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REDEFINING CULTURAL DIMENSIONS: THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF INDONESIAN INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN ASIA

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ABSTRACT

Many Indonesian Diaspora are studying as international students at various universities worldwide. Cross-cultural dialogue is essential in developing Indonesian students, particularly in their engagement with community members. This research seeks to explore the trends of intercultural engagement and analyze the six aspects of culture throughout Asia by examining the experiences of Indonesians living abroad, namely Indonesian students abroad. This study explores how meaning is generated through the use of data collection tools such as comprehensive interviews and analysis of written records, analyzed through the lens of Hofstede's Theory of Cultural Dimensions. This research is based on the cross-cultural communication paradigm, namely dialectics as an integration between functionalist and critical paradigms with a descriptive

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qualitative research approach. The study results indicate a discrepancy between Hofstede's functional data and the social reality experienced by diaspora students. Various aspects of culture, including hierarchical distance, the balance between personal autonomy and group orientation, as well as the spectrum from permissiveness to self-control, are often re-examined and expressed differently through daily social interactions. Communities with low individualism scores tend to be closed to foreigners, while collectivist societies show openness and responsiveness to newcomers. These findings confirm that cultural dimensions are contextual and dynamic and are greatly influenced by the negotiation of meaning in intercultural social interactions. Thus, this study enriches the understanding of cultural flexibility and the importance of a micro approach in reading cross-cultural communication in international education.

INTRODUCTION

Identity is an important symbol for a nation. Cultural identity is part of society through values and norms ingrained from generation to generation. Culture cannot be separated from the customs, regions, beliefs, and lifestyles of society. Communication is the best means to see culture so far connected between individuals so that there is a process of exchanging meanings that are inherent in society. (Marta, 2017).

Communication is a process in which the communicant and the communicator interact, exchanging messages directly or indirectly. It can be said to be the most crucial thing in life. (Fernando, 2024; Marta & Fernando, 2020) A social interaction can

be meaningless if the communication within it does not run properly, and likewise, in the professional world or the world of work, communication is important in giving instructions from leaders to subordinates or vice versa. (Januardi et al., 2024; Sefani et al., 2024; Supiyandi et al., 2022).

Humans communicate from the womb until near death throughout their lives. Therefore, communication cannot be separated from everyone on this earth. Communication is also essential for individuals when interacting. Sometimes, individuals feel that communication is ineffective due to misinterpretation by the message's recipient, and the misunderstanding is due to the different perceptions of each individual.

The message is one element of communication. The message delivery process consists of providing information from the communicator to the communicant. (Sumiati & Girsang, 2018). Communication is said to be good if the communication or message is effective. With effective communication, it is hoped that the communicant can receive the message delivered well. One indicator of the effectiveness of communication is if it meets several specific requirements, one of which is communication that can create pleasure among the parties involved in it. (Ramadhanty, 2014).

Paramita & Sari (2016:166), conveying the understanding of Cross-Cultural Communication. According to Samovar, intercultural or cross-cultural communication happens when individuals from one culture send information to individuals from a different culture. More specifically, intercultural communication refers to exchanges between people whose cultural understandings and methods of expressing meaning are not the same. (Sanadi, 2014:30). Revealing a simple understanding of intercultural communication as communication between two or more cultures, either within one country or between other countries. Culture and communication cannot be separated because culture is the basic foundation of communication.

A figure provides a deeper understanding of cross-cultural communication. Martin & Nakayama (2007) To grasp this topic, one must first comprehend the notions of

culture and communication, and subsequently examine how these two ideas are interconnected. An approach that integrates interpersonal communication within social contexts has also been discussed by Lubis & Sulistiawati, (2021) in a study on how information dissemination and social networks shape the processes of empowerment and adaptation in community-based settings. Martin & Nakayama (2007) Culture refers to a set of actions and viewpoints acquired and collectively practiced by members of a community. Communication is a representational activity through which understanding is constructed, upheld, restored, and altered.

Stefanie et al., (2016), put forward the challenges in carrying out intercultural relations, including (1) there must be strong motivation in carrying out relations, (2) there are differences in communication styles, values and perceptions, (3) regarding negative stereotypes that are held, (4) anxiety and fear of not being accepted, (5) sincerity of heart to be able to accept different cultural identities, and (6) the need for the ability to be able to "explain" these differences.

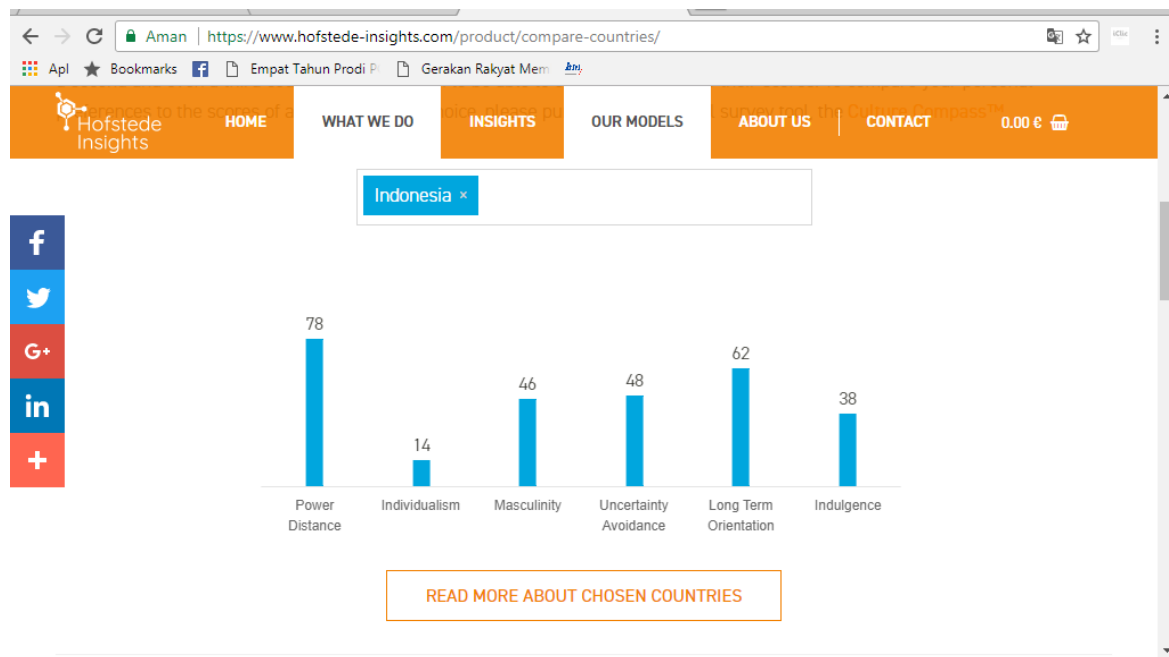
Regarding the challenges of intercultural relations, cross-cultural communication is essential in delivering messages that involve cross-cultural components such as individuals, groups, and even communities with different cultures. One manifestation of cross-cultural communication is communication carried out by the Indonesian diaspora who study abroad. Throughout the year, many Indonesian citizens choose to study in various countries worldwide to get a better quality of education. The countries they go to include multiple parts of the continents of Asia, Australia, Europe, America, and Africa. Furthermore, the term "diaspora" emerged for residents who decided to live in other countries.

Diaspora comes from the ancient Greek "διασπορ?" which means spreading or sowing. Initially, the Greeks used the term Diaspora to refer to citizens of a royal city who migrated to a colonial territory with the intention of colonization to assimilate the territory into the kingdom. In human movement, Diaspora refers to residents who settle in other countries due to various factors, such as war or seeking a better life. The

Diaspora has become a new economic force for a nation in the development of globalization. If they had previously been called migrants, the term shifted to Diaspora.

Comprising approximately 8 million individuals, the Indonesian expatriate community represents roughly 3% of Indonesia's overall populace and can be found across all seven continents: North America, South America, Antarctica, Africa, Europe, Asia, and Australia. These nationals reside overseas for academic pursuits or professional opportunities and encompass diverse ethnic heritages, faith traditions, and socioeconomic and educational backgrounds. Consequently, the Indonesian global network possesses a wide array of perspectives, capabilities, and specialized knowledge.

Figure 1. Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Database



Source: www.hofstede-insights.com, 2025

The Indonesian diaspora, which spread across various continents, continues to actualize itself with every local culture so that cross-cultural communication bridges both parties to communicate. To understand the culture in every country, Hofstede, a sociologist from 1967 to 1973, he examined cultural patterns in 50 nations while working at the private enterprise International Business Machines (IBM). Through his

research, he identified six dimensions that reflect the cultural characteristics of each nation. Today, a database containing scores for these cultural dimensions for each country, as assessed by Hofstede, is available to the public and can be found on the website www.hofstede-insights.com.

Hofstede's six cultural dimensions include power distance, which addresses various responses to societal inequality. Uncertainty avoidance reflects the degree of anxiety a community feels when confronted with unpredictability or unfamiliar situations. The individualism-collectivism scale pertains to how people are integrated within close-knit groups. Masculinity versus femininity describes how societies manage the allocation of emotional roles between genders. The long-term versus short-term orientation dimension relates to whether a culture prioritizes future rewards, immediate concerns, or past traditions. Finally, indulgence versus restraint covers the extent to which individuals in a society are permitted to fulfill desires for enjoyment and pleasure or are encouraged to exercise self-control (Sihombing et al., 2011).

This study seeks to explore the processes of intercultural interaction through cognitive data exploration of cultural dimensions in several countries on the Asian continent, which tend to experience shifts with the various changes that exist.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Hofstede's 1994 cross-national research revealed the distinctive traits of populations in various nations. He identified four cultural dimensions, one of which is power distance (hereinafter referred to as PD), individualism (hereinafter referred to as IDV), masculinity (hereinafter referred to as MAS), and uncertainty avoidance (hereinafter referred to as UAI) (Fernando et al., 2020; Kristianto & Marta, 2019a; Sihombing & Pongtuluran, 2011).

The initial dimension, Power Distance, pertains to the extent to which a society is comfortable with disparities between those in authority and those with less influence. This metric illustrates how individuals with lower status within a community perceive and accept uneven distribution of power. At its core, this concept explores how

communities manage inequalities among people, particularly between those who lead and those they govern. Generally, people from the lower classes will try to create equality between those in power or leaders and their people.

Power distance is influenced by the culture that develops in the country. The culture related to power distance is related to communication, namely, low-context and high-context communication. Both of these things can be seen from how people communicate. High-context communication is an open way of communicating; in other words, there are no hidden problems, while low-context communication is the opposite, where the person communicating many things is encoded or only implied. (Husna, 2015).

The second dimension, known as Uncertainty Avoidance, reflects how a society copes with unpredictability and unclear situations (Kristianto & Marta, 2019). It refers to how much people within an organization or society strive to handle their unease and limit the unpredictability they experience. This concept clarifies that uncertainty avoidance does not equate to avoiding risk. Individuals belonging to cultures with a high degree of uncertainty avoidance are generally more expressive emotionally. They aim to prevent unexpected or atypical events as much as possible. When encountering change, they proceed gradually, with careful planning, and ensure all rules and procedures are closely followed.

In comparison, cultures with low uncertainty avoidance are at ease with unpredictable circumstances and frequent transitions. They generally incorporate certain guidelines into their routines. Individuals in these cultures are often more practical and display greater acceptance toward new or unfamiliar situations.

The third dimension, Individualism and collectivism, is an attitude or understanding that is opposite each other. Individualism is an understanding that developed in Western culture. Individualism prioritizes one's own interests rather than the interests of the group. On the other hand, collectivism is an understanding where someone prioritizes the interests of the group rather than the individual. This means

that the person will find it easier to work with others. This collectivist culture is widely developed in Asia.

The high or low value of a person's individualism or collectivism is more indicated by how the person communicates. The number of people communicating or responding to a person's questions or responses will indicate whether the person or group is in the individual category. People who talk a lot or respond to someone are classified as collectivists, while people who respond to others only as needed are included in individualism (Husna, 2015).

The fourth dimension, Masculinity, concerns how a society perceives and assigns emotional responsibilities based on gender distinctions. (Sasongko & Marta, 2018) The masculine aspect includes attributes such as competitiveness, decisiveness, material wealth, drive, and authority. Conversely, the feminine aspect values interpersonal connections and overall well-being. In cultures emphasizing masculinity, distinctions between male and female roles tend to be more pronounced and rigid. Meanwhile, in more feminine societies, both genders are regarded as having similar traits, prioritizing modesty and compassion.

The application of gendered language, implying distinctions based on gender, has sparked debate. Consequently, several scholars adopting Hofstede's (2010) framework have opted to substitute the terminology, such as using "Quality of Life" instead of "Quantity of Life."

The fifth dimension is short-term orientation, which is in time perspective. Hofstede (2010) Previous and current policies tend to prioritize immediate outcomes. In contrast, policies with a long-term focus are designed to produce lasting impacts in the years ahead. The sixth dimension is restraint. Hofstede emphasizes that restraint describes a stance on satisfaction as something that must be maintained and regulated by the power of social norms. (Marta & Sierjames, 2018).

Based on previous research, researchers see the State of the art as a basis for thinking to study the phenomenon under study more deeply, including the following:

Table 1: *State's's Of The Art*

No	Title of Scientific Article	Author & Year
1	Branding Indonesia through Cross-Cultural Communication	(Yunus et al., 2020)
2	The influences of stereotypes in cross-cultural communication between Thailand and Indonesian students on international credit transfer program at Walailak University Thailand	(Mukhzamilah et al., 2022)
3	The Influence of Power Distance on Communication Apprehension among Workers in Palembang City	(Siagian et al., 2023)
4	Cross-Cultural Challenges in Indonesian Workplaces: A Systematic Literature Review of Chinese Expatriate Adaptation in Companies in Indonesia	(Kristanti et al., 2024)
5	Dimensi Budaya Hofstede dalam Komunikasi Antarkaryawan Organisasi Multinasional	(Girsang et al., 2024)

Source: Researcher's Process, 2025

Several previous studies have discussed the dynamics of cross-cultural communication with various focuses and approaches. Yunus et al., (2020) It highlights how cross-cultural communication between Indonesian and American lecturers can be used for cultural diplomacy or nation branding. Still, it has not touched deeply on social interactions between individuals from a diaspora perspective. Meanwhile, Mukhzamilah et al. (2022) examined the influence of stereotypes on the interactions of Indonesian and Thai students in an international credit transfer program. Still, they focused more on cross-national perception than the overall cultural experience. The study by Siagian et al. discusses Hofstede's power distance dimension and communication anxiety in the workplace. Still, it is limited to the Indonesian domestic environment and ignores the intercultural dynamics experienced by the diaspora.

Furthermore, Kristanti et al., (2024) Present a systematic review of the cross-cultural challenges Chinese expatriates face in Indonesia. Still, the role of diaspora students and micro-experiences in socio-cultural adaptation has not been directly explored. On the other hand, Girsang et al., (2024) Hofstede's cultural dimensions are utilized to analyze communication between employees in multinational companies, but it remains within the realm of formal organizations. Different from the five studies, this study fills the gap by exploring the personal experiences of Indonesian students' diaspora in everyday communication in Asian countries (Thailand and Taiwan) through a qualitative approach, which allows for an in-depth understanding of how global cultural theories (such as Hofstede's) are negotiated in real social practices in the realm of education and public life.

METHODOLOGY

The Cross-Cultural Communication Paradigm, from Judith Martin and Thomas Nakayama (2010), has three (3) main paradigms: functional, interpretive, critical, or dialectical paradigms that offer integration between paradigms. It is hoped that the chosen paradigm is in line with the problems that have been narrowed down in the background. Another thing that influences the study of intercultural communication is paradigm research. The paradigm is a fundamental view of a scientific discipline about the central issue the relevant science should study. (Purba, 2006). Each paradigm naturally assumes a different interpretation of reality, human behavior, culture, and communication. (Martin & Nakayama, 2007).

Some communication scholars believe that there is an external reality that can be measured and studied, while others believe that reality can be understood only by living and experiencing it. In short, beliefs and assumptions about reality influence research methods and findings and thus influence what we know precisely as intercultural communication. Furthermore, we can identify three approaches that each characterize culture and communication. These three approaches involve a mixture of

disciplines and reflect different views and assumptions about reality, human behavior, and ways of studying culture and communication.

Three paradigms that study intercultural communication include: (1) social science or more commonly known as functional, (2) interpretive, and (3) critical. Each provides a unique way to understand the relationship between culture and communication, but each has limitations. (Martin & Nakayama, 2007).

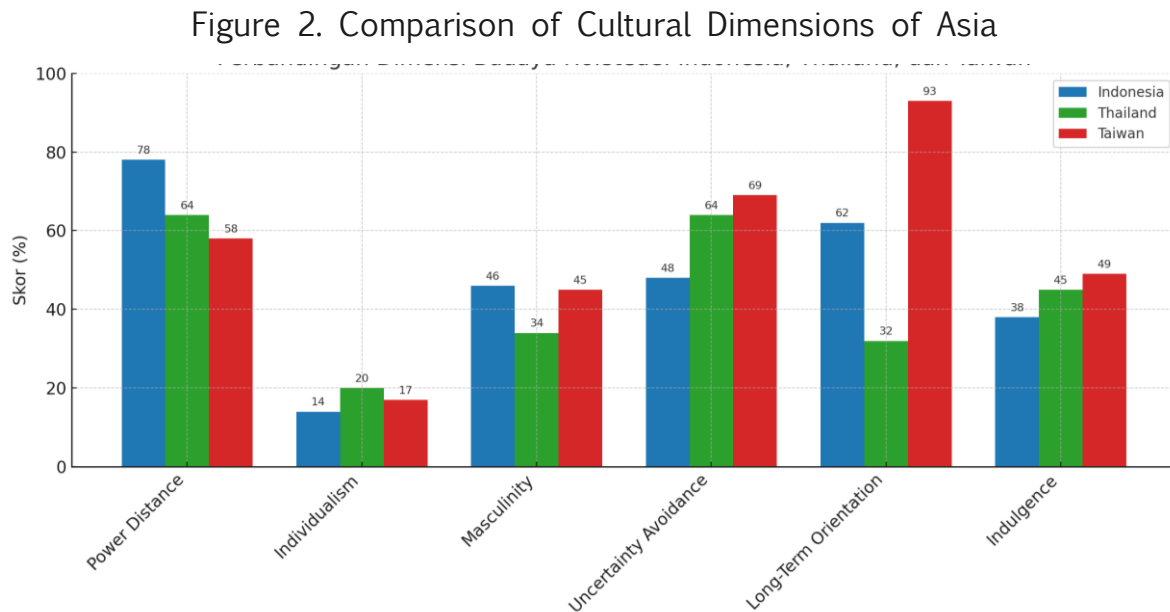
This research uses a dialectical paradigm, which integrates the three main paradigms, namely interpretive and critical functionalism. In this case, the author uses functional and critical integration, which uses documentation studies on the site. www.hofstede-insights.com which shows the percentage of dimensions of each country. After that, it tries to criticize through the description of the interview conducted through the perspective of Indonesian students studying abroad.

Researchers conducted research using a qualitative approach with a case study method with primary data collection using interview techniques and secondary data collection using documentation studies. (Fernando et al., 2022; Fernando & Marta, 2019; Harita et al., 2020). This study uses the Cultural Dimension Theory from the perspective of Prof. Geert Hofstede. In this study, there were two Indonesian diasporas in Thailand and Taiwan. When this research was conducted, they were studying as students at one of the universities in the country. There is Matahari Irandiputri, born in Yogyakarta, who is studying at Suratthani Rajabhat University majoring in Tourism & Hospitality Industry in the tourist area of Koh Samui, Suratthani, Thailand and there is also an Indonesian student in Taiwan named Victor studying at National Central University majoring in Business Administration and living in Taoyuan City, Zhongli District, Taiwan.

FINDINGS

The Asian continent places the characteristics of its people differently from other western countries. Unique things were also found in the Indonesian diaspora who conducted a study in two countries in the Asian continent, namely: Thailand and

Taiwan. Figure 2. explains the comparison of cultural dimensions between Thailand (Green), Taiwan (Purple), and Indonesia (Blue).



Source: www.hofstede-insights.com, 2025

In the Power Distance dimension, Thailand recorded a score of 64%, while Indonesia was higher at 78%. This shows that both countries tend to accept the existence of a power hierarchy in social and organizational structures. However, Thailand shows a more flexible form of hierarchy than Indonesia.

According to Matahari, an Indonesian diaspora student studying in Thailand, the interaction between superiors and subordinates in the Thai work environment is very professional. Thai society respects the power structure in the workplace. However, interestingly, when outside of working hours, the relationship becomes more relaxed and egalitarian. Social relationships become fluid, even superiors and subordinates can interact like close friends, showing dynamic social adaptation.

"Here, if the relationship between superiors and subordinates is professional, it's just that when we chat outside of work hours, we can be like close friends." Said Matahari

This phenomenon shows that although Thai society values formal structures in organizations, they also accommodate warmth and closeness in informal social contexts, which indicates a shift or flexibility in the power distance dimension in practice in everyday life.

In the Power Distance dimension, Taiwan has a score of 58%, indicating a moderate level of power inequality. This figure is lower than Indonesia (78%) and Thailand (64%), indicating that Taiwanese society tends to have a less hierarchical social structure, with a tendency towards more egalitarian relations.

According to Victor, an Indonesian student studying in Taiwan, respect for others—whether older, superior, or fellow human beings—does not depend on position or social status. For him, mutual respect is universal, and is manifested in concrete daily behaviors such as queuing orderly, being disciplined with time, and keeping promises.

"In my opinion, respecting someone can be done in various ways, as I mentioned before, such as queuing properly, not cutting in line, being disciplined with time, arriving on time when you have an appointment, and so on. I don't think there is any difference in how to respect older people or superiors and subordinates," said Victor

This statement reflects that the culture of respect in Taiwan is inclusive and not elitist; respect is not given simply because of status, but through polite and responsible social actions. This finding supports the understanding that Taiwanese society emphasizes equality in social interactions, and prioritizes shared ethics rather than formal power structures.

In the Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI) dimension framework according to Hofstede, Thailand has a score of 69%, higher than Indonesia which is at 48%. This score

indicates that Thai society has a tendency to create certainty and clear social structures to avoid uncertainty. However, based on the experience of the Indonesian diaspora named Matahari, it was found that in the practice of intercultural communication, Thai society actually shows flexibility and openness in establishing social interactions.

For example, in everyday life, they are used to greeting strangers with general terms such as "father" and "mother", which indicates a direct and warm form of communication, as well as being a social strategy to reduce awkwardness in new interaction situations.

"Mum, can I ask you for help or not?" Here, the habit is to immediately call for help, "madam, sir," said Matahari

According to (Hofstede, 2010a), societies with high UAI levels usually have strict and firm rules against uncertainty, but this study reveals that the reality of communication does not always follow this pattern rigidly. In this view Martin & Nakayama, (2010), Cross-cultural communication must be understood through a dialectical approach, namely viewing cultural encounters as a process of negotiation between cultural structures and individual life experiences.

Meanwhile, in Taiwan, the UAI score is also at 69%, but Victor's experience, another Indonesian diaspora, shows a different phenomenon. He noted that Taiwanese people tend to be reluctant to initiate communication with foreigners. The factors of language limitations, social norms, and high privacy values, are barriers to initiating initial interactions.

"As I mentioned before, Taiwanese people are very reluctant to interact with new people, (maybe because of language barriers), so we have to take the initiative to interact with them and when we get to know them, they will always ask us about things in our country." Victor said

This shows that high UAI does not always mean that people will actively build communication to avoid uncertainty, especially in an intercultural context. In this context, the research by Sulistiawati et al., (2015) highlights the importance of social network relations as a means of building trust and facilitating adaptation within new social groups, including in intercultural environments. In line with that, (Febiyana & Turistiati, 2019; Gudykunst & Kim, 2021) explains that barriers to intercultural communication are often influenced by anxiety and uncertainty, especially when individuals are in a foreign and unfamiliar cultural context.

Thus, two countries that both score high on the UAI actually produce contrasting patterns of intercultural communication:

Thailand: Developing spontaneous and inclusive communication to reduce uncertainty.

Taiwan: Showing a closed attitude and being cautious in opening communication with foreigners.

This difference emphasizes the importance of a contextual and interpretive approach in reading cultural dimensions, as stated by intercultural communication experts, that culture is not a static entity, but is dynamic and full of negotiation between individuals across backgrounds. (Martin & Nakayama, 2010).

The Individualism vs. Collectivism (IDV) dimension in Geert Hofstede's theory highlights how a society views the relationship between individuals and groups. In collectivist cultures, an individual's identity and decisions are heavily influenced by groups, such as family or community. In contrast, individualist cultures emphasize independence, autonomy, and personal achievement (Hofstede, 2010a).

In this context, Thailand has an individualism score of 20%, while Indonesia is even lower at 14%, indicating that both are cultures with a strong collectivist orientation. Joshua's research shows that in the practice of intercultural

communication, Thai society is very open to accepting new people, regardless of social background, physicality, or status.

"Maybe because local people are easy to accept, right? They don't look at physical appearance at all in Jakarta, sorry, definitely high class is the same as high class, you know what I mean," said Matahari.

This statement reflects the power of collective communication in Thai society that encourages social inclusiveness. In Hofstede's theory, collectivist cultures tend to prioritize harmonious relationships, face-saving, and building cooperation and social solidarity in communication (Minkov & Hofstede, 2018). Intercultural interactions become more fluid when the Indonesian diaspora encounters a society that normalizes social closeness from the start, as is found in Thailand.

On the other hand, Taiwan, which has a score of 17% on the individualism dimension, is theoretically classified as collectivistic. However, based on the experience of Victor, an Indonesian diaspora in Taiwan, there is a contradiction in the application of these values. He said that Taiwanese people tend to display individualistic attitudes, especially at the beginning of meetings, before familiarity is formed.

"I think their nature is more individualistic, but when you get to know them, they are also willing to mix and work together," said Victor

This phenomenon shows a difference between the structure of cultural values and real communication behavior, which often occurs in the context of intercultural communication. According to (Thomas et al., 2021) Cross-cultural communication is not only determined by national cultural indicators but also by situational factors such as social context, trust in strangers, and local social norms. In Taiwan, initial social distancing may be influenced by values of caution in public interactions or a culture of high privacy, which then fades after interpersonal trust is established.

These findings underscore the importance of an interpretive approach in intercultural communication, where the meaning of interactions is formed through direct experience, not just through common cultural assumptions (Liu et al., 2023). Both Thailand and Taiwan fall into the collectivist category in theory, but the intercultural communication patterns encountered by the Indonesian diaspora show variations in terms of social acceptance, emotional expression, and openness to outsiders.

In Hofstede's theory, the Masculinity vs. Femininity (MAS) dimension describes the extent to which a culture values competitiveness, achievement, and materialism (masculine) over values of social relationships, empathy, and life balance (feminine). Masculine cultures tend to emphasize individual success, while feminine cultures emphasize cooperation, harmony, and concern for others (Hofstede, 2010a; Minkov & Hofstede, 2018).

In this context, Thailand recorded a MAS score of 34%, indicating a more feminine culture, while Indonesia had a higher score of 46%, indicating a slightly more masculine tendency. Joshua's research highlights how the intercultural communication process experienced by the Indonesian diaspora in Thailand reveals collaborative and relational values in everyday life, especially in academic settings.

The experience of Matahari, an Indonesian student in Thailand, shows that campus culture in Thailand highly values cooperation and concern for fellow students, even in matters related to academic performance. She recounts:

"If compared to Indonesians here, there is more togetherness, more connection, for example, if their GPA is high, they help others sincerely and are able to. People here prioritize relationships with others," said Matahari

This statement reflects the real practice of feminine culture as described by Hofstede where personal achievement is not demonstrated competitively, but rather carried out with a collective spirit. The intercultural communication process that occurs

in this environment shows the existence of interdependence values, namely mutual assistance and close emotional relationships, which are the basis of social interaction.

Menurut Zhang & Harzing, (2021), In feminine cultures, communication tends to be non-confrontational, emphasizing relationship harmony, and sensitivity to the emotional needs of others, thus encouraging easier social integration for immigrants or diaspora. This supports Matahari's observation that Thai society is not only accepting of foreigners, but also actively supporting their social adaptation.

Furthermore, the intercultural communication approach in a feminine culture like Thailand provides space for the diaspora to feel accepted emotionally and socially. In this context, feminine culture not only shapes the way individuals interact, but also opens up supportive non-verbal communication channels for newcomers (Liu et al., 2022). Therefore, the communication that is built is not just an exchange of information, but also a form of social solidarity that accelerates the process of cross-cultural acculturation.

Within Hofstede's cultural dimensions framework, Taiwan scores 45% on Masculinity vs. Femininity, placing the country in the middle but feminine category. This reflects the tendency of society to balance personal ambition with social interests, and emphasize the importance of cooperation, harmony, and empathy in social relationships.

In the context of intercultural communication, the Indonesian diaspora living in Taiwan—as exemplified by Victor—witnessed that although Taiwanese people appear individualistic and distant at first, they tend to be warm and collaborative once relationships have been established. This shows that feminine values such as solidarity and togetherness remain strong in coloring social interactions. According to Liu et al., (2022), societies that have feminine tendencies in their culture prioritize communication that maintains harmony, as well as showing tolerance and support for outsiders.

Victor noted that after establishing closeness, Taiwanese people became open and willing to cooperate in various social activities, reflecting that in a feminine culture like Taiwan, close interpersonal relationships are more important than dominance or

competition. In the process of intercultural communication, this makes it easier for diasporas to engage in local social networks, because the communication approach used by Taiwanese people is more empathetic and accommodating than hierarchical or competitive.

In Hofstede's theory, the Long-Term vs. Short-Term Orientation (LTO) dimension measures the extent to which a culture prioritizes long-term values such as persistence, future planning, and self-control, as compared to short-term orientations such as meeting current needs, valuing tradition, and situational stability. (Hofstede, 2010a; Minkov & Hofstede, 2018). Based on Hofstede Insights data, Thailand has an LTO score of 32%, indicating that the culture in the country is more short-term oriented. This is evident in the observations of Matahari, an Indonesian diaspora student in Thailand, who noted that local people tend to live a more relaxed life, do not have structured long-term plans, and are more focused on needs or decisions that are near-term.

"In my opinion, if we were Indonesians, we would save for marriage and so on. But here, people have plans for the near future, not far in advance, it's like they're more relaxed, they don't worry about anything, if as an Indonesian, it's like it's less exciting," said Matahari

The experience shows how time orientation influences intercultural communication patterns. In this context, Thai people do not prepare for the future rigidly, and in social interactions, they also tend not to demand certainty or long-term expectations in interpersonal relationships. Communication becomes more casual and situational, which can be perceived as irregular by diasporas from more long-term-oriented cultures. This is in line with the findings Liu et al., (2021) which suggests that in short-term cultures, communication preferences are often more context-based and responsive to the situation, rather than thinking about future impacts.

In contrast, Taiwan is at the extreme end of this dimension, with an LTO score of 93%. This suggests that Taiwanese culture is very future-oriented, long-term planning,

and the importance of financial and social responsibility for later life. This is reinforced by Victor, an Indonesian student in Taiwan, who observed that local people are very aware of investing for old age and instill the value of saving from a young age.

“Yes, they pay close attention to their retirement investments, they have started saving in special banks for their retirement and making various investments so as not to burden their children with their retirement.” Victor said

From the perspective of intercultural communication, such long-term values form more structured and thoughtful social interactions. Taiwanese society tends to prioritize caution, individual responsibility, and constructing social relationships in a gradual and stable manner. This allows for more goal-oriented, more planned, and long-term hopeful communication, both in personal and professional relationships (Chen, 2022).

This difference in time orientation creates an important dynamic in intercultural communication: diaspora from a long-term culture such as Indonesia will more easily fit in with a Taiwanese society that shares similar values, compared to a short-term culture such as Thailand. However, as noted by Thomas et al., (2021), The success of intercultural communication also depends on the individual's ability to read the context of time and relationship expectations in the host society, not just on theoretical similarities in cultural values.

In Hofstede's cultural theory, the Indulgence vs. Restraint (IVR) dimension measures the extent to which a society allows individuals the freedom to satisfy basic needs and enjoy life. Indulgent cultures encourage the free expression of personal desires and pleasures, while restraining cultures emphasize social control and norms that limit such expression (Hofstede, 2010a; Minkov & Hofstede, 2018).

According to Hofstede Insights data, Thailand has an IVR score of 45%, slightly higher than Indonesia at 38%. Although Thailand's score is in the middle, the character of its people tends towards restraint. This is related to the strong social norms and

religious values that are adhered to, especially Buddhism which emphasizes self-control and five moral prohibitions, one of which is the prohibition of getting drunk. However, as noted by Matahari—an Indonesian student in Thailand—in daily life practices there is a contrast between ideal values and actual behavior.

“Some of them are extravagant but still have traditions like respecting their parents. Actually in Buddhism there are 5 prohibitions, one of which is not being drunk, but here they are free to buy drinks even for school children. Some are not married but they live together, indeed according to the rules they are not allowed to live together. Even though they live together, they go to the temple together, Buddhist holidays are still celebrated together,” said Matahari

This condition shows that intercultural communication in Thailand is shaped by a complex relationship between formal norms and flexible social customs. Culturally, society shows restraint characteristics—upholding traditional values and social responsibility—but in interpersonal interactions they show a tolerance for deviations from values. In perspective Liu et al., (2021), This condition can be understood as a form of "cultural compromise", namely when society maintains collective value symbols while adapting behavior to global dynamics and contemporary lifestyles.

In contrast, Taiwan has an IVR score of 49%, indicating a moderate tendency towards an indulgent society. However, according to Victor, an Indonesian diaspora in Taiwan, the people there actually show high self-control and social responsibility even though their lifestyle tends to be free. He emphasized that social values in Taiwan are not always present in the form of written rules or religious norms, but are embedded in the collective consciousness of society.

“They do not have binding norms, if I conclude in their subconscious they have embedded invisible norms, even though their lifestyle is very free (like in

some western countries), but they are still willing to be responsible and accept the consequences that apply. Like when there is a traffic accident, they always wait for the police to come and all are responsible for what they did. "Said Victor

This phenomenon shows that Taiwanese people practice a form of intercultural communication that is based on ethical responsibility and not just on explicit norms. Although their lifestyle appears liberal on the outside (e.g. in personal choices), social values such as honesty and responsibility are still present in public interactions, including in critical situations such as traffic accidents. The study Zhang & Harzing, (2022) states that in modern societies, more and more social values operate in the form of “implicit norms”—that is, unwritten rules that are collectively maintained and have a strong influence on communication between individuals across cultures.

Thus, the differences between Thailand and Taiwan in the indulgence dimension are not only seen from the numerical scores, but also from how social values and controls are articulated in the practices of everyday life and communication. The process of intercultural communication also requires the diaspora to understand that what appears permissive may be limited by implicit norms, and what appears conservative may be loose in practice.

DISCUSSION

In the Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI) dimension, Taiwan scored 69% according to Hofstede Insights, which theoretically indicates that its people tend to avoid uncertainty and prefer structure and certainty in social life. However, field findings from Victor, an Indonesian diaspora living in Taiwan, actually show that Taiwanese people are not active in initiating communication, especially with foreigners or newcomers. They tend to be passive in building initial relationships, so that the strategy of reducing uncertainty through open communication appears low. This poses a challenge for the Indonesian diaspora who come from a relatively more familiar culture and are

accustomed to using a personal approach in establishing social relationships. As stated by (Gudykunst & Kim, 2021), In intercultural communication, mismatches between cultural value expectations and actual practices in the field often lead to misunderstandings and obstacles to social integration.

Meanwhile, in the Individualism vs. Collectivism dimension, Thailand scored 20%, while Indonesia was lower at 14%, indicating that both are collectivist societies. However, the experience of the Indonesian diaspora in Thailand reveals that Thai society shows more real collectivism in social practices. Matahari informants noted that Thai society is more open, warm, and quick to mingle with foreigners, even regardless of background. This is in contrast to the social conditions in Indonesia, especially in urban areas such as Jakarta, which according to Matahari, still show social segmentation and class-based stratification. In Hofstede's perspective, collectivism ideally creates a society that helps each other and respects groups. However, collectivism in Indonesia still seems to be exclusive or based solely on "in-groups", while collectivism in Thailand is more open to "out-groups", including immigrants and tourists (Minkov & Hofstede, 2018).

The Indulgence vs. Restraint dimension is also an important highlight in this study. Thailand scored 45%, while Taiwan was slightly higher at 49%. Although these figures indicate a moderate position, the reality on the ground shows interesting social dynamics. In Thailand, visually, society appears permissive in terms of dress, free association, and a seemingly free lifestyle, making this country appear to be an indulgent society. However, in terms of cultural values, Thai society still adheres to strict Buddhist norms, such as the five main prohibitions, one of which is the prohibition of drinking alcohol. Matahari observed that this contradiction is so striking: on the one hand, society celebrates religious holidays and performs rituals together at temples, but on the other hand, social practices such as alcohol consumption even by school students take place openly. This phenomenon reflects a cultural shift from the value of restraint to indulgence in practice, which may be influenced by globalization and the penetration of popular culture (Liu et al., 2022).

Taiwan, with an indulgence score of 49%, shows a tendency towards restraint, but interestingly, the values and norms that shape social control in this country are not explicitly written. Victor notes that although the lifestyle of Taiwanese people seems free and modern, they show a high sense of social responsibility. For example, in the case of a traffic accident, Taiwanese people do not run away from responsibility, but instead wait for the authorities to resolve the problem legally. This shows that restraint in Taiwan is not formed by formal norms or religion, but by a "self-regulated culture", where social values grow from individual awareness and internalized collective culture. In the context of intercultural communication, this value is a challenge as well as an important lesson for the Indonesian diaspora, who are accustomed to a more formal or religious norm system. Communication in Taiwanese society tends to be structured by implicit norms that require high sensitivity in understanding the meaning behind actions (Zhang & Harzing, 2022).

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that the experiences of Indonesian diaspora students in Asia do not always conform to the categorization of national culture that is commonly referred to through Hofstede's cultural dimensions model. The social reality experienced shows a shift in meaning and cultural practices that are situational, contextual, and dynamic. Some societies with high collectivism scores actually show closed initial interaction patterns, while societies with high power hierarchies actually create egalitarian social relations outside of formal structures. This emphasizes that cultural understanding cannot be separated from the life experiences of individuals and the social environment in which they interact directly.

Therefore, future studies need to involve more informants from various countries and cultural backgrounds to enrich the findings and ensure the diversity of diaspora perspectives. A mixed methods approach is also recommended to combine the depth of qualitative exploration with the generalizability of quantitative data. In addition, further research can focus on the influence of institutional policies, such as

international campus regulations, foreign student orientation programs, and community-based social interventions in strengthening the cross-cultural adaptation process.

LIMITATION AND STUDY FORWARD

This study has limitations in the limited number of participants, namely only two Indonesian diaspora students in two Asian countries, so that the findings cannot be generalized to the entire context of the Indonesian diaspora in the Asian region. In addition, the qualitative approach used, although providing narrative depth, is not accompanied by quantitative comparisons that allow for statistical cross-country testing. Hofstede's data used as a reference is macro and functional in nature, so it does not fully reflect the dynamics of changes in cultural values and practices in the micro context of diaspora life. Therefore, further studies are recommended involving more informants from various countries, using a mixed methods approach, and integrating alternative theoretical frameworks such as intercultural sensitivity or cultural intelligence, in order to capture more complex and contextual dimensions of cross-cultural communication in the lives of Indonesian student diasporas.

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