

Academic and Social Integration Experiences of Papuan Students Studying in Java

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Abstract. Following the Special Autonomy Law in 2001, the number of Papuan students studying out of town soared, resulting in integration into a new culture becomes inevitable. The authors were interested in exploring academic and social integration experiences amongst Papuan university students in Java. A Semi-structured interview was used to collect data from six Papuan students (four males and two females). Data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify factors influencing integration strategy and to explore how stereotypes affect the minority student's acculturation strategy. These factors included the student's personality traits and motivation, prior contact with outgroup members, support from the university, academic barriers, and language/communication barriers. Additionally, the study found that negative stereotypes were more commonly experienced by indigenous Papuan students compared to mixed-Papuan students. This suggests that the cultural background of the students may play a role in their integration experiences. While the sample size of this study was small and may not be representative of the broader population, the findings provide important implications for educational institutions. The study highlights the importance of involving ethnic minorities in shaping educational policies related to integration. By addressing the factors identified in this study, educational institutions can create a more positive environment for all students.

Keywords: acculturation; integration; Javanese; Papuan; stereotype.

Immigration has been a common phenomenon for the past century and has increased rapidly in recent years. This trend has spurred researchers to investigate the experiences of immigrants as they settle into their "new home" and the psychological processes that accompany this transition. Following the decentralization in Indonesia, which began with the implementation of Law No. 22/1999 and Law No. 25/1999, has led to significant changes in the country's fiscal and educational systems (Muttaqin et al., 2016; Rumere et al., 2022). These laws transferred power and decision-making authority from the national government to regional governments, allowing for more localized control over public services, including education (Latupeirissa et al., 2021). This has led to a number of reforms in the Papuan education system, such as the introduction of local-language instruction and the expansion of access to education in rural areas (Muttaqin et al., 2016). Thus, leading to an increase in the number of Papuan students studying in Java. This has made them an ethnic minority in this context, as they are a minority group among the predominantly Javanese population of Java. The law has also contributed to an increase in the number of educated Papuans, as it has allowed for greater investment in education

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in Papua.

The contact between the Papuan and Javanese ethnic groups has not always been positive. Papuan people, who are an ethnic group living in the Papua and West Papua provinces in eastern Indonesia have a distinct culture and history, and have faced challenges related to economic development, political representation, and human rights (Christiani, 2017; Dalimunthe et al., 2020). On the other hand, the Javanese are the majority ethnic group in Indonesia, comprising around 40.5% of the total population (BPS, 2005). There is also a large contrast in education quality between these two regions, with Papua lagging behind Java (Mollet, 2007). This history of conflict and disparity between the two ethnic groups may impact the perception of Javanese people about the Papuan negatively (Habibi & Sutarmanto, 2017) as well as influence the acculturation experiences of Papuan students studying in Java (Mollet, 2007).

Papuan students studying in Java have occasionally been involved in social conflicts, such as the one that occurred in 2016 in Yogyakarta Papuans (Kusumadewi, 2016). This conflict not only caused financial loss but also feelings of discomfort among the local residents (Kusumadewi & Gumilang, 2016). Without proper intervention, it is possible that these conflicts could escalate, highlighting the need for preventive measures in intergroup relations. Education plays a crucial role in promoting a mindset of diversity and sensitivity towards cultural differences among different ethnic groups. However, research on Papuan-Javanese group relations and integration has been insufficient, providing opportunities for further investigation in this area. A Previous study has found that Papuan students studying outside of their homeland face several adaptation barriers (Dalimunthe et al., 2020) which can affect their ability to integrate with others and their academic performance. Understanding the history between Indonesia and Papua can provide additional insight into these barriers and their origins.

Papua was initially colonized by the Dutch and became part of Indonesia in 1963. The Indonesian government then divided the island into two provinces: Papua and West Irian Jaya (which was later renamed West Papua). This integration had a significant impact on the administrative and economic systems in West Papua, as the Indonesian central government took control of various sectors, including agriculture, social welfare, health, education, and culture. Mustikawati and Maulana (2020) does indeed argue that during the Suharto regime, the focus of Indonesian development was mainly on the Javanese island, leaving West Papua with little attention from the government. This was particularly evident in the education sector, where investment in West Papua was limited, leading to poor infrastructure and a shortage of qualified teachers (Mustikawati & Maulana, 2020). In 2019, nearly 20% of Papuans had not even attended primary school. These challenges were compounded by the fact that 2.3 million Papuans (nearly 50% of the total population) still live in remote highland areas, limiting their access to education and healthcare (BPS, 2019). These factors may have led to gaps in education and opportunities, making it challenging for Papuan students to succeed in a different educational system and cultural environment (Ulaan et al., 2016).

In response to this deficiency in education quality, many educated, educated and economically stable Papuan families send their children to study in Java in an effort to improve their skills

and education level (Munro, 2013). Boveington (2007) surveyed 26 Papuan students studying at the university level in East Java and found that their motivation for leaving Papua and studying abroad was primarily driven by family encouragement and the desire to improve their livelihood and education. However, the survey also revealed several obstacles that these students faced during the adaptation process, including lack of support from host institutions, economic reasons, language differences, and the age at which they started their course in Java. These barriers can hinder the ability of Papuan students to integrate and succeed in the academic and social life in Java.

Theoretical and evidence-based approaches are therefore important to ensure positive contact and favorable acculturation experiences between minority-majority students in an educational setting (Castellanos & Jones, 2003). The present research, therefore, aims to explore the minority student's acculturation experience to identify what are the factors that influence their acculturation strategy in an Indonesian context. Moreover, as highlighted by a previous study suggesting ethnic minorities are prone to negative stereotyping and discrimination, the present study also attempts to investigate certain stereotypes experienced by minority students and how it affects their acculturation strategy.

To sum up, the research questions for this study focus on the experiences of Papuan students in acculturating to the dominant culture in Java University. The first question asks about the strategies used by Papuan students to integrate socially and academically in Java University. The second question explores the potential impact of stereotypes on the ability of Papuan students to integrate and succeed in the academic and social settings of the university. These research questions aim to better understand the challenges and barriers that Papuan students may face as they attempt to acculturate to the dominant culture in Java.

Acculturation in the context of education

Acculturation is the product of contact between cultural groups and their individual members, which can lead to cultural and psychological changes (Berry, 2005). Using this definition, contact occurred during the process of acculturation which prompts individuals to think about how to acculturate (Berry, 1997). The issue of "how" to acculturate is known as an acculturation strategy (Ward & Kennedy, 1999). According to Berry (1997) acculturation strategy model, there are four types of strategies related to issues of maintaining an original identity and maintaining relationships with the dominant culture. These strategies are integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization. Integration occurs when individuals value their original identity and maintain relationships with the dominant culture. Assimilation is when individuals do not value their own identity but instead embrace the dominant culture. Separation refers to when individuals are willing to maintain their own identity but fail to maintain relationships with the dominant culture. When the process is forced by the state or law, this strategy is known as segregation. Marginalization is when individuals do not value their original identity and do not maintain relationships with the host culture. It is important to note that these strategies can only be achieved when individuals from the non-dominant culture have the freedom to choose how they acculturate (Bourhis et al., 2009). Factors such as support from the host institution and the presence of barriers, such as language differences, can impact their ability to adopt a

specific acculturation strategy. In the context of education, acculturation is inevitable as the demand for higher-quality education increases and drives students to seek education outside their home countries (Smith & Khawaja, 2011). However, the acculturation process can have negative impacts, such as stress and homesickness (Ward et al., 2020). Therefore, it is important to ensure that international students receive proper support and resources during their studies. To understand the acculturation process in the educational context, it is necessary to consider multiple frameworks, including the stress and coping framework, the cultural learning framework, and the social identification perspective (Ward et al., 2020). A literature review by Smith and Khawaja (2011) identified five factors that can elicit stress among international students, namely language, educational stressors, sociocultural stress, discrimination, and practical stressors. These factors can impact students' coping strategies during the acculturation process and should be considered when designing support and interventions for international students.

Integration as a Form of Positive Acculturation Strategy

Among the various acculturation strategies proposed by Berry (1997) model, integration has been associated with positive outcomes, such as information networking and enhanced academic persistence and commitment to the institution (Karp et al., 2010; Thomas, 2000). Tinto's student integration model also found that students who integrated socially and academically were more likely to remain enrolled in an institution compared to those who were less integrated (Chrysikos et al., 2017). These findings suggest that promoting integration can be an effective strategy for supporting the acculturation process and enhancing the success of international students in educational institutions. This can be achieved through various means, such as providing support and resources for language learning, promoting social connections and intercultural interactions, and addressing barriers to integration, such as discrimination and stereotypes. By adopting an integrative approach, educational institutions can create a positive and inclusive environment that supports the success of international students (Karp et al., 2010; Thomas, 2000).

There is a debate over how to define integration in the context of acculturation. Bourhis et al. (1997) defined it as an acculturation orientation in which individuals maintain key features of their cultural identity while also adopting the culture of the host majority. Karp et al. (2010) defined it more simply as "having a sense of belonging on campus," which encompasses a student's feeling of comfort or enjoyment in class. Thomas (2000) provided a more comprehensive definition, stating that integration refers to the degree of a student's connectedness with peers and the institution. This connectedness can impact their commitment to the institution.

In the context of this study, the definition provided by (Thomas, 2000) is the most suitable for understanding a student's experience of integration. This definition emphasizes the importance of connections and relationships in the acculturation process and highlights the role of the institution in supporting and promoting integration. By considering this definition, researchers can gain a better understanding of the factors that influence integration and the ways in which educational institutions can support the acculturation process.

Integration has been associated with a range of positive outcomes, including decreased homesickness, enhanced contentment, improved relationships and satisfaction, and increased social connectedness (Hendrickson et al., 2011). A study conducted among international students at the University of Hawaii used various scales and measures to assess these factors. The study found that international students who had positive and deep relationships with domestic students and maintained good relations with friends from their home countries reported higher life satisfaction and self-contentment.

While the benefits of integration have been extensively studied in the context of refugees, immigrants, and persons with disabilities, less research has been conducted on managing the negative consequences of unsuccessful integration in education (Sayegh & Lasry, 1993). Studies have shown that students from different nationalities, ethnicities, and religions may be at risk of negative social interactions, such as stereotypes (Tawagi & Mak, 2014). These social identities can amplify the "in-group" and "out-group" dynamic between the host country and the sojourner, leading to a tendency to interact more positively with members of the in-group and develop prejudice toward the out-group (Tawagi & Mak, 2014).

Supportive social networks and institutions can play a critical role in promoting integration and reducing the negative consequences of unsuccessful integration (Baker & Edwards, 2012). In a study of 7,417 students in California, Baker and Edwards (2012) found that Latino students were twice as likely to drop out of school as Black students. The researchers gathered pre-college characteristics of both groups, administered several Likert scales measuring college and community support, and assessed students' sense of belonging to the campus. The results showed that Black students tended to be more flexible in joining clubs and societies and establishing connections with peers on campus. Latino students, on the other hand, were more likely to have obligations to work off-campus to support their families, which may have limited their ability to socialize. However, Latino students who had good relationships with other students were seven times more likely to stay enrolled in the institution than those with low meaningful relations. Supportive staff and institutions were also important in maintaining Black and Latino students' retention.

In conclusion, acculturation is an important factor to consider in the educational context as it can affect the overall well-being and academic performance of students. Integration, in particular, has been associated with several positive outcomes such as improved relationships, life satisfaction, and commitment to the institution. However, negative experiences such as stereotypes and discrimination can hinder the integration process and have negative impacts on students. Education institutions have a crucial role in creating a positive and inclusive environment to support the integration of minority students. Further research is needed to fully understand the experiences of minority students in the acculturation process and to identify strategies to support their successful integration in educational institutions.

Contact act as the Expediting Factor in Integration

The acculturation process, which is the process of adapting to a new culture, can be a challenging experience for individuals, particularly for international students who are studying abroad. During this process, individuals may face various challenges, such as feeling homesick, anxious, or lonely (Brisset et al., 2010). One way to alleviate these challenges is through contact with the host culture, such as forming friendships and relationships with members of the host culture. This can help reduce feelings of anxiety and loneliness and can even lead to better integration into the new culture (Brisset et al., 2010). Yeh and Inose (2003) found that positive contact with other students is an important factor in the acculturation process for international students studying in the United States. In their study of 359 international students, they found that those who had positive contact with other students were more likely to have good friends and experience less acculturative stress. This suggests that positive contact can play a crucial role in helping international students adapt to their new surroundings and make connections with others.

However, not all contact is positive. Negative contact, such as being insulted or mistreated, can have the opposite effect, leading to increased feelings of loneliness and homesickness (Lee & Rice, 2007). This highlights the importance of fostering positive interactions between individuals and groups during the acculturation process. By creating a supportive and welcoming environment, we can help individuals more easily adapt to their new surroundings and integrate into the host culture.

Contact theory was first developed by Allport (1954) as a way to understand and promote positive intergroup relations. The theory posits that certain conditions must be met in order for the contact between different groups to be effective in reducing prejudice and promoting positive relations. These conditions include equal status between the groups, shared goals, intergroup cooperation, and support from authorities. In addition, contact should be frequent and free from negative emotions or threats. Contact theory has been extensively studied and has been found to be effective in reducing prejudice and promoting positive intergroup relations (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008); (Dovidio et al., 2003); (Vezzali et al., 2012); (Bettencourt et al., 1992). Research has shown that when the conditions outlined by Allport are met, contact between different groups can lead to more positive attitudes and more cooperative behavior. This is particularly true when contact is frequent and ongoing, and when it is supported by laws and customs (Allport, 1954; Dixon et al., 2005).

Research has shown that intergroup contact, especially friendship, can be an effective way to reduce prejudice and promote positive intergroup relations (Brophy, 1945; Kephart, 1957; Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). When individuals from different groups form friendships, they are more likely to cooperate and work towards common goals, which can help reduce prejudice and promote positive attitudes. Intimacy and self-disclosure are also important factors in intergroup friendships, as they can help foster a deeper understanding and connection between individuals (Turner et al., 2007). Research conducted by Hewstone et al. (2006) also highlighted the role of intergroup contact in promoting forgiveness in the context of the Catholic-Protestant conflict in Northern Ireland. Their study found that intergroup contact, especially contact that was personal and involved friendship, was associated with increased forgiveness among individuals from both

groups. This suggests that positive intergroup contact can play a key role in promoting forgiveness and reducing conflict between groups. This is particularly true when contact is personal and involves the development of close friendships.

To summarize, research has shown that positive contact between groups and individuals can be an effective way to reduce prejudice and promote positive intergroup relations. This is particularly true when contact involves the development of friendships and intimacy. Institutions, such as schools and universities, can play a crucial role in facilitating positive intergroup contact by promoting diversity awareness and creating an environment that supports the optimal conditions for intergroup contact. By establishing these conditions, individuals and groups are more likely to interact in a positive manner and facilitate the integration process.

Various Models of Contact within the Educational Context

It is well-established in the psychological literature that negative attitudes and prejudices toward outgroups can develop at a very young age (Stathi et al., 2014). These attitudes and prejudices can manifest in various ways, such as through children's interactions with others and their emotional reactions to those from different groups (Cameron et al., 2007; Nesdale et al., 2005). If left unchecked, these early negative attitudes can potentially lead to prejudice and discrimination later in life (Nesdale et al., 2005). This is why it is important for interventions aimed at reducing prejudice to take into account the educational context and focus on addressing these issues at a young age. This can involve teaching children about diversity and inclusion, promoting positive intergroup contact, and providing opportunities for children to interact with others from different backgrounds in positive ways. By addressing these issues early on, we can help to prevent the development of negative attitudes and reduce the prevalence of prejudice in society.

Research has shown that direct intergroup contact can be an effective way to reduce intergroup bias and prejudice among children and adolescents (Feddes et al., 2009); (Tropp & Prenovost, 2008). This is because it provides an opportunity for individuals from different groups to interact and get to know each other on a personal level, which can help to dispel negative stereotypes and promote positive attitudes (Janmaat, 2011). However, it is important to consider the proportion of the minority and majority groups when implementing intergroup contact interventions in the classroom. If the minority group is too small, it may not be effective in promoting positive intergroup contact. On the other hand, if the minority group is too large, it may lead to increased in-group bonding and greater prejudice from the majority group (Putnam, 2007). The Jigsaw cooperative learning method is one way to incorporate intergroup contact theory in the classroom and create the optimal conditions for positive intergroup contact. This method has been shown to be effective in promoting positive attitudes and reducing prejudice among children and adolescents (Molina & Wittig, 2006).

In conclusion, contact theory which is applied in the educational context should be aimed to improve intergroup relations, being conducted as early as possible in life span, and taking support from the education institution into account. Moreover, the application of the contact should be to facilitate integration amongst students. Previous research on contact theory has shown that contact

can be implemented both directly and indirectly.

Methods

The interpretive perspective used in the present research recognizes that individuals have unique perspectives and experiences that shape their views and actions (Ritchie et al., 2014). This perspective is well-suited to studying the acculturation experiences of Papuan students in a Javanese university, as it allows for an in-depth exploration of the subjective experiences and opinions of the participants. Furthermore, qualitative methods, such as interviews and focus group discussions, are well-suited to studying the acculturation experiences of Papuan students in a Javanese university. These methods allow for an open-ended and exploratory approach to data collection, which can provide rich and detailed insights into the participants' experiences and perspectives (Bryman, 2016).

Data collection processes were conducted virtually using the interview method which is a commonly used research method in the social sciences. It allows researchers to collect detailed and in-depth information from participants about their experiences, perspectives, and opinions on a given topic (Denscombe, 2014). The interview method is particularly useful when the researcher is interested in gaining a nuanced understanding of the participants' social world, as it allows the researcher to ask follow-up questions and probe for more detailed responses (Yeo et al., 2013).

Moreover, a semi-structured interview is chosen because it is a type of interview that combines elements of both structured and unstructured interviews. In a semi-structured interview, the researcher has a predetermined set of questions that they ask all participants, but the order of the questions and the specific wording of the questions may vary based on the participants' responses (Cohen et al., 2007). This type of interview allows for flexibility and the opportunity to explore topics in more depth (Denscombe, 2014), while still providing a consistent framework for collecting data across participants (Cohen et al., 2007). To sum up, the semi-structured interview is a useful research method for collecting detailed and in-depth information from participants while still providing a consistent framework for data collection and analysis.

Data collection process were conducted virtually. This online interview process can have several advantages, as well as some disadvantages, compared to in-person interviews. One advantage of online interviews is that they can be more convenient for both the researcher and the participants, as they can be conducted from any location with an internet connection. This can be particularly useful when the researcher and participants are located in different places, or when travel is impractical or costly (Denscombe, 2014). Another advantage of online interviews is that they can provide a more relaxed and comfortable environment for participants, which may encourage them to be more open and candid in their responses. The lack of visual cues and the psychological distance between the researcher and the participant can also reduce the influence of cultural and gender differences on the interview (Denscombe, 2014). However, online interviews also have some disadvantages compared to in-person interviews. One disadvantage is that the lack of direct visual contact can limit the researcher's ability to observe the participant's nonverbal cues and body language, which can provide

valuable information about the participant's thoughts and emotions (Ritchie et al., 2014). Additionally, the lack of face-to-face interaction can reduce the rapport and trust between the researcher and the participant, which can affect the quality and depth of the participant's responses.

Participants

The current study used purposive sampling to recruit participants because it allows the researcher to select participants who are particularly well-suited to provide information on the research question. This can be useful when the research question is focused on a specific group of people, or when the participants have unique experiences or perspectives that are relevant to the research (Ritchie et al., 2014). Eligible participants had to fulfill four criteria; 1. Papuan students (they were born and grew up in Papua), 2. Have/had experience studying in a Javanese University for at least six months, 3. Age 18 years above, and 4. Willing to be interviewed for 20 to 60 minutes using a video call application.

The present research also had been granted ethical clearance from the Graduate School of Education (GSoE) Research Ethics Committee (REC) with reference number 54742. Firstly, the research proposal was submitted for ethical approval and was granted approval one month later. Secondly, during the interviews, participants were informed of their right to refuse to answer any questions they were uncomfortable with, and they were given the opportunity to have their data destroyed if they wished. The researcher also took steps to ensure the confidentiality of the participants' data and used pseudonyms in the analysis and findings to protect their anonymity.

Eventually, the researcher successfully recruited six participants for the study by sending out an email invitation to members of the Papuan Student Association in Indonesia. The researcher also asked participants to refer any potential interviewees, but two of the potential interviewees were unable to confirm a time for the interview and two did not respond to the researcher. Eventually, a total of six participants interviewed were divided into two groups based on their race: Indigenous Papuans and mixed-Papuans. The participants were further characterized by their gender, academic level, and other demographic factors, such as age, length of residence in Java (minimum 6 months prior to university), type of university, and prior experience living outside of Papua. This information may be useful for understanding the experiences of these participants and comparing the experiences of the two different groups. It is important to keep in mind that the results of the study may not be generalizable to the broader population of Papuan students due to the small sample size and specific inclusion criteria.

Material

Prior to the data collection, the researcher conducted a pilot, asking a set of twelve interview questions. However, during the actual interview, two of the questions were not included in the data analysis because they were not relevant to the key themes of the research. This is a common practice in research, as researchers may identify certain questions or topics as being less important to the study after conducting a pilot study or reviewing the data. By excluding these questions from the analysis, the researchers were able to focus on the key themes of their study and avoid including unnecessary or irrelevant information in their results.

1. Pilot Study

The pilot study was conducted in June with two Papuan students who had experience studying abroad or outside their hometown. The purpose of the pilot study was to confirm whether the interview questions were easily understood by the participants. The pilot interviews were face-to-face interviews with both pilot participants. After the interview, the researcher asked for their feedback. Feedback was gathered with regard to their understanding of the questions, e.g. if any additional questions were needed and whether some questions were irrelevant and needed to be eliminated. After the pilot study, questions that could elicit emotional distress, for example, *“How did you feel leaving family and friends?”* was modified to be more general, into *“How did you feel studying at the University in Java?”*

2. Final Material

From the 12 interview questions, 10 were finalized and used to investigate the participants' views towards integration and meeting new people. The questions were divided into four parts: The first part asked about the general experience of Papuan students while attempting to make friends and settling in Java. There were only two questions in this first section. The second part attempted to reveal any barriers (such as stereotype) and possible reinforcing factors enhancing integration between Papuan and local students. There were six questions in this section. The third section asked about how the students coped with such barriers, with one question. The fourth part tried to gather information about the actions the university can take to support positive interactions amongst students to endorse integration between the two groups.

Procedure

The interview process was conducted from the end of June to mid-July. Initially, firstly, the researcher sent a recruitment email to members of the Papuan Student Association in Indonesia and invited potential participants to contact the researcher by email or WhatsApp. Participants were given an information sheet explaining the purpose of the research and the next steps for participating in the study. On the day of the interview, participants were asked to sign a consent form to confirm their voluntary participation, and after the interview, they were given a debriefing form to explain the goals of the study and answer any questions they had. Considering the nature of this study, the researcher also ensures that the participants are not unduly influenced by other students who may have knowledge of the study's goals and procedures. By asking participants not to share this information, the researcher is protecting the integrity of the study and ensuring that the results are not compromised. Additionally, this ensures that participants are able to freely share their experiences and opinions without fear of judgment or influence from their peers.

The online interviews were conducted using Skype Call and WhatsApp Video Call, depending on the participant's preference. The interviews lasted for 30 to 60 minutes and were recorded using iPhone 7 voice notes without recording any visual clues. This is a common approach for conducting interviews remotely, as it allows the researcher to capture the participants' responses without recording

any visual information that could potentially compromise their anonymity. The participants were aware of the recording prior to the interview, which is an important ethical consideration to ensure that they gave their informed consent to being recorded

Data Analysis

The data in this study were analyzed using thematic analysis, a flexible and accessible approach that allows for the emergence of themes from the participants' answers (Cohen et al., 2007). The analysis was carried out in five phases, as described by Braun and Clarke (2006):

1. Data familiarization: This involved listening to the interviews and transcriptions, and manually transcribing the data using Microsoft Excel. To maintain the original meaning of the participants' responses, the transcriptions were written in Bahasa Indonesia. However, the quotes used in the final report were translated into English.
2. Generating ignition codes: After becoming more familiar with the data, the researcher identified interesting features in the students' responses about their integration experiences. These features were noted using Microsoft Excel to filter keywords that emerged from the analysis. Frequent responses were then coded to limit the themes to the research questions.
3. Searching for themes: In this stage, the researcher focused on the broader level of the themes and collated all relevant codes within the emerged themes. Quotations were selected to support the themes and topics.
4. Reviewing the themes: The researcher aimed to construct a thematic framework and compare themes to make sense of how they fit together. The themes were arranged in a diagram to make visualization easier. Under the major themes, there were sub-themes containing smaller categorizations based on the participants' responses.
5. Defining and naming themes: This stage involved a careful review of each theme and making sense of the connections between themes. It also involved integrating and interpreting selected representative quotations and linking them to the research questions and literature.

To address concerns about validity and reliability, the researcher conducted respondent validation to check the validity of the findings (Denscombe, 2014) and used pseudonyms to ensure the anonymity of the students (Roulston, 2013). Although it is impossible to replicate a social setting in a study (Denscombe, 2014), these measures were taken to ensure the integrity of the research.

Results

Five major themes emerged in the analysis related to Papuan students' acculturation strategies in social and academic integration. The five themes, namely; 1). Personality and Internal Motivation, 2). Prior Contact with out-group members, 3). Previous academic quality, and 4). Support from authority (Wulandari, 2017). The five major themes can be seen in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1

Thematic Map of Papuan Student's Acculturation Strategy Experiences while Integrating into the Social & Academic Life



Personality and Internal Motivation as a Determinant Factor of Papuan Student's Acculturation Strategy

Personality and internal motivation were found to be determinant factors in the acculturation strategy of Papuan students in Java (Wulandari, 2017). The participants in this study reported that their own motivation, such as the desire to improve their quality of life or make their families proud, helped them to persevere in the face of challenges. Personality traits such as confidence and friendliness were also found to be important in determining how Papuan students acculturated themselves in their new environment.

Furthermore, the study found that personality and motivation act as buffering agents against acculturative stressors such as academic barriers and discrimination. However, the role of personality traits and motivation in acculturation strategy has not been extensively studied in the literature, compared to other factors such as gender (Lin & Betz, 2007; Taggart, 2018; Wang & Mallinckrodt, 2006), age (Poyrazli & Kavanaugh, 2006; Taggart, 2018), cultural distance, and language ability. In the present research, the participant Lisa, who had experienced negative stereotypes directed towards her by her peers, emphasized the importance of having a persistent and open-minded personality in adjusting to a new environment. As she elaborated on her experience:

“... it was hard. But it won't stop me from finding another friend with a more open-minded personality. I actually have an outgoing personality and I find it easy to make friends while I'm in Papua. But here, I need to try harder” (Lisa).

These comments highlight the role of personality traits, such as persistence and

open-mindedness, in facilitating successful integration. By being persistent and open-minded, individuals are able to overcome challenges and negative experiences, such as stereotypes and discrimination, and adjust to their new environment. This is consistent with previous research on personality traits and integration in the immigrant context, which has found having a proactive and positive mindset can make it easier for individuals to integrate into a new cultural environment (Vuong & Napier, 2015).

The findings of this study suggest that negative personality traits such as suspicion and anxiety towards the host culture can lead to a separation acculturation strategy, where individuals withdraw from social interaction with the dominant culture and instead remain with people from their own culture. This is consistent with the experiences shared by the participant Lisa, whose friend decided to transfer back to Papua due to difficulties in adjusting to life in Java.

Additionally, the study found that Papuan students tend to seek inward personal motivation to manage acculturative stressors, rather than seeking social support. This goes against previous research, which has found that social support plays a significant role in buffering against acculturative stress (Salgado et al., 2012). Social support has also been associated with students' ability to achieve their desired acculturation strategy within the host culture. However, the present study suggests that Papuan students may rely more on their own internal motivation to navigate challenges and stressors in their new environment. As Alice explained in the interview:

"Every time I feel down and find it hard to make friends, I keep reminding myself that I came here to study and make my family proud. I have to finish my studies, so I have to adjust well to the people here and study harder".
(Alice)

The participants in this study reported that they did not seek social support from family and friends back home when facing challenges and difficulties in their new environment. Instead, they relied on their own internal motivation to push themselves out of their comfort zone and overcome obstacles. For example, Alice explained that she did not tell her parents about her difficulties because she wanted to make them proud, and Lisa said that seeking social support from her family did not help her to integrate better at university. Rowan also emphasized the importance of pushing himself out of his comfort zone in order to succeed in his studies.

These findings suggest that Papuan students may rely more on their own internal motivation to navigate challenges and stressors in their new environment, rather than seeking social support from others. This is consistent with the participants' comments, which highlighted the role of personal motivation and determination in facilitating successful integration and adjustment to a new environment as quoted below:

"Even if they underestimated me, I need to be friendly, be good to people and prove them wrong about Papuan ... I hope one day, more Papuan can get a good education as I did. So, I need to be strong now". (Matt)

Prior Contact with Out-group Members as Facilitating Factor in the Integration

The present study found that all of the participants had prior experience in making friends with out-group members before starting university in Java. This is consistent with previous research, which

has found that positive intergroup contact can reduce anxiety and prejudice between groups (Brisset et al., 2010; Pettigrew et al., 2011). For example, a study on the Catholic-Protestant conflict in Northern Ireland concluded that intergroup contact between the groups could promote forgiveness and facilitate reconciliation (Hewstone et al., 2006).

The study also found that some participants experienced negative contact with Javanese during their studies, such as being asked mocking questions or being excluded from study groups. As Rowan explained, *"They would ask us some mocking questions such as 'do I still eat humans?'"* or as Matt experienced, *"... They would not invite me to be in the study group because they thought I was stupid"*. In another unfortunate situation, Lisa was sent away from the student union building. However, the participants reported that they did not let these experiences elicit anger or hatred towards Javanese people, as they had chosen to study in Java and were prepared to deal with such situations. As Lisa explains *"I've decided to leave Papua to study in Java, so it is my decision and therefore I have to deal with it"* (Lisa). This is consistent with the idea that voluntary contact can alleviate negative feelings towards the out-group (Pettigrew et al., 2011), whereas obligatory contact can have the opposite effect (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008).

To sum up, these findings suggest that prior positive intergroup contact can facilitate successful integration and adjustment to a new environment, and that voluntary contact can help individuals cope with negative experiences and avoid feelings of anger and hatred towards the out-group.

Support from University to Enhance Integration

The findings of the interviews suggest that support from the university is crucial for the successful integration of Papuan students into the majority student population (Wulandari, 2017). This support can take the form of group projects and social events that promote positive intergroup contact, as well as policies and programs that help minority students navigate the academic and social environment (Slavin & Cooper, 1999). However, a lack of support from the university can lead to negative experiences for Papuan students, such as culture shock and difficulties with bureaucracy (Wulandari, 2017). These challenges can affect students' well-being and trust in the institution. In line with Allport's four optimal contact conditions (1954), it is important for the university to provide a supportive and facilitating environment for minority students to help them integrate and feel like they belong. As Alice explained her experience:

"I was helped by my university who designed several group projects in the first semester. I got a chance to meet a lot of students from different background". (Alice)

Support from the university can take many forms, such as creating opportunities for students to connect with each other and with faculty members and developing policies that help to promote diversity and inclusion on campus. Additionally, setting shared goals can help to foster a sense of community and belonging among minority students, and can also help to ensure that their needs and concerns are taken into account in the decision-making process at the university (Tawagi & Mak, 2014). As Alice further elaborated, *"We were randomly assigned to students from different faculties; there were one or two senior students who facilitated the group during the first meeting of our group projects. It was so helpful,*

as we were not only conducting a research project together, but we also got a chance to get to know each other". As a result of this supportive academic climate, Alice reported making many local friends and feeling loyal to her university.

"... I would definitely consider studying master's here [in East Java] as soon as I finish my undergraduate thesis" (Alice).

On the contrary, the university that Lisa, Jamie, Matt, and Sam attended did not provide enough support to help them adjust to campus life and succeed academically. The lack of cultural induction and guidance on how to handle culture shock can make it difficult for students from diverse backgrounds to feel comfortable and supported on campus. Additionally, the lack of leadership skills training and support for learning English can make it harder for these students to participate fully in campus life and make the most of their educational opportunities. *"I recall we only received an academic induction, which I found not too useful"*, said Lisa. Jamie added this point and explained, *"I think we need more cultural induction, such as how to handle culture shock etc."* Matt suggested, *"We need leadership skills, induction to English, and how to manage our well-being"*. The findings of present research suggest that group projects and social events that promote positive intergroup contact can facilitate integration and help minority students feel more connected to the university community. This is because these activities provide opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds to interact with each other and learn from one another. The attitude of the academic staff at the university can also play a critical role in fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment. If staff members are supportive and approachable, they can help to create a sense of belonging among minority students and provide them with the guidance and support they need to succeed. As explained by Jamie:

"... the bureaucracy in the university also can be very exhausting for us as a sojourner student. For example, they are not accepting scanned signatures from my parents for certain documents. It is very costly for me to send the file back and forth by mail. I thought they will understand that we came from a very far place and will be more cooperative and helpful with us" (Jamie).

When there is a mismatch between a student's expectations and the reality of the services provided by a university, it can lead to frustration and disappointment. This can in turn affect the student's stress level and their trust in the institution (Chen & Graham, 2015). In order to prevent this situation from arising, it is important for universities to be transparent and clear about the services they offer, and to make sure that they are meeting the needs and expectations of their students. By doing so, universities can help to build trust with their students and create a positive educational experience for all.

Academic Barrier as a Hindering Factor for Integration

The findings of this study suggest that the quality of a student's previous education can have an impact on their ability to succeed and integrate at university. As (Verkuyten & Reijerse, 2008) suggest that students who come from higher-quality schools and have had more access to education facilities tend to have more confidence and better self-esteem, which can help them to mix well with other

students and participate fully in the university community. On the other hand, students who have had lower-quality education may find it more difficult to adjust to the demands of university and may be at risk of dropping out. Another point found in this study is the demanding academic load at the university can also make it difficult for these students to integrate and socialize, which can further contribute to feelings of isolation and separation (Khawaja & Dempsey, 2008). This finding is supported by Lisa, Alice, Matt and Sam who recalled some of their friends in campus were unable to finish their study due to the academic hardship and it is also preventing them from socializing with their peers.

"She said that the assignment was too hard, as a result, the time to meet other students for social occasions became limited. She felt really stressed". (Alice on her friend's experience in East Java)

Language and Communication Barrier as a Supplementary Hampering Factor of Integration Align with previous studies such as by Chen and Graham (2015) and Poyrazli and Kavanaugh (2006), the findings of this study suggest that language difficulties can hinder the integration of Papuan students with their Javanese peers. The use of local language in class and among Papuan students can make it difficult for them to learn Javanese culture and participate fully in the university community. This can have a negative impact on their sociocultural adaptation process and can make it more difficult for them to form close relationships with their peers. Previous research has shown that language proficiency plays a significant role in the initial phase of building close relationships (Zhang & Goodson, 2011), and that forming these relationships is important for decreasing stress and enhancing contentment and enjoyment in university life (Hendrickson et al., 2011).

Discussion

The result supported previous research on factors that could enhance acculturation and which factors hampered the process. The present study highlights the importance of understanding the cultural context of minority students in order to effectively integrate them into the majority culture in academic and social settings. Personality traits such as outgoing nature, assertiveness, and friendliness were found to be important for successful integration. Additionally, the findings of the study support the contact theory, which suggests that positive contact with the host culture can reduce anxiety and feelings of loneliness in students studying abroad (Pettigrew et al., 2011). Negative contact experiences, on the other hand, can help students develop better coping strategies for dealing with such situations. These findings suggest that future research on the topic of integration in education should focus on how minority students can develop their social efficacy in order to better integrate with the majority culture.

The present study supported previous study suggesting institutions, such as universities, play a significant role in creating a positive and inclusive environment for minority students (Tawagi & Mak, 2014). The use of group projects, for example at Alice's university, was found to be effective in promoting positive contact and integration. Additionally, the study found that academic stressors can

be a major contributor to psychological stress and feelings of homesickness and loneliness in minority students (Smith & Khawaja, 2011). Previous research has suggested that sustained positive contact between minority and majority groups can help decrease negative attitudes and conflicts between the two groups (Pettigrew, 1998). These findings highlight the importance of institutions in creating a supportive environment for minority students and promoting positive contact between diverse groups.

Furthermore, the present research found that Language is one factor that could hinder the acculturation process, especially during the initial contact., aligned with Zhang and Goodson (2011) all of our subjects found understanding local language helps them feel more comfortable communicating and interacting with the host students. This feeling of comfort is what helps Papuan students to feel less anxious and therefore would be able to participate more in social events, making them easy to make friends.

The finding suggests that negative stereotypes are experienced by some students, particularly two of the subjects who have the physical appearance of native Papuan. They face more difficulties in adapting to social life compared to mix-Papuan who have a less physical appearance. However, both subjects stated that once they set goals for themselves or to make their family proud by finishing school, this negative stereotype they experience will no longer hinder their motivation to integrate socially and academically.

As an explanatory study, the present research aimed to attain Papuan students' subjective experience in integration. Another aim of this research is also to answer whether the stereotype that is being addressed towards Papuan students affects the integration processes. The stereotype influences seem not the case in this present research, as only one participant reported being verbally discriminated and others only reported mild stereotype questions towards them. However, unlike previous literature in the area of stereotype towards Papuan that is usually conducted within the indigenous Papuan, the sampling in this present research are highly educated Papuan student of which 50% also came from mixed-Papuan where there are no longer psychically appears like indigenous Papuan (darker skin color, curly hair). Future research should consider being conducted within a more diverse level of education, social- economic status, and also ethnicity.

Another limitation of this research is that the acculturation strategy that is reported by the participants is either integration or separation. While assimilation and marginalization did not occur during the analyses, future studies should take into account to revise the research questions to be able to gain deeper experiences. As in the case of Participant 06 who has lived in Java for 4 years, has had a romantic relationship with Javanese, and has more Javanese friends. This participant probably would perform 'assimilation' during extended periods of time. More cultural questions should be asked in the interviews such as what kind of foods, art, and habits they like doing. Are they enjoying Javanese foods more than Papuan? Etc. This inquiry would be able to get a deeper insight into the type of acculturation the Papuan students actually experienced.

The present research found that universities in Indonesia have not been adequately promoting integration between minority and majority ethnic groups. Only one university, the University of

Brawijaya in East Java, was found to offer activities that allow students from diverse backgrounds to meet and interact with each other. Furthermore, the study found that most universities in Java prioritize academic achievement over character building and student satisfaction. This is evident in the fact that most universities only provide academic induction programs, which are often seen as inefficient and inaccessible by some students, as quoted “ *(the induction was inefficient because it mainly delivers redundant material from high school)*” (Jamie) as well as “ *not accessible for students with limited funds*” (Rowan). However, some participants reported that the academic induction programs were useful for their studies. As elaborated by Alice “ *As a nursing student, the biology class was useful for me, especially because I did not get access to good labs and qualified biology teachers back in high school*”. These findings suggest that educational institutions in Indonesia need to make greater efforts to promote integration and provide a supportive environment for all students.

The participants in this study emphasized the need for inductions that are tailored to the needs of sojourner students, particularly those from minority ethnic groups who may be more vulnerable to academic and sociocultural stressors (Kvernmo & Heyerdahl, 2003). Some suggestions for inductions included “ *programs on coping with culture shock, homesickness, and stress*” (Matt), as well as “ *leadership and organizational skills development*” (Sam). Sam further elaborate that “ *to increase minority students’ self-esteem and confidence and allow them to engage in discussions that can help them to actualize themselves and feel more included in their new environment*”. These suggestions highlight the importance of addressing the specific challenges faced by minority students in order to facilitate their integration and success in university. Additionally, the participation of minority student representatives in program and policy making was seen as critical in ensuring that the needs of these students are met, as Lisa noted:

“In my university, there is no student representative from minority groups. As a result, the program and policy that the university made were based on the majority group’s perspective. There was no surprise if the program and policy could not meet our needs”.

To conclude, this study found that participation in university activities and support from the university are important factors in facilitating the integration of Papuan students in Java. Institutions should consider these factors in order to create a positive and supportive environment for students. Additionally, the academic barriers faced by Papuan students highlight the need for long-term educational programs to improve education quality in Papua. This may involve enhancing teacher quality by providing teachers with the training, support, and resources they need to deliver high-quality instruction; Investing in education infrastructures, such as modern classrooms and technology, and supporting student learning (Rumere et al., 2022). Collaborative efforts between various parties will be necessary in order to address the education challenges in Papua and ensure that educational development is evenly distributed across Indonesia.

Conclusion

In summary, this study found that the acculturation strategy of Papuan students in Indonesia is influenced by a variety of factors, including personality traits and internal motivation, prior

contact with out-group members, support from the university, and academic and language barriers. Factors that enhance integration, such as positive personality traits, high motivation, and supportive university environments, can buffer against negative experiences such as stereotypes and discrimination. On the other hand, factors that hinder integration, such as low motivation, lack of support from educational institutions, demanding academic workloads, and difficulties with language, can make it more challenging for Papuan students to integrate into their new environment.

The findings of this study highlight the importance of fostering diversity at universities in Indonesia. The results suggest that support from the university, such as through cultural adaptation induction programs and group projects involving students from diverse backgrounds, can facilitate positive intergroup contact and promote integration. However, it is also important to involve ethnic minority representatives in the design and implementation of these programs and projects in order to ensure that they meet the needs of all students. This can help to ensure that the programs are effective and that they address the needs and concerns of all students. By providing support and creating opportunities for positive intergroup contact, universities can help to create a more inclusive and welcoming environment for all students.

The present results emphasize that universities in Indonesia should cultivate diversity, both in the academic and social life domains. As the evidence suggests, support from the university is a facilitating factor for positive intergroup contact, leading to integration. Several support programs suggested by participants include cultural adaptation induction, leadership and organizational skill, and group projects involving students from diverse backgrounds. However, the design and implementation of such projects should involve ethnic minority representatives to ensure that the projects meet the needs of students.

It is important to recognize the limitations of a study, as it can help to contextualize the findings and understand their implications. In the case of this study, the small sample size and non-random sampling technique mean that the findings may not be applicable to the general population. This is because the sample may not be representative of the wider population, and the results may be influenced by factors such as selection bias. Additionally, the limited diversity in the sample, specifically in terms of age and educational background, may also affect the generalizability of the findings. This is because different age groups and education levels may have different experiences and perspectives, and a more diverse sample may have yielded different results. Despite these limitations, the study still provides valuable insight into the subjective experiences of the participants and can serve as a starting point for further research with a larger and more diverse sample.

The findings of this study may not be applicable to all Papuan students, given the limited demographic diversity of the sample. In particular, the sample consisted of highly educated, middle-class students who did not have physical characteristics typically associated with indigenous Papuans. This may have influenced the results, particularly with regards to the finding that all participants achieved integration. Future research should aim to include a more diverse range of participants in order to better understand the impact of stereotypes on different groups of Papuan students. This could include examining students with different levels of education, social-economic

status, and ethnicities, as well as older students who may have more difficulty adjusting to a new environment (Poyrazli & Kavanaugh, 2006).

It is important to include a diverse range of participants in research studies in order to accurately represent the experiences and perspectives of different groups. In this case, the study focused on a group of relatively privileged, highly educated students, which may not be representative of the experiences of all students, particularly indigenous Papuan students. Indigenous Papuans are a vulnerable group that has faced negative stereotypes and discrimination (Brata & Legendijk, 2013), and their experiences may differ from those of the participants in the study. Therefore, it is recommended that future studies include a more diverse range of participants, including indigenous Papuan students, in order to better understand the impact of stereotypes on different groups.

Declarations

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Author's Contribution

CW was the main contributor to the research and was responsible for designing the research, conducting a literature review, developing the research instruments, collecting data, analysing the data, writing the final report, and writing the manuscript.

SMJ served as a supervisor, providing guidance and advice throughout the research process as well as the interpretation of the data.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare not to have any competing interests related to this work.

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