

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the communication barriers and adaptation process experienced by students from Pekanbaru at Telkom University, Bandung. Drawing from intercultural communication theory (N. Martin & K. Nakayama, 2010), communication barrier theory (Panocová, 2020), and adaptation process theory (Levy, 2020), the research explores how linguistic, cultural, and psychological differences affect student integration in a multicultural academic environment. Employing a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews with 11 student informants and one expert, both offline and via Zoom. The findings indicate that Pekanbaru students face significant challenges in understanding local dialects, adjusting to direct communication styles, and coping with internal psychological barriers such as anxiety and self-doubt. However, many students demonstrated resilience through cultural learning, active social engagement, and psychological adjustment. These insights highlight the importance of culturally responsive institutional support in enhancing student adaptation. The study contributes to the discourse on intranational student mobility in Indonesia and provides practical implications for fostering inclusive university environments.

Keywords: Communication barriers, adaptation process, intercultural communication