

Peace Corps Volunteers: Culture Shocks Encountered and Strategies to Overcome during Pre-Service Training in Indonesia

Relawan Peace Corps: Kejut Budaya yang dihadapi dan Strategi untuk Mengatasinya selama Pelatihan Pra-Servis di Indonesia

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Abstract

The purpose of the study is to examine the multifaceted reality of culture shocks experienced by Peace Corps Volunteers (PCV) during Pre-Service Training (PST) in Kediri, Indonesia and the strategies to overcome on a day to day basis. The research is descriptive in nature by semi-structured interviews and direct observation to PCV living in Kediri. The results of the research reveal that the culture shocks encountered are of three sorts: psychological, behavioral, and interpersonal communication change. Psychological change is of four kinds: using right-left hand, male-female interaction, asking personal privacy, and shake-hand. Moreover, the study also reveals three strategies to cope with culture shocks. They are self-confidence and optimism, accepting a new culture, and social support. It may be difficult to PCV to accept all differences with pleasure. However, a tolerant attitude and an open mind make them better to communicate with Community Liaison (CL). Eventually, by other people's assistance, the PCV were able to encounter the culture shock.

Keywords: *Culture Shocks, Culture Adjustment, PCV, PST, CL*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mencari kejut budaya yang dialami oleh Relawan Peace Corps (PCV) selama Pelatihan Pra-Servis (PST) di Kediri, Indonesia dan strategi yang dipakai untuk mengatasi kejut budaya. Penelitian ini bersifat deskriptif dengan wawancara semi-terstruktur dan observasi langsung ke PCV yang tinggal di Kediri. Hasil penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa ada tiga macam kejutan budaya yang dihadapi oleh PCV: perubahan psikologis, perilaku, dan komunikasi interpersonal. Perubahan psikologis dibagi menjadi empat macam: penggunaan tangan kanan-kiri, interaksi pria-wanita, menanyakan privasi pribadi, dan berjabat tangan. Selain itu, penelitian ini juga mengungkapkan tiga strategi untuk mengatasi kejut budaya: percaya diri dan optimisme, menerima budaya baru, dan dukungan sosial. Sulit bagi PCV untuk menerima semua perbedaan dengan senang hati. Namun, sikap toleran dan pikiran terbuka membuat

mereka lebih baik dan nyaman untuk berkomunikasi dengan penghubung masyarakat (Community Liaison). Akhirnya, dengan bantuan orang lain, PCV mampu menghadapi kejutan budaya.

Kata kunci: *Kejutan Budaya, Penyesuaian Budaya, PCV, PST, CL*

Introduction

In recent decades, people in the world are getting closer because of the rapid technological development in the field of transportation and communication. Today, the rapid globalization forces us to have more understanding on the importance of language diversity and culture because we are to communicate across languages and cultures. In this situation, communication between languages and cultures becomes global issue. As a result, one's ability to adapt to new cultures is receiving special attention now. Of course, in this adaptation process, difficulties and problems in communication can occur. Consequently, there is an emotional change from happiness and cheer to sadness and embarrassment. Such circumstances frequently occur and become a common phenomenon faced by people facing foreign cultures (Hess, 2004; Belford, 2017; Putra & Rochim, 2018; Orta, et al. 2019).

Globalization also influences people to procure more experiences; therefore, they are able to compete with other people. Today, people think that studying or working only in their country means they have not gotten enough experiences. Thereby, they need to move to other country to attain more learning as well experience. Thus, many people partly want to study or work in other country. For students, it means that they also want to study overseas. Consequently, some people have plan to go overseas. They really want to spend their time in other country for having pride and experience as well. Even, they agree to spend much money only for staying or living in other country (Rajasekar & Renand, 2013).

However, moving to other country is not that simple since they have to adjust to new culture. Mostly, people who move and stay in new environment for the first time will have difficulties in adapting new culture. Hence, to cope with that problem, they have to know the culture where they live. They are going to have social interaction with people having different languages as well as cultures.

There have been several relevant publications on culture shock, but not on PCV. It is evident then that most often culture shock is inevitable. Culture shock is a psychological disorientation experienced by people who must be in different cultural environments to live, work or study (Orta, et al., 2019). Culture shock is closely related to one's psychological state (Milton, 1998). In other words, culture shock is basically a set of emotional reactions to the loss of perceptual reinforcement from a person's culture, becomes a new cultural stimulus that is not meaningful to that person, or the person has no understanding of the new culture or cultural diversity (Adler, 1975; Putra & Rochim, 2018).

Some symptoms of people experiencing culture shock are frequent hand washing, excessive drinking of water, overacting, excessive sleep, fear of physical contact with people, feelings of hopelessness, dependency on others, feelings of anger, frustration, and most often a feeling of homesick, as well as wanting to go home soon (Furnham, & Bochner, 1986; Belford, 2017). Normally, people who live in new place will feel uncertain, uncomfortable, and under pressure. Those are the phenomena that

usually happen to people who stay in new place. Some studies also find the cultural problems faced by new comers related to communication, transportations, language, and food.

PCV is a volunteer program run by American government. They are from various states. Its main mission is to provide economic and social development outside America by providing technical assistance. In addition, it also promotes mutual understanding between the American government and the countries served including Indonesia. The volunteers have the opportunity to integrate with people in the host country, where they will live and work on projects ranging from education to business development. Volunteers in Indonesia work in the field of education especially in English language education. During their stay in Indonesia, they learn local languages including Indonesian language, Javanese, Sundanese, and Madurese.

Hence, PCV were expected to possess communicative as well as cultural competence. Therefore, before the assignment, they had already been prepared with some knowledge of foreign/Indonesian cultures and were supposed to communicate culturally. There is a process of sending and receiving messages or ideas across languages and cultures. It is a negotiated meaning in the experience across social system and society. Intercultural communication does not only mean communication with people with different languages and cultures or people living in other countries, but it also means communication with other people within the same language but with different cultures (Crawford, 2008; Saylag, 2014). Naturally, they have to understand each other before they have some communication with other people and they also share the same perspective. However, communicating culturally is not that easy and simple. It requires cultural knowledge as well cultural awareness.

Cross-cultural communication is even more complicated because it interprets messages based on past experiences and culture grids that are passed down to us in our home culture (Xia, 2009; Orta, et al., 2019). The culture grid is a framework for understanding verbal and non-verbal messages that are specific to a particular culture (Mahadi & Jafari, 2012; Belhadi & Ayad, 2017). We frequently do not realize that culture can influence our way to listen, speak and understand others (Ryan et al., 2011). Furthermore, by this problem of cross-cultural communication, people should be aware that everything is different, and it is commonly caused by some cultures.

There are five areas of practices constituting to potential barriers in cross-cultural communication (Hofstede et al., 2002; Saylag, 2014). First, there is a verbal aspect, which is a barrier of language differences. Language is not just learning new vocabulary and grammar. It encompasses cultural competence: knowing what to deliver and how, where, when, and why. Without understanding culture, a person can only speak without knowing if what is being conveyed is correct and appropriate because in a language the same words may mean differently in different settings. The ways to reduce language barriers are (1) learning the language, (2) speaking language as an interpreter, and (3) asking for clarification if you are unsure of what others mean (Ryan et al., 2011).

Second, there is non-verbal aspect, namely non-verbal communication, such as gestures, facial expressions, mimics, and other body language to show our feelings and thoughts when talking. Our culture teaches us to communicate through unspoken messages that we spontaneously do when talking; and often we do not even realize it. The ways to overcome the problem caused by non-verbal problems are (1) not assuming

that we understand all symbols or body language unless we are really familiar with, (2) not prejudice the body language of others, even though it seems insulting our culture, and (3) building awareness of our non-verbal communication which may be insulting other cultures (Mahadi & Jafari, 2012).

Third, stereotype often becomes a barrier in cross cultural communication. We often find that the reality is not what we expect. Stereotype have become commonplace due to incomplete knowledge and understanding towards new culture as well as the people of that culture. The steps to overcome this stereotype are (1) increasing awareness of our preconception and our stereotypes towards certain cultures, (2) learning the culture of others, and (3) understanding their culture from their perspective, adapting our stereotypes to fit our new experience (Ryan et al., 2011).

Fourth, there is a tendency to judge people's cultural behavior to be good or bad because of cultural biases. The ways to reduce the tendency to judge incorrectly are (1) keeping the right distance, (2) realizing that we cannot change culture quickly, (3) not judging other people's cultures from the point of view of our cultural values until we know correctly their culture and cultural values.

The last barrier is high stress caused by interactions between cultures. Like unfamiliar experiences, intercultural contact often creates stress. Misunderstanding may often occur. This undoubtedly causes burden and stress. The steps to reduce stress are (1) accepting ambiguity towards cross-cultural situations when we are sure of what they expect from us and what we expect from them, (2) continue to strive to reduce cross-cultural constraints, and (3) be forgiving to other people and to ourselves.

Eventually, there are at least five indicators of people who experience culture shock (Kidder, 1992; Chun & Lai, 2011). First, the attitude that other people are supposed to behave is missing, or the attitude has now a different meaning. Second, values that are considered good, desirable, beautiful and worthy are not respected by the host. Third, people feel disoriented, anxious, and depressed. Fourth, people feel dissatisfied with new ways, namely social skills that are usually used are no longer used. Last but not least, there is an understanding that this horrible culture shock will not never go away.

In addition, there are five changes in expression of people who experience culture shock. They are (1) physical changes (changes in hair style and color, and dress strength), (2) changes in behavior (changes in gait, and posture, changes in body language), (3) changes in interpersonal communication styles, (4) changes in language competence, and (5) changes in career values (Kidder, 1992; Chun & Lai, 2011).

Method

The research is phenomenological. It is used to describe as accurately as possible the phenomenon, refraining from any pre-given framework, but remaining true to the facts. The purpose of the phenomenological approach is to illuminate the specific, to identify phenomena through how they are perceived by the actors in a situation. In this study, the subjects were ten volunteers who lived in Rembang village, Kediri, East Java. They are six female and four male volunteers. There are three volunteers who have already married. They originally come from United State of America, but not the same states. They are from Virginia, North Carolina, New Mexico, Michigan, Vermont, Washington DC, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Florida, and Washington. They are almost in the same age, between 22-years-old and 24-years-old, and only three volunteers who

are about 32 years-old. They are the candidates of PCV that are going to be English teachers in Indonesia for two years.

The data were elicited through interview and participant observation. In this research, the researcher uses interactive technique to collect the data. By using this technique, the researcher gets the data from interview and observation. Then, the researcher uses semi-structured interviews. It consists of several key questions that not only help to define the areas to be explored, but also allow the interviewer and interviewee to diverge in order to pursue an idea or response in more detail. The researcher gave ten key questions related with the research problem and explored their answers. The data were analyzed qualitatively.

Results

This study reveals some culture shocks which are experienced by the sample of PCV who are doing PST in Kediri. The culture shocks are classified into three changes of self-reaction. Those are psychological change, behavioral change, and interpersonal change.

Firstly, there is psychological change which can cause stress and even depression. When people encounter new culture and experience culture shock, change and unfamiliarity can affect their psychological adjustment and involvement in the new environment. Psychological confusion and emotional discomfort often cause terrible psychological stress. As has been elaborated elsewhere, the negative impact of culture shock on the psychological state of the individual includes diverse set of symptoms. Although not everyone experiences all the symptoms, or experiences the same symptoms, everyone will experience some parts or all of them. The largest symptom is usually depression, anxiety and hopelessness. In this study, there are four psychological changes which are faced by PCV during their living, as the followings.

The first psychological change is the use of right-left hand. There are some behaviors and attitude which can be found in our society. One of them is using right hand to bestow or receive something from other people. It is really common for Indonesian people to use their right hand to do something. It means that people who use their right hand, they are polite to other people. On the other hand, western people are not common to always use their right hand. For them, there is not different between right hand and left hand. They are able to use both of them even to give and receive something to people or from other people. Furthermore, western people will feel uncomfortable if they always use their right hand to do something. From the observation which is taken by the researcher, it is found such expression change from PCV when they must use their right hand continually to do something. For example, PCV will directly say sorry for many times and feel guilty to Indonesian people when they forget they do not use their right hand.

The other finding is the American people feel depressed when they have to use only their right hand to give and receive something. That statement is expressed by one of the volunteers. She is Margaret Smith from Florida. She says,

I was little bit depressed when I had to do all of thing with my right hand and I was not allowed to use my left hand. It's difficult for me.

That statement has been expressed by conducting the interview. For the American people to make priority in giving and receiving with only their right hand is not really common. It has become accustomed for American people to usage as they like. Therefore, when the PCV are constrained to always use their right hand, they are going to be depressed.

The second psychological change is male–female interaction. As social human, we are supposed to have interaction with other people. It helps people to get information and connection. No limitation for the people who want to take interaction to whom and with whom they interact. However, there is limitation about interaction in some conditions. Indonesian people are really careful about this condition. Sometimes, male and female have to be separated in some events. For Indonesian people, it is really common because mostly people are Islam. However, this condition is strange for PCV. They think that Indonesian people do discrimination to male and female. As like the statement from one of American volunteer. She is Talia Mindich from Vermont. She says:

I don't know why people here separated between male and female? I remembered when we came to Pak Yani's party and we had to be separated. I think it's like discrimination.

The excerpt explains that PCV felt when they are being separated means it is discrimination. Therefore, the PCV are having depression on it. But actually, the case is the types of Indonesian culture.

The third psychological change is asking personal privacy. People are asking about their status and religion. When people are asking that, they will feel anxiety. Their feeling is showed in the quotation below.

Typically, Indonesian people are really common to ask about personal status and religion. In the first conversation they usually ask also about that. And it happened again in the same thing with other people.

The last excerpt above expresses an American (Cameron) anxiety during their PST in Kediri. That habit apparently makes the PCV are uncomfortable. For them, asking about personal status and religion is impolite question. And it had batter do not ask about it, because it is personal private and not all people should not know it.

The fourth psychological change is shake hand, which is common in social interaction. People are going to shake hand with other people when they interact one other. In Indonesia, it finds some kinds of shake hand because it is influenced by culture and trust. However, PCV feel strange when they face the different shake hand by Indonesian people. Ellysa from Pennsylvania stated that

She was really shocked when she met with her father's neighbor who came to her house. She tried to shake hand with him but he did not want to shake hand, yet he shook hand with different style without holding each other.

Similarly, Cameron from Virginia uttered that One day when his family's guest came to his house, he wanted to shake hand with them, but the girl refused my hand. She shaken hand with different style without

holding the hand. He was really shocked at the moment because her father was allowed to shake hand with her.

The above evidences are true that, for some Indonesian, they do not want to shake hand to people of different genders. Instead they just touch the tips of their fingers to other people's fingertips without holding their hands. For those who do not accustomed to it, it might be shocking and embarrassing.

Secondly, there is behavioral change. One symptom of culture shock is a change in behavior; that is, change in behavior is an indicator of culture shock. When a person arrives in a place and enters a new culture, there is a lot of uncertainty regarding what is acceptable and unacceptable, allowed and not allowed, good and bad. When they live in a new culture, there is an awareness that certain behaviors that is acceptable in their original places may become unacceptable in new cultures, and certain behaviors that are considered inappropriate or even insulting in the culture of origin can be acceptable in the new culture.

The research reveals some conversion of behavioral by PCV during their training. For example. Brian uttered:

During week six and week nine most of volunteers are indolent to do an activity. They do not appear the spirit as the first week. They are lazy to finish the assignment from PC, and they are also lazy to accost other people. They almost spend their holiday to hang out with their friend. They sometimes do a sleep over in one of the houses of other volunteers, and seldom spend their time with their host family.

The conversion of behavior by PCV appears in some expression which is showed on their activity. By observation the researcher explains that the condition is caused by their busy time for PST, no time for resting, and offering the family and the community need. However, the behavior change is only appeared on less-four weeks for PST.

In addition, there is another behavior change which is expressed by PCV in respecting other people. The behavior to respect other people decrease because of their surfeited on the schedule of their activity. In this instance, Susan stated that:

During week seven to week ten they are not respectful to other people's help and suggestion. When they get medicine from the community liaison because they cannot take it by themselves, they receive it without thank. And when they have to complete the self-assignment from PC staff, they also receive it with no respect.

That condition is also caused by a lot of schedule they have, moreover, when they have to change the schedule suddenly by the PC staff. Yet, they have to finish the task from Language facilitator about Indonesian language. Therefore, the PCV are going to have behavior change because of that condition at the time.

Thirdly, there is interpersonal communication change. This expresses a different communication by PCV with other people. Even the interpersonal communication between the volunteers and the CL is also changed as the following excerpt.

Usually in language class they do not respond well what he or she mentioned about. And they sometimes answered the question from language facilitator in so simple answer. Also, in cultural discussion when the CL asks them about cultural diversity they do not pay any attention. Then, some of them are using rude word when giving question.

The excerpt explains that the PCV are going to experience interpersonal communication change because they are tired on the day. Usually, it will show in every tiring day as like after finishing school practicum and continue to extra language class. It is actually on the week nine and ten.

Strategies to Cope with Culture Shock by PCV

There are three approaches to deal with culture shock employed by PCV. The first is self-confidence and optimism. As has been elaborated elsewhere in the study, self-confidence and optimism play key role in coping with culture shock. Those with high level of self-confidence and optimism can overcome any obstacles encountered in the course of culture shock (Saylag, 2014; Chun, 2018). Moreover, they are less anxious, and are convinced that they perform better and succeed. This strategy is utilized by some PCV to encounter the culture shock during their PCT. For example, the Peace Corps Volunteers always feel confident in adapting with the community, trying to practice the Indonesian language, and imitating the Indonesian style. However, PCV sometimes felt so hard in some cultural diversity for adapting, practicing, and limiting them. Nevertheless, being confident and optimism is one of the ways to reduce the culture shock by some PCV.

The second way to cope with culture shock employed by PCV is accepting the values and behaviors of the new culture even though they realized that it is not easy. Acceptance in this instance could mean making attempt to respect local culture, traditions and habits (Saylag, 2014). Most of PCV usually only smile, response, and try when they are adjusting with the new condition. They are sometimes expressing their interest and curiosity in local custom they found. However, it is difficult for American people to give good response, and smile to everyone. They admitted that it may be difficult for American people to accept this difference with pleasure, yet a tolerant attitude as well as an open mind could be the best ways out to cope with culture shock. Further, they accepted the new customs in order that they could be accepted by the society.

The third way is seeking social support (Belford, 2017; Belhadi, & Ayad, 2017). It is one strategy employed by PCV to cope with culture shock encountered. PCV always asked help and suggestion to their host family and Community Liaison when they came across with new things. Their host family and CL enthusiastically helped them analyze and gave them a number of suggestions about how to do better in future. The importance of social support has become the main concern for the management of PCV. Therefore, they trained the host family as well as CL to provide any assistance anywhere and anytime needed. Consequently, those working in CL almost worked 24 hours since they had be ready anytime and anywhere the PCV needed them. This is ultimately intended to help them overcome any culture shock encountered. This way worked extremely well. In the course of their stay, PCV felt enjoyed, felt at home, and felt safe due to this social support.

All of these three strategies to tackle culture shock had been provided in two occasions. The first was given during the classroom pre-training in which the tutors presented cultural diversity, intercultural communication as well as intercultural barriers. The second was given by the CL in which they always reminded, encouraged and supported PCV to be self-confident, optimistic, accepting any difference and inconvenience they might face. Therefore, it is evident that PCV implemented the strategies they had got, even though in practice it was not that easy and simple. Anyhow, they became more confident, optimistic, and accepting towards cultural differences after PST.

DISCUSSION

People automatically are going to experience about culture shock when they are adapting in new community. It normally happens because they have to interact with new situation and different culture (Trompenaars, 2006; Marshall & Mathias, 2016). Psychological adaptation to this new culture could determine the success of living overseas. It is evident as Ferraro (2006) states that good knowledge about culture shock from the point of view of psychological aspect could make people better understand about culture in general and culture shock in particular, and eventually increase the success of overseas living and decrease the degrees of stress (Saylag, 2014; Belford, 2017; Siregar & Kustanti, 2018). The study reveals that PCV experienced some types of culture shock during their PST in Kediri.

This is normal as it corresponds with what Oberg (1960: 142) claimed that sojourners are likely to experience culture. That is to say, everybody will possibly undergo culture shock anytime they leave their home country another. They will normally reach physically and psychologically when facing new elements of culture shock (Belhadi & Ayad, 2017; Chun, 2018; Sulaiman & Saputri, 2019). As the study reveal that PCVs undergo three kinds of reaction changes. The first is psychological change. It is experienced by PCV as depression and anxiety in some situation. Then, some other volunteers also show behavior change in some condition when they are depressed because of their full activity. And the last is interpersonal communication change. It explains that PCV have been changing their way to communicate interpersonally with other people.

These findings are in line with existing literature and available previous research findings (e.g., Hess, 1994; Chun & Lai, 2011; Ernofalina, 2017; Belford, 2017; Handayani & Yuca, 2018). They pointed out that change or unfamiliarity to new environment makes them fail to understand the ideology and behavior of people they newly meet. They normally do not know why people do and behave as such and they themselves do not know how to behave in response to this new culture. In addition, it is obvious that when people leave and lose their signs and symbols in the course of social interaction because of entering new culture, they commonly try to adapt themselves to those new signs and symbols in the new cultural settings (Xia, 2009; Marshall & Mathias, 2016). Of course, this not easy since the ability to adapt depends very much many variable as such personality traits and cultural competence. Those with poor adaptation will feel alienated. As a result, culture shock happens with psychological confusion and emotional discomfort (Mahadi, & Jafari, 2012; Orta, et al., 2017; Chun, 2018).

This research further reveals three strategies to cope with each culture shock encountered by the PCV. The first strategy is being self-confidence and optimism. The

second is acceptance a new culture. It may be difficult to PCV to accept all of differences with pleasure, yet a tolerant attitude as well as an open mind make them better to communicate with community. And the last is social support. By helping other people, the PCV are able to encounter the culture shock.

These findings are corroborated by other research findings. For example, Belhadi & Ayad (2017) found four strategies to cope with culture shock. The first is pre-departure training. Before leaving their home country, sojourners must have knowledge about culture in general and culture shock in particular, and how to overcome them. They must know this phenomenon and everyone will experience it. They must have awareness and understanding of the cultural changes they will face and they must have readiness to overcome problems in the new cultural environment (Crawford, 2008; Chun, 2018). Before leaving, sojourners are supposed to read a lot about the country, people and culture; therefore, they are familiar with the characteristics of people, culture, habits, and the like. Generally, people take for granted that their culture is better and more powerful than other people's culture (Mahadi, & Jafari, 2012). Therefore, ethnocentrism is the main problem faced by individuals in the host country. Thus, psychological preparation is a must because he will be considered inferior when arriving in the host country, even they are negatively judged by people in the host country. Therefore, tolerance for culture difference is a must (Saylag, 2014; Ernofalina, 2017).

The second strategy is personal and social relations. Overcoming culture shock requires network of relations(Orta, et al., 2017; Sulaiman & Saputri, 2019). They must keep in touch with family members, and friends who show their support. They must also make friends with local people, as well as with people from their own ethnic group in order that they can learn from the experiences of others when confronting the same culture shock (Pugh, 2009). Participation in social activities, sport team, social groups, music, nature lovers, and other groups are very useful activities in the adaptation process because activities like these make sourjourners busy and can make many friends. Activities like these are always carried out by PCV in their afternoons.

The third strategy is the rules of interaction and culture. It is obvious that language is a means of communication. Therefore, it is very important to know the local language in order to be able to communicate with local people in daily activities. In addition, non-verbal communication such as behaviors and manners are other things that also need to be learned by sourjourners (Marshall & Mathias, 2016; Handayani & Yuca, 2018). To know verbal and non-verbal communication, the sourjourner must observe, learn, practice and ask questions. This is where social cultural interaction is needed (Crawford, 2008; Ernofalina, 2017).

The last strategy is intercultural effectiveness skills. Every newcomer must understand that it is normal that strangers will encounter cultural problems in general and culture shock in particular when entering new cultural environment. It happens to everybody. Therefore, they must solve it rather than avoid it. It is extremely effective to cope with culture shock from the points of view of both one's own culture and others. Self-confidence, patience, stress management are variables that can help make adjustments quickly and well, because when a person experiences culture shock and loses patience and self-confidence, his stress and frustration will increase (Cohen et al., 1998; Chun & Lai, 2011; Belford, 2017).

Conclusion

In the process of international communication, where speakers come from different countries and cultures interact, culture shock is then becoming common and often occurs because of cultural diversity. Cultural differences most often make the feeling of people unfamiliar. This causes psychological stress, such as depression, worry, anxiety, and hopelessness. The findings of this study reveal some causes of culture shock during international communication and interaction, and several solutions to culture shock that can be used as reference by those who experience culture shock. Therefore, for those who will interact culturally, it is necessary for them to do cultural preparation by knowing and understanding the culture that will be encountered. Understanding of culture, the process of culture shock, and new cultural features are very important and beneficial for them. One effort in this instance is pre-departure training where cross cultural understanding is emphasized. In addition, there are three ways offered by the results of this study to cope with culture shock; namely, self-confidence and optimism, accepting new culture, and seeking social support. This all enables them to overcome psychological discomfort. However, stress and discomfort experienced stimulates cultural learning, thus making them able to adapt quickly to a new cultural environment.

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