

How does sociocultural identity influence Indonesian students' intention to study in Malaysia?

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Abstract

The growing number of international students worldwide stimulates the need to understand the factors influencing students' decision-making process. This study aims to examine the influence of sociocultural identification on students' intention to study in Malaysia by applying social identity theory. It also tests the mediation effect of destination and institution images in the relationship between sociocultural identification and students' intention. Due to the tendency of individuals to maintain self-congruity in making tourism decision, this research will contribute to the tourism literature by providing insights on the effect of national identity, consumer cosmopolitanism, and consumer ethnocentrism on education tourism decision. This research applied the multistage cluster sampling technique by collecting data from senior high school students in eight provinces in Indonesia. From more than 1,000 questionnaires distributed, 888 responses could be used in the analysis. Data were analysed using partial least square-structural equation modelling. This study found that national identity, consumer cosmopolitanism, and consumer ethnocentrism were interrelated. The results showed that national identity might affect students' intention only through destination and institution images. On the other hand, consumer cosmopolitanism and consumer ethnocentrism had direct and indirect effects on students' intention to study in Malaysia respectively.

Keywords:

Consumer cosmopolitanism; consumer ethnocentrism; destination image; institution image; national identity

1 Introduction

The tourism industry is one of the fastest growing industries in the world with a seven per cent growth rate of international tourist arrivals in 2017, the highest growth since 2010 (Rosen, 2018; UNWTO, 2018). It becomes the third largest export category in the world, which contributes 10 percent of the world's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (UNWTO, 2018). The growth in tourism industry increases the host country's revenues and creates a job as well as entrepreneurial opportunities. It may also raise the pride of local communities, nurture cultural preservation, and encourage cultural exchange (UNWTO, 2010). Due to the significant benefits of tourism to the host country's economy, government and destination marketers need to understand tourists' decision making and the factors leading up to destination choice. There are various factors influencing tourists' destination choice that are classified into external and internal factors. One of the internal factors is related to tourists' psychological aspect, namely self-concept.

Tourism literature discloses the existence of a positive relationship between self-concept and destination choice. Self-congruity theory mentions that individuals tend to maintain self-congruence in evaluating and purchasing products (Rojas-Méndez, Papadopoulos, & Alwan, 2015; Sirgy & Johar, 1999), including tourism destinations. As a result, they are likely to visit a destination that shares similar characteristics to them. For instance, Bosnjak et al. (2011), Hung and Petrick (2012), Liu, Lin, and Wang (2012), and Usalki and Baloglu (2011) reported that the congruence between tourists' self-concept and destination image positively affect satisfaction and loyalty toward the destination. In contrast to this research, Ahn, Ekinci, and Li (2013) found an insignificant relationship between tourists' self-concept and destination choice.

Although there are studies on the relationship between tourists' self-concept and destination choice, their emphasis is only on personal self-concept. Referring to Markus and Kitayama (1991) and Triandis (1989), individuals also hold social identity based on their belonging to the group. From cultural lens, social identity can be seen from individuals' nationality, ethnicity, and religion. At the country level, it is necessary to look at the extent of individuals' attachment to the home country and the world. While studies in international marketing have examined the influence of self-identity regarding globalisation and a foreign country on purchase behaviour, tourism research is likely to disregard this disposition.

There is a small number of studies on the influence of tourists' social identity, namely ethnocentrism on destination choice (Fan, 2016; Kock et al., 2018). Chen, Lin, and Petrick (2012a; 2012b) also found that national identification affects tourists' perception towards tourism destination and their willingness to visit the destination. Nowadays, individual may hold multiple identities due to globalisation and exposure to foreign culture. They may attach to the home country, and at the same time, feel connected to the world shown through their cosmopolitan identity. Both identities may co-exist. Thus, it is necessary to examine the role of each identity in purchase decision-making. There are not many studies concerning the interaction of these multiple

sociocultural identities and their effect on purchase behaviour, which indicates the needs for further research. This study aims to examine the influence of national identity, consumer cosmopolitanism, and consumer ethnocentrism on destination choice in the international higher education context.

Education tourism is one of the vast growing sub-sectors in the tourism industry. The number of international students worldwide reached 5 million people in 2016 (OECD, 2018). The presence of international students brings economic, social, and cultural advantages to the host country, which stimulates more nations to market their higher education services to international students. Even countries that used to send their students abroad adopt internationalisation strategies and become study destination hubs, which mainly target students from the neighbouring countries. One of these new study destination hubs is Malaysia. The number of international students in Malaysia in 2017 was 170,068, and it is expected to reach 250,000 in 2025 (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2013; Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, 2018). The top five sending countries for international students in Malaysia in 2017 were Bangladesh, China, Nigeria, Indonesia, and Yemen (Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, 2018). This study focuses on Indonesian students by looking at the influence of sociocultural identification on their intention to study in Malaysia.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Destination choice

When deciding to study abroad, most prospective students follow three steps as described by Chen (2007) and Mazzarol and Soutar (2002). First, they must choose whether to continue studying in the home country or overseas. There are various push factors from home country and pull factors from foreign countries which attracted prospective students to study abroad rather than in the home country such as the difficulties to access local institutions, poor political situation, poor quality of local institutions, and attractiveness of foreign study destinations and institutions. Second, they decide the host country. Nowadays, there are more nations which claim themselves as education destinations. Developed nations no longer dominate these study destinations. Finally, prospective students choose a target institution. The advantages brought by international students, such as higher tuition fees and cultural exchange have stimulated management of higher education institutions to improve their education quality and aggressively promote their institutions. As a result, prospective students have more options to study destination and institution. It indicates the importance of destination and institution images to attract international students.

Destination image consists of cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions, where the cognitive image is related to individuals' knowledge on the attributes of the destination, affective image comprises of individuals' emotions on the destination, and conative dimension refers to individuals' behaviour towards the destination (Agapito, Valle, & Mendes, 2013; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Tasci & Gartner, 2007). Later, some

scholars adopt the concept of brand personality into tourism field by looking at personality characteristics of the destination as the differentiator (Ekinci & Hosany, 2006; Souiden, Ladhari, & Chiadmi, 2017; Zeugner-Roth & Zabkar, 2015). A study by Souiden et al. (2017) found a significant positive influence of destination cognitive and affective image on destination personality, which later affected attitude and behavioural intention towards the destination.

Prospective students also consider the institution image when deciding to study abroad. Institution image refers to the beliefs and feelings towards the institution (Duarte, Alves, & Raposo, 2010; Li, Liu, & Rojas-Mendez, 2013). Similar to the destination image, institution image has cognitive and affective elements. Studies by Aghaz, Hashemi, and Atasghah (2015), Duarte et al. (2010), and Li et al. (2013) reported a significant positive effect of institution image on students' choice of an educational institution.

2.2 Self-concept as a determinant in tourists' behaviour

There are various external and internal factors influencing tourists' choice of destination. One of the internal factors is self-concept that is a part of the psychological aspect of the tourists. Self-concept, also known as self-identity, is a reflection of ones' awareness, beliefs, and perceptions about themselves. There are two types of self-concept, namely personal identity and social identity. Personal identity is shaped by individuals' personality traits and achievements, which in turn influence their self-esteem. In contrast, the formation of social identity depends on individuals' interactions with others. Thus, it depends on the perceptions of others towards themselves (Turner & Oakes, 1986; Turner & Reynolds, 2010).

Compared to the studies of the relationship between personal identity and tourism decision, research on social identity in the tourism context is lacking. Social identity is ones' beliefs on their belonging to a group based on their membership and emotional attachment to the group (Stets & Burke, 2000; Turner & Oakes, 1986). Tajfel and Turner (1986) through social identity theory, explained that individuals do social categorization process by classifying people based on their similarities and differences. Later, they identify themselves as a part of a group of people that share similar characteristics to them, called the in-group, and apart from the out-groups. This social identity leads them to adopt the group's values, norms, and beliefs that in turn, influence their perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours toward an object. Individuals hold multiple social identities since they have various roles based on cultural affiliation, gender, age, occupation, lifestyle, and social class. This research focuses on social identity based on cultural attachment at the national level. At country context, the in-group refers to the home country while out-groups apply to foreign countries, in which individuals' sociocultural identity is dependent upon the extent of their attachment and stances to the in-group and out-groups.

Globalization and contact with other cultures may affect individuals' perception toward themselves. Alden, Steenkamp, and Batra (1999) and de Mooij (2011) believes

that individuals may hold only a single sociocultural identity, either national identification or affiliation with foreign cultures. On the other hand, other scholars such as Cleveland and Laroche (2007), Strizhakova and Coulter (2013), and Zeugner-Roth, Zabkar, and Diamantopoulos (2015) argued on the possibility of the existence of multiple identities. In-country level, these identities are national identity, consumer cosmopolitanism, and consumer ethnocentrism. Although individuals may have multiple sociocultural identities, the extent of each identity and its effect on their behaviour may be different.

2.2.1 National identity and destination choice

All individuals identify themselves as members of the home country, and most likely, they hold a positive stance towards the home country. Ones' identification and emotional attachment to the home country determine the extent of their national identity. Keillor et al. (1996) stated that the magnitude of national identity is reflected by the appreciation of national heritage, cultural homogeneity, and belief system, and ethnocentric tendency. Meanwhile, Cleveland, Laroche, and Takahashi (2015) measured the strength of national identity from individuals' pride to the home country, tendency to build a strong relationship with people from the same nationality, and the frequency of accessing national media.

Individuals who have a strong affiliation to the home country are likely to have in-group bias and to be ethnocentric (Keillor et al., 1996; Keillor & Hult, 1999; Nguyen-Hau, Hai-Minh, & Nguyen, 2013). They believe open economy and purchase of different products may harm the domestic economy, and later lessening the reputation of the home country. This inclination is in accordance with social identity theory, in which individuals associate their self-esteem with a group's identity, thus they want to maintain a positive group's identity. The following hypothesis reflects the relationship between national identity and consumer ethnocentrism.

H₁: Stronger national identification leads to higher consumer ethnocentrism

Not only that it determines the level of ethnocentrism, but national identity also influences perceptions and behaviours toward foreign products. Individuals holding strong national identification tend to perceive that their home country is greater than foreign nations. This belief leads to prejudice towards other countries and rejection of foreign products. Nevertheless, previous studies found inconsistent findings of the relationship between national identity and foreign purchase behaviour. For example, Chen et al. (2012a; 2012b), and Fisher and Zeugner-Roth (2016) found a significant negative effect, while Verlegh (2007) reported insignificant negative effect, and Zeugner-Roth et al. (2015) got mixed findings.

Referring to social identity theory that states individuals tend to behave by the group's values and beliefs, it is expected that prospective students with high national identification are less likely to study abroad. Destination and institution images mediate

the influence of national identity on the intention to study abroad since these images may signal the quality of foreign study destination. Hence, students with strong national identity may perceive foreign destination and institutions negatively, which later influence their study destination choice. The hypotheses about the relationship between national identity and intention to study at a foreign destination are as follows.

- H₂: Stronger national identity leads to low intention to study in Malaysia*
- H_{2a}: Perceived destination image mediates the negative influence of national identity on intention to study in Malaysia*
- H_{2b}: Perceived institution image mediates the negative influence of national identity on intention to study in Malaysia*

2.2.2 Consumer cosmopolitanism and destination choice

Individuals nowadays may feel attached to the sociocultural group beyond their home country as the result of globalisation and exposure to foreign cultures. They perceive themselves as a part of a world citizen, which measured by the extent of cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitan individuals are usually open-minded, appreciate cultural diversity, and have the interest to consume products from other cultures (Riefler & Diamantopolous, 2009; Riefler, Diamantopoulos, & Sigauw, 2012). Due to their identification as a world citizen, cosmopolitans perceive other nations as their personal in-group. Their open-mindedness and appreciation of diversity make cosmopolitans to be more tolerant of other countries and foreign products (Parts & Vida, 2011). Therefore, cosmopolitans are usually less prejudice against other countries and less ethnocentric (Shankarmahesh, 2006). Studies by Cleveland, Laroche, and Papadopoulos (2009) and Parts and Vida (2011) have signified the negative relationship between consumer cosmopolitanism and consumer ethnocentrism. This research intends to test the following hypothesis on the influence of consumer cosmopolitanism and consumer ethnocentrism:

- H₃: Stronger consumer cosmopolitanism leads to lower consumer ethnocentrism*

The consumption-related feature of consumer cosmopolitanism reveals that cosmopolitans have the desire to try products from other countries. They perceive that foreign products may fulfil their needs for variety and satisfy their needs that are not pleased by local products (Cannon & Yaprak, 2002; Riefler & Diamantopoulos, 2009). Research by Parts and Vida (2011) and Riefler et al. (2012) reported a significant positive effect of consumer cosmopolitanism on the intention to purchase foreign products.

In education tourism context, prospective students possessing a high degree of cosmopolitanism prefer to study abroad since they may experience different culture and lifestyle and meet people from different nationalities. They perceive studying abroad will broaden their perspective and indicate them as a part of a larger society. As most

prospective students find difficulties to assess foreign education before departure, they tend to rely on perceived destination and institution images (Basha, Sweeney, & Soutar, 2015). Thus, destination and institution images may mediate the positive effect of consumer cosmopolitanism on the intention to study in a foreign destination. Based on the arguments above, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

- H₄: Stronger consumer cosmopolitanism leads to higher intention to study in Malaysia*
- H_{4a}: Perceived destination image mediates the positive influence of consumer cosmopolitanism on intention to study in Malaysia*
- H_{4b}: Perceived institution image mediates the positive influence of consumer cosmopolitanism on intention to study in Malaysia*

2.2.3 Consumer ethnocentrism and destination choice

Many scholars mistakenly assume ethnocentrism and national identity are the same. These constructs are highly related, but their emphasis is different. As presented in H1, national identification is likely towards direct in-group bias and to stimulate ethnocentrism. However, their formation process is different since national identity is shaped by affective components, while consumer ethnocentrism is influenced by normative pressure (He & Wang, 2015). Ethnocentric individuals perceive the in-group as the centre of the universe, and they will comprehend others from their inner lens (Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2004; Sharma, Shimp, & Shin, 1995). This sociology concept of ethnocentrism is then adopted in marketing to explain the phenomenon of individuals to avoid purchasing foreign products in order to save the domestic economy. Highly ethnocentric individuals perceive the purchase of foreign products is morally wrong as it may put the home country's economy and people in danger (Shimp & Sharma, 1987). Studies of the effect of consumer cosmopolitanism on foreign purchase behaviour, however, are inconsistent, particularly in developing nations (Guo, 2013; Jin et al., 2015; Ramadania, Gunawan, & Rustam, 2015).

Referring to the study on the effect of ethnocentrism on tourists' decision (Fan, 2016; Kock et al., 2018), consumer ethnocentrism may influence the intention of prospective students to study abroad. Ethnocentric students may be anxious with the negative outcomes of students' outflow to the home country and local institutions. Due to their concern, they are less keen to study abroad and choose to study at a local institution. Destination and institution images may mediate this relationship. Since ethnocentric students have a prejudice against foreign nations, they tend to hold negative perceptions towards foreign destination and institutions, which in turn influence their intention to study abroad. The proposed hypotheses on the relationship between consumer ethnocentrism and intention to study in a foreign country are as follows.

- H₅: Stronger consumer ethnocentrism leads to lower intention to study in Malaysia*

H5a: Perceived destination image mediates the negative influence of consumer ethnocentrism on the intention to study in Malaysia

H5b: Perceived institution image mediates the negative influence of consumer ethnocentrism on the intention to study in Malaysia

Figure 1 displays the relationships between the variables of interest (national identity, consumer ethnocentrism, consumer cosmopolitanism, destination image, institution image and student intention).

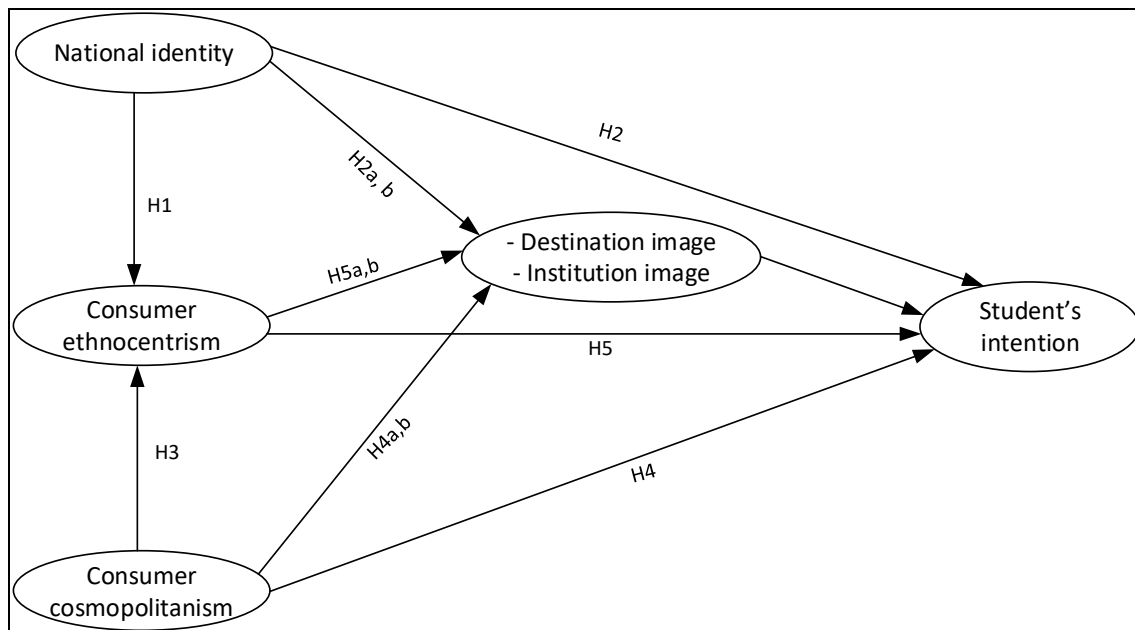


Figure 1: Research framework

3 Methodology

Prospective students of the higher education industry consisted of those intended to study in undergraduate and post-graduate programs. The focus of this research was prospective undergraduate students. There were 9.3 million senior high school students in Indonesia in the academic year of 2016/2017 (Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, 2017a; 2017b). These students were studying in general and vocational senior high schools. This study focused on general senior high school students since many vocational senior high school students preferred to work after graduation and did not have an interest in higher education.

Multistage cluster sampling was utilised to choose the samples. The first step was selecting the target provinces for data collection. Studying abroad is very costly, particularly for students from developing countries. Data were collected at provinces having high Gross Domestic Product (GDP) since these provinces usually had a

substantial number of middle- and upper-class population. Parents from these two social, economic classes had the higher purchasing power to finance their children to study at the tertiary level either at the local institution or abroad. To ease the data collection process, this research focused on provinces with many the senior high school student population. Based on these two categories, eight provinces, namely Jakarta, Banten, West Java, Central Java, Yogyakarta, East Java, North Sumatra, and South Sumatra, were selected. The last step was judgmental sampling, where students' social, economic class and motivation were used as selection criteria. As the main criteria, respondents should come from middle- and upper-class families and have the desire to study abroad.

There were 888 questionnaires collected from January to June 2018, with a usable response rate of 78.4 per cent. As presented in Table 1, most respondents were female Muslims, studying at private senior high schools, living in Jakarta, and have the monthly expenditure of less than IDR 1 million (approximately MYR280). Although most respondents had low monthly spending, this research could confirm that respondents came from middle and upper-class segments based on the senior high schools they attended. The low monthly expenditure might be due to the inclination of high school students to be financially dependent on their parents.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents (n = 888)

| Demographic characteristics | | Amount | Percent |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--------|---------|
| Gender: | Male | 352 | 39.6 |
| | Female | 536 | 60.4 |
| Type of school: | Public | 331 | 37.3 |
| | Private | 557 | 62.7 |
| Religion: | Islam | 611 | 68.8 |
| | Protestant | 154 | 17.3 |
| | Catholic | 84 | 9.5 |
| | Hinduism | 4 | 0.5 |
| | Buddhism | 31 | 3.5 |
| | Others | 4 | 0.4 |
| Domicile: | Jakarta | 208 | 23.4 |
| | Banten | 85 | 9.6 |
| | West Java | 174 | 19.6 |
| | Central Java & Yogyakarta | 179 | 20.1 |
| | East Java | 136 | 15.3 |
| | North Sumatra | 54 | 6.1 |
| | South Sumatra | 52 | 5.9 |
| Monthly expenditure: | Less than IDR1,000,000 | 651 | 73.3 |
| | IDR1,000,000-1,499,999 | 141 | 15.9 |
| | IDR1,500,000 and above | 96 | 10.8 |

N=888

Note: As of May 31, 2018, the exchange rate was IDR1,000 equal to MYR0.28

The data were collected through a survey, where respondents were asked to assess various items measuring socio-cultural identities, Malaysia’s destination and institution images as well as intention to study in Malaysia. The items were measured using six-point Likert scale with anchors 1=strongly disagree and 6=strongly agree. All sociocultural identities were multi-dimensional where each dimension was reflected by four questions. Items for national identity were adopted from Cleveland et al. (2015), consumer cosmopolitanism from Riefler et al. (2012), and consumer ethnocentrism from Sharma (2014). Destination personality was used to assess perceived destination image, in which the study used destination personality dimensions developed by d’Astous and Boujbel (2007).

Based on the focus group discussion with ten senior high students, to increase the participation rate, the questions for destination image needed to be simplified by reducing the items from 24 to 6, in which the questions represented each destination personality dimension. Six measurement items for perceived institution image were adopted from Cubillo, Sanchez, and Cervino (2006), Duarte et al. (2010), and Li et al. (2013). Lastly, there were five items measuring students’ intention to study in Malaysia adopted from Gatfield and Chen (2006), Jalilvand et al. (2012), Phau, Shanka, and Dhayan (2010), and Zeugner-Roth and Zabkar (2015).

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics, validity, and reliability of the items. Non-valid items indicated by low factor loading (less than 0.5) were eliminated from the analysis. The remaining items had factor loading between 0.606 and 0.931, average variance extracted (AVE) between 0.567 and 0.825, and composite reliability between 0.886 and 0.962. Results of discriminant validity (Table 3) showed that all variables were not significantly related since the square root of AVE was greater than the correlation coefficient between two variables. The hypotheses were examined using Partial Least Square - Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM).

Table 2: Descriptive statistics, validity and reliability (n = 888)

| Variable | Item | Mean | S.D. | Factor loading | AVE | Composite reliability |
|---------------------------------------|------|-------|-------|----------------|-------|-----------------------|
| National identity (NID) | | | | | | |
| National pride | NID1 | 5.251 | 0.790 | 0.904 | 0.743 | 0.92 |
| | NID2 | 5.173 | 0.857 | 0.894 | | |
| | NID3 | 4.851 | 0.887 | 0.871 | | |
| | NID4 | 4.378 | 0.947 | 0.772 | | |
| National media usage | NID5 | 4.703 | 1.029 | 0.851 | 0.675 | 0.892 |
| | NID6 | 4.556 | 1.087 | 0.883 | | |
| | NID7 | 3.849 | 1.293 | 0.743 | | |
| | NID8 | 3.848 | 1.035 | 0.803 | | |
| Consumer cosmopolitanism (COS) | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Open-mindedness | COS2 | 5.175 | 0.773 | 0.885 | 0.747 | 0.898 |
| | COS3 | 4.999 | 0.811 | 0.885 | | |
| | COS4 | 5.222 | 0.775 | 0.821 | | |
| Cultural diversity appreciation | COS5 | 4.839 | 0.795 | 0.878 | 0.792 | 0.919 |
| | COS6 | 4.869 | 0.809 | 0.908 | | |
| | COS7 | 4.759 | 0.834 | 0.884 | | |
| Consumption beyond borders | COS9 | 5.241 | 0.770 | 0.810 | 0.678 | 0.894 |
| | COS10 | 5.336 | 0.734 | 0.797 | | |
| | COS11 | 5.021 | 0.866 | 0.832 | | |
| | COS12 | 4.937 | 0.834 | 0.853 | | |
| Consumer ethnocentrism (CET) | | | | | | |
| Cognitive | CET2 | 4.446 | 1.017 | 0.853 | 0.691 | 0.899 |
| | CET3 | 3.653 | 1.023 | 0.804 | | |
| | CET4 | 3.778 | 1.030 | 0.802 | | |
| Affective | CET5 | 4.650 | 0.886 | 0.922 | 0.726 | 0.912 |
| | CET6 | 4.648 | 0.895 | 0.923 | | |
| | CET7 | 4.614 | 0.925 | 0.916 | | |
| Conative | CET9 | 3.633 | 1.045 | 0.887 | 0.717 | 0.910 |
| | CET10 | 0.836 | 1.085 | 0.863 | | |
| | CET11 | 2.712 | 1.066 | 0.827 | | |
| | CET12 | 2.446 | 1.151 | 0.807 | | |
| Destination image (DPI) | DPI1 | 3.832 | 1.029 | 0.832 | 0.567 | 0.886 |
| | DPI2 | 3.143 | 1.042 | 0.730 | | |
| | DPI3 | 3.262 | 1.069 | 0.726 | | |
| | DPI4 | 3.767 | 0.969 | 0.822 | | |
| | DPI5 | 4.495 | 0.897 | 0.606 | | |
| | DPI6 | 3.134 | 1.080 | 0.778 | | |
| Institution image (IIM) | IIM1 | 3.804 | 1.045 | 0.873 | 0.810 | 0.962 |
| | IIM2 | 4.064 | 0.973 | 0.900 | | |
| | IIM3 | 3.752 | 0.990 | 0.897 | | |
| | IIM4 | 4.077 | 0.944 | 0.908 | | |
| | IIM5 | 4.015 | 0.926 | 0.912 | | |
| | IIM6 | 4.123 | 0.940 | 0.908 | | |
| Students' intention (SID) | SID1 | 2.976 | 1.125 | 0.893 | 0.825 | 0.959 |
| | SID2 | 3.593 | 1.026 | 0.899 | | |
| | SID3 | 3.405 | 1.064 | 0.922 | | |
| | SID4 | 3.122 | 1.113 | 0.931 | | |
| | SID5 | 3.440 | 1.062 | 0.896 | | |

N=888

Table 3: Discriminant analysis (n = 888)

| | NID | COS | CET | DPI | IIM | SID |
|-----|--------|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| NID | 0.778 | | | | | |
| COS | -0.062 | 0.702 | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|-----|-------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| CET | 0.676 | -0.279 | 0.769 | | | |
| DPI | 0.101 | 0.141 | 0.045 | 0.753 | | |
| IIM | 0.176 | 0.107 | 0.135 | 0.659 | 0.900 | |
| SID | 0.196 | 0.011 | 0.194 | 0.591 | 0.745 | 0.908 |

N=888

4 Findings

Table 4 presents the direct effects of exogenous variables on the endogenous variable. The findings and discussion are presented in three sections starting with the discussion on the relationships between sociocultural identities, followed by the analysis of direct effects of sociocultural identities on students' intention to study in Malaysia and the mediation analysis of destination and institution images.

Table 4: Results of direct effects of sociocultural identities on students' intention

| Relationship | β | S.E. | t-value | p-value | 95% confidence interval | |
|--------------|---------|-------|---------|---------|-------------------------|------------|
| | | | | | Lower C.I. | Upper C.I. |
| NID → CET | 0.660 | 0.020 | 32.421 | 0.000 | 0.624 | 0.695 |
| NID → SID | 0.012 | 0.031 | 0.350 | 0.363 | -0.039 | 0.060 |
| NID → DPI | 0.096 | 0.045 | 2.111 | 0.017 | 0.022 | 0.370 |
| NID → IIM | 0.126 | 0.045 | 2.728 | 0.003 | 0.005 | 0.199 |
| COS → CET | -0.239 | 0.025 | 9.606 | 0.000 | -0.280 | -0.199 |
| COS → SID | -0.050 | 0.023 | 2.130 | 0.017 | -0.089 | -0.012 |
| COS → DPI | 0.116 | 0.042 | 2.803 | 0.003 | 0.046 | 0.185 |
| COS → IIM | 0.138 | 0.041 | 3.386 | 0.000 | 0.071 | 0.205 |
| CET → SID | 0.083 | 0.034 | 2.450 | 0.007 | 0.028 | 0.142 |
| CET → DPI | -0.008 | 0.051 | 0.114 | 0.455 | -0.094 | 0.073 |
| CET → IIM | 0.087 | 0.052 | 1.742 | 0.041 | -0.001 | 0.170 |
| DPI → SID | 0.221 | 0.030 | 7.399 | 0.000 | 0.170 | 0.269 |
| IIM → SID | 0.599 | 0.027 | 22.535 | 0.000 | 0.554 | 0.643 |

N=888

4.1 The relationships between national identity, consumer cosmopolitanism, and consumer ethnocentrism

The explanatory power of national identity and consumer cosmopolitanism on consumer ethnocentrism was strong ($R^2 = 0.513$). The influence of national identity on consumer ethnocentrism was positive and significant ($\beta=0.660$, $p\text{-value}=0.000$), which supported H_1 . In contrast, consumer cosmopolitanism gave significant negative influence on the formation of consumer ethnocentrism ($\beta=-0.239$, $p\text{-value}=0.000$) that supported H_3 . These findings supported previous studies by Nguyen-Hau et al. (2013), Parts and Vida (2011), and Vida et al. (2008).

As shown in the descriptive statistics, the strongest component of respondents' national identity was national pride; which leads them to feel proud of their local products. This pride on local products, however, does not necessarily promote rejection on foreign products as represented by a low average score of conative ethnocentrism dimension. Respondents of this study were teenagers who are highly exposed to foreign cultures and media. Their self-identity is not fully developed as they were a concern with the perception of others toward themselves. Like people in other developing countries, Indonesian teenagers perceive products from developed nations are more sophisticated and modern. As a result, they may be indifferent towards local and foreign products.

Regarding consumer cosmopolitanism, respondents were holding relatively high cosmopolitanism traits. Teenagers are more highly exposed to foreign cultures and global mass media, which increase their awareness of foreign countries and cultural diversity. They are also more willing to try various products than older generations, as presented by the mean value of consumption beyond borders. These cosmopolitanism traits reduce their consumer ethnocentrism tendencies by lessening their prejudice towards foreign products. In this research, this inclination is reflected by lower means of the conative ethnocentrism.

4.2 Direct effects of sociocultural identities on students' intention to study in Malaysia

Hypothesis two (H_2) test the relationship between national identity and students' intention to study in Malaysia was not supported ($\beta=0.012$, $p\text{-value}=0.363$). Rather than giving negative influence, national identity was found to be insignificant in influencing respondents' willingness to study in Malaysia, which is in line with Brewer's (1999) argument. Indonesia and Malaysia are neighbouring ASEAN countries that share many similarities, which probably make prospective Indonesian students with strong national identification recognize Malaysia as brother country. Even though both countries are founders of ASEAN and have a good bilateral relationship, there were some conflicts in the past related to territorial borders and claim over cultural assets, which may affect students' emotions towards Malaysia, and contribute to the insignificant effect of national identity on their intention to study in Malaysia.

Consumer cosmopolitanism gave a significant negative effect on students' intention to study in Malaysia, which contradicts with H_4 ($\beta=-0.050$, $p\text{-value}=0.017$) and the findings of Parts and Vida (2011), Riefler et al. (2012), and Zeugner-Roth *et al.* (2015). Both Indonesia and Malaysia are both developing countries, which speak similar languages, share similar cultural background, and have similar lifestyles. These similarities may be important for prospective students who are less flexible to cultural changes, as they may feel more comfortable, and they also adapt easily with the environment at the host country. However, the situation is different for those who have high cultural flexibility. The majority of respondents are cosmopolitans, which may be the results of foreign cultures and global media penetration. They tend to be open-minded, highly regard cultural diversity, and have interest in products from other

cultures. Consequently, they may feel that studying at the host country with a similar environment to the home country is comparable to home country and cannot fulfil their variety seeking needs.

This study found a significant favorable influence of consumer ethnocentrism on students' intention to study in Malaysia ($\beta=0.083$, $p\text{-value}=0.007$). This finding contradicts the assumption of a negative relationship between consumer ethnocentrism and foreign purchase behaviour. As Indonesia and Malaysia are neighbouring countries and ASEAN nation members, respondents may consider Malaysia as their larger in-group. As a result, they are less critical when evaluating and purchasing products from Malaysia, including studying in Malaysia. This significant positive effect indicates the existence of regional ethnocentrism and supports the previous study on regional ethnocentrism among three ASEAN nation members by Seidenfuss et al. (2013).

4.3 Mediation analysis of destination and institution images

Table 5 shows the results of the mediation analysis. Although some hypotheses on relationships between sociocultural identities and destination and institution images were significant, the explanatory power was weak where R^2 for destination image was 0.021 and R^2 for institution image was 0.049. On the other hand, the total explanatory power of sociocultural identities, destination and institution images on students' intention to study in Malaysia was also substantial ($R^2 = 0.602$).

Table 5: Results of mediation analysis

| Indirect effect | β | S.E. | t-value | p-value | 95% confidence interval | |
|---|---------|-------|---------|---------|-------------------------|------------|
| | | | | | Lower C.I. | Upper C.I. |
| NID \rightarrow DPI \rightarrow SID | 0.021 | 0.011 | 1.982 | 0.024 | 0.004 | 0.039 |
| NID \rightarrow IIM \rightarrow SID | 0.073 | 0.027 | 2.687 | 0.004 | 0.028 | 0.119 |
| NID \rightarrow CET \rightarrow SID | 0.056 | 0.023 | 2.458 | 0.007 | 0.019 | 0.093 |
| NID \rightarrow CET \rightarrow DPI \rightarrow SID | -0.001 | 0.007 | 0.117 | 0.454 | -0.013 | 0.011 |
| NID \rightarrow CET \rightarrow IIM \rightarrow SID | 0.036 | 0.020 | 1.756 | 0.040 | 0.003 | 0.069 |
| COS \rightarrow DPI \rightarrow SID | 0.026 | 0.010 | 2.579 | 0.005 | 0.011 | 0.043 |
| COS \rightarrow IIM \rightarrow SID | 0.084 | 0.024 | 3.410 | 0.000 | 0.045 | 0.124 |
| COS \rightarrow CET \rightarrow SID | -0.020 | 0.008 | 2.431 | 0.008 | -0.034 | -0.007 |
| COS \rightarrow CET \rightarrow DPI \rightarrow SID | 0.000 | 0.003 | 0.115 | 0.454 | -0.004 | 0.005 |
| COS \rightarrow CET \rightarrow IIM \rightarrow SID | -0.013 | 0.007 | 1.735 | 0.041 | -0.025 | -0.001 |
| CET \rightarrow DPI \rightarrow SID | -0.001 | 0.011 | 0.117 | 0.454 | -0.019 | 0.016 |
| CET \rightarrow IIM \rightarrow SID | 0.054 | 0.031 | 1.763 | 0.039 | 0.004 | 0.106 |

N=888

Referring to Table 5, H_{2a} and H_{2b} were supported since destination and institution images fully mediated the influence of national identity on students' intention to study

in Malaysia ($\beta_{NID \rightarrow DPI \rightarrow SID} = 0.021$, $p\text{-value} = 0.024$; $\beta_{NID \rightarrow IIM \rightarrow SID} = 0.073$, $p\text{-value} = 0.004$). Destination and institution images had competitive partial mediation effect on the relationship between consumer cosmopolitanism and students' intention to study in Malaysia ($\beta_{COS \rightarrow DPI \rightarrow SID} = 0.026$, $p\text{-value} = 0.005$; $\beta_{COS \rightarrow IIM \rightarrow SID} = 0.084$, $p\text{-value} = 0.000$). These findings supported H_{4a} and H_{4b} . Mixed mediation effects of destination and institution images were found on the relationship between consumer ethnocentrism and students' intention to study in Malaysia. Destination image did not mediate the relationship between consumer ethnocentrism and students' intention to study in Malaysia ($\beta_{CET \rightarrow DPI \rightarrow SID} = -0.001$, $p\text{-value} = 0.454$), which did not support H_{5a} . On the other hand, institution image had complementary mediation effect because both direct and indirect effects had a similar sign that supported H_{5b} ($\beta_{CET \rightarrow IIM \rightarrow SID} = 0.054$, $p\text{-value} = 0.039$).

Due to the difficulties to estimate the quality of foreign education, prospective students tend to depend on destination and institution images. Superior destination and institution images strengthen students' willingness to study in the destination. Since higher education is usually associated with cultural capital and long-term investment, prospective students will choose the host country and institution that have good image. When prospective students perceive Malaysia has good destination and institution images, they are likely to admire the country. For those having strong national identification and ethnocentrism, admiration to the host country and institutions will lead them to select this country as their preferred study destination. Meanwhile, for cosmopolitan students, they realize that even though Malaysia shares many similarities with Indonesia, the country has different personality traits and education system. Thus, they will have positive perceptions of Malaysia's destination and institution images, which in turn encourage them to study in Malaysia.

5 Conclusion

This study aims to test the direct and indirect effects of sociocultural identities on students' intention to study in Malaysia. The findings show the three sociocultural identities, namely national identity, consumer cosmopolitanism, and consumer ethnocentrism, are significantly inter-related. Among the three, national identity does not have a significant influence on students' intention to study in Malaysia, while consumer cosmopolitanism and consumer ethnocentrism have significant opposite direction relationship with students' intention to study in Malaysia. The mediation analysis reveals destination and institution images play a mediating role in the relationship between sociocultural identities and students' intention to study in Malaysia. Even though this study has acknowledged the multidimensionality of sociocultural identities, the national-interrelationship dimension in national identity has not been included in the questionnaire. Future studies may consider including this dimension to get deeper insights into the components that shape national identity. Utilization of other concepts of sociocultural identities dimensions may also increase the explanatory power of sociocultural identities on behavioural intention. Rather than using multiple items to measure each destination personality, this research considered

it as a unidimensional scale. Future studies may consider looking at the dimensionality of the destination image.

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