

# **Acquisition of Intercultural Communicative Competence of the Indonesian International Muslim Students in Japan**

<sup>1</sup>Vera Yulianti, <sup>2</sup>Shimasaki Kaori, <sup>1</sup>Ilma Hayati Nurul Alamin,  
<sup>1</sup>Raihan Ahmad Yasin, <sup>1</sup>Haydar

<sup>1</sup>Japanese Language and Culture Department, University of Al-Azhar Indonesia;

<sup>2</sup>Japanese Language Education Department, Tohoku University, Japan

vera.yulianti@uai.ac.id

## **ABSTRACT**

One of the primary challenges faced by Muslim international students in Japan is the ability to communicate aspects of their religious life—such as rules of worship, dietary restrictions, and daily lifestyle—within the context of academic and social interactions. While Japanese language proficiency is an important tool, it alone is insufficient to navigate the complexities of intercultural engagement. Students must also acquire intercultural communicative competence (ICC), which enables them to understand, respect, and convey different perspectives across cultural boundaries. This study aims to explore the acquisition process of ICC among Indonesian Muslim international students in Japan, with particular attention to how they negotiate their identities and beliefs in an intercultural academic setting. Employing a qualitative research design, data were collected through in-depth interviews and learning portfolios. The participants were four Indonesian Muslim students who had studied in Japan for one semester and possessed Japanese language proficiency equivalent to JLPT N2. Findings indicate that throughout their semester-long experience, the participants demonstrated growth in critical cultural awareness, allowing them to articulate the perspectives, values, and lifestyles of Muslims in ways that fostered mutual understanding with peers and faculty in the Japanese academic community. They engaged in both classroom and extracurricular interactions that facilitated cultural exchange, negotiation, and adaptation while maintaining their religious identity. These results highlight the importance of ICC not only for academic success but also for fostering intercultural harmony in increasingly globalised educational environments. The study underscores the need for preparatory programs that integrate both language proficiency and intercultural competence training to better equip international students for life abroad.

**Keywords:** intercultural communicative competence, Indonesian, international Muslim students, Japan