

## Identifying the Salient Factors in Intercultural Interactions within the Academic Context as Revealed by Indonesian and Foreign Students: A Case Study at the Institut Teknologi Bandung

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### Main Points

Intercultural Interactions, ITB, Indonesia, Students, Academic Contexts

Indonesia is the home of multiple cultures, having more than 770 identified ethnicities spreading across the islands of Indonesia. The many cultures of Indonesia give emphasis on the inevitable cultural contacts among Indonesian people. This is especially an intriguing phenomenon when discussing about the issue of intercultural interactions at the university level. People from various cultural backgrounds within Indonesia come to study at various places in Indonesia. Within the context of studying at the university level in Indonesia, all interactions could be considered intercultural. Moreover, in recent years, Indonesia has also attracted more foreign students to study, which adds to the already multicultural environment of Indonesia. Taking a case of the *Institut Teknologi Bandung* (ITB) as one of the most multicultural leading education institutions in Indonesia, this paper attempts to identify the apparent factors in intercultural interactions within the academic context as revealed by both Indonesian and foreign students.

This is an ongoing study – a preliminary study – that attempts to familiarize with the topic prior to conducting a deeper study regarding intercultural interactions within the academic context. Revealing the “salient factors” is attempted by asking about the students’ experiences having such interactions in academic contexts, pointing out the highlights in their academic university life.

By referring to the conceptual framework about cultural identity by Jameson (2007), the salient factors as revealed by both Indonesian and foreign students include religious identity, ethnic group and English language among others. It is not necessary that the students deliberately identify these “salient factors” in their intercultural interactions. But by using the cultural identity framework, the researchers could identify these factors based on the stories and exploration about the students’ academic life.

### Limitations:

1. This is a familiarization study. Therefore, this study could not be considered a deep study, but a call for deeper studies in the factors identified.
2. The number of students successfully involved in interview sessions was still less than 10. The more people interviewed, the more rich the data would be, leading towards more saturated data about the salient factors in intercultural interactions.

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