

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION OF INDONESIAN MUSLIM WOMEN MIGRANT WORKERS IN JAPAN

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ABSTRACT

The shinking and rapidly aging population forced Japan to accept more migrant workers, including from Indonesia, a majority Muslim population country in South East Asia. Indonesian and Japan signed an agreement in 1993 to send workers to Japan under the Technical Intern Training Program (TITP) and since 2008 Indonesian nurse have been working in Japan's elderly facilities and hospital. Other than that, many Indonesian living in Japan working as a high-skilled workers or university student. The number of Indonesian migrant workers increasing every year. Indonesian Embassy in Tokyo mention that most of Indonesian in Japan are Muslims. Moved from Muslims mayority country to non-predominant Muslims is a big challenge for Indonesian migrant workers to maintain their religious identity, especially to perfomed prayer and swomen with hijab. This research aims to find out the process of cultural adaptation among Indonesia Muslims women migrant workers in Japan, using Young Yun Kim's approach model stress-adaptation-growth on Integrative theory of Communication and Cross-Cultural Adaptation. Qualitative data collected from September-October 2024 through semi-structured interviews with Indonesian Muslims women migrant workers who hold semi-skilled visa SSW and trainee and field observation with joining the Indonesian Muslims women gathering at a mosque near Tokyo. Futhermore, deepen knowledge about Japanese language skill and culture enable them to convincing their company about the wearing of hijab in the workplace but they are forced to adjust the prayer time due to work environment.

Index Terms- Migrant workers, Muslim Women, Indonesian, Religious Identity, Cultural Adaptation

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The wave of Indonesian migrant workers to Japan began in 1993 under the Technical Intern Training Program (TITP) and in 2008 after two country lauched Indonesia Economic Partnership Agreement (JIEPA) on sending Indonesian nurse and care worker candidates to Japan (Nawawi, 2009, Yamashita 2022). Historically, the first stage of migration of Indonesian workers to Japan came about when the Japanese government started to accept Indonesian as trainees (kenshusei) in 1982, in proportion to promote international cooperation and extend assistance to developing countries and in response to the rapid postwar expansion of the Japanese economy and accompanying labor shortages. Since then, the number of Indonesian workers deployed in Japan increased year by year, especially after the training period was extended to a maximum of 3 years in 1993 (Nawawi, 2009).

Other than migrant workers under the government program, many Indonesian studying in university and working as a high-skilled workers in Japan. Japan has been an attractive country

among Indonesia to work and study in the country due to their pop-culture, high technology, and better salary for jobs especially for low and semi-skilled workers. The number of Indonesian in Japan that increasing every year. Data from Immigration Service Agency of Japan as the end of June 2024, 173.813 Indonesian among 3,588,956 foreigners in Japan. Most of Indonesian joining TITP program; 87,090, follow by Specified Skilled Worker (SSW) visa 44,305, and others visa holder such as profesional workers and university student (MOJ, 2024).

As a country with Muslims majority population, most of Indonesian living in Japan are Muslim, according to Indonesian Embassy of Japan (2024). Religion plays significant role among Indonesian, based on a survey by Pew Research (2023), 98% of Indonesian says religion is very important in their lives and other survey of Pew Research (2012) showed that prayer is also central to the lives of Muslims in Indonesia as 77% say they pray several times a day, at least seven-in-ten Muslim in Indonesia say that they perform prayer. Other survey related to religiosity conducted by a research organization Jakpat, showed that Indonesian Muslim women believe that hijab is a part of religious identity. According the survey 63.58% of 626 respondents said they wear a hijab, and 95% of them said that they decided to wear it because they believe that hijab is an obligation for muslims women. In the meantime, survey among Japanese conducted by Pew Research (2024) found that only 6% of Japanese consider the religion very important for their lives and only 56% identify themselves with a religion.

Moves to non-predominantly Muslims population and non-religious country, Indonesian Muslims migrant workers facing difficulties maintaining their religious identity. Moreover, Muslims are very small number compare to total of Japanese population 123,890,000. A study by Professor Emeritus from Waseda University Tanada Hirofumi with his colleague quote by Asahi Shimbun (2023) estimated the number of Muslims in Japan around 230,000 as of the end of 2020. And as Michael Penn (2008) said that he majority of Japanese have no direct experience with Muslims. Japanese views of Muslims are therefore largely shaped by media depictions, most of which involve Muslims in the context of wars, terrorism, and acts of violence (Penn, 2008). The image from the media and limited direct interaction makes most of Japanese people have a lack of understanding about Islam including the company that employ muslim foreign workers.

Research by Widarahesty (2024) showed that many Japanese companies lack of understanding about Islam and Muslims, which often leads to the violation of their rights. This situation makes them difficult to pray during working hours and for some Muslim women prohibit wearing hijab. On the other hand, some company that has many foreign workers including Muslims from Indonesia support their employee religious practice. Another study about Indonesian Muslim migrant workers conducted by Rizcha, Mulyadi, Rustam, (2024) also found similar case that Indonesian Muslim women who work for elderly facilities not allowed wearing hijab, the main reasons is because of the patient scared with their headscraves. On the same study, a factory worker also told by the staff of the company that their hijab draws attention of other workers so they should take it off.

However, research by Budiando (2024) on Indonesian professional Muslims workers showed different outcome and have a positive image in their company. As highly skilled workers who are also Muslim, they are privileged with the chance to play an active role in determining how Japanese people view Muslims by making use of their identity and capital in the company. This

is a chance that less-skilled workers may not have (Budianto, 2024). Research that mentions above emphasized more on diversity in the Japanese company and the impact for Indonesian Muslim migrant workers. These studies revealed the experiences of Indonesian Muslim migrant workers related to their religious identity.

Working in foreign country may caused the migrant workers experienced a culture shock and how migrant workers address this situation, as showed on previous study Communication Strategy Indonesian Migrant Workers to Overcome Culture Shock during Working in Japan by Athallah, Dharma (2024). Another study A study by Pratama, T. R., & Srimulyani, N. E. (2024) focused on Adaptation Strategy of Indonesia's Tokutei Ginou Workers: Case Study of Hokkaido's Hospitality Industry.

Other than Japan, a study Negotiating Religiosity in a Secular Society: A Study of Indonesian Muslim Female Migrant Workers in Hong Kong done by Subchi1, Jahar, Rahiem, and Sholeh (2021). Hong Kong as a part of Asian Region have similarity with Japan, as a non-religious society and Indonesian Muslim women who works as a domestic migrant workers facing challenge to maintain their religious identity. Yet, the study about how the adaptation process and negotiating religiosity experienced by Indonesian Muslim women migrant workers in Japan still very limited.

Migrant workers crossing cultural boundaries and experience a transformation from settle condition in their home country to unsettle situation in a new place. It may cause feeling of uncertainty and anxiety. As quote from John W. Berry (1997) this period called a "culture shock" (Oberg, 1960) or "acculturative stress" (Berry, 1970; Berry, Kim, Minde, & Mok, 1987) if they cannot easily change their repertoire.

In a new cultural setting, migrant workers facing a several problems started the date of their arrival in foreign country. As Berry (1997) and Kim (2001) mention that the problem that encounters by immigrant or sojourners are not cultural but intercultural (Berry, 1997, Kim 2001). Therefore, this research will examine the problem faced by Indonesia Muslim women migrant workers in Japan in the adaptation process and the key factors that facilitate or hindering the adaptation process with approach model stress-adaptation-growth of Young Yun Kim's Integrative theory of communication and cross-cultural adaptation. Similar research using Kim's theory, conducted by Guerriche and Grimshaw (2024); Revisiting Kim's Integrative Theory of Communication and Cross-Cultural Adaptation (ITCCA): Insights from a Study of Algerian Students Abroad.

This research aims to find out the process of adaptation from culture shock, adaptation stage, and how the Indonesian Muslim women migrant workers overcome the shock experience related to their religious identity in the cross-cultural environment and growth their intercultural competence.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

This research using qualitative method as Creswell (2018) mention: qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant's setting, data analysis inductively building from

particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data. The final written report has a flexible structure (Creswell, 2018, p-51).

Data of this study gathered through semi-structured interview techniques and literature research August to October 2024. For fieldwork, I attended an Indonesian Muslims women meeting at a mosque in Tochigi Prefecture on October. The informant for this research is five migrant workers who hold a Specified Skills Worker Visa or SSW (in Japanese known as Tokutei Ginou) and Technical Intern Training Program (TITP). They work in Tokyo, Tochigi, Gunma, and Saitama prefectures. The various backgrounds and experiences of the informant included on the selection process. A part of that, sectors and type of works and length of residence also considered as important to capture comprehensive picture. To protect their privacy, I use pseudonym instead their real name.

Name	Type of Visa	Type of Work	City/Prefecture
<i>Rahma</i>	<i>SSW</i>	<i>Food Service</i>	<i>Saitama</i>
<i>Finna</i>	<i>SSW</i>	<i>Caregiver</i>	<i>Tokyo</i>
<i>Rina</i>	<i>SSW</i>	<i>Factory worker</i>	<i>Tochigi</i>
<i>Reina</i>	<i>Trainee</i>	<i>Caregiver</i>	<i>Tochigi</i>
<i>Dini</i>	<i>SSW</i>	<i>Factory worker</i>	<i>Gunma</i>

All the interview recorded, transcribed, and translated from Indonesian language into English.

3.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Cross-cultural Adaptation, as Kim (2001) defined as the dynamic process by which individuals, upon relocating to new, unfamiliar, or changed cultural environments, establish (or reestablish) and maintain relatively stable, reciprocal, and functional relationships with those environments. As such, the present definition underscores the necessary condition of communication between the individual and the host environment for the occurrence of adaptation (Kim 2001).

Integrative theory of cross-cultural adaptation by Young Yun Kim (2001) presents two models: (1) the process model explaining the process in which cross-cultural adaptation unfolds and (2) the structural model identifying key factors that facilitate or impede the adaptation process. The process model describes and explains the “stress–adaptation–growth” dynamic that, over time, leads to a gradual “intercultural transformation” of the individual in the direction of greater “fitness” in the host environment. In this process model, stress created within individuals by the challenges of the new environment is highlighted as the very force that opens new possibilities to reinvent themselves. For most people experiencing stress, internal changes take hold as they embrace challenges and strive to stabilize themselves by partaking in the act of adaptation. What follows a successful, long-term, and cumulative management of the stress-adaptation disequilibrium is a subtle and often imperceptible psychological growth in the sense of an increased complexity in an individual's internal system (Kim, 2001 p.59).

4.0 ANALYSIS

Among the informants, four of them arrived in Japan before the pandemic as a trainee on Technical Intern Training Program (TITP), after 3 years they changed the visa as SSW or Tokutei Ginou. One of the informants came to Japan last year after pandemic under the trainee visa. Below are the finding and analysis of their adaptation process.

4.1 Initial challenge of Crossing Boundaries; Difficulty Maintaining Religious Identity caused Stress

4.1.1 Wearing Hijab

All interviewee believes that wearing hijab is an obligation for Muslim women and they already to do so since junior high school or high school. When they arrived in Japan, some of them being told to take off their hijab due the company restriction. Finna came to Japan in 2019, as a married women with one child, she said that it was hard to find a job in Indonesia. Due the financial difficulties for support her sick mother and her own family, she decided to applied job as a migrant worker in Japan. She was informed that she prohibits wearing hijab in Japanese company. But she decided to go and thought she could ask for the company's approval to wear hijab once she started working in Japan.

“At that time, I thought that the most important that I had to go to Japan and when I arrived, I would like to negotiated my hijab with the company. But on the first day we met the company representative and at that time he asked us to took off our hijab. All of us from Indonesia wearing hijab and we were very shock and everyone were silent. We decided to follow the instruction without questions. I felt very sad but I don't have a choice, because I just couldn't end the contract.”

Rahma who has been working for food industry about 5 years had similar experienced. When started join the company, she found out that she prohibited wearing hijab. She wore a company's uniform cap to cover her hair like other workers.

“I have been wearing hijab since junior high school and when I started working at the company, I have to took off my hijab and I was really sad. I still wore the hijab outside the workplace, before and after I finished my work. As a uniform I wear a cap to cover my hair.”

Due to difficulties to found a jobs in Indonesia, she keeps working in Japan and follow her company instruction eventhough contrary to her beliefs.

4.1.2 Praying at Work Place

Five informants told me that they do prayer five times a day in Indonesia. But in Japan it's a challenge that they faced since the first day. Most of the workers only have time to do prayer during lunch break. As a Muslim they believe that they have to pray five times a day; Fajr (before dawn), Dhuhr (noon), Asr (late afternoon), Maghrib (at sunset), and Isha (night time).

Rina said she only can do the prayer on time especially in the summer seasons. When it comes winter the daily prayer time usually shorter and it was difficult to adjust it. “It was difficult to adjust the prayer time so I combined the prayer time during working hours.”

The challenge is not only from the company, but also others migrant workers. Rina said that previously her supervisor allowed her and other Indonesian Muslims workers to use their lunch break to performed dhur prayer and ashur prayer on a 10 minutes break. But then others foreign workers expressed their objection to the manager regarding time allocation for Indonesian workers.

“After that, Indonesian workers decided to combined the prayer time to avoid another protest from our coworkers from other country, and even the company allow us to do prayer I overheard they actually not fully allowed Indonesian workers to do prayer time other than lunch break.”

Although there's dozen Indonesian muslim worker in the company, they not provided prayer room and Muslims workers performed prayer in a small space at the factory. Contrast to Dini, her company provide prayer room since many Indonesian Muslim working there. Finna and Rina also facing problem regarding the time for prayer. The Japanese company apply very strictly time management and they have to manage their own time for prayer during lunch break and in between short break.

4.1.3 Halal Food

Reina is very strict to food and only eat halal or Muslim friendly food that makes her anxious in weeks after arrived in Japan.

“I only eat halal food or muslim friendly only. When I go shopping, I carefully checking the ingredient, because I heard that bread in Japanese mini market may contains pork related ingredient such as emulsifier. On the few weeks I only eat egg or fish until I found halal store near by my apartment.”

Rahma facing different problem regarding halal food. She works at food production that provide food such as for patient at the hospital. Her most concern are cooking nonhalal food such as pork and using mirin. Since it is nonhalal food, she cannot taste it and felt uncomfortable touching the pork even though she using glove.

“I never cook Japanese food back home and the hardest time was during the adjustment process, I was learning the recipe and tried to adapt the culture here. Most of the food using mirin that contains alcohol and pork at its not halal according to Islamic principles. That's the first time for me cook pork and off course I can't taste it. At the beginning it was difficult for me and there was different opinion among another kitchen staff regarding my religious restriction, one told me that I should taste it and the others staff said that it's no problem if I'm not taste it.”

4.1.4 Loneliness and Lack of Japanese Language Ability

Living away from family makes Reina and her lack of Japanese language ability makes difficult to adjust the working environment at the elderly facility during the first a few months.

“I cried almost every day during the first weeks in Japan, feeling lonely in this foreign environment and I couldn't understand, especially when talking with elderly patient. Before I

came here, I had been learning Japanese language at the training center, but when I realized that's not enough."

Living abroad with a few or no Indonesian coworkers, makes them sometimes feels lonely. She said that, as an introvert person she's find difficulty to build a friendship with her Japanese coworkers. She also felt lonely because there's no one that she can rely on if she had a problem at works. "If I'm feeling tired with my jobs, I felt like I want to go home, but then realize that it's impossible because I have to stay here until the end of the contract and I also have a debt to pay up." She has to pay around 40 million rupiah before her departure and borrowed the money from her relative.

Diana, factory workers, said that her work only needs basic Japanese and many Indonesian fellow at the same company that help her to adapt. Others informant also said low Japanese language skilled effected to their adaptation process on the first months.

On this phase, the migrant workers feeling stress, according to Kim (2001), stress, as such, is a manifestation of the generic process that occurs whenever the capabilities of the individual are not adequate to the demands of the environment.

Indonesian Muslim women migrant workers have desire to maintaining their religious identity but hindered by the lack of Japanese language skill and need to keep working. They came from a low-economic family and had to pay the money that they borrowed for departure payment. They also cannot end the contract earlier than 3 years. If they end the contract they have to pay more.

4.2 Improving Skill and Support from Religious Community on the Adaptation Phase

In this phase migrant or sourjuners learning and adjusting to the new cultural environment. Some of them realized that the lack of their Japanese skill is one of the factors that hinder them to negotiate their religius identity at workplace.

Five informants said that they learned to improve their Japanese language on the workplace. They talking and chatting with their Japanese coworkers usually about the work and general topic. Rahma said that one or two of her coworkers sometimes talking about their privat life. She said that, good acceptance from her coworkers makes her enjoyed her work.

"My coworkers support me during the adjustment process, and sometimes provide assistance for tasting the nonhalal food that I cook."

Some of them also improve the Japanese language skill with self-study and support from Indonesian friends or their coworkers. They also got a support from Indonesian Muslim women community. Finna said that she reveived support from her senior from Muslims women community to build self-confidence, tips on how to improve her Japanese language skill, and searching for a new job with SSW visa. She came to Japan as a trainee and willing to continue to work in Japan and get SSW visa after her 3 years contract ended.

"I'm joining this community a few years ago and learned a lot of things from my fellow Muslim, about their experience working in Japan and how to survive in this kind of working

condition. I also received many information related to SSW visa and how to apply for a new job.”

SSW visa is a new regulation from Japanese government lauched in 2019. With this new immigration rule, a trainee can continue working in Japan after 3 years contract if they pass the exam for SSW and the former trainee also allowed to comeback and working in Japan. The type of visa needs Japanese ability in certain level to apply a job in 14 sectors.

Finna said in this community she deepens her knowledge about Islam and feels likes having a new “family”. “It feels like I have a family here, and until last year we can stay overnight at the mosque and usually we came here on Saturday until Sunday. On Sunday we join Islamic studies and having lunch together.”

And all informant said that in the adaptation process, they need a support from Indonesian Muslim women especially to maintain their religious identity.

As mention on Kim (2001): Ethnic communities provide strangers with access to their original cultural experiences. Particularly in large cities in countries that have experienced sizable influxes of immigrants, many aliens have organized some form of “mutual aid” or “self-help” community groups. Such ethnic organizations render assistance to newcomers who need material, informational, emotional, and other forms of social support (DeCocq, 1976; Tran, 1987).

Longing for atmosphere of religious activities in her hometown homemade Dini looks for a women Muslim community nearby. As she lived near a mosque, she could hear call for prayer five times a day. Now, she has been joining this community around three years.

“Back in Indonesia, I was never attended this kind of community but while in Japan there’s a need to gather with other Indonesian women who works in Japan, I feel my religious knowledge increase through this community and friends in this community.”

In Japan, there’s Muslims communities with multi-national background or with the same national background. This mosque also run by multi-national background such as Indonesia, Bangladesh or Pakistan. But they said that they more comfortable learning and gathering with their co-nationality that has the same cultural background, language, and madhhab.

To have better perspective about supporting group for Indonesia Muslim women migrant workers, I joined a gathering at a mosque in Tochigi Prefecture near Tokyo on 13th of October 2024. Around thirty Indonesian women migrant workers from Tokyo, Saitama, Tochigi, and surrounding area came to this masjid came to learn more about how to read Al-Qur’an and the certain topic about Muslim and daily life with an ustadzah (Islamic teacher) from Tokyo. The ustadzah has been living in Japan for decades and have a knowledge about Japanese culture. She shared a topic about halal food and the participant asked her about how to do if they company or they coworkers give them nonhalal food. She shared her knowledge how to communicate with Japanese people about dietary restriction for Muslim accordance with Japanese culture.

Each participant brought food and they eat together during lunch time. Reina said that eventhough she is living nearby the mosque this is the first time for Reina joining the Muslim women gathering at Sano Mosque. She said meeting and chatting with Indonesian women here, makes she feels home.

“I need to recharge my energy and this gathering makes me feel like home, eating Indonesian food together with Indonesian friends and discuss about any topics.”

A participant told me that they discuss many topics related to Islam and migrant workers in Japan, such as a new immigration policy in the gatherings. All informant said that religious community is important to maintain their religious identity, and sharing experience with Indonesian people who work at the same field.

In this adaptation phase, all informant said that they gain their self-confidence to adapt the living and working condition in Japan with support from members of this community. They also build their self-confidence with improving their Japanese language skill and learning about the host culture. They found many Japanese culture that make positive impact to their live, such as good in time management, detailed, etc. But they learned that as a Muslims, they can't join a few Japanese cultural events especially that related with another religion such as Tanabata Festival, Christmast, etc.

All informant using this monthly gathering to learned more about how to communicate with their Japanese coworkers regarding the religious practices. In this proces of adaptation all informant said that this gathering very important for them to maintain their religious identity and learning about Japanese culture.

4.3 Negotiating to Maintaining Religious Identity

In the growth phase, all informant said that good Japanese language skill build their self-confidence to negotiate with their employee about their religious principles and practice. After almost a year working in Japan, Rahma said that she learned that she has to provide a solution if she wants to negotiate with Japanese. She had been trying to ask approval from her employee to wear hijab at workplace. Then she learned that Japanese wearing a head and neck cover during summer and winter to avoid skin from heat and cold weather. It is similar with inner hijab; made from soft textile such as cotton usually black colour or grey colour. She decided to request re-approval to her supervisor.

“One day I saw Japanese women cover their neck and hair using fabric similar with my inner hijab, then I brought my inner hijab to my supervisor and wore it behind the hat uniform.”

She said her supervisor gave immidiate approval. She said that her colleague welcome and respect her decisions to wearing hijab under her hat uniform as a kitchen staff.

Finna said when she decided to continue working in Japan after the end of three years contract as trainee, she tried to find a job that allowed wearing hijab and perfomed prayer. She told the fellows Indonesian Muslims women and was informed about SSW visa and how to apply for the visa. She boots her Japanese language skills and have more confidence to negotiate her hijab during jobs interviews.

“Deep down inside my heart I want to find a job that allow me to wearing hijab. I decided to boots my Japanese level and caregiver skill, apply for the exam and find jobs. After I finished contract with the plant, I got a job as a care worker (Kaigo). I received the job because it meets my criteria, I can wear hijab and perform prayer during break.”

Finna works at elderly facilities and she said that she can communicate with Japanese co-workers much better than before. She said that it was not easy to build a friendship with Japanese and it need a months or years. But now, she said she has a good relationship with her Japanese coworkers and sometimes enjoyed their time together outside workplace.

“Sometimes I’m going to the restaurant with them. When we go out, they don’t mind to accompany me to find a prayer room and will waiting for me if I had to pray at the park. And since they can eat anything and don’t have any food restriction, usually they asked me to pick a restaurant or the food.”

At her new workplace she finds that it celebrates Japanese traditions that she can’t join due to religious belief, such as Tanabata (star festival) and Christmast. As a part of Tanabata festival and Christmast, her coworkers will make bamboo tree decoration during Tanabata Festival and writing wishes then they will put it on the bamboo tree. Same with Christmast, they make tree decorations, prepare gift and writing wishes. Japanese celebrate this event as a tradition and not as religious event, but Finna said that it’s contradictory with her religion.

She said that to maintain good relationship with her coworkers, she never directly refuses to make decoration directly. She decided to make her busy and not pay attention while her coworkers make the decorations. She learned that her coworkers can understand her nonverbal communication and understand.

“They never asked me for help, I feels like they understand that I can’t join them.”

Rahma also try to establish her relationship with her coworkers. She said that she using the friendliness of Indonesian people to make a friend with her coworkers.

“They said that I always smile and cheerful, they said that it makes them comfortable when talking with me.”

She said that she can exchange story with her Japanese friends, and even some of them comfortable share their private life.

Others informant, Dini, Rini, and Reina even though they experience intercultural contact with Japanese or other nationality at the same workplace, but they only have limited interaction with her coworkers outside working hours and join with Indonesian community that makes her at ease. In this growth phase, all informant adjusts to new environment and culture, and now they feel comfortable living and working in Japan.

As Kim (2002) said that coping strategy among migrant will be differed due to their internal factors such as personality and character. External factors such as type of relationship with out-group members, including the religious group also affected the way migrant responded to diversity and unfamiliarity environment.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The finding of the research provides clear evidence that all informant experienced intercultural experienced stage as Kim's Integrative theory of Communication and Cross-Cultural Adaptation, stress-adaptation-growth. In the first months after they arrived in Japan, Indonesian Muslims women migrant workers experienced stress, mainly related with their religious identity and practice, and lack of Japanese language and culture. The situation forced them to follow the company's instruction. Moreover, they faced difficulties to negotiate their religious identity due to lack of Japanese language ability and a little knowledge about Japanese culture.

Nevertheless, the stress encourages them to find a way to make adaptation with a host culture. As Kim (2017) mention; Stress, in this regard, is intrinsic to self-(re)organization and self-renewal. Stress experiences are the very force that drives strangers to adaptation. Each stress experience presents strangers with an opportunity to recreate themselves. It is through the impetus of stress that strangers are compelled to engage in activities of new learning (2017).

This research finds that their self-confidence growth as their language skill improved as well as their deepen knowledge of Japanese culture and custom. They also learned that Japanese culture and custom have similiarity with Muslims, such as hijab with head and neck cover that Japanese women wear during summer and winter especially for women who riding a bicycle and outdoor activities or work. This migrant worker uses this knowledge to negotiated their religious identity with Japanese employee. Indonesian migrant workers also try to adapt Japanese culture of harmony and nonverbal communication to refuse activities that contradictive with their religious belief.

In this adaptation process, there is strong evidence that their process influence by Indonesian Muslim women communities, as their co-national in Japan in boosting their self-confidence broaden their knowledge about Islam and Japanese culture. They using this knowledge to communicate and negotiate their religious identity with the company.

In the growth phase, all migrant workers can establish the relationship with their Japanese or other foreign nationality at their workplace. Trainee and SSW visa holder only permitted to stay in Japan with limited years, three or five years. Most of them focus on their work, frequent contact and involved in the activities only with Indonesian. But two of five of them that seems have a close contact with their Japanese coworkers, such as get along together and sharing private life issues.

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