

The Phenomenon of Culture Shock among Male Students at STP Khoiru Ummah Jember



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ABSTRACT: Islamic boarding school (IBS) is educational institutions that incorporate boarding school arrangements, requiring students to reside in the school dormitory. In their journey of living in an IBS, students often experience culture shock due to the cultural differences between their previous living environment and their current residence in the dormitory. This study aims to describe the factors causing culture shock, stages of culture shock, and coping strategies among male students at STP Khoiru Ummah Jember at the junior high school level. The research falls under the qualitative research category with a phenomenological approach. Data collection was conducted through participant observation and interviews using recording and note-taking techniques. Data analysis employed the explanatory method. Based on the research findings, it was found that the culture shock experienced by the students is caused by several factors, such as the packed schedule at the boarding school, the high target of Quran memorization, being far from parents, different characteristics of friends, inadequate facilities and infrastructure at the new boarding school, the boarding school's daily routine, subjects taught, and differences in ethnicity and regional languages. The culture shock experienced by the students occurs in four stages. The time required for students to adjust and become accustomed to life in the boarding school varies significantly, ranging from 2 to 10 months. The students and the boarding school have employed various methods to cope with the culture shock. The coping strategies identified in this research are expected to provide insights for other boarding schools in addressing the culture shock experienced by their students.

KEYWORDS- culture shock, islamic boarding school, khoiru ummah, jember, junior high school

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is a very important thing for humans. Through education, humans can acquire knowledge, skills, and values that are essential to help them face various challenges in life [1]. Moreover, education also helps humans develop the intellectual and social abilities needed to interact with their environment. Therefore, many educational institutions have been established, one of which is the institution of Islamic boarding schools. Islamic boarding schools are a form of education that is widely found in Indonesia. Islamic boarding schools are educational institutions that excel in implementing character education for their students [2]. In Islamic boarding schools, students learn about Islamic in depth. Not only that, many Islamic boarding schools nowadays also teach various other general subjects that are highly useful for the student's future. During their time in the Islamic boarding school, the students live in dormitories for several years. They interact and collaborate with each other in living their lives in the Islamic boarding school.

Islamic boarding schools are a meeting place for students from different backgrounds. Therefore, students in Islamic boarding schools are not exempt from engaging in cross-cultural communication with fellow students. Cross-cultural communication is communication that occurs between individuals of different nationalities, ethnicities, racial groups, languages, beliefs, or values [3][4]. As a result, the interactions and communications being carried out require a certain level of security and courtesy, as well as predictions about certain aspects of the interlocutors [5].

Cross-cultural communication occurs in various situations, both between individuals from extremely different cultures and interactions between individuals who share the same dominant culture but have different subcultures within a specific region [6][7]. By studying cross-cultural communication, individuals can learn adaptive steps to take when interacting with individuals from different cultural backgrounds. This can prevent negative perceptions between cultures, such as stereotypes, biases, racism, and ethnocentrism, when engaging in cross-cultural communication. In reality, the learning experience at Islamic

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boarding schools often triggers culture shock among students who come from different cultural backgrounds. Oberg stated that culture shock is the feeling of discomfort that arises when someone enters a foreign culture and experiences significant cultural changes from their original environment [8][9]. Bochner stated that culture shock is an individual's reaction to an unfamiliar new environment, which initially causes anxiety due to the individual losing the familiar signs and symbols from their old environment [10]. The phenomenon of culture shock is frequently found in various Islamic boarding schools, including the Sekolah Tahfizh Plus (STP) Khoiru Ummah Jember at the junior high school level.

STP Khoiru Ummah Jember is one of the Islamic-based informal education institutions managed by the Khoiru Ummah Jember Foundation [11]. STP Khoiru Ummah implements a curriculum that integrates tahfizh (Quran memorization) subjects with general subjects using the *talaqiyah fikriyah* learning method [12]. At the junior high school level, STP Khoiru Ummah Jember adopts a boarding school concept. Therefore, STP Khoiru Ummah Jember at the junior high school level resembles an Islamic boarding school. In the academic year 2022/2023, the institution has two batches, namely 7th and 8th grades. Each class is separated by gender, with separate classes for boys and girls.

In the boarding school environment, new students at STP Khoiru Ummah Jember at the junior high school level experience culture shock. The culture shock experienced by the students has different stages. Oberg divides culture shock into four stages as follows [13]:

- 1) The honeymoon stage: During this stage, individuals experience excitement and familiarity with the new culture and society. Gradually, they begin to perceive the new culture and society as their own and feel a sense of belonging.
- 2) The crisis stage: In this stage, the differences between an individual's own culture and the new culture start to create problems as they interact with others who have different cultural backgrounds.
- 3) The recovery stage from the crisis: At this stage, individuals acquire the skills to effectively respond to the new culture.
- 4) The adjustment stage: In this stage, individuals have successfully adapted to the new culture and have gained new experiences.

These stages depict the process of cultural adjustment and adaptation experienced by STP Khoiru Ummah Jember students at the junior high school level.

Based on the above, the author is interested in researching the phenomenon of culture shock experienced by new students in their first year at STP Khoiru Ummah Jember. As a relatively new educational institution, STP Khoiru Ummah Jember at the junior high school level continuously strives to improve its quality to ensure that students feel comfortable during their stay in the boarding school. Therefore, this research aims to determine the factors causing culture shock, the stages of culture shock, and the ways to overcome culture shock among the students. Thus, this research is expected to contribute to the body of knowledge, particularly in the development of cross-cultural communication studies. Additionally, it can provide insights for the management of Islamic boarding schools to enhance the student's comfort during their stay and learning in the boarding school by seeking solutions to the issues that arise.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous relevant studies have been conducted by several parties. First, Amanah [14] examined the culture shock experienced by international students at STAIN Kediri within the cultural environment of Kediri. The study found that the culture shock experienced by Thai students studying at STAIN Kediri was related to food, lifestyle (habits, socialization), weather, and religious social activities. Most Thai students attempted to overcome culture shock in their own ways, while a small number of them required assistance from others, such as friends. It took them anywhere from one to three months to adapt and acculturate to the culture of Kediri.

Second, Faizin & Isnaini [15] examined the phenomenology of culture shock among Indonesian language learners from South Africa in Malang. The study found that the culture shock experienced by these Indonesian language learners was due to several factors, including difficulties in purchasing alcoholic beverages, the habit of smoking in public, and the sensitivity of religious and racial issues in Indonesia, which made them uncomfortable. The impact of culture shock resulted in varying levels of stress among the Indonesian language learners from South Africa. They coped with culture shock by meeting and conversing with fellow countrymen and by learning about the local culture.

Third, Nurcahyo & Asy'ari [16] investigated the stages of culture shock among regular students at Darussalam Gontor University (UNIDA). The study used the U-curve theory and found that the stages of culture shock experienced by regular UNIDA students consisted of three phases: (a) the excitement phase, (b) the disappointment phase, and (c) the resolution phase. In the excitement phase, students experienced joy, hope, and euphoria. In the disappointment phase, students faced difficulties in learning the Arabic language, adhering to discipline, and were affected by negative stereotypes about Islamic boarding school that led to feelings of disappointment, depression, and dissatisfaction with their environment. In the final phase, students

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modified their behavior by learning Arabic and seeking a more positive environment, allowing them to adapt and eventually settle into UNIDA.

Fourth, Pintubatu et al. [17] studied culture shock experienced by students from North Sumatra participating in the Merdeka Student Exchange Program (PMM) at various universities in Java, including ITB, Semarang University, and ITS. The study found that these students encountered several adaptation problems in their new environment, such as difficulties in communication due to language differences, differences in food preferences, weather issues, transportation challenges, compliance with traffic rules, cost of living, and the cleanliness of the surrounding environment.

Fifth, Septantiningtyas & Sulusiyah [18] examined intercultural communication among students at Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School, Probolinggo in building brotherhood. The study found that students from various ethnic backgrounds built brotherhood by communicating in the Indonesian language, using both circular and linear communication patterns. At times, they used circular communication patterns that involved feedback between the communicator and the recipient. At other times, they used linear communication patterns that flowed in one direction, with feedback provided by the speaker to the listener. Additionally, there were various obstacles to intercultural communication among the students in building brotherhood, including psychological, ecological, mechanical, and cultural factors.

Based on the literature review above, we can identify the similarities and differences between previous studies and the current study. The similarity lies in the research topic, which is culture shock experienced by individuals undergoing education in an educational institution. However, the difference lies in the research subjects. The first to fourth studies focused on university students, while the fifth study focused on female students. In contrast, this research focuses on male students at the junior high school level. Additionally, this study takes place at STP Khoiru Ummah Jember, a newly established semi-boarding school. Therefore, it is expected that the phenomenon of culture shock experienced in this institution may differ from larger and more established traditional Islamic boarding schools.

III. RESEARCH METHODS

This research is a qualitative study that utilizes a phenomenological approach. Hegel argued that phenomenology refers to the experiences as they appear in consciousness and describes what one perceives, feels, and knows in their direct consciousness and experience [19][20]. The phenomenological approach is employed because this study aims to explore the experiences of culture shock that students undergo in their lives at the Islamic boarding school. The data for this research is obtained from primary sources, directly collected through the researcher's observations of the behavior and accounts of the subjects, namely the students. The research is conducted at the boarding school for male students, STP Khoiru Ummah Jember, located at Matrip street number 3A, Sumbersari District, Jember Regency, East Java Province, Indonesia.

Data collection involves the use of participatory observation and interviews. In participatory observation, the researcher engages in participation with the interlocutors by being present within the community. The techniques employed include recording and note-taking. To obtain extensive and in-depth data, the researcher focuses on studying the first-year male students, totaling nine individuals. Furthermore, to ensure data validity, the researcher conducts interviews not only with the students but also with the school principal, dormitory supervisor, homeroom teacher, and parents of the students. After data collection, the research moves on to the next phase, which is data analysis. The data obtained through interviews will be analyzed using the explanatory method [21]. This method involves in-depth analysis of the factors causing culture shock, the stages of culture shock, and the strategies for coping with culture shock. Subsequently, the results of data analysis in this study will be presented in the form of descriptions and explanations.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

STP Khoiru Ummah Jember is an educational institution that aspires to produce generations of Quran memorizers. It is a PKBM (Community Learning Center) registered in the Education Core Data (Dapodik) of the Directorate General of Early Childhood Education, Primary Education, and Secondary Education under the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology. The institution is registered with the NPSN P9996355. Initially, STP Khoiru Ummah Jember offered primary school education upon its establishment. As it has developed, the institution started offering junior high school education since 2021. By 2023, STP Khoiru Ummah Jember at the junior high school level has two batches, consisting of 7th and 8th grade classes for both male and female students. To ensure sufficient data for in-depth analysis, this research will focus on examining the phenomenon of culture shock experienced by male students. Based on the interviews and data analysis, the findings are presented as follows.

A. Factors Causing Culture Shock

STP Khoiru Ummah Jember students at the junior high school level are alumni of elementary schools from Jember and its surrounding areas. They continue their education at STP Khoiru Ummah at the junior high school level, which follows a

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boarding school concept. During this transition, they enter a new environment that is different from their previous school and home environments, leading to culture shock. There are various factors causing the culture shock of STP Khoiru Ummah Jember students at the junior high school level. The following describes these factors.

The primary factor causing culture shock experienced by the students is the intensive activities at the Islamic boarding school. Unlike in elementary school, where they had rest time after school, at the boarding school, their time is filled with studying and various other activities. The boarding school activities start with the tahajud prayer, requiring them to wake up early at 3:00 AM. After that, they engage in various other activities, which continue until 9:00 PM, when they can sleep. The boarding school activities differ significantly from the more relaxed activities at home, leading to culture shock. When at the boarding school, they have to utilize their time for continuous studying, leaving little time for playing, which is quite different from the ample playtime they had at home.

The second factor causing culture shock is the tahfizh or Quran memorization. As the name suggests, STP Khoiru Ummah Jember at the junior high school level aims to develop students who can memorize the Quran. They are targeted to memorize up to 9 juz (parts) of the Quran within three years at the boarding school. The order of Quranic juz memorization starts from the 30th, then 29th, 28th, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and so on. This memorization target can be burdensome for certain students who were not accustomed to Quran memorization during their time in elementary school. However, those who were already familiar with Quranic memorization prior to joining the junior high school may not feel as pressured by the target of memorizing 9 juz.

The third factor is being away from their parents. At the boarding school, students have limited contact with their parents. They are trained to become independent, such as doing their own laundry, making their beds, studying independently, and so on. Initially, this independence can make them feel uncomfortable as they are not accustomed to it.

The fourth factor is friends. At the beginning of their stay at the boarding school, the students are not yet familiar with each other. Some of them engage in mischievous behavior or disturb their peers, such as hitting others without expecting retaliation, turning off the bathroom lights while someone is showering, refusing to wait in line for showering or getting food, occupying someone else's bed, and so on. Additionally, another cause of culture shock is the inability to socialize well. Students who struggle with socializing find it difficult to establish close relationships with their peers and may even be avoided due to their quick temper, anger issues, or lack of humor.

The facilities and infrastructure of the boarding school also contribute to culture shock. As a relatively new boarding school, STP Khoiru Ummah Jember at the junior high school level lacks complete and adequate facilities. The classrooms used for teaching are relatively small, which can make students feel cramped. Furthermore, the surrounding environment of the boarding school is another contributing factor. Some students feel uncomfortable and disgusted by the dirty and humid environment. This occurs because some students neglect their responsibilities in maintaining cleanliness, such as not fulfilling their duty to keep the premises clean.

Another factor is the enforcement of regulations at the boarding school. When students first enter the boarding school, they may feel restricted by the rules. For example, whenever they leave the dormitory, they must seek permission from the dormitory supervisor (*mudir*). Another example is the bedtime regulation. Some students were accustomed to sleeping after 10:00 PM, but at the boarding school, they are required to sleep no later than 9:30 PM. This regulation is intended to ensure they wake up the next day with a refreshed body and no drowsiness. Furthermore, another factor contributing to culture shock is the difficulty students face in understanding certain subjects, particularly those that involve calculations and memorization. The specific subjects include mathematics, physics, and Arabic language. The extensive number of subjects they study each day also contributes to the culture shock. In a single day, they attend classes for Quran memorization, Quran recitation, and three other general subjects.

The absence of mobile phones is another factor. For some students, living in the boarding school becomes uncomfortable because they cannot play games on their smartphones. This discomfort arises from their habit of playing games while at home. However, at the boarding school, students are not allowed to bring their phones. The final factor is the difference in ethnic background and regional language. Out of the nine new students, one comes from the Madurese ethnic group, while the other eight are Javanese. The student from the Madurese ethnicity experiences difficulties when their peers converse in Javanese. Similarly, students from Javanese ethnic background also face difficulties and feel slightly different from students of Madurese ethnicity.

B. Stages of Culture Shock

The stages of cultural shock experienced by students consist of four stages. The first stage is the stage of excitement. In this stage, students feel happy because they can continue their education to a higher level. Previously, they had completed their

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education in elementary school. At this phase, they are entering the education at the Islamic boarding school equivalent to junior high school. When they first stay at the boarding school, they feel excited about the new environment and new friends. They are also happy because they receive a weekly allowance from their parents. Additionally, they are pleased because the boarding school provides ready-to-eat meals three times a day without them having to cook.

The second stage is the crisis stage. After a few weeks of staying at the boarding school, students start to feel bored and weary. This is due to the daily routine at the boarding school, which starts from 3:00 AM until 9:00 PM. Some students also experience illness because they are not accustomed to the rigorous activities at the boarding school. Furthermore, they feel sadness and longing for their parents. In fact, some students want to leave the boarding school.

The third stage is the recovery stage. When feeling bored, weary, and sad, students try to find other enjoyable activities. They engage in recreational activities and play various games with their friends, such as playing soccer, archery, tag, chess, and so on. Additionally, they try to alleviate their boredom by pursuing their individual hobbies, such as reading books, writing poetry, singing, creating artwork, going for walks, keeping ornamental fish, and more.

The fourth stage is the adaptation stage. In this final stage, students have become accustomed to and adapted to life at the boarding school. They are able to participate in the school activities. Each student requires a varying amount of time to adjust to the boarding school. The time needed for adaptation ranges from 2 to 10 months.

C. How to Overcome Culture Shock

STP Khoiru Ummah Jember students at the junior high school level strive to eliminate the culture shock they experience during their stay in the dormitory. Not only the students but also the management of the boarding school have implemented various programs to address the culture shock among the students. Therefore, the ways to overcome culture shock are divided into two categories: (a) the methods employed by the students and (b) the methods employed by the boarding school management.

The students employ various activities they find enjoyable to overcome culture shock, such as developing closer friendships with fellow students and engaging in light-hearted banter during leisure time. They also begin to pursue their hobbies. Some students enjoy playing chess, drawing, reading, keeping ornamental fish, singing, and so on. On the other hand, the boarding school implements several programs to address the culture shock experienced by the students. These programs include:

1) Providing Motivation and Recognition

One of the methods employed is to provide motivation and recognition to students who show progress in various aspects of life. By providing motivation and recognition, it is hoped that students will feel motivated to consistently uphold the values taught at the boarding school.

2) Building Camaraderie through Various Means

The boarding school also strives to foster camaraderie among the students through various means, such as a rotating room system where roommates are changed periodically. The room rotation program is conducted once a month. By changing roommates regularly, it is expected that students can interact with various peers and expand their social circle within the boarding school. This can also reduce the formation of exclusive groups that may influence the desired cultural development within the boarding school. Additionally, students are placed in small teams to engage in various activities or training sessions together to solve problems. The aim of this program is to strengthen social bonds among students and enhance their ability to work together.

3) Weekend Activities

To alleviate boredom and provide wholesome entertainment, the boarding school allocates dedicated time every week for watching programs that align with the religious and cultural values taught at the boarding school. This program can also strengthen relationships among students through relaxed and entertaining activities. Furthermore, the boarding school allows students to participate in martial arts and other activities on weekends.

4) The Role of Homeroom Teacher in Mentoring

The role of homeroom teacher is crucial in efforts to address culture shock. Homeroom teacher can provide mentoring to the students every afternoon. During these mentoring sessions, homeroom teacher educates and raises awareness about factors that trigger culture shock. For example, when students feel uncomfortable in the boarding school because they can't play online games on their smartphones, the homeroom teacher provides education about the negative effects of online gaming addiction.

When students feel uncomfortable with studying in the boarding school, the homeroom teacher raises awareness about the educational goals of the boarding school and the importance of understanding the more liberal social realities outside

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the boarding school. This is aimed at helping students understand the benefits and advantages of the boarding school environment in preventing them from falling into free association. Homeroom teacher also strives to educate students about gratitude, emphasizing that not everyone is fortunate enough to have luxurious facilities and opportunities for a good education. By instilling a sense of gratitude, it is hoped that students will appreciate the opportunities given to them and focus more on their personal development.

5) Parental Visitation

In the first semester, students are provided with facilities to make video calls to their parents every weekend. In the second semester, the boarding school organizes visitation programs every weekend. Parents are given time to visit their sons and are allowed to take them out of the boarding school for a few hours. Additionally, every third week, there is a program for students to return home. So, parents can pick up their children during that time. These programs aim to alleviate students longing for their parents.

6) Parental Cooperation and Support

Parental involvement is crucial in maintaining the success of programs at the boarding school. Therefore, the boarding school actively communicates with the parents of the students, whether through regular meetings, online communication, or sharing information about the students progress. The cooperation between the boarding school and parents is expected to provide better support and understanding for the students. As a form of support and care, parents can send their children's favorite food or snacks to the boarding school. This not only brings happiness to the students but also strengthens the emotional bond between the students and their parents. The support from parents will provide extra motivation and encouragement for the students in their journey at the boarding school.

V. CONCLUSIONS

This study examines the factors causing culture shock, stages of culture shock, and coping strategies among junior high school students at STP Khoiru Ummah Jember. Based on the research findings, it was discovered that the culture shock experienced by the students is caused by several factors, such as the packed schedule at the boarding school, the high target of Quran memorization, being far from parents, different characteristics of friends, inadequate facilities and infrastructure at the new boarding school, the boarding school's daily routine, subjects taught, and differences in ethnicity and regional languages. The culture shock experienced by the students occurs in four stages. The time required for students to adjust and become accustomed to life at the boarding school varies significantly, ranging from 2 to 10 months. The students and the boarding school have employed various methods to cope with the culture shock. The coping strategies identified in this research are expected to provide insights for other boarding schools in addressing the culture shock experienced by their students.

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