

**Empowering Second-Generation Migrants:
A Study on Intercultural Communication Between Facilitators and Beneficiaries
at a Non-Formal Educational Institution in Malaysia**



UNDERGRADUATE THESIS

**Submitted to Fulfill the Requirements for Obtaining a Bachelor's Degree
in Communication Studies International Program
at the Faculty of Social and Cultural Sciences**

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2026**

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STATEMENT OF ACADEMIC ETHICS

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Through this letter, I hereby state the following:

1. During the process of writing this thesis, I have not committed any academic misconduct of any kind, including plagiarism, the use of academic writing services provided by third parties, or any other form of misconduct that violates the academic principles and ethics upheld by the Islamic University of Indonesia.
2. Therefore, this thesis is entirely my own scholarly work as the researcher and is not the result of plagiarism or the work of another party.
3. In the process of writing this thesis, I utilized Generative Artificial Intelligence technology responsibly and limited its use to the following aspects:
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I hereby make this statement in good faith, without coercion from any party, to be used as intended.

Yogyakarta, 08 April 2026

Sincerely,



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(Nandita Faiza)

2321126

MOTTO

“Believe in yourself that you are capable, and above all, **believe in your God”**

I dedicate this work to my future, UII, SBSM, as well as all those involved in this research

PREFACE

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

اللهم صل على سيدنا محمد وعلى آل سيدنا محمد

Alhamdulillah, in the name of Allah, the greatest Creator, who has created me. My beloved Planner, who has always protected me from any potential dangers I could never have imagined facing, has been leading me along a path that allowed me to pursue a university education without any fees, and to grow up with loving and complete parents. Oh, thanks, God!

I believe that completing this work (Empowering Second-Generation Migrants: A Study on Intercultural Communication Between Facilitators and Beneficiaries at a Non-Formal Educational Institution in Malaysia) is part of my journey that could build new perspectives and insights. Special thanks to them who have been helping me during the process:

1. **SBSM teachers and students:** This thesis can't be done without SBSM teachers' dedication and effort to uphold children's right to continue their education. May Allah always protect the entire SBSM family.
2. **Barudak Mulia:** Ida, Uzan, and Mbak Cinta. Unforgettable team. Thanks for being the interviewee and supporting me during the process.
3. **UII communications department:** Dr. Zaki Habibi, my fav. lecturer and fortunately have been my thesis supervisor. Mr. Herman, my DPA who always encouraged me to achieve my milestones.

This thesis began in Malaysia, was written in Yogyakarta, Ponorogo, and Ho Chi Minh City. What a journey! The research focuses on intercultural communication while also shows empowering findings during the program. Intercultural communication is a study that never ends, while people definitely experienced nowadays. That's why it is interesting to be discussed. On the other hand, showing issues solved by empowerment activity is also life-insight for readers to take the understanding. Thus, I hope this research gives impact and benefit.

Now, as a student in this uni, let me express my appreciation to those who've been influenced my study journey:

1. **My beloved family:** Bapak, Ibuk, and my lovely sister Fafa. Bapak, he always wanted me to be prepared, brave, and capable in everything, absolutely everything. Ibuk, Resilient woman, thanks for all your sacrifices and support you have given me throughout my educational journey. Fafa, I couldn't imagine life without you. My greatest blessing, the one I love the most. May Allah always make our journey easy.
2. **Pondok Pesantren UII:** PP. UII is the best environment that I've ever had, thanks to my family "Sansquad" and "Bustanul Wardah" for always being supportive and helpful.
3. **Marcomm FPSB 2023-2025:** where I improved my public speaking, teamwork, time management, and networking skills whilst surrounded by the most talented students in the uni. All the best for us.
4. **Bahrain 4:** Nayla, Innay, and Ida, my girls with whom I share my life's stories and vice versa.
5. **My international student friends:** Zinab, Aisha, Baraa, Bichara, and others. Spending time with you has made me see the world from a different perspective.
6. **My girls:** Ama and Cinta, my classmates from the beginning of my study.
7. **UII external supporting journey: Putri Hijabfluencer Indonesia and Duta Santri Nasional.** It was a wonderful experience and journey being part of Putri Hijab DI. Yogyakarta, a space where my stories began. One more, Duta Santri Nasional is another level of blessings, where I could get a positive and supportive environment..

All of these journeys have influenced and shaped me to become who I am today. I love learning from these people how cultures are shaped by differences, how I see the world in a perspective where I don't leave my own background. Thank you

Yogyakarta, 04 April 2026

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nandita Faiza', with a stylized, flowing script.

Nandita Faiza

TABLE OF CONTENTS

AUTHENTICATION PAGE.....	I
VALIDITY SHEET.....	II
STATEMENT OF ACADEMIC ETHICS.....	III
MOTTO.....	V
PREFACE.....	VI
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	VIII
LIST OF FIGURES.....	IX
LIST OF TABLES.....	IX
ABSTRACT.....	X
1.1. Background.....	1
1.2. Problem Formulation.....	3
1.3. Research Objectives.....	3
1.4. Benefits of Research.....	4
1.5. Literature Review.....	5
1.5.1. Previous research.....	5
1.5.2. Theoretical Framework.....	8
a) Intercultural Communication.....	8
b) Communication (for) Empowerment.....	12
c) Migrant Workers and the Communication Issues.....	13
1.6. Method.....	15
CHAPTER II.....	18
2.1. Profile of Sanggar Bimbingan Sungai Mulia, Malaysia.....	18
2.2. Programs and Empowerment Activities at SBSM.....	20
2.2.1. Program Overview.....	20
2.2.2. Responsible Committee.....	22
2.2.3. Program Objective.....	23
2.3. Second-Generation Migrants as Beneficiaries.....	23
2.4. The Role of Universitas Islam Indonesia Students as the Facilitators.....	26
CHAPTER III.....	30
3.1. Findings.....	30
3.1.1. SBSM as a solution for the Indonesian second-generation migrants' problems.....	33
3.1.2. Intercultural Communication at FPSB International Mobility Program between Facilitators and Beneficiaries.....	40
3.1.3. Motivation, impact, and the empowering activities.....	52

3.2. Discussion.....	59
3.2.1. Individual uniqueness between facilitators and beneficiaries.....	60
3.2.2. Generalizing of the beneficiaries as second-generation migrant.....	63
3.2.3. Facilitators' objectivity to the beneficiaries.....	65
3.2.4. Empowerment communication for the second-generation migrants.....	66
CHAPTER IV.....	70
4.1. Summary.....	70
4.2. Research Limitations.....	71
4.3. Recommendations.....	71
REFERENCES.....	73

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1 A diagram of intercultural communication.....	11
Figure 2.1 Learning Process at SBSM class.....	19
Figure 2.2 FPSB International Mobility's poster.....	21
Figure 3.1 SBSM's education calendar signed by SIKL's head of school.....	39
Figure 3.2 UII facilitators during their introduction to SBSM students.....	42
Figure 3.3 One of the learning module that SBSM use during teaching.....	45
Figure 3.4 Indonesian traditional dance exhibition by SBSM students.....	50
Figure 3.5 The facilitators' rapport with the SBSM students.....	52
Figure 3.6 "Literacy Corner" initiated by the facilitators.....	55
Figure 3.7 Morning exercise after Dhuha prayer.....	56
Figure 3.8 Qur'an recitation after Maghrib prayer for the students staying at the boarding.....	56
Figure 3.9 SBSM Students join Pramuka ceremonial managed by Gugus Depan KBRI.....	57

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1 Responsible Structure of Committee.....	22
Table 2.2 Data of the Facilitators.....	27
Table 3.1 Data of the Research Informant.....	30

ABSTRACT

Faiza, Nandita. 22321126 (2026). "Empowering Second-Generation Migrants: A Study on Intercultural Communication Between Facilitators and Beneficiaries at a Non-Formal Educational Institution in Malaysia". Bachelor of Communications. Department of Communications. Faculty of Social and Cultural Sciences. Universitas Islam Indonesia.

A number of Indonesian migrant workers married and had children in the host country, Malaysia. Their children are referred to as "second-generation migrants." The Faculty of Psychology and Socio-cultural Sciences, Universitas Islam Indonesia, initiated the FPSB International Mobility Program, designating the second-generation migrants as beneficiaries and the university students as the facilitators. Through this program, the researcher observed the intercultural communication between facilitators and beneficiaries, examined the cultural context of Indonesian second-generation migrants in Malaysia, and explored the impact and empowering outcomes of the program. This study employs a qualitative approach, utilizing in-depth interviews, content and textual analysis, document analysis, and participatory observation. This study reflects on Samovar et al. 's (2013) of interpreting intercultural communication from three key points: individual uniqueness, generalizing, and objectivity. The findings indicate that intercultural communication requires acknowledging the inherent differences among human beings by involving mutual understanding, constant adaptation, and awareness. Instead of searching for the similarities, understanding the differences is the key. This program demonstrates that intercultural communication can function as a pivotal mechanism in providing support to marginalized communities, particularly second-generation migrants who encounter barriers to formal education, which then became an empowerment that analyzed through equality of access to education, participation, self-resilience, and capacity building. Thus, this study proposes a model for nurturing intercultural communication to empower the society. It offers benefits not only to the educational institutions and sociologists but also to future empowerment facilitators.

Keywords: intercultural communication, malaysia, international mobility program, community empowerment, migrant children

ABSTRAK

Faiza, Nandita. 22321126 (2026). "Memberdayakan Migran Generasi Kedua: Sebuah Studi tentang Komunikasi Antarbudaya antara Fasilitator dan Penerima Manfaat di Lembaga Pendidikan Non-Formal di Malaysia. Sarjana Ilmu Komunikasi. Jurusan Ilmu Komunikasi. Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Budaya. Universitas Islam Indonesia.

Sejumlah pekerja migran Indonesia menikah dan memiliki anak di negara tujuan, Malaysia. Anak-anak mereka kemudian disebut sebagai "second-generation migrants." (anak-anak migran generasi kedua). Fakultas Psikologi dan Ilmu Sosial Budaya, Universitas Islam Indonesia, menginisiasi program "FPSB International Mobility" yang melibatkan second-generation migrant sebagai penerima manfaat dan mahasiswa universitas sebagai fasilitator. Dari program ini, peneliti mengamati komunikasi antarbudaya antara fasilitator dan penerima manfaat, memahami konteks budaya second-generation migrant di Malaysia, dan mengeksplorasi dampak dan hasil pemberdayaan dari program tersebut. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif yang menggunakan pendekatan wawancara mendalam, analisis isi dan teks, analisis dokumen, dan observasi partisipatif. Penelitian ini merefleksikan perspektif Samovar dkk. (2013) mengenai interpretasi komunikasi antarbudaya dari tiga poin utama: keunikan individu, generalisasi, dan objektivitas. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa komunikasi antarbudaya memerlukan pengakuan atas perbedaan-perbedaan yang melekat di antara manusia melalui pemahaman timbal balik, adaptasi yang berkelanjutan, dan kesadaran. Alih-alih mencari kesamaan, memahami perbedaanlah yang menjadi kunci. Program ini menunjukkan bahwa komunikasi antarbudaya dapat berfungsi sebagai mekanisme penting dalam memberikan dukungan kepada komunitas yang terpinggirkan, khususnya para migran generasi kedua yang menghadapi hambatan dalam pendidikan formal, yang kemudian menjadi pemberdayaan dengan menganalisis kesetaraan akses terhadap pendidikan, partisipasi, ketangguhan diri, dan pengembangan kapasitas. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini mengusulkan sebuah model untuk menumbuhkan komunikasi antarbudaya guna memberdayakan masyarakat. Model ini memberikan manfaat tidak hanya bagi lembaga pendidikan dan sosiolog, tetapi juga bagi para fasilitator pemberdayaan di masa depan.

Kata kunci: komunikasi antarbudaya, malaysia, program mobilitas internasional, pemberdayaan masyarakat, anak-anak migran

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Malaysia is the second-highest destination country for Indonesian migrant workers departing through official channels (IOM UN MIGRATION, 2024). According to the press release of the Ministry of Immigration and Corrections (Direktorat Jenderal Imigrasi, 2023) regarding the meeting between Director General of Immigration and the Head of the Malaysian Immigration Department, the Malaysian government reported that in 2023, there were 450,000 Indonesian Migrant Workers recorded in This figure differs significantly from the data held by the Indonesian Embassy in Kuala Lumpur which estimates the population at 1.5 million. Meanwhile, according to Nurrahman & Triwahyuni (2024), citing the Satgas P2MI Projo, state illegal Indonesian migrant workers entering Malaysia reached 1.3 million people in 2023. Consequently, the total number of these individuals remains uncertain, as their names may or may not be present in the government's database records. Even though the precise number of Indonesian migrant workers in Malaysia is challenging to ascertain, the evidence shows that their population is significant.

Given these substantial figures, it is undeniable that many migrant workers have married and raised children in their host country¹. Their children are then referred to as "second-generation migrants". However, this term is less popular than "second-generation immigrants." In essence, the two are not significantly different; most research utilizing these terms finds no distinct difference in their primary meaning. Indeed, no internationally accepted distinction has yet been established between the terms "migrant" and "immigrant" (Comms, 2025; UNHCR, 2019). This distinction will be discussed further in the next chapter. According to Wallace et al.

¹ The country where the migrant parents are living and where the second-generation were born (Wallace et al., 2023).

(2023), second-generation migrants are defined as children who are born in the host country where their migrant parent is residing. Additionally, Schwarz & Pfammatter (2024) mentioned that second-generation immigrants are raised in a bicultural context, encompassing both their parents' culture and the culture of their host country. This duality is foundational to their identity development and adaptation process. Furthermore, they face acculturation that includes behavior, language, and social relations that are defined as public aspects, whereas private aspects of acculturation entail values and identity.

The second-generation migrants create a unique intercultural identity and behavior. However, on the other hand, a number of Indonesian second-generation migrants in Malaysia have faced difficulty in pursuing their formal education. Thus Sanggar Bimbingan Sungai Mulia (SBSM) 5, Malaysia established to fight for their rights to get education. Knowing this, the Faculty of Psychology and Socio-cultural Sciences (Fakultas Psikologi dan Ilmu Sosial Budaya, or FPSB) at Universitas Islam Indonesia (UII) initiated the "FPSB International Mobility Program 2025" for its students. The faculty sent university student representatives from each study program of FPSB to participate in this initiative. All these students are Indonesian nationals, born and raised in Indonesia, making them native-born Indonesians. They stand as facilitators in this program, dealing with the second-generation migrants as beneficiaries.

The significant cultural background between facilitators and beneficiaries must be treated in intercultural communication. The concept of "intercultural" highlights that culture is a basis for creating meaning; it is an aspect of all human experience. This meaning system is typically converted into values (Williams-Gualandi, 2015; Akkuş et al., 2017). Samovar et al., (2013) mentioned that people and cultures are inherently interconnected and shape human behavior. In order to analyze culture, it is necessary to analyze the communities that influence the individual. Hence, communication is required because it gathers information about personal and cultural identity. It also

facilitates the transmission of verbal and non-verbal messages that could shape other people's behavior (Samovar et al., 2013). This is the same as the culture that could also shape human behavior. Therefore, Hall (1959) stated that "*Culture is communication and communication is culture*" in his book *The Silent Language*. This perspective laid the foundation for the theory of intercultural communication (Baba, 1995).

This research observes the intercultural communication between the university students as facilitators and SBSM students as Indonesian second-generation migrants in Malaysia. This research is unique due to the majority observations of second-generation migrants focusing on family structures or peer groups in the host country context. In contrast, this study examines a more focused and deep understanding of the intercultural communication context between individuals who share the same nationality but possess significant differences in cultural backgrounds through an empowerment program.

1.2. Problem Formulation

The FPSB International Mobility Program 2025 in Malaysia was conducted at Sanggar Bimbingan Sungai Mulia (SBSM). It empowers Indonesian second-generation migrants in Malaysia. The facilitators are UII students, Indonesians who were born and raised in Indonesia, while SBSM students acted as beneficiaries. Although SBSM students also have Indonesian nationality, as second-generation migrants who have grown up in Malaysia, they have developed a bicultural or multicultural identity shaped by their environment. Consequently, the interaction between facilitators and beneficiaries presents a significant area of inquiry, addressed by the following question: "How did intercultural communication between facilitators and beneficiaries develop during the FPSB International Mobility 2025 at SBSM, Malaysia? And how did the program contribute to the empowerment of the beneficiaries?"

1.3. Research Objectives

The objectives of the present study are to:

- 1.3.1. Explore the intercultural communication aspect between the facilitators and the beneficiaries of the FPSB International Mobility Program at SBSM Malaysia
- 1.3.2. Examine the cultural context of Indonesian second-generation migrants in Malaysia
- 1.3.3. Explore the impact of the program on the beneficiaries and the empowerment outcomes

1.4. Benefits of Research

1.4.1 Academic Benefit

This research can be used as a reference for other researchers, communication practitioners, and students to enhance their insight and understanding regarding intercultural communication, particularly between native-born Indonesians and second-generation migrants.

Furthermore, the research contributes to multicultural education by promoting mutual respect. For the academic institutions, the findings assist faculties and partner schools in understanding the level of usefulness of the activities that have been carried out, thereby enabling understanding of the program's cultural exchange interaction, an important skill that should be mastered. Additionally, institutions can gain insights into how the university and school students develop their academic aspects during the program.

1.4.2. Social Benefit

The program promotes cultural understanding. It benefits society by demonstrating the importance of learning and understanding people's cultures to facilitate intercultural communication. The research is also expected to encourage readers to engage in community empowerment initiatives, offering practical value to broader communities. Moreover, this research highlights the realities faced by migrants, which are rarely discussed openly, enabling readers to learn about their experiences through this study.

1.5. Literature Review

1.5.1. Previous research

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION. Differences between Western and Asian Perspective (Chi, 2016)

This research was published by Centria University of Applied Sciences, Finland, as a business management student's thesis that focused on differences in intercultural communication between Western and Asian perspectives. A qualitative research approach was employed, utilizing semi-structured interviews for data collection. The study was grounded in theoretical frameworks, including the communication process, culture's influence on perception, Hall's High vs. Low Context Culture Theory, Barna's Six Barriers of Intercultural Communication, Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions. The research shows that there were differences as well as similarities in perspective on intercultural communication between Western and Asian cultures. However, similarities exist between Chi's (2016) study and the current research, including the comparison of two cultural groups, the addressal of language barriers and cultural perception challenges, and, most significantly, the examination of the way people from different cultural backgrounds communicate. In contrast, significant differences exist. Chi's (2016) study focuses on business communication styles in a broad Asian context. Conversely, the current research examines Indonesia–Malaysia cross-cultural program, analyzing intercultural communication dynamics between Indonesian student facilitators and second-generation migrant beneficiaries in an educational setting. While sharing methodological similarities, the current study adopts a more focused theoretical approach compared to the extensive range of theories utilized in Chi's (2016) work.

INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE OF THE SEA-TEACHER IN DEALING WITH INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES: A DIARY STUDY (Khoiriyah, 2018)

The research was published to fulfil the requirements for obtaining a bachelor's degree in the Department of English Language Education at the Faculty of Psychology and Socio-Cultural Sciences, Universitas Islam Indonesia. This study explores how preservice teachers handle intercultural communication challenges during an international teaching practicum program, specifically at the SEA-Teacher Project 2017 batch 4 in Thailand. The main theory used in this study is the Intercultural Competence Framework by Byram, Deardorff, and Fantini, an adaptation that covers attitude, knowledge, skills, and values. This research employed a diary study method to track experiential learning during the SEA-Teacher Program in Thailand. study parallels the current research as it also examines an international mobility program held by Universitas Islam Indonesia. In Khoiriyah's (2018) study, the facilitator was an English department student who taught during the program and the beneficiaries were the students of Surrathani School, an international school in Thailand. Despite these similarities, notable differences exist, including the research focus on language education, the data collection method, and the students' cultural backgrounds (coming from Thailand and the Philippines). Khoiriyah's (2018) study was limited to a single participant, thereby restricting the data to one individual's perspective. In contrast, the current study incorporates the perspectives of multiple program participants. Nevertheless, the single-case design provides valuable insights into intercultural dynamics in Indonesia's neighbouring countries.

CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION PROBLEMS BETWEEN INDONESIA AND MALAYSIA (Umami, 2023)

This study was published by JEBIT MANDIRI: Jurnal Ekonomi Bisnis dan Teknologi. The research indicated fundamental patterns of cultural differences, such as different communication styles, attitudes toward conflict, decision-making styles, approaches to completing tasks, non-verbal communication styles and attitudes toward disclosure, significantly impact individuals' daily lives. Umami's research was selected for review because it examines the cultural communication between Indonesia and Malaysia, a focus shared by the current study. The research analyzed cross-cultural

misunderstandings between Indonesia and Malaysia, in both verbal and non-verbal communication, providing specific examples and recommendations for overcoming the cultural misunderstandings. This literature is highly relevant to the current study, as cultural misunderstandings were also observed in the intercultural communication between the beneficiaries and facilitators at SBSM. Even though this study highlighted cross-cultural communication rather than intercultural communication, it provides a valuable contextual perspective given the shared national contexts.

EKSISTENSI SANGGAR BIMBINGAN SUNGAI MULIA 5 DALAM
PEMBERIAN MATERI PENDIDIKAN AGAMA ISLAM PADA ANAK PEKERJA
MIGRAN INDONESIA DI MALAYSIA (Merlynna et al., 2024)

This research was a journal article that was published by Pendas: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar. It focuses on the role of Sanggar Bimbingan Sungai Mulia (SBSM) 5 in providing Islamic religious education for children of Indonesian migrant workers in Malaysia, especially at Sanggar Bimbingan Sungai Mulia 5. The research examines two main points, the factors contributing to SBSM's sustainability over its first four years running (counted during Merlynna et al. 's research), and its role as an educational system for Indonesian migrants. In this research, Merlynna et al. (2024) focus on the Islamic education material delivered to students.

This research shares a similar context with the current research, as it was conducted in SBSM and led by Indonesian researchers. However, while the current study discusses intercultural communication between Indonesian educators and Indonesian children raised in Malaysia, Merlynna et al. (2024) examine the existence of SBSM as a place of religious education for migrants. This study is particularly relevant due to its shared contextual background. These findings potentially enrich the broader understanding of the SBSM context. Although Merlynna et al.'s (2024) research mainly also talked about the existence of SBSM, this research does not address the Islamic learning obstacles faced by migrant children, particularly those arising from differences with mainstream Indonesian culture.

Each of the above studies shares similarities with the current research, even though their topics vary. This relevance comes from the scarcity of research integrating intercultural communication within the context of Indonesian-Malaysian cultural dynamics, specifically through empowerment programs organized by FPSB at SBSM Malaysia. This is a gap that motivates the researcher to conduct research on this topic.

1.5.2. Theoretical Framework

a) Intercultural Communication

The term “intercultural communication” was coined by Edward T. Hall (1959), who primarily worked in the fields of intercultural communication and international relations (Baba, 1995; Qonita, 2018). In his book “The Silent Language”, he stated that “*Culture is communication and communication is culture*” (Hall, 1959). He used this phrase to explain a focus on efforts to align meanings in cross-cultural interactions (Bennett, 2017). Later, in *Beyond Culture*, Hall (1989) argued that in order to create human relations, we need communication to understand and shape it. Nevertheless, people will never be able to fully understand other human beings, not even themselves. Yet, understanding oneself and others is a process that is tightly related to both.

In their book *Communication Between Cultures*, Samovar et al. (2013) describe intercultural communication is dynamic and used as a symbol. The dynamic process of communication means that both parties involved are seeing, hearing, talking, thinking, and expressing feelings at the same time. However, Samovar et al. mentioned that culture is transmitted from one generation to another. Although cultures are strong, stable, and kept by generations, they are never static, but dynamic.

Samovar et al. (2013) assert that “*we are more than our culture*” (Samovar et al., 2013). This implies that individuals are unique because attitudes are shaped

by multiple sources and cultures. Samovar et al. (2013) mentioned that intercultural communication exists when a person from one culture produces messages to be consumed by a person from another culture. This process involves not only language but also complex elements such as beliefs, norms, identity, and perception. Hall (1989) highlights the 'paradox of culture,' noting that while language is the primary system for describing culture, it is inherently too linear, too artificial, too limited, thus lacking comprehensiveness. Hall (1989) also explained about people who grow up in bicultural or tricultural situations. Hall observed that bicultural persons shift from the way they interact in culture A to the way they interact in culture B without realizing that this shift is taking place. They adapt according to the demands of the situation.

In the field of intercultural communication, Samovar et al. (2013) propose three key considerations that serve to clarify the vital connection between culture and communication. These concepts address three key areas:

- 1) Individual uniqueness

The idea of individual uniqueness means that each person is shaped by a combination of factors, including life experiences, language, social groups, gender, genetic makeup, religion, education, and personal history. Meanwhile, culture provides a framework, but not all behavior is determined by it. The way people act and think in one culture might be different to the way people act and think in another culture. Samovar et al. assert that culture is a significant factor in shaping human behavior; they ask to always keep in mind that culture affects behavior, but people are more than their culture.

- 2) Generalizing

“Generalizations are based on a limited amount of data and then applied to a larger population.” (Samovar et al., 2013). While generalizations can help identify patterns, their overuse or misapplication

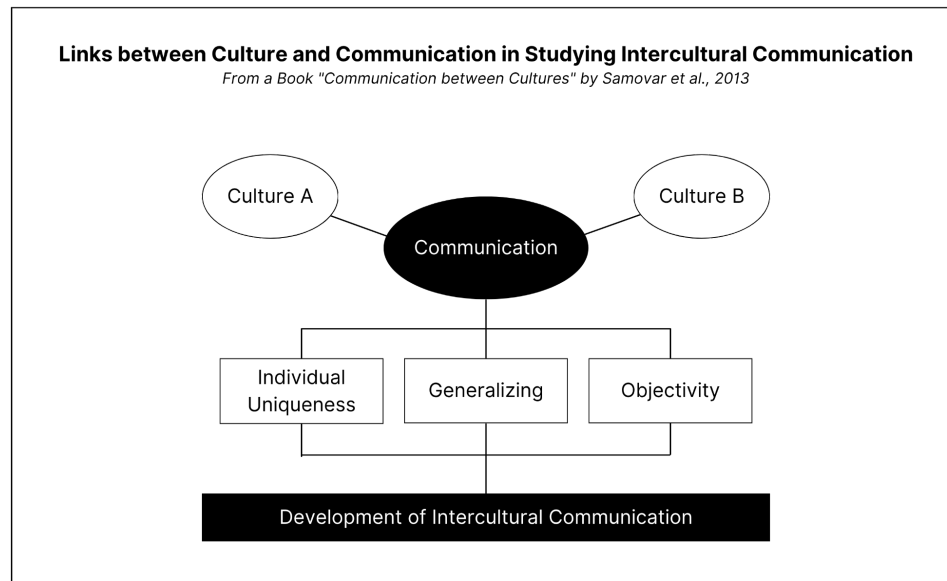
leads to stereotyping, which can be inaccurate or harmful. Stereotypes are different from generalizations because they may not be based solely on conjecture and usually appeal to the audience's negative or positive emotions. The example of a stereotype is "all Javanese are shy," whereas a generalization would be "Javanese customs of manners are very concerned with speech and behavior, so that they are very cautious." When formulating generalizations, one should focus on the primary values and behaviors of a particular culture.

In order to use them responsibly in intercultural communication, 1) they must be treated as approximations rather than absolutes, since exceptions always exist. 2) Individuals should focus on primary values and consistent behaviors that persist over time, such as greeting people or dominant cultural traits, because these patterns are more reliable indicators. 3) They should also be supported by multiple credible sources to avoid unwarranted conclusions. 4) Statements should be qualified with cautious language terms such as "often" or "usually" to avoid making absolute claims about all members of a culture. Qualifiers such as "tend to," "more likely," or "on average" allow "on average", these sorts of qualifiers allow thinking and talking about other cultures without implying that every member of the group is exactly alike. Finally, the accuracy of generalizations depends on the cultural context: they are more applicable in homogeneous societies, while heterogeneous cultures are harder to generalize due to their diversity.

3) Objectivity

The third key consideration is objectivity. Objectivity is defined as unbiased and not influenced by emotions or personal split and beliefs. It involves recognizing the difficulty of communicating with others while refraining from making personal judgments. Samovar et al. (2013) note that achieving objectivity is challenging because, in the intercultural

communication context, people tend to approach other cultures based on the perspective of their own culture, consciously or unconsciously. This tendency to interpret other cultures through one's own cultural perspective is called ethnocentrism. Objectivity contrasts with ethnocentrism. Although it is difficult, as Samovar et al. (2013) explain, to establish objectivity, it requires seeing and giving meaning to words and behavior that are unfamiliar to an individual. Furthermore, individuals must approach new situations by avoiding being too judgmental and being open-minded. Objectivity enriches an individual's experience in a new culture and improves interactions.



*Figure 1.1 A diagram of intercultural communication
 (Adapted from Samovar et al. (2013))*

These three principles serve as a framework for understanding how people communicate despite their cultural differences. In this study, the theory of Samovar et al. (2013) is used to explore the development of intercultural communication between facilitators and beneficiaries.

b) Communication (for) Empowerment

Empowerment is built on a set of fundamental principles that are essential for creating inclusive and sustainable outcomes. In *Pemberdayaan Masyarakat (Community Empowerment)*, Susanto et al. (2025), identify four principles of community empowerment, such as the principle of participation, the principle of equality, the principle of self-reliance, and the principle of capacity building. The values of equality, participation, and self-reliance form the main foundation of empowerment, which in turn facilitates capacity building.

- 1) Equality: emphasizes that every individual has the same rights, opportunities, and access to participate in the development process, regardless of social status, gender or economic background.
- 2) Participation: encouraging the community to play an active role in decision-making, planning and program evaluation, so that they are not merely objects but subjects of development.
- 3) Self-reliance emphasizes the community's ability to manage resources, overcome challenges and solve problems independently, thereby minimizing dependence on external parties.

It is important to recognize that communication plays a fundamental role in this process of empowering individuals. The primary focus of this research is communication for empowerment. The communication in community empowerment emphasizes an interactive and transactional process. The community is placed as a subject in every empowerment activity because it has various aspects of humanity, such as desires, power, ideals, cultural values and civilization (Indardi, 2010). Indardi (2010) argues that the communication process in the field of community empowerment is unique, reflecting the culture of the communities being empowered. He states that: *“Communication studies is a ‘floating science’ that depends on the subject matter (field of study) it addresses. Consequently, the*

extent to which the study of community empowerment communication is considered important will also be determined by the extent to which the field of community empowerment itself is regarded as important by many people” (Indardi, 2010). Although numerous definitions of communication exist, this study adopts the definition provided by Samovar et al. (2013), who describe communication as *“a dynamic process in which people attempt to share their thoughts with other people through the use of symbols in particular settings”* (Samovar et al., 2013). This communication empowerment theory aims to determine whether the programme is truly empowering and to explore its impact.

c) Migrant Workers and the Communication Issues

This theory aims to explain the research context, the role is to provide the research’s social background. Even though this study examines the second-generation migrant, it is also fundamental to explore the migrant worker theory, since they have existed due to their parents being migrant workers. Wallace et al. (2023) mentioned that second-generation means the children of migrants. The second-generation migrant is defined further on Chapter II, Overview of the Research Object. While a migrant worker has been defined by The International Organization for Migration (IOM) as *“A person who is to be engaged, is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a State/territory of which he or she is not a national”* (IOM, 2023). According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), migrant workers are migrants of working age, during a specified reference period, who were in the labor force of the country of their usual residence, either in employment or in unemployment (International Labour Organization, 2021). The experience of migrant workers is characterized by challenges and disparities in treatment when compared to the local labor force. As Wang et al. (2018) explained, migration gives rise to various multidimensional barriers, including cultural, network, and linguistic factors. Wang et al. categorize these barriers into three dimensions:

- 1) Culture: Adjusting to a new culture and changing identity may cause multiple stresses.
- 2) Network: Migrants typically end up forming their own ethnic group; consequently, this limits their interaction with the locals gradually.
- 3) Language: different countries share different spoken languages, yet overcoming language barriers is a crucial component in achieving social integration that brings social and economic benefits.

However, all these factors fall within the domain of communication studies. As Hall (1959) stated, "*Culture is communication and communication is culture.*" Similarly, Fuhse (2015) views networks and relationships as communication that is structured effectively and made for the regularities. Finally, since language is used by humans as a medium or a tool of communication to interact with each other, it can be concluded that communication is contingent upon its utilization (Khasinah et al., 2024). Additionally, for migrant workers with children born in the host country, the most significant single factor in explaining the observed differences between migrant and native children appears to be the language spoken in the home environment (Dustmann et al., 2011).

From a sociological perspective, migrant workers experienced challenges and social inequalities. According to Djatmika et al. (2024), concerns and challenges have been faced by Indonesian migrant workers in Malaysia over time. Such practices encompass instances of exploitation, unfair treatment, non-payment of salary, passport confiscation, employment discrimination, and constrained access to healthcare and social services. The majority of Indonesian migrants encounter difficulties regarding legal immigration status and protection of their rights (Pratama et al., 2025). In this case, the existence of the embassy matters to help their migrant workers solve the problem. According to Saguin and Shivakoti (2023), embassies and consulates play a vital role in helping migrant workers resolve various issues, including legal and administrative protection, through their function as transnational administrative hubs that reach out to workers abroad and

forge partnerships with state and non-state actors in the host country. In Malaysia, it is the role of the Immigration Attaché (part of the embassy) to provide administrative and legal protection for Indonesian migrant workers, including the processing of essential documents (passports, visas and residence permits) and legal assistance for those facing difficulties in Malaysia (Pratama et al., 2025).

However, each country has its own restrictions and regulations regarding migrants, based on specific considerations. When migrants do not meet the country's documentation requirements, they are denied access to public services, such as education and healthcare. In Malaysia, the law does not guarantee the right to education for migrant children lacking proper documentation, and, as a result, these children are denied this right for as long as they remain in Malaysia undocumented (Makhtar et al., 2015). Migration among workers cannot be explained through a single theoretical framework. Therefore, this study employs an interdisciplinary approach, integrating elements of **sociology, cultural studies and communication studies**, as well as political science. This integrative perspective underscores migration not merely as movement across borders, but as a multifaceted social process.

1.6. Method

1.6.1. Data Collection

This study employed a qualitative approach grounded in the interpretative (or constructivism paradigm). Thus, this research is not focused on the causal issue as critical realism ideology, rather it seeks the understanding from social interactions. “Constructivism considers knowledge as a social construct, resulting from exchanges and interactions between individuals and the settings within which they are formed” (Bogna et al., 2020). According to Soto-Molina and Eduardo (2023) qualitative research focuses on the human experience, understanding and the interpretation of meaning, it uses in-depth interviews,

participant observation, and content analysis as the method. In this research the data was collected as detailed below:

a) Interview

The semi-structured interviews were conducted with:

- 1) UII students as the facilitators
- 2) Student representatives from SBSM as beneficiaries
- 3) The founder of SBSM
- 4) The administration staff of SBSM

b) Observation

In addition to in-depth interviews, data were collected through participatory field observation within the SBSM society during the empowerment program. It observed from the everyday interactions between facilitators, children, and the teachers for one month, by taking documentation of the activities and recording the informal dialogues during the program.

c) Collecting Secondary Data

The existence of the researcher in the empowerment program shapes the research focus and plays an important role in building contextual awareness. In addition to interviews and observations, secondary data were collected from the following:

- 1) SBSM documents
- 2) Reports of KBRI Kuala Lumpur
- 3) Relevant media articles

1.6.2. Data Analysis

The data that has been collected was then analyzed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña's (2014) data analysis model as detailed below:

- a) Data condensation: After the data is gathered, the researcher transcribed the interview recording and organized each document by context to the folders. Eventually, the data was selected based on its relevance. The transcription was condensed by giving color coding. Similar codes were grouped into the same color regardless of the interviewee.
- b) Data display: In this process, the researcher compared and combined the coded interview data and the organized documents. Sewing the same pattern into an understandable idea.
- c) Conclusion drawing/verification: the idea was then presented as an interconnected concept that answered the research question. These findings were analyzed with the research theories in the discussion pages.

This study employed data triangulation. Triangulation refers to the use of multiple data sources or methods in qualitative research to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon. It is used as a strategy to test the validity of qualitative research by converging information from different sources (Carter et al., 2014). This study adopted a “method triangulation”, which involves the use of multiple methods of data collection about the same phenomenon, frequently used in qualitative studies. In this research, the data were collected through a variety of methods, including interviews, participatory observation, field data collection, and secondary data collection. However, during the data analysis process, each finding was thoroughly reviewed across all sources to examine whether it was supported by other evidence. Findings were deemed credible if they were consistently supported by multiple sources and methods. This triangulation process ensures that the findings are credible by guaranteeing that the interpretations are interconnected and demonstrate the evidence.

CHAPTER II

OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH OBJECT

2.1. Profile of Sanggar Bimbingan Sungai Mulia, Malaysia

Sanggar Bimbingan Sungai Mulia Malaysia is one among dozens of *Sanggar Belajar* (SB) across Peninsular Malaysia. SBs function as non-formal educational institutions for Indonesian children under the auspices of the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Kuala Lumpur. The students educated in these SBs are typically born to Indonesian citizen parents (either one or both) residing in Malaysia. Due to a lack of valid legal residency documentation, these children face significant barriers to accessing formal education in Malaysia. At present, there are 64 SBs in Peninsular Malaysia (Pusat Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan KBRI Kuala Lumpur, n.d.).

SBSM was the first SB founded in Peninsular Malaysia. Established on the 11th of November 2019, it operates under the auspices of PCI Muslimat NU (Pimpinan Cabang Istimewa Muslimat Nahdlatul Ulama) Malaysia, chaired by Dra. Mimin Mintarsih, who is both an initiator of SB development in Peninsular Malaysia and the manager of Sanggar Bimbingan Sungai Mulia 5. Two years after the establishment of SBSM, on December 6, 2021, this SB was officially inaugurated. The ceremony was attended by key figures, including the Education and Culture Attaché, Dr. Farid Ma'ruf; the Head of the Indonesian Community Affairs Section, Dr. Encik Abdul Hajar; five SIKL (Sekolah Indonesia Kuala Lumpur) teachers; and *Mustasyar* PCINU Malaysia, Kyai Liling Sibro Milisi (PCI Muslimat NU Malaysia, 2021). As of the 2024–2025 academic year, this SB accommodates more than 187 students, with enrollment continuing to rise steadily (Pusat Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan KBRI Kuala Lumpur, n.d.).



Figure 2.1 Learning Process at SBSM class

(Source: photograph by UII facilitator)

This SB functions as a non-formal educational institution (Pendidikan Non-Formal, or PNF). It offers an elementary-level equivalency program (Package A) by implementing the Education Unit Level Curriculum or Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan (KTSP) as well as the Merdeka Curriculum for Grade 4 students. Overall, SBSM Malaysia, under the auspices of PCNU Muslimat Malaysia, plays an important role in maintaining Indonesian cultural identity, providing educational access, and in fulfilling the religious education needs of Indonesian migrant children living in Malaysia (Merlynna et al., 2024).

The SB network was established to address the educational challenges faced by second-generation Indonesian migrants who were born in Malaysia and have difficulties pursuing their education in Malaysia. In the case of children born in Indonesia and enrolled in Indonesian schools, admission to the SB is not permitted.

These institutions are specifically designed for Indonesian children who were born in Malaysia or in other countries. Furthermore, SBs provide essential support for families where parents must work and lack adequate childcare options, making these centers a necessary educational resource. However, SB cannot issue or register the National Student Identification Number or *Nomor Induk Siswa Nasional* (NISN). This is due to the fact that SB is exclusively for Indonesian second-generation children who were born in Malaysia.

2.2. Programs and Empowerment Activities at SBSM

2.2.1. Program Overview

SBSM Gombak Malaysia serves as the host site for a program organized by the Faculty of Psychology and Socio-cultural Sciences (Fakultas Psikologi dan Ilmu Sosial Budaya, or FPSB) at Universitas Islam Indonesia. Note that this faculty has since been restructured into two separate entities: the Faculty of Social and Cultural Sciences and the Faculty of Psychology. This program is entitled FPSB International Mobility at Sanggar Bimbingan Sungai Mulia 5, Malaysia. FPSB International Mobility is actually a program that was implemented in the previous period, in August 2024, at Darul Ma'arif Thailand, an Islamic educational institution in Satun, Thailand. Following this, in February 2025, the program was once again held, with an additional location in Sanggar Bimbingan Sungai Mulia (SBSM) 5, Malaysia. This program enhances the reputation of Universitas Islam Indonesia as an institution that actively supports global and cross-cultural education.

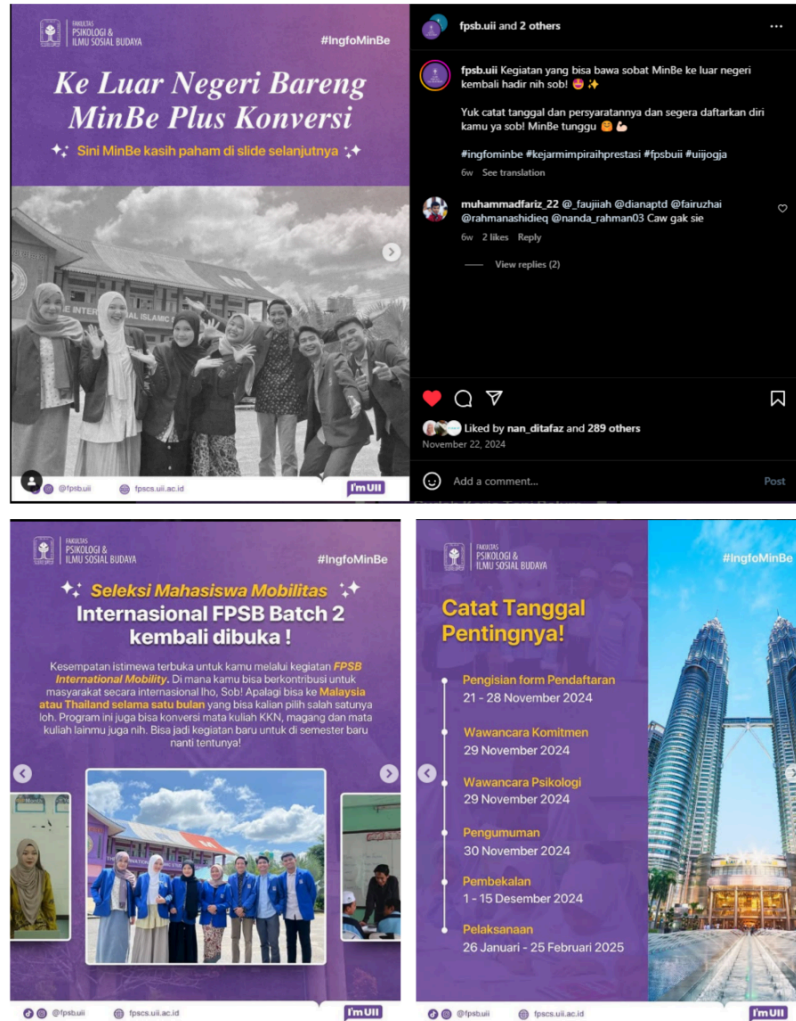


Figure 2.2 FPSB International Mobility's poster

(Source: FPSB official Instagram account)

The program's duration was one month, starting on the 30th of January 2025 and ending on the 28th of February 2025. The one-month program duration enables participants to fulfill the requirements for the Community Service Program (Kuliah Kerja Nyata, or KKN) credit conversion. The mobility program

at SBSM Malaysia was implemented by 4 selected FPSB students representing each existing study program: Communication Science, International Relations, English Education, and Psychology.

2.2.2. Responsible Committee

The program was implemented under the structured supervision of FPSB at Universitas Islam Indonesia. The faculty leadership established the "FPSB International Mobility Team" (Tim Mobilitas Internasional FPSB) to ensure the effectiveness and efficient management of program activities. The organisational structure of the responsible committee is outlined as follows:

Role	Name	Role in the Faculty
Responsible Person	Dr. Phil. Qurotul Uyun, S.Psi., M.Si., Psikolog	Dean of FPSB
Advisor 1	Nizamuddin Sadiq, S.Pd., M.Hum., Ph.D.	Vice Dean for Religious Affairs, Student Affairs, and Alumni
Advisor 2	Resnia Novitasari, S.Psi., M.A.	Vice Dean for Resources
Advisor 3	Karina Utami Dewi, S.I.P., M.A.	Head of International Relations Department
Advisor 4	Hazhira Qudsyi, S.Psi., M.A.	Head of Psychology Undergraduate Study Program
Advisor 5	Iwan Awaluddin Yusuf, S.I.P., M.Si., Ph.D.	Head of the Communication Science Department
Program Leader	Puji Rahayu, S.Pd, MLST., Ph.D.	Head of English Education Department
Secretary	Dewi Masitoh, S.Hub.Int., M.Sos.	Lecturer of the English Education Department
Treasurer	Suparyati	Staff of the Financial Administration Division

Member	Roro Millatu Al Ghaniy, S.S., M.Pd	Lecturer of English Education Department
Implementation Assistant	Zayyan Nur Alfidhdhoh	Office Staff of English Education Department

Table 2.1 Responsible Structure of Committee

2.2.3. Program Objective

The objectives of FPSB International Mobility at SBSM Malaysia are for students to:

- 1) Have the opportunity to experience international mobility.
- 2) Apply and disseminate knowledge about the Malaysian migrant community, especially the children of migrant workers who do not have legal documents.
- 3) Assist schools/learning centers serving Indonesian migrant workers' children.
- 4) Make a tangible contribution to the international community through projects focused on community empowerment, sustainable development, and education.
- 5) Enhance understanding and appreciation of other cultures, as well as build and strengthen diplomatic relations and the positive image of the Islamic University of Indonesia on the international stage.

2.3. Second-Generation Migrants as Beneficiaries

2.3.1. Second-generation migrants definition

A generation is defined as a group of people who share the same historical period in which they were born or raised (Oropesa & Landale, 1997). Meanwhile, Wallace et al. (2023) define "second generation" as children who are born in the host country where their migrant parents reside. They may also be defined as the offspring or descendants of migrants. While "second generation" is not a new term, Oropesa and Landale (1997) identify the second generation as the children of immigrants, who

are defined as the first generation. This study specifically examines Indonesian migrant workers' children in Malaysia—defined here as second-generation migrants—who receive their education at SBSM Gombak, Malaysia.

Regarding the distinction between "migrant" and "immigrant," the Longman Dictionary defines a migrant as *"someone who goes to live in another area or country, especially in order to find work"* (Longman, n.d.-b) Tataru (2020) explained in her research that a migrant engages in the process of crossing an administrative border for a specified period of duration. This includes economic migration, refugee migration, and the migration of individuals influenced by diverse factors, including family reunification. On the other hand, an immigrant is an individual who moves abroad with the intention of permanently settling there. According to the Longman Dictionary, an immigrant means *"someone who enters another country to live there permanently"* (Longman, n.d.-a). This dictionary also defines a "second-generation immigrant" as *"someone whose parents or grandparents were immigrants"*. The distinction between "migrant" and "immigrant" remains ambiguous in academic literature. In fact, there is no legal definition of migrant that is internationally accepted (Comms, 2025; UNHCR, 2019).

Nevertheless, the term "second-generation" is often linked to the word "immigrant" rather than migrant. However, it is challenging to define these children as either second-generation migrants or second-generation immigrants. The term "second-generation migrant" is considered the most suitable term for them. Conceptually, they might be viewed as second-generation immigrants, as their parents have resided long-term and build families in Malaysia. However, due to their lack of valid residency documentation, these children are legally required to return to Indonesia, despite having lived exclusively in Malaysia and never visiting their parents' country of origin. Celenta & Klausegger (2021) explore how second-generation migrants perceive and construct the meaning of "home," defining them as mobile individuals who do not reside exclusively in one country.

Andresen et al. (2014), in "Addressing International Mobility Confusion—developing definitions and differentiations for self-initiated and assigned expatriates as well as migrants," seek to clarify the definition of 'migrant', which is often unclear. The researchers note that; *“the criteria for demarcation of these different forms and the term ‘migrant’ are often unclear which leads to an unfortunate lack of comparability of research and a potential confusion for readers.”* (Andresen et al., 2014). In this research, they do not treat "immigrant" separately from other categories, rather it is included conceptually under the “migrant” umbrella. According to UNHCR: The UN Refugee Agency (2019), "migrant" is increasingly used to refer to anyone who moves from one place to another; consequently, the term “immigrant” is part of it. Therefore, because migrant is a general term and given that SBSM students are not legally permitted to reside permanently in Malaysia, the most appropriate designation for this group is “second-generation migrants”. However, it must be acknowledged that in this study, references to these two terms are used interchangeably. This is due to the fact that existing literature and data often pertain to second-generation immigrants rather than migrants.

2.3.2. SBSM Beneficiaries

The students enrolled at SBSM are second-generation migrants who lack valid documents, a situation that significantly hinders their ability to access formal education in Malaysia. According to Merlynn et al. (2024), Indonesian migrant workers' children who do not have documents are generally Indonesian citizens and must return to Indonesia when they reach high school age, in accordance with Indonesian Embassy regulations. The objective of this program for SBSM students is to facilitate their access to education and ensure its continuity, while cultivating an understanding and appreciation of the values of Indonesian culture, language and nationality among students who have been raised abroad.

2.4. The Role of Universitas Islam Indonesia Students as the Facilitators

Through this program, students from various disciplines at FPSB collaborated to create projects that have a direct impact on society, thereby enhancing their teamwork skills. Each of them should have a significant role in ensuring the continuity of the learning process at SBSM. The main role of FPSB students as facilitators was to teach SBSM students in the class during the learning process. Beyond classroom instruction, facilitators dedicated themselves to the entire program duration, implementing additional programs that had been planned through observation before arrival and one week after. These duties were divided into 2 main responsibilities: serving as an SBSM teacher and applying their respective academic disciplines from UII.

2.4.1. Role as SBSM teacher

During the class learning, the facilitators served as teaching assistants, instructing SBSM students in accordance with the established curriculum. This curriculum is the same as the one that is used at Sekolah Indonesia Kuala Lumpur (SIKL), Malaysia, which comes from the Indonesian government curriculum. Facilitators could teach all students from various grades, depending on their agreement on dividing the material to teach on the next day. Facilitators delivered compulsory subjects including Reading, Writing, Islamic Religion Lesson, SBdP (Seni Budaya dan Prakarya), English Lesson, Bahasa Indonesia, Mathematics, IPA (Ilmu Pengetahuan Alam), IPS (Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial), and PKN (Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan). In addition to classroom instruction, facilitators guided students in the implementation of Islamic teachings and activities, including the memorization of short surahs of the Quran, reading Iqra' & the Qur'an, and performing jamaa'ah prayers for *Dhuha*, *Dzuhur*, and *Ashar*. Furthermore, facilitators gained experience as scout leader assistants for *Gugus Depan* KBRI Kuala Lumpur, guiding the students during the Pramuka exercise.

2.4.2. Role as students of their respective academic disciplines from UII

The facilitators were drawn from a diverse range of academic disciplines, despite belonging to the same faculty. As outlined below, each of them initiated programs of empowerment at SBSM, based on their respective disciplines:

Facilitator 1	
Name	Auracinta Dewakanya
Student Number	20322107
Faculty	FPSB
Study program	English Language Education
Region of Origin	Central Jakarta
Program	Introduction of Wordwall in English learning (Topic: Things in the Classroom)
Facilitator 2	
Name	Nandita Faiza
Student Number	22321126
Faculty	FPSB
Study program	Communication Studies
Region of Origin	Ponorogo, East Java
Program	Public Speaking Training
Facilitator 3	
Name	Bintaya Ida Palupi
Student Number	22323185
Faculty	FPSB
Study program	International Relations
Region of Origin	Yogyakarta

Program	Introduction of Wordwall in PKN learning (Topic: Proud to be an Indonesian child)
Facilitator 4	
Name	Fajri Fauzan Azhari
Student Number	22320310
Faculty	FPSB
Study program	Psychology
Region of Origin	Sumedang, West Java
Program	Public Speaking Training

Table 2.2 Data of the Facilitators

By applying the knowledge they have gained from their respective academic fields, participants gained first-hand experience in a cross-cultural environment, which enriches their knowledge and skills in their respective fields of study, with specific focuses outlined below:

- a. English Language Education: strengthening SBSM students' active English proficiency.
- b. Communication Studies: creating effective communication techniques to improve SBSM students' confidence and communication skills.
- c. Psychology: providing psychological approaches to support SBSM's mental and emotional development.
- d. International Relations: strengthening cultural diplomacy and educational cooperation, particularly through content related to Indonesian culture and identity.

All of these programs were held to empower students at SBSM Gombak. Although the above programs were initiated individually, their implementation required collaboration with other facilitators. The nature of the programs were inherently

collaborative, with different roles for each individual. In practice, the “Public Speaking Training” program was a collaborative effort between 2 facilitators: a Communication Science student and a Psychology student.

CHAPTER III

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents findings and discussions that address the research question posed in Chapter I: “How did intercultural communication between facilitators and beneficiaries develop during the FPSB International Mobility 2025 at SBSM, Malaysia? And how did the program contribute to the empowerment of the beneficiaries?”

3.1. Findings

These findings are derived from data gathered through field observation, collecting secondary data, and in-depth interviews with representatives from Universitas Islam Indonesia (UII) and Sanggar Bimbingan Sungai Mulia (SBSM), Malaysia. The following section provides the interviewees' details of this research:

Informant 1		
Name	:	Mimin Mintarsih
Gender	:	Female (F)
Age	:	57
Position	:	Manager and founder of SBSM, Gombak, Malaysia
Institution	:	SBSM
Interview date	:	Thursday, 17 July 2025
Interview time		07:42 - 07:52 Western Indonesian Time
Technique	:	Offline (face-to-face interview)
Location	:	Villa Garuda Batu, Malang, Jawa Timur, Indonesia
Informant 2		
Name	:	Nur Afni Hidayati

Gender	:	Female (F)
Age	:	-
Position	:	Administrative Staff at SBSM
Institution	:	SBSM
Interview date	:	Wednesday, 07 January 2026
Interview time	:	11:37 - 12:15 Western Indonesian Time
Technique	:	Online via Zoom Meeting
Location	:	Yogyakarta - Gombak, Malaysia
Informant 3		
Name	:	Aura Cinta Dewakanya
Gender	:	Female (F)
Age	:	23
Position	:	Head of Facilitators for FPSB International Mobility SBSM
Institution	:	UII
Interview date	:	Friday, 02 January 2026
Interview time	:	22:49 - 23:28 Western Indonesian Time
Technique	:	Online via Zoom Meeting
Location	:	Yogyakarta - Jakarta
Informant 4		
Name	:	Fajri Fauzan
Gender	:	Male (M)
Age	:	22
Position	:	Facilitators for FPSB International Mobility at SBSM
Institution	:	UII

Interview date	:	Tuesday, 30 December 2025
Interview time	:	19:56 - 20:24 Western Indonesian Time
Technique	:	Offline (face-to-face interview)
Location	:	Kobessah Kopi 2, Ngaglik, Sleman, Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta
Informant 5		
Name	:	Bintaya Ida Palupi
Gender	:	Female (F)
Age	:	21
Position	:	Facilitators for FPSB International Mobility at SBSM
Institution	:	UII
Interview date	:	Friday, 02 January 2026
Interview time	:	19:40 - 20:04 Western Indonesian Time
Technique	:	Offline (face-to-face interview)
Location	:	Bento Kopi Jakal, Kaliurang St No.KM. 12.5, Cangkarang, Sardonoharjo, Ngaglik, Sleman Regency, Special Region of Yogyakarta
Informant 6		
Name	:	NS. Ramadani (hereafter called NSR)
Gender	:	Female (F)
Age	:	13
Position	:	Student at SBSM
Institution	:	SBSM
Interview date	:	Tuesday, 06 January 2026
Interview time	:	11:32 - 12.04 Western Indonesian Time
Technique	:	Online via Zoom Meeting

Location	:	Yogyakarta - Selangor, Malaysia
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Table 3.1 Data of the Research Informant

The collected data analyzed with the data triangulation, each finding was thoroughly reviewed across all sources to examine whether it was supported by other evidence. Color coding was used for the interview transcription and the rest was organized based on its relevance. After sewing the raw findings and passing verification. The researcher organized the findings into three discussions:

- 1) SBSM as a solution for the Indonesian second-generation migrants' problems
- 2) Intercultural Communication at FPSB International Mobility Program between Facilitators and Beneficiaries
- 3) Motivation, Impact, and Empowerment activities

3.1.1. SBSM as a solution for the Indonesian second-generation migrants' problems

Indonesian second-generation migrants lacking valid legal documentation (such as a birth certificate, a passport, and other supporting documents) face difficulties in pursuing formal education in Malaysia, especially at the elementary school level and above. This was stated by almost all parties involved in SBSM, including its manager, teachers, and administrative staff. During the interview with SBSM Manager Mimin (female, 57), she mentioned that (from Bahasa Indonesia, translated in English):

“...(in some cases) this child (second-generation (migrant child) does not have a status (nationality). Although he was born in Malaysia to parents with valid identities, he does not have a status. Therefore, this child does not have citizenship status. Because he does not have citizenship status, this child is not allowed to attend school. Neither in Malaysia nor anywhere else. He cannot be accepted in Indonesia. Nor in Malaysia.”

(Mimin Mintarsih, Manager of SBSM, July 17, 2025)

The disallowance of having school in Malaysia is actually because they can't take the final examination and will not get the graduation certificate, called *Ijazah*. Yet, the administrative staff of SBSM mentioned that (from the Melayu language translated into English language):

“For children without documents, they may attend a kindergarten (Tadika) here—any kindergarten will do. So they first go to a Malaysian kindergarten, and then for their elementary school, they choose one here (SBSM), an Indonesian school.”

(Nur Afni Hidayati, Administration Staff at SBSM, January 7, 2026)

They can attend kindergarten or preschool in Malaysian schools because preschool is not a compulsory education. A kindergarten certificate is not required for entry into Standard 1 in Malaysia (Aquino et al., 2017). However, to enter primary school in Malaysia, the parent must apply for Standard 1 (MyGovernment, 2026), but in this case they don't have the required document that the government school needed, so that they enroll in SBSM, a non-formal school specifically built for Indonesian children who do not have residence documents, otherwise they can enroll in private schools but still cannot take neither final exams nor graduate with a certificate.

This situation mirrors the experience of NSR (female, 13), one of SBSM's students who just graduated in 2025. She was a student of SBSM for 3 - 4 years, specifically from grade 4 to grade 6. Although born and raised in Malaysia, she did not enroll in SBSM until grade 4. Previously, she enrolled in a private school in the same *kampung*² as SBSM. She mentioned that while she completed grade 6 at this non-Indonesian private school, she did not receive a graduation certificate:

“It (NSR's previous school before SBSM) did indeed make it to sixth grade, but it will not give a certificate. That's where the shortcoming lies.”

(NSR, Student at SBSM, January 6, 2026)

² A term for “village” in Malaysia.

It was also confirmed by SBSM administrative staff, who added that even though the school is private, it must still follow national regulations.

“They can't take the final exam. Because private schools must also follow the Malaysian government.”

(Nur Afni Hidayati, Administration Staff at SBSM, January 7, 2026)

Atase Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan (abbreviated as *Atdikbud*) or the Indonesian Attaché of Education and Culture for Malaysia allows these children to reside in Malaysia and receive education at Indonesian schools up to high school.

“The Atdikbud will give them a chance until they finish junior high school. Because if they attend high school in Malaysia, they won't be able to. They will be blacklisted... blacklisted, once they return to Indonesia, they won't be able to enter Malaysia again.”

(Nur Afni Hidayati, Administration Staff at SBSM, January 7, 2026)

Indonesian second-generation migrants are confronted with considerable challenges, particularly regarding legal documentation. The establishment of SBSM was initiated with the objective of providing educational support to Indonesian children who were encountering challenges in pursuing their studies in Malaysia due to a lack of legal documentation. Based on the interview with the founder and administrative staff of SBSM, the factors contributing to students' undocumented status can be categorized as follows:

a. Lack of a legally recognized marriage certificate

Some parents undergo unregistered religious marriages (known in Malay as, *nikah di bawah tangan*) or without official state recognition. Despite their religious validity, these unions are not recognized by civil law, preventing children from claiming citizenship or legal status. In other words, these families do not possess a

legal marriage certificate. This lack of documentation creates significant barriers for children seeking to access formal education.

“But since there is no marriage certificate... Well, the most important thing is the marriage certificate. There is no marriage certificate, and they are “married under the table” (menikah di bawah tangan), as Malaysians say. Even then, they will not be able to obtain Malaysian citizenship.”

(Nur Afni Hidayati, Administration Staff at SBSM, January 7, 2026)

“Because the parents' goal was to work in Malaysia. So there was a work contract that prohibited them from getting married, even having children. But because of biological needs and so on, they ended up getting married. Well, the marriage was “under the table” (di bawah tangan) not legalized by the KUA (Office of Religious Affairs), and there was no marriage certificate. So, the problem is the child. This child has no status.”

(Mimin Mintarsih, Manager of SBSM, July 17, 2025)

b. Parents' lack of legal residency status

When a parent is working in Malaysia without a valid permit or passport, they are unable to register their child's birth. Consequently, the child remains undocumented in state records, as there is no legal parental basis to initiate the registration process.

“Because both of his parents are “kosong”, there are no documents, so there is no citizenship status.”

(Nur Afni Hidayati, Administration Staff at SBSM, January 7, 2026)

c. Issues of identity claims from parents of mixed nationality

The parents of SBSM students come from diverse backgrounds; while not all fathers are Indonesian, all the mothers are Indonesian. Students of mixed nationality face different administrative procedures compared to those with both parents from Indonesia. If the father is Malaysian, the child can receive an education in Malaysia,

but processing the necessary documentation is time-consuming, particularly if the marriage was not initially registered. In other cases observed at SBSM, a child may initially hold the father's nationality but later require a change to Indonesian citizenship due to legal issues. While waiting for the process of getting the document, their child studies at SBSM.

In the context of the second-generation migrants of Indonesia in Malaysia, it is important to note that all students at SBSM are Indonesian second-generation migrants who are being prepared to return to Indonesia to continue their formal education. This school exerts a significant influence on them. Nevertheless, for the manager, staff, and other relevant parties, SBSM is defined as follows:

“This Sanggar (school) is a temporary school to prepare them for their return to Indonesia.”

(Nur Afni Hidayati, Administration Staff at SBSM, January 7, 2026)

“Sanggar Bimbingan is like a non-formal school... So there, the school doesn't require uniforms... There is a small dormitory for young children who live there.

(Bintaya Ida Palupi, Facilitators for FPSB International Mobility at SBSM, January 2, 2026)

“Sanggar Bimbingan is specifically for (Indonesian) children born in Malaysia or other countries. If it is not (they were born in Indonesia), and they have no option unless to attend Sanggar Bimbingan, that is acceptable. However, the National Student Identification Number cannot be transferred.”

(Mimin Mintarsih, Manager of SBSM, July 17, 2025)

In addition to providing education, this school helps Indonesian migrants resolve their document issues, thereby facilitating access to schooling. While the children are studying, the school facilitates the following administrative processes:

- a. Obtaining a birth certificate from the Indonesian Embassy, which will later be exchanged for an *Akta Kelahiran* (Indonesian Birth Certificate) upon returning to Indonesia.
- b. Issuing Indonesian Passports.
- c. Providing a report and *Ijazah* (graduation certificate) after graduating from school.
- d. Assisting in obtaining a *Nomor Induk Siswa Nasional (NISN)* or National Student Identification Number.

Thus, when they have completed the finalization of their documentation, they are prepared to return to Indonesia. Their graduation certificates are officially issued and accredited in Indonesia.

“The certificate is from Sekolah Indonesia Kuala Lumpur, from Jakarta, from the centre. But the certificate says it is equivalent to elementary school... Package A for elementary school.”

(Nur Afni Hidayati, Administration Staff at SBSM, January 7, 2026)

In addition to the certification provided by Sekolah Indonesia Kuala Lumpur (SIKL), the school calendar and the learning curriculum are also derived from SIKL. The program adheres to the Indonesian curriculum.

**KALENDER PENDIDIKAN PNF KBRI KUALA LUMPUR
TAHUN PELAJARAN 2024/2025**

Juli 2024		Agustus 2024		September 2024		Oktober 2024		November 2024		Desember 2024	
Senin	1 11 15 22 29	Senin	5 12 19 26	Senin	2 9 16 23 30	Senin	7 14 21 28	Senin	4 11 18 25	Senin	1 8 15 22 29
Selasa	2 9 16 23 30	Selasa	6 13 20 27	Selasa	3 10 17 24	Selasa	1 8 15 22 29	Selasa	5 12 19 26	Selasa	3 10 17 24 31
Rabu	3 10 17 24 31	Rabu	7 14 21 28	Rabu	4 11 18 25	Rabu	2 9 16 23 30	Rabu	6 13 20 27	Rabu	4 11 18 25
Kamis	4 11 18 25	Kamis	1 8 15 22 29	Kamis	5 12 19 26	Kamis	3 10 17 24	Kamis	7 14 21 28	Kamis	5 12 19 26
Jumat	5 12 19 26	Jumat	2 9 16 23 30	Jumat	6 13 20 27	Jumat	4 11 18 25	Jumat	1 8 15 22 29	Jumat	6 13 20 27
Sabtu	6 13 20 27	Sabtu	3 10 17 24	Sabtu	7 14 21 28	Sabtu	5 12 19 26	Sabtu	2 9 16 23 30	Sabtu	7 14 21 28

Januari 2025		Februari 2025		Maret 2025		April 2025		Mei 2025		Juni 2025	
Senin	6 13 20 27	Senin	3 10 17 24	Senin	3 10 17 24	Senin	1 8 15 22 29	Senin	5 12 19 26	Senin	9 16 23 30
Selasa	7 14 21 28	Selasa	4 11 18 25	Selasa	4 11 18 25	Selasa	8 15 22 29	Selasa	6 13 20 27	Selasa	10 17 24
Rabu	8 15 22 29	Rabu	5 12 19 26	Rabu	5 12 19 26	Rabu	9 16 23 30	Rabu	7 14 21 28	Rabu	11 18 25
Kamis	9 16 23 30	Kamis	6 13 20 27	Kamis	6 13 20 27	Kamis	10 17 24	Kamis	8 15 22 29	Kamis	12 19 26
Jumat	10 17 24 31	Jumat	7 14 21 28	Jumat	7 14 21 28	Jumat	11 18 25	Jumat	9 16 23 30	Jumat	13 20 27
Sabtu	11 18 25	Sabtu	8 15 22 29	Sabtu	8 15 22 29	Sabtu	12 19 26	Sabtu	10 17 24 31	Sabtu	14 21 28

PERISTIWA		PERISTIWA	
2 Jul 2024	Tahun Baru Islam 1446 H	15 Jul 24	Hari Pertama Semester Ganjil SIK
9 Jul 2024	Libur Awal Muharram (Malaysia)	16 Jul 24	Hari Pertama Semester Ganjil PKBM
17 Ags 2024	Hari Kemerdekaan Republik Indonesia	19 - 21 Des 24	Periode Akad Semester (PAK)
11 Ags 2024	Hari Kebangkitan (Malaysia)	17 Jan 25	Pembagian Raport Semester Ganjil
15 Sep 2024	Hari Halyudu/Hauli Nawi Muhammad SAW	13 Jan 25	Libur Semester Ganjil TP 2024/2025
11 Okt 2024	Hari Desavali (Malaysia)	13 Jan 25	Hari Pertama Semester Genap TP 24/25
25 Des 2024	Hari Raya Natal	28 Feb dan 29 Apr 25	Libur Ramadhan 1446 H
1 Jan 2025	Cuti Bersama Hari Raya Natal	2 - 7 Apr 25	Libur Idul Fitri 1446 H
22 Jan 2025	Ira Hasya Nawi Muhammad SAW	23 - 29 Apr 25	Ujian Sekolah Menang SD, SMP dan SMA
29 Jan 2025	Tahun Baru Imlek 2575	5 - 16 Mei 25	Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru (PPDB) TP 25/26
30 Jan 2025	Tahun Baru Cina, Hari Redus (Malaysia)	16 - 20 Jun 25	Pembagian Akad Tahun (PAT)
1 Feb 2025	Hari Wafat Rasulullah	18 - 24 Jun 25	Pembagian Raport Semester Genap
11 Feb 2025	Thaipusam	30 Jun - 18 Jul	Libur Semester Genap TP 2024/2025
17 Maret 2025	Nawal Al-Quran		
29 Maret 2025	Hari Raya Nyepi, Tahun Saka 1947		
31 Mar - 1 Apr 25	Hari Raya Idul Fitri 1446 H		
18 April 2025	Wafat Isa Al-Masih		
1 Mei 2025	Hari Buruh Internasional		
12 Mei 2025	Hari Raya Waisak		
20 Mei 2025	Kerajaan Isa Al-Masih		
1 Jun 2025	Hari Lahir Pancasila		
2 Jun 2025	Hari Kemerdekaan YEP Agung (Malaysia)		
6 Jun 2025	Hari Raya Haji (Malaysia)		
7 Jun 2025	Hari Raya Idul Adha 1446 H		
27 Jun 2025	Tahun Baru Islam 1447 H		

Kuala Lumpur, 15 Juli 2024

 Kepala Sekolah, SIKL, PNF KBRI
 No. 1979/002/2000/2 003

Figure 3.1 SBSM's education calendar signed by SIKL's head of school
(Source: photograph by the researcher)

On the other hand, it is evident that documentation issues greatly affect the development of children's basic skills. A number of students accepted into SBSM still face challenges in basic literacy skills, including reading and writing, even though they are over 10 years old. This is attributed to prolonged difficulties in accessing formal education. To address this, SBSM offers a *calistung* (reading, writing, and arithmetic) class for children who need more intensive assistance in learning these skills.

"There are children who don't know where to go to school, because they can't go to school. They just found out about the Sungai Mulia Guidance Centre. Meanwhile, these children are already 10 years old. Well, that's how it is. Yes, some are even 12 years old. Imagine, they are 12 years old and still can't read. Try to imagine that. And there are many more below them. Some are just entering grade 3, some are just entering grade 4. Well, they all have to adjust."

(Nur Afni Hidayati, Administration Staff at SBSM, 7 January 2026)

Therefore, SBSM has helped Indonesian migrant children solve the education problem. This is because before this school existed, they did not attend school because public

schools did not accept them, except for international schools or private schools but still could not provide them with graduation certificates.

After graduating from SBSM, students are equipped to continue their education formally, either in Indonesia or Malaysia. It is reflected from the conversation between the researcher and NSR (female, 13), when she asked about her friend from the same batch:

- Nandita
(researcher) : *Where are your friends (after graduating)?*
- NSR : *Some continue at SIKL, and others continue in Indonesia.*
- Researcher : *But everyone continues on to junior high school, right? Continues on to school?*
- NSR : *Yes, everyone continues.*

3.1.2. Intercultural Communication at FPSB International Mobility Program between Facilitators and Beneficiaries

As outlined in the previous chapter, facilitators are defined as Indonesian students from UII who have dedicated themselves to SBSM Gombak for a one-month program, while beneficiaries are the SBSM students. Although both groups share the same nationality, they possess significantly different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Unlike SBSM Students, FPSB International Mobility Facilitators were born and raised in Indonesia, despite they also have different cultural backgrounds that are rooted in their respective regions. However, the facilitators' cultural differences remain within the scope of Indonesia. First, consider Cinta (female, 23), a facilitator leader in the program. She was born in Jakarta and grew up in multiple locations, including Lampung, Yogyakarta, and Jakarta itself. Her upbringing exposed her to diverse cultural

environments, particularly given that her parents are Sumatrans, often characterized by a direct and assertive communication style.

“I'm used to it (having a different culture) because I also grew up in an environment that was not exactly the same, so what I mean is that my father grew up in Sumatra, where people tend to speak with a higher and louder tone, and I also grew up with my mother, who grew up in Java but has Sumatran roots, so that's what helps me neutralize myself when I encounter an intercultural world.”

(Aura Cinta Dewakanya, Head of Facilitators for FPSB International Mobility at SBSM, January 2, 2026)

Meanwhile, Fauzan (male, 22) was born in Sumedang and raised in Sundanese culture. Not only that, but he also grew up in a pesantren (Islamic boarding school) environment, which means that Islamic culture also influenced him. During his time as a UII student, Fauzan lived in Yogyakarta. He observed that Yogyanese do not exhibit significantly divergent behavioral patterns compared to Sundanese people, especially in terms of *sopan-santun* (politeness) both of them place a high value on this culture, though Fauzan perceived the Yogyanese style as somewhat more polite.

“Good manners are also part of Sundanese culture... I feel that Javanese culture is actually more polite.”

(Fajri Fauzan Azhari, Facilitators for FPSB International Mobility at SBSM, December 30, 2026)

Thus, he did not feel any difficulties in adapting, aside from a minor language barrier between the Sundanese language and the Javanese language.

The third facilitator is Ida (female, 21). She was raised in Yogyakarta with Javanese culture since her birth. According to her, Jogja people are gentle, friendly, and never raise their voices or speak rudely. This is what Ida has internalized. She also learned *tata krama* (manners) at home, especially when talking to elders. She believes that these lessons are the way people in Yogyakarta are raised. Nevertheless, she grew up in a boarding school during her teenage years. She said that while living there, she lived with

various friends with different cultural backgrounds from various regions in Indonesia. This made Ida able to easily learn about other cultures.



*Figure 3.2 UII facilitators during their introduction to SBSM students
(Source: photograph by a facilitator from another university)*

It has been demonstrated that all facilitators have gained experience with different cultures prior to conducting empowerment activities at SBSM. However, interacting with Indonesian migrant children who have never visited Indonesia is a new cultural experience for them. Challenges ranged from language barriers to differences in daily life habits. Despite the fact that beneficiaries are Indonesian, the language they primarily use is Melayu as expressed by the facilitators below (the underlined text highlights their language barrier experiences):

“The first thing I realize the difference is in the language.”

(Bintaya Ida Palupi, Facilitators for FPSB International Mobility at SBSM, January 2, 2026)

“I felt that there was an obstacle in teaching them because their dominant language is Malay.... They are more proficient in Malay than Indonesian, and their knowledge of Bahasa Indonesia is also limited.”

(Aura Cinta Dewakanya, Head of Facilitators for FPSB International Mobility at SBSM, January 2, 2026)

Facilitators experienced language barriers during the program, the extent of which varies between each facilitator.

“I can adapt, but it took me about a week to adjust because I was trying to figure out whether I should follow and practice Malay. Meanwhile, the objective was to use Indonesian.”

(Aura Cinta Dewakanya, Head of Facilitators for FPSB International Mobility at SBSM, January 2, 2026)

“It was difficult for me to understand the exchange of ideas between us as teachers and our students, which I was afraid would lead to misunderstandings. The language barrier between us as teachers and our students there was quite high. This is because they use Malaysian in their daily lives, while at school they have to switch to Indonesian.”

(Fajri Fauzan Azhari, Facilitators for FPSB International Mobility at SBSM, December 30, 2026)

“Sometimes we have to rack our brains too, because children don't always know what the Indonesian words are. So, like it or not, we have to think about it.”

(Bintaya Ida Palupi, Facilitators for FPSB International Mobility at SBSM, January 2, 2026)

Some of the misunderstandings that the facilitators faced are due to the words that they hear being new for them, or having a different meaning. The words that they misunderstood are: *kasut, tandas, air kosong, Teh O, kereta*, and others.

To address these issues, facilitators frequently asked students to clarify meanings when they do not understand what the students said.

“Usually, I would speak as naturally as possible. If I honestly didn't understand, I would ask them, ‘What does that mean? What did you just say?’ “

(Aura Cinta Dewakanya, Head of Facilitators for FPSB International Mobility at SBSM, January 2, 2026)

“I learned from the children, I asked them, “What is this in Malay language? What is in Malay?” So, after we learned that, we also taught these children that in Bahasa Indonesia is like this, like this, like this, like that.”

(Bintaya Ida Palupi, Facilitators for FPSB International Mobility at SBSM, January 2, 2026)

However, it is not that difficult to face because both the facilitators and students are still able to communicate with these questions and answers method.

“Yes, there is still a language barrier, but misunderstandings can be resolved with each other. Whether it's in Indonesian or Malaysian. If, for example, I ask, “Eh, what's the Malaysian word for this?” They can answer me. Then if they ask, “Sir; what's the Indonesian word for this?” I can answer them.”

(Fajri Fauzan Azhari, Facilitators for FPSB International Mobility at SBSM, December 30, 2026)

“For example, if they don't understand, they'll say, “Not yet, ma'am.” Oh, okay, I'll explain it again. I'm also thinking about what the Malay language is..... For language, maybe the obstacles aren't that difficult. But yes, there is still an effort to balance the language and understand their words.”

(Bintaya Ida Palupi, Facilitators for FPSB International Mobility at SBSM, January 2, 2026)

Furthermore, as an Indonesian school, SBSM actually requires the teaching and learning process to be conducted in Indonesian. Additionally, all teaching modules are in Indonesian language because the curriculum is taken from the Indonesian government. Education and Culture Attaché (Atdikbud) further requires that instruction be conducted exclusively in Bahasa Indonesia to prepare students for their eventual return to Indonesia later. However, in practice, permanent teachers who have been in Malaysia for extended periods often use a mix of Indonesian and Malay.

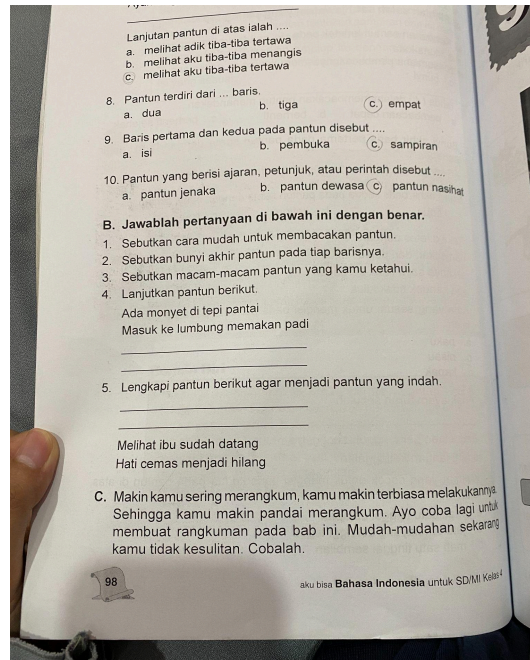


Figure 3.3 One of the learning module that SBSM use during teaching

(Source: photograph by researcher)

In response to this, Mimin, founder and manager of SBSM, said that:

"Well, when communicating outside of class, they still use Malaysian. They speak Malaysian with their friends. But in class, especially the teachers, they are not allowed to use Malaysian. It's a bit difficult for the children to speak only Indonesian, but they understand, they all understand. Now, with the implementation of KKN (facilitators' empowerment program), things are slowly starting to change. They are beginning to use Indonesian. In their conversations, they are starting to use it. However, it's not yet fully adopted; there's still some teasing going on. When using Indonesian, the slang is different, see. They still get teased. So, they become hesitant to use Indonesian and end up using Malay entirely."

(Mimin, July 17, 2025)

SBSM acknowledged that utilising the Indonesian language in its entirety requires time and process, so do the facilitators, considering the students' background.

“As for language, it is mandatory to use Indonesian at school... when teaching, all teachers use Indonesian. But the children's response, for example, when they are asked a question or when they want to ask our permission to go to the toilet or do something, they still sometimes use Malay”

(Bintaya Ida Palupi, Facilitators for FPSB International Mobility at SBSM, January 2, 2026)

“The language used is Indonesian, but sometimes it is mixed with Malay. If anyone does not understand, we will try to translate it little by little into Malaysian. However, SBSM itself wants it to be in Indonesian.”

(Fajri Fauzan Azhari, Facilitators for FPSB International Mobility at SBSM, December 30, 2026)

Aware of these challenges, facilitators establish rules to encourage students to use Indonesian correctly and confidently.

“We urge and remind them every day that the students there are required to use Bahasa Indonesia... I won't permit them (if they ask permission) until they are willing to use Indonesian.”

(Bintaya Ida Palupi, Facilitators for FPSB International Mobility at SBSM, January 2, 2026)

This approach had an impact on the students themselves. Although they initially found it challenging, they gradually became accustomed to using Bahasa Indonesia during the class. The class level and age also influence how they use Bahasa Indonesia. For instance, with younger students in grades one and two, facilitators could instill the use of Bahasa Indonesia in them. As attentive listeners, these students were able to immediately mimic and practice. As explained by Afni (female, SBSM Administration Staff) explained:

“There were difficulties (in using Bahasa Indonesia) at first. But over time, because they spoke Indonesian every day and the lessons were in Indonesian, they were able to keep up. So there were no problems... At the beginning, if they started school in first grade, there were no problems.” (Nur Afni Hidayati, Administration Staff at SBSM, January 7, 2026)

From the student's perspective, NSR (female, 13) sincerely stated that they used Malay when speaking with their classmates. However, when talking to their teachers and discussing lessons, they are encouraged to use Bahasa Indonesia, as the lesson modules are also in Bahasa Indonesia.

“Usually we (communicate with friends) in class using Malay, rarely using Indonesian.”

(NSR, Student at SBSM, January 6, 2026)

NSR is a student just like the other students in general. Born in Malaysia, she had never visited Indonesia before. This remained the case regardless of her nationality and her parents' origins. During the interview with her, the researcher used Bahasa Indonesia, meanwhile NSR (the interviewee) answered in Bahasa Melayu, occasionally incorporating Indonesian terms to mirror the interviewer's question. She said that she understands Bahasa Indonesia, but finds it difficult to speak fluently. Continuing the previous NSR's statement, the researcher asked her:

Nandita : *[Tapi pelajaran pakai Bahasa Indonesia bisa (paham,*
(researcher) *Boleh?]*
But can you (understand) lessons in Bahasa Indonesia? Can you?

NSR : *[Bolehlah, sikit]*
Sure, a little.

[Semua paham, tapi kalau nak cakap itu susah sikit]
Everything is understandable, but if I want to talk about that's a little difficult.

Researcher : *[Waktu Ibu/bapak (the students call the facilitators by the term) KKN (doing empowerment program) di sana kan pakai bahasa Indonesia, bisa mengerti? Bisa paham?]*
During Ibu/bapak were there, we used Bahasa Indonesia, can you understand? Do you?

NSR : *[Paham. Bisa]*
Yes, I do

- Researcher : *[Oh, bagus. Kalau ini, ngobrol bercakap sama orang tua di rumah, pakai bahasa apa, Shaira?]*
Oh, good. In which language do you talk to your parents at home, Shaira?
- NSR : *[Biasa pakai bahasa Minang]*
Usually, I use Minang Language
- Researcher : *[Bahasa Minang? Bahasa Indonesia, tak pernah?]*
Minang Language? You never use Bahasa Indonesia?
- NSR : *[Bahasa Indonesia jarang. Sebab emak bapak saya selalu pakai bahasa Minang kalau cakap apa-apa]*
I rarely speak Indonesian. My parents always speak Minang when they talk about anything.

In this interview, NSR mentioned that she speaks the Minang Language instead of Indonesian. It is because her parents are both from Minangkabau and use their native language. In contrast, outside the home, their parents use Bahasa Melayu. From the observation, SBSM students' parents tend to speak with Melayu rather than Bahasa Indonesia when speaking with other members of the SBSM community who are also Indonesian. Thus, Indonesian nationality does not necessarily imply the use of Indonesian in their daily conversations. This is due to the fact that Indonesia is a linguistically diverse country, with various regional languages spoken throughout its territories. Data from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Badan Bahasa Kemendikbud, 2017) identifies 718 regional languages spoken in Indonesia, from 2,560 observation areas. According to Sosrohadi (2025), this linguistic diversity stems from geographical, social, and functional differences of Indonesia. Similarly, in cases where the student's father is from another country, a similar case also happens. It is supported by Mimin as a founder of SBSM:

“Well, there are various languages spoken at home, considering that some of the students have fathers who are from Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal. However, these children listen to the communication between their parent (mother) and their father, they hear it. Yet, they never use it (the language) at SBSM”

(Mimin Mintarsih, Manager of SBSM, July 17, 2025)

From the facilitators' observation, SBSM students understand Bahasa Indonesia, but when they end up in a conversation with the facilitators, they tend to answer back in Bahasa Malaysia or mixed, just like what NSR mentioned.

“Some of them actually understand Bahasa Indonesia, but they will respond in Bahasa Melayu. So sometimes the conversation is a mix of Bahasa Indonesia and Bahasa Melayu.”

(Aura Cinta Dewakanya, Head of Facilitators for FPSB International Mobility at SBSM, January 2, 2026)

In the context of the cultural environment of SBSM students, the fact that they are originally from Indonesia but were born and raised in Malaysia results in a multifaceted cultural awareness that encompasses Malaysian, Indonesian and their parents' regional cultural influences. The children are raised in the Malaysian milieu; however, this culture is internalized by them in general. Due to SBSM being an Indonesian school, they learn and implement Indonesian culture from it. This was confirmed by the staff and the founder of SBSM itself.

“Their daily lives are indeed Malaysian. But because they have been studying here, at the studio, they have become very familiar with Indonesian culture.”

(Nur Afni Hidayati, Administration Staff at SBSM, January 7, 2026).

“If it goes to SIKL, perhaps the culture will also be taken from Malaysia. But if it goes to SBSM, we will purely introduce Indonesian culture. We cannot introduce Malaysian, Indian, or Chinese cultures because it is specifically for Indonesia.”

(Mimin Mintarsih, Manager of SBSM, July 17, 2025)

Nevertheless, the facilitators did not find it difficult to establish relationships with SBSM students, because these children are essentially Indonesian children who understand Indonesian behavior and attitudes.

“Intercultural interactions aren't really a big deal or anything. Because basically, they are still Indonesians.”

(Aura Cinta Dewakanya, Head of Facilitators for FPSB International Mobility at SBSM, January 2, 2026)



Figure 3.4 Indonesian traditional dance exhibition by SBSM students

(Source: Instagram screenshot by the researcher)

During observations and interviews with SBSM staff, it appeared that life in Malaysia and Indonesia is indeed different, especially in terms of the timing in carrying out daily routines. For instance, children in Indonesia generally start school at 7 a.m., whereas in Malaysia it starts at 9 a.m. However, SBSM follows a different schedule even though *Subuh*³ Prayer is around 6 a.m., students leave for school at 7 a.m., and arrive at 7:30 a.m. Consequently, right after dawn, when it is still a little dark, the children are transported to SBSM. Going to school after *Subuh* becomes the SBSM students' habit. Meanwhile, in Indonesia, the children still have approximately two hours to do some activity before going to school, such as helping their mom, tidying their room, helping to

³ The first prayer performed by a Muslim on that day was performed before sunrise, after the appearance of *fajar shadiq* (the true dawn).

clean their house, or even watching the TV. SBSM starts early in the morning because it adjusts to the parents of students who are migrant workers and have to leave for work early in the morning.

“Their habits are indeed different from those of children in Indonesia. That's why we have to teach them with... extreme patience. Because the culture there is different from here, their habits are different and their timing is different, you see. But once they're brought to Indonesia, they'll adjust”

(Nur Afni Hidayati, Administrative Staff at SBSM, January 7, 2026)

From the facilitators' perspective, based on the results of the observations and interviews, facilitators admitted to feeling exhausted, as they had to be ready from before dawn until they finished their duties late at night. As Ida explained, when the researcher asked about their activities in a day during the program,

“If I told you about it, oh dear, I think even you'd feel tired just hearing about it, Nandita. Because it really is absolutely non-stop over there.”

(Bintaya Ida Palupi, Facilitators for FPSB International Mobility at SBSM, January 2, 2026)

In addition to the differing working hours involved in this activity, the time difference between Indonesia (Western Indonesian Time) and Malaysia also affected the facilitators' adaptation. They woke up to prepare the SBSM facilities whilst it was still dark and often waited for the children to be picked up after school. The facilitators noticed that the time difference created a longer day. Despite this, it should be noted that while the experience of exhaustion is a natural human response, the facilitators consistently demonstrate a strong sense of enthusiasm and dedication in doing activities with the beneficiaries, they even enjoy spending time with them and are very caring towards the beneficiaries.



Figure 3.5 The facilitators' rapport with the SBSM students

(Source: researcher's camera documentation)

3.1.3. Motivation, impact, and the empowering activities

Having examined intercultural communication between facilitators and beneficiaries, it is important to note that empowerment also takes place in this program through their intercultural communication. Not only that, even Sanggar Bimbingan Sungai Mulia (SBSM) was established to empower Indonesian children with limited access to formal education in Malaysia. The empowerment process is inseparable from the motivations of those behind SBSM, including the manager, founder, teachers, staff, and facilitators; even though they dedicate themselves for only one month. Various empowering activities are implemented in daily educational practices. In addition to helping students resolve their documentation issues, as discussed previously, SBSM also provides a great deal of empowerment in the field of education and learning development for the children themselves, no less than formal education in general.

The facilitators of SBSM have various motivations for their involvement, ranging from humanitarian rights concerns, academic relevance, professional interests, and curiosity about intercultural experiences. Cinta (female, 23) from the English Education Department mentioned that she was interested because it was aligned with her academic background. She wanted to enhance her experience in a wider range and found that SBSM offered valuable exposure to students from diverse cultural backgrounds.

"My main motivation is because it fits my major, English Education. And the objective is to teach, because at that time I really enjoyed teaching... (Besides that) I was also interested in their intercultural differences from us. Even though they are Indonesian children living in Malaysia, there must be cultural differences as well."

(Aura Cinta Dewakanya, January 2, 2026)

Furthermore, other student facilitators identified motivations related to international exposure and cross-cultural learning. For instance, Ida (female, 21) emphasized that the program enabled her to acquire international experience while also aligning with her academic program which is international relations. Fauzan, representing a psychological perspective, sought international exposure to specifically observe the psychological and social dynamics of migrant families.

"Honestly, I want to gain international exposure, and one way to do that is by participating in this International Mobility program. But other than that, I really want to see the dynamics of the people there. Especially immigrant parents and children whose educational needs (before attending SBSM) are neglected"

(Fajri Fauzan Azhari, Facilitators for FPSB International Mobility at SBSM, December 30, 2026)

Afni, an SBSM administrative staff, shared her willingness to sincerely help the children. She expressed her personal satisfaction in contributing to the support of families encountering educational and administrative challenges. She noted that receiving positive updates from parents whom she had assisted brought her a sense of gratitude.

"I'm glad. I'm glad like this. I mean, helping people who are struggling here, and they feel, "Oh, thank God, since joining Sanggar, my child now has documents."

(Nur Afni Hidayati, Administrative Staff at SBSM, January 7, 2026)

The role of facilitators at SBSM is not only to assist teachers in teaching children according to the existing curriculum. Rather, they must also develop innovations that can be implemented sustainably or achieve goals that focus on the students' development. UII students as facilitators implemented an initiative program such as the use of wordwall as a teaching medium and public speaking training, which enabled all participating students to present in front of audiences after finishing the course. The topic for wordwall that facilitators used were about nationality and English lessons, reflecting the facilitators' majors in English Education and International Relations. Meanwhile, for public speaking, the facilitators focused on the speaker's technique to deliver the speech and the speaker's psychology to face the audience that was brought by communications science students and psychology students as facilitators.

In addition to the initiated programs above, the UII facilitator team also carried out the "Literacy Corner". UII facilitators donated a collection of fiction and non-fiction books, such as stories about historical heroes, Indonesian folklore, and Islamic books for elementary school children. These donations aimed to increase students' interest in reading and deepen students' proficiency in the Indonesian language. At the end of the service period, the UII team collaborated with UIN Maulana Ibrahim Malang to continue the relay in creating a literacy corner for SBSM students. This literacy corner was previously an empty space on the 2nd floor of the SBSM building, which had served primarily as a passageway for students using the stairs. Facilitators hoped that this library would sustainably increase students' interest in reading, gain more understanding about Indonesian histories and culture, and gain wider knowledge.



*Figure 3.6 “Literacy Corner” initiated by the facilitators
(Source: facilitators’ WhatsApp group)*

Various educational and extracurricular activities are integrated into daily routines at SBSM to empower second-generation migrants. These activities take a holistic approach, combining academic learning, religious education and character development. SBSM is a full-day school, and it starts with religious and physical activities before academic lessons are held. First, students perform the Dhuha prayer together, then followed by morning exercise or gymnastics sessions led by facilitators. But unlike other weekdays, on Mondays, students perform the Monday ceremony after the Dhuha prayer. Subsequent to these activities, students attend their respective classes, where facilitators and teachers provide lessons.



Figure 3.7 Morning exercise after Dhuha prayer

(Source: photograph by the researcher)

Alongside academic instruction, religious education also constitutes a pivotal element of the empowerment activities at SBSM. The role of facilitators is to provide assistance in the instruction of Qur'anic recitation after Dhuhur prayer in the mosque, in the class during the afternoon session, and after maghrib prayer for the students who stay at the boarding house. For the afternoon class, SBSM's material is all about Islamic studies. Additionally, they also must perform prayers together starting from Dhuha prayer until Ashar prayer for the regular students, and Dhuha prayer until Isya prayer for the students staying at boarding school. The students also practice *dzikr* and *sholawat* everyday guided by facilitators.



*Figure 3.8 Qur'an recitation after Maghrib prayer
for the students staying at the boarding house
(Source: photograph by facilitator)*

SBSM also teaches its students to learn outside the classroom interactively, learn teamwork, play games of skill, and teaches discipline through Pramuka (Scouting) every Saturday.

"On Saturday, there is a Pramuka (scout) training for children there."

(Bintaya Ida Palupi, Facilitators for FPSB International Mobility at SBSM, January 2, 2026)

Not only to develop their discipline and teamwork skills, but Pramuka at SBSM also increases their sense of love for Indonesia. Scout uniforms and all materials come from Indonesia because they are directly supervised by Gugus Depan KBRI Kuala Lumpur (The scout corps of the Indonesian Embassy in Kuala Lumpur).



*Figure 3.9 SBSM Students join Pramuka ceremonial
managed by Gugus Depan KBRI Kuala Lumpur
(Source: photograph by researcher)*

In order to prepare for the execution of all the mentioned activities above, facilitators frequently allocate time during the evening to engage in the planning of lesson materials and teaching media, with a goal of ensuring effective classroom engagement. The various activities carried out at SBSM demonstrate that the institution is not merely an alternative educational centre, but also a comprehensive empowerment environment that supports the academic, solves the social problems, enhances their skills, and deepens the students' Islamic religion of Indonesian second-generation migrants in Malaysia.

The FPSB International Mobility Program 2025 at SBSM Malaysia had a significant two-way impact that affected both the students (beneficiaries) and facilitators. NSR (female, 13), one of the beneficiaries, shared her experience during a public speaking class that was initiated by UII facilitators. She felt nervous about delivering the material and performing in front of an audience.

"I felt very nervous because I wasn't sure I could memorize that page. After that, I wasn't sure if I could read it in front of a large audience..... I asked you (facilitator), how to get rid of nervousness? How to avoid stuttering when reading aloud. You (facilitator) gave me some advice, and thank God, I came in second place."

(NSR, Student at SBSM, January 6, 2026)

Not only that, but NSR also mentioned that she literally got experience that she can still practice until now. For the facilitators themselves, this program has provided significant personal and professional development, while also improving their skills such as time management, classroom management, intercultural communication, and networking.

As a facilitator and English Education Student, Cinta (female, 23) mentioned that her experience at SBSM broadened her perspective on the importance of knowledge beyond English language teaching. Ida elaborated on how her professional engagement with children from diverse backgrounds had fostered her growth in sensitivity and

awareness of social issues. Ida (female, 21), elaborated on how her professional engagement with children from diverse backgrounds had fostered her growth in sensitivity and awareness of social issues. While Fauzan (male, 22) emphasized enhancements in teamwork, interpersonal communication, emotional management, and an increased sense of responsibility through this program. The program has been found to have a dual impact; not only does it empower migrant children, but it also facilitates the personal and professional growth of the facilitators. It was asserted that the university was strongly advised to continue the program in order to enhance students' skills, provide them with international exposure, and foster cooperation between the two institutions. Fauzan further elaborated that this experience also serves as a medium for students to evolve, develop, and acquire knowledge within a different cultural milieu.

Beyond the benefits of this program, the researcher sought to explore the challenges facilitators faced while implementing it, in addition to the communication issues mentioned in the previous subsection. Fauzan (male, 22), as a facilitator, responded to this by stating,

“The challenge is that they have a pretty tough attitude and... they’re pretty hard to manage. Because, well, there are probably several factors that make them hard to manage. Factors like their home life, their learning environment, the classroom atmosphere, and so on all have an impact on the quality of teaching and learning at SBSM 5.”

(Fajri Fauzan Azhari, Facilitators for FPSB International Mobility at SBSM, December 30, 2026)

3.2. Discussion

This section examines intercultural communication between beneficiaries and facilitators in the FPSB International Mobility Program at SBSM, Malaysia. Samovar et al. (2013) note that intercultural communication occurs when a person from one culture

produces messages to be consumed by a person from another culture. In this case, the facilitators communicate with the beneficiaries, who have different backgrounds, as they are raised as second-generation migrants. The main theory of this research is taken from a book, “Communication Between Cultures” by Samovar et al. (2013). The text outlines three key considerations of Intercultural communication: 1) individual uniqueness, 2) generalizing, and 3) objectivity. Analysis reveals that the FPSB International Mobility Program at SBSM is not merely an academic exercise for university students; rather, it functions as an empowerment program, especially for them as Indonesian second-generation migrants who have limitations in pursuing their education in Malaysia.

3.2.1. Individual uniqueness between facilitators and beneficiaries

Each individual has their own characteristics shaped by various factors. Among the facilitators, although all of them were raised and born in Indonesia, the study reveals that their lived realities are significantly different. Their cultural exposure is rooted in different traditions. Fauzan with his Sundanese culture, Ida with her Javanese (Yogyakarta) culture, and Cinta with her mixed cultural values between Betawi-Jawa-Sumatera. Their mother languages are all different. Regarding social background, Fauzan had long been surrounded by the Islamic environment of a pesantren, which often focuses on life within its community, whereas Cinta had been used to moving from place to place since childhood, which meant she was also accustomed to adapting to new surroundings. They all moved away from home and settled in Yogyakarta to study at UII, whereas Ida, a native of Yogyakarta, had remained there since birth. Nevertheless, she has grown accustomed to making friends across different regions and cultures. All of these backgrounds have influenced the way they communicate, in terms of politeness, social norms, and tone. For instance, Fauzan mentioned that in the early days when he came to Yogyakarta, he found that locals are particularly polite, despite both Sundanese and Javanese cultures sharing a high value on politeness. This perception

was supported by Ida, who described Yogyakarta residents as gentle, friendly, and rarely raising their voices or speaking rudely.

In contrast, the beneficiaries, as second-generation migrants, exhibited a distinctive individual uniqueness. Even though their nationality is Indonesian, they were born and raised in Malaysia. They have spent their entire lives in Malaysia. The primary language used is Malay, but their culture is a blend of Malay, Indonesian, and their parents' specific heritage culture. However, at SBSM, the beneficiaries are fully taught Indonesian culture, which is further reinforced by their families, while Malaysian culture is from the real environment that they face. Culture is a significant factor in shaping and affecting human behavior. Consequently, the cultural background of these second-generation migrants' culture shaped their behavior in their daily lives. As SBSM students are raised by Indonesian migrant workers who work from the early morning, their parents diligently bring them to school before dawn, typically after the *Subh* (dawn) prayer. Accommodating the work schedules of parents, SBSM operates from 7 a.m. Malaysia time up to after *Asr* prayer time, approximately 10 hours.

For the facilitators, this school start time and the reason behind that represented a new reality for them. Nevertheless, as facilitators who provide the material and program for the beneficiaries, they adapted to effectively engage beneficiaries in various activities, including classroom lesson, literacy corner, morning exercise, public speaking course, Pramuka, and so on. Participation in these activities constitutes a form of dynamic communication. Samovar et al. 's (2013) state that dynamic process of communication means that both parties involved are seeing, hearing, talking, thinking, and expressing feelings at the same time. This occurs because facilitators and the beneficiaries engage with each other in two way communication that involves seeing, hearing, talking, thinking, and expressing feelings at the same time.

The idea of individual uniqueness means that each person is shaped by a combination of factors, including the language that they use. Each of the facilitators has a different mother language from their own region in Indonesia. Yet, all of them speak the same language in their daily university interactions. In contrast, SBSM students primarily speak Malay, since they were raised and born in Malaysia. While students use Malay in peer interactions, they are required to speak Indonesian during class hours with facilitators and teachers, ensuring they maintain linguistic proficiency for their return to Indonesia.

Due to the main linguistic differences, even though it was required to use Indonesian, challenges and difficulties were inevitable. Some students struggled to understand their teachers' Indonesian language, while others lacked vocabulary to express themselves in Indonesian. This difficulty stems from the fact that parents primarily speak Malay outside their home, and are likely to continue to use Malay or their regional dialects at home. This is exemplified by the experience of student NSR. Their parents communicate with her using the Minang language, as their parents are both from Minang. Conversely, from the facilitators' perspective, sometimes they misunderstand or simply do not know the meaning of the students' words. For instance, when one of the facilitators heard the word "kereta", he thought it meant "train" (the Indonesian meaning), whereas in Malay, it means "car." Similar lexical misunderstandings were observed with other terms such as *air kosong*, *teh o*, *tandas*, and so on.

SBSM students are second-generation migrants who were raised in a bicultural environment. According to Hall (1989), bicultural persons can shift from the way they interact in culture A to the way they interact in culture B without realizing that this shift is taking place. However, this phenomenon was less evident in this study. This may be due to the fact that the beneficiaries' young age (7–12 years), as SBSM serves as their primary context for learning Indonesian culture and language. As Afni stated, the students initially experienced difficulties in using the

Indonesian language at first, but over time they gradually adapted and improved their proficiency.

During the program, facilitator Cinta noted, *“I was also interested in their intercultural differences from us. Even though they are (all) Indonesian children living in Malaysia, there must be cultural differences as well.”* Cinta, as facilitator, understood that all beneficiaries hold Indonesian nationality. Instead of treating all their cultures as the same, she acknowledged that there were definitely cultural differences between them. Additionally, during teaching and having interaction, Fauzan, as facilitator, explained that even though SBSM requires the facilitators to use the Indonesian language, in the field, he mixed Indonesian language and Malay and tried to translate it into Malaysian in case the students did not understand. This understanding shows the individual uniqueness concept by acknowledging that each of the individuals are different.

In this context, the development of intercultural communication within the FPSB International Mobility Program at SBSM Gombak is not achieved by assuming cultural similarities only based on nationality, but rather by simultaneously recognising both cultural differences and individual uniqueness, including understanding each facilitator’s distinct background. This dual awareness enables facilitators to adapt their communication strategies and help SBSM students gradually adapt to the Indonesian language. Yet, it should be emphasized that language does not explain the whole culture; it is too linear, too artificial, too limited, and lacks comprehensiveness (Hall, 1989).

3.2.2. Generalizing of the beneficiaries as second-generation migrant

Generalizing helps identify patterns, but overuse or misapplication of it can lead to stereotyping. In order to practice responsible generalization in intercultural communication, Samovar et al. (2013) stipulated four conditions: 1) generalizations must be treated as approximations rather than absolutes, since exceptions always exist. 2) should focus on primary values and consistent

behaviors that persist over time. 3) should be supported by multiple credible sources. 4) should be qualified with cautious language terms (often, usually, on average, more likely, etc.). These guidelines facilitate discussions about other cultures without implying that every member of the group is exactly alike.

The accuracy of generalizing depends on the nature of the society, specifically whether homogeneous or heterogeneous. In the case of SBSM students, they all face similar barriers to accessing formal education in Malaysia because of a lack of legal documentation. The fact that they have been raised in the bicultural Indonesian-Malaysian context, combined with the status of one or both parents as Indonesian migrant workers in Malaysia, creates a shared context, even though their family cultural backgrounds vary. As Mimin, the manager of SBSM, conveyed, *“some of the students have fathers who are from Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal...”* Afni, the administrative staff of SBSM, also explained a case from a student who has a Malaysian father. In cases where both parents are Indonesian, such as NSR’s, her family’s cultural background is rooted in the culture of its original region, as Indonesia is a unitary nation with a diverse range of cultures, it cannot be represented by a single tradition. Yet, generally, they share a similar cultural context due to being SBSM students, and so this society is regarded as homogeneous, a more applicable society in terms of viewing the accuracy of generalizations.

In this research, generalizing did not demonstrate significant results. Only Fauzan explained it, yet it actually went against the concept of generalization. He mentioned that *“The challenge is that they have a pretty tough attitude and... they’re pretty hard to manage....”* This statement was mentioned without cautious language terms. Since generalizing must be treated as approximations rather than absolutes. Meanwhile, other interviewees, both from facilitators and beneficiary, have not mentioned this pattern. Thus, the principle of generalizing is not strongly evident in this study.

3.2.3. Facilitators' objectivity to the beneficiaries

Objectivity is characterized by the ability to suspend personal judgments, approach cultural differences with openness, and avoid ethnocentric perspectives. The facilitators found that there were several cultural differences, especially when it came to language and daily life, even though they shared the same nationality. Moreover, SBSM is also an Indonesian school that teaches its students using lesson modules from Indonesia and requires the use of the Indonesian language. Nevertheless, in reality, the use of the Indonesian language at SBSM presents numerous challenges. As Indonesians, the facilitators could have relied on their personal judgement, yet they adopted an adaptive and open approach instead. This is evidenced by the facilitators' decision to learn the Malay language to facilitate mutual understanding, even though facilitators are required to use Indonesian in accordance with the regulations from the Indonesian Education and Culture Attaché (Atdikbud). For instance, the facilitators would often question, "What does that mean?" "What is this in Malay?" and then used this knowledge to translate concepts into Indonesian for the students. The facilitators employed this strategy to improve communication with students and to aid them in understanding the Indonesian language. This behavior is an aspect of objectivity; facilitators sought to understand the students' backgrounds after facing language issues that were not expected before meeting them.

In terms of SBSM students' behavior and daily routine, the facilitators admitted to feeling exhausted during the program's implementation. This fatigue stemmed from working hours that differed significantly from those they were accustomed to in Indonesia, as well as differences in time zones between Western Indonesian Time (WIB) and Malaysia. They began preparations before dawn, and due to the time difference, the program concluded at a later hour than they were used to in Indonesia, making it feel extended. However, feeling exhausted is a common human response. Nevertheless, the facilitators carried out the activities with enthusiasm and total dedication. They understood the reason behind all of

this, including the migrant workers' case, as parents. As the theory asserts, objectivity is predicated upon the recognition that cultural norms are not universal; being objective means not being influenced by emotions and personal beliefs. However, the facilitators' responses in this study align with this principle.

The program of FPSB International Mobility at SBSM, Malaysia, has been proven to foster intercultural communication. The main idea of intercultural communication is to have mutual understanding. The success of intercultural communication between facilitators and beneficiaries then supported an empowering environment for them, which in turn had a positive impact on their bright future and accessible educational opportunities that will be explained in the next subsection below.

3.2.4. Empowerment communication for the second-generation migrants

Through observation and data collection during the FPSB International Mobility Program, the researcher found that this program was not merely an academic program to enhance the university students' international exposure. Rather, it served as an empowerment initiative for second-generation migrants. However, the empowerment program cannot succeed without intercultural communication, considering the cultural gaps between the facilitators and the beneficiaries. While in the empowerment communication, communication served as a tool for sharing knowledge, program content, and dedication, thereby fostering empowerment. Samovar et al. (2013) define communication as “*a dynamic process in which people attempt to share their thoughts with other people through the use of symbols in particular settings.*” (Samovar et al., 2013).

From a sociological perspective, the challenges faced by second-generation migrants at SBSM are inextricably linked to the structural issues experienced by their parents as migrant workers. Drawing on the findings of Djatmika et al. (2024), it is evident that Indonesian migrant workers in Malaysia encounter numerous obstacles, including restricted access to social services such as formal education

services for their children due to a lack of legal documentation. In the case of SBSM students, these structural barriers directly impact their educational pathways. Consequently, they are marginalized from formal education in Malaysia. Thus, SBSM was established to solve this problem and give the Indonesian second-generation migrants their rights to education. SBSM is an education system that has been running successfully to date, largely due to the support by facilitators. The presence of facilitators is one of the key drivers behind the operation of the education system at SBSM.

From an empowerment perspective, this program aligned with the core principles of community empowerment. There are four principles of community empowerment stated by Susanto et al. (2025): 1) the principle of participation, 2) the principle of equality, 3) the principle of self-reliance, 4) the principle of capacity building.

- 1) Participation, this principle encourages the community to play an active role in decision-making, planning and program evaluation, ensuring they serve as subjects rather than objects of development. In this case, most of the programs that are built by the facilitators invite the beneficiaries to engage actively and play a role in the program. For instance, in public speaking training, participants first receive lesson materials and tips, then practice it right in front of their classmates. From this experience, the students not only learn from their other friends but also provide constructive feedback for their friends. In the second stage, or the final stage, NSR's experience of successfully delivering a speech after practicing in the previous stage, despite her nervousness, demonstrates that students are not merely passive attendees of the program, but actively experience and shape it. Similarly, other activities, such as lessons using Wordwall, introduced a new way to educate the students through their participation. These methods enhanced student engagement compared to the conventional teaching method. The facilitator also organized scouting activities that involved students'

participation. While the principle of participation applied to the vast majority of activities, it is acknowledged that its implementation in activities such as the establishment of the library space in the 'literacy corner' program has not yet been achieved. This limitation existed because the students were considered too young to be entrusted with organizational responsibilities, and the physical space was limited. Consequently, if the students were to assist with this, it would be less efficient.

- 2) The Equality principle ensures that beneficiaries possess equal rights and access to resources, regardless of their social status, gender, or economic background. SBSM students are primarily second-generation migrants who have issues pursuing their education in Malaysia due to a lack of legal documentation. Before the establishment of SBSM, these children did not attend school. Public schools generally denied enrollment due to documentation issues, while private and international schools were often considered too expensive or did not provide recognized graduation certificates aligned with Indonesian standards. Therefore, SBSM has helped them to pursue their education by providing them with education systems that are equal to those of elementary school. The FPSB International Mobility Program provided facilitators who educated students, contributing new knowledge and resources that continue to be used to empower them.
- 3) Self-resilience means that the community is able to manage its resources and solve problems independently. In the case of SBSM students, the issue is ensuring that they have the right to an education and the right to continue their education in the future. Findings indicate that SBSM students are capable of grasping the material and lessons delivered by the facilitators. For instance, NSR's case was that she could deliver her speech successfully and practice it independently after receiving instruction, tips, and material from the facilitators. "Pojok Literasi" program also continues to exist to this day

and has evolved over time, even though the facilitator who initiated it has since returned to Indonesia.

- 4) Capacity building emphasizes the enhancement of the community's skills, knowledge, and social capital as the primary drivers of development. During the program, facilitators who are from Indonesia teach SBSM students using materials from the Indonesian curriculum. This instruction provided not only curriculum content but also cultural exposure through interaction with the facilitators as natives. Thus, it definitely enhances the students' knowledge and their social capital, preparing them for their mandatory return to Indonesia to continue their studies. Furthermore, it developed their hard skills as students. Ultimately, the additional programs, such as public speaking classes, scouting, and other activities, focus on improving their soft skills. However, all these activities are mainly held for the students' development.

This discussion indicates that intercultural communication and empowerment are interconnected processes within this programme. The facilitators were able to value each individual's uniqueness. They were also able to maintain objectivity. This fostered mutual understanding between the facilitators and the beneficiaries. In turn, their ability created a supportive learning environment where empowerment activities were implemented, because they achieved through the intercultural communication during the program. Thus, this study proposes a model for nurturing intercultural communication to empower the society.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

4.1. Summary

This study examines intercultural communication between facilitators and beneficiaries within the FPSB International Mobility Program at SBSM, Malaysia, yielding several key findings. First, based on individual uniqueness, the study shows that both facilitators and beneficiaries shared diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, which significantly influenced the communication process between them. However, recognizing these cultural differences and individual uniqueness enables facilitators to adapt their communication strategies and individual connections. Secondly, generalization helps to identify patterns among students without reducing their diversity to stereotypes. In this point, findings did not demonstrate significant results. Third, objectivity was reflected in the facilitators' ability to refrain from judgment and to respond to cultural differences with understanding and flexibility, thereby enabling smoother interaction despite a challenging start. These findings are based on Samovar et al.'s (2013) perspective.

A key insight from Samovar et al.'s (2013) framework is that interpreting intercultural communication requires acknowledging the inherent differences between individuals. Instead of searching for the similarity, the theory emphasizes recognizing and understanding differences, allowing intercultural communication to be established wisely. Hall (1989) posits that bicultural individuals can unconsciously shift their interaction styles between Culture A and Culture B. However, this phenomenon was not consistently reflected among the beneficiaries in this study. This is because they were only recently exposed to a bicultural environment at SBSM, evidenced by the fact that senior students were able to adapt easily when switching between cultures.

The success of intercultural communication between facilitators and beneficiaries then supported an empowering environment for them. The program shows that it not

only contributes to both (university and SBSM) students' academic development, but it also contributes to the beneficiaries equality of access to education, participation, self-resilience, and capacity building. Resulting a positive impact on their future and accessible educational opportunities. In conclusion, intercultural communication within the FPSB program can be defined as a dynamic process involving mutual understanding, constant adaptation, and awareness. This program demonstrates that intercultural communication can function as a pivotal mechanism in providing support to marginalized communities, particularly second-generation migrants who encounter barriers to formal education due to cultural and legal constraints, which then became the an empowerment. Thus, this study proposes a model for nurturing intercultural communication to empower the society.

4.2. Research Limitations

The researcher served as a facilitator during the observation, which facilitated deep observation and allowed for a firsthand experience of the program dynamics. However, the observation process ended up being deep but not wide. The depth was achieved through the bonds and interactions formed with participants. However, the breadth was limited because the researcher's responsibilities as a facilitator for specific activities restricted the ability to observe other programs that were running at the same time. It caused the researcher to only focus on observing one location in one session, potentially introducing subjectivity into the researcher's perspective. Another limitation is the study's specific focus on the FPSB International Mobility Program at SBSM and short duration (one month), which prevents an exploration of the long-term impact of intercultural communication and empowerment on participants.

4.3. Recommendations

It is recommended that future researchers immerse themselves in the community to gain a more profound understanding of the research objective. Nevertheless, to address limitations in observation breadth, future studies should adopt a mixed-role approach.

Researchers should balance participatory involvement with non-participant observation to yield richer, more comprehensive data. Additionally, observing the students' daily lives and interactions outside the school is strongly recommended. Finally, future research should examine the long-term impact of the existence of SBSM in terms of the intercultural perspective.

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