorials, language skills can help or hinder their progress. Most often, lecturers attribute the lack of progress for a students to lack of language proficiency and in many cases students themselves attribute language as the major cause of difficulties in their studies. For most Indonesian students, English language is their second language or third language and they are not use to speak English actively in Indonesia (Everets & Sodjakusumah, 1996).

### **(ii) Social Problems**

The major sources of social problems faced by international students are interaction with members of the host society, different life style and age differences from their classmates (Everets & Sodjakusumah, 1996). While Indonesian students who continued their studies in foreign country have closer interaction with their co-national students than with host country's

students (Everets & Sodjakusumah, 1996), and most of them also had some concerns which caused a feeling of anxiety or apprehension prior to coming and during their first weeks in the sojourn country.

According to Novera (2004), in relation to daily interaction with host society or other foreign students, the problem lies not so much in language itself but in selecting topics of conversations. Lack of knowledge of 'footy' could be a barrier to making friends. It forced the Indonesian students to be silent, thus inhibiting the flow of conversation (Novera, 2004).

### **(iii) Personal Problems**

Some personal problems commonly experienced by Indonesian students who continued their studies in foreign country is loneliness, homesickness and adjusting to food (Everets & Sodjakusuma, 1996). Many of Asian students have complaints such as lack of motivation, laziness, bad study habits or attitudes, inability to concentrate, loss of interest or desire to do anything, low self-esteem, irritability and anger, all of which could be symptoms of depression (Lin & Yi, 1997). These students often seek help in the educational or academic context. International students tend to hide their problem or try to seek academic help so as to avoid losing face.

#### **(iv) Personal Changes**

As a studying overseas, Indonesian students feel that have some personal changes. As a result of staying and studying overseas based on Everets and Sodjakusumah (1996) many Indonesian students have experienced some personal changes such as students becoming autonomous, more understanding about themselves, more open-minded, more independent and more determined. All of these changes can help increase students' self- confidence and also changes in their self-discipline, habits, punctuality, intercultural understanding, ways of thinking, and in their perceptions about Indonesia. These changes may influence the readjustment process when the Indonesian students return home.

Based on previous studies (i.e Everets & Sodjakusumah, 1996) most Indonesian students in New Zealand, Canada, and Australia (Novera, 2004), faced problems in cross cultural adaptation such as in academic problems, social problems, personal problems and have some personal changes. This study hopes to investigate the acedemic problems, social problems, personal problems and personal changes in cross cultural adaptation of Indonesian students in University Utara Malaysia (UUM).

#### **1.2 Research Question**

To further understand the problems, the research question will attempt to couch answers in terms of the cross cultural adaptation among Indonesian students in UUM. Guiding this effort are the following questions:

- What is the relationship between academic problem and adaptation in cross cultural adaptation among Indonesian students in UUM?
- What is the relationship between social problem and adaptation in cross cultural adaptation among Indonesian students in UUM?
- What is the relationship between personal problem and adaptation in cross cultural adaptation among Indonesian students in UUM?
- What is the relationship between personal changes and adaptation in cross cultural adaptation among Indonesian students in UUM?

### **1.3 Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the problem of adaptation in cross cultural adaptation among Indonesian students in UUM. Specifically the purposes of this study are:

- To investigate the relationship between academic problem and adaptation in cross cultural adaptation among Indonesian students in UUM.
- To investigate the relationship between social problem and adaptation in cross cultural adaptation among Indonesian students in UUM.
- To investigate the relationship between personal problem and adaptation in cross cultural adaptation among Indonesian students in UUM.
- To investigate the relationship between personal changes and adaptation in cross cultural adaptation among Indonesian students in UUM.

## **1.4 Defenition of Terms**

This section will look into some definitions used for conceptualizing cross-cultural adaptation among Indonesian students in UUM.

### **1.4.1 Cross cultural Adaptation**

According to Young (2004) cross-cultural adaptation is “as the entirety of the phenomenon of individuals who, on relocation to an unfamiliar sociocultural environment, strive to establish and maintain a relatively stable, reciprocal, and functional relationship with the environment” (p.339). In this research context, cross cultural adaptation defined as the process of adaptation with different environment among Indonesian students in UUM and measured by instrument proposed by Shenay (2000).

### **1.4.2 Academic Problems**

Academic is related to education, especially in universities or colleges (Macmillan dictionary, 2006). According to Ming Zang (2002), academic problem is education difficulties in adjustment challenges facing by international students. In this research, academic problems defined the problem of education or academic system among Indonesian students during adaptation in UUM and measured by instrument proposed by Kuo and Roysircar (2006).

### **1.4.3 Social Problems**

Social problem is associated with human society, concerning or belonging to the ways of life and welfare of people in a community (Kernerman English Multilingual Dictionary, 2006-2010). According to Barker (1999) socio-cultural adjustment pertains to culture-specific skills, the ability to negotiate the host culture, and general behavioral competence.

It can be interpreted within a social learning context and is influenced by knowledge about the new culture, amount of contact with host nationals, length of residence in a new culture, cultural identity, and cultural distance. In this research, social problems is the interaction between Indonesian students and the host society or other international students in UUM during adaptation and this is measured by an instrument proposed by Kuo and Roysircar (2006).

### **1.4.4 Personal Problems**

Personal problem relates to the private aspects of a person's life (Collins English Dictionary, 2003). According to Everets and Sodjakusumah (1996), personal problem is the problem faced by students, psychologically in their personal life. In this research context, personal problems is defined by the problem of adaptation in personal life among Indonesian students in UUM and is measured by an instrument proposed by Kuo and Roysircar (2006).

### **1.4.5 Personal Changes**

According to Everets and Sodjakusumah (1996), personal changes is the changes of attitudes or habits in individuals that can give positive or negative impact in a person's life. In this research context, personal changes is the changes of Indonesian students life which give a positive or negative impact to their life during study in UUM and is measured by instrument purposed by Kuo and Roysircar (2006).

### **1.5 Limitations**

The scope of this study is confined to the problem in cross cultural adaptation among Indonesian students in UUM. Time frame is limited to one particular Universiti (i.e UUM). Therefore, the findings in this study cannot be generalized for other University than UUM or other educational institutions.

The data gathered in this study was collected through questionnaire surveys that were distributed only to Indonesian students in UUM. Participation was voluntary and such cooperation was necessary. The answers were provided in an honest and accurate answer. In addition, it was acknowledged that while this study has been purposefully designed to focus on international students' problem in cross cultural adaptation, there remains the possibility that there are differences between what the students actually experienced and the respondents of the data collection is Indonesian students only.

## **1.6 Significance of Study**

This study may help Indonesian students, to improve the relationship and understandings of cultural interaction in UUM. The advantages of this study it will widen up their perspective and outlook on how Indonesian students adapt themselves in cross-culture interaction with the locals and other foreign students. This study may also help for future research in the area of cross-culture in a cross-culture university environment it and is expected that this finding will stimulate more understanding on adaptation in cross-culture interaction in other educational sectors. Finally, a respectful understanding of how international students learn will not benefit only students but also for the staff and the university. If students know the expectation from lectures, tutorials, laboratory classes and lecturing staff, students will be in a position to more effectively prepare themselves for their learning experiences, and hence, be more likely to reach their academic potential.

If lecturing staff have a deeper understanding and appreciation of the students' situation, students will be in a better position to plan and prepare inclusive curricula which will enable students to use their cultural and background knowledge to their advantage. This explicit valuing of the cultural diversity will hence enable greater participation in educational events by international students and foster a greater, and more valuable, understanding among students and staff.

## 1.7 Understanding Indonesia

### Education in Indonesia

The relationship between Indonesian teachers and students is circumscribed by their respective social position and traditional beliefs about learning. According to Lewis (1997, p.14), *“The teacher seen to be a moral authority and students are expected to defer to all their superiors, including teachers. Teachers are also viewed as a fountain of knowledge, while knowledge is viewed as more or less fixed set of facts to be transmitted and digested by thirsty learners, later to be regurgitated in test or a deficit model of learning”*. In the typical secondary school classroom teachers mostly dominate talk. Teachers urge the students to listen, to obey and to memorise things (Buchori, 2001).

Indonesian school students are not encouraged to ask question of their teacher and are reluctant to ask questions even when they are invited to do so. Questioning is seen to challenge teacher’s authority, and to demonstrate one’s arrogance or ignorance to risk the possibility of punishment or personal humalitation or loss of social face (Lewis, 1997). This can have negative long-term implications given the need to formulate questions and develop critical thinking in tertiary education.

Nevertheless Mayer and Killey (1998, p.289) stated that *“A cultural tradition can clearly shape the dynamic of the learning environment. The imposition of a ‘western’ model of learning, or aspect of it, in such a culturally sensitive environment carries with it a degree of cultural presumption. Such a model might not be responsive to (or even valid within) this context given*

*the specific characteristics of the Indonesian education system*". When students are in a foreign language context, language become a key factor in adjustment as the finding will make it clear (Novera, 2004).

In Indonesia, English is learnt as a foreign language; though it is one of the compulsory subjects in secondary and tertiary education, it is taught for only three hours per week in Lower Secondary School and four hours per week in the Upper Secondary School (Novera, 2004). Moreover, "*English is seldom used in the classroom as teacher tend use Bahasa Indonesia to carry out their English lesson in the classroom, except, perhaps, when greeting students before the sessions get started and then when students are dismissed*" (Mustafa, 2001, p.306).

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Introduction

The literature review in Chapter 2 presents a broad review of relevant research work in order to contextualise the problem which international students face, in a more focused and detailed way. This understanding is further enhanced by reporting the findings of previous studies regarding the needs of, and challenges faced by, international students.

All individuals who enter the new cultural environment share common adaptation experiences. They all feel like a stranger in their host country and they must accept their new environment. Young (2004) defined cross-cultural adaptation “*as the entirety of the phenomenon of individuals who, on relocation to an unfamiliar sociocultural environment, strive to establish and maintain a relatively stable, reciprocal, and functional relationship with the environment*” (p.339). However, the experience and the duration of staying abroad cannot guarantee improved understanding of another culture (Hodge, 2000).

A successful intercultural adaptation requires sensitivity to cultural differences, openness, and positive attitudes, other than excessive dependence on ethnic support systems (Young, 2004). Wagner and Magistrale (1997) insisted that people’s own experience of trial and error will be the most effective way of adjusting to a new culture. A number of researchers have attempted

to explain the process of cross-cultural adaptation and have developed theories and strategies for this purpose. However, Kim (1998) has speculated that after arriving, strangers' normal patterns of cognitive, behavioral, and affective responses gradually change.

Familiar cultural habits are discarded in favor of new cultural habits. With time, strangers develop the ability to express themselves and engage in spontaneous social interaction more effectively. Kim also suggests that strangers' initial needs can be satisfied by participations in the familiar realm of communication within their own ethnic communities, if one exists for them. As their skills of communication in the host culture increase, they become less dependent on communication within their ethnic community. Kim's belief that adaptation occurs naturally if strangers attempt to participate in host society communication processes.

Everyone who comes to a new program of works face adjustment issues more so in a new institution, and much more so in a new country. According to Miller (1993), students who experience adjustment problems or what is termed 'culture shock' can experience a range of negative responses from mild symptoms such as tiredness, to severe reactions, such as the feeling of being victimised, paranoia and the refusal of most or even all aspects of the host culture. According to Burke (1986), culture shock has been identified as a common experience among international students, and it has been claimed that most international students experience culture shock to some degree.

There are a number of authors who claim that culture shock is a predictable part of the normal cycle of adjustment as the student comes to terms with new academic, cultural and social expectations, and learns to negotiate the academic system in an unfamiliar setting (Bochner 1972; Furnham & Bochner 1986; Kim 1998; Barker 1990). However Yieh (1932) found that culture shock can lead to homesickness and loneliness, and negatively affect issues related to health, bonding, establishing academic and non-academic social contacts, marriage issues, and academic problems.

Studies on international students' adaptation discuss a range of problems, including the pressures created by the new role and behavioral expectation, language difficulties, social difficulties, homesickness, academic difficulties and lack of assertiveness inside and outside classroom (Charless & Stewart, 1991; Hayes & lin, 1994; Barrat & Huba, 1994; Par, Bradley & Bingi, 1992).

International students face common as well as their unique problems. They face some problems that confront anyone living in a foreign culture such as language problem, accommodation difficulties, misunderstanding and loneliness (Lin & Yi, 1997). Inter cultural adaptation is not solely determined by the international themselves. It is shaped in relationship with others and affected by differences in value (Novera, 2004).

## 2.1 Academic Problems

Mostly, in the process of adaptation to an academic system, many students reported that they could overcome language difficulties after at least one semester, when they were more confident about their English ability, when they got used to the local dialect, and when they became familiar with the academic environment (Everets & Sodjakusumah, 1996). Inappropriateness of the program in which the Indonesian students enrolled caused problems to a few of them. As a result of studying in an undesired program, students felt more stressed and needed more time to complete their studies.

The specific difficulties are shaped not just by unfamiliarity with English *per se* but by the linguistic character of Indonesian language, the approach to English learning in Indonesia, and what happens when the two different pedagogical and linguistic traditions intersect (Novera, 2004). Although both English and Indonesia use the same script, there are differences particularly in their grammatical and syntactical structures (Novera, 2004).

Likewise, Kaplan (2001) notes that in writing, speakers and readers of English expect linear development as an integral aspect of communication. Asian traditions often involve more indirect presentation. The difficulties faced by international students who are unfamiliar with the more direct form of argument are magnified by linguistic constraints (Novera, 2004). Nevertheless, the cultural differences in learning were not always seen as negatives. The very elements that were the source of learning difficulties, such as teacher and students intimacy,

and the emphases on individual integrity and self expression, were also valued by the students (Novera, 2004).

In terms of student-professor relationship, Indonesian students who had better understanding with each other and better relationship were those whose lecturers or supervisors had experiences dealing with international students (Everets & Sodjakusumah, 1996). In addition, the relationship between teacher and student, the expectation of critical analysis, active participation in tutorials, the teaching strategy of questioning, and the attitude towards knowledge and authority all contribute to the cultural adjustment difficulties of international students (Ballard & Clanchy, 1991).

Mastery of English helps, and intercultural competencies, particularly emotional stability, have an impact. According to Novera (2004), Indonesian is one of Asian countries that highly values what Hofstede (1997) calls 'power distance'. This can be a barrier for Indonesian students in adjusting to their new environment, in two ways: it can be difficult to manage a less hierarchical teacher and students relationship, and difficult to assert themselves within the classroom as required. Indonesian are expected to obey and to respect older people, for example by using a particular language code to refer to a person senior or older than themselves.

In Indonesia, students manifest their respect for older people such as teachers by being obedient and listening to them and because Indonesian culture embodies strong commitments to collectivity and harmony, students often prefer to give indirect signals than to argue directly with lecturers. Whereas interrupting lecturers in the middle of the presentation is considered rude, and criticising the lecture is even worse. According to Novera (2004), mostly Indonesian students found it intrinsically appropriate difficult to provide critical comment on what lecturers said. Behaviour that is culturally appropriate in Indonesia can be interpreted as classroom passivity in Australia. But to change Indonesian education in this respect is difficult.

Dardjowidjojo (2001, pp.314-316) states that “*Changing the role of the learner and that of the teacher takes up a deep down into our fundamental values and traditions which, whether we realise it or not, have shackled our ways of thinking and behaving. The culture that allows people to express their views freely, to be direct in what they say, and, if necessary, to be critical of their elders, is just not with us. Conformity, rather than individuality, is still the most dominant rule*”.

Interestingly, students who are less flexible do better academically, which replicated the findings of a study among international students in Taiwan (Mol, Van Oudenhoven & Van der Zee, 2003). During this period, problems and difficulties experienced by international students were frequently seen to be ‘language related’ (Zhang, Sillitoe & Webb 1999). However, later literature (Burke 1986; Ballard & Clanchy 1991, 1997) indicates that there has been a gradual shift throughout the higher education community to positive efforts to understand and address deeper issues related to the education of international students.

With the rapid increase in the number of international students, their problems of academic adjustment to university conditions become clearly apparent. In common, with the majority of students entering university, international students faced a range of transition challenges as they moved from secondary to tertiary education. Indeed, these challenges faced by all students have been the subject of a great deal of recent studies (for example, McInnis & James 1995) and include social, financial, academic and personal issues. However, for international students in Australia University, there is the added challenge of adjusting culturally to the mores of the university system, and it is with these cultural challenges that this study is primarily concerned.

## **2.2 Social Problems**

On the other hand, the major source of problems faced by international students who pursue their studies abroad is social interaction with host society and other international students. Many other studies have identified social concerns as one of the biggest problems for international students (Heikinheimo & Shute, 1986 & Kaczmarek, et al, 1994). Indonesian students in New Zealand admitted that it was not easy to make friends with students from the host country (Everets & Sodjakusumah, 1996). Different lifestyles, age differences from their classmates, and negative perceptions by New Zealand students on international students were some factors which discourage Indonesian students from making friends with them (Everets & Sodjakusumah, 1996).

Previous research in cross culture adaptation among Chinese students in Netherland showed that they experienced difficulties in adjusting to the local situation. For instance, Spencer-Oatey

and Xiong (2006) found that, in spite of their general satisfactory adaptation, Chinese students reported problematic interactions with non-Chinese. Zheng and Berry (1991) found that Chinese students in Canada experienced more social and material problems on adaptation than Chinese-Canadian students. The tendency to wait for the host to initiate contact hampered Indonesian students in interacting actively with them. On the other hand, there might be little interest among host students to make friends with international students.

Although it was not easy for Indonesian students to overcome differences in social relations, but with the help from significant co-nationals, friends from different cultural groups, and supportive members of the host community, they learned about local customs and were encouraged to interact with host students without being influenced by their lifestyle (Everets & Sodjakusunah, 1996). A few Indonesian students, who joined sporting activities or other social gatherings on campus, claimed that they had good experiences with host students and developed friendship with them. Furthermore, number of total close friends was a poor predictor of international students' satisfaction with their social networks (Rajapaksa & Dundes, 2002/2003).

Ward (2001) identified that the quantity of interaction between international and domestic students is normally low and that international students anticipate and desire greater contact. Such interaction by international students with local students generally benefits the international student on a psychological, social and academic level.

Low occurrence of relationships between international and local students does not suggest complacency within the international student group. Indeed international students are open to and desire greater contact with domestic students (Klineberg & Hull 1979, cited in Ward, 2001). Domestic students “*hold relatively favourable perceptions of international students but are disinterested in initiating contact with international peers*” (Ward, 2001, p.2-3).

Based on previous research (Brown & Daly, 2004), international students stated that they found it harder to make friends cross-culturally, but that they would persist with attempts after initial lack of interest from locals. Domestic students differed by rating themselves as less likely to initiate interaction and more prone to giving up attempts at friendship within their own ethnic group than international students.

Domestic students considered themselves more able to handle social situations with their own ethnic group than did with international students. Both local and international students reported more close friends with co-nationals than with students from a different ethnic group (Brown & Daly, 2004). International students spent more time socialising and studying with members of their own cultural groups than people of other ethnic backgrounds.

Whereas domestic students reported having a greater number of friends within their own ethnic group than international students did, but the number of friends from outside their own cultural group was comparable, while international students reported spending significantly more time studying with friends from other ethnic groups than the domestic students did (Brown & Daly,

2004). According to Hofstede (1997, p.113) uncertainty avoidance refers to “*the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by uncertainty or unknown situations*”.

People from strong uncertainty avoidance cultures are active, expressive of their feelings, aggressive, emotional, compulsive, security seeking, and intolerant; while those from weak uncertainty avoidance cultures, such as Southeast Asian cultures (Clyne, 1994) are contemplative, less aggressive, unemotional, relaxed, accepting personal risk, and relatively tolerant (Jandt, 2001). The latter cultures also tolerate ambiguity and value harmony. Jandt asserts that students from high uncertainty avoidance cultures expect their teachers to know all the answers, whereas in low uncertainty avoidance cultures, students do not expect their teachers to know everything.

### **2.3 Personal Problems**

Whilst entering university is usually viewed as an exciting time, it can also be particularly challenging, especially for students who have moved away from their social support base and are learning to adapt to a new environment. Such feelings of homesickness commonly involve a sense of loneliness, sadness, confusion, fear, and a pre-occupation with thoughts about home. Such responses are similar to grief reactions whereby students become separated from family and close friends and feel a sense of loss of people, places and familiar routines. These reactions may contribute to greater difficulty in adjusting to one’s new environment (Mori, 2000).

Another problem in cross cultural adaptation is personal problems. According to Everets and Sodjakusumah (1996), normally some personal problem commonly experienced by Indonesian students who study abroad such as loneliness, homesickness absence of spouse and adjusting to food. Indonesian students overcame homesickness and loneliness by writing letters, making long distance phone calls of at least once a month, spending more time with other Indonesians or spending more time on their studies.

Like Indonesian students in Canada, those in New Zealand rarely sought guidance or counselling when they had personal problems Everets and Sodjakusumah (1996) said that very few of them used the Student Counselling Service to help them solved their personal problems. They solved their personal problems by themselves or with help from their spouses, other Indonesian students or their supervisors.

Homesickness is among the most frequently reported concerns of international college students in the United States (Lin & Yi, 2003). Leaving family, friends, and a home culture in pursuit of an academic opportunity abroad, international students frequently find themselves simultaneously grieving for missed persons and places, building new social networks, and adjusting to new cultural and environmental demands (Chen, 1999; Mori, 2000; Sandhu & Asrabadi, 1994). Those who experience homesickness may feel 'down,' stressed and confused about many things, feel isolated, and have intense feelings of longing for home. A student may not enjoy the university experience as much as they thought they would and they may have a strong urge to return home, a prospect that initially can appear more attractive from a distance (Chen, 1999).

Homesickness or adjustment problems can affect many areas of your life including your mood, your studies and your relationships. For example, you may feel depressed, lonely, stressed about learning your way around the university and your new environment (Lin & Yi, 2003). Students may find it harder to concentrate on their studies and to maintain motivation in their course. Students may also find that they are getting sick more often than usual. Things that they used to be able to manage easily can seem harder as self-esteem and confidence lessen and they find themselves becoming more anxious when engaging in social interactions and seeking to make new friends (Lin & Yi, 2003).

#### **2.4 Personal Changes**

Another problem that faced by International students in cross cultural adaptation is personal changes. Based on previous research by Everets and Sodjakusumah (1996), as a result of staying and studying overseas, Indonesian students reported that they experienced some personal changes. Coming home from an extended period abroad can cause a confusing mixture of feelings, both positive and negative. Students probably remember hearing about culture shock at pre-departure orientation.

International students in particular, may experience difficulties adjusting to a new climate, unfamiliar setting, accommodation, transportation, safety issues and the unfamiliar types of food (Mori, 2000). The foreign country's culture can appear very different from what we are used to and thus involve significant personal challenges when confronting different value and

belief systems. Unfortunately, some students may also encounter racial discrimination and other such difficulties in the process of adjusting to new cultural norms (Oberg, 1960).

According to Zheng and Berry (1991), most of students probably also remember experiencing it, to one degree or another, while students were abroad. Students may not have been prepared for is the re-entry shock of coming home. Just as with culture shock, re-entry shock encompasses a wide range of feelings and responses, from mild frustration or fatigue to feelings of alienation and depression.

Besides broader knowledge and increased self-confidence, students from both groups stated that they became more autonomous, more understanding about themselves, more open-minded, more independent, and more determined. They also experienced changes in their self-discipline, habits, punctuality, intercultural understanding, way of thinking, and in their perceptions about Indonesia (Everets & Sodjakusumah, 1996). These changes may influence the readjustment process when they return home.

Zheng and Berry (1991) found that Chinese sojourners in Canada reported more problems related to work, family and children, language and communication, homesickness, and loneliness than Canadian-born Chinese and non-Chinese samples. The study estimated that as much as 70% of the sojourners in the study were considered “non-adapted”, meaning that was not easy to adapt to the new environment.

The existence of local student complacency towards interacting with international students is sustained by a study (Hurtado & Trevino, 1994, cited in Ward, 2001) relating to majority versus minority culture relations, which found minority cultures interact more across cultures. The academic needs of international students are as important as their social needs. International students are firstly in new environment to study and there are often great expectations placed upon them by the fee-payer for them to return to their countries of origin with a qualification (Butcher & McGrath, 2004). Yet their social interactions will affect their academic performance.

Most of the international students who study abroad reported that they face with problems in adaptation as it is not easy for them to adapt themselves with the new environment. Based on the literature review, most of international students problem face with academic problem such as language, relationship between student and lecture. Other problems include social problem, personal problem and some personal changes. Asian international students need to make necessary cultural adjustment in order to study abroad (Ballard, 1987).

In making academic adjustment, Asian international students experience challenges in areas of time management, effective reading, assignment writing, exam techniques, computer skills and actively seeking advice about services on campus (Barker 1990a; Ballard & Clanchy 1991). The available literature (Burke 1986; Samuelowicz 1987; Ballard & Clanchy 1991; Burns 1991) also suggests that finances, accommodation, living independently, homesickness and lack of support networks are among the difficulties experienced by Asian international

students. However, these issues are directly associated with academic, social, personal adjustment and some personal changes experiences.

## **2.5 Theoretical Perspective**

In an effort to establish a theoretical framework for the present study, this chapter will discuss a theory that would help conceptualize cross-cultural adaptation, To support this theory, this study adopts by Deal (2002) for explaining intercultural adaptation issues of international students.

### **2.5.1 Uncertainty Reduction Theory**

Gudykunst and Hammer (1988) have applied the theory of uncertainty reduction to intercultural adaptation. The basis of this theory is that strangers experience differing levels of uncertainty and anxiety; their effort to reduce these feelings constitutes the adaptation process. According to Gudykunst and Hammer, knowledge of the host culture obtained prior to and after arrival in the host society is vital in making predictions about both the probable response to certain messages and the general behavior of others.

They claim that preconceptions or stereotypes of a particular group, formed primarily by mass media, play a significant role in determining the attitudes about and behavior towards individuals of the other group. This applies to both strangers' and hosts' perceptions. This part of the theory was supported by the experience of one Malaysian student studying in the United States (Deal,

2002). His stereotype of American culture, formed by watching American television programs and news in Malaysia, affected his interaction with Americans. He "knew a little better what to expect," when he first arrived. Eventually, however, he discovered that American society is more complex than he had been led to believe (Deal, 2002).

In another part of the uncertainty reduction theory, Gudykunst and Hammer (1988) point to cultural similarity as a factor influencing the level of anxiety strangers experience. If the two cultures are very dissimilar, the strangers' anxiety level will be relatively high and their predictions and explanation of behavior relatively inaccurate. According to Wanguri (1996, p.456) "*we tend to like people who are similar to us and dislike those who are dissimilar*". The implication of this for Southeast Asian students or any nonwestern person is that cultural dissimilarity to America makes adaptation more difficult for them than it is for other international students whose native cultures are more similar to American culture (Deal, 2002).

Uncertainty reduction theory also presents the case that since both uncertainty and anxiety affect a sojourner independently, the traditional designation of high-accultured and low-accultured is inaccurate. Gudykunst and Hammer (1988) also point to Berger's (1979) uncertainty reduction strategies, which consist of various means of obtaining information about culture.

Thus, this theory is deemed to be appropriate for the present study. Most of international students who study abroad, at the beginning they will feel like "stranger". Strangers in a cross-cultural setting, it views the goal of strangers desiring effective communication to be one of

understanding and adapting to the host culture. Ishiyama and Westwood (1992) view cross-cultural adaptation as being a learning experience in that it heightens awareness and also promotes personal growth. Knowledge of these theories of cross-cultural adaptation allows university counselors, faculty, and students to communicate effectively with and help Asian and other international students as they attempt to adjust to their new environment (Robert, 2004).

This theory also relate with Gudykunst's (1992) prediction regarding the process of developing intercultural friendships in which he finds that the process of making friends of either one's own or of another culture depends on the emotion of satisfaction with the relationship. If there is a high degree of uncertainty or anxiety about the interaction, people are less likely to become friends.

Collectivist societies tend to assign a higher degree of intimacy to friendships in the in-group. *"In early stages of relationship development, we must rely on cultural and sociological data to predict another person's behavior because we do not have sufficient information to use psychological data in making predictions"* (Gudykunst, 1992, p. 305). This theory helps international students to make a choices, to be more effective and are aimed at reducing or eliminating the doubt or fear that develop from the inability to predict expected behavior (Griffin, 2003).

Gudykunst and Kim (2003) point out that mindfulness does not come naturally, since we do not normally reflect on behaviors and attitudes that have become habitual. These habitual behaviors

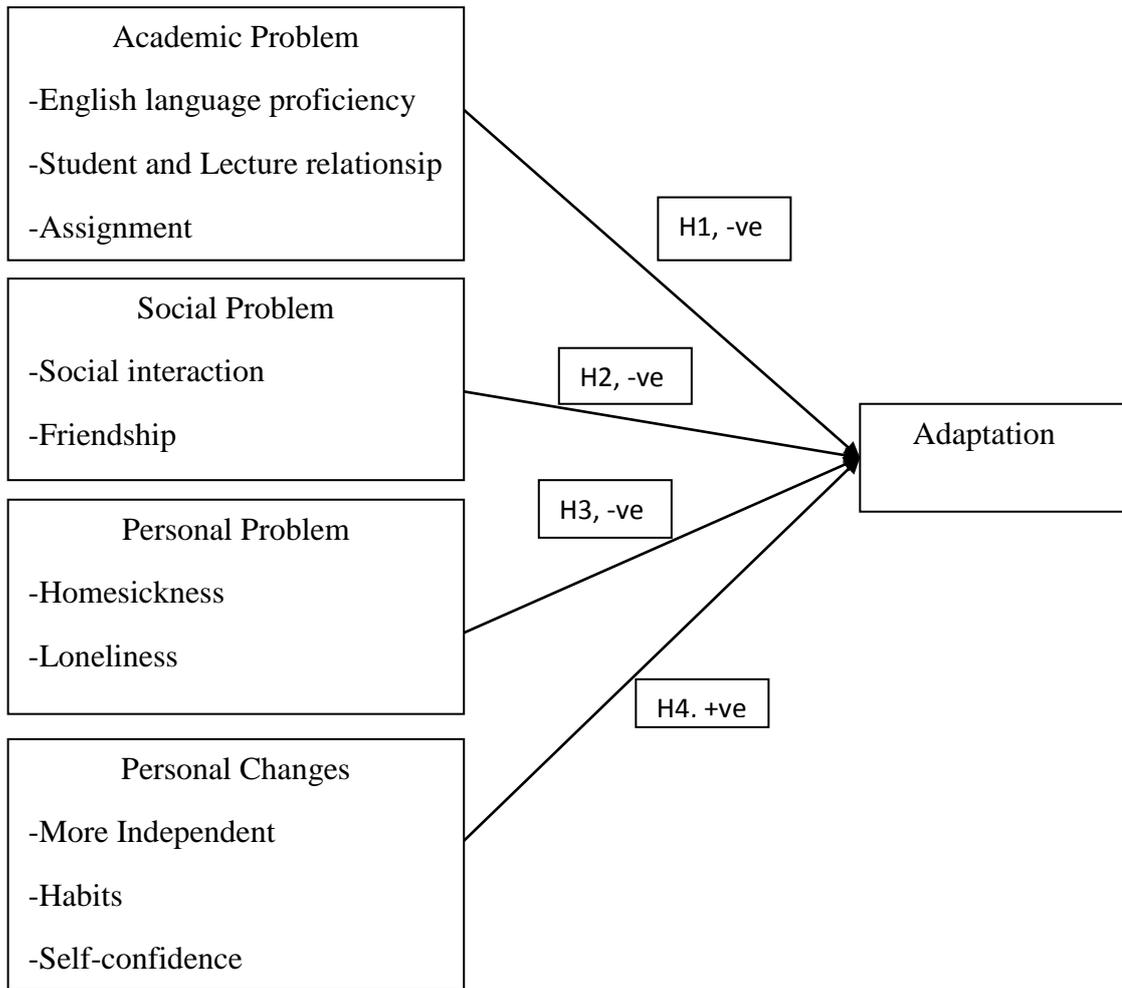
are scripted by our experiences and the “programming” of our minds through our cultures and life experiences. This theory also provides insights on identity change or marginality in the cross-cultural adaptation process, as well as identifying strategies for preservation of one’s original culture while adapting to a new cultural environment.

## **2.6 Hypotheses**

- H1: There is a negative relationship between academic problems and adaptation in cross cultural adaption among Indonesian students in UUM.
- H2: There is a negative relationship between social problems and adaptation in cross cultural adaptation among Indonesian students in UUM.
- H3: There is a negative relationship between personal problems and adaptation in cross cultural adaptaion among Indonesian students in UUM.
- H4: There is a positive relationship between personal changes and adaptation in cross cultural adaptation among Indonesian students in UUM.

## **2.7 Conceptual Framework**

This section will look into model used for explain the dependent variable as a effect and the independent variables as the cause in this study.



## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODS**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter will explain how the process involved in this study starting from data collection approach and the method of analyzing the data. The primary research design for this study was quantitative in nature and aimed to collect descriptive data from Indonesian students. As discussed earlier, the study was conducted in order to better understand the cross cultural adaptation among Indonesian students in UUM. Accordingly, the questionnaire was designed to explore the problem of cross cultural adaption in academic problem, social problem, personal problem and personal changes.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

Quantitative research is a sample through the data collection process of asking question of people (Fowler, 1994). This data collection, in turn, enables a researcher to generalize the finding from a sample of responses to population. This study employed the quantitative approach because quantitative methods ensured high levels of reliability of data gathered. According to Cassell and Symon (1994), the main concerns of the quantitative paradigm are that measurement is reliable, valid, and generalizable in its clear prediction of cause and effect. In this study exhibit all the features associated with a quantitative study and that led to adaption of this approach.

## **3.2 Data Collection**

*“The processes of analysis and interpretation of data involve disciplined study, creative insight and careful attention to the purposes of the study”* (Patton 1987, p.144). Patton explains that analysis and interpretation are conceptually separated processes, analysis being the process of *“bringing order to and organising data into patterns, categories and basic descriptive units”* (p.144). Interpretation, on the other hand, he suggested: *“involves attaching meaning and significance to the analysis, explaining descriptive patterns and looking for relationships and linkages among descriptive dimensions”* (p.144).

The data will be collected using a set of questionnaire adopted from previous research as the data collection instrument and this will be done following all required processes to validate the findings of the research as discussed in the following subsections.

### **3.2.1 Population and Sample**

A sample is a group of people or events drawn from a population (Marion, 2004). A research study is carried out on a sample from a population. The goal is to be able to find out true facts about the sample that will also be true of the population. In order for the sample to truly reflect the population, we need to have a sample that is representative of the population.

The sample for this study was drawn from Indonesian students with confirmed enrolments in undergraduate students courses at the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), UUM in 2010. The

population was 115. The achieved sample was 108 with the exception of gender (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). The samples were chosen based on the convenient sampling method.

### **3.2.2 Survey Questionnaire**

The instrumentation use in this study is questionnaire. This questionnaire include five constructs such as academic problem, social problem, personal problem, personal changes and adaptation. Measures of cross-cultural adaptation are drawn from relevant Indonesian students. The questionnaire is adopted from Shenoy (2000), Kuo and Roysircar (2006).

### **3.2.3 Instrument and Sample Procedure**

The data for this study was collected through a questionnaire. For this study the questionnaire use convenient sampling method. Fifty of Indonesian undergraduates students from CAS were chosen to fill up the questionnaires as part of the pilot study. The questionnaire was distributed through the leader of PPI (Persatuan Pelajar Indonesia) and the leader distributed the questionnaire to Indonesian students specifically undergraduate students enrolled in the CAS. Those friends also refer to other friends CAS undergraduate students. This procedure was continued until the sample size become 108.

The questionnaire was designed to include six items to measures the problems of adaptation that faced by Indonesian students in UUM. Referse to Appendix A for the sample of questionnaire. This would be ensure that the benchmarks are to complete this study. The

questionnaire was divided into five parts. Part A for demographic information; Part B for adaptation; Part C for academic problem; Part D for social problem; Part E for personal problem and Part F for personal changes.

### **Part A: Demographic Information**

Part A was used to gather respondents' general demographic background which includes the gender, age and marital status.

### **Part B: Adaptation**

Part B of the survey required respondents to complete a six-item questions measurement of adaptation experienced faced by Indonesian students in UUM. A five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree, was used to determine students' self experiences during the adaptation. Respondents specified their level of agreement or disagreement for their adaptation relative to their experiences with people and environment in UUM. Questions included “ *I enjoy living in University housing and i feel i have enough social skill to get along well in the college setting*”.

### **Part C: Academic Problem**

Part C survey required respondents to complete a ten-item questions which is to measure the degree of difficulty faced by Indonesian students in the aspect of academic system in UUM. A five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Not at All Difficult to 5 = Extremely difficult, was

used to determine students' self experiences in their academic system in UUM. Respondents specified their level of "not at all difficult" or "extremelly difficult" in the study in relation to their experiences with the academic system in UUM. Questions included "*Adapting to the new teaching styles and adapting to an effective study strategy*".

#### **Part D: Social Problem**

In this part, the survey required respondents to complete a six-item questions which is to measure the social efficacy relating to their interaction with people in UUM. A five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree, was used to determine students' self effectiveness in social situations. Respondents specified their level of agreement or disagreement for their interactions relative to interactions with people from the same ethnic group and different ethnic groups. Questions included "*I find it hard to make friends in UUM and I feel comfortable with friends of the same nationality with me*".

#### **Part E: Personal Problems**

Part E required the respondents to complete a ten-item scale which is to measure the personal problem faced by Indonesian students in UUM. A five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree, was used to determine students' personal problems. Respondents specified their level of agreement or disagreement for the problem relative to their personal problem to adapt their self in UUM. Questions include "*I usually felt lonely and I frequently hane the thought of leaving Malaysia and just go back to Indonesia*".

## **Part F: Personal Changes**

Part F survey required respondents to complete a six-item questions which is to measure the personal changes faced by Indonesian students. A five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree, was used to determine students' personal changes. Respondents specified their level of agreement or disagreement for the some changes of their personal life during the adaptation. Questions included "*I am quite confident with making day-to-day decisions on my own and I feel more confident since i start studying in Malaysia*".

### **3.3 Reliability Testing**

A pilot study was conducted among the first 50 respondents to determine the reliability of the items of the research instruments. The items of the instrument were validated using SPSS reliability test, the calculated reliability level showed the homogeneity of the items and this would assist in deciding whether the items are valid or not. With the reliability result, suitable decision was made as to whether the instruments could be used or not.

The most widely used cronbach's alpha test of SPSS was used, any item of the instruments whose cronbach's alpha was not closed to 1 will be considered unreliable. In line with Sekaran (2000) the reliability construct in a quantitative study of this nature was considered reliable if the Cronbach's Alpha was greater than 0.7. Therefore, the five constructs involved in this study with Cronbach Alphas of 0.715, 0.871, 0.771, 0.843 and 0.777.

### 3.4 Reliability Testing Demographic Information

#### Age

Based on age, from 50 respondents 21 (42%) of the respondents were age under 20. Whereas 29 (58%) of the respondents were 21-25 years old. The result showed at table 3.4.1.

**Table 3.4.1 Age**

	Frequency	Percent
Under 20	21	42.0
21-25	29	58.0
Total	50	100

#### Gender

Based on gender, from 50 respondents 24 (48%) of the respondents were male. Whereas 26 (52%) of the respondents were female. The result showed at table 3.4.2.

**Table 3.4.2 Gender**

	Frequency	Percent
Male	24	48.0
Female	26	52.0
Total	50	100

### **Marital Status**

Based on the status, from 50 respondents showed that all respondents were single with representing 100%. The result showed at table 3.4.3.

**Table 3.4.3 Marital status**

	Frequency	Percent
Single	50	100
Total	50	100

### **3.5 Reliability of Questionnaire Item**

The overall Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient for 38 items is .765, which is highly acceptable. The reliability analysis scale can be accepted if the Cronbach Alpha coefficient is between 0.6 and 1.0 (Maslach & Jackson, 1986). The result showed at table 3.5.1.

**Table 3.5.1 Reliability of Questionnaire Item**

Instruments	N of Items	$\alpha$
Adaptation	6	.633
Academic Problem	10	.765
Social Problem	6	.722
Personal Problem	10	.759
Personal Cahnges	6	.772

**Table 3.5.2 Alpha value if item deleted for adaptation**

Item	$\alpha$
Adaptation 1	.604
Adaptation 2	.556
Adaptation 3	.618
Adaptation 4	.610
Adaptation 5	.651
Adaptation 6	.640

**Table 3.5.3 Alpha value if deleted for academic problems**

Items	$\alpha$
Academic Problem 1	.738
Academic Problem 2	.743
Academic Problem 3	.755
Academic Problem 4	.748
Academic Problem 5	.750
Academic Problem 6	.756
Academic Problem 7	.740
Academic Problem 8	.743
Academic Problem 9	.739
Academic problem 10	.733

**Table 3.5.4 Alpha value if item deleted for social problems**

Item	$\alpha$
Social Problem 1	.746
Social Problem 2	.667
Social Problem 3	.648
Social Problem 4	.722
Social Problem 5	.688
Social Problem 6	.690

**Table 3.5.5 Alpha value if item deleted for personal problems**

Items	$\alpha$
Personal Problem 1	.732
Personal Problem 2	.730
Personal Problem 3	.728
Personal Problem 4	.745
Personal Problem 5	.741
Personal Problem 6	.737
Personal Problem 7	.749
Personal Problem 8	.754
Personal Problem 9	.724
Personal Problem 10	.736

**Table 3.5.6 Alpha value if item deleted for personal changes**

Items	$\alpha$
Personal Changes 1	.782
Personal Changes 2	.720
Personal Changes 3	.759
Personal Changes 4	.718
Personal Changes 5	.753
Personal Changes 6	.712

## CHAPTER 4

### DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

#### 4.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the procedures used in transforming and analysing the data collected by questionnaire. The study examined the problem of adaptation faced by Indonesian students in UUM.

#### 4.1 Data Analysis

*‘The processes of analysis and interpretation of data involve disciplined study, creative insight and careful attention to the purposes of the study’* (Patton, 1987, p.144). Patton (1987), explains that analysis and interpretation are conceptually a separated processes, analysis being the process of ‘bringing order to and organising data into patterns, categories and basic descriptive units. Interpretation, on the other hand, involves attaching meaning and significance to the analysis, explaining descriptive patterns and looking for relationships and linkages among descriptive dimensions. Thus, this chapter will analyze the data collected by questionnaire, analyzing the responses of the result from the participants to each hypotheses.

The study was quantitative in nature and was aimed to collect descriptive data from Undergraduate Indonesian students.

The following section described the five adaptation variables obtained from the correlation of the questionnaire items by SPSS and the contents corresponding to these variables. A five-point Likert format was used in all scales presented below; while lower scores represent weaker endorsement of the items stated and higher scores represent stronger endorsement of the items. Accordingly, the questionnaire was designed to explore cross-ethnic in problem of adaptation.

## **4.2 Analysis of Demography Information**

### **4.2.1 Age**

Based on the age of the respondents, 45 (41.7%) of the respondents was age under 20. Whereas, 63 (58.3%) of the respondents were between 21 – 25 years old (Table 4.1).

**Table 4.1 Age**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Under 20	45	41.7
21-25	63	58.3
Total	108	100

### **4.2.2 Gengder**

Based on gender of the respondents, 49 (45.4%) of the respondents were male. Whereas 59 (54.6%) of the respondents were female (Table 4.2).

**Table 4.2 Gender**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Male	49	45.4
Female	59	54.6
Total	108	100

### **4.2.3 Marital Status**

Based on the status of the respondents showed that all of the population are single with representing 100% (Table 4.3).

**Table 4.3 Marital Status**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Single	108	100
Total	108	100

### 4.3 Hypotheses Testing

#### 4.3.1 The correlation between Academic problems and adaptation

The hypotheses in this research proposed that there was a negative relationship between academic problems and adaptation. Pearson-correlation analysis shows that there was a significant, weak and negative relationship between academic problem and adaptation in cross cultural adaptation among Indonesian students in UUM, ( $r = -.204^*$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). This shows that the more students experience academic problems, the more they will face problem in adaptation. The result shows at table 4.4.

**Table 4.4 The corelation of Academic Problems and adaptation**

	Adaptation
Academic Problem	$r = -.204^*$
	$p = .034$
	$n = 108$

\*.Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

#### 4.3.2 The correlation between social problems and adaptation

In term of the relationship between social problems and adaptation, Pearson correlation analysis indicates that there was a significant, weak and negative relationship between social problems and adaptation in cross cultural adaptation among Indonesian Students in

UUM, ( $r = -.193^*$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). This indicate that the more social problems the students face during adjustment process, the less they will adapt themselves. The result is show in table 4.5.

**Table 4.5 The corelation of Social Problems and adaptation**

	Adaptation
Social Problem	$r = -.193^*$
	$p = .046$
	$n = 108$

\*.Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

#### **4.3.3 The correlation between personal problems and adaptation**

In term of the relationship between personal problems and adaptation, Pearson correlation analysis indicates that there was a significant, weak and negative relationship between personal problems and adaptation in cross cultural adaptation among Indonesian Students in UUM, ( $r = -.198^*$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). This indicate that the more personal problems the students face during adjustment process, the less they will adapt theirselves. The result show at table 4.6.

**Table 4.6 The corelation of Personal Problems and adaptation**

	Adaptation
Personal Problem	$r = -.198^*$
	$p = .040$
	$n = 108$

\*.Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

#### **4.3.4 The correlation between personal changes and adaptation**

In terms of the relationship between personal changes and adaptation, Pearson correlation analysis indicates that there is a significant, strong and positive relationship between personal changes and adaptation in cross cultural adaptation among Indonesian Students in UUM, ( $r = .840^{**}$   $p < 0.01$ ). This indicate that the more personal changes the students face during adjustment process, the more they will adapt themselves. The result shows at table 4.7.

**Table 4.7 The corelation of Personal Changes and adaptation**

	Adaptation
Personal Changes	$r = .840^{**}$
	$p = .000$
	$n = 108$

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

International students faced common, as well as their own unique problems. They are facing the same problems that confront anybody living in a foreign culture, such as academic problem, racial discrimination, language problem, dietary restriction, problem in social interaction, misunderstanding and loneliness (Lin & Yi, 1997). Whereas all of this problem exposure to an unfamiliar environment usually creates anxiety, depression and confusion. These condition can lead to complaints of nervousness, loneliness, insomnia and physical illness (Lin & Yi, 1997), all of which appear to interfere with studies, friendship and so on.

The purpose of the study is to investigate the problem of cross cultural adaptation faced by Indonesian students in UUM. The current exploratory study points out a number of problem in cross cultural adaptation.

#### **5.1 Academic Problems**

Academic problems is the extent to which Indonesian students are able to acclimate themselves to the new academic and linguistic environment in the host country and to become proficient in such a system is an important indicator of their psychological adjustment.

The results showed that a low in academic achievement is correlated with problems of adaptation. These findings supported by previous research. Leung (2001) showed that difficulties in adjusting to new situations were associated with poor academic achievement. Besides, it also challenges in the academic arena including difficulties in language (English) it has been consistently identified as major sources of adjustment strains for unaccompanied students (Chow, 1990; Kuo, 1991). Although both English and Indonesian use the same script, there are differences particularly in their grammatical and syntactical structures (Novera, 2004).

For Indonesian students, grammatical mistakes are almost inevitable, and this can be a source of frustration for some students, especially when doing assignments. In English subject, students had more problems in academic situations compared to social context. Normally in interaction students were not concerned with a grammatical but they were more concerned about the conversational rules as long as people understand the meaning.

Cummins (1984, in Borland and Pearce, 2002) noted that it takes longer for language learners to become competent in the academic context. Besides, that students find the test construction was difficult to comprehend. English is a second language for Indonesian students. A total 108 of participants in this study reported that at least some difficulties in use of English in academic situation. Comprehending oral English, writing essays were the areas of difficulties.

Those who have English as a second language often require extra time to read their textbooks (Li & Yi, 1997). Further students often unable to articulate their knowledge on essay exams or

writing assignment due to their limited vocabulary. Some of Indonesian students did not pass their English examination before entering the University and they should take English class for one semester. For many Indonesian students who are poor in English experience a significant academic problems in cross cultural adaptation.

Indonesian students may have difficulty adapting to the various accents of the instructor along with their different teaching styles. Students may have difficulty to understand the class lectures, it is making them feel reluctant to participate in class discussion and this affects their academic performance. In Indonesia, the students manifest their respect for older people such as teachers by being obedient and listening to them, and because Indonesian culture have strong commitments to collectivity and harmony, students often prefer to give indirect signals than to argue directly with lectures (Novera, 2004).

Interrupting lectures in the middle of presentation is considered rude and criticising the lecturer is even worse. Prior research by Chalmers and Volet (1997) and Biggs (2001) agree that the international students from high power distance cultural tend to participate less in classroom, and often lack critical skills and it is difficult to change Indonesian education. This shows that academic is one of the factors that comes a problem in cross cultural adaptation.

Indonesian students in UUM found it was very difficult to adapt to the educational system or academic. In the findings academic difficulties are a significant problem of adaptation to learning by Indonesian students. It was negatively correlated with adaptation.

## **5.2 Social Problems**

Most of undergraduates Indonesian students faced with social problems. The major of social problems faced by Indonesian students in UUM was interaction with members of the host society or other international students. It was found that their interaction primarily occurred within co-ethnic student groups and when students did interact with people from different ethnic backgrounds it tended to be for academic rather than social activities.

This is consistent with past research undertaken in Britain, Japan, France, United States of America and Canada (Ward, 2001) indicating an international trend for overseas born students to interact with co-nationals. On the other hand support by Hayani (2004), that social cultural is one of factors influencing adaptation of Indonesian students in University Putra Malaysia.

Based on this study students felt that they were less confident, had less common ground, and that it was more difficult to express dissenting ideas and to get information. It found similarity of student's perception on their commonality of conversation topics with people from different ethnic groups. Indonesian students in UUM found it harder to make friends cross-culturally. Other previous research says that students with people from other ethnic backgrounds they were less likely to initiate friendship (Brown & Daly, 2004).

Indonesian students in UUM feel comfortable to be around people of the same nationality and feel anxiety with friends from different ethnic backgrounds, but they would persist with attempts after initial lack of interest from locals or other international students. Students spent more time

socialising and studying with members of their own cultural groups than people of other ethnic backgrounds.

This finding relates with uncertainty reduction theory. This theory point to cultural similarity as a factor influencing the level of anxiety strangers experience (Gudykunst & Hammer, 1988). If the two cultures are very dissimilar, the strangers' anxiety level will be relatively high and their predictions and explanation of behavior relatively inaccurate. On the other hand, different lifestyle, age differences from their classmates, and negative perceptions were some factors which discourage Indonesian students in UUM from making friends with host or other international students. As a consequence, Indonesian students had closer interaction with their co-nationals.

It was not easy for Indonesian students to overcome differences in social relations, but with help from significant co-nationals, friends from different cultural groups, and supportive members of the host community, they learned about local customs and were encouraged to interact with host or other international students without being influenced by their lifestyle. However a few Indonesia students, who joined sporting activities or other social gatherings on campus, claimed that they had good experiences with host students and developed friendship with them.

Consequently, his requires tertiary institutions to adopt interventionist strategies to develop cross-cultural interaction. Ward (2001, p. 3) supports the introduction of interventionist

strategies “*to promote more and better intercultural activities*”. These strategies include peer-pairing of local and foreign students, although care should be taken to ensure these arrangements involve equal status contact, with local students not assuming an ‘expert’ role and subsequently disempowering international students.

### **5.3 Personal Problems**

For personal problem, based on the result there was a significant, weak and negative relationship between personal problems and adaptation in cross cultural adaptation among Indonesian students in UUM. This indicated that the more personal problem the students face during adjustment process, the less they will adapt themselves.

Some personal problems commonly experienced by Indonesian students in UUM during process of adaptation are loneliness, homesickness, and always wants to go back to Indonesia and find it hard to motivate themselves to do their work or their study. Usually they solved their personal problems by themselves or seek help from their spouses or other Indonesian students. This finding supported by Everets and Sodjakusumah (1996), study where Indonesian students in New Zealand overcame homesickness and loneliness by writing letters, making long distance phone calls of at least once a month, spending more time with other Indonesians, or spending more time on their studies.

However Indonesian students in Canada, those in New Zealand rarely sought guidance or counselling when they had personal problems. Very few of them used the Student Counselling Service to help them solve their personal problems (Everets & Sodjakusumah, 1996).

Malaysia is promoting its high quality education and its multicultural environment. It is possible that Indonesian students will experience personal problems during their time at UUM. Most of problems related to international students such as fear of failure, lack of motivation, procrastination, lack of self-discipline, examination nerves and stress.

Indonesian students personal problems include lack of self-confidence, mild or severe depression, grief, loneliness, difficulty in making friends, anxiety, feel lack of motivation, laziness, inability to concentrate with their study, loss interest or desire to do anything during the process adaptation and they tend to somatize their problems or seek academic help so as to avoid losing face. Whereas all of these personal problems could have serious consequences and it can influence their psychologist and their academic achievement. For International students holding a student visa, getting along with the new surrounding is very hard.

This is for the fact that students are novice and unfamiliar to the new setting. This finding related with uncertainty theory that being alone as a stranger adds weight to the challenges that they face. It may take times before a international students used to living in Malaysia and for international students to make a choices to be more effective are aimed and reducing or eliminating the doubt or fear that develop from the inability to predict expected behavior.

#### **5.4 Personal Changes**

As a result of staying and studying overseas, Indonesian students at UUM reported that they experienced some personal changes. There was a significant, strong and positive relationship between personal changes and adaptation in cross cultural adaptation among Indonesian students in UUM. Most of them feel that they have learned a lot, grown as a person, acquired new attitudes and knowledge.

This finding was similar with prior study on Indonesian students in Canada (Sodjakusumah, 1994), which showed that students stated that they became more autonomous, more understanding about themselves, more open-minded, more independent, and more determined. Students also experienced changes in their self-discipline, habits, punctuality, intercultural understanding, way of thinking, and in their perceptions about Indonesia. These changes may influence the readjustment process when they return home.

Uncertainty theory provides insights on identity change or marginality in the cross-cultural adaptation process, as well as identifying strategies for preservation of one's original culture while adapting to a new cultural environment. On the other hand, Ishiyama and Westwood (1992) view cross-cultural adaptation as being a learning experience in that it heightens awareness and also promotes personal growth.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

Education in new cultural context can be exciting and good experience for students overseas. This experience was constrained by unfamiliarity not only with academic context but also in social and personal lives. Problems experienced by Indonesian students in University Utara Malaysia (UUM) are not too different with those encountered by Indonesian students in UPM, Canada, New Zealand and Australia. Many of the problems that faced by Indonesian students at UUM during their course of study especially for undergraduates Indonesian students.

The number of problems experienced among Indonesian students related to this study are in academic problem, social problem and personal problem. Whereas students have good personal changes during the adaptation, but it takes at least one semester for Indonesian students to adapt to the new culture, and may be longer for some Indonesians who do not get help from other Indonesians or other significant people.

In terms of academic matters, Indonesian students in UUM find it was very difficult to adapt to the educational or academic system which include the difficulty in adapting to the various accents of the instructor along with different teaching styles, difficulty understanding class lectures, making them feel reluctant to participate in class discussion and students find the test construction difficult to comprehend.

Besides, difficulties in developing social relationships with members of the host society or other international friends are reported by Indonesian students at UUM. Barriers to active interaction with host nationals and other international students are that they feel comfortable and much save to be around people of the same nationality and feel anxiety with friends from different ethnic backgrounds. The different lifestyle, age differences from their classmates, and negative perceptions also some factors which discourage Indonesian students in UUM from making friends with host or other international students.

In terms of personal problem experienced by Indonesian students are not too different with other Indonesian students who study overseas. Mostly they feel homesickness, lack of self-confidence, mild or severe depression, grief, loneliness, difficulty in making friends, anxiety, feel lack of motivation, laziness, inability to concentrate with their study, loss of interest or desire to do anything during the adaptation process.

Eventhough, Malaysian geopgraphic and cultural is quite similar with Indonesia, Indonesian students still having problem with adaptation process. Indicate of this study shows that every people who enter the new environment still need to go through the process of adapting themselves. Besides, during the process of adaptation, Indonesian students feel that they have personal changes.

Most of them claimed to experience lot of things, grown as a person, acquired new attitudes and also knowledge such as change in their psychological readiness to study overseas, their

knowledge about the new culture, their interpersonal skills, more chances to interact with people, their English fluency, and their ability to solve their adjustment problems. Whereas that was not easy to adapt themselves with the new environment. By that time students have explored and deal with some adjustment problems and students become a good person.

## **5.6 Recommendation**

This study showed that there are many problems faced by Indonesian students. The issues are related to the cross cultural adaptation among Indonesian students in UUM. The participants experience difficulties with academic problems during the process of adaptation. English probably derived in part from sufficient exposure to English and Indonesian education, given that English is taught as foreign language and as a second language for Indonesian students.

Unfortunately, this study suggest that the preparatory courses in English provided to Indonesian students who study abroad to continue their study are insufficient to compensate the weakness of English language learning in Indonesia. This suggests the need for more language support from the country of origin. Most universities provide language assistance for international students through a language adviser.

On the other hand, in relation to the cultural differences in learning styles, education in Indonesia and the preparatory courses in English provided before commencement of the degree program, should make this issue explicit and train how to handle it. For the university especially UUM, should give specific English class for learning and interaction. However for

the students in this study suggest that they should more strongly encourage themselves in academic, social, and personal problem that they faced during adaptation in the new environment.

Students should encourage themselves to use English actively in the classroom, participate in the discussion and develop conversation skills to help them initiating relationships whether with lecturer or host society and other international students. Students may have positive perception toward other ethnic background in day-to-day interaction. Besides that students facing with a diverse cultural group of students with various approaches to learning, thus for many lecturer by positively encouraging students to ask questions or more make comments and so acquire the classroom skills.

Apparent indifference on behalf of domestic students towards initiating interaction with their international peers is a significant point and is somewhat explained through existing research that suggests the locals believe international students are impaired in their academic progress, and they want to complete their study as fast as possible. However, this does not appear to impair international students pursuing cross-cultural friendships.

Additional examination of factors limiting student interaction is warranted as this study supports existing literature that suggests the attitudes and perceptions of both student groups regarding each other are generally positive, suggesting the lack of interaction is not attitudinally based.

It is proposed that future research should investigate the effect of tertiary institutions by implementing interventionist strategies to encourage interaction between different student groups. Moreover future research should also include greater cultural diversity such as international students from English speaking backgrounds.

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## **APPENDIXES**

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Questionnaire**

#### **SURVEY:**

#### **CROSS CULTURE ADAPTATION AMONG INDONESIA STUDENTS ENROLL IN UNIVERSITY UTARA MALAYSIA (UUM)**

I am a post graduate student Master of Sciences in Managerial Communication attached at the communication program, College of Art and Science (CAS). I am conducting a survey on Cross Culture Adaptation among Indonesia Students as part of the requirement of the program.

The information you provide will help me to better understand the problem of adaptation among Indonesia students in UUM.

Your response will be keep confidential and therefore, your name will not be required.

Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.

Date:

No :

**SURVEY:**  
**CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG INDONESIAN STUDENTS  
ENROLL IN UNIVERSITI UTARA MALAYSIA**

**Part A: Demographic Information**

1. Age:

Under 20

21 – 25

26 – 30

Over 30

2. Gender:

Male

Female

3. Marital Status:

Single

Married

Other ( \_\_\_\_\_ )

**Part B: Adaptation**

Statements below describe your adaptation experiences in UUM. Please read each of the statements and state how well it applies to you. (√) the appropriate number. The answering scale are:

(1 = Strongly Disagree', 2 = Disagree', 3 = Unsure', 4 = Agree', 5= Strongly Agree').

No	Items	1	2	3	4	5
1	I feel that I fit in well as part of the university environment.					
2	I find academic work at college difficult.					
3	Recently I have had trouble concentrating on my study.					
4	I have trouble getting started on my assignments.					
5	I enjoy living in university housing.					
6	I feel I have enough social skills to get along well in the college setting.					

**Part C: Academic Problem**

Please rate the degree of difficulty you face with aspects of academic system in UUM. Please read each of the statements and decide how well it applies to you. (√) the appropriate number. The answering scale are:

(1 = Not at All Difficult, 2 = Slightly Difficult, 3 = Somewhat Difficult, 4 = Very Difficult ,

5 = Extremely Difficult)

No	Items	1	2	3	4	5
1	Adapting to the new teaching styles					
2	Adapting an effective study strategy					
3	Getting accustomed to the different learning environment and educational system					

4	Getting involved in extracurricular activities					
5	Getting along with lectures					
6	Dealing with peer relationships with lecturers					
7	Comprehending oral English					
8	Writing in English					
9	Speaking in English					
10	Reading in English					

**Part D: Social Problem**

Please respond to the following statements relating to your social and friendship patterns at UUM. Read each of the statements and decide how well it applies to you. (√) the appropriate number. The answering scale are:

(1 = Strongly Disagree', 2 = Disagree', 3 = Unsure', 4 = Agree', 5= Strongly Agree').

No	Items	1	2	3	4	5
1	I find it hard to make friends in UUM.					
2	I am able to find genuinely close/good friends in UUM.					
3	I have UUM friends whom I consider to be my close friends.					
4	I participate in activities in UUM (e.g., university clubs, sports teams or social parties with host or other International friends).					
5	I wish that I knew more about Malaysia.					
6	I feel comfortable with friends of the same nationality with me.					

**Part E: Personal Problem**

Please respond to the following statements relating to your personal problem that you face in UUM. Read each of the statements and decide how well it applies to you. (√) the appropriate number. The answering scale are:

(1 = Strongly Disagree', 2 = Disagree', 3 = Unsure', 4 = Agree', 5 = Strongly Agree').

No	Items	1	2	3	4	5
1	I usually felt lonely					
2	I frequently have the thought of leaving Malaysia and just go back to Indonesia					
3	I usually feel homesick to the extent that I could not concentrate on my study					
4	I feel very sad whenever thinking about my family, relatives and friends back home					
5	I get irritated easily about people and things					
6	I often feel isolated from others.					
7	There is someone nearby who really cares about me					
8	I almost always have someone to turn to if I need to talk					
9	Life often seems so pointless to me					
10	I often find it hard to motivate myself to do my work or to study.					

**Part F: Personal Changes**

The following statements describes your personal changes during the process of adaptation at UUM. Please read each of the statements and decide how well it applies to you. (✓) the appropriate number. The answering scale are:

(1 = Strongly Disagree', 2 = Disagree', 3 = Unsure', 4 = Agree', 5 = Strongly Agree').

No	Items	1	2	3	4	5
1	I feel overwhelmed by all the responsibilities that i have.					
2	I am quite confident with making day-to-day decisions on my own.					
3	I am satisfied with the way I have managed life on my own.					
4	I believe that I am capable of doing things as well as most other people.					
5	I feel more confident since I start studying in Malaysia					
6	I am quite indipendent when I stay in the new environment.					

Thank You For Your Time

## APPENDIX B

### Output of Hypotheses Testing

#### a. Hypotheses Testing

##### 1.1 Analysis Demography Information

**Statistics**

		Age	Gender	Marital_Status
N	Valid	108	108	108
	Missing	92	92	92

**Age**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	under 20	45	22.5	41.7	41.7
	21-25	63	31.5	58.3	100.0
	Total	108	54.0	100.0	
Missing	System	92	46.0		
Total		200	100.0		

**Gender**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	49	24.5	45.4	45.4
	Female	59	29.5	54.6	100.0
	Total	108	54.0	100.0	
Missing	System	92	46.0		
Total		200	100.0		

**Marital\_Status**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Single	108	54.0	100.0	100.0
Missing	System	92	46.0		
Total		200	100.0		

### 1.2 The correlation of Academic Problems and Adaptation

**Correlations**

		adaptation	Academic
adaptation	Pearson Correlation	1.000	-.204*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.034
	N	108.000	108
Academic	Pearson Correlation	-.204*	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.034	
	N	108	108.000

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

### 1.3 The correlation of Social Problems and Adaptation

**Correlations**

		adaptation	Social_Prob
adaptation	Pearson Correlation	1.000	-.193*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.046
	N	108.000	108
Social_Prob	Pearson Correlation	-.193*	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.046	
	N	108	108.000

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

### 1.4 The correlation of Personal Problem and Adaptation

		adaptation	Personal_Problem
adaptation	Pearson Correlation	1.000	-.198*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.040
	N	108.000	108
Personal_Problem	Pearson Correlation	-.198*	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.040	
	N	108	108.000

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

### 1.5 The correlation of Personal Changes and Adaptation

		adaptation	personal_change
adaptation	Pearson Correlation	1	.840**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	108	108
Personal_changes	Pearson Correlation	.840**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	108	108

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).