Surviving Culture Shock in Singapore Tourism Context

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Abstract—Culture shock is one of many challenges in tourism. Knowing the native culture and having good intercultural communication are essential for tourism professional. It can happen to anyone when they come to foreign country and also happened to some trainees from Indonesia who do job training in Singapore. The study aimed at identifying the culture shock faced by the students, how they adapt to it, and how to overcome the problem. The study is qualitative and employed ethnography method. The main participants were 24 students from one of Indonesian Tourism Colleges and their 8 Singaporean supervisors as supporting participants. The result of the study shows that trainees faced 3 levels of inconvenience: high, medium, and low. Another aspect related to the communication intercultural competencies are Fundamental Competence, Social Competence, Social Skill, Interpersonal Competence, Linguistic Competence, Communicative Competence, Relational Competence. The most dominant aspect experienced by the students is Language. It was found that there were three categories of students' adaptation, namely quickly, middle, and slowly. The process of trainees' adaptation involves four stages, embracing: euphoria, crisis, a period of consciousness and struggle, a period of multicultural enjoyment. Hence, Tourism College should improve the quality and quantity of the instruction to let the students master those competencies.

Keywords— culture shock, adaptation, intercultural communication competencies.

I. INTRODUCTION

As a global working world, tourism and hospitality industries are fully composed of diverse cultural backgrounds, either between business actors and their guests or tourists or between workers or when Indonesian tourism human resources go overseas for work. Globalization of tourism workforces, especially in the field of hospitality has taken place since long time ago, even long before hospitality schools come into existence, the working world of hospitality has long flourished. The presence of hospitality schools in Indonesia has created many graduates, most of whom look for job overseas or work in a cruise ship owned by foreign company with the hope that they get doubled salary compared to that within the country. However, approximately in the last ten years, working overseas has also gain some interests not only from the graduates, but also from the students who are still actively undergoing their studies to do internship in Singapore. Many hospitality students have done internship overseas such as in Switzerland, Netherland, Singapore and Malaysia. Though recently Singapore and Malaysia have caught the students' interests, in the last few years, Singapore has no longer accepted trainees from several countries for internal reason. This is aligned with the Decree of The Ministry of National Education Number 232/U/2002 and Number 45/ U/ 2002, stating that competent human resources refers to "the ground principles of personalities abilities, mastery of knowledge and skill abilities (know why and know how), working abilities (how to do), of how to act and to conduct in working to be independent, how to responsibly take decision (to be), how to live in society by cooperation, to respect one another, and to appreciate pluralism and live and create peace (to live together)"

The last part of the excerpt above serves a direct relation to the ability of the intercultural communication. Globalization defines a term that has a relationship with increased interconnection and dependence between nations and people all over the world through trade, investment, travel, popular culture, work, and other forms of interaction so that the boundaries of a country become biased. On the other hand, the actual realization of globalization in the field of economy has occurred in many forms, one of them is workforce globalization. The presence of foreign workers constitutes a symptom of workforce globalization, conversely Indonesian workforces have long migrated overseas to look for jobs, particularly in the field of hospitality that continues to increase from year to year, including the students who do the internship overseas, even though their goals are for training, in fact they are treated as actual workers and are paid, relatively small amount compared to that of their actual workers. Global companies nowadays make use of workforce from all over the world in line with their classes, for example, the use of professional staff is taken from workforce with international experience background, while labor staffs are usually recruited from developing countries. The presence of globalization means the human movement is freer and easier. At the present time, developed countries import workers at the operational stage from developing countries, which is why tourism human resources or human resources are urgently needed by developed countries, such as America, Singapore, England, including various countries in the Middle East.

Laksaguna (2007: 9) proposes a national tourism human resource development strategy to meet the workforce needs in the tourism industry, one of the qualifications is that tourism HR must be able to fill job market opportunities overseas with the strategies to accomplish include: making networking with industry outside country, enhancing intercultural communication skills to realize intercultural understanding in the era of globalization and for the achievement of international standards. This is not only that, but also how to deal with the challenges of diversity of cultural backgrounds and adapt to success in the country. One of the cultures in Singapore that need to be emphasized is about time. Different in our culture, sometimes it is neglected due to the toleration. The time culture in the Singapore community has a monochrome concept of appreciating timeliness and applying good time management (Bahsin, 2006). Therefore, it is a challenge for the trainees to adapt the intercultural culture so they are able to survive in the face of culture shock in the Tourism Industry.

This study formulates the research problem as follows: How the trainees are able to survive in the face of culture shock in the Tourism Industry. Based on the research problem as formulated above, the identification of the problems is elaborated as follows:

1. How are the competencies of intercultural communication of trainees
2. What are the adaptation processes done by trainees
3. How self-management is conducted in dealing with adaptation problems

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Tourism

According to Law Number 10 of 2009 regarding Tourism, Tourism is defined as "Various kinds of tourism activities and are supported by facilities and services provided by the local community, fellow tourists, government, local government and entrepreneurs. In Indonesia, tourism business is regulated by Law Number 10 of 2009 regarding Tourism putting Tourism Business under the following classifications: Tourist Attraction, Tourism Region, Tourist Transportation Services, Travel Services, Food and Beverage Services. It also includes the provision of Accommodation, Organizing Entertainment and Recreation Activities, Organizing Meetings, Incentive Travels, Conferences and Exhibitions, Tourism Information Services, Tourism Consultant Services, Tour Guide Services, Tirta Tours and Spas. Based on the definition above, hotel also constitutes one of the tourism businesses.
However, the function of the hotel has now increasingly been widespread, the allotment of hotels is no longer only supporting tourism activities, since guests who come at the hotel nowadays are not only tourists, but the general public who come with various destinations, and not always with the purpose of staying. Sulastiyono (1999: 34) differentiates two types of hotel business products, including:

(1) Real or tangible products, which can be used, can be tasted, can be seen with real, tangible, called tangible products such as: hotel rooms, food and drinks in restaurants, bars and banquets and other facilities and equipment.
(2) Non-tangible products, or abstract products or intangible products, such as hotel staff hospitality, caring, comfort, intercultural communication competence, such products cannot be touched, cannot be touched in real life but can be experienced and felt by hotel guests.

B. Intercultural Communication

Communication and culture refer to two inseparable aspects, as also suggested by Smith (in Djuarsa 1994:284) human communicates through their culture in which they see their worlds through category, concept, and label resulted from their culture. Human communication is bounded by culture owned by the, so that the behavior of one's communication is different from that of another. When the process of communication takes place, the perspective formed by communicator to the addressee and vice versa will give influence on the process of giving meaning. Elements influencing the process of giving meaning, among others are: trust or belief, values, attitudes, world view, and social organization. The most actual lies in the different verbal communication or language, which also leads to nonverbal difference. Try to see the differences in intercultural vocalism, in the way of shaking hands, in the way of pointing, the difference in artefact, in the way of clothing, the types of clothes used, the time concept, and the distance and so on, the most important thing is that, each culture has different meaning.

C. Competencies of Intercultural Communication

Spitzberg and Cupach in Chen (1984: 359) proposed seven aspects of competencies in the context of intercultural communication as follows:

1. Fundamental Competence, the ability to adjust to a new environment effectively in line with the goals expected. This competence includes cognitive capacities to make it works dealing with foreign and new situation.
2. Social Competence and Social Skill, a social ability that one must possess when entering a new cultural environment, including to have empathy, to be able to take roles, to understand and master complex situations, and to be able to manage interactions properly
3. Interpersonal Competence, the ability of a person realized by his interpersonal communication skills, to have ability to establish harmonious relationships with others in order to attain the expected goals.
4. Linguistic Competence, the ability to speak properly to create a smooth interaction
5. Communicative Competence, one's ability to establish relationships with others in the context of

messages.

6. Relational Competence, one's ability to determine the right level of relation by taking into account aspects as follows; professionalism, ethnicity, nationality and other values aiming to build harmonization of relationships.

7. Bochner in Chen (1998: 240) defines communication competence as "the ability to communicate effectively from one to another" in order to become competent, we have to feel confident to say so and other monitors it and make it stronger.

D. Adaptation

Ellingsworth in Gundykunst (1983: 83) states that every individual is basically endowed with interpersonal adaptability, therefore each individual has the ability to choose and take actions what to do and not to do when interacting with other people coming from different cultures.

Chen (1998: 173) illustrates four stages of culture adaptation process, as follows: honeymoon period, crisis period, adjustment period, and biculturalism period.

1) Honeymoon Period

Honeymoon period or initial euphoria stage, takes place at the beginning of entering a new environment where one enters into a beautiful time and admires his new environment.

2) Crisis Period

Crisis period or frustration stage is when an unpleasant feeling comes into existence in the new environment a result of adaptation difficulties, such as: language difficulties, difficulties due to differences of opinion, habits, the emergence of prejudice and so on, resulted in dislikes even in a very disturbing hostility creating an uncomfortable atmosphere.

3) Adjustment period

It is when one starts to open up and realize that he has entered into a new environment and the problem he has experienced is considered as "This is my problem and I have to deal with it".

4) Biculturalism period.

Biculturalism period or mastery period, is a complete adjustment period. One has the ability to understand and accept different values as a different way of life, although sometimes there is still social tension, he makes an attempt to control his feelings, giving a faith that over time those tensions will disappear. With this complete self-adjustment, one not only understands and accepts habits, values, and other cultural elements, but also begin to enjoy it, imitate it, even the extend that to take it into a new life value for himself.

III. METHODOLOGY

This qualitative research employed an ethnographic approach, taking some processes including: the assessment of one's language role in the communication behavior of a society, the ways in which language is used in different cultures (Koentjaraningrat, in Kuswarno, 2008: 11). The data were collected by using observation and interview. The main sources of data were 24 students / alumni working in Singapore as subjects or key informants. The researcher also made cooperation with training managers or direct supervisors of informants, and included representatives of student distributors in Singapore and their agents in Indonesia as samples in this study. Other data sources used were documents, records / results of interviews, observation and evaluation of the implementation of work practices, and photographs. Data analysis techniques were carried out by involving the following stages: data collection, data reduction or management through the stages of editing, coding, data tabulation were systematically presented in accordance with the identification of problems and then analyzed by building a second degree construct in the forms of categories or classifications, continued by building model.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The finding of this investigation can be described as follows:

A. The competence of Intercultural Communication of Trainees

Fundamental competence as the basic attitude for a person to have a willingness to enter and to be able to adjust to the new environment. The ability to adjust to the trainees' new environment is different from one individual to another, some are quick to adjust, some are moderate and some are slow. Interpersonal Competence, interpersonal competence which is reflected in the trainee's verbal and nonverbal competencies when communicating with guests are categorized into three levels; competent, less competent and very lacking. Linguistic Competence refers to the ability to properly speak to create smooth interaction. The main language used by the interns when communicating with guests at work is English. Alternative languages for the interns are Singlish, Malay and Indonesian and even regional languages.Speaking skills are one crucial element when interacting and working with colleagues, asking questions or responding or receiving instructions, explanations or directions from superiors. The interns' English language skills can widely be classified into three levels: good, sufficient, and lacking. Of the 24 informants, the language skills of interns in the context of intercultural communication in the workplace are described as follows:

Table 1.
The level of foreign language ability of interns

No	Types of Language	Number of Informants (People)	Good	Fair	Less
1.	English	24	6	6	12
2.	Singlish	24			24
3.	Malay	24			24
4.	Mandarin	24			24

Note:
Good: able to communicate orally and in written
Fair: not fully able to communicate orally and in written
Less: not yet able to communicate orally and in written

B. Description of Adaptation Process

Below is a description of the adaptation period experienced by Indonesian interns' staff at work when they interact with guests, with superiors and with co-workers.

1) Euphoria period.
The participants experienced a relatively short period of euphoria, on average they only had it two to four days, because once they arrived in Singapore they had almost no special time for the orientation period. Their pleasure intensity seems to vary, some are very happy, some are happy and some are ordinary.

2) Crisis Period
The crisis period was experienced by the interns, started from the start of entering the workplace, from the first week because they only enjoyed until the second month, the third month or until the fourth month, entering a new work environment interacting with people coming from different culture. At this time they experienced what was called a culture shock. Culture shock is a common phenomenon that will be faced by people entering a new environment highly requiring the ability to adapt to the new environment. The interns with limited language skills experience are inhibited from conveying ideas, find it difficult to ask questions about things they have no knowledge. Conversely, interns with good English language skills do not face communication barriers so they are not too stressed out facing strangers. Those with lack English skills have barrier to communicate with people coming from different culture.

This is supported by the results of interviews, as Andri said that he was confused about what to say, "I am confused, it feels like my feet don't step on the floor, like in another world and I often avoid because I am afraid to talk," he said. Unlike Sofyan, who was quiet and very limited in English, he could not communicate in English at all, as a result he was more closed. Almost all those who experience English limitations say the same thing except Sofyan. Differences in habits regarding rules discipline, differences in work techniques that are not entirely the same as those that have been studied while at school, use different work tools, are not mentally prepared to face fast-paced work, run quickly, appreciate such tight times, etc. are among the causes that generate stress or heavy pressure.

3) Aware and Struggle Period
In the next stage, they enter into the adjustment period, they realize that this crisis is a reality that must be accepted, passed and must be controlled, so they begin to change their attitude to open themselves and realize that they have entered into a new environment and the problems they experience are considered something to overcome. At this time, the awareness of accepting that this situation is a reality that must be accepted arises and it improves their attitude, they make an attempt to improve and change themselves since there is no choice, except to survive. Otherwise, they will be repatriated at the risk of bearing a substantial penalty fee, ashamed of their parents and relatives if they are unsuccessful, get sanctions from school.

4) Accepting and Enjoying Multiculture Period
The last period is a period of accepting and enjoying multiculture, interns have been able to understand and accept different values as a different way of life, even though sometimes there are still social tensions, they starts to collect spirit to control their feelings. With this complete self-adjustment, students not only understand and accept habits, values, and other cultural elements, but also begin to enjoy it, imitate it even to have the desire to take it into a new life value for themselves, such as how to manage efficient time as something valuable, work fast as a responsibility.

C. Adaptation Process

1) Adaptation Speed Level of Interns
The data collected from Interviews and observations found that there is a time difference between one interns and another in the case of adaptation process, some of whom are relatively fast, medium and slow as described in the following table:

TABLE 2
ADAPTATION ABILITY LEVEL OF

Adaptation process	Euphoria Period	Crisis Period	Aware and Struggle Period	Accepting and Enjoying Multiculture Period	Number of Interns
Fast	taking place in the first week	taking place from week 2 to week 8	taking place from week 8 to week 12	Taking place from week 12 to week 24	10 people
Moderate	taking place in the first week	taking place from week 2 to week 12	Taking place from week 13 to week 15	Taking place from week 14 to week 24	12 people
Low	taking place in the first week	taking place from week 2 to week 17 cannot adapt and failed			2 people

Source: Interview Data

The four stages of the adaptation process are illustrated in the following figure, each stage takes place in a process with sharp not sloping lines such as in the Drake adaptation process model, with based on the reason that their comfort level changes dramatically from one stage to the next, as can be seen in the figure below:
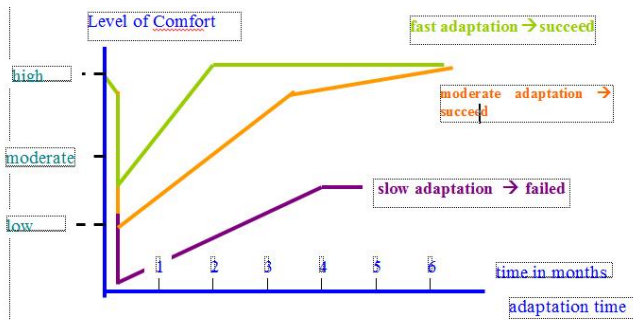
Figure 1 The Comparison of Adaptation Process based on Time
Source: Result of Study

(1) Fast Adaptation

In general they prepare themselves well before leaving for Singapore, such as having initiatives to attend English lessons: additional English courses, daily workers for soft skills development. Interns who are in the category of the fast adaptation actually feel it is time to change themselves. Therefore, they managed to survive in a culture shock in Singapore.

(2) Moderate Adaptation Period

During the adaptation period, it is seen that the euphoria period is the same as the fast adaptation period and the slow adaptation period, but in times of crisis it depends on the readiness of the students to deal with their new environment. It can be seen in this moderate category that interns experience a crisis period long enough while the experience of the perfect period or the time to enjoy their new environment is relatively short. However, in the end, they managed to survive after passing their comfort zone while in a new environment.

(3) Slow Adaptation Period

The third category is a group of students who experienced failure in the process of adapting, not only in facing a very long crisis but also in following their internship program so they were sent back to their home school.

V. CONCLUSION

1. Intercultural Communication Competencies of trainees cover several aspects. From the seven aspects of intercultural communication competence, the most prominent in this context is linguistic competence. This foreign language ability is also related to the courage of fundamental competencies to adjust to their new environment. Similarly, interpersonal competencies, communicative competencies and their relational competencies are inhibited as they cannot convey what they mean and cannot interpret what others communicate to them. In line to this, there are three categories of English language competence for trainees: both medium and less.

2. The process of adaptation of trainees involves four stages, embracing: euphoria, crisis, a period of consciousness and struggle, a period of multicultural enjoyment. a. Euphoria is a time of joy felt at the beginning of departure from the homeland until arriving in Singapore around two to three days.

b. The period of crisis is a period of experiencing confusion, depressed, difficult times entering his new world, not confident, feeling himself stupid, with varying duration, some are fast around six weeks to eight weeks, some are twelve weeks and some are up to sixteen weeks.

c. The period of conscious and struggling is a time of reflection and deep awareness of the purpose of interns arrival, being aware of differences, limited abilities, thus encouraging them to work hard to succeed.

d. The time to find and enjoy multiculture is the time interns have begun to develop their abilities, both in languages, work techniques, self-control, so that they no longer feel the difference as a burden but have enjoyed it because the communication is smooth, the social distance is near.

3. Self-management model

The interns' self-management is related to their own self-concept, there are three categories of their self-concept related to dealing with problems in times of crisis or culture shock. The interns who have a strong self-concept are those who have big positive values, they always make attempt to maintain and build positive values in themselves so that they have the ability to face the cultural shock they experienced.

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